

**SSCC**

**39<sup>th</sup> General Chapter**

***Brothers***

28.08.2018 - 26.09.2018

**DOCUMENTS AND DECISIONS**



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# PROMULGATION

Rome, November 6, 2018

Dear brothers,

As you know, the 39<sup>th</sup> General Chapter of the brothers was held in Rome from 28<sup>th</sup> August to 28<sup>th</sup> September 2018 at the same time and in the same place as the 36<sup>th</sup> General Chapter of the sisters.

The General Chapter was a time of discernment that brought together the thoughts and reflections of the brothers based on the Constitutions and Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation, "Evangelii Gaudium". There was also a sharing of the most significant pastoral and spiritual moments that the communities of the Congregation are living. In light of the motto "Savour God along the journey of life" (Good Father) and the inspiring text of the Disciples of Emmaus, we asked ourselves, "Where do we recognize Jesus walking with us today?" "What new paths does he propose to us?"

All of this evolved into a desire for a deep inner renewal, the fruit of an expected encounter with Jesus. This desire is included in the guiding document of the Chapter, "Our Inner Self is being renewed day by day" (2 Cor 4:16). It's about rekindling our daily commitment to let ourselves to be found by Jesus; He retraces the journey of the Disciples to Emmaus with us, transforms our many times hardened hearts, and make

us joyful witnesses of his presence. The Chapter takes up this dynamic in the document, "The Pastoral and Missionary Conversion: new paths to Emmaus". In it are expressed some challenges that come from our world, from the Church and from the people we meet. In addition, it offers paths toward some areas of pastoral and missionary conversion where Jesus is awaiting us.

The renewal of the inner man and pastoral and missionary conversion are two poles that need and inspire each other. They are the expression of the renewed encounter with Jesus and his Gospel. We will only discover their effectiveness when each one of us, and each community of the Congregation, continues the path of spiritual discernment begun in the General Chapter.

Also contributing to this discernment are the decisions on "Sacred Hearts Spiritual and Historical Patrimony", attention to Initial Formation, especially the preparation for final vows and ordination to the priesthood ("Initial Formation: 'Fourth Stage'"), the shared use of goods in service of the mission and for a decent life for all of the brothers ("The Administration of Temporal Goods").

We do not journey alone on this path of spiritual discernment and pastoral and missionary conversion. We are called to make the journey along with our sisters ("Promoting Brothers and Sisters' unity") and with the laity who share our spirituality and mission ("SSCC Secular Branch").

These documents and decisions of the Chapter, which become effective with this promulgation, trace for us a path of personal and missionary renewal for the whole Congregation. I ask that each brother and each community of the Congregation

make this deep desire for renewal their own, that they once again place Jesus and the joy of his Gospel at the center so that it and we become Good News for the brothers, for the people we serve and for our world.

Fraternally in the Sacred Hearts,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alberto Toutin', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Fr. Alberto Toutin ssc  
*Superior General*



# **“Our Inner Self is being renewed day by day”**

**(2 Cor 4:16)**

*“In whatever age or stage of life we find ourselves, what measures the health of the Congregation is its capacity to sustain and strengthen the “inner man” of the brothers, that is, that brothers can always enter more deeply into the experience of God that the charism and consecration through religious vows brings. The apostolic strength of the Congregation depends on having brothers willing to give themselves totally to the Gospel and to the SSCC mission. The religious quality of each is dependent upon the discernments they make being truly of the Spirit, and not just negotiations based on criteria and an odd interest in what we have professed.” (Report of the General Government, 2012-2018, 5.1.1)*

## **1. Introduction**

The theme of the “inner man” or the inner life of a brother, is one that has captured the imagination of the delegates at our General Chapter. It was introduced in the preparatory documents, became a feature in many of our deliberations, and a motif that we returned to, especially during our retreat days. Such interest reveals both the centrality of our relationship with the Lord to our religious vocation, and the desire in us for this relationship to grow and deepen. Fidelity and consistency in our vocation today, require a greater

awareness of the importance of this relationship, which we are called to enter into with gratitude, determination and confidence.

## **2. The Inner Life**

As Christians, when we speak about the “interior or inner life,” we are of course speaking about the life of Christ that dwells within us, through the Holy Spirit. St Paul in Galatians says: *“I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”* (Gal 2:20) This seed of faith was first planted in baptism and can be renewed daily. (Cf. 2 Cor 4:16) It grows and matures in union with other members, into the fullness of Christ (Cf. Eph 4:13) and will come to full completion at the end of time, when God will be *“all in all.”* (1 Cor 15:28)

## **3. “Did not our hearts burn within us?” (Lk 24:32)**

The Lucan story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus provides us with a key to understanding three essential elements in our relationship with Christ: conversation, accompaniment and conversion.

It is through conversing with Christ (prayer) that the disciples learn who their Crucified and Risen Saviour is, and what he requires of them. In the accompaniment of Christ, they learn the different ways he is present to them: in Scriptures, in prayer, in the Eucharist, in our sisters and brothers, (especially those who suffer), in his hiddenness and *“when two or three are gathered in my name.”* (Mt 18:20) Christ’s conversation and accompaniment with the disciples changes them: “The journey they have made with Jesus has

converted their hearts, changed their view and transformed them into his witnesses.” (Inspiring Document: Saviour God along the journey of life, 6.3)

Rereading our Constitutions in the light of the Emmaus encounter has given rise to desires in us that we believe to be the fruit of God’s action and grace. Likewise, our reflections on Pope Francis’ Exhortation “*Evangelii Gaudium*”, evoked similar aspirations: to evangelise and be evangelised (Const. 43); to touch the suffering flesh of Christ (Const 41.5); to enter more deeply into the experience of God’s mercy as manifested in the heart of Jesus (Const 2-3); to renew our living of the vows (Const 15-16); to work more as a team and as part of the Church ( Const.1; 153); to deepen the richness of our SSCC spiritual heritage.

