

# *Proposals CLM General Assembly Roma 2018*



## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The 6<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the CLM has been a very intense week of group-works and plenary assemblies in various languages, leading to approvals by consensus.

It was also a week of personal encounters, where we interacted with other people, and we have come to understand a little better how we live our common CLM vocation in the various countries and cultures. We also shared our joys and successes, but also our difficulties and challenges, encouraged to accompany and support those who fall ill. But we all, from this spirit of the International CLM Family, desire to support one another in fulfilling the mission the Lord has entrusted to us as an International CLM Movement.

It was also a privileged time of prayer and shared celebrations. A time to share our faith and our common CLM vocation. Each one called by Jesus to go out to meet humankind, having a personal encounter with the weakest and most marginalised members.

This was also a time when Mary was very much present. In our little crypt we had an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Mary who comes near us as the intercessor of the least ones, of the indigenous peoples of America, making possible the inculturation of our faith. She is a teacher on our journey. Mary leads us to Jesus in this time of Advent, a time of hope. She, in all her different attributes, was very much present during this week, as a mother who desires to journey with us.

At the foot of the altar, the image of Comboni constantly reminded us about the specifics of our vocation. A vocation that seeks to be “Catholic” (universal), because only if we are all united will it be possible to regenerate this World.

A globe of the World also was placed by the altar, representing all these situations we are called to serve, starting from our own mother earth, mistreated by over-exploitation, by taking care of its

children who suffer the inequalities of this world, the unjust distribution of access to the riches and wonders that God placed for all, so that we could have a full life.

On a journey by which we have recognised the path travelled in these six years from every corner of the world. Many have been the realities of our humanity that have come to the surface, as we remembered the places where the CLM are present. We want to continue to be an outgoing Church, never comfortable but one that starts off with humility to accompany the lives of the impoverished ones, that recognises the richness in diversity, that needs to constantly learn with the least ones to discover the face of God in a most complete possible way, the one we have read and discovered in each culture of this world.

A community of communities that wants to be present wherever the Lord places us. Who wants to look around and not to settle down. That approaches these frontier realities, where others do not want to go, and becomes one with the people. Ready to leave one's country or to attend to these mission realities in their own country. Because the mission is not concerned with borders and geographical areas, but with people. A globalised world that needs a common response.

That's why we recognise, we shout, we pray: **One world, one humanity, one common response!**

This is why have sung several times, that *"Tudo está interligado, como se fôssemos um... tudo está interligado nesta casa común"* ("all is interconnected, as if we were one... everything is intertwined in our common home").

Now we enter a time of prayer and discernment in order to perceive the passing of the Lord through our lives, our assembly, to understand the conclusions that received our approval.

It is a time of study, reflection and prayer in each of our communities, because, just like the Word of God, these conclusions, read in the community, may acquire a fuller meaning.

May the Lord grant us the courage to take a step forward and the fidelity to stay with Him on this path of missionary service.

**Now begins the time to make all these resolutions come true!**

#### **CLM FAMILY COMPOSITION**

The CLM are lay people, women and men, in different states of life: single, married and also with children. It is very important to be CML with different states of life: there is great wealth in it, because both singles and married people can reach specific social groups and deal with different tasks.

We must strive to promote our vocation and find ways to guarantee our presence in mission and help the CLM to live their lives fully in the community dimension.

From the assembly have come the following proposals to help us in this regard:

1. In the mission, it is important that a family has its own place, physically separated, with privacy for their family moments, but without assuming to be separated from the community life with the other members. For this, it would be helpful that the CLM community elaborates a community programme that includes moments together with the families and with the single members. This may orient, but without limiting, the common activities.

