

PROGRAM OF THE GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

2009 – 2015

***To the Superiors of the Provinces, Regions and District and their councils
and to all Dehonians.***

At the beginning of these six years, we, as General Government, have met to discern what it is that the Spirit of the Lord Jesus urges us to take on. We came together in Vitorchiano, the novitiate house of the South Italian Province. In the quiet of the house we reflected on what the Congregation during the XXII General Chapter gave us as an outline for our activities in the next six years. We asked ourselves again what it meant that *the love of Christ urges us*, what it meant to be one with him in our communion with one another, and where his Spirit was sending us in these shifting and turbulent times.

INTRODUCTION

We wanted to undertake this ministry in the footsteps of our founder, Fr. Dehon, inspired by his experience of the love of God in the person of Christ. Our Constitutions calls this experience of Fr. Dehon his personal faith experience. It was this experience of the love of God that transformed him and lies at the root of our foundation. Knowing that God had gone to the point of death – death on the cross – Fr. Dehon could no longer doubt that he was taken up in this love. It was this deep trust in the love of God manifested in the heart of Christ that he left as the foundation of the life of the Congregation.

For him this faith experience was the incentive to gather around him a band of people, his congregation. They were to live out of this same faith and trust in the love God for all people, particularly for those who feel abandoned: the poor, the workers in his time, the marginalized, the refugee, the stranger in the land. But above all he wanted his congregation to deepen within itself the communion of this love in prayer, adoration, in the self-gift to others, in the common life, in the sharing of goods, and in the growth of faith and love. The community first gathered in Saint Quentin, a city torn apart by the ravages of the industrial revolution. But he did not stay there. Very early on, he began to look beyond Saint Quentin, beyond the boundaries of France: to Germany, Holland, Belgium, to beyond the boundaries of Europe: Brazil, Ecuador and the Congo, there to give further life to this love. Through all sorts of circumstances the international community was born.

... Dehon's personal
Faith experience...

It began a process that has continued to our time. We now find ourselves in more than forty countries with a community of about 2200 members. In our time we have asked ourselves anew the meaning of this communion.

... in a communion
Of love

Slowly in 1997 we began this new exploration of ourselves as a communion in the faith experience of Fr. Dehon and created the slogan “We, the Congregation.” It reflected that our communion must extend beyond ethnic, linguistic, and cultural boundaries to a reaching out to the other in the congregation by establishing international communities and projects. The XXI General Chapter developed this theme further by applying this life together to our mission. We saw this communion to be part of the very mission of the Congregation. This too was a prophetic move. Our communion was to be a sign or symbol of the type of union Christ wanted to create among humanity. In all our brokenness and fragility, we wanted to be a foretaste of the unity of humanity in the final revelation. In the latest chapter we felt ourselves impelled by the love for Christ to strengthen this aspect of our fraternal life by developing further the notion of internationality to apply it not only to our mission but to the heart of our being together and our being with others who differ from us in culture, faith, or world view.

And with the broadening of this vision of our communion, we also realized more clearly our mission. Our mission was to flow from the experience of the love of God for everyone. As the Acts of the Apostles states: “God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.” (10.34)

