

Thy Kingdom Come!

## PRESENTATION OF THE COMMUNIQUÉS OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER

1. From January 8<sup>th</sup> through February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014, the Extraordinary General Chapter of the Legion of Christ took place in Rome. His Eminence, Cardinal Velasio De Paolis, CS, and his two counselors, Fr. Gianfranco Ghirlanda, SJ, and Fr. Agostino Montan, CSI, presided. Sixty-one chapter fathers participated, 19 *ex officio* and 42 elected by the nine territories of the congregation and the centers of Rome.

2. This Extraordinary General Chapter marks the end of the journey of in-depth revision that the congregation has travelled since the apostolic visitation, which took place during 2009-2010, and the naming of a Pontifical Delegate in the summer of 2010. Our principal tasks in the Chapter, as Pope Benedict XVI<sup>1</sup> indicated and as Pope Francis confirmed<sup>2</sup>, were to revise the Constitutions and to elect a new central government for the congregation.

3. In the first days, in light of the reports that the Pontifical Delegate and the pro-General Director submitted, we focused on analyzing the life of the Congregation since the ordinary General Chapter that took place in 2005. One of the outcomes of the intense exchange of ideas that took place in those days was the communiqué that the Chapter approved on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014, about the journey of renewal of the Congregation. This same day, the elections of the new central government took place. Once the election had been confirmed and the Holy See made the two nominations that it had reserved to itself, the elections of Fr. Eduardo Robles Gil, the general counselors, the general administrator and the general procurator were published on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014, the 49<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Decretum Laudis*.

4. The new constitutional text is the fruit of a broad process of revision and consultation, in which all the religious of the congregation took part over a three-year period, by means of community meetings and numerous individual contributions. In the summer of 2013, a draft that the Central Commission for the Revision of the Constitutions had prepared was examined by the territorial assemblies, which in turn presented their recommendations for the consideration of the Chapter. After revising the text number by number, we, the chapter fathers, made the opportune changes to the text and the structure. At the end we approved the new constitutions on February 25 in order to present them to the Holy See for definitive approval.

5. The new Constitutions are the principal document of this Extraordinary General Chapter. The attention of all the Legionaries should be directed to them because there they will find the principal lines of our identity, our life and our mission expressed in a renewed and more concise way.

6. This Chapter did not have the task of addressing themes connected with the entire life of the Congregation. Even so, the chapter fathers decided to dedicate the last part of the Chapter to

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Letter appointing the Pontifical Delegate*, June 16, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis, *Letter to the Pontifical Delegate Cardinal Velasio De Paolis*, June 19, 2013.

collect reflections and orientations about relevant issues in several communiqués in order to share them with our brothers. Many of these issues had been brought up by a number of different Legionaries.

7. This task was carried out in commissions. Each document was reviewed on at least two occasions in plenary sessions of the Chapter before final approval. It seemed opportune to make these communiqués public relatively quickly, even though they do not offer an exhaustive exposition and we have not been able to give them a uniform length or style. These texts above all seek to communicate a message. They do not have the terminological precision of a juridical text and, at times, they repeat the same idea from different points of view. We present these communiqués with the following order, which parallels the overarching structure of the new Constitutions:

- a. Charismatic identity of the Legion of Christ
- b. The Legion of Christ in Regnum Christi
- c. Fraternal life in community
- d. Liturgical life and prayer
- e. The formation of the Legionary and the *Ratio Institutionis*
- f. Our apostolic renewal
- g. Government, authority and obedience
- h. Administration and the vow of poverty
- i. Attachments
  - Statement of the Extraordinary General Chapter of the Legionaries of Christ about the path of renewal that we are traveling
  - Some reflections regarding the name of the congregation

8. At the end of the General Chapter, the Pontifical Delegate invited us to unite ourselves to Mary in order to give thanks to God and sing of his mercy. We would like to extend this invitation to all our brothers: “*Magnificat anima mea Dominum...*” (Lk 1:46).

Rome, February 27, 2014

## CHARISMATIC IDENTITY OF THE LEGION OF CHRIST

9. *Our current situation.* In these recent years the Legionaries of Christ have gone through turbulent times, with considerable questioning from within and without the congregation. The discovery of the grave facts regarding our founder gave rise to uncertainty about our origin and our charism. At that point, the Pope came to the aid of our congregation through an apostolic visitation and the appointment of a Papal Delegate, to set us on a path of profound examination and renewal, which we are now bringing to its conclusion. Early in the General Chapter we decided to address these topics because it is our duty as chapter fathers to take a clear stand and offer some light from an adequate theological perspective.
10. *A solid charismatic foundation, endorsed by the Church.* To better understand God's will for the Legion and our lives, the Papal Delegate has invited us on several occasions to take as our starting point certain undeniable facts, such as: we exist as a religious congregation in the Church, the Successor of Peter approved us, we have a large number of exemplary religious, and also the fact that in these years of purification the Pope issued a substantially positive judgment of the congregation and confirmed us in our mission: "When the Church approves a form of consecrated life or an Institute, she confirms that in its spiritual and apostolic charism are found all the objective requisites for achieving personal and communal perfection according to the Gospel"<sup>3</sup>. We are a religious institute of priests in the Church (CLC 1 § 1<sup>4</sup>) and want to see Christ reign in the hearts of men and in society (CLC 2). We have an identity and a vocation (cf. CIC 587), a nature, spirit, purpose, lifestyle and traditions which constitute our spiritual patrimony (cf. CIC 578). One of our essential features is that we are part of a larger reality, Regnum Christi, alongside other members of the Church who share the same charism, according to their state of life (CLC 1 § 2)<sup>5</sup>.
11. *God's plan and the limited role of the founder.* In line with common doctrine regarding religious institutes in the Church, the Legion of Christ and its essential features do not have their ultimate origin in the person of the founder; they are a gift from God that the Church has accepted, approved, and made her own, and which from that point on lives in the congregation and in its members<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, when talking about our foundational charism, we must not limit our consideration to the initial impulse from God, or how the founder embraced this grace in his life, but rather recognize that we are in the presence of a charism that has already been configured and institutionalized in the Church<sup>7</sup>. God has entrusted us

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<sup>3</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Vita Consecrata*, 93.

<sup>4</sup> The abbreviation "CLC" refers to the constitutional text which was approved by the Holy See on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> This paragraph of the constitutions has yet to be approved by the Holy See, as the definitive canonical configuration of the Regnum Christi Movement has yet to be defined.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE LEGIONARIES OF CHRIST, *A statement regarding the path of renewal for the Legion of Christ*, 275, 1.

<sup>7</sup> In the press conference of January 31, 2014, on the occasion of the presentation of the Year of Consecrated Life, the prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Cardinal João

with this gift, and in our congregation—with all its historical vicissitudes—we can discover his providential plan. Theological reflection will lead us to a growing understanding of the meaning God’s ways and enable us to explain and transmit it to others. Still, our minds and our hearts will find peace only if we base ourselves on faith, and trustingly place ourselves in the framework of the mystery of the redemption wrought by Christ through the scandal of the cross.

12. *A charism that addresses each one personally.* We must never forget that, since we are Legionaries, the question regarding our charism is not a matter of merely historical or intellectual interest but one that has repercussions in our entire personal and community life: How are we to become holy and serve mankind? What have we to leave behind and what must we reaffirm in order to fulfill God’s plan, be configured to Christ, and give, as men of the Kingdom, unambiguous testimony of a fully evangelical life (CLC 235)? Under the Church’s guidance we have been maturing our answer to these questions during these recent years, and it can now be found in the new constitutional text. This text reflects more distinctly the essence of our identity and the charism or institutional patrimony which renews us, binds us as brothers and drives us to fulfill our mission. The Holy Spirit invites us to be open and docile to his inspirations, knowing for certain that he will lead us to the fullness of our vocation.
13. *The one mystery of Christ is the source that always gives life.* God has made himself present in the history of mankind through the Incarnation of his Son, Jesus Christ, who died for us on the cross and, risen from the dead, remains with us. The Church emerges from this mystery, as does also in a particular way, the vocation to the priesthood and consecrated life that we have received. In contemplating the pierced heart of Christ and experiencing his love (CLC 3), we discover our Legionary vocation which, through the working of the Holy Spirit, configures us to Jesus Christ, priest and victim. Especially in the Eucharist, which is the memorial of the merciful love of God, we stand together with Our Lady of Sorrows and St. John the Evangelist at the foot of the cross, from which Christ reigns. Impelled by our love for Christ (cf. 2 Cor 5:14), we feel the same drive to evangelize as our patron St. Paul (cf. 1 Cor 9:16), that is, to make the Kingdom of Christ present in the world. Therefore, as we have experienced in recent years, the renewal of our way of life must always start from Christ, his Spirit, his word, his Church, his sacraments, and our total donation of ourselves to him and to all people. In these springs we are able to satisfy our thirst for a Christ-centered spirituality and become Legionaries of Christ after his own heart.
14. *A particular way of following Christ.* Because of the inexhaustible richness of the mystery of Christ, each religious congregation expresses “a concrete program of relations with God and one’s surroundings, marked by specific spiritual emphases and choices of apostolate, which

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Braz de Aviz, explained the current situation of the Legionaries of Christ. He noted that “it is important to distinguish between the founder who brings a charism and the charism in itself.” He also affirmed that, “not all founders who bring a good grace to the Church live according to the grace that they communicate. We have to recognize it and distinguish things correctly. This is something that we are carrying out very carefully.”

accentuate and re-present one or another aspect of the one mystery of Christ”<sup>8</sup>. Each congregation or movement is a gift which God gives the Church through the men and women who live its charism with humility, gratitude, and love. As Legionaries of Christ we are called to make particularly present the mystery of Christ the Lord who gathers the apostles to himself, reveals to them the love in his heart, forms them and sends them to help establish the Kingdom in the hearts of people and society (CLC 4). This also characterizes the way we relate to Christ as our Friend and Lord, our community life and our mission. We invite all Legionaries to dedicate themselves humbly and with resolve to the task of rediscovering and transmitting this spirit.

15. *A life centered on Christ*. Our spiritual life arises from our personal encounter with Christ—the Way, the Truth, and the Life (cf. Jn 14:6). During the Chapter, we participated in the celebration of the World Day for Consecrated Life with Pope Francis, who reminded us of this fact: “Jesus comes to us in the Church through the foundational charism (...). It is He who comes to us, brought by Mary and Joseph, and we go towards Him, led by the Holy Spirit. But He is at the center. He moves everything, He draws us to the Temple, to the Church, where we can find Him, recognize Him, and embrace Him”<sup>9</sup>. This experience moves us to live united to him and go forth to the mission (cf. Mk 3:14). We feel we are coworkers with God, who gives the growth and the fruit from the seed he himself planted in us (cf. Mk 4:31; 1 Cor 3:6).
16. *A life entirely transformed by Christ*. Our union with Christ presupposes and fosters our exercise of the theological virtues and the humble acknowledgment that without him we can do nothing, be it our own sanctification or the apostolate (CLC 56). Living in Christ touches every dimension of our being. Therefore, it invites us not only to welcome the presence of God in our soul, but to give a particular stamp to our human formation (CLC 58). We seek to put on the new man and be conformed in everything to Christ, whom we strive to know, love and imitate. In the midst of our weakness, we live with the passion to make visible the love we have received from Christ, not admitting mediocrity into our lives (cf. Phil 3:12), and with the desire that he be loved more each day.
17. *Living like Christ, embracing the evangelical counsels*. We want to live as a community of religious priests who seek to glorify God (CLC 2) and to make Christ— poor, chaste, and obedient—reign in us (CLC 18-36). Therefore we want to give witness and proclaim:
  - a. through our life of poverty: that Christ is our only treasure. We seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, we trust that everything else will be added unto us, and we live an austere and simple lifestyle without prejudice to personal and community dignity;
  - b. through our life of chastity: that Christ is our supreme love who fills our hearts. In him and through him, we live joyfully and maturely the gift we make of ourselves to all people;

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Vita Consecrata*, 93 and also *Lumen Gentium* 46.

<sup>9</sup> FRANCISCO, *Homily on the XVIII World Day for Consecrated Life*, February 2, 2014.

- c. through our life of obedience: that we participate in the salvific obedience of Christ. Our food is to do the will of the Father by offering ourselves up in trust, in perseverance, and in faith, thus efficaciously channeling our personal initiative and the responsibility we have to the Legion and the Church.
18. *Christ's charity, the soul of our apostolate.* Our whole apostolate aspires to make the Kingdom of Christ present by irradiating Christ himself and his attractiveness. We seek "to live authentic charity as Christ practiced and preached it in the Gospel" (CLC 3). He teaches us that charity is giving your life for others, and hence we consume ourselves to reach more people and offer them new life in Christ. This consuming desire gives its value to time as a gift that God gives each one to fulfill his own mission on earth (CLC 11 and 23). Therefore we embrace our personal abnegation and dedication to the apostolate, based on love for God and a firm and tenacious will (CLC 66, 2). Christ's love helps us to form the heart of a good shepherd: welcoming everyone with kindness, understanding and humble openness; reaching out to those in need, in service from the heart; cultivating a sincere concern for justice and the welfare of those most in need; building communion and promoting dialogue, collaboration and teamwork.
  19. *The mission of being apostles and forming apostles.* Our charism is contemplative and evangelizing (CLC 12). What we strive for in our apostolate is that people meet Christ and that he transform them into apostles. If we evangelize people and form them deeply we help them in their turn to evangelize their milieu and the whole of society, placing their leadership in service of the Church. This way of making the Kingdom of Christ present defines our priestly ministry and our apostolic works (CLC 4, 111 and 112).
  20. *A vocation within the Church, building communion.* As Legionaries it is in the bosom of the Church that we find our *raison d'être* and the direction for our mission, living in communion with the universal Church through the Successor of Peter and with the local Church through the diocesan bishop (CLC 14). Likewise, as we share what we have and our mission, and exclude individualism, our community life in the Legion and our relationship with the other members of Regnum Christi become a living sign of the primacy of God's love of and of the Kingdom of Christ (CLC 17 and 38).
  21. *Guided by Mary, our Mother.* In this whole journey, we feel the presence and support of Mary's close and affectionate company. She is our mother. With affectionate, filial and trusting love we approach her; she is the model of the new creature brought about by the redeeming power of Christ and Queen of the apostles who cooperate with her Son in the redemption of men (CLC 15).

