We are approaching the feast day (dies natalis) of the Good Father. To speak of the Good Father invariably implies speaking also of the Good Mother. Their destiny was united in service of the Congregation that they founded and accompanied. This is a time to revive in us - SSCC brothers, sisters and lay - the spiritual dynamics that guided their life. At a time when we are looking to renew our ways of being and serving in the Church, our being open and willing to engage these spiritual dynamics could prove to be an encouraging and challenging resource for us.

The Secret

In her Memoirs of the Congregation, Gabriel de la Barre recorded the history of our religious family up to 1823. Here is the portrait she offers of the Congregation:

"In general, a remark that can and always could be made of the Congregation is that the means available were constantly below the ends proposed. Thus there were acquisitions to be made and no money for purchases, many children and young people to instruct and
very few teachers. Among the Sisters, it was the same. Illnesses added to the difficulties, yet perpetual adoration was never interrupted. God wished to do all; God did all. The members of the Congregation who are still alive and who have been involved or witnesses to all of this, will have great difficulty in saying how they were able to do what they did. God guards his secret. (Gabriel de la Barre, Mémoire de Sœur Gabriel de la Barre, Notes sur la Congrégation des Sacrés Cœurs, Premier Cahier (18 octobre 1823) in Écrits (1802-1829), p. 91)

Gabriel de la Barre draws our attention first to the reality of a disproportion that existed between means and ends that would form part of our SSCC apostolic style: having very high objectives or goals with little means available. In spite of this precariousness of means, resources and persons, there was no lowering of the objectives or goals. This was not seen as an obstacle to carrying out the most diverse activities: free classes for poor children, formation of seminarians, availability for parish missions in France or the missions in the Sandwich Islands or in the United States or the ensuring of perpetual adoration, etc. Thanks to Gabriel de la Barre we see how it was above all God who carried out his work through the precarious conditions of the Congregation. It is this observation of fact, read in faith, that became a spiritual resource and a theological conviction that inspired and encouraged the Founders: The Congregation is first and foremost the work of God. This conviction enabled them to look with confident realism at the difficulties they encountered on the way and at the institutional precariousness that accompanied them. The more difficulties they encountered, the more they placed their lives and their projects in God's hands. It is God who makes the commitments and projects fruitful.

Thus the Good Mother's exhortation to ensure that there were free classes for the poor children in the houses of the Congregation, because she saw this as a form of blessing of the houses. The Good Father spoke of the strength of the Good Mother in spite of her health problems, and her capacity to animate and organise the life of the communities in spite of the lack of means, as a kind of constant miracle.

I would like to propose some elements to help us delve into this secret source of pastoral audacity and generosity that marked the Founders’ lives of service - a source from which they drank and which today they offer us to drink.

**The love of the Cross and trust in God's Providence**

In the Good Mother we see her participation in the Cross of Christ as a spiritual constant. This spiritual desire is the fruit of her contemplation of the Cross as a sign of the total gift of love for all. In her letters she places great emphasis on entering into the wounds of Christ. It is there that we are invited to drink from the wellsprings of his own self-giving; by approaching the furnace that is the wounded Heart of Jesus we are encouraged to renew the lukewarmness of our spiritual ardor or zeal. The Good Mother neither understood nor lived her love in any way other than what she learned at the foot of the cross of Jesus. For her, Eucharistic adoration was a memorial of this self-giving, and it was there that she shared in the sufferings of her sisters and brothers, asking the Lord himself to give her the strength to bear all. The immensity of Jesus’ love on the Cross is so great that the Good Mother goes so far as to say that it is not she who carries the Cross, but rather it is carried by Love. At the foot of the Cross the Good Mother finds the providential love of God the Father who does not abandon his Son, Jesus or those who, like him, carry their crosses every day:

"We are all in a critical state. We must then pray more fervently than ever and abandon ourselves to Providence. Only the love of the cross can and must sustain us, for we must not disguise the fact that we will have to suffer much. We must take refuge in the Heart of Jesus, cling to it so as never to leave it" (Hilarion Lucas, Vie de la T. R. Mère Henriette Aymer de la Chevalerie, 1847. Tome II, La Bonne Mère. Son Esprit, Polycopie Picpus p. 65).
The Good Father’s way of participating in the sentiments of Jesus that led him to give himself up on the Cross was mediated by what he saw in the Church: Christian communities without pastors, the ecclesial institutions in charge of education had been dismantled, the ecclesial fabric was torn apart by internal divisions and by external persecution. When echoes of this social and ecclesial landscape reached him, his shepherd’s heart was moved. He came to believe that he was the last living priest in France. The pain that he felt at the situation of the Church made him come out of his hiding place. He experienced with mobilising certainty that the purpose of the priesthood he had received was to give his life like Jesus, helped also by his own trust in the providential love of God the Father, who does not abandon his children. "For I became a priest with the intention of suffering everything, of sacrificing myself for the Good Lord and, if necessary, to die in his service. However, I always had a certain feeling that I would be saved".

