



Guanella News

Notiziario della Casa Generalizia dei Servi della Carità - Anno XXIII (II Serie)

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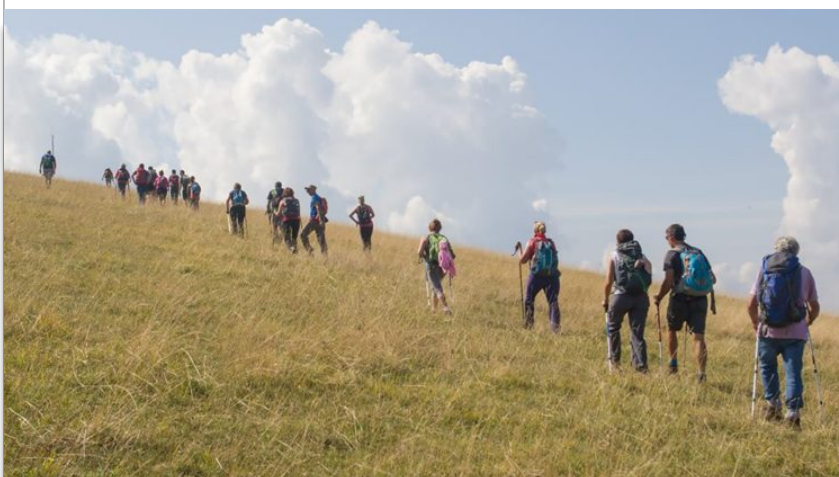
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Living the wait for Christ as a community, also preparing for the celebration of the XXI General Chapter on the theme: "Faithful and creative in the charism: co-responsible in the mission. With Christ we meet the challenges of our time".



«Let's begin a journey of creative fidelity»

Dear Confreres, when you receive this issue of Guanella News, I will be already in Philippines to witness, on December 8, the priestly ordination of four new confreres: two from Vietnam, one from Philippines, and one from Congo. The Guanellian family extends, and we can't but be happy and grateful to God who called them, thanking also the four confreres who

followed the Lord's project for the service of the poorest. Let us keep them in our personal prayer.

During this time of Advent, as we promised in the programme of this last year of our mandate, we wish to wait together for Christ coming, also preparing to celebrate the 21st General Chapter (October 6 to 24, 2024).

This is why, in this issue of Guanella News, you find:

- ◆ · a reflection on the main theme of the 21st GC: **“Faithful and creative in the charism, co-responsible in the mission. With Christ, we take up the challenges of our time”**. Starting from the Gospel passage in Matthew 14:22-32, that will be the background of Father General's report, each part of the General chapter theme is analysed.
- ◆ **A Lectio Divina** on the same passage of the Gospel.
- ◆ **A questionnaire of 15 questions** about the themes that will be part of the Report. The report will surely be more relevant and precious if it will present the view of the Congregation's situation not only from the viewpoint of the General and Council, but involving the view of all the confreres, the entirety of the Servants of Charity. This synodal aspect is more and more urgent when celebrating a General Chapter of the whole Congregations. Therefore I expect all the confreres to give a help and a collaboration in compiling my Report.

We entrusted this work on the Chapter's title and the Lectio Divina to Fr. Wladimiro Bogoni, whom I wish to thank for his generous effort.

This first step will be followed by two others, before the celebration of the 21st GC:

1. The Lenten journey together through another Lectio Divina and a penitential community moment that will be suggested.
2. The celebration of the “Mini-Chapter” of the Guanellian Family together with our Sisters and the Guanellian Cooperators in Rome on 7 to 9 June, 2024. We will begin celebrating together the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart and renewing our consecration, to continue in dialogue listening to the DSMP and the GuanCoop on the theme of our Chapter.

Dear confreres, I wish a serene and peaceful Holy Christmas to each one of you and to each community of the large Guanellian family. With faith and hope we pray that the wars that are devastating many parts of the world, and that in every heart there may be space for the gift of peace brought by the birth of the Child in Bethlehem.

Best wishes also to all your lay collaborators, the residents of our houses with which we make the large Guanellian family.

May the Emmanuel, God with us, bless all with his presence. Merry Christmas!!

Roma, 21 novembre 2023

P. Umberto

**“Faithful and creative in the charism,
co-responsible in the mission. With Christ,
we take up the challenges of our time”.**



The *Navicella* by Giotto di Bondone (1266/7 –1337), which illustrates the scene from St Mathew’s Gospel when St Peter walks on water towards Christ, (Mt 14:22-33) is one of St Peter’s Basilica’s most important works. **This icon of faith has greeted visitors leaving the Basilica since the early 14th Century onwards.** The mosaic that remains today is situated high above the central doorway of the main portico of St Peter’s Basilica.