## THE LEGION OF CHRIST IN REGNUM CHRISTI

### Regnum Christi

22. The General Chapter has reflected on the reality of Regnum Christi and the place of the Legion of Christ within it.
23. We reaffirm that the Legion of Christ is a part of Regnum Christi (Cf. CLC<sup>10</sup> 1, § 2<sup>11</sup>). Regnum Christi came into existence because of the effort and commitment of many Legionaries. Nevertheless we recognize that our congregation was only the beginning of a reality whose origin is in God and has developed to maturity in its different states in life.
24. Regnum Christi is made up of men and women who share the same charism, lived out according to each one's own vocation and specific identity: religious priests – the Legionaries of Christ – , consecrated lay men and women, lay people who live in the world and diocesan priests. Each vocation expresses the shared charism in its own way.
25. In the communion of Regnum Christi, we share the same spirituality and mission. The complementarity of the different vocations brings a unique evangelizing strength to the Movement.
26. Two potentially helpful images have been used to express the nature of Regnum Christi: the human body and the family. The image of the body expresses the inseparability of the parts of Regnum Christi, which can only achieve their purpose when united and whose head is Jesus Christ. The image of the family highlights that our common Father is God, our equal dignity, our affection for one another and the interdependence of the members. Both images represent the participation of all in what is common to all.

#### 1) Remembering the journey travelled with the Pontifical Delegate

27. In these years, we have walked a path of renewal, clarification and reflection on our charism. This journey should continue. We would like to highlight four aspects: the self-governance of the consecrated branches, the participation of the lay members, the placing of the Legionaries within Regnum Christi and the quest for a canonical configuration.

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*a) The self-governance of the consecrated branches*

28. The General Chapter sees the self-governance of the consecrated branches as a step forward in consolidating the whole of Regnum Christi. The request they made to the Holy See to canonically erect associations of faithful responds to the need to establish *de iure* what they already are *de facto*: a group of persons who live the evangelical counsels under their own governance. This does not mean that the other branches are breaking away, but that they are maturing in their own identity and hence that the whole body of Regnum Christi is maturing. Their Statutes, which were recently approved by the Delegate, are an important and beautiful outcome of the journey they have travelled. It is deeply gratifying to see in them both the family traits we all share as well as the unique characteristics with which each branch enriches the whole of the Movement.
29. At the same time, the Legion sees the need to respond to the desire and the commitment to live in unity and communion expressed in the general assemblies of the consecrated branches. The Chapter observes the same strong desire in the congregation. We want to serve you as priests and accompany you as our brothers and sisters in following Christ and announcing his Kingdom.

*b) The participation of the lay members that do not profess the evangelical counsels*

30. With the lay members, we share the grace of baptism and the invitation to holiness and apostolate proper to the Christian life. Along with the members of the consecrated branches, we share the particular vocation to Regnum Christi as a path that God offers us to develop this Christian life and bring it to its fullness. The lay members, because of their state in life, make the Kingdom of Christ present in their families and in their social and professional surroundings. We Legionaries value their lay vocation and together with them we wish to bring to fullness the mission that God has entrusted to Regnum Christi for the good of the Church.
31. Convoking the lay members to participate in a reflection about their identity and mission was a good decision, since they are the ones that have received this specific vocation and are directly responsible for developing this gift. It is a journey that must continue in the next years. We trust that it will bear abundant fruit for the spiritual and apostolic renewal of the Movement<sup>12</sup>.

*c) The placing of the Legionaries of Christ within Regnum Christi*

32. The journey we have travelled has enabled the Legionaries to enter more deeply into our own identity within Regnum Christi and how we live out the shared charism as religious and priests. The Legionary is always a member of the Movement and wherever he is, Regnum Christi is present. Without reducing the broad range of apostolates and tasks that the Legionary can take on, our specific mission in relation with the other members of Regnum Christi consists in exercising

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<sup>12</sup> Canonically, the first and second degree members continue to belong to the private association of the faithful with the statutes that were recognized by the Holy See in 2004.

the spiritual fatherhood proper to the priest by accompanying them, forming them and encouraging them as they walk the path of holiness and engage in the apostolate (Cf. CLC 4).

33. The consecrated women, lay consecrated men, and the lay members, as well as receiving our priestly service, are our companions in the mission. For this reason we appreciate their capability and commitment in decision-making and in the development of the Movement and its apostolates, as fits in each case. They contribute gifts that we do not have, gifts that are necessary to bring Regnum Christi to its fullness.
34. We are grateful for the support and encouragement that the members of the other branches have always offered us, especially in these past years. We thank all the Legionaries who have taken the charism of Regnum Christi to so many different places in the world and have helped others to discover and flourish in their vocation to the Movement. We also wish to ask for forgiveness, in the name of all Legionaries, for the times in which we have not sufficiently appreciated and promoted the individual vocation and mission of each member.

*d) The quest for canonical configuration*

35. Under the guidance of the Delegate, the previous central government, together with the representatives of the other branches, began a reflection in search of a possible canonical configuration for Regnum Christi as a whole. It has not been possible to arrive at definitive conclusions since we must still reflect more on the possibilities that canon law currently offers and on the proposal to make to the Church regarding how to live the communion and the mission of Regnum Christi in light of the developments of these years. For this reason, we have sought intermediate steps that could offer a framework that will foster the communion among the branches that already exists and offer channels through which we can collaborate apostolically and address the difficulties that may arise.
36. In this context, the Pontifical Delegate gave us his authorization to explore the possibility of making a “working agreement” (*convenio de colaboración*) between the consecrated men, the consecrated women and the Legion of Christ. A draft was written up and the general assemblies of the consecrated men and of the consecrated women and the General Chapter of the Legionaries were asked for their opinion on the subject. Afterwards, it would be the task of the three governments to decide how to proceed adequately in provisional agreement.
37. The judgments of the General Chapter and the general assemblies have been positive as a whole, with some specific observations. Both we and they have reiterated our firm commitment to follow this path together, to make the necessary commitments to one another and to take the canonical steps that are possible in each moment. For his part, the Pontifical Delegate reminded us that we are not called to create a new reality, but to bring to maturity the one that already exists and that we must live better each day. The chapter fathers are confident that the three central governments, working together, will both address the current issues of collaboration and take the necessary steps towards the canonical configuration of Regnum Christi.

**2) The path towards the future**

38. The life of the Movement continues, and we will continue living closely united, in our service to the mission, with the different realities that make up the life of Regnum Christi and the works of apostolate.
39. The General Chapter urges the Legionaries to once again take up the task of evangelization in communion with the other members of the Movement. These years have been characterized by a deep self-examination that has been necessary and that, in a certain sense, should continue. But we cannot forget what the Lord has called us to do and our purpose in the bosom of the Church.
40. While the canonical configuration of the Movement continues to mature in dialogue with the Holy See, we should strengthen and institutionalize, insofar as is possible and appropriate, the channels that will allow us to express and live the communion that unites us. We should develop an adequate collaboration and coordination between the different vocations according to what Regnum Christi already is *de facto*. The collaboration and participation that we truly achieve will be an excellent example and a good basis on which to present to the Church a definitive configuration that would express our reality. This task requires dialogue and a sense of what is essential in order to define effective solutions.
41. We would like to call to mind that fruitfulness in the mission and the depth of our communion depend first of all on the union that each one of us has with God and not on definitions or juridical instruments. Such instruments protect, guard and foster the institutional development of the charism, but they presuppose a lived experience of the gift of the Lord.

### **3) Recommendations to the government of the Legion of Christ**

42. In light of the indications of the Pontifical Delegate, of the current canonical possibilities, of what was discussed in the chapter hall about the draft of the working agreement (*convenio de colaboración*), and considering the comments on the draft of the agreement received from the general assemblies of the consecrated members and the suggestions of the directors of the consecrated branches, we wish to ask the following of the new government:
  - i. That the general director, together with the central governments and representatives of the other branches and in dialogue with the Holy See, continue the quest for an adequate canonical configuration of the whole of Regnum Christi.
  - ii. That the general director guide a reflection regarding the identity of the first and second degree of the Regnum Christi Movement. We ask him to facilitate a broad participation of the members throughout the world, as well as of the Legionaries, consecrated men and consecrated women, since we are convinced that to understand the identity of Regnum Christi and each state of life within it requires dialogue between all the members of the family.
  - iii. That, in agreement with the central governments of the consecrated branches, provisory norms and mechanisms of joint direction in the apostolate be defined, that would promote an adequate participation and shared responsibility of all the branches on the international, territorial and local levels.
  - iv. That the goods of the congregation be administered with an adequate participation of the consecrated branches and that mechanisms be established to make this possible, since these

goods are intended to support the Legionaries, the consecrated members and the mission of Regnum Christi.

- v. That the general director urge the territorial directors to implement the preceding indications according to the circumstances of their respective territories.
  - vi. That the general director keep the Legionaries informed about the advances, reflections and actions taken in this area.
43. We also ask all the Legionaries of Christ to reflect, in the presence of God, in prayer and dialogue, on what it means to belong to Regnum Christi, in order to grow in appreciation of the unity of the Movement and the richness of the different vocations that make it up, notwithstanding the inevitable difficulties and tensions of daily work, thus creating a climate of communion, collaboration and mutual service among one and all.

## FRATERNAL LIFE IN COMMUNITY

44. “Fraternal life in community” is one of the themes stirring greater interest among Legionaries in recent years, as attested to by the many contributions on the topic received by the Central Commission for the revision of the Constitutions or sent directly to the Chapter. Hence, the chapter fathers dedicated ample time to study and reflect upon this aspect of our life. This document presents some of our reflections on fraternal life, keeping in mind principally our communities of apostolate.

45. Fraternal life is essential to religious life<sup>13</sup>. Its foundation is the call of Christ, who has gathered us to form a family around him. As his disciples and apostles, he reveals to us the love he bears in his heart; he forms us and he sends us out to cooperate in establishing his Kingdom. This fraternal life, a gift of the Holy Spirit<sup>14</sup> and a reflection of the communion of the Church<sup>15</sup>, finds its expression according to the nuances of each specific charism<sup>16</sup>.

### 1) Fraternal life in the Legion of Christ

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<sup>13</sup> Fraternal life is not only an essential element of religious life, it permeates the triad consecration-communion-mission which is proper to consecrated life (see the table of contents of John Paul II’s *Vita Consecrata*):

- Consecration, as a welcoming of and response to the gift of Trinitarian love, becomes visible through the practice of the evangelical counsels, lived in a personal way, and at the same time, in a deep relationship with others.
- Communion, because fraternal life and common life are inspired concretely in the Holy Family, the community of disciples around Jesus and the first Christian communities.
- Called to communion for the mission, we are all evangelized and we form a community that is at the same time, evangelizing. All Legionaries are destined to the mission and available for it

<sup>14</sup> “Religious community is a gift of the Spirit. It is the love of God, poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, from which religious community takes its origin and is built as a true family gathered together in the Lord’s name.” Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life CICLSAL, *Fraternal life in community*, 8.

<sup>15</sup> “The fraternal life [...] is an eloquent sign of ecclesial communion.” JOHN PAUL II, *Vita consecrata*, 42.

<sup>16</sup> “The members of a religious community are seen to be bound by a common calling from God in continuity with the *foundational charism*.” CICLSAL, *Fraternal life in community*, n. 2c. (emphasis in original)

46. We thank our Lord for the dedication and appreciation Legionaries have for fraternal life in community, which has normally been characterized by a climate of respect, kindness and esteem, by speaking well of others and by promoting harmony and peace. These are all gifts to be preserved and lived ever more authentically.

47. We value the abundant fruits of fraternal life. It favors holiness and the acquisition of a mature personality that includes a harmonious affective life. It fosters the spirit of joy that is so helpful in vocation ministry, and it offers a witness of unity and charity to a highly individualistic world.

48. We have noted that certain deficiencies in how we live fraternal life in community have become evident in recent years: a certain individualism and lack of interest in matters common to all; the tendency in communities of apostolate to get so engrossed in the ministry as to reduce participation in community life to the barest minimum, almost viewing it as an obstacle or rival to one's personal mission <sup>17</sup>; a certain reduction of common life to a mere disciplinary obligation or simply "being there" in particular community acts.

49. While the Legion does have its own family spirit, we saw that some members lack the ability to establish rapport as brothers and friends, to share what is theirs and take an interest in others. Among the reasons behind this deficiency we might mention: a mistaken understanding of universal charity that focuses on externals; a certain fear of falling into exclusive friendships; scarcity of the thoughtful gestures that make for warmer fraternal interaction; a misconstrued discretion and reserve that inhibits sharing personal or spiritual experiences; the idea that one should only open his heart to his superior.

50. Mutual trust between superiors and subjects is fundamental to a harmonious and serene community life. Lamentably, in recent years distrust in all levels of authority has entered into our life, causing confusion and suffering, independently of each individual's function or service. We feel duty-bound to recognize the work of the superiors during these difficult years, even though at times there were errors in their exercise of authority. In this regard, we believe think that sometimes not trusting sufficiently in the subjects or inhibition in decision-making caused a certain vacuum of authority that gave rise to uncertainty and suspicion. As regards the subjects,

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. CICALSAL, *Fraternal life in community*, 59c.

we notice that in some cases their ability to view the superiors in a supernatural way has diminished, to the degree of challenging or even openly disrespecting them<sup>18</sup>.

51. Fraternal life in community is an expression of charity. Its root is not to be found in organizational needs. Neither is it a way to obtain everyone's greater participation and cooperation through building consensus, or a means to be more effective in the mission. It is a gift of the Spirit that, transcending absolute uniformity enables us to live in unity amidst the diversity of persons, cultures, times and places. In this point, the distinction attributed to St. Augustine continues to be valid: "In essentials, unity; in matters of opinion, liberty; in everything, charity."<sup>19</sup>

## **2) Some principles for the renewal of fraternal life in the Legion of Christ**

### *A community centered on God*

52. Our relationship with God is the heart of our community life. The Eucharist is therefore the community's spiritual center (cf. CLC 52)<sup>20</sup>: there, Legionaries gather in his presence at the beginning and end of their day and at other significant times, and it is where they take their leave of him when they go out and greet him when they return. From him they draw the power to share their spiritual, intellectual, cultural and material benefits.

### *Forming a consecrated heart*

53. All of the above turns the community into God's family, living in an atmosphere of joy and serenity, where everyone feels "at home"<sup>21</sup>. In addition, each religious forms in this

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<sup>18</sup> The superior is a "means of mediating the will of the Lord: human mediation, true, but still authoritative, imperfect yet at the same time binding; the starting point from which each day begins, and also for moving forward in a generous and creative impulse towards the holiness that God 'wills' for every consecrated person." CICALSAL, *Service of authority and obedience*, 9.

<sup>19</sup> "In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas."

