



SUPERIORE GENERALE  
DELLA CONGREGAZIONE DEI CHIERICI MARIANI  
DELL'IMMACOLATA CONCEZIONE DELLA B. V. M.

VIA CORSICA, 1 – 00198 ROMA, ITALIA

**LETTER FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION  
OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY 2022**

Rome, December 8, 2022.

Prot. n. 226/2022

Dear confreres,

The titular Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary is for all of us a day of common celebration and prayer for our religious community. It is a day of gratitude to God, both for the gift of the Congregation's existence and for the grace of the Marian vocation of each one of us. This year's celebration directs our thoughts to several circumstances. First of all, we are still celebrating the 350th Anniversary of the origin of our Congregation and, therefore, like every jubilee in the biblical and ecclesiastical tradition, it is a time of grace. Secondly, we are all aware that the extremely aggressive and brutal Russian aggression against Ukraine continues, where, amidst thousands of innocent victims and endless suffering, many of our confreres are experiencing constant threats to their lives. Let us support them with our spiritual and material help. In addition, the whole Congregation is going through a time of Chapters: House Chapters, Provincial Chapters, General Vicariate Chapters and finally the General Chapter. In the near future, the election of a new government, both General and Provincial, will take place. We entrust all these matters to the care of the Immaculate Mother of the Lord, our Mother and Patroness.

**Marian Fathers School of Spirituality of the Immaculate Conception of Mary**

The celebration of the 350th Anniversary of the origin of the Congregation, although limited because of the pandemic, has already borne some fruit. One of them is the definition of our spirituality and its designation as *the Marian Fathers School of Spirituality of the Immaculate Conception of Mary*. In classical spiritual theology, a *school of spirituality* meant a path of the spiritual life in which three elements are essential: a master - preferably a saint, confirmed by a canonization decision of the Church; a doctrine of the spiritual life, preferably if it introduces some original or new elements into spiritual theology; a group of disciples - followers striving to accept, deepen, and pass on to others, the lifestyle and teachings of the master-founder.

In our case, all three elements are present, although they are stretched out in time and the disciples were not always able to elaborate the doctrine from the perspective of spiritual theology. Rather, there was a lot of intuition, more of an account of the lifestyle and spiritual matters most important to St. Stanislaus Papczyński, and there were difficulties in determining the most doctrinally significant element of the concept of the spiritual life.

Recent years have brought a certain renewal of theological and spiritual thought. The gifts of Divine Providence, such as the Beatification and Canonization of our Founder, and earlier, the Beatification of Blessed George Matulaitis, the Renovator; moreover, the recently celebrated 100th Anniversary of the Renewal and the present Jubilee, have been received by our Community as special graces and spiritual experiences of our Religious Community. Consequently, they have inspired us to reflect not only on the life of the holy Master of our school of spirituality, but also





on more significant events in the history of the Community and the most important elements of our spiritual doctrine. This found its proper expression in the renewed Constitutions, in which point 2 is entitled *The Essence of the Charism*. It states that "the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin is the essence of the charism of the Congregation and has been, from the very beginning, a particular sign, strength, and joy of the Marian vocation. From this mystery flow the identity and mission of the Congregation." From the charism flows the spirituality and it is the way of living it. All of this, seen in terms of spiritual theology, gives rise to a doctrine. Directly or indirectly, such a process has taken place throughout our history and today we have become aware of its fruits in the form of the name, the *Marian Fathers School of Spirituality of the Immaculate Conception of Mary*. In addition to the great schools of spirituality, such as the Augustinian, Benedictine, Dominican, Franciscan, Carmelite, and Ignatian, there are also smaller schools of spirituality. Such is ours, initiated 350 years ago, based on the life and doctrine of St. Stanislaus, our Father Founder. Numerous disciples and followers of our Father Founder have joined this school, and some of them have attained a high degree of sanctity, confirmed by the Church. Today, perhaps more than ever, thanks to the grace of the Jubilee and, as we believe, the action of the Holy Spirit who gave birth to our community, we realize the importance of the spiritual legacy passed down through generations of Marians. Thus, we notice, as it were, anew, the ever-present elements of our tradition, such as:

- the centrality of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of the Lord, her path of holiness from the moment of her conception until her passage to the House of the Father (Mary as *Templum Dei Mysticum*), her devotion to God and her concern to bring the Good News to every human being;

- the act of the *Oblatio*, performed on December 11, 1670 and giving birth to our Congregation; it expresses an *oblative spirituality* and draws its inspiration from the Eucharist (*oblata* - the gifts of bread and wine, which, thanks to the action of the Holy Spirit and man's cooperation, become the Body and Blood of Christ - the Eucharist and the Sacrifice - *Oblatio*); the act of *self-sacrifice* of Father Stanislaus is a creative response to the *Divine vision* granted by the *Spirit of God* to the Founder while he was still in the Piarist Order;

- the sources of our Congregation's spirituality, expressing the *founding spirit* of our holy Founder, such as, among others, *Norma Vitae*, *Fundatio Domus Recollectionis*, *Templum Dei Mysticum*, and others;

- the continuity of the charism and the identity of the spirituality, in spite of the great adversities which the Congregation underwent, including dependence on external factors (for example, the Franciscans Friars), the reforms (the periods of K. Wyszynski and R. Nowicki), the changes in the structures and forms of the Congregation (the time of Blessed George), etc. In this history, we see constant references to the center of our spirituality, that is, to the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, even if it was not always passed on by our formators and predecessors or was not always fully realized. The most characteristic thing here is the confession of Blessed George, who did not have the opportunity to receive a full religious formation from the last of the Marians, Fr. Vincent Sękowski, and yet writes: "I thank You, Lord, for having given me such extraordinary feelings of love for the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the past, I found this prayer difficult. But now, how sweet it is to fall at Her feet and to immerse myself in prayer! Overwhelmed by these feelings of incomparable sweetness, my soul swoons and my body is filled with wondrous, incomprehensible, and inexpressible tremors" (*Journal*, p. 60). Without a doubt, this proves that a charism is a special action of the Holy Spirit and His gift. Conceived in this way,





the charism shapes the spirituality. The description of the spirituality is a theological-spiritual reflection, most often already done by the disciples of a certain school and the followers of the master.

