

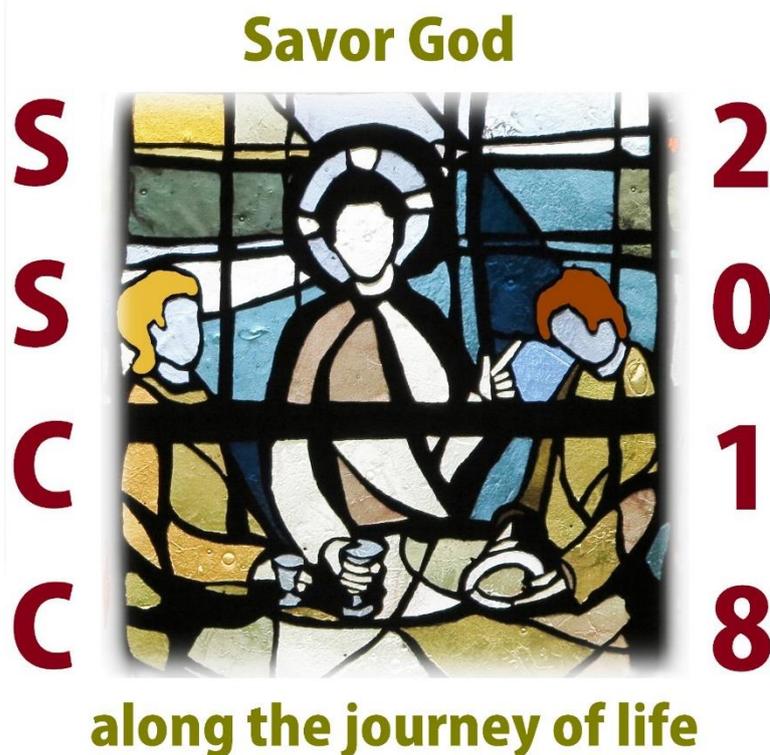


Rome, May 10, 2017
Memory of Saint Damien De Veuster SSCC

To all the Brothers of the Congregation

Announcement of the 39th General Chapter

Constitutions 126 § 1



Dear Brothers:

In conformity with article 126 § 1 of our Constitutions, by this letter I officially announce the Thirty-ninth General Chapter, which will take place in **Rome August 28 to September 28, 2018**. As is customary, our General Chapter will be held in the same place and at the same time as the General Chapter of the sisters.

"The General Chapter is the highest authority within the Congregation. Its purpose is to support and encourage the Congregation in the realization of its mission, with renewed fidelity to its proper vocation. It belongs to the Chapter to determine general orientations and to establish norms that it considers opportune for the common good of the Congregation, in accordance with common law and our proper legislation." (Const 121). One of the principal tasks of the General Chapter (cf. Const 128) is electing the Superior General and the members of the General Council.

Composition of the General Chapter

The General Chapter is composed of *ex officio* members and delegates elected directly by all the professed of each major community (Const. 123 and 124). On February 7, I sent a consultation to the major Superiors concerning the number of delegates that the General Chapter should have. Of the 16 superiors consulted, 7 responded.

On the basis of the responses received, and a criterion based on the number of brothers in each province (1 delegate for up to 50, 2 delegates for up to 80, 3 delegates for more than 80) we have added the criterion that each province that has a region would have at least two delegates. This new criterion is meant to encourage the provinces with regions to consider the possibility of electing brothers from the region, so that there would be representation from the greatest possible number of different situations.

In function of those criteria and considering the number of members at the present moment, the composition of the General Chapter will be as follows:

Community	Brothers	Delegates	<i>Ex officio</i>	Notes
Africa	34	1	1	
Brazil	46	2	1	It includes the Region of Paraguay
Chile	57	2	1	
Colombia-Peru-Ecuador	54	2	1	It will become one province in June 2017
Germany	42	1	1	
France	54	2	1	It includes the Region of French Polynesia
Iberia	96	3	1	
Indonesia	70	2	1	
Ireland-England	19	1	1	
Japan-Philippines	25	1	1	
Mexico	21	1	1	
Nederland	18	1	-	Delegation
Poland	47	1	1	
US	98	3	1	It includes the regions of USA-West and India
Flanders	29	1	-	It will become a delegation in April 2018
General Government			5	Superior General and Councillors
		24	18	
TOTAL	710	42		

Besides the *ex officio* members and elected delegates, the Superior General has the authority to call up to three brothers to participate with voice and vote in the General Chapter. (Const. 125).