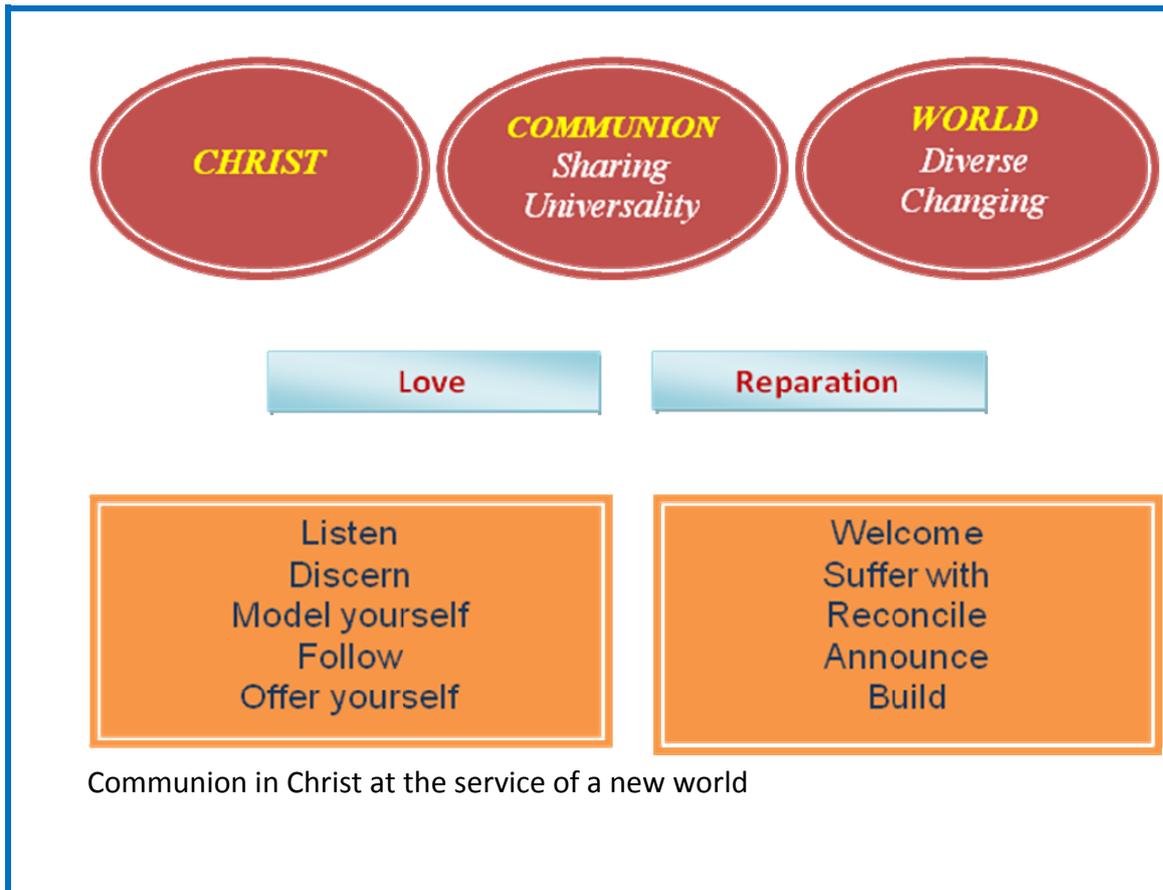
...repairing the world
with
Love and reconciliation

In making that love our own, we experienced the urge to reach out to others and to witness among them the desire of God to bring all to one in Christ. Through our own appropriation of this love in our community we want to reach out to others in the *missio inter gentes*, in repairing the world where it needs healing because of divisions between rich and poor, the worker and the Board of Directors, the Christian and the Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, between aboriginal peoples and foreigners, between Christian and other Christians, the sick and the healthy, the marginalized and rejected and the ones who have a voice. Our mission with one another in community is also what feeds our desire to be with others.

In Vitorchiano, we hoped that in some way this knowledge of the love of God in us would lead us to strengthen what is weak, to encourage those who waver, to thaw what is frozen, to stimulate what is alive. We prayed that we may have the strength and insight and courage to do this so that the love of Christ may become visible in our words and deeds.

As a General Government we tried to state as clearly as possible how this vision would translate into the activities that are properly ours and activities which we could promote, encourage, accompany in the various entities of the Congregation. We tried to give a visual form to this task.