2. Once a family is in the process of preparation and is willing to leave for the mission, the coordination team must discern, together with them, about the most suitable destination, making first a discernment concerning how to best attend to the needs of the children, especially concerning the school level in the neighbourhood where they are going and the possibility of paediatric follow-up, when applicable. In agreement with the province of destination, the needs of the children must be considered and the financial responsibilities must be defined with the parents. For each case, the possibilities and viability must be evaluated. Children and adolescents, before going to the mission, must receive some preparation (including psychological preparation).
3. For cases of pregnancy during the period in the mission, it is important that the parents always maintain a dialogue with the CLM coordination team of the country of origin and of destination, and that together find the best solutions, especially for the prenatal care of the expectant mother.
4. Community life is a blessing, but sometimes our personal attitudes may create difficulties. We must do our best to follow the international agreements on international communities and talk about all the different issues that our missionary presence may involve as a community, with openness and awareness that the Lord has summoned us together to serve His people.
5. The CLM who live in the same country should meet at least once a year to plan and reflect on the paths to follow as CLM and to share on the work achieved by each community/group. We should also use Skype or any other means to communicate more often.
6. Each CLM community may prepare an annual calendar, scheduling common moments with the nearest CLMs. This may orient, but not limit, the common activities.
7. According to their possibility, the Central Committee should visit the international communities whenever necessary.

### **STRUCTURE AND LEGAL RECOGNITION**

We agree that the organizational structures of the CLM movement should be as simple as possible. We believe that the current structure of our CLM organization is good, the problem is how to put into practice the decisions made by the Committees and Continental Assemblies.

We recognise the role of the Central Committee in coordinating at worldwide level the activities of the LMC movement.

#### **At general level:**

8. We must make greater efforts to achieve autonomy in all fields.
9. We must continue taking steps in view of legal recognition, at ecclesiastical level as well as at civil level, in the various countries and at international level.

#### **In order to strengthen the groups of each country/province/circumscription and continental organisation, we propose:**

10. That each CLM within its responsibilities “assumes what needs to be done and does it well”;
11. To become aware that the way to autonomy goes through an organisational, economic and formative strengthening;

12. That both the CLM and the MCCJ adviser know the international and continental agreements, as well as that these agreements have to be included in the various directories;
13. After the continental and intercontinental meetings, the group from each country will meet to include in and adapt to their situations the commitments taken in the aforesaid meetings by inserting them into their own group's plan of action.

**Each CLM group must have in each country:**

14. A Coordinating Team made up of: a coordinator, a secretary and a treasurer. This team must send its reports to the Continental and Central Committee.
15. A person in charge of communication (Blog, Facebook, Twitter...).
16. A Formation Team which must: plan and prepare the topics of formation; ensure the follow-up and the evaluation of the formation given.
17. Each group must have someone from those in charge of formation who will be networking with those responsible at the national level.
18. As we only have one CLM group in each country, which includes local and expatriate members, we should have a common program decided in the assembly of each country, a coordinating team that shares the responsibilities and makes all the important decisions together. Those CLM who live close to one another, should also try to share some activities, prayers, meals, formation...

**Responsibilities of the Continental Committee:**

19. To have a coordinating team with a coordinator, a secretary and a treasurer.
20. To call and prepare the continental meetings;
21. To make an effort to implement the decisions made in the previous assemblies (whether continental or international); starting from the different topics treated by the Assembly itself (identity, organisation, formation, communication, finances and Comboni Family)...
22. To be in constant communication with the Central Committee and the groups within the continent;
23. To promote communication with the different countries;
24. To encourage meetings among the coordinators of the different countries to exchange experiences, formation, organisation... in order to follow up the agreements taken. These meetings could also be considered for the different services within the groups, such as finances, formation, communication, etc.

**Within the work of the Central Committee:**

25. We believe that it is still necessary to have a person fully dedicated to the movement. This person should receive a fair compensation. To avoid excessive centralisation, the tasks of the Central Committee should be discussed and shared by the different members.
26. To avoid excessive centralisation of the movement, the continental Committees and the coordination teams of each country must be more active and implement their specific tasks.

## **INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES (Organisation)**

As we all know, at the beginning of our CLM movement, the different groups of each country were responsible for maintaining our missionary presence. In 2006, at the European meeting at Granada, we seriously discussed the possibility of making the various groups responsible of our presence in the mission. Instead of opening new presences, we could share those communities where a group is already present but without being able to assure continuity to our presence. With this idea of collaboration, emerged the so-called “international communities”, such as those that would not be sustained by one country but by different countries (internationally). Even before, we had experiences where CLM from different countries were staying in the same community in the mission, but since then a decision was officially taken. Subsequently, in the international assembly of Maia, it was approved that: “We are committed to ensure the continuity of the CLM communities, especially the international communities; this, therefore, will be our priority when we come to discernment”.

