



# Christian Brothers

32<sup>nd</sup> Congregation Chapter

PerÚ 1<sup>st</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 / Ireland 23<sup>rd</sup> January – 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2022

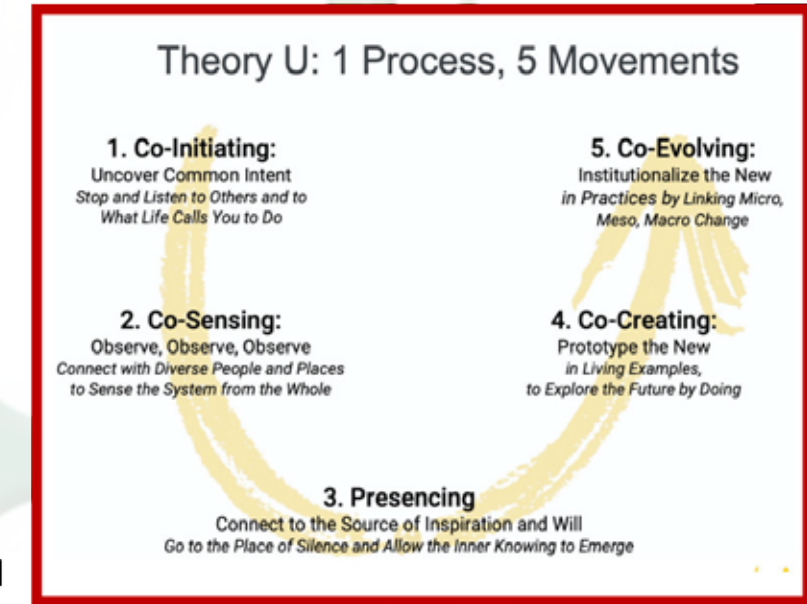


## The Congregation Chapter Story

In June 2018 the CLT, together with the Province Leaders and their Deputies, gathered in Rome for the Congregation Leadership Group's annual two-week meeting. As a result of a desire for inclusive ways of creating the future of our Brotherhood, planning began towards developing participative processes to involve all Brothers. These processes would see the 2020 Congregation Chapter as a step on a longer journey.

*Generative Conversations* were introduced as a way of listening to each other, of reflecting on what we were hearing and of clarifying our understandings. Conversations around *Fanning the Flames of Brotherhood* added to what was being gathered for the Congregation Chapter.

At the Chapter which opened on March 1st, 2020 and was scheduled to last four weeks, a process called *Theory U* was used. The first two weeks in Lima focused on the *Initiating* and *Sensing* stages of listening to story, considering Reports, and getting a picture of the larger Congregation reality. As the *Sensing* stage was nearing the end, the world around us changed, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Our Congregation Chapter was suspended on its 13th day.





# Sustaining Our Momentum

A group called *Sustaining Our Momentum* was then established to help connect the Chapter Delegates with the Brothers of the Congregation, so that we might explore how to continue our journey together. Several Brothers from the Chapter were invited to write reflections on their experience. These reflections were collated and circulated throughout the Provinces. The next step introduced us to Congregation-wide Zoom communication. Three international Zoom calls were organized in July 2020, to enable Brothers to interact with some of the Lima Delegates.

These Zoom calls showed that many Brothers had a real interest in connecting across the Congregation. This led to an invitation to *Rekindle Our Brotherhood*, an endeavour which included international prayer groups, a series of international Zooms, and encouragement to continue the *Generative Conversations* at Province and local levels. International Zoom calls took place during the last three months of 2020 and during the first four months of 2021. 24 international prayer groups were formed. Many of these continue to meet.

In anticipation of the eventual resumption of the Congregation Chapter, the focus of the international Zooms moved to a Scenario Building process as a further step in co-creating the future of our Brotherhood.

## KEY COMPONENTS OF THE JOURNEY

### 1. International Prayer and Integration Group (PAIG) through Zoom

An international group of 6-8 Brothers meeting for one hour to pray together and integrate what they are going through in their lives, as well as what is coming up from the conversational space in 2 below.