This wonderful scene transmits an inspiring story of faith to all leaving the Basilica. It speaks to the pilgrims in an ecclesial sense and also a personal sense, because the waves represent the difficulties of living the Christian life and the trials that we all inevitably face in living up to the faith. However, when the tempest rages, when our faith starts to fail, we only need to follow St Peter’s example and hold out our hand to the Lord who will support us in our every trial. Jesus looks towards the departing pilgrim, and also looks at us, as reminding us that he is with us in our struggles and difficulties. Let us have no hesitation in asking for His help, looking at Him saying, **“Take heart, it is I: have no fear.”** (Mt 14:27)

THE 21ST GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE SDC, OCTOBER 6-24, 2024

Father General reminded us in the October issue of *Guanella News* the indiction of the 21st General Chapter as an important moment in which “each confrere is called to be vigilant, to live and to promote the gift of the Spirit, that is the Founder’s Charism”. The General Chapter is in fact a moment of evaluation and planning rooted in the Charism. The following *Lectio Divina* is a first simple answer to the invitation to prepare this important Congregation event. It should help each confrere to make the Founder’s Charism shine in his life. *“Often the enthusiasm and passion for don Guanella and his*

charism appears fading in several confreres, – Father General wrote – obscured, with little life and attraction. What is happening, dear confreres? We cannot afford such mediocrity. Let's move, roll up our sleeves, open our heart to the breath of the Spirit who still wants to accomplish with us, as he did with don Guanella, miracles of good, of growth, of holiness, with creative charity.”

THE THEME OF THE 21ST GENERAL CHAPTER OFFERS THE FOLLOWING OUTLINE: FAITHFUL AND CREATIVE IN THE CHARISM, CO-RESPONSIBLE IN THE MISSION. WITH CHRIST, WE TAKE UP THE CHALLENGES OF OUR TIME. With this Lectio Divina we wish to enter deeper into the theme that is also the biblical icon for the works of the 21st General Chapter. We think we need to start with a brief comment to each of the three parts that make up the title of our theme, preparing the work of seeking and sharing.

FAITHFUL AND CREATIVE IN THE CHARISM

This is an invitation to look back at our history, to go to the sources or rather to the times of the Founder. We start a journey that may help us to care and review the “quality” of our faith, of our being religious and priests, of our being spiritual fathers and shepherds, putting God back to His place in our life and in the Church's life. The difficult times we are living urge us to move steadily along the path of the Gospel and of the Sacraments through which Christ is touching and healing us until today.

The Guanellian religious, and especially the priest, is today a little lukewarm, maybe standardised, more of a manager than a shepherd, more a social worker than an evangeliser. He should ask himself what is his position facing the people of our times, basically each of them lonely ... just as the persons don Guanella was facing. Our societies are changing so fast that the citizen living in this world is always running late. We feel not ready, not adequate to the task, in perpetual state of emergency. The human being is not able to face in a balanced way the uncountable questions coming both on ethics and of technique and science. He lives in this world, but day after day he feels “**stranger**” and “**lonely**”. Our world is full of loneliness: we can hear the cry of humanity reaching to the sky, crying for abandonment, wars, earthquakes and suffering. Maybe we are distracted, but our hearts are reached by the same cry of suffering heard by don Guanella over a hundred years ago, coming from the “least ones” of his time. It is the cry of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda: “*I have no one*” (Jn 5:7) on which don Guanella composed the song of his life. He understood where he should stand in life, that *his people* would be the people of the little ones, the weak, those not able to go on in life on their own. The fresh source of the charism takes life as soon as it finds Guanellians (Servants, Daughters, Cooperators) “**able to listen**”, “**swords of fire in the holy ministry**” as don Guanella resolved, chasing all lukewarmness, because “*The lukewarm go to hell*” as in the title of a book written by a priest of the street, Michel-Marie Zanotti-Sorkine. Our society needs Guanellians **able to give flavour to their own life and that of others** because “*Our Lord didn't write that we should be the honey, but the salt of the earth*”. (Georges Bernanos). Jesus said “you are the salt of the earth” (Mt.5,13-16), not “you will become the salt of the earth”: thus, He gives us the assurance of the one that has understood the truth and embraces it full-heartedly.

CO-RESPONSIBLE IN THE MISSION

What are the contents that the Guanellian mission should pass on? Only “managing” charity services, or also an announce of evangelisation, catechesis for a people more and more marked by ignorance about the truths of our faith? Jesus, while helping, healing and curing, affirmed the great truths of humanity and about humanity!

Has the hour come, for the three branches of the Servants, the Daughters, and the Cooperators, to generate together creative responses of charity? with the spirit of mutual trust of the Founder, who was always attentive to the signs of times and transformed the works of charity and pastoral in actions of Salvation.

A mission founded on bonds of charity as the building blocks of religious communities, parishes, groups of friendship and evangelising formation.

A mission able to “build a home”. Evermore relevant and clear appears the reflection given by the Cardinal Vicar of Rome on June 28, 2022: “There is a widespread desire to have a feeling of home and family in our communities. From different parts, simpler church structures are invoked, to make them more agile in announcing the Gospel, so that the pastoral workers may not be burdened with the anxieties of Martha. At the same time, there is an invitation to start moving to the homes and the places of men and women of our times.”¹ “We need to work together and ask ourselves which signs we need to make even more the Church a home. We need to understand what can be forfeited as no more relevant, and what has to be brought to light as essential. For example, parishes are invited to have a familiar face, be more family-like and less business-like.”² Our priests should find again their heart of “shepherds” and “fathers in faith”, and hold off the temptation to be oppressed mainly on management, organisation, finance. Fostering the building of communities as places of proximity and communion where one can find the healing of wounds, an oasis refreshing soul and body, a beacon cutting the darkness, a haven to find refuge.

