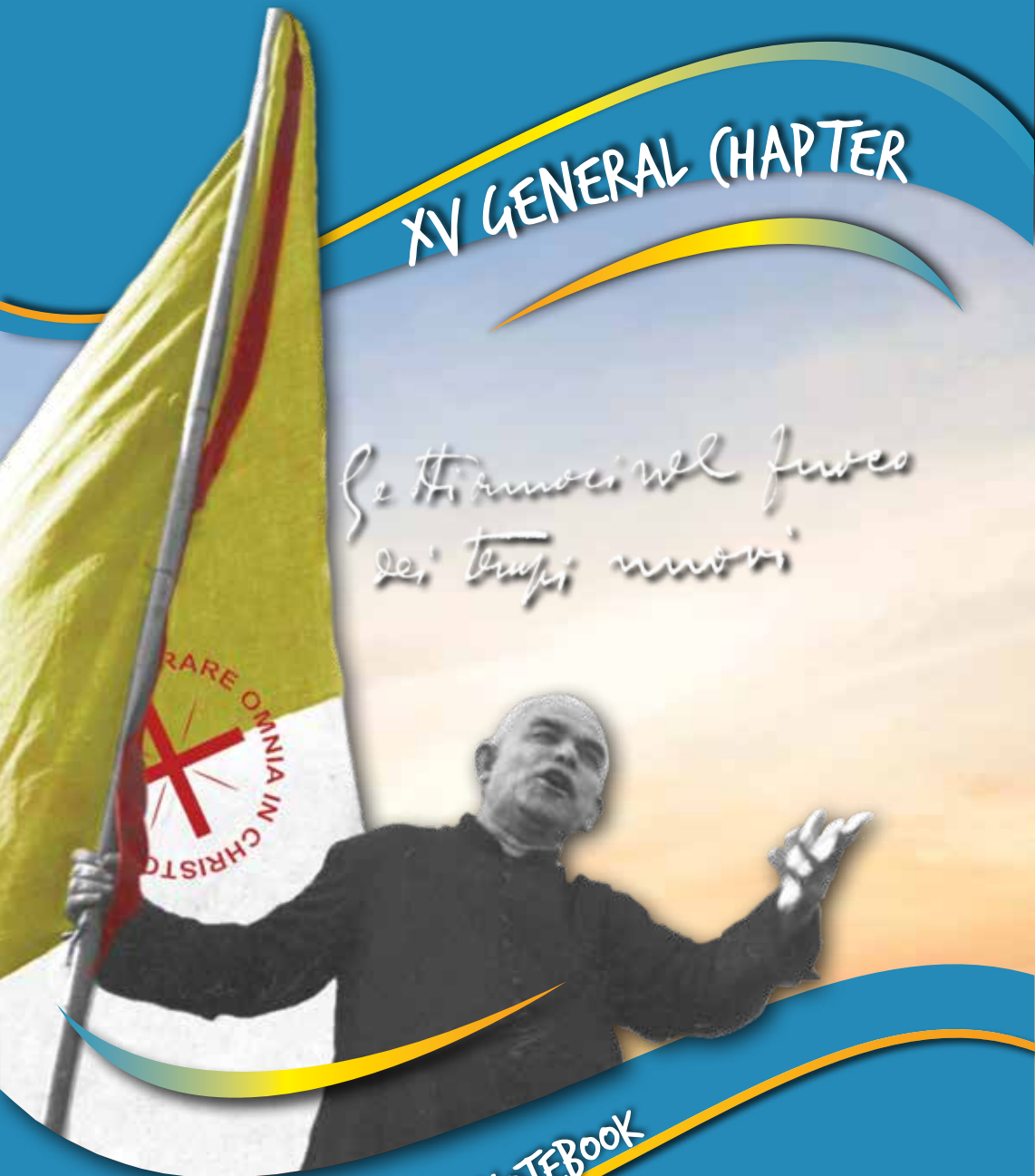


XV GENERAL CHAPTER

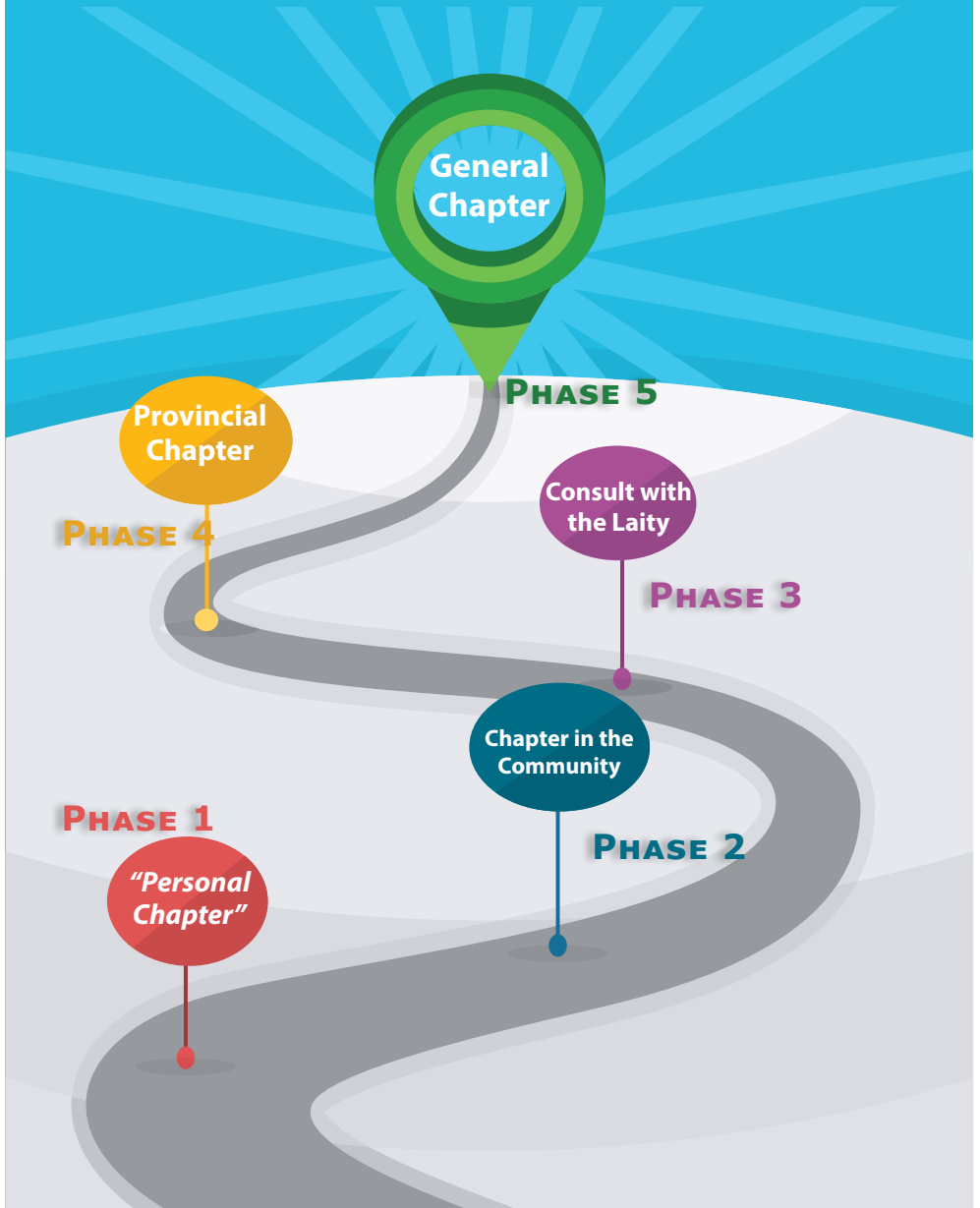
*Sei tu nuovo nel fuoco
dei tempi nuovi*