#### **4. The Interior Conflict**

In the conversation with Christ on the journey, we realise with joy, that the desires arising from our burning hearts, are the same as the great desire God has for us. In this, we “rediscover a taste for adventure, so that we can take the risk—with Jesus—of proclaiming him to our brothers and sisters, and especially to the most poor.” (Inspiring Document, 2) There is of course a tension that arises in prayer, between desires that are other centred, and the temptations to only look after and protect our own needs. *“They will be unfaithful to their most essential vow, the moment they wish to live for themselves alone and not to work for the salvation of their sisters and brothers.”* (The Good Father, Memo of the Title of Zealots)

Some of these temptations are mentioned in the 'Inspiring Document' (7.1-7.6) and include: an over concern with self, keeping our distance from the poor, pessimism, individualism and an intellectual and spiritual laziness. This tension at the heart of our interior life, between our will and God's will, calls us to an "ongoing renewal in faithfulness." (Rule of Life, 16-20) This tension should not discourage us, and is indeed a sign that we are taking our relationship and conversation with the Lord seriously. It is something Jesus himself had to deal with, (Cf. Jn 4:34) and which came to a climax in the garden of Gethsemane. (Cf. Mk 14:32-35) Even moments of crisis can bring us to a new reliance on the Lord, who is always there to hold out His hand and draw us closer to Himself. (Cf. Mt 14:22-33)

## **5. Our Vocation**

It seems appropriate at this point, to remind ourselves of the particular nuance that our relationship to Christ takes on through our SSCC spirituality. We know from our Constitutions, the radical nature of this relationship, for when we "put on" (Gal 3:27) the "attitudes, options and tasks" (Const. 3) of Christ, we enter into the pierced heart on the Cross. We are, as the Good Father says: "children of the Cross." The union of the Heart of Mary with that of her Son provides us with a model of faith in this radical love. From this consecration, our apostolic mission has its origin: to contemplate, live and announce God's love to the world. (Const. 2)

Given the desire to enter more deeply into our inner life and the rich and radical nature of our consecration, now seems an opportune time to begin a reflection on our religious vows as they apply to both Initial and Ongoing Formation. Living out our vows disposes us for the mission, making possible our “availability to the needs and demands of the Church, discerned in the light of the Spirit, and the capacity to adapt to circumstances and events.” (Const. 6)

## 6. Supporting our Inner Life

Our SSCC apostolic religious lifestyle requires a personal commitment to take care of our inner life. The desire for union with God that springs from our consecration needs to be rekindled every day. For the most part, we are responsible for our Ongoing Formation, for a **personal plan** and for daily faithfulness to our relationship with the Lord. The following are some supports that can help us remain faithful to Christ in whatever stage of life we find ourselves.

- Our love for and interest in **Sacred Scriptures** grounds and inspires all that we do, think and say. In this we take our lead from our Founders, two people for whom “the Word became flesh” in a powerful and beautiful way. **Lectio Divina** and Gospel **meditation** provides means to keep the scriptures alive and relevant for us.
- The importance of the Sacraments especially **Eucharist** and **Reconciliation**: “Our life of prayer is centred in the Eucharist as the living expression of our personal and communitarian commitment.” (Const. 51.1) The regular receiving of the Sacrament of Reconciliation “renews and strengthens our fidelity to the Lord.” (Const. 54.1)

- **Spiritual accompaniment** - having someone we can share with at a heart level is an important, and one might say indispensable, aid to modern religious life. Such soul friends help us remain faithful and consistent in our relationship with the Lord.
- Good quality **spiritual reading** can also help sustain our relationship with the Lord. This includes material related to our own SSCC spirituality and charism.
- Time away on **retreat** can help us to have a different perspective and refocus our attention on the Lord, whose desire is that we become aware of his constant presence with us. (Cf. Mt 28:20)

## 7. Support through community

"We live our vocation and mission in community." (Const. 7) Our local communities should provide the environment where our inner lives can grow through the support and example of our brothers. Regular **faith-sharing meetings** remind us of the One who is the reason for our very existence as religious. (Const. 3) Such gatherings can form part of the community's plan. Knowing that: "we do not form communities of the "perfect", but of "pardoned sinners," (Rule of Life, 42) we can, in time, build up enough trust to share with those we live with, the hopes, joys and struggles of our interior lives. Discerning and evaluating together, a community can grow in transparency. It is at this level that "On-going formation" can truly bear fruit.

When a Community is one that affirms, encourages and nourishes its members, it becomes a witness to the people of God where it is established. (Const 7) Pope Francis makes a particularly plea in this regard, challenging us to become a “contemplative fraternity”:

*“... a fraternal love capable of seeing the sacred grandeur of our neighbour, of finding God in every human being, of tolerating the nuisances of life in common by clinging to the love of God, of opening the heart to divine love and seeking the happiness of others just as their heavenly Father does. Here and now, especially where we are a «little flock» (Lk 12:32), the Lord’s disciples are called to live as a community which is the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Cf. Mt 5:13-16). We are called to bear witness to a constantly new way of living together in fidelity to the Gospel. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of community!” (Evangelii Gaudium, 92)*

## **8. Witnessing: “A Lamp on a Stand”**

Our religious lives and communities when lived in this way –a way that is not afraid to speak of Christ (Cf. Mt 10:32) and which flows out in service to others–will surely be attractive to any aspirant discerning a call to our Congregation. Likewise, it would be important for any postulant or aspirant to meet and be inspired by our brothers of advanced age, who have been faithful in their relationship with the Lord, to community life and to the apostolate. These brothers, remaining faithful in the ups

and downs of life and ministry, possess a certain serenity and wisdom that in its own quiet way says: "this life was worth it, I have been faithful to the Lord and He has been faithful to me."

