



## 2010 CROSIER GENERAL CHAPTER

### Starting Afresh from A Place of Light

## Decade of Transformation

### Celebrating Crosier Foundations

I use the State of the Order Report for the extraordinary General Chapter of 2010 to celebrate the gains made among us in this last Decade of Transformation. I outline some of the key moments in the ten-year history and accent the aims we strived to attain for our Crosier Charism.

The originating impulse at the 2000 International Study Days was followed up in the 2001 General Council meeting's endorsement of a decade long preparation for the Great Crosier Jubilee Year of 2010. Now, in 2010, at the Jubilee celebration, we want to take pride in our accomplishments and celebrate our foundational values for another new page in our Crosier religious life history.

The largest part of the report, as will be seen, is that of reporting historical events, important gatherings, and refinements in the course of the decade long journey of faith. The final section concentrates on a retrospective review and evaluation of the gains made among us during this decade.

### Background: International Study Days 2000

The 1997 General Chapter authorized holding a special series of study days on the Crosier Charism. The same chapter established a spirituality resource commission to support the spirituality of the Crosier Order in the different provinces.

The general council determined that the special study days needed to focus attention on a particular aspect of the Crosier Charism. It chose the topic of community life. In 2000, General Assistant Pierre-Paul Walraet organized the meeting of Crosiers to be held in Bandung, Indonesia. The participants came from around the world to discuss, explore, and deepen their understanding of "community" in the Crosier tradition.

A special paper on "Community in the Acts of the Apostles" was commissioned to be studied and prepared by Fr. Tom Jacobs, S.J., from Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Fr. Jacobs had already published research on the understanding of *koinonia* in the letters of St. Paul. The reason for the planning committee to select the use of *koinonia* in the Acts of the Apostles (notably Acts 2.42 and 4.32) is that St. Augustine, who wrote the Rule on Community Life, referred often to the text of Acts as fundamental for the "augustinian form of religious life".

Whenever Augustine quotes the text "one mind and one heart", in numerous contexts, including sermons, meditations, and letters, he always made two significant changes to the biblical text. He always reversed the order of 'mind' and 'heart' so that the phrase came to be "one heart and one mind" [*cor unum et anima una*] instead. And then, Augustine added – invariably added – *in deum*. Every time Augustine referred to *cor unum et anima una* (he always adds) *in deum*.

The addition is substantial and significant. Community life for Augustine always means that we are to become "one heart and one mind" – as St. Luke says the early Christian Community at Jerusalem was. The followers of Jesus were one, committed to fraternal unity, devoted

to community. The communion was meant to create a bond, an inner bond, between the “company of believers” not just at the level of shared space, shared goods, shared household needs. The communion envisioned is a unity of interiority: shared heart and shared mind. Developing a common understanding and a common felt dedication. The addition of ‘*in deum*’ to *cor unum et anima una* was a stroke of genius on Augustine’s part. Various translations, *in deum* means “on the way to God” or “intent on God” or “unto God”, “aimed toward God”. There is no need to reduce Augustine’s meaning to any one of these translations. They all serve to taste the meaning.

Fr. Jacobs in his explanation of the originating *koinonia* texts from Acts accented some special notes. First, every order or congregation has favorite and foundational scriptural texts at the base of their life. The selection says something about who they are. The itinerant preachers (*viz.* the Dominicans) emphasize being sent out two by two (Luke 10.1). The Franciscans, in their love of Lady Poverty, accent that as disciples of the Lord they leave everything and follow (Luke 5.11). Canons Regular (taking clues from Augustine), and thus the Crosiers as well, have always favored the text describing the first Christian community of apostles and disciples in Jerusalem found, described in Luke’s Acts of the Apostles.

The ‘religious life program’ set out by this descriptive summary continues to mark Crosier life. “They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles, and to fellowship (*koinonia*) to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers.” (Acts 2.42) One way to read this text is to repeat “they devoted themselves to” four times instead of just once. It brings out the four-fold pro-active “devotedness” this early community of Christians had. The community of apostles and early disciples made sure they lived a Eucharistic community, a community of the prayers (connected with the communal liturgy of the canonical hours), a fraternal community sharing goods, and an apostolic community, devoted to the apostles teachings (*didache*), keeping the gospel life fresh and alive as it was among the original community of apostles infused by the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

Community (*koinonia*) is, then, first of all to be seen in this biblical context, that is, among this set of fundamental values, *differentiated* observances, and communal practices in the apostolic community of life in Jerusalem. *Koinonia* is not a “lone” free-standing value, shaved off from the other elements of dedication noted in the biblical context. *Koinonia*, especially in Acts 4.32, strongly emphasizes communal property, common goods, almost a communistic sense of shunning private property. Thus, traditional Crosier poverty – coming from the apostolic communal life of the early Jerusalem church – emphasizes communal property more than abnegation, “grinding poverty”, or even “Lady Poverty”.