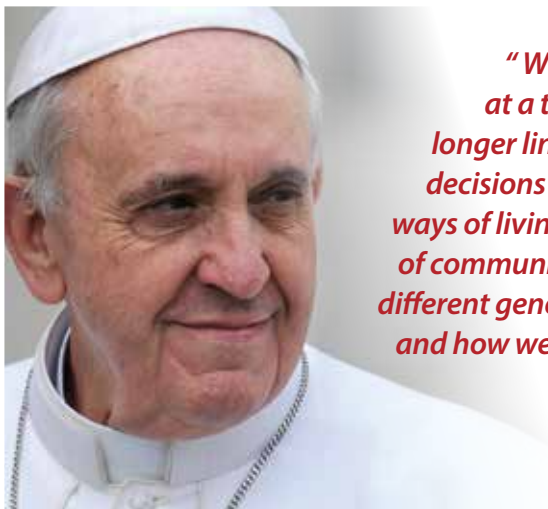


PERSONAL NOTEBOOK

To evangelize the world
through the prophecy of Charity,
new in style, forms and frontiers

All AT THE CHAPTER...





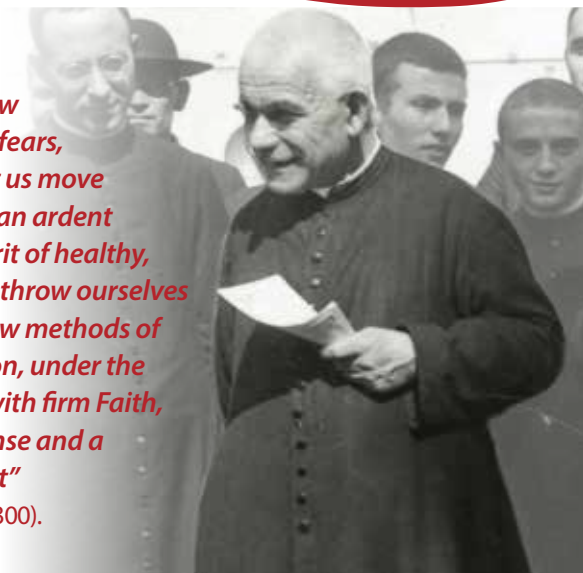
“ We find ourselves living at a time when change is no longer linear, but epochal. It entails decisions that rapidly transform our ways of living, of relating to one another, of communicating and thinking, of how different generations relate to one another and how we understand and experience faith and science”.

(Pope Francis,
21/12/2019)



“ Are these new times? Away with fears, let us not hesitate: let us move to overcome them by an ardent and intense apostolic spirit of healthy, intelligent modernity. Let us throw ourselves into the new forms and new methods of religious and social action, under the guidance of the Bishops, with firm Faith, but with common sense and a generous spirit”

(Scritti, 79,300).



...FOR THE GOOD OF THE CONGREGATION

“PERSONAL CHAPTER”

1

The “first seat” of the Chapter is the heart of every religious! We dedicate a considerable amount of time to Personal Reflection with the help of the Personal Notebook. In agreement with the planning of my community, what time do I have available?

From _____ **to** _____ **2021**

CHAPTER IN THE COMMUNITY

2

Each community reflects on the theme starting from the contribution that each religious has noted in the personal notebook. The date of the realization of the Chapter in my community is:

Date: _____ **2021**

PROVINCIAL CHAPTER

3

Each Province assumes the contributions of the communities, evaluates them, authoritatively elaborates the contribution of the Province to the General Chapter. My Province will hold the Chapter on the following date:

Date: _____ **2021**

GENERAL CHAPTER

4

The General Chapter has tasks and dynamics already established in the Constitutions and Norms and ordered in a proper Statute. The General Chapter will be held:

From 31 May to 18 June 2022

«Let's throw ourselves into the fire of the new times»

*To evangelize the world
through the Prophecy of Charity,
new in style, forms and frontiers*

The 15th General Chapter is approaching and as it happens every six years, the time has come to commit ourselves in a particular way to prayer and reflection so that the Congregation can discern what Divine Providence wants from us in this historical juncture. The itinerary that we embarked on last May 31 with the official convocation of the Chapter is a synodal itinerary in all its aspects, so that the Chapter may be, for our Religious Family, as the Constitutions say, the “*main sign of unity, in diversity*” and the “*privileged moment of his community life*” (cf. *Const.* art. 138).

