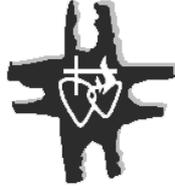


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Rome, October 21, 2014

To all the SSCC Brothers

To all the SSCC Sisters

Subject: Information about the SSCC Secular Branch

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

One of the tasks that has been entrusted to the Spiritual Animation Team of the Secular Branch is to "motivate and inform the Congregation" about the life of the Secular Branch. The Team believes that good information will perhaps create a great stimulus in the Congregation. The meeting took place in Rome (Via Rivarone) from 7 to 9 October.

This second meeting studied the annual evaluation of all sectors of the Secular Branch throughout the world. The Team regretted the fact that some sectors did not send their evaluations.

In this letter, the Spiritual Animation Team would like to share two points:

1. Annual evaluation of the Secular Branch.
2. A possible meeting with the coordinators of the Secular Branch.

1. Annual evaluation of the Secular Branch

The Spiritual Animation Team has new information that is not in the Index of the Secular Branch: which is the number of SSCC lay communities.

At the moment there are 56 communities, excluding the Sectors of Peru, Mozambique, Indonesia and Brazil (which are those who did not answer the questionnaire).

These communities are: Chile: 16 communities; Ecuador: 5 communities; England-Ireland: 4 communities; USA: 12 communities; France-Quebec: 5. communities; Spain: 3 communities; Kinshasa: 3 communities; Paraguay: 3 communities and Poland: 5 communities.

In relation to what we have received from their evaluations, the following is clear:

- The SSCC laity have a strong faith in God. As laity, they have in their Life Project moments of prayer, ministry, formation and small organization which respond better to

their mission. In this way we can see the living out of the SSCC Charism and the desire to build a more just world.

- They are very involved in the ministry of the Church. Some members are directly related to our work and mission. Others collaborate in projects of the Congregation, helping as best they can.
- The Secular Branch has a good sense of the family spirit. Their presence in many places is a source of joy. They feel accepted and loved as lay people in this great family of the Sacred Hearts. There are places where they are involved in events of the Congregation (Congregational feasts, joint retreats, meetings, etc.). All this shows that each and every one, in accordance with their commitments, work on building up the Kingdom of God.

Their evaluations also show challenges.

- There are sectors in which the majority of members are older. They are concerned about the non-participation of young people. This concern is a real challenge. They are sure that the Congregation because of its Charism and mission can respond to the realities of our world today. These answers apply to both adults and young people.
- They also note the lack of SSCC sisters and brothers who can accompany them, this poses many questions. The Animation Team asks the brothers and sisters to be available to share our Charism and mission with the laity. They expect us to be with them so that we can journey together. Our availability will be a great sign of love and communion. Let us be moved by the cry of the laity, especially in those places where brothers and sisters are not part of the task of accompaniment.

2. A possible meeting of the coordinators of the Secular Branch in 2017

In 2017, the entire Sacred Hearts family will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the approval of the Congregation by Pope Pius VII. From our origins the Congregation has had a Secular Branch... and its members are committed to live the mission and spirit of the Congregation (Art. 9). It is a joy and an opportunity to remember the Spirituality and Charism received, and ask ourselves *"how does the SSCC Charism help me in my mission as a believer."*

This anniversary has urged the Spiritual Animation Team to suggest an international meeting of the Secular Branch to take place in 2017.

This meeting will have two main objectives:

1. mutual exchange of knowledge and experiences from different contexts of the Congregation;
2. reflection on the lay vocation inspired by the Charism of the Sacred Hearts.

This meeting will be exclusively for the Sector Coordinators who will work in conjunction with the Spiritual Animation Team. The realization of this meeting raises a number of questions: such as, the content of this meeting, finance, location, organization, animation, duration, etc.

To answer these questions, the Team has written a letter to the coordinators of the Secular Branch so that they can react to their suggestion. Questions are raised in the letter, that can guide the Team as to whether it would be of benefit to hold a meeting such as is suggested, or not.

On behalf of the Animation Team we wish each and every one of you a great mission. We remember you and we always take the mission of the Secular Branch to our prayers.

NB. We would like you to comment on this letter in community meetings to exchange information about what the Secular Branch is experiencing. We thank all the local superiors for their openness to receiving this request.

Fraternally in the SSCC,



Mary McCloskey, ssc



Camille Sapu, ssc