



Salt and Light

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WHAT IS THE SS.CC.' FAMILY?

When we speak about the Congregation, we frequently use the expression “SS.CC.’ Family”, but what does this really mean? Who are the members of this family?

It’s logical to think that “the Brothers and Sisters” are the family in the first place. And also, of course, the laities with commitments to the Secular Branch, inheritors of this External Association that exists since the begging’s of the congregational origins. Nonetheless, are these the only members of this family?

A spiritual family is conformed by all those who nourish themselves from a same spiritual heritage, from a charisma, from a particular richness given to the Church by the Spirit. And there are a lot of groups and individuals who fit in this definition: for example, the members of our lay communities (both adult and juvenile) who share their path (their life reflection, their learning and living their experience, their prayer) with the particular style of the SS.CC. With or without explicit commitments to the Secular Branch, they feel –they know themselves– as part of the family.

But there are also those who conform groups or teams of service –pastoral, catechesis, mission, chorus and mass animation, social action– who feel identified with the Congregation, love it and feel comfortable with its way of living. Some of them work in Schools or Parishes of the SS.CC., but they can also act more autonomously (volunteering in prisons, for example) and still feel as part of the family.

There are also those who, not conforming any organized group, frequently go to church in our parishes or chapels and feel at “home”; or parents of SS.CC.’ school students that experience a certain proximity and feel identified with the Brothers and Sisters’ style; the teachers, as well as the students and ex-students who, going beyond the school frontiers, begin to feel the way they are experiencing faith and how they understand their belonging to the Church has to do with SS.CC.’style.

And what shall we do with this universe that is so diverse in people and groups? In the first place, perhaps, recognize the gift, the enormous richness that this means. And then, as in every large family, search for ways to find themselves, to know themselves, to value themselves and to love themselves in all our diversity. Big congregational gatherings are privileged moments, but we should begin to search for new and creative ways to live and share them even more. And thus, to improve more and more the testimony we share of being SS.CC.’ family: the love of God expressed through Jesus Christ.

What is the SS.CC.' Family for you? The feelings of some members of our communities...

"SS.CC.' family for me is teaching, is accompaniment. It's an encounter among brothers, all guided by a same charisma". *(Rita, Father Eustaquio's Community)*

"The SS.CC.' family is everyone who tries to live feeling God in his/her day to day; and that under the Congregation's charisma lives in a sense of community and tries to share his/her faith experience and the love message of God with everyone else, especially with those who are in need." *(Francisco, Animating group the mass in Recoleta)*

"For me, to think about the SS.CC.' Family is to think of table, companionship, of sharing, of faith. It is to think of FREEDOM, of spirituality, of joy..." *(Mari, Nicolás Castel Community)*

"When I think of the SS.CC. a table comes to my mind... as José Kuwae used to say, the Peruvian, the person is known around a table. I have two spiritual families, the Ignatian and the SS.CC.; Jesuits feel themselves as the hands of God in the world, but they usually go alone, one by one... the Sacred Hearts move massively, in community". *(César, José Kuwae Community)*

"For me, the SS.CC.' Family is the spiritual family with which I have been blessed; a family that shares joy with simplicity, that enjoys a table together, that pray together, but that also has a mission to take love to a world that is terribly hurt". *(Martha, Secular Community of Belén)*

"We begin to acquire the concept of family since we belong to one, in a relationship with our siblings, cousins, uncles, nephews, sons, siblings in law... where the blood bond is strengthen as the affections come together, when the fondness, the joy of the encounter flows spontaneously, when we join ourselves to celebrate with any motive as a pretext to love ourselves even more: a birthday, a graduation, a moving, going to the cinema, a marriage, a departure and any motive that might show up to be together and celebrate in family. Also, of course, in bad circumstances, in sickness, in sadness, in difficulty, in failure, when someone screws it up, in discord, family is there for consolation, to help, to be together and make the burden lighter, to hold our hands. Among the SS.CC., the experience of God's love is what relates us, joining each other and harmonizing our souls; we do this to celebrate the tenderness of God father, and it is more remarkable and happier when we realize that it is so difficult to find harmony with anyone in our entourage, even among our family and friends. It is this space of community where Jesus is present, in the middle, and we are capable of feeling like a family and to act accordingly, being responsible for the others' faith, for his/her life, because we love each other by making visible that which is written in the Acts of the Apostles" *(Daniel, Héctor de Cárdenas Community)*