To take part in the sufferings of the Church is simply to love as the Lord Jesus loved - giving his life for his own. This conviction had been with him since his formation as a seminarian: "It is not enough to suffer with Jesus Christ (like the evildoer who was crucified at his side); we must suffer for Jesus Christ, we must suffer like Jesus Christ". (Sermon on the beatitude of those who suffer, 1790). As Founder he constantly invited his brothers and sisters to live this love according to the Heart of Jesus, that is, a love that consisted in associating themselves with the Cross of Jesus, all the time helping to carry the cross of one another. This is what the Good Father wrote to Father Philibert Vidon on 29 January, 1823:

"I assure you, my good friend, that if I could bundle your sorrows together with all the sorrows on the cross that has fallen to me, I would gladly join them – but I beg you to help me carry it. For I count on you as much as on myself to help me unto death". (LEBP 815)

Moreover, the certainty about the providential love of God that the Good Father felt when he left the granary became, with the passing of the years, a key to a theological reading of the history of the Congregation which had been marked by vicissitudes and conflicts. At the time, that same certainty became one of his greatest spiritual assets. This is what the Good Father communicated to his brothers and sisters when he announced the approval of the Congregation by the Holy See:

"The Lord has not ceased to bestow on us the miracles of his Providential care. He has led us by the hand. Each day we have known the proof of his all-powerful protection. We have been preserved during the Reign of Terror. (Circular Letter of the Good Father announcing the approval of the Congregation, April 14, 1817).

**Called to love**

Another spiritual element that our Founders lived and which they promoted among the members of the Congregation is the vocation to love. Those who consecrate themselves to the love of the Sacred Hearts no longer live for themselves, they live so that the crucified love of Jesus and the tender love of Mary may become flesh in them. Once again we find the disproportion between this end and the precariousness of the means. The founders stressed again and again that the brothers and sisters should not be discouraged by tenacious personal limitations, nor by tensions in the communities, not even by the lack of means or by obstacles that may appear along the way. None of this can prevent the love of Jesus and Mary from being shared and offered, even at the risk of this love not being accepted and reciprocated. It is the logic of the Cross that leads to love in this way, without fear and with generosity.

"Immerse yourself forever in the painful and loving wound of the Divine Heart of Jesus, and you will be sheltered from all storms," wrote the Good Mother. Love more and you will fear less" (Letter to Sister Agnès Crouzet 1804-1805, LEBM 215).
For his part, the Good Father, faced with adversity or personal disappointment, encouraged the community to be rooted in God, as the only source of love and happiness. Thus he wrote to the sisters and brothers of Le Mans:

"Tell everyone; tell even my brother and his friends. I feel it in myself. Everything is nothing, except loving God. So let us live for him alone, and die to please him. This is true happiness" (Letter of the Good Father to the Sisters of Le Mans, July 8, 1828, LEBP 1386).

**The shared secret**

The source for clarity when looking at the present and when thinking about the pastoral audacity of the Founders is to see in everything the providential hand of God: in the institutional precariousness, in the calls of the Church, in personal desolation and in the demands of a new obedience.

Our Founders nourished their strong, generous and selfless way of loving by contemplating the self-giving of Jesus on the Cross and adoring Him in the Eucharist.

What impact might there be on our apostolic discernment if we saw God’s providential love as the key to reading our history and considering our personal and institutional resources?

Would it not be good for us to ask ourselves about the quality of our fraternal life - are we loving our brothers and sisters more concretely every day? Are we helping each other to carry our crosses?

Let us dare to drink from the secret source from which our Founders drank.

Fraternally,

Alberto Toutin sscc
Superior General
During the Angelus in Rome on 5th February, 2020, Pope Francis has appointed our brother Sergio Hernán Pérez de Arce Arraigada sscc as bishop. Since September 2018 Sergio has been serving as apostolic administrator to the diocesan church of San Bartolomé de Chillán in Chile. Sergio will be ordained bishop on 28th March, 2020, at 11 am, at the Cathedral Church of San Bartolomé de Chillán (Chile). We unite with our brother in prayer, praying for him and for his Diocese.

Meeting on Pastoral Care of Adults (Iberia)

Last Saturday, 8 February, a meeting took place in the Parish of the Sacred Hearts in Madrid. It was organized by the Parish Commission for Adult Pastoral Care. As well as the priests of the parish, one or two lay people from the different parishes participated. A questionnaire had been sent earlier to the various parishes to reflect and share on their parish realities.

After the meeting was opened and following a brief moment of prayer, Aurelio Cayón, provincial, welcomed and encouraged the work being carried out. The morning was dedicated to presentations of each parish and it concluded with a time of adoration prepared by the Parish of San Víctor (Madrid). After a meal three groups met to ask how the parish commission could help in the pastoral care of adults and what are the challenges. This was fed back into the larger group for some fine tuning the sharing. The meeting ended with a final group photo.

