

COMMUNITY GUIDING REFLECTIONS ON THE XIX GENERAL CHAPTER STATEMENT



Part 1
Our Personal
Wounds

Guide 1
Embrace, Accept,
Assume, and Integrate
Our Personal Wounds

EMBRACING OUR WOUNDS

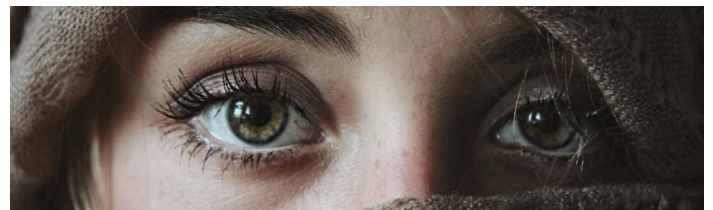
**“By embracing our own wounds as SVD, we become sensitive to the wounds of others.”
(Faithful to the Word 6, n. 3)**

**“I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”
(2 Cor 12:9)**

We know that to embrace expresses an attitude of non-rejection, fosters a sense of welcome, a purpose of consciously attending to a given reality. Every wound indicates a level of pain, a certain urgency for healing. Nonetheless, many of us carry wounds for years, like a heavy backpack relentlessly attached to our backs. Added to this are bad moods, helplessness, sometimes a degree of anxiety, and not infrequently gestures of aggression. Not seeing what we carry on our backs makes it seem as if others are making the journey difficult, and this alienation from ourselves turns us into victims.

Let us face that backpack again to embrace it, with the intention of turning our attention and affection to it, to hold it with our arms and bring it close to the heart. When we embrace, we shorten the distance to feel up close what still causes pain. It is a simple action that imprints humanity, which takes me out of the trap of victimhood and prepares me for a path of healing.

Paul’s response to his accusers reveals a profound spiritual truth about embracing our wounds and limitations. Rather than defending himself against those who questioned his apostolic authority by pointing to his weaknesses, Paul chose to openly acknowledge his vulnerabilities as sacred spaces where Christ’s power manifests most clearly. This wasn’t passive resignation but an intentional theological choice, recognizing that our wounds and limitations can become channels through which divine grace operates most powerfully. Paul understood that acknowledging our need creates room for God’s transformative presence, turning our vulnerability into ministry assets that allow others to witness Christ’s grace working through human frailty, thus preparing us for authentic healing and deeper sensitivity to others’ wounds.



REFLECTION

1. What wounds are you currently carrying like a “heavy backpack,” and how might consciously embracing them change your relationship to both the pain and the healing process?
2. In what ways has avoiding or rejecting your wounds led to a sense of victimhood, and how could embracing them instead prepare you for a genuine path of healing and greater sensitivity to others’ wounds?

ACCEPTING OUR WOUNDS



**“We are aware of our wounds, and yet we continue to give light.”
(Faithful to the Word 6, n. 30)**

**“We carry this treasure in earthen vessels, so that it may be clearly seen that this Extraordinary power is not from us, but from God.”
(2 Cor 4:7)**

Accepting that we are wounded does not carry any shame. It is humiliating when we are the only ones not noticing the wounds that reveal themselves in our relationships. Arrogance, aggression, indifference, ambition, addiction, abuse of power, individualism, narcissism, etc., are some of the most visible and common consequences affecting us as religious missionaries. Each of these manifestations may have some link with one's own culture; however, it has everything to do with our way of being and our personal history.

An important point is recognizing these wounds in the mission journey. The more we give ourselves to others, the more our fragilities surface, along with our wounds. Just as we do not become aware of our limitations except through human relationships, we will also be able to recognize and heal our wounds through service and missionary dedication. It is more than evident that isolation and closing ourselves off dehumanize us.

Paul's metaphor of earthen vessels reveals God's intentional choice to work through our wounded, fragile humanity rather than despise it. Ancient clay pots were common and breakable, precisely opposite of what might seem appropriate containers for precious treasure, yet Paul presents our imperfections not as design flaws but as God's wisdom. Our wounds, limitations, and fragilities—including arrogance, ambition, or indifference—don't disqualify us from ministry but actually highlight that divine power operates through acknowledged brokenness. When healing and transformation flow through visibly imperfect people, the source becomes clearly divine rather than human. This paradox prevents us from claiming credit for what only God accomplishes, allowing Christ's presence and love to shine more brightly against our acknowledged frailty.