"I used to think that the SS.CC.'s Family was constituted by the priests and parents that I've seen through these years in my children's school... but since I began to participate in the Community, I have also begun to understand that laities of the secular communities and everyone who participates in the Congregation's missions also constitute it" *(Mary, Mercy in Action Community)*

"The first thing that comes to mind when I hear about the SS.CC.'s Family is the word LOVE. It is there where I grew in faith and I met the real reason why I am a Christian and I carry on. Before that, I used to have a lot of questionings: I'm not saying that they are all gone, but I've learnt that by walking with Jesus they decrease." *(Mabel, Marcel Tregouet Community)*

ENCOUNTER OF THE SS.HH. LAY COMMUNITIES' COORDINATORS



On April the 10th at night, at the Héctor de Cárdenas Community, it was held a really significant reunion: for the first time, the coordinators and representatives of the different SS.CC. lay communities of Lima gathered together. Summoned by the Coordination of the SS.CC.' Secular Branch in Peru (which was represented by its coordinator Daniel Gushiken and by Juan Carlos Townsend), a total of 18 people began to arrive: Sergio Rodríguez and Mabel Enciso from the Marcel Tregouet SS.CC.' Community (Laderas/Ensenada); Mary Vidal from the SS.CC.' Community Mercy in Action (Recoleta); Lorena Huaco and Mari Girón from the Nicolás Castel SS.CC.' Community (Plaza Francia); Xavier Salinas and César Alfaro from the José Kuwae SS.CC.'s Community (Recoleta); María Laura Muñoz, Kiomi Kunigami y Mauricio Muñoz-Nájar from the Héctor de Cárdenas SS.CC.' Community; Jorge Núñez from the Father Eustaquio SS.CC.' Community (Recoleta); Lida Solimano from the SS.CC.' Secular Community of Belén; and Coqui Ocaña from the group that animates the Eucharist at Recoleta's Chapel. Father José Serrand and Sister Susana Villarreal were also present.

Time ran short for the act of sharing (which was of course held around the table and accompanied by snacks). A first row allowed us to listen to the very diverse experiences of each one of us in our path along with the SS.CC.' Family; and at the same time to realize the resemblance in the discovery of a nearby charisma: familiar, simple, of a community and related to the people. In a second row we talked briefly about the history of each community: how it came to be, which Brothers, Sisters or Laities were influential, how many years does it actually have, how many members and how are they organized. Finally, there was some time left so that the SS.CC.' Secular Branch could propose to establish more bonding, to keep in touch and if possible to commit to some projects together. Some ideas included an intercommunity retreat that could gather people from all communities; a formative day where reflection about a subject and exchange of experiences would be held; some important dates in which we would gather together to pray, probably in the dynamic of adoration. We agreed to translate the concerns and proposals of each community.

The final hour was near and we had to finish, but not without agreeing about the creation of a Whatsapp group so we could maintain the coordination between communities. On behalf of everyone, Mari Girón from the Nicolás Castel Community guided a simple but meaningful prayer. Then, we all went back home. It was a really promising reunion and, apparently, the first one of a new time of rapprochement as a family.

Passing the experience

An essential part of a family experience is when you pass the learnt experience from a generation to the next ones. On April 14, 50 young people between 16 and 22 years old that constitute the Juvenile Pastoral Team of the SS.CC. School of Belén gathered themselves for a day of capacitation in the managing of groups, dynamics, teamwork and other resources for the pastoral experience. There were four workshops in which they participated with a lot of enthusiasm. The ones in charge of this capacitation were Bruno Espinoza and Juan Carlos Townsend (Héctor de Cárdenas Community) and Xavier Salinas (José Kuwae Community), all of them with years of experience in confirmation and catechesis programs. The experience was enriching for the capacitors and capacitated ones.



VIII LATIN-AMERICAN ENCOUNTER OF THE SS.CC.' SECULAR BRANCH Asunción, 2019

In recent communication between sectors and for the joy of every Latin-American sector of the Secular Branch, Lourdes Martínez, coordinator of the Paraguay Sector, confirmed officially the convening for the VIII ELARS, which will be held from April the 18th to the 20th of 2019 in the city of Asunción, Paraguay.

The ELARS began on Easter of 2002 with an Encounter in Lima, Peru. After that, there have been new reunions on 2005 (Asunción, Paraguay), on 2007 (La Paz, Bolivia), on 2009 (Santiago, Chile), on 2011 (Quito, Ecuador), on 2013 (Lima, Peru) and on 2016 (Santiago, Chile). It was in this last encounter that the convening for the I World Encounter of the SS.CC.' Secular Branch that took place in Madrid on Easter of 2017 was announced.