### **Concrete proposals:**

27. Some of our international communities have a priority character, which does not mean that they are better than the rest of our missionary presences, but simply that we commit ourselves to ensure “priority” for their continuity.
28. We must plan to have an international CLM community in an English-speaking country.
29. Let us try to internationalise our missionary presences. To give continuity where we have an international presence and have internationality in the other places where we serve as CLM.
30. Continuity of missionary presence is a value for us, but we cannot forget that the needs of the mission and professional skills are also important factors in choosing the country where the CLM have to be sent.
31. When possible, it is better to open a second community in the same country that to open one in a new country.
32. Decision about where to send people will be taken through the Central Committee in dialogue with the CLM groups, MCCJ provinces involved and continental committees when possible.
33. We will try to review our collaboration agreements with the MCCJ provinces where the CLM must present themselves as missionary agents with whom to collaborate as a Comboni Family. Involve them in the decision as a main partner and with the possibility of giving continuity to our presence simply by communicating the sending of new people to the MCCJ province.
34. Every CLM who is going to be sent to an international community should have a period of formation in a community experience and study the “International Community Charter” in order to facilitate our missionary presence.
35. Decisions about international communities should involve, in the first place, the community itself, the CLM coordinating teams of the country of origin of the groups and of the welcoming groups, the MCCJ provincials involved and the Central Committee.
36. We must be more careful with the transitions in the mission. The CLM should not be changed all at once. We must give time for the new ones to be together with those who can have the time to introduce them to the culture and the situation.

## FINANCIAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Undoubtedly we all agree that financial self-sufficiency is one of our greatest challenges. To reach it the assembly proposes the following:

37. We intend to include the financial aspect in our spiritual life, in order to live a life based on Providence. In this context, we ask the groups to include the issue of how we relate to money in our formation programs, placing our solidity and trust in God.
38. The International Common Fund is a fundamental means for the CLM movement. Each group should regularly make a free contribution, annually and fixed in each country after a proper financial discernment.
39. Knowing that we all belong to the CLM Family, we are called to be responsible to support the group. In this sense, all the CLM must contribute to the local fund of the group. From this fund, the group in turn should contribute to the international common fund, managed by the Central Committee (one can also contribute to it as CLM at individual level). We know the difficulties and the differences between the realities of each country where we are present, but we also believe that everyone has some ways to contribute. Nowadays it is left to the discernment of each group about how everyone can contribute. Each member must assume his/her responsibility for the sustainability of the movement. It can be done with money contributions, but also with goods or work. For example, a group may choose to till a field and to sell the produce to generate funds. One may help with the seeds, others by making an area available, others through labour, others with the negotiation process or with the transport. Another possibility would be to send handicrafts from one country to another (for example, through missionaries who travel abroad) and, in accordance with the groups, share the outcomes of the selling. Every country should gather information and try to create an association or other type of juridical and/or ecclesial structure to get external financing according to each country's circumstances.
40. Do not wait until the end of the year to make your contributions and to inform the treasurer of the Central Committee.
41. The treasurer of the Central Committee will send the annual budget and the annual expenditure report to the different countries. Transparency is very important and encourages the increase in contributions.
42. We must be co-responsible for the missions. We invite countries with more possibilities to help the CLM of other countries, as we are one single movement.
43. Continental financial support may be made through the international fund, with a limit to each continental committee. To carry out some continental activities, the Continental Committee may make a request to the Central Committee for resources from the international fund. The Central Committee will analyse the viability of the financial support for the respective activity and the funds available, and will reply to the request according to the possibilities. The request has to be made at least one month in advance. The person who has made the request and has received the financial support, must send a report on how the money was used for accounting and transparency.

44. In the process of our financial self-sufficiency, we also invite the various groups to include in their formation program the economic aspects, such as the development of projects based on the local needs, the search for funds, the keeping of the accounts, etc.