A mission that can read the present with the gaze of a Shepherd, as don Guanella did. From the point of view of faith, therefore with God’s eyes.

In the Church we sometimes run the risk of looking at the world more with socio-anthropological rather than theological categories. We all are part of our time, but we should not forget a deep truth: that each one of us is called to be part, and daily cooperator of the Plan conceived by God for the time we are living in.

WITH CHRIST - AND FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF OUR FOUNDER - WE TAKE UP THE CHALLENGES OF OUR TIME

Christ is the only friend we can trust to be our guide in the turmoil of our times. He, with His Word, will be the one who accompanies the preparation of our General Chapter. To Him we entrust the Congregation’s future. We begin our reflection on Matthew’s Gospel (14:22-32) to evaluate our faith and become, after the example of don Guanella **“used to contradictions and never be abashed by them: in them we find good strength, like the rowers who become strong by rowing with their arms in the midst of the tempest”**.

¹Diocesi di Roma, *Linee guida per l’itinerario sinodale 2022-2023*, pag. 19

²Diocesi di Roma, *Linee guida per l’itinerario sinodale 2022-2023*, pag. 19-20

Lectio Divina

WITH JESUS IN THE BOAT OF FAITH

Part One //

It is the last year of our Congregational animation which will prepare us for the XXI General Chapter. A particular year in which the Provincial Chapters, the extraordinary one of the Vice Province and the Assemblies of the two Delegations will have to be celebrated. Aware of the importance of these appointments, we entrust ourselves to the Holy Spirit, soul of the Church, to enlighten us and help us in our weakness!

THE TEMPEST PUTS OUR FAITH IN JESUS TO THE TEST

“Then he made the disciples get into the boat and precede him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. After doing so, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When it was evening, he was there alone. Meanwhile the boat, already a few miles offshore, was being tossed about by the waves, for the wind was against it. During the fourth watch of the night, he came toward them, walking on the sea. When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified. "It is a ghost," they said, and they cried out in fear. At once (Jesus) spoke to them, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter said to him in reply, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw how (strong) the wind was he became frightened; and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

After they got into the boat, the wind died down. Those who were in the boat did him homage, saying, "Truly, you are the Son of God".

THE CONTEXT OF THE PASSAGE

While being a historical event, the passage contains many symbolic aspects, through which we will try to see the Congregation in the Church and in the world. The difficult moment we are experiencing in our faith, our sense of belonging to the Congregation, the quality of our charitable service, the depth of our pastoral activity.

The boat may represent everyone's life, a journey toward a goal, in which one feels knocked down by unexpected challenges. The beliefs of our faith may appear so light that they fade away, as mirages: "it is a ghost", as if saying, "how difficult it is, believing in a God we cannot see and touch".

It is, therefore, a passage with a strong practical teaching, that shows "the journey from being frightened to the courage of a faith, tried by doubt and fall, that attains fullness in the experience of salvation" (Silvano Fausti, Una comunità legge il vangelo di Matteo, EDB pag. 295).

Peter represents each of us, the Church, and the Congregation: when we look up to the Lord and his call, we trust and we are able to move on; when, on the contrary, we look at our difficulties, we are afraid and sink. Yet, there is still hope, the child of the cry, "Lord, save me!"

The Gospel passage invites us to change strategy in this historical period of sudden changes. As it happened in Israel history, as it is happening in the Church, since the time she was born from the heart of Jesus, as it should happen to each one of us, so the time we are living is needed and providential to have our faith make a leap in quality. History teaches us that we grow when we are forced to reconstruct from destruction, when everything around seems to fall apart and sink into nonsense. The experience of salvation that follows leads to peace and to recognise the Lord. Peter walking and sinking is the symbol of the strength and the weakness of our faith. **Let us cry to the Lord, and He will catch us with his hand".**

SOME CENTRAL POINT OF THIS PASSAGE

The most important words on which we can focus our talk and the questions for our life could be: Solitude, Prayer, Peter, Sea, Boat, Wind, Fear, Faith, Holding the hand etc. Words that, once gathered in one mainstream, become a point of pastoral convergence.

THE SEA

The event happens in the sea, and it will be highlighted by exegetes, painters, writers, artists etc. In the biblical world the sea is the place of evil and death. In the Psalms, for example, the rough sea is the symbol of the anxiety of some situations of life (e.g.: Ps. 31:6; 68:3.16; Jer. 49:23; Lk.21:25). In this case, we can read in the sea dark and deep, shaken by a furious wind all the world's problems, with war, violence, exploitation. The sea can represent the great confusion spread almost everywhere, even in the Church, the lack of certainties and of relevant points of reference, the absence of internal footholds, a deep fear, undefined and indescribable.

