

**THE IMPORTANCE AND ROLE OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER AS AN
INTERPRETER OF THE CHARISM AND IDENTITY OF A RELIGIOUS
INSTITUTION**

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ABSTRACT

This article aims at presenting the role of the general chapter in the interpretation of the Charism of the religious institutes. It looks at the meaning of the word Chapter and what happens during religious chapters. It explains the different levels of chapter and how they affect the institutes. Chapter is presented here as an analogous form of an ecumenical councils of the church albeit within the religious institute where positive ideas for on emanate. Every reform in the church is aimed at bringing back the original truth which the spirit inspired from the beginning and which God intended.

Since the Charism of every religious institute is paramount to the life and apostolate of the congregation, the article also presents to us the meaning of Charism, charisms as inspired by the spirit and how the general chapter enhances the understanding of our charism as religious men and women. It gives reasons why every religious should uphold the charism of his/her congregation and live to express in all sincerity, a life in line with the good seed sown in the congregation through the founders and Foundresses.

The article likened the General Chapter to the gathering of Jesus Christ with his disciples citing some biblical indications to the chapter.

Notwithstanding, it also tries to broaden our minds to the consistent working of the Holy Spirit in the founders and foundresses of our institutes, and how through the same spirit, these Charisms are also transmitted from one generation to the next for the continuation of expanding the horizons on the gospel value.

INTRODUCTION:

Religious life is a special call within the church to serve God in humanity and to express the love of Christ in its totality. Religious institutions are made up of men and women who have been called to this special relationship with God. They are people who are called to an interior life of prayer that is expressed in their witness of life through words and works.

While every institute of Consecrated Life has a different name and founders/foundresses, historically consecrated life as such has its origins from the monastic life of the early centuries of the church. Ultimately, all institutes of Consecrated Life have their roots in Jesus Christ, whom their members desire and strive to follow Him more closely. As the change in times is inevitable, this way of

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life got continually reformed from one century to the other. That is why today, we have newer forms of the same religious life.

These reformations are deemed necessary to give way for more realistic ideas to transpire with the already lived pattern, that the religious life could be livable and that the persons called to serve in this way of life, as well as their services could be more useful to the church and the world at large.

Since the relevance of religious communities for the life and holiness of the Church can never be overemphasized, it becomes weighty to examine the lived experience of today's religious communities, whether monastic and contemplative or dedicated to apostolic activity, each according to its own specific character. This is the more reason why the church from time to time calls for a council to put things in place. As the church considers a broader view of sustaining the mission of taking Christ to the people in their very situation and in the places where they are, religious institutions also in their specific way help the church to facilitate the spread of the gospel message. Jesus at the beginning of his public ministry chose from among the people his apostles who worked closely with him. He taught them and trained them on what to do. He did not just stop there, He called them together once in a while to teach them new things. The deeper they went into the work, the more they needed clarifications on the mystery of the incarnation.

We may safely assume that the followers of Jesus were having meetings to discuss pressing matters even after his death. Hence there were the different Councils of the Church, though the first one mentioned appears in Chapter 15 of the Acts of the Apostles, where Luke narrated the event of the Council of Jerusalem, thus:

A great issue faced the Christians. Led by James, head of the Jerusalem

Community, they had focused on converting Jews, and most doubted whether They should spread the faith to Gentiles. The unquestioned champion of Evangelizing the Gentiles was Paul. Basically, Paul presented his case; the assembled leaders, apparently all men, discussed what Paul had said; and James, speaking on behalf of the other leaders under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:28), agreed that the missionaries could go to the Gentiles, and from the discussions that followed arose the "apostolic letter" which was sent through Paul, Barnabas, Barabbas and Silas to Antioch (Acts. 15:22-29). With that the people were given the right directions and they knew exactly what to do and what not to do.

Over the years, in a bid to make the church more organized and to also clear up certain confusions in matters of faith, since the church is constantly faced with oppositions and questions regarding her teachings and traditions, there were 21 councils over a period of 2000 years, among which is the most recent Vatican Council II that has so transformed the face of the Church as well as religious life in general. In today's Church, these Councils are called Ecumenical Councils and they are assemblies of Patriarchs, Cardinals, residing Bishops, Abbots, representatives of

heads of religious orders and other juridical persons, and other persons nominated or invited by the Pope. The purpose of an ecumenical council is to define and/or to expose doctrine, reaffirm truths of the Faith and Morals, and therefore, where necessary, extricate heresy. Ecumenical Councils are convoked by the Pope and their decisions, to be valid, must be approved by the Pope. Participation is limited to the persons who have a right, or are elected, or invited to participate in the assembly; the participants who are enabled to vote cannot delegate their voting rights.