The diagram came out of the computer looking like this:



<p>In the pierced side of Christ, God's Holy Love became visible and accessible</p>	<p>This Love in us builds the community of the People of God.</p>	<p>This Love as it heals us is also at work everywhere in our world.</p>
<p>In faith and baptism this Spirit enters into our hearts and gives us the capacity to love as Christ loved.</p>	<p>In our religious communities, our life in communion is the symbol, the sacrament, of what the Love of God has made us capable.</p>	<p>The Love we have experienced and tasted allows us to participate in its power to help repair the world in the places where the communion among people has been broken.</p>
<p>Following the example of Fr. Dehon, our lives are built on this trust in the love of God in us that has no limits, also for us personally.</p>	<p>This Love breaks through our ethnic, tribal, cultural, religious and family boundaries</p>	<p>This participation in the power of love to repair is extended especially in our ministry to the poor and the excluded.</p>
		<p>As such we are prophets of love and agents of reconciliation.</p>

In our ministry to the Congregation we will constantly ask:

<p>How will this activity help strengthen our faith in the love of God in Christ – in his death and resurrection – in accordance with the faith experience of Fr. Dehon?</p>	<p>How will this activity help strengthen our bonds with each other as an international community? How will it help us in our solidarity with each other, in the formation of our communion in Christ, and in the sharing of our goods?</p>	<p>How will this activity help in our mission to love and reconcile what has become divided in God's world so that all may be one? How does this activity help repair the world in which we work and live? How can these activities repair the world so that in Christ all things may hold together?</p>
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After our deliberations, we arrived at the following motto for the next six years:

Communion in Christ at the service of a new world

In the motto *Communion in Christ at the service of a new world* we found the summary of the XXII General Chapter. We want to make it the motto of our next six years and let it permeate our activities.

***THE ANIMATION OF THE CONGREGATION
2009 – 2015***

Over the years the General Government has used several ways to provide leadership to the Congregation. There have been gradual shifts but one administration has built on the previous. We will follow that tradition with some adaptations to our time:

- A. *Visits to the entities of the Congregation*
- B. *Gatherings by continents*
- C. *Activities of the Congregation by sectors (spirituality, formation, etc.)*
- D. *Letters to the Congregation*
- E. *Work of the support staff (collaborators)*

A. Visits to the Entities of the Congregation

The visits to the different parts of the Congregation are one of the main means of strengthening fidelity to our charism in the Church, of deepening our communion in the midst of great diversity and of developing our increasingly international and intercultural mission.

During this mandate these visits will take on a somewhat different form than during the previous mandate. Because of the way we want to work, we have sought to coordinate the visits so that the complementary roles of the Superior General, the Vicar General, the Councilors and the Bursar within the General Administration may become visible. During the next six years, these visits will be done as follows:

1. The **General Councilors** will visit all the communities in the entities assigned to them at least once in a comprehensive way. These visits will be prepared together with the leadership of the entity. They ought to be occasions to listen to the confreres, to ascertain the common project of the entity, to exchange experiences and projects, and to present suggestions and observations useful for the whole Congregation.
Beyond these visits, the councilors will also be available to participate in significant events in the life of the entities, either in line with their role of being the liaison between the entity and the General Government or as the one responsible for a specific sector in the life and mission of the Congregation.
2. Beside his role as liaison with some provinces, the **Vicar General** will coordinate all the visits, help in their preparation by providing background information, clarifying the specific objectives, and be available to take part in specific visits together with the General Superior and the other Councilors.
3. In accordance with his own function, the **General Bursar** will visit the entities with the purpose of advancing the objectives proposed by the General Chapter by working together with the entity's bursar and leadership. He will give special attention to formation, international solidarity and projects leading to local financial autonomy.
4. The **Superior General** will visit each entity at least once during the next six years. His visit will be conducted mostly by meeting with larger groups, such as the communities or members working in specific ministries, especially the ministry of formation. Using ways appropriate for each occasion, we hope that these visits will be moments of reflection on the life and projects of the entity and of the Congregation. These visits will always include a meeting with the leadership of the entity and with those who head the communities and the main activities of the entities. The visit will always also allow for contacts with individuals.