What I am presenting to you here is the Personal Work Notebook. It is a useful tool to facilitate your reflection and to write down ideas that you can then use for discernment during the Community Chapter.

Speaking of the General Chapter, our Constitutions invite us to make a work of reviewing the progress made in this period, and of planning and relaunching for the next six years. The 15th General Chapter must help us to open the horizon of expectations, to set high goals. This does not mean that they will be impossible or unattainable, but goals that will encourage us to take risks to help build a world according to God's heart. Sometimes one gets the impression that the fear of facing what is new is blocking the Congregation, limiting our creativity and, in this way, reducing the strength of the legacy left to us by Don Orione. We are called to “more”, to love more, to serve more; not a “more” which is obstinate, but the fruit of a movement of generous love in search of God's will. “*We only try to love our Lord more, and more and more, and to unite ourselves more and more in charity and in love for our dear Congregation*” (Scritti 4,187).

Don Orione was a priest who, with clarity and great trust in God, knew how to expand real possibilities and go further, believing in the dream of Restoring all things in Christ. We carry this humble audacity in our DNA and we cannot lose it, as Pope Francis reminds us: *“I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities”* (EG 33).

The personal contribution to the journey of the Congregation

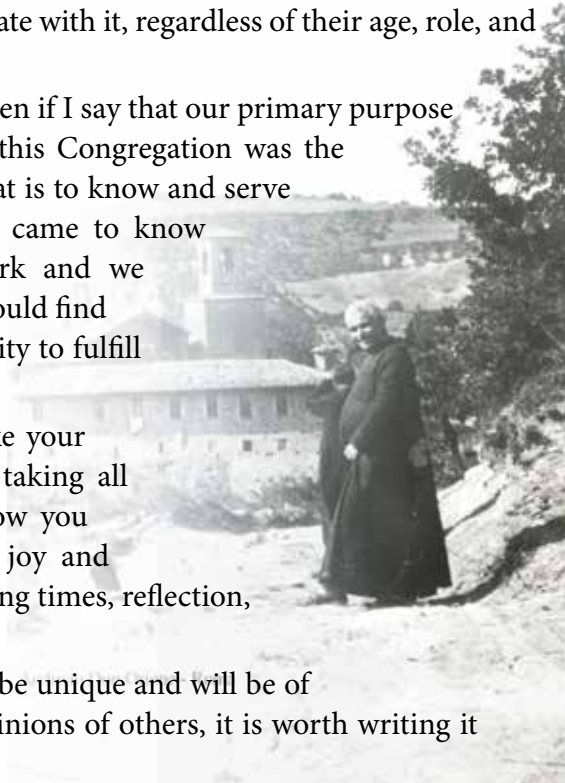
The General Chapter that we will celebrate in June 2022 in Montebello, is the privileged moment for this reflection, but it is only the final moment of the verification/planning process. The real chapter starts today and the place where it happens is in your heart.

Here the future of the Congregation is at stake and it is important that all its members cooperate with it, regardless of their age, role, and origin.

I think I am not mistaken if I say that our primary purpose in choosing to be part of this Congregation was the desire to become saints, that is to know and serve God more and more. We came to know Don Orione and his Work and we understood that here we would find the ideal style and spirituality to fulfill our purpose.

So I invite you to make your personal work fruitful by taking all the decisions that will allow you to live this moment with joy and responsibility: prayer, reading times, reflection, etc.

Your contribution will be unique and will be of great value. Beyond the opinions of others, it is worth writing it and also proposing it.



The General Chapter will be fruitful if the preparation process has been well cared for at all its levels, especially at the personal and community level.

How to work on such an important task?

The General Council has chosen a theme dear to Don Orione, a sure way in which to carry out this journey: *“Let us throw ourselves into the fire of the new times”*.

Why this theme?

- **Because it is orionine.** Not only these are the words of Don Orione, but they are a clear reminder of his paradigmatic attitude, always striving to take action on behalf of the Church and the poor, despite the complexity of the times and situations he had to face. He said: *“Let us make the sign of the cross and throw ourselves trustfully into the fire of the new times for the good of the people: the cause of the people is the cause of the Church and of Christ himself ... We do not wait for the war to end: Caritas Christi urget nos.”* (Scritti 75,242).
- **Because it is urgent:** The word that is perhaps most striking in this title is “new”. Novelty can stimulate, but it can also produce fear. Pope Francis says: *“if we allow doubts and fears to dampen our courage, instead of being creative we will remain comfortable and make no progress whatsoever. In this case we will not take an active part in historical processes, but become mere onlookers as the Church [Congregation] gradually stagnates.”* (cf. EG 129).
- **Because it is in accord with the Pope: the Pope himself told us:** *“With Don Orione, I too urge you not to remain closed in your surroundings, but to go outside.”* (27/05/2016).
- **Because it is synodal:** It is an invitation, not a prescription! It is an appeal, to be accepted with all freedom. It is not a military order! It is an exhortation, almost a prayer! To be fulfilled as plural and not as singles; in fact, Don Orione does not simply invite us to “throw the selves”, but to “throw ourselves”, setting up our movement according to the dynamism of the community and the congregation.

- **Because it is practical:** It is a simple, engaging, intuitive and very powerful sentence, which immediately communicates the strength of the “verb”, of the action, putting us in a perspective of movement. It puts us in harmony not only with the thought of the Founder, that of the “*Outside the sacristy*” and the “*It is urgent to leave!*”, But also with the insistent thought of Pope Francis who urges us to “*go out*”, to be a “*Congregation in Exit*”.
- **Because it is in continuity with the previous Chapters:** The 13th GC had assumed the “*Only charity will save the world*” as “a dynamism of conversion for a spiritual, community and apostolic renewal”. The 14th GC focused on the person of the religious “*Servant of Christ and the poor*”. To us it seemed only right to propose an itinerary of reflection whose central dynamic could put the Congregation in an apostolic attitude of “going out”. Continuity also exists with the previous Chapters: we want to “*Be Don Orione, today*” (10GC), “*Religious and Laity on mission*” (11GC), “*in creative fidelity*” (12GC). This is not only because the themes are similar, but above all because its content combines the reflection on our identity and on the new times we live in, with the choice of a courageous apostolate.
- **Because it offers us the opportunity to “make all things new”,** with the newness of the Spirit and therefore it is a practical implementation of the Orionine desire to “*Restore all things in Christ*”.

