



**CONGREGAZIONE delle SCUOLE di CARITÀ  
ISTITUTO CAVANIS**

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J. M. J.

*Il Preposito Generale*

CIRCULAR 16 OF JULY 2020

Beloved Cavanis family,

We are about to celebrate the *182nd anniversary* of the canonical institution of our beloved Institute. It will be next July 16, memory of Our Lady of Carmel. This pontifical approval consolidated the diocesan recognition by the Patriarch of Venice in 1819. In order for the Institute to have more freedom of action in the face of the Austro-Hungarian Empire that was promoting a state of monopoly on education, our Venerable Founders used all their energies so that the Holy See recognized the importance of the charism at a universal level. This celebration becomes even more special because we also remember the *bicentenary* of the first Cavanis community with the entry of the first novices to *Casetta* on August 27, 1820. The Servants of God recognized the maternal protection of the Virgin Mary in the origins and development of the Institute at the time more difficult and decisive. They promoted a very special devotion, imposing on each religious a virtuous daily act in their honor and recognizing in this devotion a pedagogical strength in the spiritual formation of young people (cfr. *Positio*, p. LXX).

By meditating on the documents and correspondence left by our Founders, we can learn about the profound motivation that was to ensure the existence of the charism of welcoming children and young people with love from God the Father. After long years of youth association and school experience, the charism was institutionalized in a new religious family in the Church. This celebration asks us how we are living the vocation we received, about our fidelity to the charism, the sanctity of our consecration, the relevance of the vows and the quality of our fraternal life. The reception of the XXXV General Chapter is an updated tool for a true and fruitful evaluation.

Our Constitutions ask that this date be celebrated with fasting and abstinence (n. 24/c). I recommend that the material fruit of this sacrifice be made available to those in need as soon as possible. Fasting without sharing would be nothing more than greed: “*What prayer asks for, fasting achieves and mercy receives. Fasting is the soul of prayer and mercy gives life to fasting. Whoever*

*prays also fast; and whoever fasts, practices of mercy. Whoever wishes to be answered in his prayers, observe the pleas of whoever asks him. Fasting only bears fruit if it is watered by mercy, because the dryness of mercy makes fasting dry” (St. Peter Crisologo, Sermon 43: PL 52, 320.322).*

I invite that each community and religious can read and meditate on the first two chapters of the Constitutions that deal with community life and our consecration. A triduum could be organized with reflection and appropriate intentions. The daily recitation of the Rosary is highly recommended (Const. 20 / a). We need to grow in the confidence that the Virgin Mary lives her motherhood taking care of her children received at the foot of the cross. If the dogma that declares Mary Mother of God was proclaimed only in the year 431, the revelation that She is our Mother was made by Christ Himself on the cross: “Behold, your Mother” (Jn 19:27).

Our Founders lived an intense filial relationship with Mama Mary. We have the opportunity to make ours the beautiful Marian prayer Dear Mother Mary attributed to Father Marcos. It can help us to become aware of the recitation of Ave Maria, the most known and prayed by Catholic Christians. In the prayer that Jesus taught us, we call God the Our Father, but in the Marian prayer gestated over the centuries by ecclesial tradition, we call our Mother in heaven by the name: Mary. Not once, but twice. Now, no son calls his mother by name! In each culture there are loving forms such as mommy, mommy, mommy ...! Let us have the experience of beginning to pray personally: “... Holy Mary, Mother of God and ours, pray for your sinful children for us now and at the time of our death. Amen”. May each one think of the quality of filial love in his heart. It is wonderful to feel that our Family has such a kind and powerful Mother. Let us make every effort not to sadden her. This will only be possible when we fulfill the only request she left us: “*Do whatever He (my Son) tells you*” (Jn 2, 5).

I propose that in the personal and communal recitation of the Rosary, after the meditation of each decade, three intentions should be added to the prayer taught by the Virgin Mary to the visionaries of Fatima: “Oh my Jesus, forgive our offenses and deliver us from the fire of hell. Take all souls to heaven and help mainly those most in need of your mercy. *Bless the Holy Father, our families and our Congregation!*”.