The conclusions can be summed up in the need to create a plan for SSCC parishes that features a profile of the lay adult in our communities, a plan that proposes, out of the charism of Sacred Hearts and the centrality of the Eucharist, the missionary work that is necessary today and a plan that collates provincial initiatives at spiritual and formative level, that generates networking and helps to cover the needs of different types of people that we encounter in the parishes.
The annual meeting of superiors of the communities of Sacred Hearts sisters and brothers of the Iberian Peninsula took place between 14-15 February. Present alongside the local superiors were the Zone Delegate, Territorial Coordinator and the Provincial. This meeting has a long tradition lasting more than twenty years and it is a good moment for formation in the service of authority and reflection in regards to the animation of the life and mission of the communities. It is also an opportunity to care for and deepen the relationship between sisters and brothers.

The meeting was prepared by the Coordinators of Ongoing Formation Consuelo del Saz and Raúl Valverde and Pablo Gonzalo, a Passionist religious, ensured that the dynamics and reflections were undertaken with depth and good humour. The theme proposed for the meeting was the animation and accompaniment of the elder brothers and sisters in the communities, though the rapporteur, whilst not forgetting the older members, presented the theme on a more general level, which could be summed up like this: how can we accompany each other in our changing communities as we journey together in living out our charism.

Both the talks of the speaker and the times for group sharing were positively valued.

After evaluating the meeting, dates were set and some topics proposed for the next meeting, as it does seems that those taking part were keen to have more of the same.

More photo in this link: https://bit.ly/2V1CYNr
Little by little progress is being made regarding the international community project in Berlin. Last January the brothers who form part of the community and who are already in Germany visited Berlin. They are getting to know something about the city. At the same time they had a good meal and a good conversation with our brother, Manfred Köllig sccc, vicar general of Berlin. They also met representatives from different Diocesan departments in Berlin. Again they were presented with different possibilities for a pastoral presence for the community in Berlin. They visited two possible houses where the community could live and were invited to a great dinner. It is expected that housing will be available by the end of July 2020, so that brothers can arrive and settle into their new home during the first two weeks of August. The official start for the new community will hopefully be immediately after 15 August. On 15 August, the German province celebrates 100 years since its foundation.

Patrisius Breket Mudaj y Dionisius Caritas Ribu Watun from Indonesia are making significant progress in learning the language and have integrated very well into the local Werne community. Crispin Badinga from the Province of Africa finally received his visa and he will join the group on March 17.

Brothers and sisters in Kinshasa had their quarterly assembly, gathered under the theme "transparent management of goods". This theme was led by a Jesuit priest. He taught us that as sons and daughters of our religious Congregation, we are called to overcome all the temptations that lead to mismanagement of goods in order to use the Congregation’s goods for its mission: the proclamation of the Gospel.
To get out of the disease of mismanagement, there needs to be in place a system of control, formation of members, the putting in of competent people, a spirit of belonging and love for the Congregation. If each community tries to put these elements into practice, religious life can avoid its "economic death".

**Meeting of young SSCC in Initial Formation (Iberia)**

From Friday, 21 February to Sunday, 23 February, 2020, the young people in Initial Formation - coming from Spain, France, Africa, Indonesia, Vietnam, India and French Polynesia - met in El Escorial to share together a time of reflection on the theme of the Word of God. As Pope Francis has dedicated the Third Sunday of each year (Ordinary Time) as the Feast of the Word of God, the young people made the Word of God the theme for their meeting.

To help go deeper into this theme, the organisers Juan de Dios and Santiago González (representing the Zebedeans) and Tomás Esquerdo (representing the Unbeliever) prepared many workshops.

The first workshop was facilitated by Carmen Yebra, a biblical theologian and a professor at the Pontifical University of Salamanca. She offered a different way to approach the Word of God. After this, some more workshops with a biblical character took place as well as a period of night adoration that was carried out in two shifts.

The final workshop involved presentations through drama or games of the images we have of God. When all was done, thanks was expressed for everything in the Sunday Eucharist for all that had taken place during the weekend. In a special way, thoughts and prayers were offered for Beatriz Garcia who had to leave on account of special circumstance. Thoughts too went to Alberto Gaitán who is in the Chilean province at this moment in time and so was unable to be present at that meeting. Finally, a huge thank you to the Iberian Province which welcomed the formandees to the house of El Escorial. And many thanks also to the organizing committee: the Zebedeans and the Unbeliever.

On January 18th, four members of our Community met in Fairhaven, Massachusetts to report on steps taken to revive the work of the Enthronement Office. The members were: Fr. David Reid, Fr. Columban Crotty, Sr. Claire Bouchard, and Fr. Herman Gomes.

The goal was to report on what has taken place at the National Enthronement Center, in Fairhaven, and what the group hopes to achieve. As a community, we believe strongly in this work, especially as it pertains to ministry among families. There is an on-going effort to articulate the relevance of this ministry and present it as a valid response to the call of the Chapters, both General and Provincial. The work needs to continue!