In dialogue with the Holy Spirit

Pope Francis, with his words and attitudes, has insistently asked the Church to follow a synodal path. The Chapter is our “Synod” and it can be defined in this way: “*Walking together under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit*”. The main actor of the Chapter is the Holy Spirit.

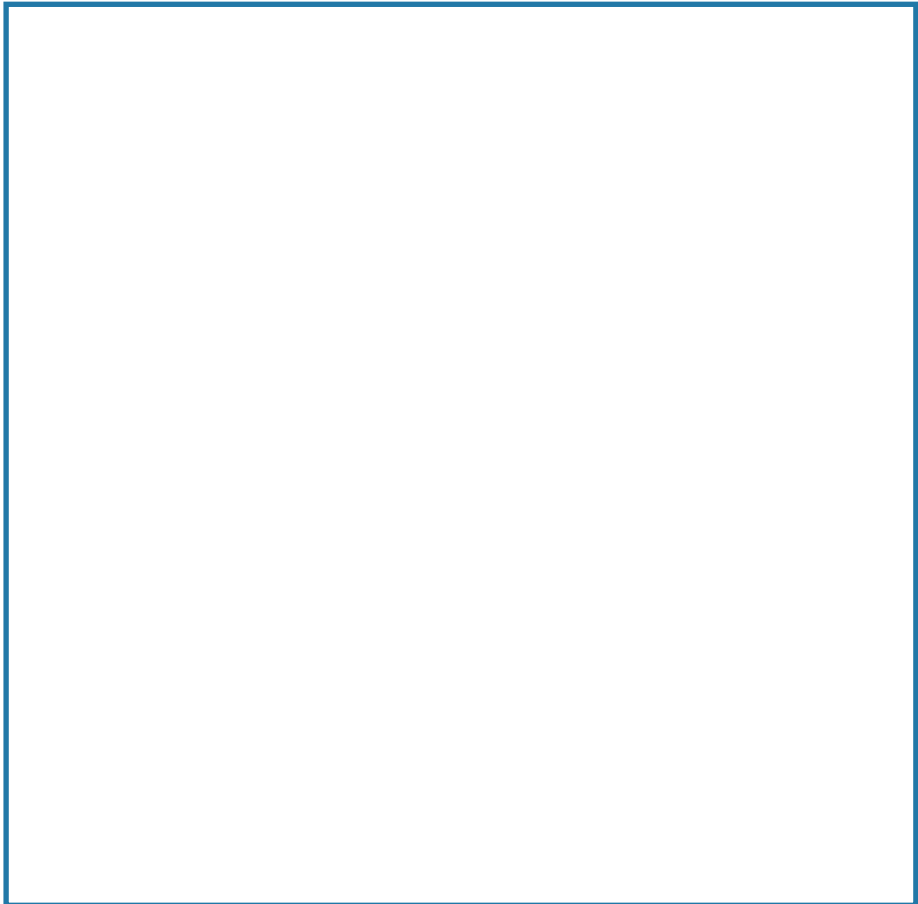
This is why it is important that your reflection is carried out in an atmosphere of prayer and adoration, invoking the presence of the Holy Spirit. In addition to starting each personal and community moment of reflection with a time



of prayer, perhaps even of adoration, I now invite you to pause a moment for a dialogue with the Holy Spirit. In the silence of your heart, invoke his presence and reflect:

- **Contemplating the reality that surrounds you, what is the Holy Spirit asking of the Congregation?**
- **Towards what prophetic goals should the next General Chapter lead us?**

In the space below you have the opportunity to take note of some insights, thoughts, key ideas that the questions provoke. These can be used to examine the thematic units proposed below, but also to inspire other themes that you will have the opportunity to suggest at the end.



On the way

Your reflection continues. I believe it is the most important moment of the journey, because it gives space for the Holy Spirit to enlighten you on your position in front of the world in which he has called you to live and work.

He will certainly send you many stimuli that will have value on various levels. Some will be more personal and will be useful for you to work on yourself. Others, on the other hand, will concern the reality in which your community operates and therefore will be a topic that you can share at the moment of the chapter in the community. Still others, having a more general relevance, will have to be discussed at the level of the Provincial and perhaps General Chapter. It will be important that these too are formulated in the right way to become material for discernment in the next level of reflection: you propose to the community; the community prepares the material to be sent to the Provincial Chapter; the Provincial Chapter prepares the material to be sent to the General Chapter.

Methodology of reflection

Later you will be presented with three units in which you can enter your reflections, using the empty boxes placed under each of them. For each thematic unit and for the other themes you will add, do a triple work characterized by the three verbs: Discover, Dream, Propose.

In this way you should arrive at the community chapter (next phase) prepared and the risk of transforming the meeting into formalities will be avoided, where the obvious things would be highlighted and some more hidden, but perhaps more essential things to our path could go unnoticed.

In the community chapter you will all be called to share your reflections, to discern together which ones are useful only for you and which, on the other hand, should be reworked in a more organic way to be sent to the Provincial Chapter.

Here is a clearer explanation of how to proceed in the three phases of work for each theme. They are meant for both personal and community work.



First stage: *Discover*

It is the «Descriptive» moment which does not use, however, a purely sociological or human vision, but which is done through the eyes of God's Providence. The analysis you will do, therefore, does not have the purpose of an inventory, but to open your mind and heart to what is still missing for God to reign in our realities and show you how you can contribute to the realization of His Kingdom. Reality is seen both in its strengths and resources and in its weaknesses and difficulties (lights and shadows).