<sup>20</sup> Translator's note: The abbreviation "CLC" refers to the constitutional text which was approved by the Holy See on October 16th, 2014

<sup>21</sup> Cf. CICALSAL, *Fraternal life in community*, 50.

environment a filial, fraternal and paternal heart, which will be of such great help to him in his priestly ministry.

54. “Filial”, as a son, allowing himself be shaped by God’s action in his life through obedience and docility to the Holy Spirit.

55. “Fraternal”, as a brother, welcoming each one as he is, being concerned for all, taking an interest in knowing them (family, apostolate, health, etc.) and dealing with them cordially and not merely formally. He also strives to lighten his brothers’ crosses and avoids adding to them the weight of his own defects. Likewise, he avoids whatever might make others feel excluded, such as forming groups based on language, country, age or natural affinity. He feels like a living part of the community and so he wants to be there, pleased to take part in fellowship activities and community projects.

56. “Paternal”, as a father, learning to give, and not only receive. With a sense of shared responsibility, he builds up the community and feels accountable for the growth of his brother<sup>22</sup>. He is able to face the inevitable tensions and helps resolve them maturely<sup>23</sup>. Lastly, he acquires the heart of a father, mercifully welcoming those who have erred, and is able to ask forgiveness for his own faults.

### *A community built for mission*

57. Bound to God and to each other as brothers, all aspire to form a community on fire for the mission. They are conscious of being a religious community evangelizing a locality through its witness and its apostolic action in Regnum Christi. The mission is not an individual task, but it belongs to all the members of the community, of the locality, of the territory and of the Movement. It is one mission and not simply a sum of apostolates or individual efforts. In this light, the various apostolates have to be considered part of the shared mission.

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. CICALSAL, *Service of authority and obedience*, 13g.

<sup>23</sup> “We must never act like managers when faced with a brother’s conflict: conflict instead must be caressed.” POPE FRANCIS, *To the meeting with the superiors general*, November 29, 2013.

*Mary, mother of the community*

58. To the above, we must add the awareness of being sons of the same Mother, Mary. She gathers us as brothers, consoles us in our difficulties and accompanies us on the mission of being apostles of the Kingdom of her Son.

### **3) Some concrete elements of fraternal life in community**

#### *a) Fraternal life, friendship and individualism*

59. We would like our communities to be living signs of fraternal charity. Despite these good desires, due to the changes in times and society some doubt and confusion has arisen regarding various aspects of the fraternal life in common proper to the religious state. Taking our lead from the guidelines of the Magisterium of the Church on consecrated life, we will now consider some of these in light of our own charism.

60. Our fraternal life is founded on God's call to be a Legionary and to form part of a concrete community. This divine call has spiritual implications in our life:

a. Through our consecration, we give ourselves completely, definitively and exclusively to the one, supreme love of Christ. He is the friend of each religious and he is where every consecrated heart seeks consolation.

b. Through our celibacy, which expresses Christ's spousal love for his Church, we participate in the love that Christ has for every individual—a love that goes out to each and every person.

c. Through the commandment of love, we are called to live universal charity after the example of Christ, who loves each one with a love so great that it brings him to give his life

for his friend. Looking at him, nobody feels less loved. And it is his Spirit of Love that moves the consecrated person to open his heart to everyone.

61. In itself, friendship is a gift that arises naturally and spontaneously. In a community setting, there can be humanly speaking difficult relationships, which ought to be welcomed with “crucified love”. In other cases, however, a deeper, more gratifying relationship will evolve which, elevated by grace and supernatural charity, develops into the Christian friendship of a consecrated person. It is therefore possible to have companions we know better than others, with whom we get along better and consult more easily—without this relationship ever excluding anyone else.

62. You choose your friends, your brothers are God-given and welcomed with faith and love. Our challenge is to overcome contemporary individualism. It is not a question of having brothers on the one hand and friends on the other. Christ calls us to be better brothers and friends of all, especially the members of our own community.

63. Particular traits of fraternal life in the Legion:

a. Straightforward, friendly but respectful interaction among everyone, including those tasked with the service of authority. This is shown by using the titles “father” or “brother”, taking care to avoid nicknames and annoying jokes, using respectful forms of speech (“usted” in Spanish);

b. Joy as an expression of faith and universal charity even when our feelings are not so inclined or when we find it more difficult to bear the sufferings and weaknesses of others;

c. A spirit of creative and practical service, especially when you see that a companion or the community needs something;

d. Attentive listening, taking interest in what the other wants to communicate, while still being free to express your own opinion without imposing it;

e. Kindness in judgments and words, avoiding gossip and pessimism;

f. The openness and trust to be able to communicate what you feel, love or what worries you, and to simultaneously receive with respect and welcome what others share, overcoming the tendency to cut yourself off or form closed groups with those of a like mind;

g. The ability to ask for pardon and mutually forgive.

b) *The role of the superior in fraternal life*

64. “Those in authority promote the growth of fraternal life through the service of listening and dialogue, the creation of a favorable atmosphere for sharing and co-responsibility, the participation of everyone in the concerns of each service balanced between the individual and the community, discernment and the promotion of fraternal obedience.”<sup>24</sup>

65. The superior, like Christ the Good Shepherd, must know, trust, take an interest in, encourage and appreciate each religious and thus stimulate a climate of trust in the community. It is his task in particular to: remind the community of the principles of consecrated and Legionary life, and with kindness to see they are fulfilled; listen, speak and prudently handle whatever tensions and conflicts arise in his community; promote unity among the members both in the community and in the locality.

66. The subjects, for their part, need to be sincere and forthright and allow their superior help them in their life, especially through personal dialogue. They should uphold him with the free gift of their esteem and trust, and in a constructive attitude, offer the service of their gospel obedience.

67. Everyone, both superiors and subjects, must hold in high esteem the religious discipline that supports fraternal life and “makes it so that the religious house is not merely a place of residence, a collection of individuals each living his own life, but a ‘fraternal community in Christ.’”<sup>25</sup> To achieve this, it will be necessary to internalize the disciplinary norms in faith and love.

68. The superior, after consulting his council, may adapt the frequency and modality of community activities to the particular needs of his own community and locality.

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<sup>24</sup> CICLSAL, *Service of Authority and Obedience*, 20.

<sup>25</sup> CICLSAL, *Fraternal life in community*, 50; in *idem*, *Service of authority and obedience*, 20e.

69. It is necessary for major superiors to accompany and help local superiors so that they will be able to exercise the authority that the congregation has entrusted to them with the heart of a father and shepherd, especially in the areas of helping their subjects, creating communion and promoting the apostolate. For their part, the religious should address concrete issues first with their immediate superior and in their community, without reducing their cordial and close contact also with their major superiors.

c) *Shared responsibility in fraternal life*

70. How are we to combine and live the irreplaceable role of the superior and the co-responsibility of all the members? The document on *The Service of Authority and Obedience*, of 2008, is the magisterial source that clearly offers us the way.<sup>26</sup>

71. The principle that frames shared responsibility is the following: “In community life animated by the Holy Spirit, each individual engages in a fruitful dialogue with the others in order to discover the Father's will. At the same time, together they recognize in the one who models an expression of the fatherhood of God and the exercise of authority received from God, at the service of discernment and communion.”<sup>27</sup>

72. The superior should take each one of the members into account in the decisions that affect all, and meet with them occasionally to discern what is best. But the final decision is always his to take.<sup>28</sup> We encourage everyone to participate in these meetings with a sense of responsibility, keeping the following attitudes in mind: “seek nothing other than the divine will

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<sup>26</sup> The whole document does so, especially number 20.

<sup>27</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Vita consecrata*, 92.

<sup>28</sup> The “spirit of discernment” is to be distinguished from “community discernment”. The former is the superior’s interior attitude when determining what is best for the community: “The spirit of discernment ought to characterize every decision-making process that regards the community.” The latter, on the other hand, is a means available to the superior to use on occasion: “Sometimes, when foreseen by the institute’s code or the importance of the decision to be taken demands it, the search for an adequate response is entrusted to community discernment.” It is clear that “Community discernment is not a substitute for the nature and function of persons in authority, who alone can take the final decision.” CICLSAL, *Service of authority and obedience*, n. 20e.

[...]; recognize in each one the ability to discover the truth [...]; attention to the signs of the times [...]; freedom from prejudice, from excessive attachment to one's own ideas [...]; courage to state the reasons behind one's own ideas and at the same to open oneself to new perspectives [...]; firm proposal to maintain unity always [...].”<sup>29</sup>

73. The spiritual directors should also contribute to the union and peace of the community: they can help those who consult them to humbly recognize the gifts that they can contribute and the personal limitations they need to overcome; help them to take a supernatural stance when looking at the other members of the community, and to exercise virtue in confronting the difficulties that arise in their dealings with others or in their exercise of obedience.

d) *The community project*

74. We strongly recommend that each community have its own program or community project, which comes from listening to the will of God for the community and mutual dialogue coordinated by the superior. The project will take into account the type of center and the personal, community and apostolic needs of the community, the locality and the territory. All the members, therefore, should participate in drafting it, applying to their local situation the general regulations for communities and the directives of the general and territorial directors.

75. As a suggestion, we recall here some of the elements of this project: life of prayer and union with God, promoting charity among the members, commitment to the mission of the community and the locality, on-going formation, appropriate rest for all, the economic situation of the house and the congregation, and cooperation in equipping the house, maintaining it, keeping it distinguished and clean.

76. In particular, all should feel responsible for their own rest and helping the others to rest. Though it is not always easy to arrange it, they should be mindful of the fact that the community needs their presence in the activities of fellowship and relaxation (Sunday as the “day of the Lord”,<sup>30</sup> the community day of rest, weekend getaways, vacations, playing together, etc.).

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<sup>29</sup> CICLSAL, *Service of authority and obedience*, n. 20e.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Dies Domini*, 7.

Likewise, if they need to, they should look for some personal rest, overcoming possible individualistic attitudes and checking with their superior how they go about it.

e) *Fraternal Correction*

77. Fraternal correction is a duty of charity and a spiritual good. In the congregation, it ordinarily takes the following forms:

a. Sessions of directives lead by the superior to orient the community and correct what needs to be corrected;

b. Regular meetings among the members to point out to each other in an atmosphere of charity, acceptance and trust whatever could be of help in their religious life or apostolate,;

c. If circumstances warrant it, they may correct their brothers one-on-one, in word or in writing, with charity and prudence, especially if there is danger of scandal. For those still in formation, such corrections should ordinarily be made after consulting the superior.

78. In the various forms mentioned above, the one correcting should proceed with genuine charity, prudence, purity of intention and sensitivity. In this way, he will express only those external aspects that the other can assimilate and change; he will not omit what in conscience he needs to mention, and he will avoid causing hurt or humiliation. The one receiving the correction, for his part, should graciously accept the assistance given and ponder its truth, with the desire of growing in his personal life, humbly and with a grateful heart.<sup>31</sup>

#### 4) **Formation for fraternal life**

79. Fraternal life in common requires continual formation. This formation has to be gradual, and the process of learning it entails ascetical effort and progressive affective maturation. We therefore invite all formators and religious in formation to work toward acquiring this dimension of their personality, which is essential for their consecration and of great help for their final perseverance.

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<sup>31</sup> “Whoever deems it necessary to correct another should proceed with genuine charity and purity of intention. The one who is corrected should humbly and gratefully accept the corrections.” CLC, 42.

80. A large community of formation may render interpersonal relationships somewhat more difficult and provoke a certain sense of loneliness. Especially in these cases they should remember that genuine human relationships depend principally on one's desire and effort to form a priestly heart that is open to others, rather than on the number of persons with whom one deals. They should take advantage of the possibility that the teams and groups in their communities offer to build fraternal relations that will be of so much benefit in their own life and in the exercise of their priestly ministry.

81. If charity, harmony and peace reign in our communities, it will allow us to learn to live these attitudes also in our relationships within the locality, the territory, in all of Regnum Christi and, finally, within the wide range of charismatic realities in the Church.

82. The chapter fathers suggest to all Legionaries, superiors and subjects, that as individuals and in community they study and reflect upon the documents of the Magisterium on consecrated life, especially:

- a. CICLSAL, *Fraternal life in community*, February 2, 1994;
- b. JOHN PAUL II, *Vita consecrata*, May 25, 1996;
- c. CICLSAL, *Starting afresh from Christ*, May 19, 2002;
- d. CICLSAL, *Service of authority and obedience*, May 11, 2008.

## LITURGICAL LIFE AND PRAYER LIFE

### Introduction

83. The thirst for prayer and contemplation has been one of the great fruits that has matured in Legionaries' hearts in the midst of these years of confusion and suffering.

84. It is moving and encouraging to see this action of grace that seems to have possessed our hearts, attracting us and gathering us in Christ in the Eucharist in order to help us understand the past, be realistic in the present and have hope for the future. He is our only strength and our only treasure.

85. We feel that the revision of the constitutions would be of no use if the Legionaries' spiritual life is not renewed. We are conscious of the fact that any attempt at renewal that is not built upon the rock of our union with God would be superficial.

86. In the chapter hall we examined the spiritual life lived in the Legion, especially our liturgical life and our acts of piety, in light of the territorial assemblies' conclusions and the concerns that many Legionaries sent us.

87. During this exam some dangers were found that could affect or impoverish our members' spiritual lives. Among others: a formalistic focus that gives more importance to fulfilling duties than to profundity (CLC 47 § 1)<sup>32</sup>, a secularized environment, and superficiality in a culture of the ephemeral.

88. We believe that we can grow in our love for the Word of God; in our relation with the Holy Spirit; in our familiarity with the different methods of prayer; in a clearer integration of the affective and emotive dimension of the spiritual life; and in the knowledge of the great masters of spiritual life.

89. We perceive a desire to give more relevance to the liturgical prayer of the Church; concretely, there are brothers who feel attracted to the prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours. Some priests have suggested that some hours of the breviary could be prayed together at times, spontaneously and without considering it a habitual community act.

90. The many petitions sent to the General Chapter consistently converged in suggesting to reduce the multiplicity of the acts of piety during our daily lives and to open more space for personal prayer.

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<sup>32</sup> Translator's note: The abbreviation "CLC" refers to the constitutional text which was approved by the Holy See on October 16th, 2014.

91. We are convinced that any examination that we make of our prayer life should take the hierarchy of the different types of prayer into account, in line with the liturgical renewal begun by the Second Vatican Council: 1) liturgical prayer, which is the official prayer of the Church and which has the celebration of the Eucharist as its supreme moment; 2) mental prayer, which includes adoration of the Blessed Sacrament; 3) the different acts of piety<sup>33</sup>.