### **THE COMMON CLM FORMATION**

During the assembly we discussed about how formation strengthens our identity and vocation. And how a common formation helps us to recognise ourselves and grow as an international CLM Family.

#### **Two general elements emerged:**

45. Formation must prepare the candidate for a commitment as a CLM for life.  
46. We have to prepare a common formation guide and also a common evaluation guide.

#### **And also a series of concrete proposals to improve our formation programme:**

47. Each candidate in formation must have a CLM to accompany him/her during the process of discernment. If not possible, a MCCJ may accomplish this task. This accompaniment must continue during his/her missionary service and in the first period after his/her return home.  
48. When possible, we should add to our formation the possibility of a short-term missionary experience.  
49. Do not hesitate to make use of the help of psychologists and other professional people in the formative programs.  
50. Practical tools for conflicts resolution should be introduced in our CLM formative programs.  
51. To dedicate a specific time for formation during our international and continental assemblies.

### **THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE COMBONI LAY MISSIONARIES**

Without material food the body loses strength, without spiritual food the spirit also becomes weak. Our missionary life needs to be constantly fed. A food that we seek personally and in community. Food that we find in the Word, in Prayer, in Meditation, in the Sacraments,... in the Community.

From our assembly we propose the following challenges:

52. We have to transform our heart in order to transform the world, because the first evangelisation goes through us (announcement and denunciation). The SPIRITUALITY of the CLM needs to be cultivated and deepened in the context of a journey of unceasing formation in the spirit of Saint Daniel Comboni in the light of the Gospel. It is a personal and community formation, through local and international meetings.  
53. The centre of the CLM spirituality is to be witnesses. That is why we encourage mission promotion in the churches of our areas (promotion of missionary awareness).  
54. We have to have fraternal meetings with the CLM at the local level (spiritual retreat) to share in prayer and in the Word.  
55. The CLM must live their sacramental and spiritual life with coherence.  
56. We encourage all the CLM to know and pray the prayer of the Comboni Family.

Through these commitments, we are called to bond faith with life, to walk and live in history knowing that God and the spirit of Saint Daniel Comboni live with us.

### **LIVING THE COMBONI CHARISM**

We are the bearers of a great treasure, the vocation of Comboni Lay Missionaries scattered throughout the world. And within this call and specific vocation for life, it is necessary to carry out a process of discernment of this vocation; to assume an identity of our own, creating a style of living the Christian faith in a personal encounter with Jesus and guided by the teachings of St. Daniel Comboni; the development of the sense of belonging; and, among other elements, a specific preparation in view of the mission, bearing in mind that each mission, each context has its own characteristics; an unceasing ongoing formation, since we are beings in continuous improvement. Committed to a context of mission promotion and missionary experience, it is imperative that we become aware of the need to consolidate a mature and enlightened laity, capable of contributing to its specific mission. Therefore, we propose:

57. To return to the Comboni sources, review its history, documents and teachings of Saint Daniel Comboni;
58. To strengthen or encourage the creation of Laity Groups who desire to share the charism called the “Comboni spirituality”, “Comboni friends”, or similar names, wherever we are present. All based on a work of Formation, Mission Promotion and the Commitment to JPIC. Establishing national networks, encouraging commitment and efforts worldwide, mission beyond our borders...
59. To offer a course on Comboni Spirituality of the Comboni Family where lay people can participate (physically or online). Through an in-depth study of the Comboni sources, the course should provide the participants with the experience of being a Comboni member today in their specific life environment and mission. It should also be a time to reflect and to give a new meaning to our Comboni heritage.
60. To publicise missionary experiences as Comboni Family.
61. Participation in meetings with other lay missionaries strengthens our identity and helps us spread the Comboni charism.
62. We need common worldwide ways of identification: CLM Day (Third Sunday of Advent – the Sunday of Joy), CLM logo, CLM song, CLM motto, CLM T-shirt... Remembrance of our deceased CLM, trying to identify them in the countries we work.