However, although they are technically not the same, the General Chapters or the assembly of the Religious institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life have some similarities with the Ecumenical Councils since they are both linked with the task of moving the Church forward, though at different level. The General chapters of the religious institutes are held according to the frequency established by the particular laws (e.g. the Constitutions) of each Institute or Society. They also elect the Superior leaders of the institutes; most of these leaders have defined terms of office. Only some are elected for life like in the case of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits Fathers).

WHAT IS CHAPTER

According to the HarperCollins encyclopaedia of Catholicism, the Word “chapter” originated with the monastic practice of assembling daily to listen to a reading of a chapter from a monastic rule. Gradually this gathering included discussions and decisions concerning the application of the rule. This assembly often took place in a so-called chapter house.

This definition of chapter given here must have been drafted centuries ago but is not far from what is applicable today.

Chapter in today’s sense is an avenue created for members of religious communities to share ideas, for discussing or passing vital information. Chapter is an opportunity for positive deliberations that can enhance the growth of an institution.

Speaking with an elderly sister of my Congregation (Rev. Sr. Christeta Hess), on what happens during chapter, she said, it is the meeting of sisters from many different cultures and ministry fields in an atmosphere of prayer, sharing, and deliberating with one another. She said chapter helps to deepen our own understanding of what we were called to do and in what kind of congregation. She continued that chapters help to deepen our spirit and charism and that, even in the face of the changing world, when our root is deepened enough in Christ, then change is no problem.

It is imperative to have in mind that every Founder of the religious group would like the identity and spirit with which he began to live on even after they are no more. And that is why even as older members of the Religious institutions get retired or pass on, younger and newer members join and need to be helped to understand and internalize the spirit and charism of the institute. So, there is the constant need to properly transmit the value and nature of the Congregation to the younger members, not just relating it the

way it was expressively lived in the past but as it relates to the situation of our own time and place. This means that it is necessary to interpret the charism of the religious congregation in a way that is understandable to new members and may be better appreciated and expressed by every member. This will help them, particularly the new members, to have a sense of belonging and they can freely and courageously participate in the life. It is the duty of chapters to open the eyes of the entire congregation to these contents of change as we move from one generation to the next, and as we try also to update our traditional modes of expressing our identity, we should hold in high regard our values as handed on by the founders and foundresses.

There are different kinds of chapters. And in recent times, religious chapters take the form of the hierarchical structure of the religious institutions. There is the house or local chapters which involve religious men or women living in a particular community. The content of this level of chapter has basically to do with the issues surrounding the particular community or again to discuss information passed on from the leadership teams as they affect their particular community. Local or house chapter does not make any changes in the affairs of the institute, rather it relates to what is at hand in the current local community. Starting from there, it can of course also develop ideas what could make the life of the total congregation more effective in the present time. The house chapter is held regularly and it helps the community members to be more collaborative in deciding a way they can collectively carry out their apostolates and live community life according to the spirit of their congregation.

Furthermore, there are the Pro-regional, regional and provincial chapters. Here members within a particular country gather with or without a representation of general leadership to deliberate on issues concerning them. These two levels of chapters streamline their discussions to conform to the prior suggestions and decisions of the general chapter. According to the rules of the institute, these Chapters also elect leadership of the level at which it is held.

Similarly, the General Chapter is the assembly of religious men and women from the different provinces, regions and pro-regions as the case may be, where a religious institution has spread. Here the main focus is on how to foster the spread of the gospel values according to the tradition of the congregation. The General Chapter is chaired by the superior general.

The encyclopaedia stated that general chapter promotes the active participation of members of a religious institute in the life and welfare of the institute, that is to say, that the general chapter helps in the integration of the charism and identity of every religious institution. It further listed that protects the institute's patrimony, promotes renewal in the members, publishes norms for observance by the institute and also elects the General leadership team.