### 1) The Eucharist, source of spirituality

92. For the Legionary, the Eucharist is the summit of his day and the source of his action<sup>34</sup>. His identification with Christ arises from it. The Lord makes himself present in the Eucharistic celebration, “he who once offered himself on the cross now offers himself through the ministry of the priests”<sup>35</sup> (CLC 51, 2°). The Legionary, accompanied by Our Lady of Sorrows at the foot of the cross (CLC 15), makes an oblation of himself to the Father—as offering, victim, and altar— together with Christ the priest, in order to conquer sin and make his Kingdom of love triumph.

93. The definitive triumph of Christ’s love—the climax in which he establishes his Kingdom (CLC 11)—is the Paschal mystery, which is made present in every celebration of the Eucharist<sup>36</sup>. A burning love for his neighbor (CLC 10) and the desire to proclaim the gospel (CLC 11) spring forth in the priestly heart of the Legionary from the love of Christ, who was made flesh, died, and rose for the salvation of all men and women.

94. From the beginning of our formation, we learn to appreciate the sacred meaning of the liturgy<sup>37</sup>. The Eucharist, celebrated with dignity, devotion, sobriety, and simplicity, allows the community to become aware of “the greatness of the mystery being accomplished”<sup>38</sup> (CLC 51, 1°). In this way we prepare ourselves for the personal and community encounter with Jesus Christ.

95. Our communion springs from the font of the Eucharist (CLC 52) and from it our fraternal life is fortified. We have been called to live a personal relation with God within a community of believers – a sign of communion and reconciliation. This communion is made manifest in a special way during the Eucharistic concelebration, particularly on feast days<sup>39</sup>. We note that, in

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<sup>33</sup> “In order that Religious may more intimately and fruitfully participate in the most holy mystery of the Eucharist and the public prayer of the Church, and that their whole spiritual life may be nourished more abundantly, a larger place should be given to mental prayer instead of a multitude of prayers, retaining nevertheless the pious exercises commonly accepted in the Church and giving due care that the members are instructed diligently in leading a spiritual life.” (PAUL VI, *Ecclesiae Sanctae*, 21).

<sup>34</sup> Cfr. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10.

<sup>35</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7.

<sup>36</sup> “The Most Blessed Eucharist contains the entire spiritual boon of the Church, that is, Christ himself, our Pasch” (*Presbyterorum ordinis*, 5).

<sup>37</sup> Cfr. JOHN PAUL II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 48.

<sup>38</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Dominicae Cena*, 9.

<sup>39</sup> “Whenever rites, according to their specific nature, make provision for communal celebration involving the presence and active participation of the faithful, this way of celebrating them is to be preferred, so far as possible, to a celebration that is individual and quasi-private.” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 27).

recent years, the practice of concelebration has been extended to other occasions, such as Sundays, community days, meetings, etc.

96. In our communities visits to Christ in the Eucharist and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament extend this Eucharistic worship throughout the day. We are happy to note that in the last few years Eucharistic adoration has notably grown in our communities (CLC 52).

## **2) Life in Christ as a perennial liturgy (CLC 53 § 1)**

97. The Liturgy of the Hours “is the very prayer which Christ Himself, together with His body, addresses to the Father”<sup>40</sup>. By praying it, the Legionary desires to identify himself with Jesus Christ (CLC 9) in “this wonderful song of praise”<sup>41</sup>. It is also a privileged way to hear the Word of God (CLC 48), because it puts the listener in contact with the Sacred Scriptures and with the living Tradition of the Church<sup>42</sup>.

98. We ask that a greater relevance be given to the Liturgy of the Hours and that our members receive a greater education about it so that this prayer of the Church may nourish our spiritual life more<sup>43</sup>.

99. It is not enough to consecrate different moments of the day to praising God. The Holy Spirit invites us to transform our very existence into a perennial liturgy (cf. Rm 12:1), to live life in Christ as an offering to the Father with our study, apostolate, and rest, “all for the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31).

100. In this way all our religious and priestly life will become one with the life of Christ as a continuous offering of praise. And through the priestly ministry we present all of the works of our brothers to the Father as a spiritual sacrifice<sup>44</sup>.

## **3) Meditation of the Sacred Scripture and preaching**

101. From the beginning of his formation, the Legionary deepens in the frequent reading and meditation of the Sacred Scripture, from where he obtains the sublime knowledge of Christ (CLC 48)<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 84.

<sup>41</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 84.

<sup>42</sup> Cfr. BENEDICT XVI, *Verbum Domini*, 62.

<sup>43</sup> “Now that the prayer of Holy Church has been reformed and entirely revised in keeping with its very ancient tradition and in the light of the needs of our day, it is to be hoped above all that the Liturgy of the Hours may pervade and penetrate the whole of Christian prayer, giving it life, direction, and expression and effectively nourishing the spiritual life of the people of God” (PAUL VI, *Laudis Canticum*, 8).

<sup>44</sup> Cfr. *Lumen Gentium*, 10.

<sup>45</sup> “Drawing therefore upon the authentic sources of Christian spirituality, members of religious communities should resolutely cultivate both the spirit and practice of prayer. In the first place they should have

102. We invite all to base their preaching ministry on and nourish it with study and meditation of the Word of God, making the person of Jesus Christ and the beauty of following him shine forth. We see the recent introduction of Sunday homilies in our houses' community Mass as a positive development<sup>46</sup>.

103. An extensive desire for more flexibility in the preaching of spiritual exercises has been perceived, adapting them to the stage and situation of every group. There is a generalized desire for more space for personal prayer and adoration.

104. We also recommend that all our priests engage in frequent spiritual reading (daily if possible), above all of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, the recent Magisterial documents, proven masters of spiritual life and good commentaries of Sacred Scripture.

#### **4) The salvific encounter in the sacrament of reconciliation (CLC 50)**

105. The sacrament of penance is the place where the Legionary experiences the triumph of the merciful love of Christ over sin as the way his Kingdom is established in his own heart. Our reconciliation and our salvation come from the Heart of Christ, pierced for our sins (CLC 9).

106. From the first stages of his formation, the Legionary learns to value the sacrament of reconciliation as a personal encounter of salvation, and he goes frequently to receive the sacramental grace to continue advancing in his path to conversion.

107. We invite all priests to live this dimension of their identification with Christ the Redeemer and to continue to be always available for the ministry of reconciliation, welcoming penitents and facilitating their encounter with the Lord.

#### **5) Interiorization and accompaniment in the life of prayer**

108. Growth in interior life finds its foundation and power in the exercise of the theological virtues (CLC 56), in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and in the frequent and transforming encounter with God in prayer.

109. Thus, in the Legion, great importance is given to prayer as the privileged place of encounter with God and of identification with his most holy will. It is for this reason that from the beginning of his formation the Legionary is introduced to mental prayer with the help of the discursive-affective and the contemplative methods, knowing that prayer usually progresses toward the simplicity of union with God.

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recourse daily to the Holy Scriptures in order that, by reading and meditating on Holy Writ, they may learn "the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:8)." (*Perfectae caritatis*, 6).

<sup>46</sup> "By means of the homily the mysteries of the faith and the guiding principles of the Christian life are expounded from the sacred text, during the course of the liturgical year; the homily, therefore, is to be highly esteemed as part of the liturgy itself; in fact, at those Masses which are celebrated with the assistance of the people on Sundays and feasts of obligation, it should not be omitted except for a serious reason." (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 52).

110. Hence the importance that spiritual directors be men of prayer and specifically formed to guide each one in his own spiritual path. At the same time Legionaries recognize that they will find this path only with difficulty without the help of a spiritual director (CLC 59).

### **6) Spiritual life and apostolate (CLC 12)**

111. The Legionary is called to have a solid and profound spiritual life as the expression and enactment of his consecration to God and as the condition of his apostolic fruitfulness (CLC 47 § 1). Union with God should permeate all the areas of his existence. If the Legionary does not make this union the foundation of his life and action, it will be much easier for him to fall into dissipation and activism.

112. This is why, in their formation and apostolate, Legionaries should take into account that “the problem is not always an excess of activity, but rather activity undertaken badly, without adequate motivation, without a spirituality which would permeate it and make it pleasurable”<sup>47</sup>.

113. It is necessary to accompany religious on apostolic internship and newly ordained priests so that they consolidate the habits of prayer in the active life, and that they progress in them, in such a way that all their life become a loving response to the Lord. It will also help when the center for apostolate is a haven of silence and recollection that fosters the spiritual rest and interior serenity of its members (CLC 91).

### **7) Acts of piety (CLC 53)**

114. It is good that the Legionaries continue to harmonize the many expressions of prayer: liturgical prayer, mental prayer, and exercises of piety, in order to be contemplative men in any circumstance. The general principle should be to favor the time of liturgical and mental prayer, and to assess the acts of piety in terms of union with God and not as ends in themselves.

115. We value morning offering and night prayers as powerful moments in which Legionaries present themselves before Jesus Christ as a community to offer the work of the day that is beginning, or to thank him for his benefits at the end of the day.

116. In accordance with approved norms (CLC 53 § 2), and with the flexibility required in each stage, superiors—as guides of their community (CLC 47 § 2) —, and spiritual directors should motivate our religious to give priority to their prayer life and help them adapt the acts of piety to their personal situation.

### **8) Openness to God and conscience examen (CLC 57)**

117. The conscience examen is a privileged space of discernment and of meeting God. There we thank him for his presence and gifts, we ask for forgiveness, we welcome his invitation to conversion and reform, and we renew our will’s union with his, a union that calls us to identify ourselves with his Son Jesus Christ every day.

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<sup>47</sup> FRANCIS, *Evangelii gaudium*, 82.

118. Spiritual discernment is not reduced to a limited time signaled by the schedule. Life in the Holy Spirit implies being always attentive to his voice, with docility to his inspirations and motions, willing to please the Divine Guest in all (CLC 13).

119. Sunday talks and practical exams also have the purpose of helping in spiritual growth, of exhorting to perseverance in the search for sanctity, of remembering the principles of Christian life, and of enlightening concrete aspects of spiritual life.

### **9) Petitions to the new general government**

120. At the end of these reflections we ask the central government:

1. To revise the acts of piety of the Legionary in order to underline appropriate gradualism, the guiding principles, and the flexibility necessary for the life of an apostle, taking the new constitutions, the numerous suggestions that the General Chapter received, and the feeling expressed by the chapter fathers themselves into account.
2. To revise the manual of the liturgy and make the necessary adaptations.
3. To revise the way the manual of spiritual exercises is applied, above all seeking to accommodate for different groups.
4. To revise the Ritual of the Congregation: rites, novenas, etc.
5. To renew the Manual of practical exams.
6. To renew the Prayer Book, taking into account, among other things, the Legion as part of *Regnum Christi*.

## ON LEGIONARY FORMATION AND THE *RATIO INSTITUTIONIS*

### 1) Introduction

121. A Legionary's formation has been one of the most important themes treated in the chapter, since it is indispensable for facing the stage that the congregation now begins in the best possible way. As chapter fathers we ask the new general government to give it the highest attention. Certainly, it is not only the task of the government but of all Legionaries, both formators and those in formation, and so we invite everyone to participate actively.
122. In this communiqué we aim to present only a synthesis of some of the aspects discussed in the chapter. We think that they should be taken into consideration when drafting the *Ratio Institutionis*, which the Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* defines as “a formation program inspired by the particular charism, presenting clearly and in all its stages the course to be followed in order to assimilate fully the spirituality of the respective Institute” (*Vita Consecrata*, 68).

### 2) Analysis

123. The Pontifical Delegate invited us to analyze our formation on the basis of our experience and the current socio-cultural context. Here are the main points of our reflection which should receive further in-depth consideration.
124. The influence of the socio-cultural context on young people has always been a challenge to formation. Dealing with it requires the ability to understand and adapt so as to take advantage of what is positive in each generation and transmit perennial values to it. At present, secularization, the dissolution of the family, the crisis of authority, a false concept of human autonomy, the relativization of values, constant changes, etc. create growing difficulties<sup>48</sup> for religious and priestly formation. A culture of the provisional does not favor definitive decisions.<sup>49</sup>
125. We appreciate the interest the Legion has always placed on the integral formation of its members. The fruits can be seen in many Legionaries who live a love for the church, a sense

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<sup>48</sup> Benedict XVI spoke of an “educational emergency”, the “increasing difficulty encountered in transmitting the basic values of life and correct behaviour to the new generations” (Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Participants in the Convention of the Diocese of Rome, 11 June 2007).

<sup>49</sup> We recall here the words of Pope Francis during an encounter with seminarians and novices last July: “However, listen carefully: we are all, even the older people among us, we too, are under pressure from this ‘culture of the temporary’; and this is dangerous because one does not put one’s stakes on life once and for all. I marry as long as love lasts; I become a woman religious, but only for ‘a little while...’, ‘a short time’ and then I shall see; I become a seminarian in order to become a priest, but I don’t know how the story will end.” (6 July 2013).

of obedience, self-denial, availability, and apostolic zeal. They also combine an adequate intellectual formation with a careful human formation.

126. We also find certain deficiencies that need to be corrected. Sometimes we have not adequately accompanied religious in their vocational discernment, helping them to make and live responsible and mature decisions, partly due to the high number of religious in centers of formation. Not having ordinarily distinguished between superiors and spiritual directors, among other possible consequences, weakened the specific function of each. Regulating with norms, often even the smallest details of life, and a lack of gradualism in applying norms hampers the process of maturing or can lead to performing acts solely to fulfill the norm without inner understanding of the values they contain. Failing to integrate all of the facets of life with one's consecrated and priestly vocation can beget the widespread phenomenon of activism and a neglect of community and spiritual life in favor of apostolic activity; when interior life declines, we throw ourselves into action.

### **3) Formation in the light of the Charism**

127. The purpose of the *Ratio Institutionis* is to help all members of the congregation to reach the measure of the fullness of Christ (cf. Eph. 4:13), according to the charism of *Regnum Christi*. We must always keep before our eyes the identity of a Legionary: he is a religious priest who, experiencing the love of Jesus Christ, understands and feels the urgent need to center his whole existence on him, to live authentic charity, to proclaim the merciful love of God to everyone, and to bring them to a redeeming encounter with him (cf. CLC, n.3<sup>50</sup>).

128. By the profession of the evangelical counsels in the Legion, we have consecrated ourselves to God, embracing the way of life that Jesus Christ chose for himself. We should be more mindful in the whole formation process of our condition as religious priests and of the high ideals involved.

