



To all Brothers of the Congregation

December 14, 2018

Dear Brothers,

Generative Conversations on CLT Report to the Congregation: Change of schedule

Warm greetings to you all from Rome.

Last month we wrote to you on the matter of Generative Conversations and the CLT report to the Congregation prior to the Chapter in Lima in March 2020.

We are aware of the various efforts being made across the Congregation to put in place structures which will allow groups of Brothers to gather on a regular basis over the next year or so. We have thanked leadership teams for the energy they have put into making this possible across the Congregation.

It had been our intention to issue the CLT Report in monthly instalments beginning in February 2019. However, we have since decided to delay issuing our report until after the Congregation Leadership Group Meeting in June 2019.

The reason for this is that we have come to see that the time between now and February is too short for significant Generative Conversations, uncoloured by our report, to take place. It also allows us the opportunity to include in our report relevant items arising from the Generative Conversations that will have taken place prior to June next year.

We place great value on ensuring that each of you has the freedom to bring to the surface, for deep and rich conversation, matters of significance to you. **We want every Brother to be aware that he is being personally invited to participate in these conversations.** We are convinced that in these groups, as the level of trust grows, we will be more open to sharing from the heart our personal lived experiences, our joys and sorrows, our hopes and challenges. Then, together, we can begin to look towards our shared future.

Whilst we hope that those leading the process in your Province/Region give you adequate guidance and support, we believe that if leadership were to name the topics for discussion too early, the emergence of issues of importance to you could be stifled.

An important aspect of Generative Conversations is that of 'harvesting'. By this is meant the gathering of the experiences shared, the wisdom that is shared, the insights that are revealed and the issues that emerge. This is not a matter of reporting on matters heard in the confidential

intimacy of the small groups. Rather it is the identifying of what is burning within us, for good or ill, and that we would do well to address in the process of co-creating our Brotherhood into the future.

We believe it is important for you to know that what you raise for conversation is not lost. It feeds into the bigger picture of who we are as a body and who we need to go.

It has been very heartening for us to hear that engaging in Generative Conversation has been a wonderful experience already for many Brothers. This has certainly confirmed us in the belief that we really do need, *and want*, this process at this time.

Brothers, those of you who are involved in Generative Conversations know that they are not easy. They require slowing down, deep listening, suspending judgements, and being aware of the emotions being stirred. They also require that we check that we have understood correctly, and that we seek clarification. These are skills that require practice to develop. It is indeed good news that developing these skills is well underway in some places.

This topic will also be covered in the next CLT Bulletin. Over the next year or so, the Bulletin may also include other items related to this process and to the issuing of the CLT report to the Congregation, so we encourage you to read the Bulletin as it appears.

We close with a reflection on stillness and silence as central elements of the Advent season. At first sight this may seem strange in a letter concerning conversations, but as we know, if our sharing does not come from a place deep within, it risks being the mere interchange of noise.

To enter into the space of stillness offered by the season of Advent is not to escape from the world but to come to see it more clearly. Everything around us conspires against the possibility of allowing us to walk in darkness and yet this is what we must do before we can come to the light. (Anne Thurston)

"I have discovered that the unhappiness of human beings comes from just one thing; not knowing how to remain quietly in a room" (Blaise Pascal)

God bless,

Hugh, John, Julian, Peter and Richard
Congregation Leadership Team