

General Chapter 36, in Vietnam Final Message 2023

- Father Norman Pelletier, sss, Superior General from 1993 to 1999, who himself participated in this chapter, was the one who broke the record for participation in General Chapters. Taking up the concept of the Cenacle as a very significant icon, he highlights the strong ideas of our spirituality: prayer, fraternity, and service.

It is important to express our sincere gratitude to the members of the General Chapter for the final message because it reflects the serious work that was accomplished at this General Chapter by the capitulars, the majority of whom were present for the first time. A word of thanks must also be expressed to the members of the Memory and Discernment Commission who organized and articulated this message for the Congregation.

My reflections will be brief and I will not repeat all the ample applicable references that can be found in the original text of the Final Message of the Chapter. What I intend to do is underscore the significant ideas that this Message contains and which were appropriate on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the approval and promulgation of the Rule of Life.

What I found particularly interesting was the focus that the Chapter gave to the CENACLE as the primary icon for the Congregation as it was lived and taught by our saintly founder. Notice must be given to the fact that the Last Supper did not receive the same attention. This icon of the Cenacle clearly sets us in a *post resurrection* reality. That is where we belong as a Eucharistic Congregation, and where we will learn to become a community of disciples and apostles.

A community of disciples and apostles is our goal as we struggle to become more fraternal, prayerful, and service oriented. We must be convinced that we have been called to become and to live as a Eucharistic community marked by the *gift of self* together in prayer and service. This is a vocation that requires discipline, perspective and perseverance.

In order to fulfill the requirements of our vocation we follow in the footsteps of Jesus as our saintly founder did. Here I recall Rule of Life #28 in which we are reminded that Jesus lived his entire life in an atmosphere of prayer. So, let us be very cautious when we place prayer separate as one of the three pillars: fraternity, prayer, and service. To live the Eucharist fully like our saintly founder means that our entire being, fraternity and service reflects this atmosphere of prayer we wish to acquire and hopefully proclaim in community and mission. Like Jesus we aim at offering our *gift of self* to the Father and humanity in an atmosphere of prayer.

These are some of my reflections on the General Chapter's Final Message to the Congregation. I hope and pray that they may be helpful. Keeping you all in love and prayer.

8 April 2025 - original in English

FATHER NORMAN PELLETIER, SSS



Cleveland, U.S.A.