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The Role of Women Religious in the New Evangelization Rev. Geno Sylva

The second week of the General Chapter, Monday, July 8, began with an energized presentation by Rev. Geno Sylva. Fr. Geno, from the Diocese of Paterson, established St. Paul Inside the Walls: The Catholic Center for Evangelization in the Paterson Diocese. Presently, he is an Official, Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization in Rome.

From his start, Fr. Sylva clarified that the New Evangelization is proposing the Person of Jesus Christ, and this can only come through good relationships that communicate, by way of words, our personal encounter with Christ. The New Evangelization will be efficacious if it offers fruits of hope, joy, and charity. The greatest poverty we experience, he noted, is the absence of joy. Joy is the certainty that we are loved by God to the point that He gave His life for us. The world needs joy, and religious have the opportunity to announce the joy of belonging to Christ. Religious can be defined as an icon of evangelization.

A religious is free when she doing God's Will. In doing God's Will we are guided by His love and become a greater sign for the world.

When the Cardinal and St. Lucy founded our schools, it was a call to evangelization. The greatest center for the New Evangelization is the school. It is about shaping lives and about building relationships. A Catholic School is worthless if it is minus a Catholic identity. We cannot be afraid to proclaim what we believe in, and what makes us authentic Catholics. It is the truth and our hunger for Christ in the Eucharist that set us free. Religious are missionaries of God's love to the world.

To Teach: Charism and Mission; vocation and work Most Rev. Lorenzo Chiarinelli

As Bishop of Viterbo for thirteen years, the Most Rev. Lorenzo Chiarinelli comes to the Chapter with a rich knowledge of the Institute. How privileged we were to have this charismatic prelate among us on Tuesday, July 9!

Bishop Chiarinelli developed his presentation in three areas:

- 1.) **Education according to our Charism as received from Cardinal Barbarigo and St. Lucy:** In order for us to better understand the validity of the work of St. Rose Venerini and St. Lucy Filippini, and to see how today's reality is different, we must keep in mind the social conditions of the time. Their environment was one of poverty and hardship, there was an absence of schools for the poor, particularly girls, and the role of women was insignificant. This is the setting that St. Rose and St. Lucy ministered. Their work was to make active the feminine dimension and to give the people a Catechesis. The immediate objective was to create awareness of the faith through an efficient education, to animate the Christian Community, and to raise their level of dignity.
2. **The school: What is this reality today?**
Our schools today move in a different direction; We move from the human to the Christian dimension. There is a plurality of reasons why children come to our schools as well as different expectations and different objectives. It is upon these realities that we impose our service, following the objectives of our charism.
- 3.) **The challenges of education today:**
 - a) **The "whatever" mentality:** Accepts whatever happens and what we choose is compatible to what we want. There is no stability.
 - b) **The "homogenization" mentality:** Everything is made equal and eliminates the dignity of the individual. There is a globalization of indifference. *(continued)*

c) The "adaptation of technology" mentality:

The ability to use these instruments becomes the criteria of education.

Experience of faith: Faith is an act of abandonment to God. Faith is light; it opens and enlarges our horizons; it is gift and discovery. To educate for the faith we must awaken in our disciples a love for the person of Jesus. We start with the heart of the person, cultivate the soil in which the "I" is located (conscience, values, criteria), stir up questions, and construct responses.

An inspiring text for reference is from the Gospel of Luke, the journey to Emmaus, which is a journey of faith. The journey has three steps: welcome, dialogue, sharing. After Jesus shared the bread, the disciples with burning hearts return to Jerusalem with hope and are ready to start again.

Reports from Provincials, Vice Provincial, and Regional Superiors

On Saturday, July 13, the entire morning was absorbed listening to reports from each major superior from every entity of the Institute. The reports covered many topics: statistics, programs of formation, vocation promotion, works with the laity and youth, and spiritual growth initiatives for the Sisters in their provinces, vice province, regions. They communicated the diverse ways they implemented the directives of General Chapter 2007.

Some Superiors reported special milestones celebrated in their provinces/vice province/regions, construction projects, and extraordinary events that colored these years.

