

# About a new economic model in the Congregation

Synthesis of responses received

Africa	France	Mexico
Andean	Iberian	The Netherlands
Brazil	India	US
Germany	Ireland England	Chile
Flanders	Japan Philippines	Indonesia

## 1. What comments suggests the content of the letter?

### 1.a General comments on the letter

#### *Positive aspects*

1. The letter is good, clear, necessary, important and timely. It reflects a reality that we have lived for a long time in the congregation. It raises concrete ideas that we can and we must generate and invite you to raise new ones. The experience of the pandemic lived this year has been very suggestive when you start a global crisis that has economic consequences
2. Update and put in the context of the Global Human Society our vote of poverty. It proposes ways to structure our lives as SSCC religious. It makes see that the world will be increasingly poor and with more differences. Our concern has to look at the global reality. Economy and mission can not be disconnected.
3. It has served to reflect and work in the communities about the economic consequences of the pandemic and on our reality and commitment to the Gospel, poverty, our standard of living ... reflect on a certain "economic spirituality" in a context like the one that We live today, it is an advance for all the brothers. He has put the economy in our dialogue forum.
4. The letter is an invitation to assume new initiatives, responsibilities both at the provinces and in the entire congregation, which cause specific changes and practices in the daily life of our communities. It proposes us to encourage projects that fit the existential realities of the moment. It invites us to change towards a moderate lifestyle, for the well-being of the local community and all the congregation. He invites us to live more of our work and depend less on donors.
5. Brothers are invited to live with gratitude for the resources we receive, to take responsibility for the economy and make proper use of goods. He is inspiring and helps in the searches of new ways to hold our lives.

#### *Negative aspects*

6. Two related but different issues are raised: personal austerity with the need to invest better. Contrast the call that makes the letter to live with evangelical criteria, with a strategic that aims to strengthen us as investors.

7. The letter does not refer to the care of the brothers, the health needs and the age of the older brothers. We must remember that we are a congregation and not a corporation.
8. General issues are treated, issues that do not affect the daily practice of brothers around the world. It would be more useful that the letter would have asked for concrete initiatives in the local area or the action plans in each place, which are very different.
9. The reflection proposed by the letter does not necessarily lead to a "new economic model", but to sensitize that at this time the whole world is being hit by the pandemic and that the repercussions in the countries and in the communities are unequal so That is called to be solidarity.
10. Some concrete proposals must be understood from the situation of each major or local community.

### **1.b General ideas about the economy and attitudes of the brothers**

11. It is important that all the congregation think and work the same themes and come to have tune in the management and the use of the economy. It is evident that there are aspects and areas of life and mission of the congregation that are responsible for the entire congregation.
12. We have economic responsibility for the projects and the people we have in our position. You have to be very practical. There are a lot of damage cases of mismanagement and certain exaggerated works and projects.
13. In Economics we apply certain ideologies for some things and others not. We criticize some sources of income, which we need, but we justify the extensive domestic service, for example. Sometimes we live this topic with some schizophrenia, we want to have a more austere life and on the other we justify our standard of living and everything we consume.
14. Each time it cost us more to give up external services. We are invited to review our structures, especially the number of people to our service. Religious life requires more "light" structures so that we can devote more to the mission.
15. It should not be only the pandemic or the needs of the congregation which leads us to raise the economic dimension of our life. It is something that we must always question us as religious.
16. We regret that the brothers have not assumed the precariousness of resources from our vote of poverty, jointly with those who are less, but as a transitory situation that will soon pass and return to the previous state.
17. An element of discernment must be that the brothers are sustained with their work, not through financial investments. The responsibility of living in community, does not exempt us from looking for work forms that allow our personal, social and congregational growth.

### **1.c Contributions on the economic reality of the Congregation**

18. The economic situation of the Congregation makes the proposed work necessary. The Congregation is decreasing in places with more economic resources and grows in more needy places.

