



Rome, December 2, 2012
First Sunday of Advent

Dear Brothers,

During the last General Chapter (September 2012), several liturgical books of the Congregation were distributed. These included the "Ritual of Religious Profession", the "Masses and Lectionary, with the Proper Liturgical Calendar" and the "Liturgy of the Hours" of the Congregation. All of these documents have been approved by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments.

We are starting a new liturgical year and this may be a good moment to take some time to learn more about these documents. In your communities you should have received the volume of the "Masses and Lectionary" and a copy of the "Liturgy of the Hours" for each member. The Major Superiors and the formation houses have also received the "Ritual of Religious Profession" as well as a small booklet entitled "Pedagogical Orientations for the Use of the SSCC Rite of Profession". In any case, all these documents are available on the Generalate's website, in the section on "Liturgy and Spirituality." Certainly, these books have been produced in the three official languages of the Congregation. Some provinces have plans to translate them into other languages.

We invite you to read the presentation and the appendixes which are in the volume of the "Masses and Lectionary". More specifically, we offer a guide below for reading and working on **Appendix 1: "The liturgy and our SSCC vocation and mission."** The intention is to encourage personal and communal reflection on the value of liturgical life in our local communities and in our experience as believers. Our communities are praying communities (Constitutions No. 50-59) and the recent General Chapter reminded us that "*the local community shapes our SSCC identity*", that "*the foundation of our being together is faith, faith in the call of the Lord and in his plan*" (Document "Mission", No. 9). In a special way the General Chapter reminded us about our ministry of reparative adoration (Document "Mission" No. 38).

We hope that the time we spend in personal and community reflection on this subject will be useful in enhancing the liturgical life of our local communities and deepening our faithfulness to our SSCC vocation and mission.

Wishing everyone a happy and beneficial (liturgical) year!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Felipe F. Hamilton Lazcano SSCC". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Felipe F. Hamilton Lazcano ssc
(On behalf of the General Government)

Guideline for reading the Appendix:

"The Liturgy and our SSCC Vocation and Mission"

This guideline aims to be a help in reading this Appendix which consists of 31 short numbers, sorted under 13 subtitles. The content is very rich and we suggest that you make the most of it.

Many times we get a new machine and along with it the corresponding instruction book. We rarely read it. We just start to use it and nothing more. We do not want it to be this way with this document. Hopefully we will make the best possible use of it.

As an introduction to our SSCC liturgy, this document wants to give a framework of ideas, convey the spirit that inspires it and encourage the proper use of what is proposed in it. The guide that we offer below makes possible a "reading" of this Appendix in one or more community meetings.

We propose that you accompany this work with the Rule of St. Benedict. *"You know, beloved brothers and very dear sisters, that the Rule of St Benedict is the foundation of ours. We invite you to read and meditate often, before God, the Rule of this great patriarch of the monks of the West."* These are words of the Good Father in his Circular Letter of February 11, 1826, when he sent out the Rules that were approved by the Holy See. The Benedictine rule can give us a special light for our reading and reflection.

Working method

It's very simple. Naturally it requires some personal preparation time prior to the meeting. The proposed reading from the Bible or the Rule of St. Benedict could also be done at the meeting.

Questions are being offered as an invitation for reflection and sharing. It will always be possible to share other issues and considerations. Each community may make appropriate adjustments.

At the community meeting:

1. As an introduction, the biblical text or the text from the Rule of St. Benedict can be read.
2. Read aloud a group of numbers from the Appendix.
3. Share the answers to questions that correspond to those numbers. Usually, this will give rise to an exchange of ideas and experiences.
4. The goal is to take ownership of the text and discover how each one has experienced the different dimensions of liturgical and prayer life. We also intend to reflect on how we can improve the liturgical practice in our communities.

Guide for each part of Appendix 1:

"The Liturgy and our SSCC Vocation and Mission"

- Numbers 1 to 6

Read John 1: 35-42. "Master, where do you live? - Come and see. "

Read the corresponding numbers.

Read the QUESTIONS and allow for some quiet time to answer.

- *Elder brothers: How have I experienced the changes in the liturgy since Vatican II so far?*
- *Younger brothers: What do I like about the current liturgy and what do I miss?*
- *Everyone: How do I experience the relationship between personal prayer and communal prayer?*
- *Is our present way of praying together stimulating?*

Share the answers.

- Numbers 7 to 12

Read Chapter XIX of the Rule of St. Benedict: *"On the Manner of Saying the Divine Office"*

Read the corresponding numbers.

QUESTIONS:

- *What has been my personal evolution in the way of experiencing community prayer? What do I enjoy? What would I change?*
- *What words, prayers or psalms have passed from my mouth to my heart and have been integrated into my life?*
- *How do I experience the tension between "celebrating with joy" and "praying out of duty"?*
- *When praying alone in the chapel, do I feel united to the Congregation and the Church?*

Share the answers.

- Numbers 13 to 19

Read Hebrews 12: 1-3. "Surrounded by such a cloud of witnesses ... eyes fixed on Jesus."

Read the corresponding numbers.

QUESTIONS:

- *What elements or prayers of the past inspire me and why?*
- *For which feast of the Congregation do I have a special affection?*
- *What place or importance does my prayer life have when organizing my day?*

Share the answers.

- Numbers 20 to 27

Read Luke 22, 7-13. "Take care of preparing Easter dinner."

Read the corresponding numbers.

QUESTIONS:

- *Identify the highlights of my experience of Adoration. Stages.*
- *How does Adoration make us to grow in the reparative dimension of our vocation?*
- *What way of celebrating the liturgy inspires me and why?*
- *Faced with moments of silence, do I feel restless? Do I try to fill them with songs, prayers or radio? Do I really value silence?*

Go to the chapel together, as community, and observe the chapel in silence; then share your ideas about what you like about it or what improvements could be made to it.

Share responses and proposals.

- Numbers 28 to 31

Read the first two paragraphs of the introduction to the Rule of St. Benedict. "Listen, son, to the Master's precepts, and incline the ear of your heart ... it to complete every good work you started."

Read the corresponding numbers.

QUESTIONS:

- *Which are the main texts we use for our prayer today? Why?*
- *Which prayers do we feel are proper prayers of the Congregation, how they come to us?*
- *What elements of our culture have we incorporated into our liturgy? Do they stimulate us? Could we replace some of them or incorporate others?*

Share the answers.