The community life (*koinos bios*) envisaged in Acts includes fellowship and participation in one another’s material and spiritual goods. Sharing entails more personal and more interior (heart-felt) common care rather than merely an external dividing up of the common pot. The rich history of Crosier poverty, especially in our modern world – includes joint ownership, shared responsibility, mutual accountability, systems of reporting and early formation into participative decision-making. All this understanding comes forth as a performative interpretation of this foundational text from Acts.

The Crosier accent on Eucharistic community, also stemming from Acts, sees Eucharist ecclesially: as a community building and community-expressing rite. The conventual liturgy of Crosier communities – even when private masses came into being, even when private mass intentions tended to make over the eucharist into ‘prayer intentions at mass’, even when the symbolic breaking of the bread got lost in secrecy behind the back of the priest – the Cro-



siers' conventual liturgy always retained a central focus on the community-forming dimension of Eucharist. Communion is first and foremost communion *in deum*, a group of believers bonding in fraternal love through our active liturgical participation in Lord's meal of the one bread and the one cup.

The apostolic community was marked by a dynamic communal devotedness to the apostles teaching, in short, keeping the proclamation of the Good News alive. Keeping alive the good news sometimes uses words, but mostly it embodies love in life and mutual service.

Fr. Jacobs stimulated the Crosier participants to a rich discussion of key themes and practices of the religious life in the community of the early church and of the implications for living that charism of *koinonia* today for Crosiers.

By the end of the 2000 Study Days in Bandung, the participants formulated several conclusions that they wanted to offer to the wider world Order. Perhaps most telling was the conclusion that the energy and dynamism of these "study" days had to change gears. Study is not sufficient. And the participants were convinced that neither is the "incidental community" of Crosier life lived together in Bandung during those study days sufficient for any further steps. The "Study Days Participants" formulated a proposal and request to the Master General and his Council that they would need to take steps to promote, to further, to deepen, to necessitate accountability in Crosier practice worldwide, in appropriating the value and charism of our community life. The group knew that they were for the study days, just that, "students". Any real leadership and follow up would have to come from another group, rather than from themselves. They addressed themselves to the leadership group of the Order, the General Board.

There were other concrete proposals [cf. Handbook 09-004] and ideas formulated for review in the Council to the Master General, but the particular action proposal to the Master General and his Council "to give lead to the Order" for new appropriation of the Crosier Charism of community created the wave that was to follow. The central thrust that was suggested by the participants in their closing statement was to encourage transformational change in the Order through the pursuit of transformational values. The insight shared in the group, by several participants, was that incremental routine changes are not sufficient for our Order at this moment in history. The need for a more radical appropriation of our particular charism was felt in each of the provinces.

## General Council Meeting of 2001

The Master General, Rein Vaanhold, who had also personally participated in the entire Bandung Study Days, took seriously the petition and proposal of the ISD group. In the spring meeting of 2001 the Council spent several days of its deliberations to re-experience themselves the work, study and insights of the Bandung ISD Group.

The Council studied not only the Statement of the Participants of the International Study Days 2000, the individual members of the council also prepared particular study papers for the deliberations of the council members.

In the course of study and deliberation on the substantive issues and values, the members of the Council drew together their summary. These conclusions are written up as the board issued document: *Celebrating Crosier Foundations: A Decade of Transformation*.

A preliminary note, before unpacking what the contents and aim of that document say. Two



considerations arose in the General Council that had not surfaced so clearly in the ISD2000 [International Study Days 2000]. The leaders of the general order recognized that the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Order was going to occur within a decade. At that point in time (early 2001), 2010 seemed a long way off. But with the turn of the millennium and the universal church's attention to this major, 2000<sup>th</sup> "Year of Our Lord", there was special attention in the Council members' minds to privilege the Crosier Jubilee in 2010. The Council's deliberations focused on the importance of recalling our historic foundations of 800 years ago and celebrating them. But equally important was the forward looking need to assure that in our own time, in our own changed world, our members now need some experience of being grounded and founded in the historic charism of the Church given to the Crosiers. Particularly Provincial Toon Rijken spoke passionately of the need for "re-founding." Thus, the title for the document "Celebrating Crosier Foundations" using the plural, was chosen as intentionally multivalent. Both the first originating foundation and a present needed re-founding demanded attention and preparation for 2010 celebration.