THE BOAT

You have surely noted that, at **the moment of taking off, the boat is without Jesus!** Even more, Jesus "made the disciples get into the boat" without Him, but only for a short time. It looks as if the Lord wanted to put them to the test, not so much for an evaluation of who were those able, but to make them know the power and glory of the Son of God. Once more a tempest is shaking the disciples' hearts, but suddenly Jesus is walking on waters. Peter, by means of Christ's power, will have the same experience of the Lord. **The Boat is therefore the Church, the pilot is Christ** – whose symbol is the cross of the mast – who leads to the haven of salvation those who put their trust in her. But the boat is also the community, the place of faith, of communion and sharing of the same call to live together one vocation.

SOLITUDE AND PRAYER: "When it was evening he was there alone". Jesus lives moments of intense prayer, of love to the Father. He is a Master of prayer. It is important to contemplate him in this work, to keep him as a model, to listen to his teaching on prayer (e.g. on the "need to pray always, and never give up", "when you pray, say "Our Father...", ""Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father ..."). It is necessary to look for time, place, and ways to pray. We have to choose and live these strong, beautiful, deep, holy moments. A Christian needs prayer to open his eyes and learn how to read deeply the

events of every day, to be able to discern with eyes illumined by the truth of faith, and to act as collaborators of the Kingdom of God. In prayer we learn to differentiate among events and to inspire all our action to truth. God himself asks us to work this change in us: this is the insistent request made by Jesus over and over in the book of Revelation: "Whoever has ears ought to hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev 2:7.11.17.29; 3:6.13.22).

Most of our prayers aim to get human things or to see our desires fulfilled. The challenge for the community today is to make sure to be always in tune with the Holy Spirit, the one who guarantees the tradition and the Church.

Only one is our Leader, Jesus, the Christ who is the first to go, ahead of us, in the journey of life.

Only one is our interior Master, the Holy Spirit, who is divine and sure presence in us, in spite of limitations, weaknesses, sins proper of our human condition. Only one is the Father, who makes us feel "beloved children", deeply respected and welcomed, and makes us live among us as "brethren" without domineering one over the other, without separations that are fruit of our harsh judgments dividing good from bad, just from sinner, pure from impure.

PETER

When we see Peter, we feel some friendliness in our heart, because Peter's adventure is that of every person, of each of us. When the doubt starts, Peter stops walking toward Jesus. He starts sinking when he is not looking to Jesus anymore, but to himself. What happens in the time between Christ's invitation to Peter to go to him, the coming out of the boat to start the first steps over the waves, and the fear that forces Jesus to stretch his hand? Yet the direction did not change. The fundamental option for Jesus was unchanged. In both cases Peter is going toward the Lord. It all depends on the direction of the eyes: at the beginning he is looking to Jesus and goes on quietly, but then he looks at himself, and sinks. When looking at Jesus, he moves; when listening to his fears, he sinks. The attitude of Peter is truly exemplary, it personifies and symbolises every movement of every human being toward Jesus. Movements and choices are almost never free from doubts, because together with the certainty and assurance that God is always faithful and never denies what he has promised, yet there is a high risk for us to follow different ways. St. Philip Neri often prayed: "Keep your hand on my head, Lord, otherwise Pippo will cheat you".

FAITH AND FEAR two words opposing each other: either one or the other is there

Once, fear knocked at the door. Faith went to open and saw that nobody was there. If there is fear, there is no faith. Falling into fear means sinning against faith. But this word is present at least three times, to tell us that during that night the disciples lived a traumatic experience that was little less than a tragedy. Fear for what is evoking a ghost, for the dark night, for the unknown looming. Fear for a tragic, painful, bad end into nothing and emptiness. **What is frightening us, what are the fears that paralyse us?** Fears begin when we perceive danger. Saint Augustine suggests: "Why not look at every danger putting God by its side?". When we are caught by fear, let us make ours the words of **Psalms 90**: "You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shade of the Almighty say to the LORD, "My refuge and fortress, my God in whom I trust." He will rescue you from the fowler's snare, from the destroying plague, he will shelter you with his pinions, and under his wings you may take refuge; his faithfulness is a protecting shield. You shall not fear the terror of the night nor the arrow that flies by day, Nor the

pestilence that roams in darkness, nor the plague that ravages at noon...". **God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control (2Tim. 1:7).**

PETERS CRY

Crying, the irreplaceable human resource. Man puts in it all the violence of his protest, the bitterness of his disgrace, the dizziness of his despair, the shame of his failure, the anguish of his sadness. This cry makes an irreplaceable Companion rush to us: "Hear, Lord, ... pay heed to my cry" (Ps. 27). "Lord, the God of my salvation, I call out by day; at night I cry aloud in your presence. Let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry" (Ps. 88). Our cry is one of the truest and most convincing prayers because it puts us in front of God in extreme truth: crying does not need convoluted prayers "ready-made". It is just the truth of man crying to his God: I call upon you; because you answer me, O God". (Ps 17 v.6). Descartes was content with his famous "cogito ergo sum". You can say: I cry; therefore, I am ... I am saved ... and each day I find myself redeemed.

HOLDING BY THE HAND: allowing Jesus to hold our hand.