19. The pandemic has reduced our income, both for our lives and for missionary projects and charity. At the same time, the needs of medical expenses, cleaning and prevention have increased, also for burial burials that have passed away. The letter is especially timely at this time, has helped talk about this topic in some provincial chapters.
20. The poverty situation that will leave this crisis can be good news for our communities. The differences between our countries, not only noticeable the difference in the standard of living of our brothers, but also in the practical way of managing our economy. This obliges and urges in advance, as has been done in recent years, in a more transparent administration that ensures the mission, the care of our older brothers and the formation of the youngest.
21. It invites us to think about the economy from other parameters: expand our vision over the unequal conditions of each, alleviate the situation of the weakest economies and that have been more affected. It is sad to think about first and third world keys, the letter helps overcome these keys.
22. We will have to respond to training in places with fewer resources. There is only one reference to the initial formation in Africa, which sustains the entire congregation, it would be very interesting to know how many candidates has and how many remain in the last 5 years.
23. In some cases, initial training structures seem disproportionate. It is important to think how IF can contribute to sustaining the Congregation.
24. It is important that the capital of the congregation is well managed, centralization can help.
25. Urges us an economic management that allows long-term insurance income, since capital investments do not grant sufficient income for the needs of our works.
26. You should not fall into a saving that decreases communication, encounter ..., but in terms of structures, buildings ... technologies should take advantage of
27. Although solidarity is an unrenunciabile value, we cannot lose sight of the objective of the economic autonomy of the provinces / regions / delegations. In this sense, we must continue to insist on improving local economic efforts

## **2. What internal and external difficulties do you see in this process?**

### **2.a Internal difficulties**

#### *Internal difficulties for the attitudes of the brothers*

1. They have to do with the appreciation of the problem and their assessment, that not in all places is the same and depends on the standard of living, the conditions, etc. There are different ways of understanding the economy and also votes, charity, religious lifestyle.
2. A global culture style that is essentially consumed, own liberal capitalism has entered our communities. In this sense, we are doing excessive consumption and without need. We live a "bourgeois" character of the Congregation in all countries. We give the image of a rich congregation.

3. In communities we have no vision of the future holistic with the Congregation, there is still an individualist thinking that causes us fear of risking in future projects. We live incongruities: we want to be supportive but we lack confidence between us and with other provincial communities. We have difficulty getting out of the comfort zone in which we have been installed for a long time, that leads us to think first in our local group. We ordered transparency in our money management but we have little provision to exercise it.
4. There are poor provinces or regions, but not poor siblings. There are difficulties so that some brothers with many accumulated economic resources share with others.
5. There are great differences in economies, either from the provinces and countries, with very diverse levels of lives; we can not live in other countries with another continent's standard. This is reflected in the different ways and ways to handle the economy.
6. We can fall paternalism and in relations of begging between communities. We live the clericalism and the power associated with the priest. Regionalism or nationalism can be an obstacle to work and collaborate together for the mission. The narrow thought of the first and third world mentality.
7. There is a conservative and infantile vision of the economy, it is expected that external factors or groups will solve our problems, such as benefactors, associations, donors in general.
8. Among the brothers there is still the perception that there is no full clarity in the surrender of personal and community accounts, that generates distrust. We have a "adolescent" experience of the poverty vote. Faced with precariousness, some can choose to become personal savings.
9. We have brothers who accommodate themselves and are not willing to work with a schedule, with specific responsibilities, in paid jobs. The brothers are too much separated of economic issues and to review our lives in this area. There is a certain laziness at work by many brothers who do not bother working to raise funds. There is laziness to reinvent themselves in other forms of mission, to put gifts at the service.
10. There is a lack of interest on the part of the brothers in wanting to extend their training camp to be able to perform more activities.

*Structural internal difficulties*

11. Reticence of the provinces to the loss of economic independence. Fear of some provinces to centralize money management.
12. Some provinces or regions have a serious problem to achieve economic autonomy. Africa depends long on the generosity of others.
13. The way to finance projects and the internal solidarity of the Congregation must be improved. You have to establish clear and transparent processes, and work them in a professional manner.
14. Missing control measures on the administration of the provinces, there are no external audits. It is a difficulty at the time of trust and transparency, plus money is lost. The current monitoring and accompaniment system is not good, there is a lack of reliable information and within a deadline.

15. Weaken time to implement a more centralized system in the congregation. And create the need to improve transparency in financial management.
16. The initial training receives everything and does not make any fundraising campaign and look for some form of entry. This requires a review. Lack of perseverance and correct motivation of candidates.
17. Lack of economic training in the Congregation and that sometimes the economic criteria are not sufficiently considered in decision-making. Lack of training in disciplines and specific fields to exercise new responsibilities and face new challenges.
18. Lack of impulse and pastoral initiatives by provincial and regional leadership. Lack of stimuli to the brothers.
19. We need to take care of the presences that generate economic resources. We can not forget that it is good that the brothers live from their work and their effort.
20. There are not many problems if there is goodwill, the problem would be if some provinces do not want to continue contributing or not agreed with the distribution of money according to needs.