REFLECTION

- 1. How has accepting your “earthen vessel” nature—your fragility and imperfections—enhanced rather than hindered your ability to serve others and reflect God's treasure?**
- 2. In what specific ways have you witnessed God's extraordinary power working through your Acknowledged limitations, making it clear that the strength comes from God rather than from yourself?**

ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR WOUNDS

**“The pain and fragility present in the Church and in our Congregation urgently call us to undertake a path of renewal and conversion.”
(Faithful to the Word 6, Presentation)**

**“We take captive every human thought to make it obedient to Christ.”
(2 Cor 10:5)**

The next step in the healing journey is to assume our own woundedness. This grants us much freedom and opens the door to a renewed horizon. We cease being victims or helpless individuals, taking responsibility for the ‘thorn’ that we carry in our flesh (cf. 2 Cor 12:7), and become accountable for what we are and the healing we need.

We are not after either justification or judgement here about people or situations. While justification tends to soften or decompress the effects of evil, judgement places us in a grade of superiority, very much closer to vengeance than to healing. Evil can only be overcome with humility and love. This leads to take upon our own reality and searching for reconciliation.

Paul’s language of “taking captive” reveals that assuming responsibility for our wounds requires active ownership of our inner life rather than passive acceptance of destructive patterns. This deliberate, ongoing commitment involves consciously engaging with thoughts and internal struggles that emerge from our woundedness, recognizing that wounded thinking often becomes habitual and destructive if left unattended. Taking responsibility means identifying these patterns and actively redirecting them toward healing, moving beyond victimhood into accountability. The phrase “make it obedient to Christ” doesn’t mean denying our pain but allowing Christ’s voice to become louder than our wounds’ voices. When thoughts of unforgiveness, hopelessness, or self-pity arise, we must actively choose to examine them against Christ’s truth, relying on divine grace while engaging human effort to redirect wounded thinking toward Christ’s perspective on our identity and purpose.



REFLECTION

- 1. What specific thought patterns or internal narratives have emerged from your wounds that need to be “taken captive” and made Obedient to Christ’s truth about who you are?**
- 2. How can you develop daily practices of examining your thoughts and choosing to redirect wounded Thinking toward Christ’s perspective on your Identity, relationships, and future?**

INTEGRATING OUR WOUNDEDNESS

**“Healing wounds and bringing light to the world, reflecting the Light of Christ, express the commitment of a faithful disciple.”
(Faithful to the Word 6, Presentation)**

**“Blessed be God... Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our afflictions, so that we may be able to give to those who suffer the same comfort that we receive from God.”
(2 Cor 1:3-4)**



To integrate is to make something ‘become part of a whole’. Evil works to separate, to divide, to disintegrate, to cause fragmentation. We are still inheriting a morality of ‘separation’ of the two realms of humanity: good and evil, body and soul. Salvation comes to assume our humanity as a whole, what is good in it and what needs still to be redeemed.

Personal and communal contemplative prayer in the light of Jesus’ paschal mystery renew our being reconciled with God. Nothing can separate us from His compassionate love. Remaining in Him strengthens our fraternal bonds and allows us to heal fragmentations.



Paul reveals God’s essential nature as the “Father of mercies” who works to heal fragmentation and restore wholeness, directly countering evil’s divisive forces. This divine comfort isn’t superficial consolation but deep restoration addressing the root causes of our afflictions, transforming scattered pieces into integrated wholeness through divine intervention beyond human capacity. Paul unveils a profound principle: we receive God’s comfort not merely for personal healing but to become instruments of that same comfort for others. Our wounds become transformed from sources of personal pain into channels of divine healing, preventing narcissistic self-containment and opening our afflictions to serve God’s larger purposes. This integration doesn’t erase our wounds’ memory but redeems them, allowing God’s comfort to transform wounded places into sources of compassion and ministry connection with others.

REFLECTION

- 1. How have you experienced God’s comfort in your own afflictions, and in what specific ways has this comfort equipped you to offer healing to others who face similar struggles?**
- 2. What areas of fragmentation or separation in your life still need God’s integrating work, and how might allowing divine comfort into these wounded places transform them into sources of ministry and connection with others?**

“Your Light Must Shine” Mt 5: 16