Every general chapter's decisions are drawn from the existing composition of the constitution or rule of the institute. And such decisions are not in any way to counter

any provision of the rules of the congregation; rather, the rules should guide the decisions and deliberations of the chapter. The general chapter by the thirteenth century became a requirement for all religious institutes.

CHARISM AND IDENTITY

Charisms are gifts of the Holy Spirit used to serve, sanctify and minister life in the Church and in the world. Ministering life here means, bringing Christ who is life to the world. God the father desired that those he created should enjoy life in abundance. And Jesus during his public ministry, said "I have come that they may have life and have it in full" (John. 10:11) and in another text he said "I am the way, the truth and the life..." (John 14:6). Charisms are the life breathed upon us by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost that we may move without fear to the ends of the earth. They are a manifestation of Jesus' intention to equip his chosen ones for the Mission.

The encyclopaedia of Catholicism has it that, it is a divine spiritual gift to individuals or groups for the good of the community. St. Paul in his first letter to the (1Corinthians, 12:7) expressed, that "to each is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good. All these gifts are activated by one and the same spirit who allots to each one individually just as the spirit chooses". God chooses people, groups or Organizations through the Holy Spirit to work differently but all must be channeled towards the one purpose of spreading God's kingdom which was his mission on earth.

During one of the classes I had as a Novice, my Novice Directress explained intensely, what Charism is. She said the term "Charism" denotes any good gift that flows from God's benevolent love. In other words, it simply means any spiritual gift given to an individual out of God's love for the good of others. This implies that we do not merit the gifts but they are given to us out of the Love God has for us and most importantly they are given to us for the sake and good of others and as such must be used for that purpose.

Furthermore, it can also mean any of the spiritual graces granted to Christians to enable them perform their tasks in the Church. In the narrowest sense, it is a theological term for the extraordinary graces given to individual Christians for the good of others.

These extraordinary spiritual gifts, often termed "Charismatic gifts" are: the word of wisdom, knowledge, increased faith, the gift of healing, the gift of working miracles, prophecy, the discernment of the spirits, diverse kinds of tongues etc. (Cf. 1 Corinthians 12:8-10). To these gifts mentioned above are added the special ministerial gifts of apostles, prophets, teachers, helpers - connected to the service of the poor and the sick - and government or leadership ability which are connected with certain offices in the Church.

The charisms of all religious Orders reflect the actions of our Lord Jesus Christ. The bible explains how to use the gifts of the Spirit in (1 Peter 4:11): "If anyone speaks,

they should do so as one who speaks the very word of God, if any one serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ”.

Religious orders use the word “Charism” to describe their spiritual orientation or any special characteristic of their mission or value. An example might be the works of a teaching order compared to that of a missionary order or one devoted to the care of the poor, the sick and those who are in need of help. The charism of a religious order is the charism of her founder or foundress. By the charism of the founder or foundress, we mean the special grace granted by the Holy Spirit to an individual in order to empower that person to found a religious institute and to configure its shape and identity. When the spirit possesses a soul, the soul grows from strength to strength and this is made manifest in the lives of our founders who understanding their own special charisms, listened more intensely to the movements and promptings of the spirit and so they grew and established into what we have today. The charism of a religious order is what gives the members of that order their identity. Jesus Christ calls all religious to identify with his own way of life since he is the reason for our vocation. We see him in everything; in the Sick, the Poor, the abandoned, the homeless, the voiceless, and the unjustly imprisoned. Therefore whatever we do to these mentioned, we did it for Christ.

. In total humility Christ carried out his own mission on earth, so that he never deviated from the will of his Father who sent him. He is also urging us to do same as expressed in the book “ To live is Christ - Nature and Grace in the Religious life” by Robert W. Gleason “I am all that you see me to be, I have all the perfection that you admire in me, because I am humble. If you wish to be capable of imitating me in everything, in my virtues, in my words, in my actions, in my attitudes towards God and towards man, learn of me to be humble of heart”

In a nutshell, our charism as a religious institute is that identity which gives us a particular and unique character different from other religious orders. For instance, the Charism of The Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ which is to “Propagate Virtue through example, instruction and prayer” differs from that of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul that is devoted to “serving Christ in persons who are Poor through corporal and spiritual works of mercy” as well as that of the Jesuits in which “Dedication to the greater glory of God” is the first feature of their life style. The same applies to other religious institutes like, the Dominicans, Franciscans, Claretians, and Cistercians to mention but a few . All these charisms, though different in words and grammatical presentations, have some similarities in their apostolic expressions. The religious therefore have their root in their charisms. Through these charisms, they express and realize the total giving of themselves to God and to God’s plan of salvation for humankind.