### **4) Some Aspects of Integral Formation**

129. Among the various aspects that call for our consideration in order to improve the formation of Legionaries, we believe that at the present moment the following deserve special attention.

#### *a. Principles of Formation*

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<sup>50</sup> Translator's note: The abbreviation "CLC" refers to the constitutional text which was approved by the Holy See on October 16th, 2014.

130. It is important to develop an attitude of constant growth. This means being ready to form ourselves every day of our lives, since we can never assume that we have finished bringing to life the “new man” in ourselves<sup>51</sup>.
131. The relationship of formation is accompaniment, characterized by mutual trust between the formator and the one in formation. Both should lend their cooperation and willingness to reach a close, friendly relationship, characterized by sincerity, simplicity, openness, and warmth.
132. We should overcome the danger of living formation as the automatic result of a mere succession of stages; we must center the mission of the formator on helping the religious to take upon themselves the responsibility for their own growth, finding a sense of motivation and a wider vision in the formative objectives which the Legion proposes, and which the *Ratio Institutionis* should define clearly. This should facilitate the personalization of the formation process.

#### *b. Spiritual Formation*

133. The unifying heart of the life of a Legionary should be his spiritual life. Called to be another Christ, we have to foster a solid spiritual growth keeping in mind that the Holy Spirit is the author of our transformation into Christ and the one who sustains us in the mission to establish his Kingdom (cf. CLC 13). We should value the life of grace and prayer as an intimate, growing relationship with Christ, in which love expands, as the source of inner freedom in living one’s commitments.
134. It is also necessary to continue strengthening the attitude of listening to the voice of God and the consequent exercise of spiritual discernment by taking advantage of conscience examinations and spiritual direction, among other means.
135. With respect to norms, we are aware that it is neither necessary nor convenient to regulate the path of perfection in all of its details and that gradualism favors religious maturity. We consider that the reduction of norms carried out in these years is an opportunity to discover the meaning of the norms: their pedagogical value, their orientation towards the good of the community and the values that each norm protects or promotes.
136. A militant character is part of the spiritual and human make-up of the Legionary as the expression and fruit of a healthy tension towards holiness and the establishment of the Kingdom.

#### *c. Human Formation*

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<sup>51</sup> Cf. *Vita Consecrata* 69: “(...)Due to human limitations, the consecrated person can never claim to have completely brought to life the ‘new creature’ who, in every circumstance of life, reflects the very mind of Christ. (...) None are exempt from the obligation to grow humanly and as Religious; by the same token, no one can be over-confident and live in self-sufficient isolation. At no stage of life can people feel so secure and committed that they do not need to give careful attention to ensuring perseverance in faithfulness; just as there is no age at which a person has completely achieved maturity.”

137. The importance of human formation remains relevant today because the priest “should seek to reflect in himself, as far as possible, the human perfection which shines forth in the incarnate Son of God” (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 43).
138. Among other aspects, we see the need to foster affective maturity as the fruit of a love which commits the whole person and in which one grows to the degree that the heart clings to God. With the heart focused on Christ we watch over ourselves (cf. Mt. 26: 41), overcoming selfish love (cf. Rom. 7: 14-25) and freely giving and receiving love.
139. We need to continue growing in responsibility. In the process of maturation each one is called to learn to use his freedom, to make prudent decisions and to respect the obligations undertaken with God and men.
140. Called to clothe ourselves with Christ and to be new men (cf. CLC 19), we seek to show this by paying attention to our presentation and by the courtesy with which we deal with others as befits a Legionary.

*d. Formation of the apostle*

141. Regarding the apostolic formation of the Legionary priest, we invite all to renew their awareness of the fact that the mission guides, unifies and determines the formative process (*Pastores Dabo Vobis* 57). It is essential that from the first stages of formation a Legionary should acquire a practical knowledge of how to do apostolate in *Regnum Christi*, form himself as a formator of apostles, begin developing the ability to work in a team with other members of the Movement and the capacity to adapt apostolic methods to the needs of the people whom he would evangelize.
142. In this context apostolic internship holds a particular place. The religious will best achieve the objectives<sup>52</sup> of this period by being assigned to a community and an apostolic responsibility suited to that precise period of formation, by an adequate introduction to the apostolate entrusted to them, and by the accompaniment of their superiors and the directors of their apostolate.

*e. Intellectual Formation*

143. Regarding intellectual formation, we invite all Legionaries to continue seeking a solid, profound, select preparation in order to be able to engage actively in the task of the new evangelization. We encourage those at the beginning of their formation to dedicate

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<sup>52</sup> Cf. CLC 104: “The religious should live this period conscious that it is an opportunity to know themselves better, consolidate the formation they have already acquired and assimilate in practice the criteria and apostolic principles of the Legion of Christ. They should seek to form a priestly heart in dealing with souls and learn to live the evangelical counsels in the world without being of the world. They should try to live and grow in apostolic zeal, militancy, responsibility, conviction, and team work.”

themselves with enthusiasm to their academic preparation, seeking to expand their horizons, and not losing sight of the fact that this preparation is geared to the mission.

144. We should be aware that to carry out our priestly mission we need to know the situation of the Church and the world, detect the primary apostolic challenges, the problems that people suffer and the ideological tendencies that have most influence on society (cf. RS 51<sup>53</sup>). Only in this way will we be able to engage in an evangelizing dialogue with culture.

*f. On-going Formation*

145. Finally, we recall that formation does not end with priestly ordination; it can always be deepened, perfected, and updated in various areas. We believe that the Legion needs to offer a program of on-going formation adapted to the circumstances, but we invite each Legionary to take responsibility for his own formation. As John Paul II reminded us in the Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*: “permanent formation is a requirement of the priest's own faithfulness to his ministry, to his very being.” (n.70).
146. In this program of on-going formation special emphasis should be given to accompaniment during the first years of priesthood.

**5) Path of Formation**

147. In addition to the dimensions of integral formation, we also discussed the path of formation, in continuity with the reflections made during the past years.
148. We believe that there are issues that still require further analysis. Among others are the following: the duration of candidacy, the study of humanities, the duration of apostolic internship, license in philosophy, license in theology, the duration of the diaconate, the personalization of the path of formation. The development of the *Ratio Institutionis* will offer an opportunity to carry out this reflection and allow the new government to make the appropriate decisions. However, the general chapter expressed support for the proposal that in the Directory, it should be established *ad experimentum* that the first profession and the subsequent renewal of vows be made for four years each.
149. The objective of this proposal is to offer better conditions for maturing and to improve coordination between religious formation and academic stages. In particular, it is expected that Legionaries would ordinarily prepare for perpetual profession having lived for a time in Rome after apostolic internship and having done their month-long spiritual exercises. Furthermore four year periods allow a more continuous support by the superiors, who will have greater time to know and guide the religious before presenting them as candidates for renewal of vows or perpetual profession.
150. The chapter fathers are aware that to achieve this objective the most important factor is the attitude of each religious, especially the awareness of what it means to be consecrated to

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<sup>53</sup> Translator's note: The abbreviation RS refers to the Legion's current *Ratio Studiorum*.

God from his first profession (cf. CLC 84) and of each one's responsibility for his own life and vocation.

151. It is equally important that superiors should be able to dedicate themselves entirely to the task of accompanying religious closely and that they always have in mind the requisite qualities.

## **6) Tasks the Chapter Entrusts to the Central Government**

### **152. *Ratio Institutionis***

- a. the chapter asks the central government to form a committee, presided by the general director or one of his counselors, to develop the *Ratio Institutionis* of the congregation. They should bear in mind the documents of the Church regarding priestly formation, especially *Pastores Dabo Vobis, Vita Consecrata* and the *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis*.
- b. it asks that the committee seek ways to take into account, verify and validate the experience of the past, and what has been implemented in recent years.
- c. the chapter proposes a period of three years to finish the work, in order to have three years to put it in practice before arriving at the next chapter, which should approve it.
- d. As far as possible, the *Ratio Studiorum* should also be revised and completed in the next years.

### **153. Formation of Superiors and Formators**

- a. The General Chapter requests that the central government develop and follow up on a plan of formation specifically for superiors, formators, and spiritual directors. It should promote, oversee and coordinate the initiatives that emerge in the territories.
- b. It should assist superiors and formators in knowing and applying the formative principles mentioned in numbers 10 and 12, and promote the reception and assimilation of the Constitutions and other documents of the chapter.
- c. It should continue monitoring attentively formation in the various territories, promoting and coordinating communication and exchange among formators of the same stages.
- d. It should ensure the continued promotion of spiritual direction and a trustful relationship between superiors and subjects.
- e. It has been found that superiors can improve their preparation in some areas: a deeper knowledge of the spiritual life and of the documents of the Church about religious life, a greater knowledge of psychology in general and especially of affectivity, and the capacity to offer guidance in vocational discernment.

### **154. Renewal of Apostolic Schools**

The chapter requests the government to continue ensuring the renewal of the apostolic schools, something already underway in various territories. Specifically it asks it to:

- a. coordinate the work of producing a document on the identity of the apostolic schools of the Legion, with their essential elements.
  - b. see to it that they continue to make the due pedagogical and disciplinary adaptations taking into account the legitimate diversity among the schools.
155. Make a plan of **accompaniment and formation during the first years of the priesthood**. Continue ensuring that the community and mission assigned are appropriate to this stage.
156. Conduct the **evaluation of the humanities program** and its implications.
157. Analyze the dynamics of formation in **small novitiates**.
158. Create a commission to analyze the **adequate use of psychology**, reflecting on its goals and how to apply it advantageously to discernment and formation, taking into account the documents of the Church.

## COMMUNIQUÉ REGARDING OUR APOSTOLIC RENEWAL

### Introduction

159. As chapter fathers, we have reflected on the apostolate of the Legionaries and the service we offer the Church. We would like to offer a synthesis of our deliberations in order to renew our apostolic enthusiasm and continue to bear witness to the newness of life brought about by Christ.

160. We want to begin by recognizing the gift of God. With the founding of the Legion of Christ, God gave life to a new charism in the Church that has flowered and borne fruit in Regnum Christi with its great richness in different states in life. Each of us forms part of this spiritual family to which the Heart of Jesus has called us.

161. We have been able to follow and imitate Christ in the Legion. At the same time, we have communicated this experience to others simply and directly. We have announced to many men and women that he calls them out of love to be apostles and Christian leaders to “sum up all things in Christ” (Eph 1:10). After these years of analysis and examination, we feel a desire to renew the gift of God, regain vigor in our dedication and reignite our apostolic zeal.

### 1) Bright spots and shadows in our apostolic action

162. When we chapter fathers reviewed the Legionaries’ situation and attitudes with respect to the apostolate, we noted a certain loss of passion in our apostolic zeal. As well, there are instances of mutual distrust that have made it difficult to work and live in communion. Strengthening communion among Legionaries and the other Regnum Christi members will be one of our major tasks over the next few years and a strong witness of Christian life we can offer the world.

163. We have experienced hesitation and uncertainties when it came to defining and applying our apostolic charism. For this reason, we have not always managed to impart an adequate formation to our religious in order to live and carry out this charism in practice. Nor have we prepared ourselves sufficiently for the mission. As well, we recognize that our institutions have only partially evangelized many of the people that have attended them and that, because of this, they have not always managed to become true centers for the formation of apostles and Christian leaders.

164. We have also discovered in some cases a certain overvaluing of the human elements, of prestige and of institutional strength. We have insisted on getting results, putting a lot of pressure on some people. Today, we are seeing a certain rejection of any type of evaluation, even when we all understand the need for it. There has also been a certain “rush” to get immediate results and a desire to grow too quickly. In some cases emphasis was placed on the methods instead of the objective and at times we have treated persons as means to reach an objective.

165. Individualism has also made itself present in our apostolic action. There is a certain tendency to work in an isolated way, without relating to other Legionaries or seeking communion. We have not trusted enough in the capabilities of the laity and have not shared enough responsibility for the mission with the Regnum Christi members. At times we have isolated ourselves from the local Church and have not sufficiently taken into account the bishops' pastoral plans and projects.

166. In the territories and localities, our apostolic plans have not always been conceived realistically. At times we have let the opportunities of the moment guide us, and we have not sufficiently adapted to the situations of persons and the circumstances of different times and places.

167. In the past we had already recognized the need to correct our vocation work and give it a new impulse. We have not always managed to integrate our vocation work within the framework of our apostolic activity and the service we provide to dioceses. On occasions we lacked sufficient discernment with young men who wanted to join the Legion. As well, many religious were asked to spend long periods out of community in order to dedicate themselves to promoting vocations, with negative effects on the spiritual and religious life of some of them.

168. With the whole Church, we are confronting the burden of a growing secularization that has made the Gospel challenges incomprehensible to many Catholics. We have not always been able to adapt to the new situations. We are facing the challenge of the new evangelization.

169. However, though there have been dark spots and limitations in our apostolate, the light of God's action has been much more powerful. Despite having pointed out a certain reduction in apostolic zeal, we also note among us now a longing for deep renewal so that we can be what we should be and work together to establish the Kingdom of Christ in people's hearts and in society.

170. In general we find a sincere love and a great desire for service, communication and collaboration with the universal and local Church, with pastors and laity. We recognize with gratitude that God chose to use us to bring about the conversion of many individuals and families and the formation of numerous apostles. Thanks to the work of Legionaries and Regnum Christi members, the Church now has a considerable network of institutions that seek to evangelize and help persons on their journey towards eternity. There are also noteworthy efforts, including some large-scale ones, to transform culture and society in light of Christ. We believe that God has given us an attractive charism that truly responds to some of the most urgent needs of the Church. We are convinced that the Movement as a whole is a help in evangelizing and represents a hope for the future.

171. The trial of these years has made us discover the spiritual and human caliber and the zeal for the salvation of souls of many priests, consecrated members and lay Regnum Christi members who have been able to hope against all hope. These brothers and sisters in the mission are the greatest gift that God has given us to build up together Our Lord's Kingdom of love. We all want to say with St. Paul at the end of our lives: "I have fought the good fight to the end, I have run the race to the finish, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim 4:7).

## 2) Our apostolic charism

172. The chapter fathers offer, in synthesis, the essence of our apostolic charism, looking to numbers 1 and 4 of the Constitutions that were recently revised and approved by the General Chapter.

173. The first thing we should affirm is that the Legion considers itself part of the Regnum Christi Movement and shares the same mission (cf. CLC 1<sup>54</sup>). A Legionary lives this mission as a priest and religious consecrated to God by the evangelical counsels. We are journeying together with the branches of Regnum Christi seeking an ever deepening understanding of the meaning of God's marvelous plan for us.

