

Dear confreres, sisters, members and friends of the great Orionine family.

We were welcomed here in Bonoua, Ivory Coast, with the traditional "AKWABA", that is, a warm welcome. Now, at the end of our assembly work, we have decided to share with you some echoes of our "missionary experience".

Our meeting was an opportunity to begin the 50th anniversary celebration of our arrival in Africa. So we want to thank the Lord for this long history marked by a passion for the poor, and the self-giving attitude of the first pioneer missionaries, which continues to this day.

We also wish to thank our confreres of the "Notre Dame d'Afrique" Province for their warm and fraternal welcome. They were extraordinary in their preparation and care, and they made us experience one of the essential elements of our spirituality: the family spirit, a value that Don Orione wanted for his children from the beginning, and that the assembly has wished to re-launch as an essential value.

We have felt this family spirit not only among ourselves but also with the Little Missionary Sisters of Charity, with the sisters of the Secular Institute and the members of the Lay Orionine Movement, in the persons of their representatives at the Assembly, in the exuberance of our young seminarians, in the fervor of our parishioners and in the commitment of all those people we saw at work in the various realities we visited in Bonoua and Anyama.

Here at the assembly we were confreres from the four corners of the world; the differences between us have not been a problem, they have, instead, aroused the joy of seeing the riches, the symphony of voices that sing the good done in the name of God in various languages and cultures.

The XIV General Chapter asks us to be "prophets faithful to dialogue with the new peripheries of poverty and the new evangelization". The task of the assembly was to assess the situation. In the various presentations we have been given, we have seen with joy that, despite our fragility and our limits, the family is alive and dynamic and we want to thank you for being the people at the front in doing God's good. We have traditional works that are still beacons of charity and at the same time we have many new and innovative initiatives. The charism that God has entrusted to us is beautiful and pushes us to the extreme frontiers of human misery, then we need to ask the Lord for the grace to be able to resist the temptation that comes from the typical individualism of our age and the consequent fall into an accommodated life or a self-referential protagonism.

As a remedy we want to re-launch the importance of fraternal life in community, a milestone of our religious being, and to encourage each other to make use of all those

dynamisms that can favor it. Our living as a family will inevitably give rise, among us, to the desire to work for the arrival of new children / brothers who can continue our work. Hence the commitment to work tirelessly, in the search for new vocations.

We have also been asked to be what we are: "the first mission of the religious is to be religious and that of the orionine is to be orionine", that is, to give primacy to God because we receive from him the reason for our being and our mission.

This union with God, following the inspiration of Don Orione and the example of so many brothers who preceded us, is the unifying element of all the dimensions of our religious being. All that we are and what we do, must be to "Instaurare Omnia in Christo."

Being in Africa has made us touch a different reality, for many of us a new one, a different way of living and responding to the needs of the poor. It was a highly educational experience that we would like to be understood and known by all of you. Perhaps this is the hidden reason for our message. We all feel called to a new missionary zeal. Each one of us must be a missionary in his reality, in the sense in which Pope Francis asks us to be, but it would also be nice for all to have some experience of the "missio ad gentes".

At the end of everything we entrust the fruits of these days of work to Notre Dame de la Garde that, through her intercession, God may grant to each one of us the grace of conversion, the fire of love, the courage to give ourselves completely to everybody.

Bonoua, 19 October 2019.