The charism of religious life has three dimensions namely: missionary, apostolic-prophetic and eschatological. It is missionary because it bears witness to the life of Jesus and to the gospel. It becomes apostolic-prophetic when it proposes a new and

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eternal life won by the redemption of Christ. Then its eschatological dimension prefigures or represents the future resurrection and the glory of the heavenly kingdom.

Put differently, the charism of a religious congregation refers to the distinct spirit that animates a religious community and gives it a particular character. Our Charisms are so strong that they cannot be extinguished, even if every written or saved record concerning it is destroyed. It lives on by the testimonies of its members and those whose lives have been and are still touched in one way or the other.

God remains happy with us when we strive both as individuals and as a group to sincerely increase and not to extinguish the light rays that shine forth from our charism -- while we endeavour to express the same charism -- as handed down by the earlier members of our religious Institute. And in doing so we appreciate God each day for his gifts. Those who received these gifts and Charisms from the beginning, lived all their lives in gratitude to God, because they were aware that they received these graces not because of their worthiness or merit, but because it pleased God that they be chosen; and so they remained humble so that God may direct their paths. Blessed Mother Mary Katherine, the Foundress of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ, emphasizes on allowing God's will to prevail. She expressed this often. In one of her letters to her sisters, she wrote for example: "May the holy will of God be done in all things and everywhere in our whole congregation, in all our convents, in all the sisters, in all our works and duties, down to the least until the holy will of God means everything to us. For this we ask, not for what we want or do not want".

Blessed Mary Katherine Kasper, just like other founders of religious institutes, understood herself to be called by the Holy Spirit and in prayer; she faithfully followed the guidance of the spirit. Thus, she experienced her vocation to such handmaid service. Out of her love and passion for the poor, Mother Mary Katherine chose the name "Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ" as the name of her congregation, and this name expresses the charism of her congregation. Handmaid simply means "servant". So our charism is "Readiness to serve through example, instruction and prayer". These services we try to render in love, humility and simplicity and through our services, we propagate and promote virtues.

Consequently, we must gently and obediently embrace the life pattern and methods reserved for us. We are obliged to use our good gifts and talents as members of our religious institutes, for the building up of the institutes we belong to. And in doing this, we are to sincerely submit ourselves wholly to be used by the congregation according to the discretion of the spirit through the superiors.

It is a fact that as persons, we have got some personal values and principles but as religious people, we evaluate each day to see that those are blended to be in conformity with the vision of our founders. As we spread and move into the nooks and crannies of the world, there is the certainty that the people out there will just

stay to watch and see what we are up to. We can only succeed in bringing Christ to them if we remain consistent with our acts of love and justice as Christ did.

It is important that we have a deep knowledge of who Christ is and as individual members, have a personal relationship with him, so we could in turn relate to these others. If we have embraced specific charisms by belonging to a particular institute, let us joyfully represent what we believe in and the identity with which we are marked. What we are called to is a very sensitive course which demands our readiness to take risks at any time. That is why every religious man and woman must be spiritually strong and mature, mature in the sense that we are fully aware of the presence of God working in us. Our Charism brings us into a unique relationship with God. There is something he wants to achieve through us, and so in this relationship, we must each day renew our readiness to make sacrifices, to offer something to God. It is very certain that God cannot ask of us what we cannot give. As Blessed Mary Katherine Kasper puts it in her letter to her sisters in December 28, 1884: "Good sisters work calmly and peacefully ... they take no notice of old age and weakness, for each sister does what she can and God demands nothing more". This is a clear statement that calls for constant self-examination. The hidden question here is, Have I, in all sincerity, worked to the measure of the strength I have received, or do I reserve some energy for a different purpose? One important thing to know is that, God does not just allow us to work by ourselves, rather he accompanies every demand he makes of us with an actualizing grace. This is very much evident in the lives of some important biblical personalities, for example: Abraham and our Blessed Virgin Mary.