I ask all the Major Communities to proceed to the election of their delegates, according to what is indicated in the General Statutes 68-70 and their own provincial statutes, so that we know the names of the delegates **before April 15, 2018.**

“Savor God along the journey of life.” (Good Father)

The Enlarged General Council of 2016 chose this phrase from the Good Father as inspiration to guide the preparation and the General Chapter itself.

And so, the General Chapter will treat the different topics on its agenda from the perspective of the experience of God in the Congregation. In fact, we could say that the Congregation is a particular path within the Church for following Jesus and for knowing, experiencing, savoring God the Father of love whom Jesus reveals.

Process of preparation

Different elements foreseen as part of the preparation of the General Chapter are:

1. **Constitutions:** over the course of this year (2017) of the bicentenary of the pontifical approval of our Constitutions, each brother and each local community is rereading the Constitutions and meditating on them. In October 2017, we will send you a short questionnaire so that you can tell us of the most significant results of that reflection.
2. **Evangelii Gaudium:** In that exhortation, Pope Francis charts a path of pastoral conversion for the whole Church. In January 2018, we will send you a working document so that we can ask ourselves what are the main challenges that the exhortation presents to us as a Congregation today.
3. **Previous General Chapters:** we are preparing a short document that will help us be aware of the orientations given by previous General Chapters, so that we will not forget the evolution of the Congregation in recent decades.
4. **Evaluation of the General Chapter of 2012:** In December of this year the provincial, regional and delegation governments will receive an instrument for evaluating the last General Chapter.
5. Presentation of the **situation of the Congregation:** In December of this year, we will also ask the different governments to send us certain data in order to prepare one presentation of the present reality of the Congregation, focusing especially on the most significant processes taking place in their respective communities.
6. Reports of **teams and commissions:** The General Econome, the Secretary General, the Postulator, the Commission for the Historical and Spiritual Patrimony and the General Commission for Initial Formation will prepare reports for the General Chapter. Those reports should be ready for April 15 2018

7. Work **with the sisters**: together with the sisters, we will prepare the topics of the Secular Branch, Communications and the situation of structures which bring together brothers and sisters.
8. The report of the **General Government**, which will be sent to the capitulants in mid-June 2018.

As you can see, different parts of the preparation involve different people:

- ALL THE BROTHERS: the work on the Constitutions and reflection on *Evangelii Gaudium*.
- GOVERNMENTS (provincial, regional, delegation): evaluation of the General Chapter of 2012 and the presentation of the situation of each community.
- COMMISSIONS: reports on their respective areas of work.
- GENERAL GOVERNMENT: preparation of its report and coordination of the whole process of preparation.

Brothers, the process that the Chapter entails (preparation, the chapter itself, reception and implementation) is an exercise of communion, faith, discernment and religious obedience. Let us all be involved faithfully and with sincere love. We are one body with a charism and we are trying to know and better serve the Lord and his people.

A bit later, we will send you the text of prayer we have prepared with the sisters for the preparation of the two General Chapters. But I ask you to already place this intention before the Lord in your time of adoration. Thank you.

Fraternally in the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,



Javier Álvarez-Ossorio SSCC
Superior General

Logo

At the beginning of this letter, you see the LOGO which will accompany the preparation and the General Chapter itself. The central image is a stain glass window in the Benedictine monastery of Venière in France, which represents the Emmaus story (Lk. 24:13-35). That passage speaks of a "journey" (the disciples are walking along), of hearts "burning" and of recognizing and savoring the presence of Jesus in the breaking of the bread. For that reason, that biblical image expresses well the invitation of the Good Father, "Savor God along the journey of life."

Diagram of the process

On the following page you will find in diagram form the process of preparation for the General Chapter, in which is included (in the last part) the topics proposed by the Enlarged General Chapter of 2016.

Preparation of the 39th General Chapter 2018