All of us have experienced the feeling of tenderness and security given by dad and mammy when they were holding our hand. God our Father holds our hand in his Son Jesus. Holding our hand to be able to stand and not to sink. Being held by the hand is the experience of being saved. **The Gospel shows us the way to salvation when we invoke the name of Jesus.** The image of holding the hand comes again. As soon as we call on Him invoking His Name, we have the experience of being held by the hand. For Peter, salvation is being grasped in a moment of grave difficulty. **Share the moment of your life when you felt God catching your hand and for your faith you found the humility and courage to cry to Jesus, "Lord, save me" and to thank him!**

TRULY YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD

After so many wanderings and fears, it is beautiful to join Peter and all the others in adoration, murmuring: "Truly you are the Son of God", which means adoring the One who saves us "**Lord, save me**", "**O you of little faith, why did you doubt?**" **man of little faith, why did you doubt?**" (Jesus) **spoke to them, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."** Now is the moment to hear and welcome this word personally to us: "**Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."** **Come to me "walking on waters", that is among the waves and tides of this world, leaning only on Me!**

Part two //



LED BY THE FOUNDER ON THE STREETS OF MANKIND

The Word of Jesus led us to reflect on our common journey as Congregation and collaborators in the various contexts of our Guanellian mission. At the same time, in the phase of preparation to the 21st General Chapter, to evaluate the term we are closing, we can receive aid from the example of our Founder in the seven years he spent at Savogno. It's nice to look at him in his mission of Shepherd strong and loving, just as a father for the people of the little village.

His traits as a shepherd are quite clear: **always active, guided by a vision and daily moving at the light of faith.**

We allow ourselves to be inspired by him and evaluate **how central** is Christ in our pastoral action, **how deep** is our faith **how welcoming** is our mission and the quality of our priesthood on the example of the "shepherd Guanella".

Don Guanella was in Savogno for seven years from 1867, a period that was important for the growth of his person and his vocation. In that phase of his priestly journey, don Luigi showed himself as a shepherd who was sharing life with his people. A shepherd of great commitment, of vigorous ideas, attached to tradition but also open to grasp the new needs of times, especially close to the people to better understand their needs, heal the wounds, helping them grow in faith. With the excuse of taking a stroll, he would go slowly through the village, stopping for a greeting, a little chat, a visit to a sick person, some relief to an unfortunate. It was a simple way to meet his parishioners, to talk, to hear the news of the day, but especially to be updated on what could be useful about situations, events, health, and needs of his humble people. He was with them, one of them, ready to carry stones or sand for the works, to discuss what was needed or useful for the village, the pastures, to share sorrows and hopes.

His house, by the houses of his people, was open to all, his welcome happy, his charity always ready and generous.

One could see **the fruit of his social effort, as a shepherd, in the extraordinary attendance** to the sacraments in daily life, eucharist and penance. This proves that his social commitment was not his last goal and was not aiming to a simple human promotion: it was able to take people closer to God.

The Guanellian... like don Guanella ... saint of charity and man of uniting and harmonising charity.

The expression "saints of charity", used today for those persons who give their whole life to reduce the suffering of so many poor, has lost along the years its original meaning, as soon as the category of "social" entered. Don Attilio Beria, in his introduction to *Pagine Spirituali e preghiere* point out that "Social is a category of our times, the craze for social organisations, social speeches, social words. It is a homage to the worship and idol now prevalent among the new tribe of gods, and that sometimes has corrupted the expression "Saints of charity", to indicate, saints who organised services for the society, for one or another "social class", for one or another group of miseries. **Charity is love: you don't love the organisation, you don't properly love society; you love single human persons; love is born only in a human being and adheres only to a human being.** This is true for all the primordial and more intimate sentiments of mankind, such as love, or sorrow, for example. [...] What a happy expression "saints of charity", if it is rightly

understood: it points to Christians who took seriously Jesus' word: "This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (In. 13:35). **Either we love, or we are not Christians! Love is commanded for each single person, loved for his/her soul. To reach the soul, as a means or as a consequence, is also manifested love for the body and mercy for the muddle of miseries.**"¹

In a happy summary, don Attilio Beria offers the view of don Guanella as a priest with a pastoral of unity and harmony, seeing him as a man "totally abandoned to Providence, exhorting to be great in prayer; saddened by the sinful man that is in us, but certain of the gift of life in the sacraments; and this for every human being, even the most sorrowful in the body"². Don Guanella's pastoral was a pastoral of unity, because it was the fruit of "charity" aiming to the souls of persons, of the poor, as it happened at Savogno. We want to highlight two aspects of this. **The contemplative aspect** of his acting, that is not action and contemplation, but contemplation supporting and founding his action of charity. **The other aspect is his free spirit**, sustaining and animating him, as the fruit of his certainty that God is Father "**who takes care**" of each person.

As Guanellians we have the task to **follow these two directions to discover the secret of the pastoral of unity of don Luigi Guanella**. What we should announce without giving up, and we **must continually reaffirm is the faith in Christ**. Having defeated the unbelief, overcome the moment of "sinking", with the wind at the sail of the recovered faith, the fruits of charity will come. The encounter with Him always pushes to the fraternal encounter with others.