With heartfelt endorsement, the Council has appointed: Fr. David Reid sscc, National Director of the Enthronement; Fr. Columban Crotty sscc, Assistant Director; Sr. Claire Bouchard sscc, Administrative Assistant. We give thanks for all that they continue to do.

In October 2018, a number of houses of several families in the Mission of Ludru (Parish of St. Damien) in the Region of India were destroyed by Cyclone Titili. The Region of India then made an appeal for contributions to help with the reconstruction of the houses in order to rehabilitate families. In response to that request, there have been generous contributions from various Provinces and Secular Branches in Ireland, England and Hawaii.

The brothers have prepared a detailed report of what they were able to do. In addition, the Region gives thanks for the fraternal solidarity shown for the mission of the Congregation in India and for your generous contributions to rebuilding the homes and lives of people in our rural missionary parish in Ludru. The houses have already been handed over to the families affected. The Superior General on his visit last June to India, blessed some of them and had a meeting with the families who benefited.
From 10 - 21 February the canonical visit to the area of Colombia took place. **Alberto Toutín** and **Fernando Cordero** met the brothers of the communities of Bruno Benati, where they visited the Parish of San Damián de Molokai, with a celebration of the Eucharist and a meeting with the laity of the parish community.

On 12 February, they visited the Damián de Molokai community and toured the parishes of San Antonio de Padua and San Vicente de Paúl.

On 13 February, it was the turn of the Juan Teck community, which ended with a celebration of the Eucharist and food with the SSCC sisters from Bogotá. After this they travelled to Medellin to be with **Winfrido Vercraeye** and greet the other residents who live in the “Corporación Hombres Hermanos” (“Brothers Men Corporation”) and celebrate Mass with them.

Alberto and Fernando’s meeting with the SSCC community of Guaynabo (Puerto Rico) took place between 17-20 February. They were able to talk with all of the brothers: Víctor Hugo Mira, Mateo Mateo, Luis Enrique León and Luis Alejandro Mora.

On 18 February, the Eucharist and a meeting with the two pastoral councils took place in the Parishes of the Sacred Hearts and Immaculate Heart of Mary. They also visited ‘Santa Teresa de Jesús Jomet and Ibars’ residence where Mateo ordinarily lives.

On 19 February, the archbishop of San Juan de Puerto Rico, **Roberto Octavio González Nieves** OFM, invited the community and visitors to a meal at his residence. The archbishop thanked the SSCC brothers for their involvement and participation in the activities of the Archdiocese and noted “how they make friends with everyone”. The stay in Puerto Rico culminated in a meeting with the brothers of the community.

On Friday, 21 February, the canonical visit to the area of Colombia ended. The day began with an encounter with students and teachers at the San Damián de Molokai
School. The students prepared a light-hearted play about the life of the Good Mother. Following this there was a meeting with members of Father Damián Foundation, which currently manages 10 kindergartens. Then came the assembly with the brothers in the area.

At the assembly Alberto invited the brothers to review how the peace process in the country (an elusive good) is impacting upon their lives. Alberto went on to offer tips on how to care for the “inner life” and how the brothers can help each other in this area. He also asked that a provincial discernment take place to recognize the mission. Is there a possibility of exploring, for example, a missionary presence in the Amazon? Alberto also stressed the need to practice teamwork. The brothers had a chance to react to all this and showed interest in the process of discernment-exploration. The visit to the Areas of Colombia - Puerto Rico ended with a prayer and a meal at which the SSCC religious, teachers at the School and members of the ‘Padre Damián’ Foundation were present. Alberto and Fernando thanked the brothers and especially Elí Perdomo, animator of the area, for organizing the visit.

More photos in this link: https://bit.ly/2OQG6Yz

♦ Visit the area of Ecuador

Del The canonical visit to the brothers in Quito took place from 22 - 25 February. Alberto Toutin and Fernando Cordero celebrated the Eucharist and had a meeting with the laity in the Vicariate of San Damián de Atucucho and the Parish of the Sacred Hearts.

On Sunday 23rd February they celebrated the Eucharist in the community of the sisters of San José de Rumpamba. This was followed by a festive meal attended by the sisters from the different communities in Quito as well as some SSCC brothers. Alberto and Fernando met and spoke with each brother and then met with them as a community.

On Monday, 24 February, David de la Torre sssc, auxiliary bishop of Quito, blessed the new chapel of the community, presided over the Eucharist and joined the brothers for a meal during which he shared his experience of his first months of being a bishop. The visitors were also able to visit the Parish-Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Swan, its chapels and met with the laity. Their next stop will be a visit to La Concordia.
The visit to the SSCC community of La Concordia took place from 26-28 February 2020. Alberto and Fernando met with each brother separately and then joined them for a community meeting. They also distributed ashes in rural chapels ("enclosures") and in the Parish of the Sacred Hearts. They visited the community of SSCC sisters of La Concordia, who work together with our brothers in the parish, and the community of SSCC sisters of La Unión. As well as this they had the opportunity to attend the graduation of high school students of the SSCC. Educational Unit. They went to see the grounds of what will be new facilities for this educational centre. Finally they got to see the Dean of San Juan Bautista and met with the pastoral workers of the Parish.