## **9. Adoration**

We feel we need to say something in particular about our SSCC calling to reparative adoration as concerns the "inner life". Because we were conceived and born out of adoration, (Const. 5) this form of contemplative prayer belongs to our SSCC identity. We do not need to "reinvent the wheel," nor look for a path to contemplation outside of our own charism and spirituality: "The Eucharistic celebration and contemplative adoration make us participate in the attitudes and sentiments of Jesus before the Father and before the world." (Const. 5) Adoration brings us close to the heart of Christ (Cf. Jn 13:23) from where all graces flow. In daily adoration, we "savour" God, who accompanies us in this way of life. Here, in silence, we do not have to say, ask or do anything, except allow Christ to love and heal us. In the trust and security of this relationship, we can then bring to Christ the needs and concerns of all those we love and serve.

## **10. "Rejoice in the Lord always..." (Phil 4:4)**

In closing let us leave the final words of encouragement to the great mystic St Paul, whose whole life, ministry and martyrdom was poured out so that we might realise that we are "in Christ," and that Christ dwells in us:

*“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.” (Phil 4:4-9)*

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**Original document in English**

# The Pastoral and Missionary Conversion: new paths to Emmaus

## Introduction

1. In these days of journeying together we have shared with the Lord and among ourselves our desires for personal, pastoral and missionary conversion. These desires form part of the reality of our journey as a Congregation. As religious and priests of the Sacred Hearts **we long for other ways of being and serving in the Church**. With a heart attentive like that of Mary, we can hear God's call in these desires. Jesus, 'the one whom they have pierced', knows that in our desires lie hidden obstacles and resistances. Thus, if they are to be realised, temptations will need to be overcome and disappointments faced. Where we see only failure and powerlessness in the suffering and death of Jesus, he directs our gaze to the depths of the reparative love he has—"for his Father and for the world, especially for the poor, the afflicted, the marginalised and those who have not heard the Good News." (Const 6)
2. The needs of the Church and the challenging reality of our world make us sense **the urgency for a deep missionary and pastoral conversion** in our Congregation. But this conversion is only possible if, before all else, we tirelessly ask the Lord for the grace of conversion of hearts, outlooks and actions. We have discerned together some of the challenges posed by

reality and read in the light of the conviction that the Lord is walking in our midst. We present these challenges as new paths to Emmaus, new opportunities to savour God who goes before us, along with some guidelines to help us review our styles of presence, change our ways of acting and encourage new initiatives.

## I. Challenges

3. “The world to which we are sent is **the world as it is**—suffering, beautiful, seeking, hoping.” (Rule of Life, 16) In our world we see the beauty of cultural plurality and also xenophobia; a more interconnected globalized world (thanks to the various means of communication) but also one of solitude and anonymity; the thirst for spirituality and belonging but also individualism; we live in a time of great development and opportunity but also a time of economic inequality; a greater ecological awareness alongside limitless consumption...
4. We appreciate in **young people** their openness to a world that is constantly changing: their notion of friendship, their care for creation, the natural relationship they have with the body, their familiarity with social networks. We are conscious that our usual pastoral ministry to young people often does not attract or interest them. This leads to another concern - that there are so many young people who live without the light of faith, who live without a sense of ‘belonging’ to a believing people, who live without the horizon of meaning held out by the Gospel. Nor do we want to

remain indifferent to the many problems that affect them, such as individualism, drugs, juvenile delinquency, and so much more. We want to share with young people the challenging beauty of the Gospel, and at the same time allow ourselves be evangelised by seeing things from their perspective. We want to sow in their hearts the desire to follow Jesus, the desire to give their lives to God and in service of men and women. Desires such as these can result in different vocations, including vocations to the SSCC religious life.

5. In our pastoral service, we encounter **a diversity of ways to be family**. This calls us to respect families and support them in their searching and need. We want to strengthen their longing to love with the light of the Gospel. It hurts us to see couples and marriages in crisis, domestic violence and how precarious the quest is for affection and even work. The bonds between generations are weakening. As a result, many who are sick and elderly find themselves alone. With all of this we feel challenged by the vision of a church with "open doors"—a "field hospital". Inspired by our reparative spirituality, we want to accompany families as well as the sick and elderly who are often to be found within our SSCC communities.
6. The **Church** is also rediscovering the beauty of the Gospel and the joy of communicating it. We are all missionary disciples of the Gospel. However, the church faces challenges from within, including the challenge of **clericalism**, which does not respect the diversity of the church's gifts and ministries thus allowing for all kinds

of abuses. All of this is a challenge to our pastoral activity. To humbly take on these challenges, keeping in mind the vision of **a church on-the-move**, will mean moving from a pastoral practice of mere conservation and simple maintenance to a decidedly missionary one. (Cf. *EG* 15, 25, 27, 33 and 46)

7. As a Congregation, we feel **the need to broaden our missionary horizons**, to risk with Jesus taking new paths where he both precedes us and is waiting for us. Our SSCC religious family has had a missionary vocation from the beginning. For our Founders and for our brothers Damien and Eustáquio, the precariousness of resources or the scarcity of personnel never impeded their ability to respond with generosity and boldness to the new calls to mission.