Generally speaking, this view of our spirituality can be found in the draft of the message of the forthcoming General Chapter prepared by the Jubilee Commission.

### **General Chapter 2023**

The 53rd General Chapter will be held from February 6-18, 2023, at our General House in Rome. It is celebrated every six years. It is associated with the Chapters of the Provinces and General Vicariates. It is a special and important time for the Congregation and should be embraced in the prayer of our whole community. For this reason, in my letter convening the General Chapter, I asked that all the confreres pray the Jubilee Prayer every day from September 8 of this year, and from January 27, 2023, the Feast of Blessed George, the Sequence to the Holy Spirit (*Come, Holy Spirit*). We wish to pray for an abundant action of the Holy Spirit during the Chapter and for openness of hearts and minds to His inspiration both for the participants of the Chapter and for all the members of our Congregation.

The Chapter will begin with a Day of Recollection during which Mass will be celebrated in the Papal Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. The Mass will be presided over and the homily will be given by Cardinal Stanislaw Ryłko. After Mass, in front of the image of Our Lady *Salus Populi Romani*, all the members of the Chapter will make an Act of Entrustment of the Congregation to our Immaculate Mother and Patroness. The formula of the Act of Entrustment and the hour of the prayer will be communicated to all of the confreres in advance, so that our local communities, united spiritually, can make their Entrustment at the same time. We will repeat this same Act of Entrustment at the end of the Jubilee, on the Patronal Feast of December 8, 2023.

The General Chapter has the tasks outlined in our laws (cf. C 258) and will try to complete them within a period of two weeks - the conclusion is planned for February 18, although we all know that the final decision will depend on the Chapter members themselves. In addition to the objectives set out in our law for the Chapter to achieve, one of the themes of the Chapter will be a reflection on the self-awareness of the Congregation in the context of the Jubilee, the identification of possible ways forward, a proposal to undertake new works and other issues connected with any proposals that come before the Chapter. The Jubilee Commission has also prepared a draft of the Chapter's message to the Congregation on the occasion of the Jubilee. The Chapter itself will take place during the Jubilee period and will be one of the events planned for it.

If we accept with faith that God speaks to us not only through words but also through deeds-events (cf. Constitution *Dei Verbum*, 2), then undoubtedly, the General Chapter of the Congregation is one such event. It is the space for the action of the Holy Spirit in our personal and communal life. The fears that sometimes arise as to whether the decisions of the General Chapter are in accord with the will of God and whether the work of Divine Providence is present in them are a sign of our struggle in the life of faith and ought to be overcome by trust in the Holy Spirit. We have no other criteria for evaluating Chapter decisions than those defined by religious tradition, Church law, and our Constitutions and Directory. Any decision taken in accordance with our Constitutions and subsequently approved by the Holy Father is always an expression of God's will and an act of Divine Providence. No one's arbitrariness or manipulation can be assumed in advance, and even if it were to happen, there are ecclesiastical ways of verifying such decisions. This is done primarily through the final approval of Chapter decisions by the Holy Father. Of



course, there are times when decisions may not be in line with our expectations, perceptions, or emotions, but if they are decided by the Holy See, we ultimately recognize them as actions of Divine Providence. We have two great examples of such an action of Divine Providence: the first is the necessity to adopt a religious rule and a different kind of approval for the Congregation than our holy Father Founder had imagined; the second is the rejection of certain elements of the Congregation's reform presented by Blessed George to the Holy See. Both of them accepted the decisions, which were contrary to their intentions and contrary to their will, precisely as an act of Divine Providence. Therefore, in the case of any changes made by the Chapter, the guarantor of what is an action of Divine Providence is the final decision of the Holy Father, and it is in this way that we accept them in faith. This is precisely how the changes in our most recent Constitutions have been made. I encourage you to have a healthy and greater confidence in the action of God's Providence in our personal and communal lives.

**Dear confreres,**

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary always has a special meaning for us: today, we are renewing our religious vows, surrounding ourselves with mutual prayer, kindness, and care. Let us especially remember our elderly confreres, the sick, and those who have left this world in the past year, passing on to the House of the Father. As a religious community, united by the bonds of faith, hope and love, living the same charism, we give thanks to the merciful God for the great gifts of His goodness for us, especially those that have recently been bestowed upon us. We commend to the Holy Spirit our General and Provincial Chapters. We are aware that much depends on our openness to the light of the Holy Spirit and our docility to His inspirations. Today, I entrust our entire community to the merciful God and to the intercession of the saints, especially to the Immaculate Mother of the Lord, to our holy Father Founder Stanislaus, Blessed George, the Renovator of our Congregation, and to Blessed Anthony and George, our martyrs.

*Immaculata Virginis Mariae Conceptio sit nobis salus et protectio!*



*Andrzej Pakuła*  
Andrzej Pakuła, MIC  
Superior General