To facilitate reflection and dialogue, some questions may be useful that are not intended to be exclusive, but serve as a provocation to start with:

- What are the “new times” that we face?
- What are the new obstacles because of which each of us or our community/province finds difficult to actualize, today, the charism of Don Orione?
- What are the beautiful things that we already have and can serve you as a basis for the «leap» into the «new times»?
- Looking, in particular at the last General Chapter and at the proposals it made, what steps have been taken in which direction we must continue?

Second stage: *Dream*

The previous discernment inspired you to desire new goals. The Holy Spirit who acts in us pushes you up to overcome your human limitations and to launch yourself into divine horizons. Now, you need to identify the landmarks to continue the itinerary. You have the Word of God, the example and words of the Founder and of many heroic confreres, the teachings of the Church and of the Magisterium of Pope Francis. These make you dream.



However, there would be the danger that the dream remains something abstract and theoretical. So, you have to transform it into a concrete story, and to do this, you can use some episodes from the Bible and from the life of Don Orione. It is the “Narrative” moment.

In short:

- What dreams does God call you to participate in?
- Don Orione, what would he have dreamed of?
- What dream do you want to fulfill to embrace new styles, forms and the frontiers of the prophecy of charity?

Third stage: *Propose*

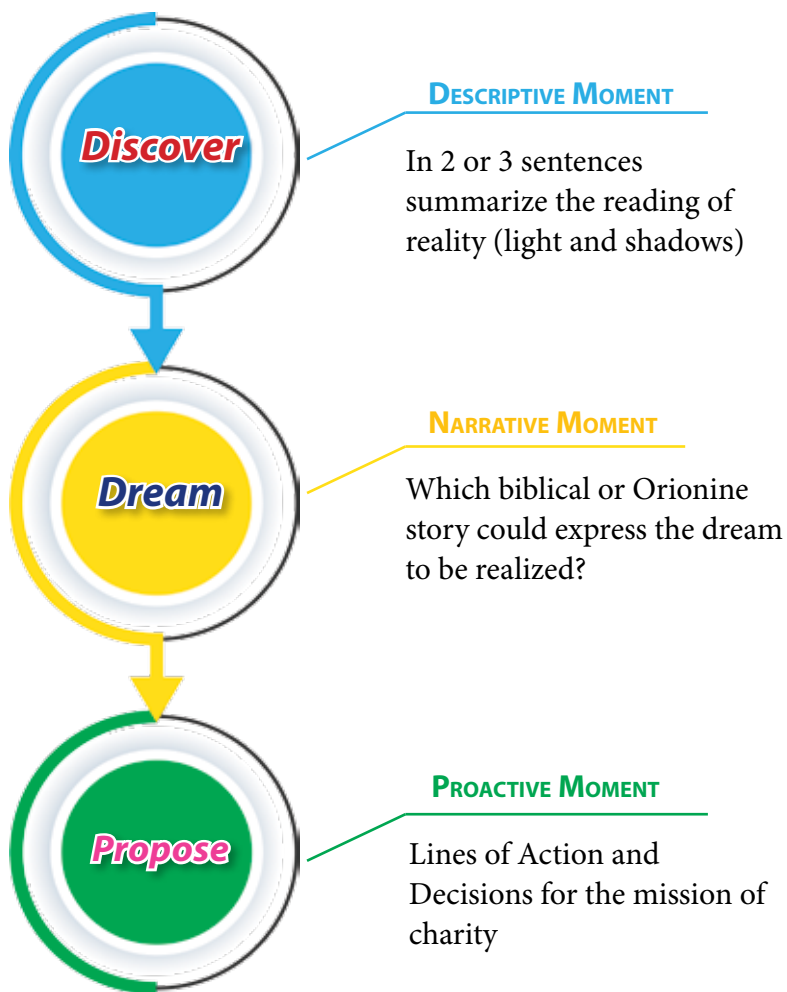
After the analysis of reality (Discover) has provoked us to dream, it is time to propose concrete lines of action for the mission of charity. It is the “Proactive” moment.



One of the purposes of the Chapter is to plan our life and our apostolate for the next six years. For our conclusions to have a future, it will not be enough to “do better”, but it will be necessary to “make new” what the tradition of Consecrated Life and the Charism has given us as a gift and a renewable energy. This is, to envisage a “new” model of life and apostolate, expressed by religious disciples / witnesses who want to embody a new form of fraternity, in the new frontiers of the prophecy of charity.

Here, at each level, we are called to formulate proposals to be presented to the next (the religious to the Community; the Community to the Provincial Chapter and this to the General), and concrete decisions that can already be implemented in our community / province. As for the proposals, they must be concrete, possible and verifiable decisions or lines of action.

In summary: for each of the thematic unit and, then, also for the other particular themes, the following method is used:



Very important: With regard to the working methodology, both in personal and community work, to elaborate the contributions to be sent to the Provincial Chapter, make sure that:

- a) The contents of the three stages are **numbered, essential, complete, no more than three, listed by priority;**
- b) are sequential, that is to say, at each point of discovery, a dream corresponds and leads to a proposal.

THE THEMATIC UNITS OF THEES 15TH GENERAL CHAPTER

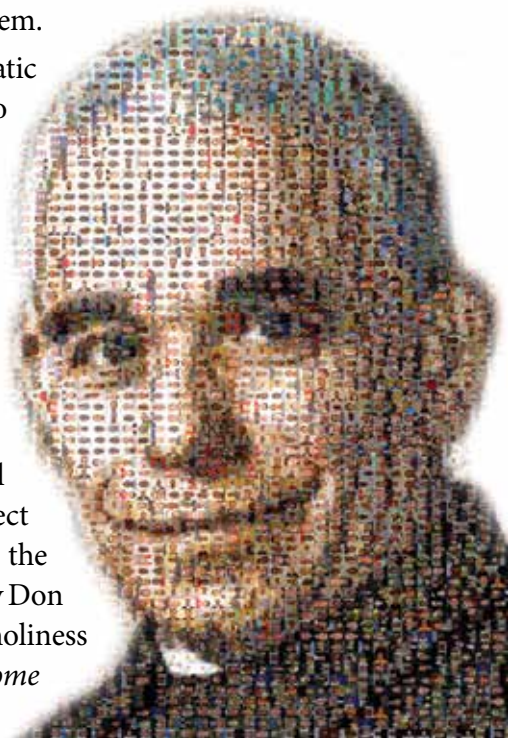
The theme of the Chapter, “Let us throw ourselves into the fire of the new times”, finds its practical implementation in three vital areas that correspond to the following questions:

- *Who?* - Identity; to become Disciples.
- *How?* - Communion; to become Witnesses.
- *For who?* - Mission; to become Prophets.