## **II. Proposals and Orientations**

### ***A. AREAS FOR PASTORAL AND MISSIONARY CONVERSION***

#### **8. Pastoral care in large urban centers**

- 8.1. Create or renew our presences by reaching out to those who live in the peripheries (geographical and existential) of large urban areas. (Cf. *EG* 48-49) We are inspired by what "the hidden life" of Jesus has to teach us. From this, we seek new ways to be church, to savour the Gospel and to serve Jesus in those who perhaps have never attended church.

- 8.2. Offer our family spirit (brothers, sisters and lay SSCC), as a support to those living in the city, providing places of welcome, inclusion, listening, close support and professional competence.
- 8.3. Create links with other Congregations or civil organisations in order to develop new initiatives or collaborate with existing initiatives that seek to respond to the challenges faced in the urban areas (e.g. working with the marginalised).
- 8.4. Each Major Community or Conference to organise seminars that facilitate a sharing and reflection on our pastoral work in the major urban areas.

## **9. Parishes**

- 9.1 Promote formation, accompaniment and participation of the laity in parishes so that they can engage in pastoral ministry in a co-responsible way—as an antidote against clericalism; find inclusive ways to draw up a pastoral plan; create a system that helps with evaluation and monitoring; develop and put into action a policy that is dedicated to the prevention of abuses.
- 9.2 SSCC priests in charge of parishes: that they work as a team with their own brothers and with others; exercise pastoral discernment in the local community; give an account of their management to the parish, to the diocese and to the Congregation—especially when the parish is handed over to another brother at the end of their term of office.

- 9.3 That parishes incarnate the charism of the Congregation –according to their own reality–and be animated by the missionary spirit of our Founders. In so doing, the parishes will communicate the faith, practice mercy and justice, deepen the reparative sense of Eucharistic adoration, and promote ecumenical, interreligious or intercultural dialogue.
- 9.4 That the Congregation, at all levels, encourages formation for parish ministry: setting out what it involves during Initial Formation, highlighting what priests specialise in and encouraging the exchange of experiences and reflection on this pastoral area.

## **10. New missionary horizons and also new missionary presences in Europe**

- 10.1 Discern and choose with the missionary boldness of our Founders areas of evangelisation in the margins (Const. 6) of the places where we are today as well as beyond them.
- 10.2 Train ourselves to make better use of social media as an instrument for mission.
- 10.3 Create forums for joint reflection at Major Community or Conference levels (seminars, workshops, etc.), in which our presences can be constantly assessed from the perspective of a Church reaching out.

- 10.4 Encourage projects of interprovincial collaboration between communities from Europe and communities from other places of the Congregation in order to establish new missionary presences in Europe.

## **11. Schools and education**

- 11.1 That our schools and educational activities be true platforms of evangelisation, both in secularised societies and in those in which education is practically the only way out of poverty.
- 11.2 That the pastoral and missionary conversion in SSCC educational works puts at the centre of the process the person (students, teachers, families...) as well as accompaniment in the academic and pastoral fields, so as to encourage personal and social growth.
- 11.3 That the SSCC educational system integrates the demands of the pedagogical field (multiple intelligences, neuroscience, cooperative work, interdisciplinary projects, the appropriate use of technology, respect for nature, multilingualism, ...) with the demands of the pastoral field (the personal encounter with Jesus, the ecclesial experience, the SSCC charism and the vocational response).
- 11.4 That forms of collaboration be established between the communities, and between the brothers and sisters of the Congregation, to implement pastoral and missionary conversion in our schools.

## **B. GROUPS**

### **12. Youth and vocational discernment**

- 12.1 That we go out to meet young people, especially the most marginalized and not solely confine ourselves to the institutional or ecclesial spaces in which we are presently.
- 12.2 That the brothers who work with young people do so in coordination with lay people, family and vocational ministry, and in collaboration with other institutions committed to young people.
- 12.3 That we change our ways of being with young people: This presupposes seeing their lives in a positive way, becoming familiar with their language, culture, ways of relating to technology and their ways of understanding the world, in order to communicate the Gospel in a relevant and meaningful way.
- 12.4 That we offer young people an accompaniment based in the Sacred Hearts spirituality and grounded in the cordiality that helps heal wounds, repair and make possible the transformation of the human heart, an accompaniment in which personal relationship and vocational discernment are central.
- 12.5 That some apostolic communities invite young people to join them in their liturgical celebrations and community life. This can be a way of nourishing their faith and may well have some vocational impact.

### **13. Families**

- 13.1 That brothers, animated by our SSCC family spirit and by the ministry of reparative adoration, prioritise the accompaniment and support of families in our pastoral presences.
- 13.2 That brothers prepare themselves adequately to accompany families, married couples and those preparing for marriage.
- 13.3 Promote collaboration and teamwork of brothers, sisters and laity in the pastoral accompaniment of families.
- 13.4 Help families by using materials dedicated to the family that are already available on the website, or documents such as *Amoris Laetitia*, *Gaudete et Exultate*, or family prayer such as the Enthronement to the Sacred Heart, etc.

### **14. The elderly and the sick**

- 14.1 That brothers recognise “the suffering flesh of Christ” (EG 24) in the elderly and the sick.
- 14.2 That all brothers, especially those who are responsible for communities of the elderly and sick brothers, come to understand old age as a stage in spiritual growth.
- 14.3 That those responsible for communities of the elderly and sick ensure an atmosphere of openness and avail of professional help when necessary.