The second consideration had to do with the choice of what to concentrate on. Clearly too many issues to lift up for attention would undermine any real transformation and progress. The values had to be foundational, urgent and pressing. The General Council members insisted on limiting the scope of the challenge we wanted to present to the Order to three central values. Thus the general council deliberated carefully and thoughtfully as to what transformation was indeed needed, at this point in our history, all over the world Order. They wanted to world wide Order to deal with what was fundamental to our received and living tradition.

The three transformational values selected all satisfied these criteria.

The first value named: "Apostolates that foster community life" is directly quoted from the Crosier Constitutions (22.1). The preponderating value of community life stands out clearly in that formulation. But so too does the value of the apostolate. The drift that had been felt in the analysis of the current situation (2001) is that the apostolate in many and practical ways takes the predominant position, both in province level decisions, in individual member's imagination of what is primary, in bishops' and lay persons' understanding of how they know Crosiers and who we are. The need to address the issue within the perspective of the Crosier charism was clear.

The second value named in some ways might have been the first: "actually living together". The communal dimension of the Crosier Charism had become much clearer as foundational to Crosier identity to the members of the ISD2000 and to the general council. Over the years, however, both by reason of legitimate assignment and economic trends toward gainful employment, as well as because of disaffection (by some) with past models of a too institutional a form of community life, the communal component of Crosier life seemed to have relaxed and drifted into a generalized minimalism of expectation. The general council knew that if the Crosier Order was going to have a future – a distinctive and identifiable future – the issue of actually living together needed leadership from the master general and his council.

The third value named concentrated on the contemplative dimension of Crosier Religious Life. One could say that the first two values are clearly and visibly linked to the *koinonia* theme of the International Study Days 2000. But where does contemplation fit in that mix? Recalling that *koinonia* is always first and foremost communion with God – *cor unum in deum* – the Crosier charism's concentration on community cannot be reduced to a flat, hori-



zontal social fraternity: a Greek KaiBetaAlpha gentleman's club! Crosier community is intent on God. As religious, devotedness to the breaking of the bread and the prayers is also connected with devotedness to the apostles' inspired teaching transformed into the Word of Life. The Crosier charism of community will instill personal and communal devotedness to conventual prayer, conventual eucharist, and prayerful reading and meditation on the Word of God. In a secular era, religious communities, attuned to the transcending aim of human life, serve as a witness to the transcendent in our midst (Const. 10.6).

The three transformative values formed the substantive core of the decisions of the 2001 meeting of the general council. In addition, as response to the insistence of the ISD2000, there was added a final reflection about role recognition for all members of the general council. The general council committed itself to pursue a more rigorous and focused program of assessing the vitality of our community life as actually lived in local communities. They pledged to become more directly involved in building local communities in the provinces. They appropriated their role as stewards of the Crosier charism. In conclusion, the priors provincial in this public statement reinforced the message that they wanted to be held personally accountable for their stewardship of the Order's charism in building community life in the provinces.

*Celebrating Crosier Foundations* was a strong ten-year program of promise and accountability, a prophetic decade of transformation.

## General Chapter 2003: Becoming New in Mind and Heart

The whole order celebrated its general chapter in Mario Campos, Brazil. It was obvious that the selection of the chapter theme **Becoming New in Mind and Heart** resonated with the key words of the scriptural theme in Acts of "one heart and one mind" but with the added dedication to transformation "becoming new".

The energies of the capitulars focused directions for the world Order by explicitly endorsing, as its own, the Statement developed and published by the General Board two years earlier. The General Chapter decisions did not change the substantive content of the Statement. It did add directives to strengthen the implementation of the vision.

The General Chapter 2003 called for strong leadership. "Crosier leadership must be a bold driving force in moving forward the goals of **Celebrating Crosier Foundations: A Decade of Transformation**, by appropriating these values and promoting them as goals for Crosier religious life."

The General Chapter of 2003 also recognized the need for subsidiarity. The program of transformation that had been decided in the general chapter had to be worked out and brought into the province levels of the Order. Thus, the general chapter mandated that the primary agenda of provincial chapters for the next six years had to pursue the fundamental elements of the Crosier charism spelled out in the Decade of Transformation Statement.