From 29 February to 3 March, the canonical visit to the community of Guayaquil has taken place, involving a personal meeting with the each brother, a community gathering and participation in the Eucharist in the parishes of Jesus the Liberator and the Sacred Hearts. There was also time to meet our SSCC sisters from Guayaquil (the community of Colegio Corazón de María and the Colegio de los Sagrados Corazones). Accompanied by all the SSCC brothers, Fernando and Alberto then went on to greet the SSCC sisters in Salinas. After this, the canonical visit to the Andina Province moves into its last stage in the area of Peru, from 4 - 15 March. After this, Alberto and Fernando will return to Rome. The two visitors are very grateful to the brothers, sisters and communities for their excellent reception and fraternity in Colombia, Puerto Rico and Ecuador.

More photos in this link: https://bit.ly/2VnQqvc
Derek Laverty and Margarita Orozco, representing the two General Governments, travelled to India for the month of February with two objectives. For Derek the purpose was to be with CAP for their Ministry Seminar, Formators’ Meeting and finally CAP Assembly and Executive. Margarita was able to participate in the Ministry Seminar and later be with the sisters for their assembly in Bhubaneswar. The two visitors arrived at Bhubaneswar airport on Monday 3rd February. They were welcomed by Ajith Kumar and Vandana Narayan.

Opening day of Asian Ministry Seminar

Brothers and sisters (33 in all) from India, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, French Polynesia and the USA came together for the first day of the Asian Ministry Seminar 2020 held for the first time in India in St. Vincent’s Retreat Centre, Gopalpur, Odisha. The Seminar opened with a reflection on ‘Namaste’ - “the God in me greets the God in you”. So we begin the Seminar on holy ground. The focus of the Seminar was on family ministry.

Fr. Prasad Pinto, an Indian Capuchin, was the main resource person for the seminar. He spoke of the changes and challenges in religious life and the centrality of the ‘ABBA’ experience in the life of Jesus. Mission today is essentially witnessing to your own experience of God and from there becoming open to discovering the divine mystery in all life. Fr. Pinto went on to speak about the various challenges of religious life in India today. He put forward thought-provoking questions like: “Is religious life relevant today? Is there a crisis in religious life in the Church?” Are you a happy religious and so on?

Sujata Jena sccc a final professed sister of the congregation (Indian) had an opportunity to share with the participants the fruits of her learnings on mission, collaboration-networking, project management- fundraising that she received from studies, various national- international, workshops and her own engagement in mission and social development work. Sujata emphasized that mission is to get out oneself and reaching out to others crossing the boundaries of culture, language, philosophy, belief etc. with love, compassion and recognition. Finally, the Assembly together agreed to continue to foster family ministry in Asia, seeing it as one of the mission priorities. At the same time thought will be given before the next CAP seminar to other
pastoral areas in Asia that need to be looked at. The Assembly unanimously agreed to meet once in three years for similar training programs in the future.

Ludru

The last full day for brothers and sisters together concluded with a visit to the rural parish of St Damien, in Ludru, Odissa. SSCC took on responsibility for this parish in 2018. There we celebrated a colourful and joyful Sunday Eucharist with the local community. Mass was followed by our breaking into groups to visit some of the more rural communities in the parish. This was followed by lunch. On the way back we called into a Diocesan Marian Shrine where people were gathering in anticipation of the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. Mission theory became mission reality.

◆ Initial Formators’ Meeting (CAP)

14 formators from the Asian/Pacific Conference (CAP) took part in an Initial Formation meeting that lasted from Wednesday, 12th - Saturday, 15th February, 2020. The meeting took place the same venue as the Ministry Seminar. Five brothers are from India and seven are from Indonesia. The Philippines and French Polynesia are each represented by one brother.

The meeting began with a presentation of the reality of each place as well as the challenges they are facing. Included among the challenges is the decline in interest in vocations among young people. It was also noted by some of the brothers that finding personnel for formation can be difficult. Later on there will be time for some reflection on other areas of Initial Formation such as the Fourth Stage, the formation of formators and the place of Initial Formation in Ongoing Formation.

For the meeting the formators were blessed to have two keynote speakers: Felipe Lazcano sscc gave us a full day presentation on Religious Life today noting how it is composed of members representing various cultural moments in its history: traditional (pre VAT II), redefined (VAT II onwards) and post-modern. In places up to 4 generations can be found in various communities, each with their own distinct view of the world and church. Formation has to take this inter-generational reality into account. The importance of having and developing a relationship with Jesus becomes obvious in these times.