174. The Legion within the Movement, working person to person and in communion with the other Regnum Christi members, is called to establish the Kingdom of Christ by forming apostles, Christian leaders at the service of the Church (cf. CLC 4). We endeavor to bring these apostles to do the same in order to form a chain by means of which God's grace will reach people's hearts, families and society. Likewise, together with them we seek to create and direct Catholic institutions that are truly evangelizing (cf. *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 5-7). On the basis of a personal experience of God's love and aware that Christ is the one who transforms the hearts of men and women, a Legionary always embraces this mission as his own, even when the ministry he carries out only lets him accomplish it indirectly.

175. It is important to propose the vocation to Regnum Christi to the persons we work with and, if they feel called, to help them discern before God if they should formally join.

## 3) Apostolic renewal

176. In the Chapter, we are aware that, together with the rest of the Regnum Christi members, the Legionaries are trying to define new forms of participating in the apostolate. We ask the new government, in light of the analysis made in the Chapter hall, to draw up a plan to give impetus to the apostolate that will involve the territories and the localities, keeping in mind the *Regnum Christi Member Handbook* and in coordination with the other branches. We also present some points that we consider to be particularly important in the current context. The central, territorial and local governments, and all Legionaries, should work on them over the next few years:

1) *The experience of Jesus Christ's love is the source of our apostolic zeal* (cf. CLC 3, 12.1). If we want to enkindle our apostolic zeal, we need to let ourselves be possessed by Christ's love. For this reason, we ask the Legionaries to make union with God the center of their life. We invite the superiors and spiritual directors, through their prayer, witness and guidance, to encourage all Legionaries to constantly nourish themselves by contemplating the mystery of Jesus Christ and to live their personal and community acts of piety with conviction.

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<sup>54</sup> Translator's note: The abbreviation "CLC" refers to the constitutional text which was approved by the Holy See on October 16th, 2014.

2) *Communion with the local Church* (cf. CLC 14.3). We should always live and work in communion with the local Church and actively participate in the diocesan presbyterate. Our charism is the gift with which we serve the Church. We do so principally by means of our own institutions, and also when we collaborate with a mission that the diocese entrusts to us. It is our obligation to understand the pastoral plans of the dioceses where we work and to put them into effect. We should humbly serve the dioceses where we work since when we serve the Church, we serve Christ himself.

3) *The new evangelization*. The world is undergoing a deep and accelerated process of secularization in which relativism, materialism and hedonism reign. To avoid succumbing to the seductions of the world, a Legionary needs a solid spiritual formation, combined with a deep cultural and apostolic formation that will qualify him to carry out the new evangelization. Further, since each generation has a different cultural language, it is necessary to find the ways of reaching out in order to call and welcome people where they are (cf. *Evangeliium Gaudium* 119, 127; CLC 12.2). Many times we must begin with the first steps of the faith, giving reasons for the hope that we have (1 Peter 3:15), before bringing people to an encounter with Christ and a deep, active commitment with him. We invite the Legionaries to bring new passion to the apostolate and to constantly renew our methods so we can fulfill our mission.

4) *Personalized formation*. We have noted the need of studying with each Legionary what tasks are best adapted to his possibilities and his personal situation and of accompanying him so that he can meet the apostolic challenges that his mission entails. For this reason, we ask the new government to emphasize formation for the specific apostolate of the Movement and to establish a plan to train members in specific competencies and to accompany them during the period of apostolic internship and the first years of priestly ministry (cf. CLC 100). In formation it is necessary to ensure that our religious learn to be good spiritual directors, understand in depth the laity's call to holiness, and be prepared, according to their capacities, to promote, direct and engage in team work in our apostolates and institutions.

5) *The apostolate of a Legionary*. A Legionary should carry out his mission in light of his identity as a priest and religious. First off, this is up to each one of us. We invite the Legionaries to value what is proper to us as priests and religious: intercessory prayer, offering our life so that others will receive grace, bearing witness to the goods of the life to come, our community as an essential element of our life and the starting point for carrying out our mission, sacrifice as a priestly act, selfless love for souls, etc. We exercise our spiritual fatherhood specifically in the Regnum Christi family, dedicating ourselves to preaching, formation, directing souls, administering the sacraments, and establishing or directing its structures together with other members of the Movement. Based on humility, after the example of Christ, we should be a source of unity, charity and harmony within Regnum Christi. Given the importance and breadth of this task, we request the central government to establish a study commission that will help us better understand and assimilate our apostolic mission from the theological and pastoral point of view, within the current context of the Movement.

6) *Organization in the localities*. A good number of religious and territorial assemblies have requested that the Chapter pronounce itself regarding organization within localities. We know that we can only give strength and projection to our apostolate if we start there, since that is where evangelization is actually carried out. Since participation of the whole Movement and the

different branches is required to be able to define this, we consider that this task is not within the competency of this Chapter. Besides, it is important to consider the great diversity that there is between one city and another, and between one country and another. So, we ask the territorial directors to study the reality of the localities in their respective territories, under the guidance of the general director and in coordination with the authorities of the other branches, in order to lay down basic guidelines and principles of action. To help in this task, we underline the following principles, among others: 1) Organization of a locality aims before all to establish a plan of apostolic action and to help carry it out, in line with the pastoral plans of the diocese and in dialogue with the local pastors, so that, besides being effective in the mission, the Regnum Christi sections and apostolates will be coordinated, communion and charity will have appropriate channels, and osmosis and synergy will happen. 2) According to the principles of canon law, there are only three levels of authority (international, territorial, local); on the other hand, just autonomy should be granted to the works of apostolate. For this reason, the local structures cannot have authority over the works of apostolate or over their budgets, since they depend on the territorial director. Nevertheless, if judged necessary, some authority can be delegated to the local coordinator of apostolate. 3) Proposed solutions need to be flexible and simple so they can be adapted adequately to different times and places. 4) For the proper functioning of a locality, an attitude of collaboration and a sense of unity should be fostered in all, aware that the whole must be privileged above the parts and thus achieve a good formation for dialogue that can serve as a basis for any joint endeavor.

7) *Some apostolic priorities.* We have a charism that obliges us to concentrate on a few priorities. Given our current situation and the apostolic challenges that we have in this moment, we ask the central and territorial governments to keep the following priorities in mind when making personnel assignments so that they can be implemented in an organic and integrated way, and so achieve an adequate consolidation of each of them over the next few years:

- a. *Evangelization of the family.* We have found that it is necessary to evangelize the whole family, paying special attention to married couples. For this reason, all the institutions and sections of the Movement need to collaborate with each other in order to attend the family as a whole.
- b. *Evangelizing young people.* It is important to renew our youth work, a challenge that the whole Church is facing. We should endeavor to respond to the real needs of young people, seeking to bring them to meet Christ, make a commitment with him and be apostles of his Kingdom. Keep this in mind especially with those who desire to join ECYD and Regnum Christi.
- c. *Catholic education.* Our schools and universities, above and beyond offering an excellent formation, should create communities full of faith and love for God, the Church and souls. They should be focal points of evangelization and our charism should radiate from them. We should ensure there is adequate coordination between Regnum Christi groups and these institutions.
- d. *Evangelizing and helping the neediest.* In line with the social teaching of the Church, the Legionaries, as we are already doing in the Prelature of Cancún-Chetumal, in *Mano Amiga* and in other projects, will continue making ourselves

present to the poor: 1) as far as possible, we will try to have all Legionaries dedicate part of their ministry to serving the neediest; 2) we will endeavor to further develop our educational centers for the most underprivileged and our institutions that provide them with material support and Christian charity; and 3) we commit to continue helping economic, social and political leaders recognize the need to respond adequately and decisively to situations of underdevelopment, poverty and injustice in the world.

- e. *Promoting vocations.* Promoting vocations is not a “program” but a living impulse that arises from love of one’s own vocation, from the personal conviction that Regnum Christi is a work of God with a transcendent mission to fulfill and from the passion to see it grow so that many people will come to know Jesus Christ. Vocation work is a concrete way of thanking God for the gift of one’s own vocation. All of us participate in it through prayer, sacrifice and apostolic action in our locality. The central and territorial governments should relaunch the promotion of vocations, first of all because every vocation is in itself a gift, but also because of the situation in which the Church and the Legion find themselves. Because of the communion that unites us, we ask all Legionaries to support the consecrated men and women in their vocation work.

## **Conclusion**

177. In 2001, John Paul II, with his prophetic words, highlighted certain aspects of our apostolic charism. Many things, both sweet and bitter, have taken place among us since that memorable moment. Even so, these words of the Vicar of Christ have the same force today and we offer them on this occasion hoping that they will inspire us all:

“Another trait which distinguishes your charism is *apostolic zeal*. You show this in all the many works you have undertaken, especially in education, evangelization, social communications, the spreading of the Church's social teaching, the cultural and human promotion of the poor, and the formation of diocesan priests.

In all of this you strive to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit, who constantly renews the face of the Church with gifts and charisms which enrich and strengthen her. In a secularized world such as our own, built in large part on neglect of truth and transcendent values, the faith of many of our brothers and sisters is sorely tried.

Because of this, there is a need today more than ever for a confident proclamation of the Gospel which, casting aside all crippling fears, announces with intellectual depth and with courage the truth about God, about man, about the world. To you, Legionaries of Christ and Regnum Christi members, I repeat the words of St Catherine of Siena that I proposed to the young people at the World Youth Day: ‘If you are what you should be, you will set the whole world ablaze!’” (John Paul II, January 4, 2001).

## GOVERNMENT, AUTHORITY AND OBEDIENCE

178. The government of the congregation of the Legionaries of Christ, the exercise of authority, and the way obedience has been lived have been topics frequently dealt with, both in the apostolic visitation and in the revision and reflection that the Legionaries have undertaken in the last three years under the guidance of the Papal Delegate. Because authority and obedience are two fundamental aspects in religious life, we the chapter fathers would like to share with our brother Legionaries some of the reflections made in the chapter hall, in the hope they can help us in our ongoing journey of renewal.

179. The main problems identified in the government of the congregation were the following: excessive centralization, a diffused and fragmented authority, deficiencies in the functioning and performance of councils, lack of sufficient rotation in leadership positions, little opportunity for consultations and other forms of greater participation provided for by canon law for religious institutes, and the tendency to multiply norms. We also recognize that some of our religious have not always followed the example of Jesus Christ in his fundamental attitude, “Father, here I come to do your will” (Heb 10:7, 9) present in the living of their obedience.

### 1. Religious authority as a service

180. Religious superiors receive their authority “from God through the ministry of the Church,”<sup>55</sup> not from the community. A religious congregation is not a group of faithful who pursue an ecclesial objective because of their own initiative; it is an institute of consecrated life that acts on behalf of and by order of the Church.

181. Authority in religious life must be exercised in a spirit of service, respect for the individual, and in dialogue for the good of the institute and the Church<sup>56</sup>. The superior of the community should personally and prudently guide the religious life, health, and the material and spiritual needs of the religious entrusted to him. In particular, he has to give his attention to the apostolic

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<sup>55</sup> CIC 618: “The authority which Superiors receive from God through the ministry of the Church is to be exercised by them in a spirit of service. In fulfilling their office they are to be docile to the will of God, and are to govern those subject to them as children of God. By their reverence for the human person, they are to promote voluntary obedience. They are to listen willingly to their subjects and foster their cooperation for the good of the institute and the Church, without prejudice however to their authority to decide and to command what is to be done.”; cfr. *Perfectae Caritatis*, 14.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. CIC 618; Jn 13: 13-14; Phil 2:7; CICLSAL, *Essential Elements in the Church’s Teaching on Religious Life*, 49.

work of his subjects, respecting the scope of his own competence and the authority of those leading various apostolates. To do this he may also have to visit members of his community in their workplaces or collaborate with them in their apostolates.

182 . The moral authority of the superior comes from the witness of his life and this facilitates the exercise of his canonical authority and the obedience of his subjects. The superior, in addition to trying to be a witness of religious and priestly life (CLC 36.1)<sup>57</sup>, exercises authority under the law (CIC. 617) and in obedience to the major superiors. Religious for their part should always keep in mind the meaning and the gospel value of redemptive obedience and that “The Christian, like Christ, is defined as an obedient being. The unquestionable primacy of love in Christian life cannot make us forget that such love has acquired a face and a name in Christ Jesus and has become Obedience.”<sup>58</sup>

## **2. Personal authority**

183. In the recent review of our practices and in the new constitutions, various figures surrounding the superiors no longer exist (e.g. nuncios, delegates of general director for the apostolate, or assistants of the territorial director). Delegating tasks to these figures ran the risk of diluting authority and making the relationship of government between superiors and subjects less direct and personal. These changes are aimed at strengthening personal authority within three canonical levels of government: general, territorial and local. Each level has its respective superior, with its own responsibilities and functions. The superior has authority under canon and proper law with the power to decide and command what serves to promote the good of the Church, the congregation, the community, and each member (CLC 125).

184. As permitted by law, a superior may delegate his authority. Delegations must be made in writing and judiciously, for if the superior habitually delegates many of his powers he ceases to exercise his authority as such or can fragment it. Although a large delegation could be useful for efficiency, it would be harmful to the relationship between the superior and the religious.

## **3. The council of the superior**

185. The superior’s authority, although personal, is aided by the assistance of his council.<sup>59</sup> The council is not a governmental body but rather one of collaboration. Indeed, its consent or opinion

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<sup>57</sup> Translator’s note: The abbreviation “CLC” refers to the constitutional text which was approved by the Holy See on October 16th, 2014.

<sup>58</sup> CICLSAL, *The Service of Authority and Obedience*, 8.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. CIC 127, 627.

regarding some of the superior's decisions, as established by law, is necessary; it also helps the superior discern the will of God, advises the general director in the analysis of government issues and on matters falling within its competence, gathers information, makes suggestions in the decision-making process, proposes solutions, actions and initiatives that nurture good governance, and helps monitor projects of the community or the congregation.

186. Councilors should express their opinion freely and clearly, and, if the gravity of the matter calls for it, carefully maintain professional secrecy.<sup>60</sup> The superior, meanwhile, has to take responsibility for his decisions without passing it on to the councilors. Once the superior has decided, the councilors are called to support him loyally in the communication and implementation of the decision.

#### **4. Participation and co-responsibility**

187. In addition to the council, the superior has the help of participatory bodies, such as assemblies and consultations (CLC 126 § 5; 134). These are institutional forms by which co-responsibility is put into action and expressed; they channel the care of all who live in the institute towards the good of the community.<sup>61</sup> We have seen the positive results that these bodies and consultations have brought about in recent years.

