ORDO AUGUSTINIANORUM RECOLLECTORUM
GENERALATUS

Viale dell'Astronomia, 27 - 00144 ROMA
Tel. 06 592 65 34 – Fax 06 592 08 87
curiageneral@agustinosrecoletos.com

Prot. N. 118/2016

TO ALL THE RELIGIOUS OF THE ORDER

My dear brothers

As the General Chapter draws near, I call on all our communities and on each of us individually to offer up prayers to the Lord and to journey towards the chapter with hearts open to the Spirit and to the needs of the Church and of the world. The chapter is an ecclesiastical event of renewal, of communion, and of discernment for all the brothers of the Order, not only for those taking part directly. It is an opportunity for experiencing the life and mission of the Order as one's own.

The *Constitutions* lay down that "the General Chapter is the Order's highest authority, and must be a sign of unity in charity". As well as examining the state of the Order and the performance of the general administration of the Order over the six-year period, it is to "promote unity and co-operation among all the brothers and provinces for the common good, to defend the patrimony of the Order and give impetus to its preservation and growth, to evaluate everything to do with formation, and to keep it always up-to-date, and to elect the Prior General and the members of his council".[1]

The forthcoming General Chapter is a great opportunity for the charism to be expressed with more vigour and dynamism in our life and in our mission. Let us uncover the power and the vitality of the Gospel within the charism of the Order. It is a gift to the Church and is an action of the Spirit in our hearts. Let us also pray that with the help of the Lord, the chapter may take the necessary decisions for our better organisation and for the revitalisation of the charism and of the evangelising mission of the Order.

Preparing for the chapter

As steps leading up to the Chapter, the Prior General's report on the state of the Order has been sent to all religious[2]; the delegates to the general Chapter have been elected[3]; having received and assessed suggestions sent in by the religious, the pre-capitular commission has handed over to the General Council the "*instrumentum laboris"*, and has informed the religious of this[4]; it has made known the support for the proposals for restructuring[5]; and it has appointed a team to carry out a juridical study of the restructuring and revitalisation proposals, the validity of which would demand either modifications to the constitutional text or authorisation from the Holy See[6].

Our journey towards the chapter is a path of personal, community-based, and pastoral conversion. We need to ask ourselves: What is the Lord asking of the Augustinian Recollects today? What do we have to do to achieve it? What is preventing us from making progress in the revitalisation we all wish for?

I wish to express again my thanks to all the brothers who open their hearts with humility before the Lord, to everyone who has taken part in the elections and consultations and all those who, according to their possibilities, take on board the Order's revitalisation process with responsibility and by making themselves available.

In the attached document we publish the list of the members of the General Chapter, in accordance with *Constitutions* 335-337 and *Ordinance* 29 of the last General Chapter.

---

[1] *Constitution*s 331
[2] *Const.* 333
[3] *Const*. 335-337; *Ordinance*s of the 54th General Chapter, 29
[4] *Additional Cod*e 338
[5] Prot. 87/2016
[6] Prot. 89/2016; 113/201

The process of revitalisation and restructuring

Following the *Ordinances* of the 54th General Chapter, within the Order we began a process of revitalisation, based on our charismatic identity, so as to better fulfil the mission of evangelisation[7]. The Chapter reminded us that the gift of our charism and the mission of evangelisation both demand that we open ourselves to a profound experience of God, and opt for a consolidation and transformation of our structures through boldness, passion, and a spirit of sacrifice. These should drive us towards a spiritual life that is both demanding and enriching, a communion of fraternal and ecclesiastical life, and a greater eagerness for apostolic charity[8]. We will need to ask ourselves, in what way have I changed? And, how do I feel united to the Order? So that this revitalisation may be possible, there has to be coherence between what we say and what we do.