5. Finally we will organize the visits of the Superior General by continents in order that, at the end of such a series of visits, a continental gathering may be called to discuss issues of a continental scope.

B. Continental Areas

For some time now the Congregation has sought to move the organization of its mission beyond our involvement in the individual entities to a continental coordination and collaboration. More and more our mission consists of interactions with members and entities other than our own. This has given rise to a seeing ourselves also as continental communities. Currently we recognize four such continental communities: Africa, America, Asia and Europe.

Beyond the work, therefore, in the individual provinces, regions and districts, the councilors are asked to accompany also the grouping of these entities on a continental level. In line with our objective to strengthen our bonds with each other also on a continental level, each continent has assigned to them a General Councilor to help coordinate activities on a continental level. The activities in which the continents can collaborate are to be found in the vocation and formation ministry, on-going formation, new missions, research on spirituality, collaboration with the Centro Studi, and in the making available of members to help the Congregation at a general level and other common projects.

The General Councilor will assist the continental community in organizing meetings of major superiors and of different sectors. The continental community will be urged to give an appropriate, flexible organization to this collaboration in order to sustain its growth. If considered timely, continental communities can hold continental conferences on topics specific to their continent.

During the next six years Fr. Albert Lingwengwe will accompany the continental community of Africa; Fr. Clàudio Weber will continue to follow events in America with the help of Fr. John van den Hengel; Fr. Paulus Sugino will act as liaison with the countries of Asia; and Fr. John van den Hengel will function as the general contact person of Europe with the help of Fr. Claudio Dalla Zuanna.

The development of the continental community is not intended to decrease the interaction and collaboration among the continents or between individual entities, either in the exchange of personnel or in the expression of financial solidarity.

C. Activities of the General Government by sectors

The third area of activity of the General Government is about the day-to-day living of religious life in the Congregation. Each Dehonian in his own place has assumed activities that in a variety of ways fulfills the mission of the Congregation. The General Government also accompanies these activities. We have generally called the grouping of these activities sectors.

In listening to the wishes of the General Chapter, we arrived at 10 different sectors of activities. These are found below. Each of the sectors is animated by one councilor, assisted by a second. In order to assure that all these activities (the visits, the accompaniment of the continental communities and the sectoral responsibilities) are indeed doable, the General Government created a detailed calendar of activities. A limited calendar of the main activities will be presented at the end of this programmatic letter.

Here is a list of the different sectors of activities through which the General Government seeks to achieve the objectives it has set:

- (1) Spirituality*
- (2) Formation*
- (3) Justice and Peace and Reconciliation*
- (4) Administration of goods*
- (5) Youth Apostolate*
- (6) Vocation ministry*
- (7) Parish ministry*
- (8) Education and formation*
- (9) Missions*
- (10) Communication*

In the next part, we will outline the objectives and basic outline of the sectors. In each of the sectors we will attempt to realize what above we have identified as the overriding objective of the six years. We want each of the sectors to reflect how the love of Christ that entered into the heart of Fr. Dehon can help us to work together with a common heart in the service of the world.

1. Spirituality

Accompanying councilors: Frs. *John van den Hengel* and *Cláudio Weber*

*Following Fr. Dehon's faith experience of the love of Christ, we will journey together, heart and mind, making our own Christ's mission to reveal God's love, particularly in his *ecce venio* and his desire of *sint unum*, and to give our deepest self so that the world may live.*

In order that this way may enter into the life of every confrere and community, we will undertake the following:

1. to encourage a spirit of listening to the love of God and of sharing and working together in each community, we propose the frequent reflection on the Word of God through the lectio divina, the celebration of the Eucharist and adoration, and the timely reviewing and programming of our life together;
2. to develop an openness within our spirituality for intercultural and international dimensions;
3. to offer the opportunity to reflect and grow spiritually at the local and international level by way of retreats, meetings, courses, organized by age or by pastoral activity, with a special attention to our young members and those in the first years of ministry;
4. to rediscover, study and appropriate the spiritual legacy of Fr. Dehon, to be lived by us as a gift of the Church for the world of today by
 - arranging a critical edition of the life of Fr. Dehon;
 - assuring the resources for the Centro di Studi Dehoniani (CSD), as urged by the General Chapter, to digitize the writings of Fr. Dehon and making them available for study and reflection by the Congregation and by others;
 - coordinating the activity of the CSD with the Theological Commission and the centers of reflection in the entities in order to allow for the blossoming of our spirituality through congresses, publications and courses;
 - continuing the preparation of thematic studies of our history and spirituality for formation;
 - promoting and accompanying the study and interpretation of Dehonian spirituality in the different cultural contexts;
 - encouraging the entities to allow members to specialize in the field of Dehonian spirituality;
5. to share our spirituality and mission with others through the Dehonian Family by
 - Proposing to coordinate the different Dehonian groups, consecrated or not, who have assumed the Dehonian spirituality as the orientation of their life and mission;
 - accompanying the Dehonian formation of lay people, especially those who recognize themselves as Lay Dehonians (volunteers, youth missionaries, adult groups...);
 - stimulating the formation of young people and adults into new groups of Lay Dehonians.

2. Initial and On-going Formation

Accompanying councilors: Frs. *Paulus Sugino* and *Albert Lingwengwe*.

We will accompany the area of formation so that all may grow to maturity, freedom and a personal experience of Christ (see Const. # 4-5) in a personal and international communion for a meaningful religious life open to the needs of today's world.

We will seek to fulfill this objective by:

1. undertaking the revision of the *Ration Formationis Generalis* and encouraging the revision of the Provincial, Regional and District Rationes formationis;
2. promote the international and/or continental collaboration in initial and on-going formation;
3. assist in organizing the course for formators (the first course will be in 2010 -2011);
4. assist in organizing on-going formation for formators, parish priests, bursars, superiors, etc.;
5. organizing meetings for those responsible for formation at various levels;
6. enhancing the role of the International College of Rome and other centres of international formation in the Congregation;
7. continuing the work begun on a reference text on the Dehonian content of the various stages of formation.

3. Justice and Peace and Reconciliation

Accompanying councilors: Frs. *Cláudio Weber* and *John van den Hengel*.

To accompany the life of the Congregation in its efforts to promote justice and reconciliation, and to develop concrete initiatives in the face of the great problems that afflict our world as an expression of the spirit of reparation and of our solidarity with the love of Christ for humanity

We will take the following actions to fulfill this objective:

1. knowing and sharing initiatives of *social involvement* and *Justice and Peace* in all the entities;
2. encouraging, in initial formation, programs of study of the social aspect of our charism and the social teachings of the Church;
3. giving incentives for participation in courses of social studies, conflict studies and strategies of justice and reconciliation;

4. encouraging our confreres to deepen their knowledge of the social field, and to work with religious, ecclesiastical and civil institutes on public policy for the alleviation of poverty locally and globally, and inviting someone to specialize in the field of justice, peace and reconciliation;
5. spreading information about initiatives in the social field and in justice, peace and reconciliation and about situations that merit our attention;
6. making sure of the presence in each entity of minimal structures (at least one person or a committee) to sustain activity in the social field;
7. promoting contacts or periodic meetings of those responsible for this activity at interprovincial and continental levels.

4. Administration of Goods

Accompanied by Fr. *Aquilino Mielgo* and the *General Economic Commission*

We will be inspired by the attitude of Christ toward earthly goods so that we may grow in a greater trust in God's good care of us and of the earth. We will live a sober life-style, urging us toward a community life that will be transparent in its care of the resources at our disposal and generous toward the needy among us.