Expressively, God's covenant with Abraham is an indication to this, that at the long run in his relationship with God, God asked of him a very un-imaginable sacrifice. The sacrifice of his only Son, Isaac: the only thing Abraham had ever yearned for and he was given. It is truly fascinating, that there was no resistance on the part of Abraham; he did just as God demanded. This is because Abraham had reached a high level in his relationship with God. He had faith in God and believed that even his Son was given to him by God, so ideally he was only returning what he had received. Abraham was fully involved in, and focused on this precious covenant he had with God and would not let anything come between him and God.

Similarly, reflecting shortly on the vocation story of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we could see how she gave up her youthful pleasure for the mission of our salvation. Every religious should take Mary as a model; we should be courageous and strong in carrying out our work. We should be willing to let go of our reservations like our founders did and to give ourselves fully and totally. For Jesus said in the Gospel of Luke. 9:24: "Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me, will save it".

However, Jesus urges us to remain constant in doing good even amidst the chaotic economic and political climate of our time, we should become faithful witnesses of our charism wherever we go, bearing in mind the command of God that

accompanies every Charism “Go into the world and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19).

THE GENERAL CHAPTER AND THE INTERPRETATION OF CHARISM

Every General chapter is like the beginning of a new dawn. It is a period of re-examination, a time of re-evaluating our abilities so far in the transmission of the gospel value embedded in our different Charisms. It is not a time for mediation or settlement of disputes; it is rather a season to peer into the future with the whole congregation, using a single eye.

The interpretation of Charisms usually involves a collective commitment. That is why the general chapter is considered a viable avenue for the purpose. The participants of the general chapter include delegates representing the entire congregation, and so whatever decisions agreed upon by the delegates are generally accepted by the total membership of the religious institution. Since those delegated to the General Chapter meeting are people who to an extent have experienced the life of the institution, the other members await a quality information at their return.

Prior to the general chapter, some committees are set up for a short term, to help look into specific areas of the Congregation. The focus is to see how all the congregational activities could be better carried out in the spirit of the institution.

For instance, there is the evaluation of community living, apostolate, formation, prayer and spirituality, finance management etc. Other aspects are contained within these discussions, even though the tags may differ from one congregation to the other. But the questions are: What was from the beginning, what has been, how effective has it been? Has it worked out with the method that has been chosen? etc.

General Chapter is a time to decide on some positive changes that could enhance the spiritual growth and foster sincere involvement of the members in the work of the congregation. Every religious institute, being members of the church, the body of Christ, systematically possess the characteristics of living things. Every living thing including human beings grows and develops and as this growth takes place there are inevitable changes that must be allowed to enable a holistic growth. The General chapter creates these opportunities for possible changes to take place. Change belongs to the phenomena that demand access to every part of the institution's life. And when a single unit is reframed, restructured or amended, the other parts are also adjusted since the parts of the body are connected to each other. Such access could be likened to, when an application is being downloaded into an Android phone for the first time, it brings up a dialogue box with such inscriptions ... will need an access to some packages (messages, personal information, etc.). The operator is expected to either accept or decline. Declining will mean, remaining with only what is available while accepting will add another package to what is there already and then the operator enjoys an improved version of the gadget.

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The world changes with the passing of decades and centuries. What was possible in one century takes a different dimension in subsequent centuries and so there are changes in ideas, understandings, structures etc. These changes knock at the doors of different congregations as they carry out their work and as they strive to express their identity to the world. Unfortunately they are not allowed entrance in some religious institutions. Some do not want to adapt to anything new and so prefer to remain where they are in their closet, un-contaminated.

Robert W. Gleason in his book, *To live is Christ: Nature and grace in the religious life*, opined that, for many religious, the word adaptation has an ugly sound. It seems to suggest a disguised attack upon those ancient traditions of their order which incarnate the original spiritual intentions of their founders and foundresses. Nevertheless adaptation to modern conditions is a necessity for every religious congregation if it is to continue to meet the needs of the modern mind. In as much as the religious orders grow, spread to different parts of the world, and are open to admit people of recent time and people with modern ideology, it is important also to apply prudence and caution while adapting to any form of change, especially since there is no definite clarity in the economic and social questions in the world.

The General chapter has it as a duty to make sure that no change is made or adapted without considering all aspects of a situation, since it is sometimes difficult to reverse a change once it is introduced. These considerations should begin with the original intention of the founder for the congregation.