The sectors of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru are getting ready with enthusiasm for 2019.



Picture of the participants of
the VII ELARS – Santiago de
Chile, Easter of 2016



MARCEL TREGOUET ss.cc. Community. On March 11, it was their first anniversary. Constituted by catechists and pastoral agents with many years working in Laderas and Ensenada along with the Brothers and Sisters, they responded to a convening of the Secular Branch and have been accompanied ever since in their monthly reunions by some of its members. More precisely, in their reunion on April 7, they chose their name: Marcel Tregouet, in honor of F. Marcelo, whose close, active and solidary style of doing Church marked them all. They have chosen Sergio Rodríguez as coordinator and have begun to design the formation and action program.

MERCY IN ACTION ss.cc. Community. The Community has been working on Pope Francis's *Laudato Si* and more recently on the subject of the call for mission, in which they worked with the testimony of a guest, priest to be. On February they participated on an integration and joint formation journey with the Father Eustaquio Community, which had been decided in their Christmas reunion of last year. The activity was held at the "Journey House" of the SS.CC. School Recoleta, with the participation of most of the members of each community and their advisor Manuel Lozano. They decided in this encounter to maintain the bond between communities, keeping track of their yearly programs and their subject proposals.

ANIMATING GROUP AT RECOLETA'S MASS. Thanks to the participation of their indisputable leader, Coqui Ocaña, in the coordinator's reunion of the SS.CC. lay communities, this group is looking forward to deepen in their own identity: they are not exactly a community and, nonetheless, neither are they simply a choir. For this reason, they have decided to dedicate some reunions to tune up the way in which they understand their vocation and the service they want to grant.

JOSÉ KUWAE ss.cc. Community. During these days they are agreeing with their advisor Elizabeth Zapata to meet again soon, after their last reunion, planned for March, had to be abruptly canceled due to the happy arrival of Ignacio, son of Mario and Carolina, both members of the Community. Without a doubt, that will influence a considerable amount of the reflection and sharing. Along with them, most of the members of the community are already parents as well.

PADRE EUSTAQUIO ss.cc. Community. On February, they participated in the formation and integration day with the Mercy in Action Community, renovating their purposes of strengthening bonds and keeping in touch. Recently they have worked with Manuel the subject of Adoration and Reparation in SS.CC.' Charisma; in this sense, they have agreed to spend some time in the chapel to do adoration at the beginning of their reunions. Furthermore, two of them participated in the reunion of the Mercy in Action Community about the call to mission. They are also preparing the celebration of the 15th anniversary of their community, participating in the Eucharist at Recoleta's Chapel on May 27 at 9:30 am: after that, they will have an act of sharing at the "Casa de Jornadas Padre Damián".

NICOLÁS CASTEL ss.cc. Community. On this 2018, the community, after a pretty hard process for many of its members, has established a series of activities to renovate its commitment. For this, they will work during the year subjects that will allow them to clarify and define them in a more concrete way. In their most recent reunion, they worked on the subject of Adoration and ended with some time in front of the Holiest, where they asked specially for the needs of their brothers and for peace in Syria. They have also established the need of encounter spaces with other people and communities, which will provide a better growth for their members. Moreover, on April 11, most of its members participated in the Eucharist through which they remembered the second anniversary of the passing away of Father Juan Luis Schuester; it was an emotive encounter full of friendship.

BELÉN ss.cc. SECULAR COMMUNITY. After evaluating the possibility of moving their premises to the chalet Saint Joaquin, next to the Community Héctor de Cárdenas, the members of the secular community decided to stay in their actual place, because going up stairs isn't too convenient for some of its members. Furthermore, they are concerned for the health of their sister Elsa Béjar, one of the oldest of the group, for whom they ask for prayers to all the SS.CC.' Family. The community maintains its weakly reunions in houses, being only the first reunion of each month in the Community premises.

HÉCTOR DE CÁRDENAS ss.cc. Community. The community had a space of reflection on Eucharist (guided by his member Pablo Espinoza) on Holy Thursday, where they invited members of diverse lay SS.CC. communities. On that day, mass was especially festive because of the news about Fr. Gastón Garatea's priest license renovation. Moreover, on the masses of April 1 and 8, they commemorated respectively the first anniversary of Martha Amézaga and Deborah Laporta's passing away. Since it is a community of communities, they are having a series of intergroup reunions to strengthen bonds on the inside: during these days, Wayki and Maná have gathered together, they have programmed a reunion between Pucllu and Maná, and they are coordinating schedules of Oración and Lebab. And now there is a new Initiation group starting to know their path.