



***MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER GENERAL
TO THE TRINITARIAN FAMILY
ON THE OCCASION OF THE SOLEMNITY OF SAINT JOHN DE MATHA
AND THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD***

B. S. SS. T.

1. INTRODUCTION

Two significant events for our religious family have recently taken place in Rome: the launch of a collaborative project with the Pontifical Gregorian University through a conference on religious freedom, and the installation of the *Signum Ordinis* in the Vatican Gardens. Both events were organized by the General SIT, which this year celebrates the 25th anniversary of its founding. The first event opens new horizons for our mission, standing in solidarity with those who suffer for their faith. The second event serves as a profound reminder of the charismatic roots of our spirituality and apostolate. These roots call us to remain faithful to the original inspiration of our founder and to bring that vision to life in our present context a time profoundly marked by the rise of religious persecution, especially against Christians.



The conference on religious freedom not only highlighted the relevance and complexity of this issue but also introduced the collaborative initiative called the “Resource of St. John de Matha.” This initiative includes a course on religious freedom and a two-year research project culminating in a scholarly publication. As I emphasized during the project’s presentation, this partnership between the historical and charismatic experience of our religious family and an academic institution promises to yield significant benefits for all. Our mission will gain strength from the depth of theological reflection, while theological thought will be enriched by real-life examples of dedication and commitment to safeguarding the freedom of every believer.

The installation of the Cosmatesque mosaic in the Vatican Gardens was another significant event. The mosaic, crafted in the workshops of the rehabilitation center in Bernalda, Italy, was generously donated by the Province of St. John de Matha. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the staff and residents of the center, as well as to the Provincial Minister, Fr. Rocco Cosi, for their dedication and generosity. Cardinal Fernando Vérgez Alzaga, President of the Governorate of the Vatican City State, presided over the blessing ceremony and conveyed greetings and blessings from the Holy Father. Upon learning about this initiative, Pope Francis shared words of gratitude, further enriching the occasion with his spiritual support.

As we look ahead to the new year, we eagerly anticipate many significant events, both for the universal Church and for our religious family.

2. SYNODALITY AS A STYLE AND METHOD OF OUR JOURNEY

The Synod of Bishops on the theme of synodality in the Church concluded just a few weeks ago. The insights offered in the final document are a valuable gift for our journey ahead. This Synod reminds us that, in both the Church and our religious family, authentic renewal is impossible without conversion. Throughout history, the Church has advanced through conversion processes initiated by God’s presence, love, word, and grace. When we encounter Christ and His Gospel, what we receive are not yet the fully ripened fruits, but the signs of a new life and a new world. We are called to nurture these signs, allowing them to sprout and bear fruit within us, among us, and in collaboration with everyone.

As Abbot Mauro Lepori insightfully observed: “Synodality too must not be claimed as a fruit without seeds and without roots, because then it risks becoming just another phenomenon resembling unripe grapes produced by the brambles of our own initiative and will, rather than the true vine that is Christ, present in the Church, animated by the Spirit, and who asks us to remain united with Him like branches.”

The root of the synodal way is the mystery of the Holy Trinity, which for us is a calling to embrace and live the gift of communion. Divine communion is both a profound mystery and a precious gift. It is not merely a theoretical concept but a lived experience in which we are invited to participate.

Rooted in the Trinity, we are pilgrims journeying along the often winding and challenging roads of the world, bringing the light of the Gospel to every corner. We are called to renew the missionary zeal that has always defined the Church and, within it, our religious family. Today's challenge is to embrace boldness in the mission of evangelization, which includes upholding the dignity of every person. May our passion for the poor and the captives inspire our initiatives, fuel our creativity, and transform us into courageous missionary disciples.

The Church, through the authoritative voice of her Magisterium, calls us to be a "prophetic voice," particularly by embodying the gift of fraternity that transcends all barriers, prejudices, and divisions. As stated in the Synod Final Document: "Today, many communities of consecrated life are a laboratory of interculturality that constitutes a prophecy for the Church and for the world" (no. 65).

3. THE GENERAL CHAPTER OF RELIGIOUS: AN EVENT OF GRACE FOR THE WHOLE TRINITARIAN FAMILY

Outstanding expressions of synodality are the Chapters celebrated at the Local, Provincial, and General levels. We are preparing to celebrate the next General Chapter in a synodal spirit, involving the entire Trinitarian Family in discernment and prayer. A Chapter is more than just a meeting; it is an act of faith, a moment of grace in which the Holy Spirit works. It's not about drafting a business plan for survival but about learning to listen together to the Word of Jesus, trusting in God's presence. The challenges facing religious life are many and crucial for our future. We are called to confront them with a healthy sense of realism, but even more so with deep trust in God. We must ask ourselves: What is the Lord asking of us in this time of crisis? How can we revitalize our religious consecration?