### **MISSION AD GENTES AND INTER GENTES**

The CLM movement is born to serve the missionary needs of the world. To attend to these needs, to meet people, to leave our own personal, cultural and country boundaries continues to be our priority as CLM. We have to provide a double response from our vocation to the call to leave our own culture: both at personal level (the call received by each one of us) and at the level of CLM group (assuming the responsibility as a group that enables others to go and do so on our behalf), opening the Church to its missionary dimension.

We know that the mission cannot be understood only in geographical terms. In a globalised world like the one we live in, we need to respond in a way that transcends these needs. To recognise and commit ourselves as CLM Family in these new realities, found both outside and within our countries, is essential in our service as a missionary movement. Not only acting on the consequences but above all on the causes of an unjust world.

We believe that the missionary exit from one's own culture, language, etc. is a constitutive part of our missionary vocation and a moment of grace for all the CLM. And, like Comboni, we recognise that those who give their lives for the mission and make it the centre of their life, whether leaving or remaining in their country of origin, are an essential part of our CLM Family, having the same rights and duties. By placing the mission at the centre and by placing ourselves all at its service, we will form a great family that will allow us a better missionary service to the poorest and most abandoned of the world in each historical age.

It is this characteristic of serving the mission of God, in the moment and place that the Lord places us at each moment, which should characterise us as CML, and not just the time that we remain outside of our country. This is the vocational proposal that we must make to all those who wish to join our missionary movement, both to those who will leave their home country and to those who in their own country will offer their life for the mission (in the missionary services within their own country, in formation, mission promotion, fund-raising, etc.).

We also encourage our groups to establish missionary communities within their own countries, at the service of different missionary realities, such as attention to indigenous peoples, immigrants, JPIC, pastoral work in areas not sufficiently evangelised, etc.

It is by being all united and assuming the co-responsibility for our common mission that we assume the International CLM Movement.

#### **Concrete proposals:**

63. The various countries should present ideas and concrete proposals of mission work within their own country at the next continental assemblies. We could share this reflection through our Moodle platform.
64. To prepare a general guide for all the countries or provinces where the CLM are present and have candidates to go to the mission *ad gentes*, in order to facilitate and expedite the procedures between the province sending them and the province receiving them. The countries that have already received or sent CLM could send their contributions to the Central Committee to help them prepare this general guide.
65. To sensitise the MCCJ to continue supporting and encouraging the CLM who want to go on an *ad gentes* mission in countries or provinces that have a Comboni presence.
66. Let us grow in our knowledge on Missiology, sharing the reflection as Comboni Family.

## **CLM VOCATION PROMOTION**

The mission needs missionaries who can bring the love of God to the farthest corners and to the most needy people.

We know that the best vocation promotion method is our **life witness**. Therefore, to be present, as lay people, in the ecclesial and social realities of our environment must be an important part of our missionary going out.

We know that it does not depend on us but on the Master of the harvest. But it is in our power to encourage the vocation of those who are called to the mission.

As indicated in the text “CLM Vocation Promotion” of 2015, we encourage you to carry out a **systematic plan of vocation promotion** in our groups. We could begin with this proposal or with other proposals that we can share.

### **Concrete proposals:**

67. To share our vocation promotion plans and material through our formation platform.
68. To collaborate with other missionary groups in vocation promotion and especially as Comboni Family.
69. To pray for vocations. Have patience and learn to wait.
70. Vocation promotion should lead to involve young people in our activities.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **Invitation to personal responsibility:**

What is the use of having so much communication means, if we do not make use of it? Communication is essential for the success of mission and it is the responsibility of all the CLM, as it has been for St. Daniel Comboni.

### **Internal communication**

We propose to have a communication team or a secretary for each country. This is not just someone to publish in the blog or to write articles, but someone who motivates and encourages communication among the CLM of his/her country as an essential part of our being missionaries.

### **We recommend:**

71. To give more importance in the training in communication.
72. To renew the list of volunteer translators (each country should designate people) and then share the translations with other countries.
73. To improve the work in the network with the CLM of the international communities, the continental committees, the Central Committee and the Comboni Family.
74. To facilitate the integration of new CLM in the local CLM groups, we must strengthen communications and networking between the sending group and the receiving group, the Central Committee, the Continental Committees and the MCCJ provincials.