Fr. Joshy Xavier, SJ was the second speaker. He is a specialist in the world of IT and social media. He was clear that the advances in technology are a gift from God serving communication - which is essential for the kingdom of God. That said it is also
clear that the same gift can be misused and abused. The challenge for formators is to find ways to highlight the good uses of the internet for evangelising and doing good and alerting the formandees to the perils and consequences of improper use. The formators had a chance to reflect on the two excellent inputs relating it to their experience of formation in their respective Provinces.

The last day of the Formators meeting involved coming up with some draft proposals for the CAP Executive meeting that begins this coming Monday. The evaluation was overall very positive. Three possible themes emerged for the next meeting (2023): (i) psycho-spiritual- sexual integration in IF; (ii) Asian Spirituality enriching charism of the Congregation and (iii) the art of personal accompaniment. The day and place for the next meeting has yet to be decided.

◆ Assembly of the Sisters in India

After the Asian Brothers-Sisters Ministry Seminar held from February 5-10 in Gopalpur, the Sisters in India held their Assembly in Bhubaneswar from February 12-15. This was facilitated by Romeka Situmorang, Coordinator of Asia. Irene Barboza, Superior Delegate of the Zone and Margarita Orozco, from the General Government, also participated.

The main objectives were to reflect together on fraternal life in community and to evaluate the Apostolic Plan. The basic document for this reflection, read previously, was "Fraternal Life in Community", from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CIVCSVA). Each day began with the Eucharist presided over by our SSCC Brothers, some of whom were participating in the CAP or Formators’ Meeting.

The Assembly ended with commitments for the communities and sentiments of gratitude for the life shared during these days.
♦ CAP Finance Commission

The meeting of the CAP Finance Commission took place in DSDI (Damien Social Development Institute) Bhubaneswar, Odisha from 15-16 February 2020. The commission looked into the financial reports of each Province-Region and studied possible financial risks, strengths, capabilities and possibilities for the fruitful mission in CAP.

♦ CAP assembly and CAP Executive

Some of the areas discussed in the Assembly and in the CAP Exec were: Integration of (i) Fourth Stage of IF and (ii) Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Social Media into CAP Initial Formation Plan; the present reality of IF in the Japan-Philippines Province; that the next Ministry Seminar would reflect on new pastoral concerns in Asia; that changes are needed in CAP Statutes to take account of French Polynesia as a Region and the new sisters’s configuration that is called PAZ (Pacific Asia Zone). The next meeting of the CAP Executive will take place from 18-20 May (inclusive) 2021 in Tomobe, Japan.

Congratulations and thanks to Bonie Payong and Ajith Kumar Anthony Dass on their election and acceptance to be Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator respectively.

The prevailing spirit among the brothers and sisters for the Seminar, the Formators’ Course, the CAP Assembly and CAP Exec Committee was very positive throughout. The hospitality shown to us by SSCC brothers and sisters in India could not have been better.
On Friday 21 February, in the parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City, José Rodrigo Alcántara Serrano was ordained priest by Mons. Jesús Antonio Lerma Nolasco, titular Bishop of the Diocese of Iztapalapa. The Eucharistic celebration began at 1 pm with the presence of brothers, sisters, family and invited lay people from the cities of Puebla and Guadalajara.

During the Eucharist a recap was made of the Initial Formation process and Rodrigo’s service in Mexico, Chile, Brazil, Germany and the United States.

Rodrigo thanked God for the gift of his vocation and the Congregation and his family for the unconditional support they gave him throughout his discernment process. A particularly moving moment was when Rodrigo addressed a few words to his father, who died two years ago: “thank you dad because from the Father’s House you continue to accompany and advise me, blessing my sisters and my mother.” Without a doubt, his father would have been the first to be proud and happy to see his consecrated in the service of the People of God as he himself was.

After the celebration a party was held during which the parish dance group performed some dances. Rodrigo presided at his first Mass on Saturday 22 February in his native parish “Nuestra Señora del Refugio” in the city of Puebla. After the Eucharist there, the people of this parish, who still remember the Congregation with love, put on a reception for the SSCC brothers and sisters, Rodrigo and his family.

More photos in this link: https://bit.ly/3c5xGxa
INTERVIEW WITH PABLO BERNAL RUBIO sscc, Iberian Province

“As a gift from the Friend, religious vows are not some kind of objective, and still less a burden or annoyance”

On 18 April, our brother Pablo Bernal Rubio will make his perpetual profession in the Parish of San Víctor in Madrid, together with Bea García Comyn sscc. We asked him to share what such a definitive consecration means to him.

"In whose service I want to live and die." Can you comment on this statement?

I have to start by saying that this part of our profession formula was a late discovery for me. When I made my first profession it was chastity, poverty and obedience that caught my attention. A first awakening to its meaning occurred to me in Chile, in my fourth year of temporary vows. By praying with the consecration formula in a retreat for initial formation, I found myself imagining myself at the end of my days: a life spent, lived in service of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. I imagined having lived a whole life like that of Pablo Fontaine or Armando Lanzani, with whom I shared community that year. “Blessed are the old” - Esteban Gumucio would say - who are able to witness to the joy of having given a lifetime following the Friend. I am not exaggerating when I say that this was the first time that I considered perpetual profession as a real possibility for the life ahead of me.