188. Their purpose is not to democratize government, but to enlighten the superiors, allowing them to more prudently exercise their governance. They should not invade the field of government or replace the superiors' responsibility. The opinions, consultations and counsels that the superior receives from these bodies are a valuable help in deciding prudently and responsibly at the service of authority.<sup>62</sup>

189. Consulting a religious prior to an appointment fosters a climate of respect and dialogue; it should not be interpreted either as the subject's "right" or as a sign of reduced confidence in the religious' availability. A consultation is not made regarding an appointment to ask if the subject will obey or not, but, assuming that everyone is willing to obey, its aim is to involve the religious in order to know his views and thus make the best possible decision.

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<sup>60</sup> Cf. CIC 127 § 3.

<sup>61</sup> CIC 633 § 1: "Participatory and consultative bodies are faithfully to carry out the task entrusted to them, in accordance with the universal law and the institute's own law. In their own way they are to express the care and participation of all the members for the good of the whole institute or community."

<sup>62</sup> CIC 626: "Superiors in conferring offices, and members in electing to office, are to observe the norms of the universal law and the institute's own law, avoiding any abuse or preference of persons. They are to have nothing but God and the good of the institute before their eyes, and appoint or elect those whom, in the Lord, they know to be worthy and fitting. In elections, besides, they are to avoid directly or indirectly lobbying for votes, either for themselves or for others."

## **5 . Accountability**

190. While planning, methodology, systems of organization, having to report results and being held accountable are useful for our evangelizing objective, they do not guarantee it. The chapter fathers have realized that when religious are involved in the drawing up of programs, they become more realistic. At the same time, the religious see the task as their own, and hence are more responsible in its fulfillment (CLC 38 § 3).

191. We have also realized that the fact of having on occasion insisted too much on numeric results and reports (at times without having sufficiently verified their utility and their adequacy) has led to a certain resistance or even the rejection of the idea itself of accountability.

Recognizing the errors of the past, we invite everyone to consider how necessary and useful some type of accountability is: to one's own superior through evaluations, meetings, and periodic reports. All of this is an expression of personal responsibility at the service of the common good; it is a manifestation of the mature and generous living of religious obedience and a necessity of good government.

## **6. Norms for the exercise of government**

192. One of the criteria in the process of revision of the Constitutions has been to clearly express the hierarchy of different norms. On the one hand, the Constitutions contain fundamental norms regarding the government, discipline, formation and apostolate of the institute; they seek to harmonize the spiritual and juridical and avoid unnecessary elements. On the other hand, the secondary codes of proper law contain more particular norms that are in harmony with the Constitutions. These secondary codes can be revised and adapted when needed according to the demands of time and place<sup>63</sup>. The Constitutions and secondary codes are equally binding for the members of the institute, however (CLC 232). The difference between them lies in their stability and the authority needed to sanction changes in them: changes in the Constitutions require the approval of the Holy See, while the secondary codes can be modified by the competent authority in the congregation itself.

193. These codes indicate, each according to its nature, the path that a religious has at his disposal in order to fulfill the Supreme Rule of his life: the following of Christ<sup>64</sup>. Superiors should help their religious discover the correct value and meaning of the norms of the institute so

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<sup>63</sup> Cf. CIC 587, 4.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. CIC 662; CLC 235.

that having interiorized them with religious spirit, conviction, and maturity, they may be followed with the true liberty of a son of God.

## **7. Criteria of government with reference to expansion and consolidation**

194. In these last years the central government of the congregation has followed a path of greater consolidation and a more prudent plan of expansion in the founding new houses and starting new apostolates. For this reason, it has been more diligent in seeking an adequate assignment of personnel and of the available material resources. It has followed the following criteria in the assignment of personnel: strengthening of religious life, perseverance, and permanent formation of legionaries; assigning persons to more appropriate places; reducing, not without costly sacrifices at times, the geographic dispersion that was present in some territories; assigning religious in apostolic practices to houses and apostolates that favored close accompaniment; maintaining apostolic schools and novitiates with vocations largely from the territory itself.

195. Following these criteria a series of measures were implemented that aimed at increasing the quality and sustainability of the respective programs, territories, and centers of formation: the merging of the territories of Germany and France; the merging of the territories of Atlanta and New York; the separation between the territory of Italy and the centers of formation in Rome; the closing of the apostolic schools in Santiago (Chile), Cordoba (Argentina), Colfax (California) and Porto Alegre (Brazil); the closing of the novitiates of Dublin and Cornwall; the closing of the center of Humanities in Salamanca; the closing of the Center of Higher Studies in Thornwood.

## **I. Recommendations to Legionaries**

### *a. Recovering confidence: a task for all*

196. In these last years the relation of confidence and closeness between superiors and subjects, so characteristic of the family spirit with which God has gifted us and which is necessary for good government, has been adversely affected. The various causes of this situation include the lack of attentive listening and clear and quick communication on the part of the superiors. This has caused confusion and has resulted in misunderstandings and inadequate interpretations of the actions and words of the superiors. It has also led some to interpret the communiqués from the Holy See as a global condemnation of the congregation's superiors.

197. We thus invite all Legionaries to strive to recover their confidence in authority and foster respect towards superiors in an open and sincere dialogue motivated by the supernatural virtues (CLC 40 § 2). Here are some elements that can help renew these virtues and attitudes:

- a. Superiors, as good fathers and shepherds, should welcome and listen to their subjects. They should be patient, humble, and sincerely open when they express disagreements or criticisms, even if in an inadequate manner, trusting instead in their good intentions. Religious, on the other hand, should remember the meaning of obedience, recognizing and respecting the authority of superiors, and be witnesses of an “Obedience, enlivened by charity, which unites the members of an Institute in the same witness and the same mission, while respecting the diversity of gifts and individual personalities.”<sup>65</sup> All of us recognize and appreciate that a relationship of closeness and dependence in what concerns religious life and apostolate between superiors and subjects is necessary.
  
- b. Superiors should communicate to the members of their community all that affects the life of the congregation and the community, and all that helps foster a family spirit. For this reason, they should try and ensure, in as much as possible, that news regarding the congregation reach Legionaries through their superiors. Given the dynamism and immediacy of today’s means of communication, this will not be possible in certain circumstances and hence we invite all to accept these limits with realism and understanding.
  
- c. Superiors should foster confidence when they share reflections regarding religious life with their communities, inviting all to share in the common responsibility of programming, budgeting, and organizing apostolate or other themes that involve the whole community (CLC 38 § 2).

*b. Exercise of authority*

198. With the help of their councilors, the superiors should resolve those problems that pertain to them by law without deferring decisions to higher instances of authority. Religious, for their part, should become accustomed to speaking with the immediate competent superior when needed, avoiding words or actions that send the message that they only have to obey major superiors.

199. When confronting complex or irregular situations of a religious, superiors should proceed according to the law, learning to manage these cases with fortitude, rectitude, and charity. When the gravity of the situation requires it, recourse is to be made to the appropriate formal warnings.

200. When superiors give permissions or request tasks of a certain relevance of their subjects, they are to do so in writing. They should also inform other persons who may be affected by these decisions, so that there is clarity among all regarding the line of authority, areas of competence etc.

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<sup>65</sup> *Vita Consecrata*, 92.

*c. Fostering the participation of all*

201. Superiors are to promote and favor the participation and co-responsibility of all in their own community and mission. For this reason, they should take advantage of the different forms of participation that exist in religious life such as: community meetings, consultations with those affected by a particular decision, the involvement of all in the elaboration and revision of programs, community projects, budgets, and other areas that involve the community. Religious, for their part, should recall that it is the superior who is called to make the final decision in a given matter and that obeying “means relying on the final decision of the person in authority, with the conviction that such obedience is a precious contribution — even if involving suffering — for the building of the Reign of God.”<sup>66</sup>

## **II. Tasks and suggestions for the central government**

*a. Elaboration of the secondary codes*

202. The chapter fathers entrust to the new government of the congregation the elaboration of the appropriate secondary codes. These are to be approved *ad experimentum* by the general director and his counsel until the celebration of the next general chapter, which is the ordinary authority for the approval of such documents. These secondary codes are: Directory (Complementary Norms), *Ratio Institutionis*, *Ratio Studiorum*, Rules for administration, Rules for the General Chapter. These codes are to follow principles that are analogous to the ones that have guided the revision of the Constitutions (cf. CIC 578, 587) and are not to be too long or exhaustive.

203. We also ask the major superiors to promote among Legionaries an adequate canonical formation that allows them to recognize the hierarchy and obligatory nature of the different norms, thus understanding their correct sense and their gradual adaptation to the different stages of religious life. A good introduction to the new Constitutions can be an occasion for this formation and awaken in Legionaries the commitment to live the disciplinary norms of the congregation in a more mature and convinced way. The fact that there are fewer and less detailed norms should be the occasion for a better assimilation of the principles that inspire these norms and for the practice of the virtues which sustain the living of the demands of religious life.

*b. Rotation of superiors*

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<sup>66</sup> CICLSAL, *The Service of Authority and Obedience*, 20 d.

204. The General Chapter asks the new government to maintain their ongoing effort to change those superiors who have exceeded the established time for their post according to proper law<sup>67</sup>.

*c. An adequate decentralization*

205. The growth of the congregation has made the centralization of government outlined in the 1983 Constitutions unsustainable. Under the guidance of the Papal Delegate, the central government already put into practice certain steps in decentralization without waiting for the end of the process of the revision of the Constitutions. In particular, it delegated to the territorial directors certain faculties previously reserved to the general director (CLC 197): admission to novitiate, first profession, and renewal of vows<sup>68</sup>; some faculties in the areas of administration<sup>69</sup>, academics, and apostolate in schools<sup>70</sup>; and in some aspects of religious life and discipline<sup>71</sup>. These delegations of authority remain in effect since until the new Constitutions and the other secondary codes receive approval, as they were already approved by the Papal Delegate and confirmed by the General Chapter when so needed. With the help of his councilors and in conformity with our legislation, the general director should reflect on the degree and modes of centralization that should be conserved in the congregation, especially in the assignment of personnel and economic resources in order to guarantee the unity and efficient apostolic action of the congregation.

*d. Establishing criteria for expansion and consolidation*

206. The chapter fathers ask the general director, together with the territorial directors, to analyze the procedures and establish the general and territorial criteria for consolidation and expansion of territories and communities, in view of the common good and the sustainability of the territories, houses, and works of apostolate.

*e. Archives and history of the congregation*

207. The archives are where the memory of the government and life of the congregation are conserved. The chapter fathers ask the central government to:

- a. gather the sources and necessary testimonies for future studies regarding the history of the Legion.

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<sup>67</sup> Cf. CIC 624.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Prot. D.G. 409-2011/1.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Prot. V.G. 50-2012/1.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Prot. V.G. 193-2012/5.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Prot. V.G. 75-2012/1.

- b. name a commission to prepare a succinct and objective history of the most relevant canonical events in the life of the congregation, especially for use in centers of formation.
- c. reorganize the current archive, the depository of the historical documents of the congregation, and the secret archive according to the science of archiving, common law, and proper law. For this end, it is necessary to elaborate and approve instruction manuals with norms on administrative praxis, regarding the writing, registration, expedition, and classification of documents, regarding the ordering, inventory, and conservation of documents valuable for the patrimony of the congregation, and regarding the structure, organization, and personnel of the archives.

*f. Reports*

208. The chapter fathers ask the general director to analyze the practice of personal reports that the superiors prepare when their subjects change community or stage of formation in order to guarantee the accompaniment of the religious during formation and especially during apostolic practices.

*g. Institutionalize the establishment of safe environments*

209. In his letter of December 5, 2013<sup>72</sup>, the acting general director informed the congregation of the principles that the central government was following to prevent abuses and attend any allegation of a crime presented against a Legionary. The territorial directors also informed the General Chapter about the implementation in their territories of the “code of conduct” for Legionaries regarding dealings with minors, women, vulnerable adults, and the procedures to be followed in the case of an allegation of misconduct by a priest or religious in compliance with civil legislation of each country.

210. The chapter fathers have noted that the general director and the territorial directors have named personnel and created commissions to help local superiors fulfill these norms contained in the codes of conduct and fulfill independent accreditation standards to favor safe environments in our houses and apostolates in these last years. We ask the new government to continue these efforts so that preventive measures are enforced on an ongoing basis so that all those we work with receive the maximum possible protection to reduce risks as much as possible.

211. We also ask the general director that, with the approval of his council, he establish procedures and standards for safe environments that all the territories should meet in the next 6 years. In those territories where there is no independent organization to certify the quality of abuse prevention measures, of the response to allegations, and the pastoral care of alleged or real

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<sup>72</sup> Cf. Prot. V.G. 1351-2013/11.

victims, the general directorate should function as accreditor and offer assistance to the territorial directors and the coordinators for safe environments so that all necessary procedures and accreditation requisites are fulfilled.

*h. Define the figure of the local coordinator of apostolate*

212. In light of a clearer distinction between the three levels of government and the personal responsibility that pertains to each of these, the general director should promote reflection on and clarification of the role of the local coordinator of apostolate. The General Chapter has preferred not to pronounce itself on this matter, because for the moment we encounter a variety of experiences on the matter and the other branches of the Movement must participate in the discussion. It is up to the territorial governments to issue adequate orientation for each locality.

213. In the Legion, unity of religious and apostolic authority is found in the person of the territorial and general director, each at their level. This unity, however, is not present at the local level: it is the superior of the center (or directors of teams of consecrated men or women) who has canonical religious authority over persons, while authority over apostolic work is in the hands of the directors of apostolates and sections. The local coordinator of apostolate is neither a religious superior nor a figure with intermediary apostolic authority between the directors of apostolate and the territorial director. Unless the territorial director wishes to delegate specific faculties to him, the local coordinator of apostolate only has the task of coordinating the apostolic activities in a locality and should not interfere with the internal running of apostolates or sections, or in the life of communities.

214. The General Chapter recognizes that as long as the person named for this role has the needed qualities, he can pertain to any branch of the Movement. We invite both Legionaries and members of the other branches of the Movement to actively and generously collaborate in their apostolate for the common good (CLC 16), especially in those localities where the distinct branches and sections share the same center, direct schools that are close to each other, or administer the same budget.

*i. Government and institutional communication*

215. Although our internal and external communication has been improving, we ask the general director to foster an appreciation for the value of communication in superiors and subjects. He should also oversee the implementation of institutional principles of communication so that a direct, clear, objective and constant style in our communications is achieved. For this purpose, we need to establish a consistent institutional communication regarding our identity and mission, create updated sources of accessible institutional information such as statistics and news etc., and regularly publish a bulletin with information from the central and territorial governments.