In them you will be able to organize the reflections and the material to continue the discernment. Of course, these three units are not exclusive. There will undoubtedly be some important issues to discuss that do not embody well within one of the units, or that, due to the importance or relevance they have in your opinion, deserve to be treated separately. There is then a more open area called “Other important themes” in which you can insert them.

In the presentation of the thematic units below, we have chosen not to provide a questionnaire with closed questions to answer. A series of questions would have made the job easier, but less engaging and perhaps less fruitful. We preferred to launch provocations so that you can reflect and feel freer in the contribution to make.

The perspective that will accompany us and that will connect the whole thematic journey of the Chapter is the one indicated to us by Don Orione himself: the search for holiness (“*We must be saints*”, “*we must become saints*”).



«Let's throw ourselves into the fire of the new times»

*To evangelize the world
through the Prophecy of Charity,
new in style, forms and frontiers.*

1°

Identity

I need holy sons! (1914)

To become disciples

2°

Communion

*Holiness in fraternal and
sweet charity! (1922)*

To become witnesses

3°

Mission

*Saints of the people
and of social wellbeing!
(1939)*

To become prophets

1st thematic unit: Identity

I need holy sons! (1914)

To become disciples

On March 3, 1914, thinking of future missionaries, Don Orione launches this heartfelt appeal: “Yes, we will be able to do great good; but I need holy sons!” (Scritti 2.76).

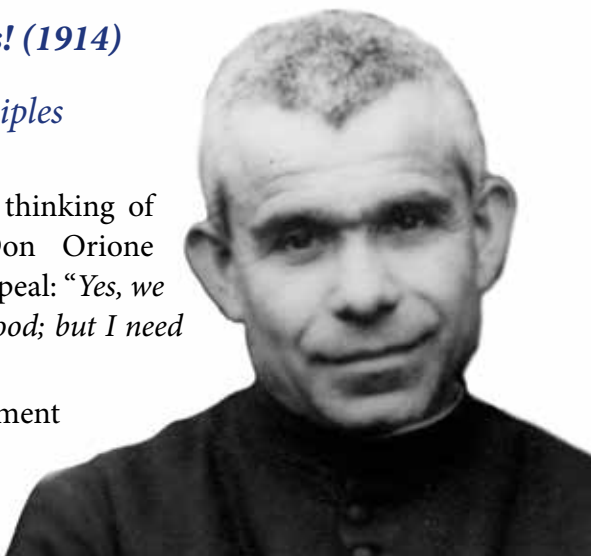
Wanting to implement this desire of the Founder, we face the theme of our identity as religious called to

“throw ourselves into the fire of the new times”. This reflection allows us to further deepen what was said by the previous Chapter on the identity of the Religious and on his humanity.

It is true that God acts even in our frailty and uses our weakness to show the world the strength of his love for it. It is also true, however, that he calls us to a constant effort to conform to the person of Christ and his teaching by following the example of Don Orione and the encouragement of the saints and the Pope.

In this first unit we are invited to look at the lofty ideal proposed to us, that of holiness that must permeate all moments of our life. Don Orione showed us a great spirituality, a constant search for the will of God, an unshakable trust in Divine Providence. This questions us about the relationship between our being men of God and being administrators of our works.

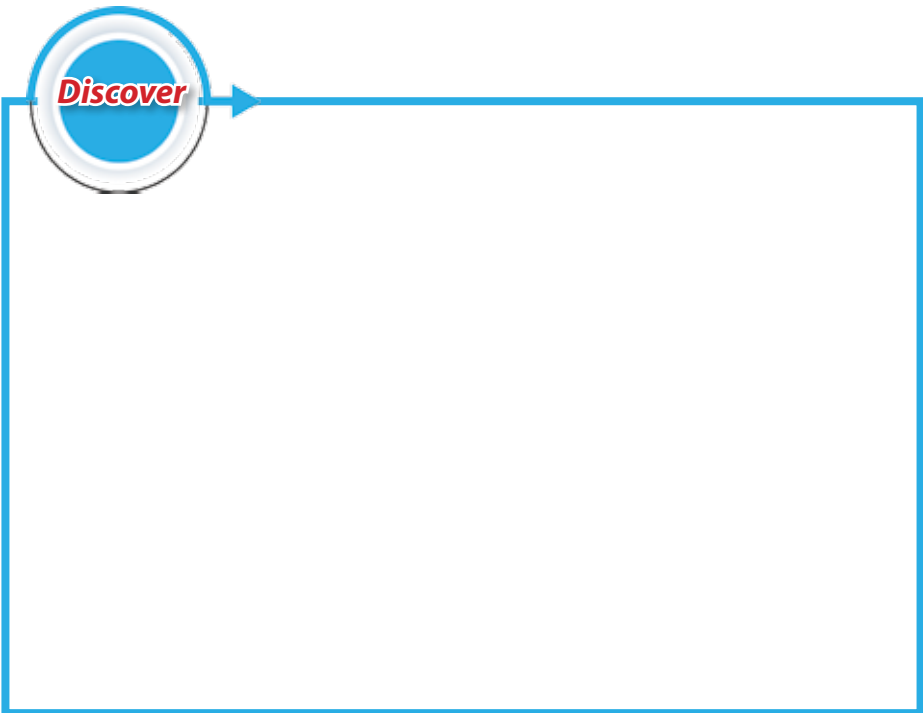
Pope Francis has shown us a different way to go to the people with a missionary drive that wants to reach everyone. He recommended us mercy and tenderness as a style of the apostolate. This questions us about our way of approaching people.