Specifically, the general chapter called for restructuring of the provinces to make it possible actually to live our particular form of Crosier Religious Life, which privileges this strong community dimension.

The general chapter, due to time constraints and emotional drain (after the armed robbery), by its own admission, was less successful in spelling out clear and explicit directives for nam-



ing the community life priority and for pursuing with determination and explicit directives on transformation process, even though these were both named.

### Local Leadership Workshop (2005): This Gift To Offer

A gathering of local community leaders from around the world to participate in a workshop on Crosier leadership approached the decade of transformation particularly from the vantage of religious leadership. Because local communities form the most fundamental “organ” in the Crosier structuring of religious life, it is the priors of local communities who embody the central leadership role in helping members become new in mind and heart. Just as with the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council, so too the local community in the Crosier Order needs to be strengthened as “the heart and embodiment of the spirit of our Order” (Const. 22.2). Provinces and even the Generalate are primarily governance structures. It is the local community as a real community of brothers that embodies the charism and spirit of the Order of the Holy Cross.

The 2005 workshop drew striking attention to some major challenges in the Order. The provinces of the Order of the Holy Cross had not been developing local priories as a leadership priority for the last years. Only three priors actually attended the workshop. In 2005, there were no priories in two areas: in the province of Sang Kristus, Indonesia, and in the region of Congo. The priory in Papua, although established, struggled with too few members to elect a prior, thus there was an appointed administrator. The four priories in Brazil had only one prior, who was in fact appointed. The European province had five priories, but with only three elected priors, each of whom voiced concerns about aging and symptoms of burn out from having been reelected too many times. From the US Province the two priors from the reconfigured priories both attended the workshop. In short, the older provinces’ priories were struggling with the burden of safeguarding too many priories. And the younger provinces and regions were struggling from want of not enough priories and no lived experience of this “heart and embodiment of the spirit of the Order”.

The closing statement of the workshop, *This Gift To Offer*, cited two strong recommendations that grew out of the Decade of Transformation project.<sup>1</sup> The first request of the participants, directed to the Master General and his Council, accented again the “courageous and visionary leadership” role needed in building normative Crosier Life. This visionary leader-

#### <sup>1</sup> We ask the Master General and his Council:

##### *In Building Normative Crosier Life*

- ✘ To hold each other and all Crosiers accountable to the Crosier Constitutions
- ✘ To ensure the restructuring toward priories with priors, vital community chapters, and a rhythm of public prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours and Eucharist
- ✘ To assist the priors (local leaders) in developing processes of transformation
- ✘ To insist that our forms of apostolate flow from our life of fraternal communion, which is our most immediate apostolate
- ✘ To assure that programs of initial formation occur in normative Crosier community

##### *In Developing Spiritual Leadership*

- ✘ To form leaders for living the evangelical life of fraternity as Crosiers according to our charism and to assure the form of life (the Crosier “architecture”) which supports the integral development of confreres
- ✘ To urge Crosier leaders to advance conversations on Crosier spirituality and the charism throughout the whole Order
- ✘ To call major superiors and local leaders to develop a plan of ordinary ongoing formation
- ✘ To provide models or tools for pre-election discernment of major and local superiors



ship needs to ensure restructuring communities toward priories with priors, vital community chapters, and a rhythm of public prayer of the Liturgy of Hours and Eucharist. Initial formation into the Crosier Order must assure that formation programs occur in normative Crosier community. The second appeal concentrated on developing spiritual leadership, specifically forming leaders within the Crosiers' community tradition and the charism of evangelical fraternal life.

The new accent provided through the recommendations of the participants of this workshop was stimulated by the input of the Dutch Carmelite Theologian Hein Bloomestijn of Nijmegen. In his paper delivered on Spiritual Leadership he underscored the need for "spiritual architecture". This spiritual architecture supplies the needed incarnational grounding, supportive day-to-day props, and externalized life rhythms and relationships that undergird spirituality so that it does not end up being too idealizing, excarnational, breathy and airy, all in the head. A spiritual leader cannot be only a man of talk. Especially in a communal charism, the spiritual leader cares for the "architectural" aspect of going to God together.

Thus, there grew in the leadership workshop a deeper connection between, (1) normative community life in priories for those solemnly professed and (2) spiritual formation into living and valuing this way of life. Spiritual formation aims especially toward candidates seeking their first introduction into the Crosier spiritual life in community but, equally, the communal architecture remains formative, in an ordinary ongoing way, for all confreres finished with initial formation programs.