- 14.4 Accompany the elderly and sick as they live this stage in peace and in thanksgiving and include the celebration of the sacraments of reconciliation and anointing of the sick as ways of healing and making visible the closeness of God in weakness. It could be helpful to make available, among other things, the writings of our brother Esteban Gumucio ssc, on old age: "Blessed are the aged".
- 14.5 Encourage as much as possible intergenerational SSCC communities wherein "*your old shall dream dreams and your young shall see visions.*" (Joel 3:1)
- 14.6 May the elderly and sick, even in weakness, discern in community how to continue to walk with the People of God, participating in a concrete way in the mission of the Congregation "to live and die in the service of the Sacred Hearts." (38<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, *Mission IV*, 31-37)

### **III. Decisions**

15. That each brother be open to questioning his way of doing things in the mission in order to enter into the dynamic of conversion on the road to Emmaus.
16. Each Major Community, Region or Delegation to discern, choose and implement within the next six years one or two of the challenges of missionary and pastoral conversion.





17. The government of each Major Community, Region or Delegation will promote and accompany the implementation of the chosen pastoral challenges. To help with this, collaboration may be sought either from within or outside of the Congregation, both at community and Conference levels.
18. The General Government will pay special attention to the implementation of these challenges as part of its service to the spiritual and missionary animation of the Congregation.

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**Original document in Spanish**

# Sacred Hearts Spiritual and Historical Patrimony

*"Did not our hearts burn within us  
when he spoke to us on the way  
and explained to us the Scriptures?"*

(Lk 24:32)

1. The experience of the disciples of Emmaus is also the experience that we, religious of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts, have lived throughout our history. After more than two centuries, we can say what the Good Father affirmed when he announced the approval of our first Constitutions: "The Lord has led us by the hand". In thanksgiving to the Lord for so many gifts received, the Chapter invites the whole Congregation to continue "**savouring God along the way**", as our Founders and so many of our brothers and sisters have done. The journey of life in which we are invited to savour God, is a journey involving three directions: an interior journey, a journey towards the margins and the journey to and with the brothers. (Cf. Inspiring Document, 1) For this journey, we find in the spirituality of the Sacred Hearts and in our historical patrimony a rich source that helps renew, sustain and strengthen our interior life—a source that helps us to enter more deeply into the experience of God that our charism brings, and into the consecration made through religious vows. (Cf. Report of the General Government, 5.1

2. The **Commission for Spiritual and Historical Patrimony** will continue promoting, at a general level, initiatives of Ongoing Formation in this field. In a special way, it will coordinate studies and publications concerning our history and spirituality, organise sessions or other initiatives at international level, collaborate in initiatives promoted by Provinces or Interprovincial Conferences and help the General Government when requested to do so.

The Commission will be composed of brothers who live and work in the General House. The General Archivist, the General Postulator, the General Secretary will belong to it as well as a member of the General Council, who will be the one to coordinate it. Brothers who study in Rome can also be part of it.

The Commission can include brothers and people who are in other places, asking for their collaboration or inviting them to face-to-face meetings or video-conferences. When appropriate, the Commission will collaborate with the sisters in some common works.

3. The **Chapter values those places** in which—from the beginning until now—the life and mission of our Congregation has developed. Among them all, especially important are those places linked to the foundation and to the brothers whose holiness has been recognized by the Church. The Chapter asks the General Government, in dialogue with the communities that are in these places, to promote a meaningful presence of the Congregation.

4. The "**Poitiers Session**" has been a good initiative of Ongoing Formation and immersion in the spiritual itinerary of the Sacred Hearts.

The Chapter asks the General Government to continue offering this activity jointly with the sisters, generally intended for brothers and sisters, formators or other groups as deemed appropriate. It could also be opened to members of the Secular Branch. The Commission for Spiritual and Historical Patrimony can be counted on to collaborate in organising this.

5. From the origins of the Congregation to this present time, there have been brothers and sisters who, in the way they embodied the charism and the mission of the Congregation, have become **icons** that nourish our consecration and our mission as religious of the Sacred Hearts. We have our Founders, the Good Father and the Good Mother; Saint Damien de Veuster, Blessed Eustáquio and the Blessed Martyrs of Spain—brothers whose holiness has been recognized by the Church; and those brothers whose process of beatification has begun—namely, the martyrs of the Paris Commune and Esteban Gumucio sccc.

The Chapter asks the Commission for Spiritual and Historical Patrimony to work towards the production of a catalogue of the studies, publications and other materials relating to these icons that have been completed in the Provinces, selecting from among them works of quality and interest that can subsequently be shared and translated into the different languages used in the Congregation.

6. The Chapter:
  - a) encourages brothers to give time to **studies** of the history, spirituality, charism and mission of the Congregation, which will help all of us to have a deeper and more updated understanding;
  - b) asks brothers who undertake specialised studies in Scripture, Theology, History or other disciplines, to take on some work that is related to the spiritual and historical patrimony of the Congregation;
  - c) asks the Provincial Governments to release brothers for further studies, especially in Rome (where the General Archives are located), or in Paris, in the country where the Congregation was born.
  
7. The Chapter asks the Commission for Spiritual and Historical Patrimony to promote the publication of **new editions** of "Cahiers of Spirituality" and "Études Picpuciennes"; and to develop study aids, reading guides or tools that assist us to work with them, whether personally or in community.