It will soon be one year before the celebration of the General Chapter. Some important steps have already been taken. Other decisions depend on the return to certain normality after the health crisis that the world is going through. With a strong involvement of all, I think that in the Assembly of Superiors scheduled for next year, it will be possible to approve the new *Ratio Institutionis Cavanis* (RIC), projects for ongoing formation, vocation and youth. Chapter proposal n. 22/3 calls for the formation houses (Novitiate, Philosophy, and Theology) to be restructured throughout the Congregation.

The moment demands that we invest in the formation of trainers from the perspective of an international team. We thank the territorial parties for having made available a religious in view of this process. We are making the discernment of an international novitiate over the course of this

sexennium. The discernment that the novitiate should take place after the philosophy course and at least three or four years of community life is practically consolidated, in view of greater preparation for this fundamental stage of religious life. The possibility of another international Scholasticate, like Rome, is not excluded.

A quality fraternal life in the multiculturalism of the internationalization process of our communities would be further evidence that our love for our dear Mother is sincere. The inculturation of our charism is a path of no return. There is no better culture than the other.

The Gospel in its essentiality is not the fruit and must not be held hostage by any specific culture (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 116-117). We cannot forget that the fraternal charity that we manifest among ourselves will convince others that we are Jesus' disciples (Jn 13: 35).

Family members are mainly concerned with the most fragile: children, the sick and the elderly. The initial training phase must be everyone's responsibility. The confreres who live in the houses of formation are primarily responsible, but not the only ones. If the difference between the house of formation and the lives of the others who are inserted in the various pastorals manifested a mismatch in essential things, we would be working in vain. It would only be information and not training, at best. The formation of our young people needs to be part of an authentic religious life. In fact, we are all in permanent formation, which is nothing more than an intrinsic requirement to the dynamism of fidelity in the various seasons of life (cf. CIVCSVA, *New wine in new wineskins*, 2017, n. 16, 36). We cannot run the risk of seeing the condemnation of the doctors of the law made by Jesus imputed to us: "*You travel the sea and the land to convert someone, and when you do, make you worthy of hell twice as much as you*" (Mt 23, 15).

Pope Francis makes an ardent invitation to all communities in the world to ask for a testimony of fraternal communion that becomes attractive and luminous. May everyone admire how consecrated people care for one another, how they encourage one another and how they walk together (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 99). New wine in new wineskins, Jesus warns us. But for new wine to be appreciated and valued it needs to be good. So it was at the wedding in Cana. The best wine was served last. The image of new wineskins "*clearly reveals the need for institutionalized, religious and symbolic forms to have the need to always gain in elasticity. Without the necessary elasticity, no institutionalized form, however venerable, has the capacity to withstand the stresses of life or even respond to the calls of history*" (*New wine in new wineskins*, n. 1).

The European continent is experiencing reopening phases after the isolation imposed by the covid-19, but unfortunately in others the situation is very worrying. The projects for the admission and follow-up of initial formation in our seminars and the human promotion in our works in all territorial parts will certainly be affected due to the global economic difficulties. The damage can be lesser only if a bold and effective review of our spending and lifestyle is made, in valuing the essentials and putting the solidarity economy into practice.

A suggestion that I take the liberty of making would be to consecrate the 11th of October, *dies natalis* of the Servant of God Father Marcos Cavanis, as the day of the Cavanis Mission. The search for missions will certainly think of some proposals. In the coming months our Congregation is preparing for events of great joy with the perpetual profession of some religious and the ordination of two deacons from the Province of Brazil. We have several confreres who celebrate this year the wedding of religious and priestly life. Fidelity in consecrated life is like the forest that grows in silence.

Let us not be discouraged and frightened by the noise of possible falls. May the Virgin Mary, Mother of God and ours, our Holy Patron Saint Joseph Calazans, our Venerable Founders Father Antônio and Father Marcos Cavanis, the Servant of God Father Basilio Martinelli intercede for our mission as educators. Amen.

Rome, 21 June 2020 – *Breve apostolico di Approvazione della Congregazione (1836)*



*Manoel R. P. Rosa*

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P. MANOEL R. P. ROSA CScH – PREPOSITO G.

*n.b. traduzione dall'Originale in Lingua Portoghese a cura di P. José V. Siqueira*