### **Crosier Religious at Solemn Profession: A General Profile (2006)**

The Crosier Order, unlike other religious congregations, does not have a standing general Order commission on formation. The vivid interest in formation has, nevertheless, enjoyed strong routine workshops on formation for those responsible ever since the leadership of Master General Graus.

In planning the formation meeting in 2006, the accent shifted from holding a workshop for formators to developing an ad hoc commission for policy makers charged with overseeing the vocation and formation programs, formation personnel, and the content and developmental processes used for forming and educating candidates into the life and charism of the Order.

The gathering of policy-makers from throughout the world Order at Pratista (Indonesia) focused on providing the Order with a profile of what the "end point" of initial formation should achieve. In other words, what should a young Crosier, who has been well-formed, appear to be when he makes his solemn profession? What should be expected of him? How can formation guides and superiors judge properly that there is a fit between this candidate and the charismatic life of the Order? What sort of objective standards can help both candidates and their superiors from becoming too merely concerned with a single issue or too behavioristic in their assessment or too merely subjective in their relationship? What, basically, is the Order of the Holy Cross looking for in formation of its members?

The Profile that emerged from the ad hoc commission meeting, held over the course of three weeks, was a well-rounded and balanced description. It avoided idealizing language and tended to be illustrative and phenomenal. It bridged concerns for "architecture" and concerns for "spirit".

In connection with the decade of transformation's aims, the work done by the formation



policy commission clarified “actually living together” as brothers and friends to be a lively, delightful and compassionate path to God. Fraternal relationship is of the essence in the profile.

The conventual liturgy in a Crosier community is necessarily both a spiritual experience and an apostolic service. The Crosier charism relies on and develops a liturgical spirituality that celebrates life in community as communion in God and as the expression of oneness of heart and mind among confreres. Clearly the liturgical life, among Crosiers, draws together devotedness to “*koinonia*, breaking the bread, and the prayers”.

The Profile regards the well-formed Crosier at the time of solemn vows as capable of voicing insistence among his brothers on seeking balance and integration between the various elements of Crosier Religious life. Especially telling is his participation in communal evaluation along with his brothers in redressing recurring imbalances in time, energy, or over-commitment of the members.

The Profile, while focusing on a Crosier at the time of solemn profession, avoids treating formation as finished and complete with solemn vows. The living God does not stop living and actively calling each person when someone “finalizes” his final, vowed, solemn commitment. The member along with his profession of solemn vows pledges to take on, along with his brothers, the co-responsibility to contribute in deed and in word, in good judgment and in embodied example, to the maturing of younger brothers still involved in initial formation.

The ad hoc commission submitted its work to the Master General and his Council for their approbation and publication. The Profile was adopted in October 2006 as something like a gleaming, refined diamond, clearly no longer rough and uncut.

### **Policy on Proprovince (2006) and Priory (2007)**

The Master General and his Council approved at the same October 2006 meeting a set of indicators and criteria they wished to use in establishing a region of the Order as a Proprovince and in establishing a community as a Priory.

Both documents helped refine the concern for coming to good judgment in the general council over what we as an Order expect in the formation and development of communities of Crosiers “actually living together” and of “apostolates that foster community life”. Less focused in these sets of criteria was the “contemplative dimension” in the priory. But nonetheless one indicator clearly connected normative community life with strong rhythms of liturgical prayer: “The community regularly gathers to celebrate the conventual Eucharist and maintains a daily rhythm of the Liturgy of Hours in common.” While not naming what contemplative practices will be evident in the community, the documents of indicators for a priory does say that the physical building itself, in its architecture, “reflects the holiness to which the community is called and exhibits identifiable beauty which reflects the divine permeating the consecrated life of the community.”

The documents of indicators were drafted and approved by the general council in light of the need to guide and develop existing communities as priories and existing areas or territorial regions in the Order to become a proprovince and eventually a province, in accord with norms that would foster the transformation intended for Crosier foundations. While allowing initiative to rise in the provinces, the Master General and his Council saw the critical importance of taking their own responsibility seriously in pursuing “a more rigorous and fo-



cused program of assessing together the vitality of our community life as lived in the local communities" and "in fostering the charism of building apostolic community life in the (pro)provinces and region, thus serving as stewards of the Charism." And that is what the document on the Decade of Transformation of 2001 document said they would.