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**Original document in Spanish**

# **Initial Formation: “Fourth Stage”**

## **1. Introduction**

The Fourth Stage—using terminology that has become common among the formators—is of fundamental importance in the process of Initial Formation (IF). It is the time in which the brothers in formation consider their life-long commitment to religious life in SSCC and face the difficulties that are part of the first years of apostolic life. This stage requires a particular form of accompaniment. The first three stages of IF are: the pre-novitiate, the novitiate and the first years of temporary profession.

In general, it has been noted that the Fourth Stage is the weakest stage in IF throughout the whole Congregation and the one that needs the most attention. The quality of the discernment that forms part of the request for and admission to perpetual vows is a matter of concern. In some cases, it happens that the importance of the life-long commitment as an SSCC religious (expressed in perpetual profession) is overshadowed by the desire for eventual ordination to the diaconate and priesthood.

## **2. Definition and covering period**

The Fourth Stage corresponds to the second period within the professed stage. “In this period the emphasis falls on the integration of the professed in the apostolic religious life of the Province and of the Congregation, providing the

necessary conditions for those who are continuing in following academic studies." (General Plan of Initial Formation 164 & 2)

The beginning of this stage should be between the third and fifth year of temporary profession and conclude with priestly ordination or with perpetual profession for those who are not destined for priestly ministry. (Stat. 39.2)

### **3. Objectives**

- 3.1 Facilitate the process of full incorporation of the brother—with all the rights and duties—into the apostolic religious life of the Major Community/Region/Congregation with emphasis on his availability.
- 3.2 Complete a solid initial philosophical and theological formation. Create a personal theological synthesis that involves a dialogue with the process of faith of the professed and the apostolic work that he undertakes.
- 3.3 Focus on the learning of, at least, a second language among those used in the Congregation. (Cf. Stat. 34.3; General Plan of Initial Formation 96)
- 3.4 Become acquainted with and share in the type of life that the professed will find when IF ends in regards to both the fraternal life in a local community and the apostolate in a pastoral community.
- 3.5 Strengthen the definitive religious consecration of the professed. Discern and prepare for perpetual profession.

- 3.6 Offer a theoretical and practical formation for priestly ministry and adequate accompaniment for the discernment of this vocation in the context of our SSCC religious life.

#### **4. The 'Where' of the Fourth Stage**

- 4.1 The most suitable setting to carry out this stage is the Major Community/Region to which the brother belongs. The community becomes a decisive formation agent, firstly, by proposing a real experience of life and mission and secondly by helping the brother discover what is his personal contribution to the mission of the group.
- 4.2 It is advisable that for this stage the brother in temporary vows lives in an apostolic community in order to facilitate his integration into the real and practical life of his Major Community/Region, especially in regards to the fraternal and pastoral life.
- 4.3 The apostolic community that welcomes the brother to the Fourth Stage is a community that seeks to live faithfully what the Major Community aspires to—as reflected in its PARL.
- 4.4 Before welcoming any brother to this stage, the local community becomes conscious, in dialogue with the Provincial Superior and the formation team, of what the Province is asking of it regarding the brother in formation and will inform itself as to what is necessary to carry out this task.

- 4.5 If the brother in temporary vows undertakes this stage in a formation community, special care will be taken to ensure that his formation plan facilitates some type of contact with an apostolic community, fostering a qualitative growth in the pastoral life of the professed and his progressive integration into the PARL of the Major Community/Region.

## **5. The Formator**

Regarding the Formator for this stage, the General Plan of Initial Formation states "During this second period, the professed are under the immediate responsibility of a Formator in everything that concerns the process of formation and study. The Formator, together with the community, helps them in the discernment of their personal commitment in the Mission of the Congregation." (164 & 3) The Formator of this Stage forms part of the Formation team.

His functions are:

- a. Ensure that the objectives of this stage are complied with.
- b. Offer individual or group/formation activities that are intended to help the brothers live more deeply the objectives of this stage.
- c. Undertake personal accompaniment (formative) in a systematic way, ensuring that the brother in the Fourth Stage has spiritual accompaniment.

- d. Maintain an open and regular dialogue with the apostolic community to which the brother belongs in order—when appropriate—to request reports about him.
- e. To request from the person who is in charge of the community’s pastoral work an evaluation of the apostolic activities of the brother in Fourth Stage.
- f. It is for the Formator to draw up reports for the Provincial and his Council. (Stat. 35)
- g. It is for the Formator of the professed brother to prepare a programme for final vows and, where appropriate, for ordained ministries, having listened to the views of the Formation team and other interested parties. (General Plan of Initial Formation 165)
- h. Reflect with the candidate on the steps that lead from Initial Formation to Ongoing Formation.

## **6. Contents**

The contents of this stage should revolve around the SSCC religious life and the SSCC priestly ministry. They would be complementary to the contents for the preparation for final vows.

## **7. Preparation for final commitments and Ongoing Formation**

7.1 In some Major Communities, it is difficult to highlight the uniqueness and importance of perpetual vows when perpetual profession and priestly ordination take place very close in time. We consider it worthwhile that

the Major Communities and formation teams look for suitable pedagogical ways to ensure the discernment and preparation that each step requires.

- 7.2 "The profession of perpetual vows must be preceded by a period of prolonged preparation. Its duration and modality must be approved by the Provincial Government." (Const. 83) The Formator of the Fourth Stage will make a program proposal to the Provincial Government for this period. (Cf. General Plan of Initial Formation, 165) The program will include, among other elements, participation in the congregational meeting preparing for perpetual vows (with the necessary preparation beforehand); a retreat prior to profession; and preparation for the liturgical celebration of the perpetual profession.
- 7.3 Preparation for priestly ordination is of the utmost importance and careful thought must be given to this by the Major Communities, offering space, time and accompaniment to the brother who is in this moment of discernment. (Const. 84; Stat. 39)
- 7.4 In the same way, we must not neglect the steps leading to Ongoing Formation and the accompaniment of the first years of the priestly ministry. Experience tells us that these are challenging years, where important personal adjustments take place that affect the brother's vocation and pastoral style.