THE SECRET TO ATTAIN SUCH TRUST IN GOD IS TO LOOK AT OUR LADY and to invoke her with perseverance. **Saint Bernard** compares Mary to a luminous star, guiding the ships in the dark night. He exhorts each of us to look at that star, in order to happily reach the desired haven of eternal Life. These are his words:

"O you, whoever you are, who feel that in the tidal wave of this world you are nearer to being tossed about among the squalls and gales than treading on dry land, if you do not want to founder in the tempest, do not avert your eyes from the brightness of this star. When the wind of temptation blows up within you, when you strike upon the rock of tribulation, gaze up at this star, call out to Mary. ... In dangers, in hardships, in every doubt, think of Mary, call out to Mary. Keep her in your mouth, keep her in your heart. ... Following her you will never go astray. Asking her help, you will never despair. Keeping her in your thoughts, you will never wander away. With your hand in hers, you will never stumble. With her protecting you, you will not be afraid. With her leading you, you will never tire. Her kindness will see you through to the end". Let us look at this star, and trustingly invoke Mary!

¹ Don Luigi Guanella, *Pagine Spirituali e Preghiere di don Guanella* (a cura di don Attilio Beria) Editrice Nuove Frontiere 2014, pp.19-21

² Don Luigi Guanella, *Pagine Spirituali e Preghiere di don Guanella* (a cura di don Attilio Beria) Editrice Nuove Frontiere 2014, p.30

Questionnaire to involve the confreres in preparing the 21st General Chapter

Cari Confratelli vi chiediamo di coinvolgervi in modo sinodale nella celebrazione del XXI CG attraverso le risposte che ci farete pervenire come singoli e come comunità su temi che riguardano certamente la nostra vita di Congregazione e che saranno inseriti nella Relazione del Padre generale al Capitolo.

CHARISM

1) Do you think that our original charism, received from the Spirit and renewed in time to adapt us to the situations required by the laws and by the needs of our residents, is still valid and it is still an answer to the needs of humanity today? Are we able to apply and adapt the charism today, updating our ways and forms of service?

WORKS

2) Our Congregation is experiencing a difficult time in managing large Institutions. It would be easier to manage services without having our own structure, in structures owned by others. What is your advice, to develop and extend more agile structures and more effective methods of service?

LAY PERSONS

3) Once again, the recent Synod has underlined the need to share with the laity both the moments of mission and those of decision. The Congregation is following this path. What is your opinion about this.

ABUSES

4) In the past years, the topic of abuses on minors or vulnerable persons has entered also in some of our communities. Did you go through the Congregation's Guidelines produced in September 2020? Do you agree with the principle: zero tolerance for the sin, but understanding and mercy for the sinner?

FRATERNITY

5) The reports from Province and Delegation Superiors highlight often that it is hard to create friendship among the confreres in the communities, to help them bear uncomfortable situations, to forgive some wrongs received, to seek fraternity and cooperate to build it up. Individualism is apparently on the main stage. How do you think we can find some remedy for this situation?

VOCATIONS

6) In some countries there is total lack of vocations: there is no candidate along the stages of the formation process. What is your suggestion to create awareness and increase the effort to find followers, asking God the gift of vocations?

YOUNG CONFRERES

7) Our young confreres are often overburdened with duties and show signs of being tired and suffering. Some are looking for places of prominence, some are attracted by an over-use of social media. Where do you see their potentials, and how can we support them practically?

COMMUNITY PRAYER

8) Common prayer is often overlooked or forgotten in our communities. Is it really lack time, or is our community life obeying our laziness and lack of will to meet together in front of the Lord?

STUDY/IN-DEPTH STUDY

9) We often find confreres who only retain some notions about the Founder, the Congregation's history, the studies done in the past about Guanellian charism, spirituality, pedagogy. Why do you think there is lack of passion in going deeper into something that should touch us personally, as Guanellians? How can we revive the interest and the effort for a deeper knowledge?

MISSION AD EXTRA

10) How do you think we can face the theme of being available for mission outside one's province or delegation of origin? Why are we afraid to leave our homeland for a mission in Guanellian communities in other areas of the world?

GUANELLIAN FORMATION

11) Cosa si dovrebbe inserire nell'itinerario formativo per recuperare la dimensione guanelliana nella formazione? Gli studi teologici e di specializzazione assorbono quasi totalmente i nostri chierici. Come salvaguardare che ci sia anche uno sviluppo più puntuale e comprovato del carisma guanelliano? È opportuno prima di assumere impegni definitivi verificare anche questa assimilazione del carisma guanelliano?

ELDERLY BROTHERS

12) The theme of elderly or sick confreres grows year after year in the Congregation. What do you suggest for training that helps them acknowledge and accept that they are no longer active in the mission? And what should the Congregation put in place in the coming years specifically and urgently for them?

GUANELLIAN FAMILY

13) How do you see the family relationship between SdC-FSMP-GCoop? What do you suggest in this regard? What should be highlighted even better at Superior level? To promote? Require?

GEOGRAPHICAL REORGANIZATION

14) How do you personally evaluate the reorganization of the Congregation carried out by the General Council: Vice Province of Our Lady of Hope; Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe; Province of San Luigi Guanella; Stella Maris delegation; Luigi Guanella delegation?