In my visits of renewal to the communities, it has often been evident to me that we have a need for greater communication, for listening and for dialogue, for seeking things in common, and for appreciating what others do. On several occasions, I have noted that it is of no benefit to the Order when we have partiality, the imposition of one's ideas and culture, nor the interests of a particular group, and certainly not provincialism and nationalism. It is not acceptable to attain one's objectives through slander and rumour-mongering. We find ourselves in a time of change; today neither high-handedness nor a sense of victimhood are valid paths to take. We may have different outlooks but, moved by charity, we all need to seek the well-being of the Order together. Everyone who has wished to do so has been free to express his opinion.

We need to take all of this into account in talking about the restructuring of the Order. We do not have an easy task. In the *Constitutions*, we are told that a province "has a sufficient number of brothers and sufficient resources of whatever is necessary to function autonomously with regard to the religious life, formation, administration, and finances"[9] Several criteria are set out in the *Life and Mission Project.*[10] In addition, we will have to ask ourselves what it is we intend to do, and which starting point we set out from, when we speak of restructuring: My own interests? Those of my community? Or those of my province, or of the whole Order?

The one who acts with hope sees the situation in its reality – whether he likes it or not – and, trusting in the Lord, listens, questions, seeks, and corrects with humility, changing whatever does not work. If we are to go forward with the process of revitalisation and restructuring for the Order, we cannot allow the fire of the Spirit to be extinguished. We need to face up to reality with confidence, restructure with spirit, and stay united in taking bold decisions.

Restructuring for what?

Let us remember once more that in these times the provinces and the Order cannot satisfy themselves with just "surviving". If we stay shut-up in dreams of the past and in fears, or in the laid-back attitude of "it's always been done like that" or in one's own security, we can remain spiritually listless and without the ability to respond in an evangelical manner.

The Church also asks us Augustinian Recollects to revitalise our charism so that our communities can evangelise. We have to restructure so as to live with enthusiasm and joy, give new life to our prayer and fraternal life, and recover the spirit of poverty in order to not rely so much on money. All this, so that on our missions and in our parishes and colleges, we may put forward proposals and evangelical projects of communion which generate excitement and hope. We must join our efforts to strengthen youth and vocational work, initial and ongoing formation, and to be in solidarity with the poorest. Do not these desires come from the Spirit?

The Chapter is a challenge to openness, responsibility, and making ourselves available. We may be more or less in favour of specific proposals for revitalising and restructuring the Order, but we must always listen to our brothers and never discredit them or assume attitudes and ways of behaving that are "political" or worldly. We will see how far we get. We all need to be united in prayer.

---

[7] Cf. 54th General Chapter, *Ordinances*: Overall objective
[8] Cf. 54th General Chapter, *Ordinance*s: Introduction
[9] *Const.* 372
[10] *Life and Mission Project of the Order*, L.4

Prayer for the Chapter

From the 1st July onwards, I ask all the brothers of the Order to offer up prayers to the Lord at Morning Prayer, with the intention of the chapter being able to achieve abundant fruits[11], and I exhort them to invite the faithful to unite themselves to our prayer for the General Chapter in the bidding prayers of the Mass.

GRANT, LORD
That the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy
may usher in a new time for our Order;
may the Door of Grace be opened for us,
and let us never cease to wonder
at the limitless horizon of hope;
in our restructuring,
may we not see mountains that block our way,
but rather the chance to explore, hand-in-hand with you,
paths both new and wonderful.
Prepare us
for the forthcoming General Chapter.
Make us
worthy of our history,
and of our saints.
Give us
trust in you alone,
a personal life transfixed by your love.
Give us
community life
founded in Mercy toward our brothers.
Give us
generosity, discernment and the necessary wisdom
to dedicate ourselves to our common enterprise
of passing on your Mercy.
Give us what you command
and command what you will,
for all our hope is in your great Mercy
AMEN.

In his mercy, may the Lord fill us with his Spirit and renew our hearts.

Rome, 14th June 2016.

Fr. Miguel Miró
Prior General

Fr. Francisco Javier Tello Vegas
Secretary General

SIGILLUM ORDINIS AUGUSTINIANORUM RECOLLECTORUM

[11] Cf. *Const*. 333