## 8. Decisions

Entrusted to the General Government are the following:

- 8.1 Integrate this document into the General Plan of Initial Formation of the Congregation and assess the relevance of updating said plan.
- 8.2 Coordinate the holding of a meeting to prepare for perpetual vows with the following characteristics:
  - a. Objectives:
    - To help the brother have a deeper understanding of the SSCC charism in order to strengthen his decision to consecrate himself definitively to the Congregation and to its mission in the present and in the future.
    - To use the international character of the meeting to broaden the horizon of the SSCC mission and to enrich the participants in the experience of diversity.
  - b. Those who participate in this meeting will be those brothers who have expressed their wish to make perpetual profession and whose governments have approved a preparation plan for the profession.
  - c. The duration of the meeting will be between 4 and 6 weeks. The date and place will be defined by the General Government in dialogue with the General Commission for Initial Formation.

- d. In the event that the number of candidates is low or the brothers who are participating are from one Conference or Major Community/Region, the General Government, in dialogue with the General Commission for Initial Formation will study the suitability of holding the meeting that year, or it may propose a different kind of meeting.
- e. The financing of this meeting will be assisted by the Congregation through the General Government.

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**Original document in Spanish**

# The Administration of Temporal Goods

## Introduction

Everything we have, whether it is through donations or by our work, is already a gift of God. Because our community life and our mission are two poles of the same reality (Const. 40), the gift of temporal goods is given for the life of the brothers and the good of the mission of the Congregation. In faith, our attitude is one of gratitude for God's providential care and our response is generosity with what we already admit is not truly ours.

Therefore, our administration of temporal goods has the character of a grateful steward caring for what has been entrusted to him until the master returns. For the well-being of each and the good of the work, we place all our goods in common. (Cf. Acts 4:32) For the common good, we try to avoid being caught up in our own interests and concerns so as not to lose sight of what is really important, to always make room for others (Cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 2), to promote the "care of our common home" (*Laudato Si'*, 17), and ensure that all the brothers have what is necessary. We freely respond to our Constitutions which call us to embrace the system of the community of goods, following the example of Jesus and the ideal of the primitive community. (Const. 25,3)

Responsible stewardship always requires concrete expression in the many aspects of our Congregational and personal lives. At this time, we specifically address ourselves to the system of contributions, financial solidarity, budgeting, accountability,

transparency, best financial practices, the observance of civil requirements as well as ethical investment.

## **The System of Contributions**

1. The General Government will continue to establish percentages for annual contributions for each community (Province, Region and Delegation)<sup>1</sup>. The General Government will determine the percentage every three years.
2. The General Government will follow the limits (set by 38<sup>th</sup> General Chapter) in developing its annual budget for the General House (€280,000) and for Initial Formation requests (€250,000).
3. The General Chapter asks the General Government to study ways to increase the investment funds of the General House and based on their conclusions to make proposals to the Enlarged General Council.
4. The Province of Africa needs the Congregation to continue to help its ordinary expenses in order to maintain the life and mission of the community. On the other hand, the Province of Africa must improve the way it manages its economic resources and develop new sources of incomes. Taking this into account, the General Chapter made the following decision: the Province of Africa, during the next six years, will receive a fixed amount of €60,000 per year for its ordinary expenses (regardless of what the requests made for Initial Formation).

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to the 38<sup>th</sup> General Chapter on the System of Contributions and Congregational Financial Solidarity numbers 8-10 on page 31.

## **Financial Solidarity**

5. Communities may apply to the General Government for help with projects.
  - 5.1 For projects that have to do with the functioning of the communities and the development of its infrastructure, and for projects that involve meeting an urgent need, the General Government will solicit funds from the Congregation.
  - 5.2 For those projects which may qualify for matching funds from outside the Congregation, the requests for funding must be submitted at least one year in advance.
6. The General Government will publish a progress report on the projects and a financial report of all the solidarity funds distributed throughout the Congregation annually.

## **The Budgeting and Accountability**

7. "The communities adopt a simple life style, which will serve as an evangelical witness in the areas they live in, keeping their expenses within the framework of a budget drawn up and evaluated in common." (Stat. 5,1) The Provincial Treasurer will prepare an annual budget by coordinating all the local community budgets prepared by the local communities and other common projects. (Stat. 6) The budget must include complete income and expenditure, thus explaining the entire financial situation of the community. This annual budget must be approved by the Major Superior with the consent of his Council. (Stat. 6)

8. Every Major Community will establish a Finance Commission. (Stat. 101 and 104) The Major Superior will appoint one of the commission members to verify and sign the bank statements and financial reports prepared by the Provincial Treasurer. The Major Community should conduct an external control of its accounts at least every three years.
9. The General Chapter asks the Major Superiors to establish control systems to guarantee transparency at every level. Accountability and transparency must also be guaranteed in the social and ecclesiastical institutions where we administer. Each Major Community and Delegation will report on the status of the implementation of its control system for evaluation at the next Enlarged General Council.
10. The General Chapter reminds every brother to give to the community all that he earns and receives in cash and kind, and is accountable to the community for his expenses.
11. In the interests of fraternal solidarity, if a brother's family needs assistance, the Major Superior decides after dialogue with the brother.