PERSONAL PROPOSALS

15) What do you feel like suggesting to the XXI GC? What is most important to you as a brother of this Congregation and what do you want the chapter members to at least talk about and find, where possible, answers or concrete lines to address these issues?

v Respond to the General Secretary by the end of January 2024



News di Congregazione



Avvenimenti di Consacrazione

Alessandro Bassani dal 16 settembre 2023 è passato alla Comunità di Barza d'Ispra, per proseguire il suo iter formativo, accompagnato da don Domenico Scibetta, ed iniziare così il periodo di preparazione alla professione perpetua. Riceverà i ministeri del Lettorato a Barza D'Ispra il 19 dicembre 2023 e l'Accolitato a Roma il 6 gennaio 2024.

I Chierici **Brai Anthony Okhumagbe, Lokange Ilumbe Cedrick, Savarimuthu Melvinraj** e **Lourdhu Samy Arockia William** hanno emesso la loro Professione Perpetua il 23 ottobre nelle mani del Superiore generale, don Umberto Brugnoli, nel Seminario Bacciarini di Roma. Hanno ricevuto il Diaconato il 24 ottobre nella Chiesa San Giuseppe dell'Opera don Guanella in Via Aurelia Antica, Roma, per l'imposizione delle mani e la preghiera consacratrice del Vescovo salesiano, mons. Calogero La Piana.

I chierici **Gundala Chandra Sekhar, Michael Charles Xavier, Lordu Samy Edward Francis** e **Peter George Maria Paulraj** hanno fatto la Dichiarazione di Intenti e i chierici **Rajenthiran Arul Pondiyan, Gnanapragasam Arockia Samy, Malliya Doss Arokiya Jayaseelan** e **Mathiyas John Peter** hanno ricevuto il ministero dell'Accolitato il 24 ottobre nel Don Guanella Seminary in Chennai, India.

Nella Provincia Guadalupe sono stati ammessi due postulanti al noviziato: **Eric Soares Ferreira** e **Jefferson William Caetano**. Sono gli unici due novizi per l'anno 2024 e provengono entrambi dal nord-est del Brasile.

L'ordinazione presbiterale dei nostri quattro diaconi **Nguyen Luong Hoang John Baptist, Kibwamusitu Pumbulu Bruno, Giuse Pham Dinh Khiet Anh** e **Magdaong Christian**, avrà luogo l'8 dicembre 2023 presso la chiesa parrocchiale di San Isidro Labrador, Tandang Sora, Q.C., Filippine. La Messa di Ringraziamento sarà celebrata domenica 10 dicembre presso il "Guanella Centre" di Manila.

Il 15 dicembre ci sarà la Professione Perpetua e il 16 dicembre l'Ordinazione Diaconale dei confratelli **Evbuomwan Kelvin, Govina Roger, Iornumbe Stanislaus** e **Mbembe Jacques** in Ibadan, Nigeria.



Nella Casa del Padre

❖ Famiglia guanelliana e parenti defunti dei Confratelli

Il 7 ottobre, all'età di 94 anni, è deceduta **Sr. Giuliana Magnavacca** nella Casa S. Antonio di Trecenta (Rovigo), Italia.

Il 27 ottobre, nell'Ospedale di Paşcani (Romania), all'età di 74 anni, è deceduta **Maria Gherguţ**, cooperatrice guanelliana madre del nostro confratello chierico Andrei, studente di Filosofia a Iaşi.



Confratelli defunti

Pe. Adenir José Fumagalli è deceduto il 4 ottobre, a causa di un grave infarto, nella sua residenza a Manaus, Amazzonia, Brasile. Aveva appena festeggiato 72 anni il 1° ottobre 2023. La sua salma è stata trasferita a "Realeza", nello Stato del Paraná, ed è stata tumulata nel cimitero dove riposano il padre e la sorella defunti.



Altre News di Congregazione

- ✦ **Don Silvano Poletto** è rientrato in Italia e si trova nella RSA di Como-Casa Madre.
- ✦ **Don Peter Sebastian Maria Louis** sta facendo una esperienza pastorale in Italia nella Diocesi di Pinerolo (TO).
- ✦ **Don Charles Makanka** verrà in Italia e farà parte della comunità di Firenze-Parrocchia.
- ✦ La **Divine Providence Province** ha iniziato una fase di conoscenza per una possibile nostra missione nella diocesi di Jaffna in Sri Lanka, dove si parla Tamil.
- ✦ La **Vice Provincia Africana** ha inviato un confratello nella diocesi di Gallup, Nuovo Messico (USA), in esplorazione per un anno, per verificare la possibilità di una nostra presenza futura.
- ✦ L'Opera Don Guanella ha celebrato i 25 anni della Casa de 'La Divina Provvidenza' nella città di **Orán-Salta**, (Argentina) il 28 e 29 ottobre 2023.
- ✦ Il 9 ottobre è stata inaugurata la **Comunità Fratel Giovanni Vaccari**, la comunità dei diaconi che si preparano al sacerdozio. Essa si stacca dal Seminario Teologico di Roma ed appartiene alla Comunità San Giuseppe di Via Aurelia Antica, dove ha trovato gli spazi abitativi che permettono autonomia e servizio pastorale.
- ✦ Il 19 novembre il neo-cardinale **Emil Paul Tscherrig**, nunzio apostolico in Italia, ha preso possesso, come titolare, della Basilica San Giuseppe al Trionfale. Nella solenne celebrazione eucaristica, il Superiore generale, ha messo in rilievo il grande piacere di avere nuovamente un vescovo svizzero alla guida della basilica, dopo il primo parroco, Aurelio Bacciarini, anche lui vescovo svizzero.

