
DIARY OF THE CHAPTER

"Do not be afraid."

**Cal 2017**
Fr. Claude Marechal, aa
Former Superior General

Yes, who does not remember the first words from John Paul II after his election, words often repeated in the Scriptures: “Do not be afraid.” But the words that followed are equally important: “Open, open wide the doors to Christ, to his saving power. Open the national frontiers, the political and economic systems, the immense domain of culture, of civilization and development.” What a wonderful program for a General Chapter whose task is to set the tone for the next six years for the entire Congregation and determine the means to tend toward it if it cannot be perfectly realized. “Men of communion, proposing the Faith, in solidarity with the poor.”

Six years later, the goal remains the same. Is this the easy solution? Yes, if we only change a few words. No, if in faith and prayer, attentive to the four continents so obviously present in the faces of the brothers here, we listen to “what the Spirit has to say to the Churches.” At the rate that all things change, six years means that this is no longer the same world, the same Church, the same people either in Asia or in Africa, in Europe or in America. It is , of course, the same Gospel, the same Rule of Life, but they need to be lived differently.

We need to be faithfully creative and keep our moorings in a faith that is solid and shared in community always open to the Spirit. Lay people and Religious, living the same spirit, making new advances together, empowered by the same basic conviction: “In truth, the one that God has sent says the words of God because God gives him the Spirit in abundance.”

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