## Evaluations and Retaining Momentum

Annually, between 2003 and 2009, a review was made in the general council of plans scheduled and progress being made in the different provinces, especially in the agendas of provincial chapters, in implementing the General Chapter 2003's directives. In 2006 and 2008 there was a more focused evaluation on the work of the general council in holding the provinces accountable for "refocusing values" (Decade of Transformation, 2001). The 2006 evaluation cited some sincere efforts and actions, but as Henri Paluku Muhumira voiced the issue for his own region Congo, "We do yet not have a culture of texts... We do not refer consistently to decisions we made and said we would do." The 2008 (rather thorough) three-day long evaluation, preparatory to writing the State of the Order Report – anticipating the 2009 General Chapter – summarized a wealth of accomplishments and directions found, especially over the previous years from 2003-2008. The 2008 evaluation, under the guidance and facilitation of the Vicar General of the Dominican Order, Friar Edward Ruane, O.P., concluded that the work of the Crosiers during this decade of transformation was not only impressive and worth celebrating, it also gives proof positive of the value of working within a planned frame of reference to accomplish significant transformation and re-foundation.

Recalling that the "decade of transformation" does not finish in 2009, the General Chapter of 2009 focused even more clearly on some of the initiatives, ideas and agenda that surfaced in various meetings and gatherings over the years. The jubilee theme of "Starting Afresh from *A Place of Light*" concentrated the Order's attention on the importance of Crosier priories as foundational *Places of Light*. The 2009 decisions hammered out in chapter give clear directives to strengthen Crosier Priories as privileged communities where "the heart and embodiment of the spirit of our Order" is safeguarded. The fraternal life, the liturgical life, and the apostolic life all remain *agenda* (= works in progress, to be done). Or as the Constitutions say: "One of the main responsibilities of the community chapter is insuring the continual realization of our particular fellowship... If its work is to be effective the entire life of the community, its common prayer, life, and work, must again and again be critically examined in light of our special sources of inspiration, and above all in the light of the Gospel and its acutalization in today's world." (Const. 8.2)

Finally, in the first general council meeting after the 2009 Chapter, the master general, in his closing words to the council meeting, observed the strong symbolic and imaginative importance of the Decade of Transformation for working as an Order at a shared goal.

The general council had just reviewed the decisions of the General Chapter 2009 and the need now for implementation through long term planning. The Master General connected the implementation work through long term planning with the efforts already made during the Decade of Transformation.

He warmly congratulated the general council on its "sustained attention to shared values" through out the decade of years since 2000. Not an easy task, given the changing membership in the council chambers. He recalled the contribution of Rein Vaanhoud, then Master General, who adopted the decision to establish this Decade for the life of the Order. Rein once mused, "We have tried several themes and ideas over the years, but this one catches the



attention of members and hold that attention as the most engaging focus we have had in years." Another pioneer member of that 2001 Council, Toon Rijken (RIP), then prior provincial of the Brazil province, whole-heartedly endorsed the idea. "Foundations and re-founding are what we need as an Order. *Celebrating Crosier Foundations* will direct us *in deum*." Frans Vermeulen, Prior Provincial of Sang Kristus, Indonesia, and Huub Wagemans, Prior Regional of Congo, provided original insights about the importance of the contemplative dimension of Crosier Religious Life and of the personal leadership needed in their areas to sustain depth of interest in the Crosier Charism.

The Master General in the December Council meeting noted that the subtitle "Decade of Transformation" was actually instrumental to the main title: "Celebrating Crosier Foundations". What the general council in 2001 said explicitly was: (1) "It is our conviction that these foundational elements of the Crosier charism will embrace other religious impulses as well... and encourage new vital spirit in the process of pursuing them." (2) "It will entail a change of mentality in our members and new decision-making in our leadership." (3) "In ten years we wish to celebrate the gain among us of strong vital communities in our provinces, proprovinces and regions." And (4) "The General Board encourages that all Crosiers (personally and communally) view the next decade as a call to treasure and foster the foundational charism of contemplative communion."

Did the Order of the Holy Cross accomplish all it intended in 2000? Certainly not all. But, yes, amazing grace. The Master General closed the December 2009 Council meeting by quoting lines from the hope, embedded in the seasonal Advent Word of high expectation, quoting from 2 Peter 1.3-19.

His divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness, to become participants in the divine nature...

For anyone who lacks these things is nearsighted and blind, and is forgetful of the cleansing of past sins. Therefore, be eager to confirm your call. I intend to keep on reminding you of these things...

You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts...

Starting afresh from the morning star arising in our hearts is what we have been about for ten years. The result of a decade of transformation gives us reason and joy in 2010 to Celebrate Crosier Foundations.