### 2. International Generative Conversation (IGC) through Zoom

A monthly Zoom meeting on chosen topics with 80 to 100 participants minimum for 2 hrs.  
The format may include videos about a particular topic (for a live guest speaker sometimes) and generative, contemplative conversation about my lived experience in relation to the topic. These conversations will include plenty of small group time to allow for in-depth sharing as well as plenaries.



### 3. Community locally based Generative conversations

You will be encouraged to participate as you would normally on a generative conversation happening in your community/province.  
These conversations will address needy topics of interest more specific to you as a community/province, but no doubt they will also be from where you can make links with what you are connecting to in the Prayer and Integration Group and the International Generative Conversations.

## 4Cs & Scenario Planning

Four international Zooms were held in the last four months of 2021. The CLT and Province Chapter Reports were shared with all Brothers, who distilled them into the *Four C's*, which presented a snapshot of our Current reality, Concerns, Challenges and Concrete actions.




Brothers were then invited to imagine what our future could look like and were offered the opportunity to represent their vision creatively as *book covers*. Over eighty *book covers* were produced. Using these, Brothers formed working groups. Each group built a *Scenario* around themes that energized them. The 28 *Scenarios* that emerged were shared around the Congregation. It became evident that there is significant energy amongst us to profoundly re- vision our Brotherhood.

The Congregation Chapter reconvened at the Emmaus Centre in Dublin from January 23rd to February 5th, 2022. Returning to the *Sensing* phase of *Theory U*, the Capitulants revisited the Lima experience, shared stories around the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, and reviewed the processes that had taken place since March 2020. This led into the more contemplative *Presencing* phase.

Significant time was given to contemplative listening to discern where the Spirit is leading us, since from *Presencing* comes the movement towards the phases of *Co-creating* and *Co- evolving*.



Chapter 2020-2022, a significant event in our ongoing journey together:

-  highlighted Care of the Earth as the major issue on the world's agenda
-  endorsed the continuation of processes engaging all Brothers in co-creating the future of our religious Brotherhood
-  accepted three pairs of statements that can form a lens through which we view all that we are and do as Brothers

The following material, which comes directly from the Chapter, relates to each of these three points. It will form the basis of interactive processes into which you will be invited.



***Congregation Leadership Team:  
Hugo Cáceres, John Casey, Peter Clinch,  
Senan D'Souza and David Ryan Silva***





# Cry of Mother Earth

Care for Our Common Home

*As far as we know, the only planet in an immense universe on which life has emerged is our wonderful, blue planet Earth. Earth is home to myriad creatures, ourselves included.*



*Today, however, Earth is severely diminished by human ignorance and greed, and we Brothers join with Earth as She cries out in protest.*



*In his encyclical **Laudato Si'** Pope Francis calls each one of us to a transformation of heart and soul with a growing awareness of the ecological challenges facing our home, Mother Earth.*



*Laudato si'*  
REVOLUTION

*The Congregation Chapter calls each of our Brothers to embrace the Pope's call to love and protect our planet through contemplation, prayer and action.*



*The Chapter commits the Congregation to support the **Laudato Si'** Action Platform, as invited by Pope Francis.*

*Province Leadership Teams are asked to engage with their communities in four main directions.*





## 4 Main Directions

- ✚ *Animating and accompanying local communities in their efforts towards integral ecology.*
- ✚ *Promoting opportunities for the personal formation of Brothers in this area.*
- ✚ *Providing financial resources and support to engage in, for example, alternative energy plans and new investment strategies.*
- ✚ *Developing policies and guidelines essential to sustainable ecology.*

## *Urgent Call to the Brothers*

*The Chapter calls us all into a deeper love for Mother Earth, leading to a fundamental conversion of heart, and expressed in our daily life choices.*







# CHRISTIAN BROTHERS PROFOUNDLY RE-VISIONED

## Essential Issues

*expanding  
openness to  
THE MYSTERY*

Through the recent experience of Brothers connecting with each other across the Congregation in recent years, we are sensing the Spirit inviting us to a renewed appreciation and exploration of many essential issues, including:

1. Our foundational stories
2. Brotherhood in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
3. Contemplative living
4. The cry of the earth and the cry of the poor
5. Our evolving Edmund Rice charism
6. Future governance structures and resources.