The mission countries expressed deep gratitude for the assistance they receive from the Generalate and from the countries that extend themselves through financial contributions, prayer, and other expressions of concern and support. They never feel alone in their suffering, but sense the unity of the Community. Through their tear-filled eyes, the assembly felt their sincere appreciation.

The Superiors revealed, too, the challenges they experienced during this time period. It was heartwarming to note how they share the pain of their suffering sisters, and the sisters who have passed on during these years. They were also saddened, when they spoke of the poverty and anguish of those they serve, especially in our mission countries.

Each entity has some burden unique to its province, vice province, region. At the same time, there was never an absence of a lack of trust in God. At the end of their presentations, one sister exclaimed, "This has been a wonderful witness of faith and a conclusion of hope and love."

International Mission Office Report Sister Mary Beth Lloyd

Sr. Mary Beth began her session by reviewing the history of the International Mission Office from its inception of the 1994 General Chapter. Continuing, she explained how she implemented the lines of action promulgated at the last Chapter of 2007. Sr. Mary Beth detailed the many projects that have been completed these past years. These included opening houses of study and a women's center, building schools, a gymnasium, making repairs, helping with teacher salaries, dug wells, provided milk and food for thousands of children, and supplied books and teaching materials.

Sr. Mary Beth provided a list of donors who give regularly to her projects and who deserve our recognition. She also expressed appreciation to the provinces, schools, etc. who donate financially to sustain this good work and to those sisters who give mission appeals. The assembly enjoyed two short videos from each of our missions. The videos documented the good work Sr. Mary Beth has accomplished and her mission came alive through them.

In addition to Mother General's words of gratitude and praise for the work that Sr. Mary Beth accomplished these six years, the entire Assembly applauded her initiative and passion to assist our mission lands.

Chapter Working Paper

The Chapter completed the discussion of the working Paper "I Know Him in Whom I Have Believed" which consisted of four parts. The results of the discussions will become part of the Acts of the Chapter and will make up the lines of action for study on every level of the Institute.

During this week the Chapter also studied the proposals that were sent by the various provinces, vice province, and regions. Although the proposals were few in number, discussion will continue as we enter the new week.

Visit to Castel Gandolfo & Frascati

Sr. Virginia Iamele, Provincial of the Province of the Sacred Heart, planned an extraordinary tour for the Chapter members. Special permission was received to walk through the Vatican Gardens in Castel Gandolfo since the Holy Father is not residing there this summer. The beauty of the gardens was magnificent, and it has an interesting history. Although many photos were taken, it is very difficult to capture the beauty of this historical, papal site. The Institute is fortunate to have a convent attached to these grounds where our Sisters serve meals to the Swiss guards. After enjoying the gardens, we were recipients of the Sisters' hospitality.

From Castel Gandolfo, we visited our school in Frascati where a spectacular sports center was recently built. It is called the Centro Sportivo of Santa Lucia Filippini. In addition to a huge indoor swimming pool many other sport activities are part of the complex, which continues to expand. The Institute owns the Centre but it is supervised by a lay staff. The Sisters are exploring ways to also use this novel endeavor as a means of evangelization and as a way to reach out to families. After touring the complex, we were received very graciously by the Sisters who are missioned here and enjoyed a delicious meal with them.

Study of the Moral & Financial Reports

Sr. Malfadina Rocca reported in the name of her committee the review of Mother General's moral report. She thanked Mother General for a complete, distinguished, profound picture of the Institute, and for its clarity and honesty. She emphasized some issues that were included in the report that were urgent, and of serious concern. She questioned why we so easily forget the lines of action from our Chapters and suggested we find new ways to make them more operative.

After studying the financial report, Sr. Nicoletta DiRocco on behalf of the financial committee, presented their review. She commended the General Administration and Sr. Teresa Tassoni, General Treasurer, for their wise, attentive management of the Institute's funds. After some minor observations, Sr. Nicoletta noted that good stewardship allows us to answer the needs of the Institute when diverse emergencies arise.

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*The Chapter is prayerfully preparing for the
Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.
We ask that you join us in our prayer.
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, pray for us!*