We will seek to fulfill this objective by:

1. encouraging a sober, simple and responsible life-style;
2. making effective in all the entities the recommendations of the General Chapter by promoting responsibility and transparency, the sharing of goods and solidarity by way of the common purse at all levels, the three-year plan, the gift of at least 1% of disposable income as solidarity for the Congregation, the setting of upper limits to our reserves, the use of budgets, and financial reports of individuals;
3. organizing in 2011 – 2012 a specialized course (in Italian) for bursars and future bursars;
4. organizing in 2012 a meeting of the bursars of all the entities;
5. making economic affairs part of initial formation;
6. engaging each entity to make use of local resources to attain financial self-sufficiency in each entity;
7. studying the possibility for health insurance and care of the elderly in the dependent entities.

5. Youth Ministry

Accompanying councilors: Frs. *Albert Lingwengwe* and *Paulus Sugino*.

We will promote and coordinate initiatives in the various entities for a youth ministry to help them discover in Christ the true meaning of life, their vocation in life and a model of love to meet the challenges and needs of our contemporary cultures.

To fulfill this objective we will:

1. promote among youth a Dehonian spirituality and openness to and communion with others (the poor and excluded, other cultures, ethnic groups and religions, etc.);
2. encourage a reflection on the education of youth for a future world in the planning of the next General Conference;
3. help to organize interprovincial meetings of those working in youth ministry;
4. adapt our web site to include youth ministry;
5. encourage youth ministry in universities;
6. Within youth ministry, to insert the ministry and accompaniment of vocations.

6. Vocation Ministry

accompanying councilors: Frs. *Albert Lingwengwe* and *Paulus Sugino*.

To encourage and reinforce our involvement in the vocational ministry in order to help youth to discover in Christ the model of love and total self-gift which might lead them to follow Him by taking on consecrated life in community and in service of the Gospel in the world.

To realize this goal, we will

1. Encourage all entities to be involved in vocation ministry;
- 2, help organize interprovincial meetings of those working in the vocation ministry;
3. work together with lay people and other religious or local churches to promote, discern and accompany vocation.

7. Parish Ministry

Accompanying councilors: Frs. *Cláudio Weber* and *Albert Lingwengwe*.

We will accompany Dehonians working in parishes and encourage the development of their mission as a community project so that they may be pastors according to the Heart of Christ in the service of the faithful in a changing world.

We will seek to fulfill this objective by:

1. working out a profile of Dehonian parish ministry, by spreading among the people of God in our parishes the Dehonian spirituality and creating a Dehonian community of at least three members;
2. organizing international meetings in continuation of the ones held in Buenos Aires and Manila;
3. encouraging the missionary spirit in parishes towards their own geographic territory and towards the universal mission;
4. arranging the exchange of religious at the international level in parishes.

8. Education and culture

Accompanying councilors: Frs. *John van den Hengel* and *Claudio Dalla Zuanna*.

From the beginning of the Congregation, the presence in the world of education and the formation in a culture have marked our history and life. We will seek to help the younger generation to become inspired by the values of Christ to build a society of greater solidarity, and to be open and sensitive to the challenges and needs of the world.

In the next six years we will do this by:

1. organizing the development of a pastoral plan for our schools;
2. promoting activities towards a fuller Dehonian presence in our universities, colleges and schools;
3. organizing another international meeting of educators;
4. organizing a General Conference for 2012 on this topic.

9. Missions and international collaboration

Accompanying councilors: Frs. *Claudio Dalla Zuanna* and *Paulus Sugino*

In our missionary activity, in dialogue with religions and cultures, we will speak out of our own encounter with Christ to the poor and those who have not heard about him, by making grow an international communion beyond ethnic, linguistic and cultural bonds.

We will seek to fulfill this objective by:

1. applying the orientations of the Warsaw Conference;
2. promoting and organizing an international presence in the apostolic ministries of each entity;
3. promoting the openness of members for working in another entity;
4. paying particular attention to the more recent missions: Albania, the countries of Easter Europe, Angola, India, and Vietnam, and preparing our presence in new areas: Paraguay, Chad and China;
5. encouraging efforts towards a Dehonian presence in secular society and in interreligious dialogue.

