

24 June 2022

Greetings from Rome!

June 24th –has always been a special day for the Congregation:

the birthday of our Founder's patron saint -John the Baptist:
born of Elizabeth,
itinerant preacher who knew his own mission
and who humbly followed it through to the end,
the one who prepared the way for Jesus the Christ.

This description of John the Baptist, does it not also describe
our dear Founder – Jean Baptiste Debrabant?

born of Marie Augustine
in the early 1800's in France

he prepared the way for us – his Holy Union daughters
and sons - for a time
to follow the Christ who calls us to Mission.

In the spirit of John the Baptist of the Scriptures
and Jean Baptiste Debrabant of Douai
both of whom were drawn to the light of Christ,

we, too, are “preparing the way” of journeying together
toward our Collegial Assembly 2023, a journey into
the future.

Our Constitutions move us to reflect on the special significance
of our Collegial Assembly.

“...An ecclesial event it is a privileged moment of
discernment and renewal in the life of the Congregation
and a time of accountability for us, not only for ourselves,
but to the Church and to the world...” Article 114

Today, along with this video introduction, the General Council has
prepared a formal letter convoking the Year of the Collegial Assembly,
which culminates with the 33rd General Chapter, our collegial assembly,
to be held *in person* from July 24 – August 10, 2023, in Nemi, at a Divine
Word Missionaries retreat center, in the foothills of Rome. The Collegial
Assembly is a graced moment for all of us in the Congregation. It is not
just for the chosen few who will assemble in July to formalize the fruits of





all that was shared throughout the year. For all of us, it is our life as Holy Union.

During the Enlarged General Council, the Leaders proposed ideas for the Collegial Assembly theme and logo, and entrusted the final choices to the Collegial Assembly Planning Group in consultation with the General Council. The concepts of mission, oneness, change, and movement together were the key elements to be considered.

We believe that that the theme chosen for the Collegial Assembly embodies these ideas.

“Impelled to respond anew in Mission, together we engage with the diverse changes in our world.”

And how do we prepare the way for this journey before us?

-  By engaging and accompanying one another in this process of reflection, discernment and cross-cultural conversations
-  By praying with and for one another
-  By seeking the Light
-  By believing in the hope of the Paschal Mystery

The Collegial Assembly Planning Group has designed a year-long process of engagement which will be emailed to each of you on June 27th.

With our revered saints to guide us and bless our journeying together, we begin our Year of the Collegial Assembly 2023. We set out on this journey with a prayer prepared by the Planning Group, which you will receive today with the Letter of Convocation. In the near future, you will also receive bookmarks with the logo, theme and prayer.

Holding the Congregation as One,

I voice this prayer now and ask you to pray it daily.

Collegial Assembly 2023 Prayer

God of Faithfulness,

you watch over your people in all times and circumstances.

We thank you for calling us each day to live our charism and
to be co-creators of life on our planet.

May the Spirit guide us through this year of the Collegial Assembly.

This is a graced moment in Holy Union

as we face the challenges before us in this beautiful, fragile world
that longs for wholeness and peace.

Empower us to choose life
for ourselves, others, and all of creation.

Grace us with vision to see beyond the obvious,
to recognize your presence in all that is unfolding.

Stretch us
to feel humanity's joys, hopes, and pain.

Open us
to respond with understanding and compassion.

Impel us
to engage anew with passion for Mission.

God of Surprises,

Stir the waters of transformation within us
as we embrace the future with hope.

Be with us on this journey
as together we celebrate the joy of Incarnation. Amen.

Closing: One Heart, One Soul by Monica Brown*

One Heart One Soul.

fashion in us, O God

One heart, one soul fill us with your own love

United as one in you, one heart, one soul.

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