Today I see something else in the words that we use to consecrate ourselves: the certainty that the service is not something merited but a very great grace. The "I want" does not only express my resolve; it expresses, above all, a very deep desire. After having experienced how sad it is to live only for self-fulfilment, to protect one’s image, to satisfy my own or others expectations... enclosed within these words of consecration is a request: “Deliver me from whatever binds me, let me enter into the service that is proper to God’s children”. Such liberation is certainly a death: to myself, to the security of duties fulfilled, to my illusions of omnipotence ... But it is also a death that gives life, like that of the grain of wheat.
If you were to present the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience to the young people you work with in the SSCC San José College and in the SSCC Parish in Seville, what stories or other means would you use to help them understand the significance of the vows?

This is not a simple question! The truth is that I myself am searching for a narrative that helps me to live my life as chaste, poor and obedient. At this time I would choose three narratives to try and present our vows to the young people of Seville with whom I work.

In the first place I would use the narrative of creativity as an update of the classical idea of the "imitation of Christ," which I believe these days is not that accessible. To speak of imitation implies the loss of our legitimate human autonomy. Furthermore, imitation seems to be more focused on the external and visible aspects of Jesus’ life; thus depending on what aspects we choose, religious life can be, in comparison, somewhat disjointed. That is why I prefer to speak of the vows as a means of recreating - at every moment in history - certain aspects of the Lord’s life, in order to try to live them. It’s about doing something beautiful with our life, making it a work of art, one that evokes the Lord Jesus.

Second, I would try to replace the identity narrative with that of gift. In regards to identity I have often found myself quite confused: “in what way am I different if I live the vows?”, “how does it show that I am a religious …?” All this is to focus on self. As a gift from the Friend, religious vows are not a purpose, let alone a burden or annoyance.

The Pope repeats this in Christus Vivit: the Lord gives what he knows will make us happy. The logic of gift, unlike that of identity, is that it takes us out of ourselves: St. Paul taught us that no charism is an end in itself; A charism is for the construction of the community (religious, ecclesial or even the whole human family).

Finally, I would engage the image of fluidity as a way to understand how the vows make visible the transcendent dimension of religious consecration. “Perhaps I am wrong,” says N. Martínez-Gayol aci, “but more and more I perceive that what we are called to be today [in religious life] is a ‘formless life form’ which means neither deform nor ‘a-form’” (Root and wind, Sal Terrae 2015). I like this understanding as it appropriates one of the key elements of postmodernity, and takes advantage of its possibilities by filling it with meaning. The eschatological tension of the vows makes us, in effect, live without a fixed form and at the same time with consistency. Such a narrative also speaks of our lives as directed to mission: to live expecting everything from God helps us to relativise human structures - even those that we give ourselves: achievements and failures, effective leadership and failures. We live without a fixed form in a fluid world, for we expect nothing less than God himself.

What aspects of our SSCC religious life would you emphasise?

I don’t know how to respond globally to this question. From the perspective of the European Church and my Province, I think I would stress the quality of our communication and the spirit of discernment in our lives.
The issue of communication is, I think, one of the signs of our times: there exists today the paradox that the greatest connection possibilities happen to coincide with the ever greater fragmentation and simplification of messages. Here we have a challenge, to communicate richly and with nuance, seeking to build communion (which, being a gift, is always a task). And it is not just an inward looking task; it is also outward looking. It is true that our world is a difficult interlocutor, all the time coming back at us, but perhaps it is no more difficult than those Greeks who mocked the foolishness of the cross or the Jews who were scandalized at the notion of a crucified Messiah.

As for the issue of discernment, I would not want this to sound like some pious consideration or something fashionable. What I do mean is that we give emphasis in our religious life to our openness to listening to the will of God in the realities in which we are immersed. I think this is a central aspect of what we called “renewal of our inner self” at the last General Chapter. I am not referring (only) to a decision-making procedure. I am referring to a “willingness” to be open to renouncing our own partial point of view; to be prepared to retrace our steps and convert, as a way to advancing along the way and preparing to rejoice with the Lord and rest in him.

Name some biblical texts that you consider significant for today's religious life.

A first text that I feel is significant at this time is Ecc. 3:1-15. It is the quote that begins: “There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens. A time to be born, and a time to die….” It ends by affirming that God “restores what would otherwise be displaced.” This text, in my experience is helpful - it soothes any feelings of anxiety in the face of the many tasks that lie ahead. The Holy God is not only the Lord of all the earth, but also the Lord of history; Time is his. The apostolic religious life deals with what is urgent by keeping faith in the “one thing that is needed” (cf. Lk 10, 38-42). And it seems to me that this is only possible if we believe that God reaches out to what is urgent - even if it escapes us. Believing in this Word, we imitate Jesus, whose time was in God: so much so that he went to the extreme of dying on the cross, even though there were other urgencies around him.

