I give thanks

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I share with you some reasons why I am thankful to the Lord for the Congregation and my confreres.

**Courage and endurance**

If someone were to ask me what, in my opinion, was the most difficult Spiritan mission I would have difficulty in replying. Having in mind so many visits made and having read and studied so many reports, I can readily say that all Spiritan missions are difficult and it is impossible to classify them.

The difficulties differ from one place to another. Sometimes it is great poverty and insecurity. Sometimes it is the socio-religious context — great indifference in some places, direct or hidden opposition in others. Then again it can be the situation of the group itself which makes mission difficult: little or no common vision, tension between confreres.

In general though, Spiritans show great courage, patience and endurance. They stay on the spot, put up with what cannot be changed, do their best, and often do more than their best. This continuing presence brings us the friendship and esteem of those among whom we live.

**Initiative and creativity**

I can say that each generation of Spiritans is a generation of founders, because new needs for evangelization arise all the time to which a creative response must be made. Think of all that exists today in your area which did not exist at all ten, twenty or thirty years ago.

Last year when I was in Nigeria I asked Fr. Onyeneke how many religious congregations there had been founded by Spiritans. I think he counted up to fifteen.

Among the most creative Spiritans we must not forget those we refer to as Spiritan Associates/Lay Spiritans.

**Availability**

When we ask a confrere if he is prepared to accept such and such a responsibility helpful to the whole Congregation, generally both he and his superior are very open to the request.

**Humility and modesty**

We do not seem to have the habit of describing our parishes, missions, schools, chaplaincies as “Spiritan”. We work very simply in the place where we have been sent. We do not put CSSp after our names as a matter of course — it does not seem to be one of our main concerns.

I know well that in this area times have changed and that we need to do a bit more publicity for our Congregation. But let us keep this spirit of modesty and humility, this Spiritan simplicity which helps us to stay close to those with whom we live and work.

Together with all of you I give thanks every day for the big Spiritan family. It has pleased the Father to reveal to us the mystery of his Son and to confide to us the mission of announcing him to the world.