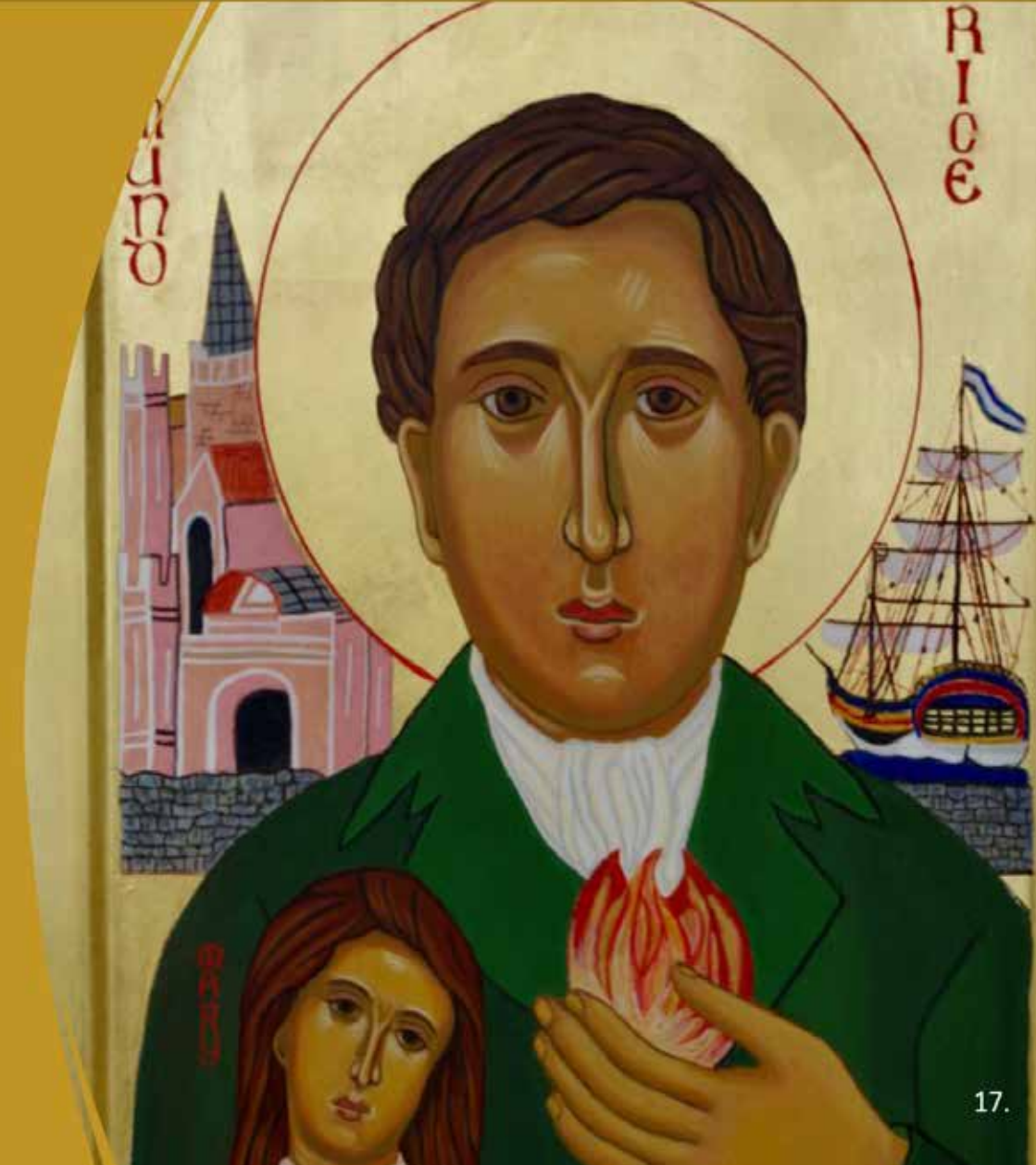
## The Christian Brothers Profoundly Re-visioned

In the light of our diversity, heritage and the challenges facing us and our world today, we believe that the Spirit is calling us to continue co-creating our future.