#### *Local internal difficulties*

21. We suffer the decrease of brothers with ministerial activity by high age and disease. We live, thank God, an increase of brothers in initial training, with a remarkable increase in costs (US). The accusations for sexual abuse on deceased brothers and compensation have produced an important burden on our finances.
22. There are projects and opportunities but in some cases age or health make it difficult to take them forward. In the same province there are other places without resources and with many economic difficulties, even if they have available siblings (Japan Philippines). The decrease in income in the parishes means that the IF in the Philippines can not be sustained in the coming years.
23. We have very small remnants and economic deficiencies because we do not have investment funds and our income are generally minimal. Our economy is based on services in the temples. The saved has been spent, lack liquidity and there is no investment capacity. (Mexico).
24. The use of different currencies (Africa) makes losses in changes, depreciation, fluctuations, etc. It includes a lot of the cost of residence in Mozambique.

## **2.b External difficulties**

#### *General External Difficulties*

25. The difficulties come from the different situations and places in which the congregation is. Cultural, economic, civil, fiscal, administrative, accounting legislation, etc. There are restrictions on the part of some governments.
26. Difficulty of movements for the brothers by migratory laws when stages or international training experiences are raised, stays of siblings in other countries, etc.

27. The dependence on managers and advisors who are more conditioned by the market than by the Gospel. Assume "the truths of the market" without questioning them. The difficulty to compatible the market with ethics, justice, solidarity ...
28. The pandemic has caused great uncertainty in the economy worldwide and in investment. Projects and budgets are in constant fluctuation. The work and service to the most needy often exceeds us in our communities and works. There is overwhelming by the demands of tax payments, payroll of workers and social insurance.
29. We are tied to the financial and capital world, we enter the circle of goods consumption without realizing the possibility of alternative and more solidarity projects.

*Local external difficulties*

30. The political environment is hostile and intolerant with religious minorities (India). Strict government and draconian policies that affect financial resources and the management of religious societies / congregations.
31. (Germany): Since almost no brother has impositions for a retirement, nor the State grants pensions to older citizens, the province must necessarily implement and maintain a pension fund for the maintenance of each older brother, finished His active work time, controlled by the "Solidarwerk" (agency of the Conference of Superiors) and that it is not known if it can be reversed in a foreign country.

### **3. What PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT can you contribute?**

#### **3.a General proposals and attitudes of the brothers**

1. Reflect from the general government about exaggerated individualism and on some very high standards of living. Flee from "goodness" and paternalism.
2. The economic issue has to have a greater relevance in our decision-making processes. The provinces would have to do an economic feasibility study of the projects we have functioning. Accompany in the creation of new projects looking for alternative ways of doing things.
3. Discover and exploit talents from the brothers to reduce staff costs and contracts. Reduce personal and community expenses.
4. Form brothers to lead, be responsible for the economy at different levels, both in the progress of provincial and general economies, as well as on the development of projects and financing search for them. Train and train the brothers in the different fields and needs that demand the challenges imposed by the world today.
5. Learn to work in constantly collaboratively to be more efficient and effective in provincial and congregation responsibilities and projects. Think of congregation projects. Work with the provinces of the Interprovincial Conference, telematically.
6. We can think about how to collaborate with projects with the sisters, the secular branch or in joint projects with other congregations.
7. We need a community provision and strong adhesion to the collective, for from there, to cultivate a true mystical and sense of solidarity - and not obligation - towards the provinces or more fragile delegations.

### **3.b Concrete economic proposals**

#### *Financial investments*

8. Concentrate financial investments with the start-up of an international advisory team to manage professional people with experience and accredited results. This idea is positive and interesting.
9. This common investment means that we can expect better management, transparent, from the ethical and ecological perspective, not centered on speculation but profitable to help the most fragile economies. For that, each community should consider what it can contribute to improve this common financial fund.
10. Investments in common may be more consistent, which are the product of good discernments, advice and ensuring coherent ethical standards with our religious life and adequate to the reality of each country, can be interesting way for the future of our congregational economy. Share successful experiences in this path of reflection, planning and investment
11. If there are common investments of the Congregation, it would be to be clarified:
  - a. The distribution of the income of the capital invested,
  - b. The guarantee of the funds,
  - c. The possibility of being helped to deal with structural deficits. How to calculate the needs of each group.
  - d. Decision making about investments, how each province participates with its contribution and controls how your money is used.
  - e. Keep in mind that working with a single financial entity can be dangerous if there are problems.
  - f. Prevent financial management from being in the hands of a few.
  - g. Invest in the Christian Brothers Investment Service (CBIs), socially responsible organization and offering accurate low management and good performance (US).

