Dear Brothers and Friends,

Mary Chapin Carpenter has a very profound song entitled, *Late for Your Life*. In the song she asks, “Why would you wait and be late for your life?” As we on the TST were creating this reflection letter, this phrase came to our mind.

Needless to say, the invitation to Brothers to join the first cluster of communities could be seen as something very challenging, and maybe even frightening to some. And some Brothers may think that what the invitation is calling them to is too difficult, too demanding.

We believe, however, that the invitation may be all of these things, but more importantly, it is an invitation to life! It is a call to radical discipleship, to a deeper quality of life, and to an experience of discovering the face of God in the very faces of people made poor.

This first cluster of communities is the beginning of a transformation of the Congregation and the call is an urgent one. Let us not be late for our lives! The time is now, and we are the people!

I can never hear enough the question that Mary Oliver asks in her poem, *The Summer Day*, ‘Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?’ What a question to ask ourselves as we receive the invitation to join one of the first cluster communities to be set up in Zambia! We are being invited to a plan that will bring life and energy to each and every Brother who takes up the invitation. In addition, it will go to transform our community life and especially respond to the real needs of people made poor.

To embrace Our Way into the Future is to embark on a journey of amazement, a journey that we believe will transform both the Brother who says, ‘Yes’ and the community of which

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he will be a part. At this time in Lent, what an opportunity to embark on this journey of change and transformation!

There may also be Brothers who may feel that they would prefer to stay with the tried and tested. But has the tried and tested run its course, and are we being called to a new way of being Brother? At the heart of this call is an experience of community, lived in service of the people at the margins of society.

Brothers, we have now the unique opportunity to be part of a whole new way of being Brothers. It will be a way that is full of life and energy. Let us not stay with the tried and tested, but rather launch out into the deep, knowing that we are not alone in this new venture. All we can do is to try. We are never guaranteed that we will succeed, but what a glorious way to live a life!

I think the words of Henri Nouwen are very appropriate here. He says,

“You have an idea of what the new country looks like. Still, you are very much at home, although not truly at peace, in the old country. You know the ways of the old country, its joys and pains, its happy and sad moments. You have spent most of your days there even though you know that you have not found there what your heart most desires, you remain quite attached to it. It has become part of your very bones.

Now you have come to realise that you must leave it and enter the new country, where your Beloved dwells. You know that what helped and guided you in the old country no longer works, but what else do you have to go by? You are being asked to trust that you will find what you need in the new country. That requires the death of what has become so precious to you: influence, success, yes, even affection and praise.

Trust is so hard, since you have nothing to fall back on. Still, trust is what is essential. The new country is where you are called to go, and the only way to go there is naked and vulnerable. Risk a few more steps into the new country, trusting that each time you enter it, you will feel more comfortable and be able to stay longer.”

Now is the time to choose!
Choose life, so that others will have life!

Your brothers,

David, Declan, Donal, Francis, Ruvan and Sunil

LET GOD