Each Brother's story is sacred and part of a whole.  
The Chapter calls all Brothers to engage in writing our collective story, imagining our future together.

JESUS &  
his GOSPEL

## Where is the Spirit leading?





# Where is the Spirit leading?

In Emmaus, after initially re-connecting with the *Sensing* phase of Theory U, we moved into a more contemplative space, for *Presencing*. We were to be *present* to the material, to what we had heard, to what we felt, and to stillness.



After each of us spent time in quiet reflection, groups of three were formed to share what was stirring in us. What was the Spirit saying? Could we put this into one or two simple phrases?

The groups of three later became groups of 6 and then 12.

Independently, each of these three larger groups of 12 expressed what was being heard and where the Spirit seemed to be leading us, in two simple statements.



1. Through acknowledging our fears  
And embracing diversity, we release  
energy for life and mission.
2. As we learn to be more contemplative  
in action, we become more life-giving.

## STATEMENTS FROM GROUPS OF SIX TO GROUPS OF TWELVE

3. The Spirit is calling us to be open to an  
experience of God that invites us to a deep  
transformation into being fully human.
4. The Spirit is inviting us to appreciate  
that diversity is a key aspect of all life  
giving processes.

1. The Spirit is calling  
us to journey together  
through contemplative  
experiences leading  
us to ongoing  
transformation.

2. The Spirit is calling  
us to acknowledge our  
fears and embrace our  
diversity in order to  
release energy for life  
and mission.



1. Through embracing diversity, led by the Spirit, we grow in oneness.
2. Central to our Brotherhood is our ongoing search for Jesus our brother.

**STATEMENTS FROM  
GROUPS OF SIX TO  
GROUPS OF TWELVE**

3. Listening with the Spirit of God leads to understanding and acceptance of diversity.
4. God is love- in love there is no fear.

**3. Led by the Spirit  
We embrace diversity  
as the gift of life.**

**4. God is love -  
in love there is  
no fear.**

1. We are called to recognise God at work through the feminine energy to bring about healing and wholeness in our world.
2. How is God inviting us to embrace this energy in facing our brokenness and acknowledging our diversity.

**STATEMENTS FROM  
GROUPS OF SIX TO  
GROUPS OF TWELVE**

3. With my (as the calling of the Holy Spirit) power working within you, risk transforming yourselves, and through your Brotherhood accept and embrace each other and all my creation with its brokenness, diversity and dignity.
4. Christian Brothers embrace brotherhood as the way forward in a broken, turbulent world. Diversity is their gift, Presence is their stance, Fragility is their struggle, Transformation is their mission.

**5. You are called  
to rebirth your  
brotherhood by  
personal  
transformation.**

**6. You are called to  
recognise God at work  
through feminine energy  
allowing you to see  
your brokenness and  
diversity.**





**1. The spirit is calling us to journey together through contemplative experiences leading us to ongoing transformation.**




**2. The spirit is calling us to acknowledge our fears and embrace our diversity in order to release energy for life and mission.**





3. Led by the Spirit we embrace diversity as the gift of life.



4. God is Love:  
In love there  
is no fear.





**5. You are called to rebirth your  
brotherhood by  
personal transformations.**



**6. You are called to recognise God  
at work through feminine energy  
allowing you to see your  
brokenness and diversity.**



## A New Kind Of Chapter Calls For A New Kind Of Post-chapter

You are invited to give yourself some contemplative space to interact with the statements. You might like to combine them or rearrange them to see how they might act as a lens for us to view our journey of *Co-creating* and *Co-evolving*



1. *In my contemplative journey, how can I engage with these statements as a lens which helps me to see what is burning in my heart?*
2. *In the light of the Chapter's endorsement of processes inviting all Brothers to participate in co-creating our future, what are my hopes for how this will become a reality for me and for Brothers everywhere?*
3. *What is my response to the Chapter's urgent call to a deeper love for Mother Earth and to a fundamental conversion of heart?*
4. *What do I see as key elements of a Congregation 'profoundly re-visioned'?*



**Live Jesus in our hearts forever**