## **Other Recommendations**

12. The General Chapter encourages each community (Province, Region, and Delegation) to find ways to train their local economies to address problems related to financial laws and best practices of their respective countries.

13. The General Chapter asks the Major Communities to meet all legal requirements when alienating or transferring temporal goods to other entities and in particular to safeguard those patrimonies that have spiritual and historical value to the Congregation.
  
14. The General Chapter encourages each Major Community to look into ethical ways of investing ensuring that some percentage of their investment is directed towards positive impact in the world (investing in improvements on education, poverty, ecology, etc.).

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**Original document in English**

# Promoting Brothers' and Sisters' unity

*The brothers and sisters of our religious family constitute one Congregation. Each branch has its own juridical autonomous personality, legislation, structures of government and formation, community life and temporal patrimony.*

*Since its foundation, our religious family has had but one charism, one mission and one spirituality. Aware of the significant value that this constitutes, the brothers and sisters together assume responsibility for maintaining and strengthening this unity.*

*Promoting unity is the special responsibility of the governments of both branches at the different levels.*

*The General Government of the brothers and sisters are jointly, in the final instance, the guarantors of the unity of the whole Congregation.*

(Const. 8)

## 1. Incentives

The General Chapters received the results of the survey on how the different encounters between brothers and sisters are carried out in the Congregation. The Chapters appreciate the journey taken in recent years to sustain and promote unity between the two branches. Aware that unity is a gift received from our Founders, the Chapters encourage sisters

and brothers to consider some orientations that may motivate a deeper commitment to unity:

- 1.1. It is good to recall and rekindle the charismatic inspiration of our unity, which is an essential element of our belonging to the Congregation. (Const. 1)
- 1.2. It is important to foster mutual relations and communications and to affirm and strengthen the activities and meetings that are already taking place. It is good to do what we can to deepen mutual respect among us (understood as a consequence of our reparative charism).
- 1.3. We understand that when collaboration takes place in mission, links are created and we feel more motivated. Unity is strengthened in a particular way when we come together to work for those most in need.
- 1.4. At this present time, when Pope Francis is calling for a deeper renewal of the Church, our relationship as men and women, consecrated in the same Congregation, can be a significant contribution to healing and hope.

## **2. Decisions**

- 2.1. For the whole Congregation:** Maintain, develop and share good practice in regards to meetings, collaboration and communion, principally in Initial and Ongoing Formation, and in the apostolate, having special regard for youth ministry, vocations and those most in need.

- 2.2. For the Governments (at all levels):** That they promote meetings of the brothers and sisters. That they identify appropriate contact persons for each level (according to the diverse structures of the two branches) and concrete actions in the places where they find themselves.
- 2.3. Icons of the Founders:** At a time when we are working hard on the cause of the Founders, the General Governments will establish a common plan of spiritual animation for the entire Congregation inspired by them. This plan will help us to go to the sources to see how the Good Father and the Good Mother lived the charismatic experience together and how they might illuminate and inspire our life today.

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**Original document in Spanish**

## SSCC Secular Branch

Both General Chapters have listened to the calls and challenges coming from the Secular Branch and which are addressed to the Congregation.

The recommendations that surfaced during the July 2017 International Meeting of the Secular Branch are as follows:

- 1. Include in the Initial Formation of brothers and sisters, input regarding the Secular Branch (history, development, its growth in the world, theology of laity, etc.).*
- 2. Encourage brothers and sisters to do as much as they can to promote the development of the Secular Branch, particularly in those parts of the world where the Secular Branch is not fully established.*
- 3. Study the possibility of lay participation in various Congregational meetings (celebrations, assemblies, chapters, retreats, etc.).*
- 4. Have a member of the Spiritual Animation Team accompanying the different Secular Branch International Commissions.*

The Chapters commit themselves to continue helping brothers and sisters to grow in awareness of the Secular Branch, rather than simply leaving this task to the brothers and sisters responsible for accompanying it.

## **Decisions**

### *1. Concerning the Congregation*

- 1.1 Maintain the presence of the Spiritual Animation Team of the Secular Branch.
- 1.2 Give due consideration to the recommendations from the laity. (Cf. El Escorial International Meeting, 2017)
- 1.3 Ensure the accompaniment of the Sectors.
- 1.4 Foster the growth of the Secular Branch, especially where it does not exist.
- 1.5 Invite the Secular Branch to participate in meetings of the Congregation that involve reflection and formation on the various themes of our spirituality.

### *2. Concerning the General Governments*

- 2.1. That they appoint the members of the Spiritual Animation Team of the Secular Branch.
- 2.2. That they meet with members of the Secular Branch during canonical visits and other possible encounters.

### *3. Concerning the Spiritual Animation Team*

- 3.1 Accompany the three International Commissions of the Secular Branch: Communication Commission, Formation Commission and Prayer Commission.
- 3.2 Look for ways to accompany other SSCC groups (part of the SSCC family) that may need help.

- 3.3 Continue to provide formation material for the Secular Branch.
- 3.4 Participate in the international meetings of the Sectors (if they are organised) and collaborate in the organisation of these same meetings (if asked).
- 3.5 Organise formation meetings for the Coordinators of the Secular Branch and those SSCC who accompany the Secular Branch.

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**Original document in Spanish**

## Elections of the General Government

Alberto Toutin ssc *Superior General*

Derek Laverty ssc *Vicar General*

Fernando Cordero ssc *General Councillor*

Jean Blaise Mwanda ssc *General Councillor*

Thomas Sukotriraharjo ssc *General Councillor*



I. to r.: F. Cordero, D. Laverty, T. Sukotriraharjo, J.B. Mwanda, A. Toutin