

Press Release of the 13th General Assembly of UCESM

TORHOUT, Belgium, 11-17 February 2008

“RELIGIOUS NOURISHING THE SOUL OF EUROPE”

1. The Union of European Conferences of Major Superiors (UCESM) has held its General Assembly in Torhout, Belgium, from the 11th until the 17th February 2008. Representatives of 38 conferences of men and women religious of 26 European countries have gathered for this meeting which is held every two years. They represent 400.000 men and women religious from all Europe. Among the invited of various institutions, the Assembly has welcomed Cardinal Franc Rodé, Prefect of the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Associations of Apostolic Life, Cardinal Godfried Danneels, Archbishop of Malines-Brussels and President of the Belgian bishops' conference., Mgr Karl-Josef Rauber, Apostolic Nuncio of Belgium, Mgr Roger Vangheluwe, Bishop of Bruges, and Noel Treanor, Secretary General of the Commission of Episcopates of the European Community.
2. This Assembly is a forum where ideas and activities can be shared for the benefit of better knowledge of one another and better cooperation. “Passion for Christ, Passion for Humanity, Lived in Community. What Contribution Does Community Life Offer to Europe?” was the theme that brought the participants together. Inspired by experts like the Dominican Father Jean-Claude Lavigne, the members of the Assembly reflected on the significance of religious life, lived in community. As a place of brotherhood and communion in faith and solidarity, it is in the middle of society one of the signs that reconciliation and hope are possible. The Assembly approved a final message that expresses its convictions regarding the importance of the value of religious life for the church and for the world.
3. The Assembly has elected the new Executive Committee for the years 2008-2012: Sister Lutgardis Craeynest sdb (Salesian sister, Belgium), President; Father Manuel Joaquim Gomes Barbosa scj (Dehonian father of the Sacred Heart, Portugal), Vice-President; Sister Danuta Wrobel smppn (Little Servant of Mary Immaculate, Poland), Counsellor; Father Mariano Sedano Sierra cmf (Claretian Missionary, Russia), Counsellor.