We are busy working and we often do it with generosity and resourcefulness, but sometimes we are tired, disheartened or demotivated. Perhaps some of us are afraid to insert ourselves in the works, or they no longer feel “ours”. This questions us about the roots of our being and our work, about our awareness of being “Orionine” and what this means concretely in daily life.

Perhaps in our life the tiredness of everyday life, of routine is taking over. This questions us as to what could be a new way of being Sons of Divine Providence dedicated wholeheartedly to the mission of God and the Church.

So, inspired by Don Orione and Pope Francis, what style do we the Sons of Divine Providence have to adopt to “*throw ourselves into the fire of the new times*” and become disciples?



Dream



Propose



2nd thematic unit: Communion

Holiness in fraternal and sweet charity! (1922)

To become witnesses

On 24 June 1922, speaking of Saint Pacomius and Saint Anthony the Abbot, Don Orione said that they were very busy in many activities, but they cultivated “*above all, holiness in fraternal and sweet charity*” (Scritti 82,114).

We too are called to live “*community holiness*”. We know well that living in a community is an essential characteristic of religious life and of our being Orionine. We know it, we believe it and we want it, but we cannot hide that in everyday life it is difficult to practice it.



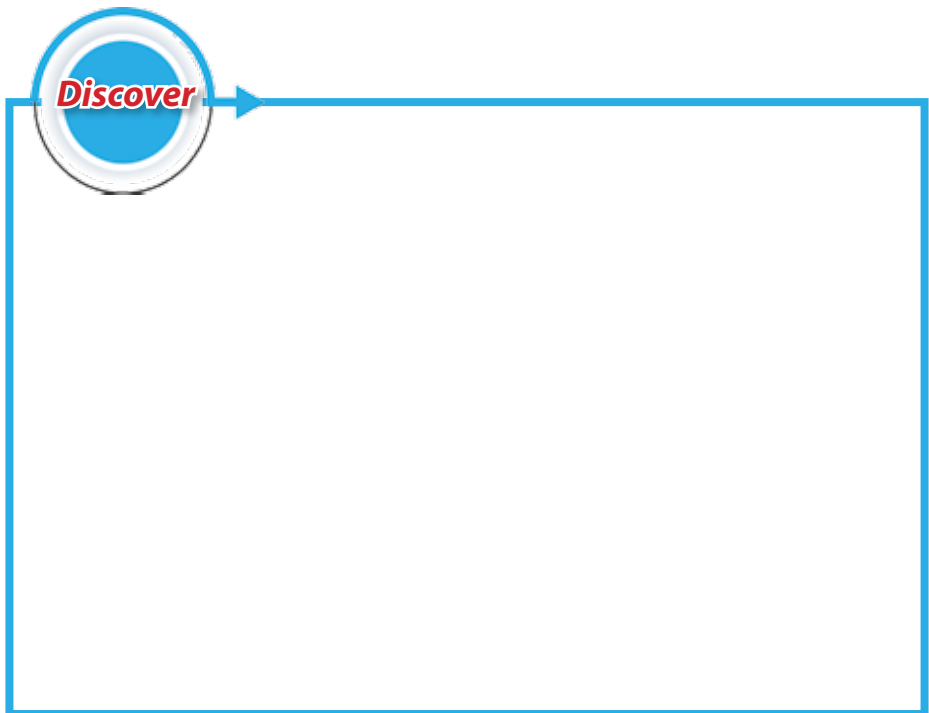
The Gospel and the Magisterium remind us that the witness of fraternal life and mutual love is the most powerful weapon of our apostolate. This questions us about what witness our communities give to the people who come to us regularly.

Perhaps we are linked to old patterns, traditional styles that on the one hand safeguard fidelity to “community practices” but do not encourage creativity, nor the external expression of our being “brothers”. We love each other, but sometimes we are shy to tell or show it to one another. To witness means “to show” and this questions us about what innovations we could introduce into our homes so that we can feel more about family style, reciprocal esteem and mutual help.

New technologies allow us to be in contact with people spread over the 5 continents and this is a terrific thing. But often we are so caught up in it that we forget to look at who is physically next to us. We communicate with the world but we cannot communicate with those in the house. This questions us about the quality of our relationships, about how much time we dedicate to listening and talking to our brothers, about fraternal dynamics.

Over the years the awareness of belonging not only to a congregation but to a “charismatic family” has grown where the spirit of Don Orione is expressed in a greater variety of forms. This questions us about how we experience this familiarity with the other members (PSMC, ISO, IMN, MLO).

So, what style of fraternity does it take to “*throw ourselves into the fire of the new times*” and become witnesses?



Dream



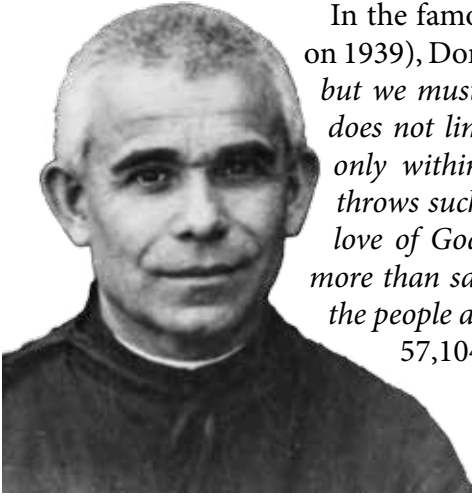
Propose



3rd thematic unit: Mission

Saints of the people and of social wellbeing! (1939)

To become prophets



In the famous piece “*Souls! Souls!*” (probably on 1939), Don Orione wrote: “*We must be saints, but we must be such saints that our saintliness does not limit itself to the faithful, nor remain only within the Church, but transcends and throws such a shining light, such a great life of love of God and man on society, that we are more than saints of the Church; we are saints of the people and saints of social wellbeing.*” (Scritti 57,104c).