#### *Economic control systems and transparency*

12. It is necessary a greater involvement of the general government on economic issues. Insist on the follow-up of budgets, accounts, etc. Budgets should take into account the social context where you live. Control more and better accounts of the provinces that receive help from others.
13. Eliminate the personal economies of the Brothers, establishing the Common Box in the Communities and Provinces.
14. The General Economic Commission must make internal audits in the provinces, regions and delegations. Caring for the General Finance Commission to confirm the necessary confidence.
15. The balance sheets published by the provinces must be comparable and responsible. That requires the follow-up of the superiors and provincial economs. Greater requirement in presenting accounts of local communities and brothers, also in time of pandemic.

16. It must be seriously considered if the Government's structure of the Congregation can be continued, including the structure of the General House in Rome. In a technological time, is it necessary to keep the General Councilors living permanently in Rome? Maybe they could perform their functions from their provinces.

#### *Initial Formation and solidarity between provinces*

17. Initial Formation should also be structured with a view to reducing the economic possibilities of the provinces, especially as regards expenditure related to internationality. Promote more vocational activities that allow donations for the training house.
18. Review the expenses in the IF and to study that the brothers in fi collaborate economically. The brothers can collaborate taking care of the facilities, garden, orchard to get food and not buy them, take care of computers and other facilities, etc. You can reduce teachers who come to our training houses. Rooms can be rented that are not used to professionals and thus get additional income. You can see if there are sponsors to hold the brothers in IF.
19. Reduce the contribution to the general government by 20% and give it to the initial training. Do we need to support the numbers we have in Rome? We can find a simpler way for the exercise of authority in the congregation.
20. Allow a fund for the ongoing formation of the brothers, thus enabling a profession in which they will work and can help the congregation.
21. Improves the Solidarity Network. Collaboration agreements where conditions be clear and that are legal. Improve the application procedures for economic aid for projects and give accounts of employee in more detail. Create a development commission that looks for aid for projects, helping the voluntary contribution system.
22. Share human resources by exchanging presence and help brothers from other provinces for the support of works and for exchange of good practices. The provinces with the best economy can continue to receive brothers from provinces with fewer resources, so that they collaborate with the local church and generate some good for their province of origin.

#### *Local proposals*

23. If it is not convenient to sell properties, continue to improve them so that at the opportune time is still offering for retreats and other activities. Invest to build commercial spaces that can then be rented. Invest in niches in parochial cemeteries (Mexico).
24. Conduct online traits in different fields you need the province, to be able to continue with community tasks while we train ourselves. Offer training to others and ask for a return.
25. Present the congregation at different dioceses. Write to Diocese distant to request intentions of Masses (India).
26. Collaborate with governments and administrations in projects in the country itself.

#### **4. What concrete measures have you already put into practice or can you implement your province, region or delegation?**

##### **4.a General measures**

###### *Measures already implanted*

1. Insist a lot in the common box, which is the basis of the current economic situation and to be able to endure in time of pandemic.
2. The administration is transparent, each community and the provincial economy elaborates an income and expenses budget each year and is stipulated there. Each brother and each community render it monthly.
3. The administration of the province is reviewed and controlled every 2 years by an external company. (Germany).
4. We have a good investment policy, transparent and effective. The budgets are prioritized for monitoring and asset management. Investments with 13 religious congregations in the Netherlands, which manages to obtain a large outcome of an interests of an important capital. This allows you to easily pay an investment manager between all, count on advisors and get a good result every year. Investments with other congregations through Christian Brothers (US).
5. Investment management of other provinces (Ibérica, India, Government).
6. Do not give the brothers with fixed personal money (Pocket Money) but is asked when necessary, first to the Community Box and then to the Provincial. Not having bank accounts or personal funds, everything that is entered (also in paid jobs for other institutions) goes to the provincial box.
7. Sending brothers to other countries where there are more income (India). Generate new ministries in the region that provide income (school, vocational assistance, personal talents ...).
8. Share missionary and economic projects with other provinces.