75. To regularly share news and/or documents of the local coordinating team with the Continental and Central Committees.
76. To implement blogs at local, national and international level and empower the networking with social institutions, families, etc. To share the local wealth of information by having each group send an article to the international blog every two months.
77. To filter and publicise communication in a more articulate way; to search for new forms of communication. It is important to send the minutes and the conclusions of your meetings, which can be accompanied by summaries, videos, or key ideas. People sometimes get tired of long pages.
78. To check for available communication means in every country and to provide standardised information (making sure that everybody receives all that is published).
79. To subscribe to the local and international blogs; updating other current communication tools such as Facebook pages, newsletters and so on.
80. To create new means, such as an App (to upload photos and other material), e-cloud, Instagram, Twitter, etc. So that the documents that appear on the website are linked and show links to news blogs. In addition, a daily thought or phrase of Comboni... Keeping information in the mobile today is fundamental. According to our possibilities we will work on all this, aware that it will require a lot of work.
81. To prepare a guideline on communication to be used by the CLM to answer questions about communication procedure, its structure, the dates when the reports and any topic relating to communication must be done.

### **External communication**

82. To publicise our being CLM and the realities of mission life through the social media, in order to help mission and vocation promotion. We recognise the importance of social networks but we also remind you of the new data protection laws.
83. To print information material to make it available to people who have no access to internet, so that they too may know us.
84. To create / improve a mailing list of contacts belonging to the fields of journalism, culture, dioceses, NGOs and other associations in order to reach larger areas of our contemporary society;
85. To collaborate with the Comboni missionary media in each country so that we may let our voice be heard and also be in touch with the local media beyond the Comboni Family.
86. On extraordinary occasions (international meetings, etc.) to organise press conferences with local key-speakers from the fields of politics, dioceses, etc. If this is not possible, at least to send press releases to local journalists and bloggers for publication in local media.

## **JUSTICE, PEACE AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION**

In a world where there are still many injustices, inequalities and violence, we are inspired by the encyclical “Laudato Si” of Pope Francis and by our own Comboni charism in the commitment to Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation as one of the signs of the times of mission today.

In order that the CLM groups of every country may enter into a process of collaboration and articulation of the topics of JPIC in a progressive way, we formulate the following proposals to be assumed progressively:

87. To encourage a debate and reflection in the various CLM groups to see how to organise the JPIC issues in each country, starting by questioning our lifestyle.
88. The CLM in each country could have a JPIC promoter, according to the needs and the situation of our presence.
89. To encourage the creation of a JPIC commission (if it does not exist yet) in each country as a Comboni Family.
90. To collaborate with the concrete work that already exists as a Comboni Family in each country and at international level (for this we could have a CLM promoter of JPIC at the international level, who may be our representative in the Comboni Network and responsible for linking the different experiences of our presence). Likewise, we encourage to enter in the networks already created by other social organisations, since the work of JPIC is something that must be addressed in a global way.
91. To choose a specific theme of JPIC (for example: ecology, mining, immigration, violence against women ...) and work to deepen it, but without forgetting that in JPIC a global discernment is necessary.

### **THE COMBONI FAMILY**

Our dream as Comboni Family (Brothers, Fathers, Sisters, Secular and Lay people) revolves around a closer relationship among all its members, working together and in co-responsibility; where we all feel brothers and sisters, living and sharing the spirit of Comboni.

#### **To achieve this dream we propose:**

92. To organise a meeting of the Comboni Family in each country, according to the situation.
93. To develop a common project as Comboni Family in each country, where all work in co-responsibility.
94. To coordinate the work as Comboni Family in each country: to prepare proposals, joint activities, prayers, retreats, formation...
95. Where there are other lay groups that live the same charism, we must get to know them and find ways to collaborate.
96. To celebrate as Comboni Family the day of Saint Daniel Comboni and organise ourselves a meeting in which we invite the members of the Comboni Family to participate. (This meeting could take place during our CLM day).