I also think it can do us good to hear from the Master: "Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid" (Mt 14:27). It is true that the wind blows against us, and that fatigue and fear can paralyze us. But the trust we place in the Heart of Jesus never falls on deaf ears, as we learn from our founders. Faith is, in hard times, a choice that can be made and a grace to be requested.

Finally, at this time when it hurts us that some brothers leave the Congregation, two texts in the Gospel of John are significant to me. Listen to how Jesus answers the question: "Lord, and what about him?" By way of reply Jesus says “What concern is it of yours? You follow me”. (Jn 2:22) Our "and what about him?" sounds like a judgement and may even contain a certain hint of envy; The Lord responds by inviting us to convert to him. It is then time to remember with grateful memory the whole truth that is revealed in the words: "Lord, and to whom would we go? Only you have words of Life" (Jn 6:68).
Can you give us three keywords that guide and validate your life.

At this time, those three words could be "horizon," "destiny," and "reality."

The word "horizon" evokes in me the experience of this time of growing in hope. If I look to the future, there are not only clearings: I also see clouds, and some of them foreshadow storms. However, the horizon does not disappear. Without avoiding the clouds, ‘horizon’ reminds me that God is ahead waiting for me and that is why “it is time to move on” (Saint Teresa of Jesus [Avila]).

When I choose “destiny” I mean above all “shared destiny.” In these years, I have discovered in you, my SSCC brothers and sisters, encouragement for the path and company that makes my heart happy. Therefore, joining my fate - my destiny - to the Life and Mission of this religious family is like putting a seal on the bond of love and respect that already exists.

And finally, “reality.” Maybe the word I need most. I have become aware that the ‘where’ and ‘when’ of God are the here and now. I may fantasise and dream of achieving high goals; I can use beautiful words and present colorful reflections ... but without reality, everything is empty. Let’s go on living in truth!
AGENDA OF THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT

♦ 8 February - 15 March	 Canonical visit to the Andina Province
Albelito Toutin and Fernando Cordero

♦ 17 - 20 March	 Sessions of the General Government	 Rome

♦ 23 - 26 March	 Meeting of the two General Governments
of Brothers and Sisters	 Torricella in Sabina (Italy)

♦ 27 March	 Dies Natalis of the Good Father

♦ 28 March	 Episcopal ordination of Sergio Pérez de Arce
Albelito Toutin	 Chile

♦ 30 March - 3 April	 IV Provincial Chapter of Iberia
Albelito Toutin	 Spain

CHRONICA CONGREGATIONIS

† Deceased

More on our deceased brothers can be found on our web page: www.sscpicpus.com

Clarence Guerreiro sscc, 76 years, professed on 22 August 1964 in Wareham, MA (USA) and died on 4 February 2020 in Honolulu, Hawaii (USA).

Gérard de Villers sscc, 84 years, professed on 8 September 1955 in Châteaudun (France) and died on 14 February 2020 in Sainte-Anne d’Auray (France).

Percival Cowley Vargas sscc, 86 years, professed on 25 December 1954 in Los Perales (Chile) and died on 21 February 2020 in Santiago (Chile).
Pasquale Vito Laghezza sscc, 86 years, professed on 15 August 1955 in Fairhaven (USA) and died on 27 February 2020 in New York (USA).

Andy Wafer sscc, 80 years, professed on 22 August 1964 in Cootehill (Ireland) and died on 1 March 2020 in Dublin (Ireland).

PERPETUAL PROFESSION

18 April          Pablo Bernal Rubio                  Iberia

EPISCOPAL ORDINATION

28 March          Sergio Pérez de Arce                 Chile

LEAVINGS

Mahendra Kumar Singh 23 January 2020  (India) Dispensation from Perpetual Vows

JUBILEES

Profession

27 March          David Israel de La Torre Altamirano    Andina Silver (25)
27 March          Salomón Sarango Valladares              Andina (25)
30 March          Heinrich (Heinz) Klapsing                Germany 60
17 April          Fernando Vives Fernández               Chile 60
17 April          Gonzalo Duarte García de Cortázar       Chile 60

Ordination

12 March          Doroteo (Osvaldo) Aparicio Jiménez      Iberia 60
25 March          Emeterio (Ramiro) Huarte Gorria          Iberia 70
2 April           Juan Navarro Cantó                      Iberia 60
2 April           Amado Pérez Martínez                    Iberia 60
2 April           Alejandro Bayón Rodríguez                Iberia 60
2 April           José Javier Flamarique Liberal           Iberia 60
New POSTS in the Blog

http://ssccpicpus.blogspot.it/

- "I feel quite small compared to the mission that needs to be undertaken", Sergio Pérez de Arce sscc, appointed bishop of Chillán (Chile)

- "Asia Ministry Seminar", Sujata Jena sscc (Philippines)

- "Pensando en educadores Sagrados Corazones en este tiempo", Matías Valenzuela sscc (Argentina) *(available in Spanish)*