Dal Consiglio generale

✦ XXI Capitolo generale a Barza d'Ispra (VA) dal 7 al 27 ottobre 2024

Il XXICG sarà aperto domenica 6 ottobre alle ore 16.00 a Como e si svolgerà a Barza dal 7 al 23 ottobre 2023. Si chiuderà il 24 ottobre col giuramento e professione di fede, sull'altare del Fondatore nel santuario Sacro Cuore in Como, da parte del nuovo Superiore e del suo vicario. Il tema del capitolo è "**Fedeli e creativi nel carisma, corresponsabili nella missione. Con Cristo cogliamo le sfide del nostro tempo!**". Entro giugno 2024 si dovranno svolgere i capitoli provinciali e della Vice Provincia, e le assemblee in vista del XXICG.

✦ **Gemellaggio con le case della Vice Provincia Africana.** Poiché alcune Case non ce la fanno a portare avanti la normale gestione dell'opera, il Superiore generale ha proposto un gemellaggio per venire loro incontro. Tale iniziativa consiste nel gemellare alcune Case europee e di altri continenti, con le Case dell'Africa più bisognose.

Date dei prossimi Consigli Generali per il 2024
(date orientative, passibili di cambiamenti)

- 9-10 gennaio Consiglio generale
- 13-14 febbraio Consiglio generale
- 12-13 marzo Consiglio generale
- 9-10 aprile Consiglio generale
- 14-15 maggio Consiglio generale
- 11-12 giugno Consiglio generale
- 16-17 luglio Consiglio generale
- 6-7 agosto Consiglio generale
- 3-4 settembre Consiglio generale

Merry Christmas to everyone and Peaceful 2024!



“Dismayed by the horrors of a war that is overwhelming peoples and nations, we seek shelter, O Jesus, as a supreme refuge in your very loving Heart. From You, the God of mercies, we implore with ceaseless moaning the end of the immense scourge. From You, peaceful King, we expect soon with fervent wishes the peace we long for. From your Divine Heart you spread charity over the world so that, removed any dissention, only love could reign among men ... Oh, may your Heart be moved also in this dim hour that brings us deadly hatred, horrible massacres ... Inspire the leaders and the peoples with suggestions of meekness; harmonise the disputes that tear nations apart. Make men turn back to share the kiss of peace, You that made us brethren at the cost of your blood ”

(Prayer of Pope Benedict 15th, included by don Guanella in his Letter to the SdC April 1915).

December 19th Intercontinental Mass

We want to remind of this beautiful and meaningful Guanellian tradition, of celebrating all at the same time all over the world, the thanksgiving Mass on the occasion of don Guanella's birth day the 19th of December. Below you will find the scheme of the time for the different countries. Dear confreres, even with some sacrifice, let this tradition not die off, because it unites us all, though physically afar, in praising God for don Guanella, and in renewing our personal attachment to the gift of the charism received by the Spirit.

INTENZIONI OF PRAYER:

- 1) For Pope Francis: that the Lord, who called him to be his representative among his holy people, sustain his health and apostolic action. Per il Papa Francesco. Let us pray
- 2) For Peace in the world: in this time of war, hatred, antagonism among peoples, we need more than ever the Peace brought by the Child of Bethlehem. May the leaders of the countries be touched by the Mystery of Christ's birth and be encouraged to actions of reconciliation and peace. Let us pray
- 3) For the Works of Don Guanella all over the world: the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence, the Servants of Charity, the Guanellian Cooperators. May our fidelity to the action of the Spirit urging us to holiness in charity produce respect, reconciliation, fraternal love in all the places where we live. Let us pray
- 4) For the Servants of Charity, preparing their 21st General Chapter. Through the Provincial Chapters and the Delegation Assemblies, may they be more and more aware of the relevance of their charism in today's world, and their accountability and perseverance as men consecrated to the Service of God and the Poor. Let us pray
- 5) For the Guanellian Lay persons who share with us Spirit and charism. May we build up together a large family, with mutual love and commitment to serve our beneficiaries uniting professional competence and consistency of faith and life. Let us pray.

Orario Messa Intercontinentale

- 8.00 U.S.A., Messico, Guatemala
- Ore 9.00 Colombia
- Ore 11.00 Argentina, Cile, Paraguay, Brasile
- Ore 14.00 Ghana
- Ore 15.00 Italia, Nigeria, Congo, Polonia, Svizzera, Spagna
- Ore 16.00 Romania, Nazareth
- Ore 17,00 Tanzania
- Ore 19.30 India
- Ore 21,00 Vietnam
- Ore 22.00 Filippine