10. Communication

Accompanying councilors: Frs. *Claudio Dalla Zuanna* and *John van den Hengel*.

We will make use of the available means of communication to foster communion among ourselves, the Dehonian family and benefactors and to spread the Gospel.

We will seek to fulfill this objective by:

1. ensuring the regular and consistent communication of the events and activities of the Congregation and its entities;
2. accompanying the activities in the area of communication (publications, radio, television, internet).

D. Letters

The practice of writing letters to the Congregation will continue along similar lines as in the previous general administration.

At the centre will be the letter sent on the occasion of the Feast of the Sacred Heart. It will focus on a central theme set for each year. It will take as theme a particular aspect of our spirituality and of our life together.

This theme will be initiated in a March “letter”—around the Founder’s birthday (March 14) — with a reflection on the legacy of Fr. Dehon. This letter will be prepared with the help of members of the Congregation who have studied the life of our Founder in greater depth. The letter for the Feast of the Sacred Heart will seek to interpret this legacy for our time.

Finally, in a new format, there will be an end-of-the-year overview of the main events in the life of the Congregation of the past year. In this way we hope to deepen our faith in the One whose love urges us onward.

The Collaborators of the General Curia

The work of the General Administration would not be possible without the invaluable collaboration of confreres who work with us in the different areas of the General Government. We note here particularly their generous participation in the work of the Centro Studi, in communication, in the work of translation, in the secretariates, in finance and logistics. We appreciate the efforts of the community of Roma II to create a vibrant and praying community which we have the pleasure of sharing. In the course of the next six years, we will be calling on other confreres to make themselves available to help us move forward the activities of the Congregation. We hope that you will respond with generosity. For all those who have given us of their talents and their energy, we are grateful. We thank the Lord at all times for the gifts that you have brought.

Calendar of Events

At this point we can only indicate the main events on the calendar of the next six years. They are:

2010 October 18-27	The meeting of major superiors in Rome
2010/11	The course of Formators in Rome
2011/12	The course of Bursars in Rome
2012	The General Conference
2013	The middle of October: the meeting of major superiors in Rome
2015	XXIII General Chapter in Rome

It is foreseen that the whole general government will be in Rome for meetings,

- during April and May and
- during October and November.

With the appointment of Fr. Claudio Dalla Zuanna as the Vicar General, decisions regarding the general administration of the Congregation that require more immediate attention can now be made also in the absence of the Superior General. With the means of

communication available to us today, it is no longer necessary to await decisions until such time that the whole government is in Rome.

Conclusion

We began our search for a way to serve the Congregation in the General Administration by asking ourselves what verbs we felt would best summarize what we wanted to undertake in our ministry of leading the Congregation. We selected three: to listen, to accompany and to govern. By way of conclusion we give you our reflections around these three verbs and we pray that we may be worthy before our God of what these verbs evoked in us:

- We will *listen* attentively to the Spirit – speaking to us in events and through one another – whose love in Christ urges us to bring all things to unity amid our diversity and to allow the poor to hear the gospel;
- In our conversations and in activities, we will *accompany* our confreres in their search to be of the same mind, the same soul, the same Spirit as was in Christ Jesus in continuity with the faith experience of Fr. Dehon;
- And in our *governance* we will seek to strengthen what is weak, to encourage those who waver, to thaw what is frozen, to stimulate what is alive.

May the Lord help us.

Rome, December 8, 2009, The Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Fr. José Ornelas Carvalho – Superior General
Fr. Claudio Dalla Zuanna – Vicar General
Fr. Paulus Sugino – General Councilor
Fr. Clàudio Weber – General Councilor
Fr. John van den Hengel – General Councilor
Fr. Albert Lingwengwe – General Councilor
Fr. Aquilino Mielgo Domínguez – General Bursar