###### *Constatations and situations in time of pandemic*

9. As a community we have not been directly affected by the economic consequences of the pandemic. The material care of the brothers has remained without any sensitive variation (Flanders).
10. Reduction is notable: fewer collects and intentions of masses and other works. Less income from Ministry (several provinces).
11. The brothers find that they have little or no knowledge about the economic situation of the delegation, income - expenditures. This management has been left in the hands of the Government and the Economy.
12. Death of brothers, risk of isolation, retreat. There are brothers who have become weaker because of the consequences of the pandemic. The average high age does not allow the brothers to do jobs in the communities, or it is something reduced.
13. The call to the brothers to perform tasks in the house that are within the possibilities of each one to not have to call and pay someone external.

14. Find mechanisms for the missionary projects to be gaining in economic autonomy. Insist on the need and commitment to look for more funds.

#### **4.b Specific measures**

##### *Concrete measures adopted*

15. The budget has been a great starting point from where to have a general look of the economic situation of the Congregation. If there is a deficit forces to find and study the causes (Chile).
16. Perform a study of the economic capacity of local communities and apostolic works so that they contribute a percentage of their income to the Zonal or Provincial cash.
17. Reduction of Inter Community Meetings. Perform meetings by telematic media. Consider these means for some meetings, saving travel expenses.
18. Reduction of the number of cars. Share personal cars.
19. Reduction of hours of service personnel. Keep the policy for years of having the minimum possible service personnel. Combine pastoral service and service to the community.
20. Reduction of spending outside the home, with restaurants and bars; Decreased expenses with the reduction of employees who serve us. Decrease in Community expenses (Brazil).
21. High age allows you not to have to budget vacations or many trips. The need for meals in the communal cuisine that serves us (Netherlands) has been reduced. The death of the brothers has made the needs reduce. The common phone has been removed. Rooms have been rented that were not already needed and the community room too large.
22. Raffles and sale of religious items, food, coffee and crafts have been organized to support local producers and the community by offering low-cost products and promoting fair trade (Mexico).
23. He has worked on social networks to get donations. Collectibles have been made in the parishes to help the same parishes and local communities (India).
24. Online training courses have been offered at a minimum price, which has been an income (Mexico).
25. Training has been initiated for some brothers to work in children's schools (Japan Philippines)
26. Sale of unused places or necessary for the Congregation in the Breda Cemetery (Netherlands).
27. Installation of solar panels, review and improvement of water losses (Mexico).
28. Maintain the remuneration of our workers despite the remarkable drop in income.
29. Change the place of Berkeley's IF to Fiji, where a student costs 4 times less. (US) Participate in the National Retirement Association and achieve funds by that means. Investments with other congregations. Take the novitiate to the US West region, which assumes costs. Sale and rental of real estate.

30. Move funds to ethical funds. Maintain the commitment to help to poorer areas of the Congregation. Adapt management to good practices of charitable entities (Ireland-England).
31. It has been decided to send 15% of the investment results as an additional contribution to the provisions of the delegation of the Netherlands, from now on and in the coming years.

#### **4.c Ideas that can be implemented**

32. Encourage local communities to consider the real economic value of each brother's work. Retrieve and implement the value of "responsibility" (individual and community) at the meeting of the local community.
33. Know the budgets, give reason for budgets and adjust to them. We have to improve in budgets to be useful tools in works and communities. Have some informative session for the brothers to know the economic situation of the province or delegation.
34. Along with reflection on the IF, it is also interesting to know what the improvement, FP studies cost. You have to ask yourself if it is necessary to go to study without another responsibility.
35. Create professional support commissions in the administrative, accounting, economic field to make successful decisions in the execution of projects
36. Make an accompaniment in the management of economic activities taking into account the knowledge and management of accounts, account formats, surrender of personal accounts and provincial accounts.
37. Rethink the needs of domestic service. Evaluate the need for each of the workers who are at our service.
38. Have works where the brothers can work and live from their work. Propose new business units to increase revenue within the province through rental projects or investment.
39. Invest in the economic formation of the brothers. Train the brothers in fields that the province needs to better manage its economy and project them in future profits. Invest in the training and qualification of the brothers so that they are more efficient and profitable in the labor field. Training in professional fields, not only in theology, in order to provide remunerated services.
40. Study the insurance and pension funds for the brothers.
41. We must continue to deepen the ethical management of our investments.
42. Study the situation of large and ancient buildings and think about improvements through sales or real estate projects to improve our situation.