The theme and motto of the Chapter are: "Persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed" (2 Cor 4:9). With this choice, we aim to renew and strengthen our commitment to persecuted Christians around the world. It will be the Holy Spirit who guides us toward new paths and approaches, enabling us to carry out this challenging mission as effectively as possible and respond to the cries of suffering from countless Christians who are victims of unprecedented and heinous violence. We must grow in our awareness of the "flagrant relevance" of the Trinitarian charism, which calls us to serve those deprived of the freedom to

believe—the foundational freedom that is the highest expression of every person’s dignity.

I ask everyone to support this time of preparation for the General Chapter with prayer

4. THE JUBILEE AS AN EVENT OF DELIVERANCE AND A SIGN OF HOPE

The Jubilee that will begin in a few days is a “year of the Lord’s favor” (Is 61:2), a time when God restores to humanity what was lost through sin: forgiveness, freedom, and the joy of faith. In its biblical roots, the Jubilee is presented as a moment of liberation: the liberation of people, the liberation of land, and the return of homes that must once again belong to those who lost them due to calamity, misfortune, debt, or captivity. It marks the end of servitude for those sold to creditors.

We could say that the Jubilee represents the transition from slavery to freedom—from the enslavement of sin to the service of God. This aligns closely with our charism. May this time serve as a precious opportunity for all of us to dive ever deeper into the spiritual richness of the charism of liberation and redemption, which remains more alive and relevant today than ever before. We also find comfort in the words of the Holy Father, who, in the Bull proclaiming the Jubilee, invites us to offer signs of hope. These signs reflect the richness of our apostolate, which leads us to stand with the prisoners, the poor, and the sick. Every aspect of our apostolate—from charity to education, from pastoral care to mission—must always remain grounded in the original charism, which calls us to be instruments of liberation for those experiencing various forms of slavery.

5. 4th CENTENARY OF THE DEATH OF ST MICHAEL OF THE SAINTS AND 2nd CENTENARY OF THE DEATH OF BLESSED ELIZABETH CANORI MORA.

The year 2025 will be marked by two significant anniversaries: the 4th centenary of the death of St. Michael of the Saints and the 2nd centenary of the death of Blessed Elizabeth Canori Mora. Both of these holy figures are united by their extraordinary mystical gifts. Their holiness is the fruit of heroic fidelity to their vocations and to their religious and lay consecration, in keeping with the Rule of St. John de Matha.

In these two great mystics, the love of God triumphed, particularly in their

love for the poor in spirit. As my late predecessor, Fr. José Gamarra, once said, “holiness is the triumph of the love of God the Father, in Christ through the Holy Spirit, in the life of the Christian.” As we celebrate these two centenaries, we will reflect on the simplicity and devotion to prayer of St. Michael of the Saints, and the heroic fidelity to the marriage vow shown by Blessed Elizabeth Canori Mora. We will ask for their intercession on behalf of our religious family, that the Most Holy Trinity may inspire new and generous vocations, both religious and lay, and that we may never lack the gift of new saints, as the world has a constant need of them.

To the intercession of St. Michael of the Saints and Blessed Elizabeth, we entrust our journey and our desire to dedicate our lives to the service of the poor and suffering, bearing witness to the merciful and redemptive charism we share as a Trinitarian Family.

6. MAY IT BE A TIME OF PEACE FOR ALL

Finally, I would like to extend my warmest wishes to all of you, your families, and your communities for the Solemnity of our Founder, St. John de Matha, and for the upcoming Christmas holidays. In this particular moment of history, which we are living through with concern, we are confronted with 59 conflicts that sow destruction and death around the world. One in four people, or two billion individuals, reside in areas affected by war, with 400 million of them being children. These wars also lead to poverty, disease, and migration, but they also generate enormous profits for the arms industry. The arms market is currently one of the most profitable sectors.

Let us call upon the light of Christ, the Prince of Peace (Is 9:6), in this dark time of human history, that He may illuminate our paths and disarm our thoughts, words, and actions. Following the example of St. John de Matha, let us also strive to be true builders and witnesses of peace. May this time of desolation transform into a new dawn of peace. Best wishes to all!

Rome, 8 december 2024

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception



P. fr. Luigi Buccarello O.S.S.T.

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Minister General