Speaking during the 5th general chapter of the Schoenstatt Fathers, the Holy Father Pope Francis stressed the need for religious orders to maintain their Charisms and transmit them accordingly so that they will continually be inspired in their lives and mission. *He further explained that, these charisms are not to be kept in a showcase just for contemplation and it is enough, he said, fidelity to keep the charism pure, in no way means to short it In a sealed bottle, so that it is not contaminated by the outside.* No, he said the charism must be opened and allowed to go out, so that it enters into contact with reality, with persons, with their anxieties and problems. His take is that when our charisms come in contact with reality, the charism grows, it is renewed and the reality is also transformed; it is transfigured by the spiritual force that the charism bears.

Consequently, as members of Christ's body, the spiritual radiance of our charisms should engulf our lives as members; it should penetrate to mingle with the situation within us. Then when we allow ourselves to be transformed from where we are, we can move to touching the lives of others around us in their own very situations. We could systemically change the situations of our environment and our world.

Members of religious orders progress differently in their work and apostolate. And this depends on how a person was able to allow his or herself to be immersed into the spirit of the congregation. It is important, as St. Paul puts it in his second letter to the Corinthians, chapter 3: 4-6, that we do not attribute anything to ourselves, as if it were our own, but to acknowledge that our capacity comes to us from God.

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The General Chapters lays emphasis on the need for the members to pay more attention to the living presence of God working in and with them and to also identify (to) which direction he is pointing to at the time. And this is how we grow with our charism. As Pope Francis suggested earlier, we should be moving and not just to be stuck. If this is the case, the end result will be boredom and members can become worn-out since the spirit is not refreshed and the hope not renewed.

It is an avenue to teach members how to live life outside the enclosed box of their own perceptions which may not really be directing them to the reality all the time. This could also be the case of the whole institute. When a religious institute is so centered in itself, not allowing even the slightest wind from outside to refresh it, it gradually becomes solely self-referential and narcissistic; the human ideology takes precedence rather than the divine idea. This situation could lead to stagnation, so that there will be no room for spreading their wings, for true renewal and becoming disciples of all nations as our Lord Jesus Christ intended it. When there is a progressive movement from the self towards the original root (God) made manifest in humanity, then there will be much success recorded of their life and work.

The General chapter also evaluates the prayer life of the members, and offers new ways in which the members could improve in prayer. Prayer is what sustains every religious. This sincere and gentle dialogue with God who has called us is the key that keeps us safe in his shelter. God is our first love, he is the beginning of our vocation story and he should also be the end. So that in all things, we should always turn to God to seek his will.

In the same vein, Pope Francis said in his address during the 5th General Chapter of the Schoenstatt Fathers; *"It is not good to neglect prayer, or worse still to abandon it. If the Lord does not build a house, in vain do its builders labour"* (Psalm 127:1) furthermore, *"It would be a grave error to think that the Charism of a congregation is kept alive by concentrating on external structures, on schemes, on methods, on the forms"*. He said that *the vitality of the Charism is rooted in the 'first love' (Revelations 2:4).*

There is therefore, the need to once in a while, examine if we are still working in union with our first love, the point of our unity, the place where we have our sense of belonging; the fountain where the hope of our eternal salvation lies. In prayer, we meet with our true selves and we are able to freely unfold our inner poundings to the one who sees everything (Psalm 139).

Conclusively, when we are rooted and well-grounded in our specific charisms, our goodness in relating with one another and the extension we make to those out there who come in contact with us through our services of teaching, counseling, health apostolates, hospitality, charitable services of different kinds, especially as regards to the poor and abandoned. All that can never be short lived. If we take a closer look at our world today, we see people with their violent way of approaching life. Even our environments have remained hostile to those who live in them. Now there should be a different feeling when they come to us. There should be that feeling of peace, serenity, love, kindness, patience, faithfulness, trust and gentleness, we should make

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ourselves the victim for the sacrifice rather than just staying aloof and instructing as Sr. Irene (PHJC) puts it during my interview with her. We should be people who bear within them the seeds of the Holy Spirit. That is why, every general chapter is a new opportunity to re-evaluate our experiences so far and then try to reshuffle our steps

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- Sr. Kelechi Ifoegbu (PHJC)
- Sr. Irene Alonge (PHJC)
- Rev. Cornelius Apili (SJ).