



The Congregation Leadership Group, with facilitators, Rome, June 2016

Back: Peter Dowling, John Casey, Joe Johnson, Hugo Carceres, Michael Colasuonno, Edmund Garvey, Clement Sindazi, Dean McGlaughlin, Julian McDonald, Michael de Klerk, Declan Power, Steve Fernandes, Kevin Griffith, Richard Walsh

Front: Dominic Sassi, Francis Hall, Lorna Pearcey (F), Kevin Bernard, Hugh O'Neill, Ian Williams (F), Peter Clinch, Chris Meehl

Annual meeting of the Congregation Leadership Group

The Congregation Leadership Group, comprising the CLT, Province and Region Leaders and deputy Leaders and the Congregation Director of Resources and Planning, met recently in Rome for 10 days in what was the second of our annual meetings.

Two Transition Support Team (TST) representatives have been invited to each of these two CLG meetings.

The purpose of the CLG is to share brotherhood, to expand the collaboration among leaders from around the world and to advance our working together around the themes of the 2014 Chapter.

A Focused Understanding of *Our Way into the Future*

Our sharing, prayer and reflection led us to focus on what it means for *Our Way into the Future* to be for every Brother.

CLG members were heartened at hearing reports of Chapter-inspired initiatives, as Province and Region leaders shared the various ways in which the Chapter directions are becoming a lived reality in different ways, in different parts of the world.

The CLG spent considerable time in sharing:

- *experiences and learnings of the past two years*
- *the main points of key documents*
- *our common desire to support all Brothers in living with passion and commitment.*

The sharing was characterised by real openness, honesty and vulnerability. This, in itself, was an experience of the brotherhood we are seeking, and gave us a lived appreciation of *Our Way into the Future*.

Members of the Group affirm that ***Our Way into the Future***, endorsed and promoted by the Congregation Chapter of 2014, **is an invitation to a new way of living for all Brothers.**

Together we came to a clearer understanding that the following three elements are essential to living as Brothers today:

- *Sharing with one another our spiritual journey and our experience of the Mystery of God (spirituality)*
- *Building joyful communities characterized by gentleness, intimacy, compassion and love (community)*
- *Being brother by engaging with people made poor and with the earth community (ministry).*

These are central to understanding and embracing the call of the Congregation. CLG members see these as key reference points for all Brothers in making *Our Way into the Future*, including the eight Chapter Calls, a lived reality.

We encourage you to evaluate how you are responding to the Congregation Chapter's direction that "all Brothers give their full energy and commitment to the Chapter Call".

CLG Committees

To strengthen its capacity to make recommendations to CLT on a range of issues that are important for the life of our Congregation now and into the future, the CLG recommended that committees be set up to look at other areas of importance. These include:

- Planning a proposed ***Congregation programme for Brothers in the middle years of life***. The proposed programme would be designed to include giving wider Congregation exposure to some Brothers as 'stepping stones' in their continuing spiritual growth
- ***Looking at Congregation Demographics*** and their implications for future life and

ministry, including Congregation Structures

- **Succession planning** for future leadership, including possibilities of lay leadership for some areas of our lives and ministry
- **Developing Congregation and Partner capacity** for future mission, given the fast changing and ever-increasing demands for planning and compliance
- Considering and adopting **best practice regarding Brothers who have offended** against children or vulnerable adults.

Assessment of the ongoing evolution of the setting up of new communities by the Transition Support Team

The CLG also recommended that the CLT and TST begin a process of reviewing aspects of the project of establishing new communities, as it continues to evolve. The learnings from two years indicate that it is timely to re-visit some of the ways in which it was initially thought this project would be implemented and managed.

It is clear to those involved, that the task has been far more complex than anyone imagined. This review was begun in the subsequent meeting of the CLT and TST (see below).

TST/CLT meeting

The CLT is specifically calling on Brothers who are able, to take a further step in living out *Our Way into the Future*, by undertaking the training for clusters of communities in the developing world. The next cluster will be in India.

The TST met with the CLT in Rome between June 20 and 27 for the second of three meetings scheduled for this year.

We have a particular responsibility in assisting the TST in implementing its mandate with regard to its role in the establishing of clusters of new communities in the developing world.

There was deep and open sharing on many aspects of TST life and ministry, leading to the development of an approach to the above-mentioned review.

The review will look at different aspects of the TST's role of establishing clusters of communities living in a fresh way, as well as elements impacting on the TST's ability to grow as a community in living out the Chapter calls.

Together we developed a set of headings for the review, as well as key questions to be addressed. A group of four, (two for TST and two from CLT), has been asked to move this review forward without delay.

It is anticipated that wide consultation will form part of the process and that the outcome will lead to improved understanding, implementation, management, ongoing ownership and sustainabilitykeeping in mind these words from *A Message*, circulated to the Congregation by the CLT in 2013:

What we are proposing as *A Way into the Future* is not primarily a series of action steps.

This is first and foremost a way of living life.

It is the Jesus way, a way of kenosis, of self-emptying, that is not about the preservation of the Congregation, but about

making real the “Kingdom of God” that Jesus was so passionate about.

It requires a new mindset, a new consciousness that will change drastically the way we live and work.

The final day of the TST/CLT meeting was the Feast of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. May she help us at this time of transition in our Congregation.

Hugh, John, Julian, Peter and Richard.