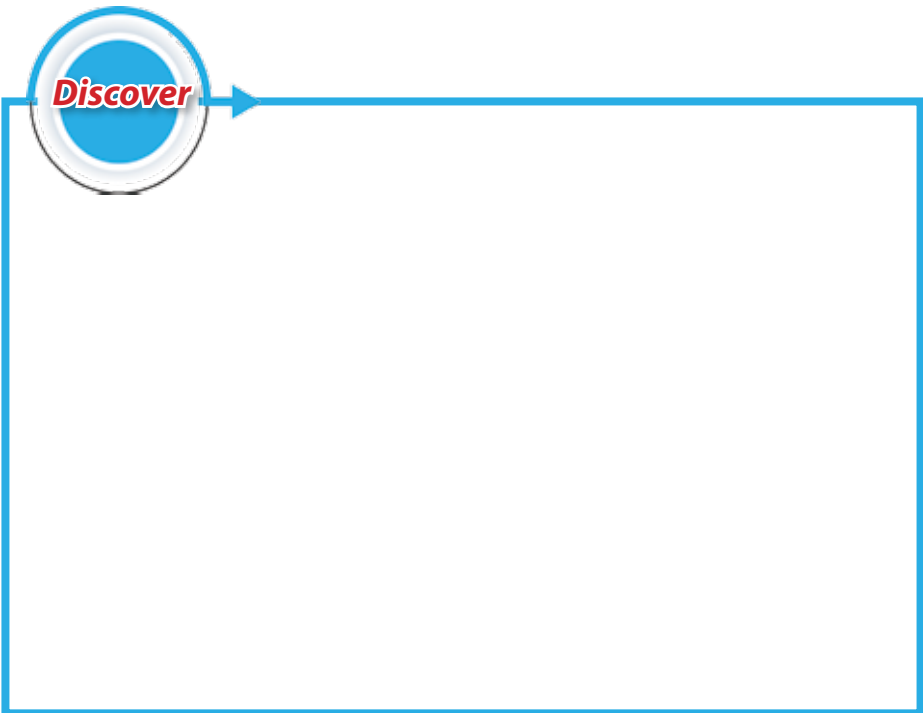
The “saints of the people and of social wellbeing”: this is how Don Orione wants us. He told us to go out of the sacristy and Pope Francis reminded us that in the past, people used to call us “the priests who run”. Today we can do more. The Holy Father proposes to us a triple conversion: pastoral and missionary (*Evangelii gaudium*); for an integral ecology (*Laudato Si*); towards a fraternity without borders (*Fratelli tutti*).

The field of the apostolate is increasingly vast and “new poverties” emerge every day: there are those affected by the crisis caused by the pandemic, the refugees, the increasingly disoriented young people, and many others we meet in our environment, but who often we do not know how to recognize. Our Founder said: “*We also need to rejuvenate in the way we work for souls: if we really want to go to the people and be effective we must rejuvenate ourselves in many things, and we need a bath of well-understood modernity*” (Scritti 52,221). This challenges us: do we still feel within us Don Orione’s anxiety to run to the poor, to the least? Do we know how to see the face of Christ in everyone? Are we concerned for those who are far away or are we satisfied with those who come to us? If our works and parishes are permeated by this apostolic anxiety, they will give a strong testimony of the charism and those who attend them will experience the sweetness of being part of the family.

A previous Chapter invited us to start activities as pioneers with immediate and speedy schemes. This apostolic paradigm must be continued and strengthened. On the other hand, someone asks: How to manage the large institutions we have and that often cause us anxiety, concern for compliance with regulations and sometimes even debts? Today, to manage our works, especially the largest and most complex ones, “good will” alone is no longer enough. Above all, competence, professionalism and authority are needed.

The “new times” call us to manage our works differently from the past, in a certain sense unprecedented. We must ask ourselves if and in what way the religious can still manage the works or should they simply be left in the hands of qualified professionals. The choices we will make from what motivations will they be driven? Will they only be the result of a resignation that tries to “disguise” our unpreparedness?

So, what style of apostolate does it take to “*throw ourselves into the fire of the new times*” and become prophets?





A large empty rectangular box with a yellow border, intended for writing or drawing related to the 'Dream' theme.



A large empty rectangular box with a green border, intended for writing or drawing related to the 'Propose' theme.

Other particular themes

Place here all those issues that are not part of any of the three main units, but which you still consider important and that should be discussed in the General Chapter. It is good that these themes are presented at all levels of participation, both in the personal or community level and in the provincial one.

The Provinces should act as promoters in encouraging the communities to suggest what is important to them and, then, during the Provincial Chapter, they should evaluate what needs to be resolved at the local level and what should instead be presented to the General Chapter. Naturally, the possibility remains valid for each religious to address directly to the General Chapter, in his own time, his issues.

Particular theme n.1: _____



Dream



Propose



Particular theme 2: _____

Discover



Dream





If you have other themes to suggest, you can do so by following the same methodology: Discover- Dream- Propose.

Prayer for the General Chapter

*Lord Jesus,
You who called us to follow you
as religious Sons of Divine Providence,
send your Spirit to enlighten our minds
and to inflame our heart
in this time of preparation
to the 15th General Chapter.*

*Renew us in the joy of living your Gospel
and revive in us the charism you have given us
through our Founder, St. Luigi Orione.*

*Grant that this time of grace
may be for all an opportunity for spiritual renewal
and strengthen that bond of charity in us,
that makes us taste the beauty of brotherly love.*

*Teach us to open our arms to all those
for which the Congregation carries out its mission of charity
and to throw ourselves courageously into the fire of the new times.*

*Give us the strength to be in the world,
prophets of communion and servants of those poor
that your goodness entrusts to our care.*

*We ask this through the intercession
of Mary Mother of Divine Providence
and of our holy Founder. Amen.*



**PICCOLA OPERA DELLA DIVINA PROVVIDENZA
(OPERA DON ORIONE)**

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