216. In order to achieve adequate communication at all levels, we should ensure that each territory has, in proportion to its size and capacity, a department of communication with the necessary personnel and means to perform their job in a professional manner. We ask the territorial directors, local superiors, and directors of works of apostolate to make an ongoing effort to improve their mode of communication. We also ask that all religious be familiar with our principles of institutional communication and the criteria for the use of the social media as a means of communication and apostolate. It is also necessary that Legionaries and other members of *Regnum Christi* who are dedicated to apostolate in these areas be adequately trained.

## **Conclusion**

217. We would like to end this document asking the Lord that the Legion be profoundly renewed in the areas of the exercise of authority and the living of religious obedience. On the one hand “it is necessary to recognize that the task of being a guide for others is not easy, especially when the sense of personal autonomy is excessive or conflictive and competitive in its relations with others. Therefore, it is necessary on everyone's part to sharpen his or her ability to see the encounters of this task in faith, in order that he or she might be inspired to have the attitude of Jesus the Servant who washes the feet of his apostles so that they might have a part in his life and in his love (cf. Jn 13:1-17)”<sup>73</sup>. On the other hand, our obedience should offer to all men and women the testimony of a holy life in imitation of Jesus Christ and his acceptance of the will of the Father. In this way we can repeat the words of the Blessed Virgin: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word” (Lk 1: 38).

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<sup>73</sup> CICLSAL, *The Service of Authority and Obedience*, 12.



## ADMINISTRATION AND VOW OF POVERTY

### 1. Introduction

218. During the course of the General Chapter, the chapter fathers have had several opportunities to reflect on the living of our vow of poverty, on the financial situation of the congregation, and on various aspects of the administration of temporal goods.

219. In the first place, Msgr. Mario Marchesi, member of the Economic Affairs Commission, presided by His Eminence Cardinal Domenico Calcagno, presented the results of their investigation to the Chapter assembly and affirmed that, according to the documents analyzed, “no irregularities were found in the handling of finances”. In his turn, Fr. Eduardo Vigneaux, general administrator, presented the chapter fathers a summary of the administration’s report from 2005-2014. The complete report was at our disposal during the Chapter.

220. We also reflected on the corresponding numbers of the Constitutions and discussed these topics at length.

### 2. Relation between finances, poverty, apostolate, and personal life

221. From a more general point of view, the chapter fathers analyzed the relation between the vow of poverty, the apostolate, and religious life. Above all, we looked to Christ who, though rich, became poor for our sake, and has called us to imitate and follow him more closely.

222. a. **Virtue and vow of poverty.** The vow and living of the virtue of poverty are essential elements of religious life. Poverty, understood as a condition of penury, misery, or lack of material goods, in itself is not something positive. On the other hand, as a Christian virtue, in imitation of the way of life that Jesus Christ chose to live, it is something positive: detachment from temporal goods in order to grow in inner freedom.

223. We must make a conscious choice to live poverty, taking care not to reduce our poverty to obedience, for it is not by simply getting permission from one’s superior that one lives in

accord with the Gospel spirit of poverty: just because I may be able to obtain permission to use certain material things does not mean that I should necessarily ask for them or have them. The fact that someone offers them to me free of charge is not sufficient reason to accept or use them. We have chosen to be poor in response to Christ's call by the profession of our religious vows, and we should live out the consequences of our poverty with authenticity.

224. It will be helpful for Legionaries to review their living of poverty, as a vow and as a virtue, periodically in spiritual direction and in formation dialogue.
225. Another consideration was made in reference to the relation between the specific apostolates of the Legion and the living of poverty. Our apostolic charism at times brings us to work with people in environments of economic abundance. For some this can imply certain risks in the living of the vow and the virtue of poverty.
226. We are aware that at the present moment within the Church and society there is an urgent need for bearing witness to true Gospel poverty. Although in almost all of our houses we live with religious austerity, we should take care to ensure that the communities and members of the Legion of Christ also give a clear testimony of poverty.
227. We asked ourselves how to fit several elements together that could seem contradictory: on the one hand, a true living of poverty on the institutional level combined with affective and real personal detachment from temporal goods, and on the other hand the demands of the apostolate in differing locations and circumstances. This reflection leads us, in practice, to review our use of and our stance towards the temporal goods that are at the disposal of our communities and members: money, cars, mobile phones, computers, cameras and other similar electronics, clothes, or other objects, etc. We have seen how some of these means can prove useful for the apostolate, but we also recognize that they present risks for our personal and community life.
228. Thus arises the need for a permanent personal and community watchfulness so as to be in the world but not of the world, to distinguish between that which is truly necessary, or at least helpful, for the apostolate, as well as for personal and community life. Great purity of intention is needed here. Money and temporal goods are always and only a means to an end.
229. On a more practical note, we invite everyone to reject the ever-present temptation to multiply travels without sufficient motives, or to seek to always have the "latest and greatest"; and to reflect when paying the necessary attention to one's personal presentation so that it does not become an excuse to seek out better or nicer things.

230. We also invite everyone to value the temporal goods we have and to appreciate the great sacrifices that many Legionaries and benefactors of ours have made and are making. On many occasions they not only give us what they have an excess of, but even that which they themselves have need of.
231. Besides this, we need to learn to appreciate the reality of the lives of people who work every day, with great sacrifice, to earn enough to make ends meet in their personal lives, family, and workplace. Solidarity with them is shown by knowing how to appreciate what things cost, taking care of them with responsibility, and accepting with realism that it will not always be possible to have at our disposal all the means that we might wish for in the apostolate or our personal life.
232. From another point of view, we acknowledge that the need or the demand that our houses and apostolates be self-financing due to tight cash flow and budgets has put pressure on some and has brought others to slacken in the diligence with which they live the vow of poverty by managing funds apart from legitimate superiors and administrators. We invite all to overcome the temptation to hold on to money without permission, even for apostolic or organizational purposes, and to always operate within a budget approved by the appropriate superior.
233. **b. Poverty lived in a spirit of communion.** We have seen that Legionaries can improve the living of poverty as a community, which implies that we are all united as one body. We feel called to live a poverty like that of the first Christian communities, in which they had all things in common.
234. Each one of us needs to be supportive of and feel responsible for his brothers, for the Legion, and for the Regnum Christi movement as a whole; when I have, I share, and when I am in need, I ask for help from my brothers knowing that they are going to help me out. We are all brothers. Although one may be the director of an apostolic work or a superior, in community life he is one like any other and takes part in everything without distinctions or privileges. These are demands of religious life and of the common law of work.
235. This communion also has certain community and organizational implications: the need for a joint organization, for budgets that are approved, respected and made one's own; for the participation and responsibility of all in seeking out the necessary financial resources, avoiding any kind of indifference when able to take part in helping obtain them.
236. In accordance with the demands of our vow of poverty, we should consider temporal goods not as our own, but as a patrimony at the service of the Church, the Legion, and the *Regnum Christi* movement. Everything we receive is for the community, for the Congregation, for the Movement, and one should have the necessary permission if anything is to be kept for one's own use.

237. At the same time, given that different times, places, and circumstances entail differing needs, we cannot realistically imagine that there will be no difference at all between the apostolic means at the disposal of different Legionaries. We should avoid making comparisons that generate conflict and envy or foster coldness and division. It is rather in our personal and community life in which, yes, equality should be sought, not out of uniformity, but from an equally genuine living of religious poverty.
238. When reviewing the new text of the Constitutions we have tried to make sure all these elements remain clearly reflected in our proper law, albeit in a general way, as corresponds to a constitutional text. Other concrete aspects will be taken up in other texts of our proper law.
239. c. **Work with the poor.** We could not leave out a reflection on this topic. In the Chapter assembly we have seen that, besides having a special love for the poor, Legionaries are invited to know, appreciate, and better participate in the good that the Legion and the Movement do, directly or indirectly, for those who suffer poverty. We look with gratitude upon the numerous Legionaries who have spent their lives working in the Cancún-Chetumal Prelature, in the Helping Hands schools, in the evangelizing missions and in various works of Christian charity. We acknowledge that just as material poverty and want must be attended to, neither can concern for moral and spiritual poverty be set aside.
240. Above all, we recall that, in agreement with our apostolic charism, we seek to lead people to commit themselves, according to their possibilities, qualities, and capabilities, to help meet the needs of society, so that by giving themselves to the task of transforming its structures with the message of Christ, they will reach out to their neighbor in order to bring him not only the light of the Gospel, but also relief in his needs.
241. While we value direct apostolic action towards those most in need, we also have in mind that we can reach a greater number of them and do them greater good by means of the action of many others, above all of Regnum Christi members. In saying this, we are not forgetting that evangelizing social or economic leaders is not always easy, but it is part of our vocation to bring them to Christ and encourage them to know and put into practice the Social Doctrine of the Church, and in so doing to transform social structures in accordance with justice and charity.<sup>74</sup>

### 3. Practical considerations

242. At the end of the presentation of the financial situation of the Legion, the chapter fathers had time for community reflection in which the following points were highlighted:

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<sup>74</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Ecclesia in America*, n. 67.

243. a. **Patrimony.** We reflected on the need to increase our patrimony in order to sustain our members, and the shared responsibility of all Legionaries in this task.
244. b. **The current debt.** At the present moment we find ourselves in a situation of high indebtedness. Although it is a manageable debt and the repayment plans are being fulfilled, the Pontifical Delegate and the General Chapter judge that it is necessary to make an effort to reduce it.
245. The greater part of this debt was taken on to finance the launch and development of educational institutions. At the time, it was thought that they themselves would be capable of paying off the debt in its totality in a more timely way than has actually been the case. On the other hand, the large investment in formation centers in various territories has also affected the economy of the congregation. The difficult financial situation of the world today has made our situation even worse. So that this does not happen again, in the future special attention will be paid to financial sustainability when evaluating projects, institutions, or new territories or communities.
246. Among other causes, the lack of global accounting information, prudence, and consideration when moving forward on the purchase and construction of various educational and formation centers were pointed out.
247. Over the last few years, the territories have been adopting measures to balance this out and these are already starting to bear fruit. Basically, the measures can be grouped into the following: diminishing of operational expenses, sale of properties, and delaying of investment in projects. We still need to continue to increase the generation of other sources of income that will allow a stable support for our houses of formation and apostolate.
248. c. **Lay personnel that collaborate in our institutions and *Integer*.** One concern that the Pontifical Delegate presented to us from the beginning of his mandate referred to the group of lay employees gathered into what was known as *Integer*. We also had the opportunity to touch on this theme during the days dedicated to the analysis of the congregation's finances.
249. In recent decades, our apostolic initiatives expanded rapidly and grew immensely. In many cases, this growth was disordered and unbalanced due to a lack of adequate systems and procedures, of investment in personnel and resources, etc. A decrease in the operating margins of our educational institutions due to the ever more secularized society, a general reduction in birth rates, and the increasing educational offers from other entities were unforeseen, along with other causes.
250. With our sights set on seeking out better solutions to these problems, we involved lay professionals in the administration and management of our apostolic works at the local,

territorial, and international levels by means of an internal organization named *Integer*, which focused on developing our schools and universities, as well as on human resources, financial information, and other similar sectors such as fundraising. As well, the operational and managerial divisions of our schools and universities were restructured, giving them greater autonomy. The involvement of territorial administrations in the supervision and direct management of our educational and apostolic institutions diminished, allowing them to concentrate on auditing, treasury, and legal areas. All this showed positive results, but also engendered no shortage of difficulties.

251. As of today, one clear line of authority has been reestablished (general director – territorial director – local directors), reintegrating parts of the *Integer* teams into the general, territorial, and local levels, while doing without other parts of them. We should gratefully acknowledge the dedication and professionalism showed by these lay men and women during this particularly difficult period. We would also like to thank the many Legionaries and consecrated men and women who for years have collaborated in the administrative tasks of our institutions.

252. **d. Faculties delegated to the Territorial Directors.** The General Chapter has confirmed, at least in principle, the provisions that Fr. Sylvester Heereman, acting general director, established, empowering the territorial directors in certain matters and procedures regarding decentralization in the administration of temporal goods (cf. Prot. V.G. 050-2012/1). It will be up to the administrative guidelines and the general director to confirm or modify these provisions, or to add other similar ones.

253. **e. Fundraising.** Temporal goods are necessary for us to fulfill our mission and, at the same time, fundraising is an experience of God's providence and part of our evangelizing ministry. When evangelizing people, we put emphasis on the desire to seek each person's good and to make the Gospel known to them. Often times from this there arises in them a desire to help the Church and the Legion in the task of evangelization. Likewise, the need to ask for economic help often opens the doors to bring our benefactors closer to the Lord and to cooperate with God's grace so that He may transform their lives and make them into apostles according to their own vocation.

254. All Legionaries are called to cooperate in this effort to invite people to participate in our mission according to their possibilities, taking special care not to fall into materialism, attachment to the world, or an unhealthy independence in the use of temporal goods. For a Legionary, the task of fundraising should never become an obstacle to the formation of our religious, nor to the fervor and perseverance of our priests. On the contrary, it should contribute to a more genuine living of poverty and humility by means of coming to experience one's own needs. It should also be of help to us to recognize the faith and generosity of so many people who support us and often give us an example of sacrifice.

255. Finally, *esprit de corps* demands that we never limit our fundraising goals to just our own individual needs or projects. A Legionary should take into account and be concerned for the needs and the good of the communities, while always respecting the donor's intention. He should cultivate the awareness that God's providence provides for the needs of those who trust in Him, and the assurance that the Legion strives to meet the needs of its members.

#### **4. Mandates and assignments for the central government**

256. a. The Chapter Fathers have asked our new government to draw up and approve some secondary legislation (i.e. Administrative guidelines) that, taking the text of the new Constitutions as a starting point, will regulate administration, promote responsibility at each level of government (international, territorial, local), facilitate due follow-up, and subordinate administration to the common good.

257. b. The central government was asked to attend to the following tasks: seek to increase the fund for the sustenance of elderly and sick members; continue implementing the territorial plans for self-sustainability, especially of those territories affected financially by the debts of their respective institutions.

258. c. The chapter fathers have asked that a study be carried out in order that the general director might formally designate some temporal goods as part of the stable patrimony of the congregation.<sup>75</sup>

259. d. The Chapter asks the general administration to continue, together with the territorial administrators and their teams, to create a culture of communication at all levels in order to achieve a greater spirit of cooperation and mutual solidarity.

260. e. The Chapter entrusted the general director with the task of determining the amount for extraordinary administrative acts at each level, which will be in place *ad experimentum* until further approval from the next general chapter.

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<sup>75</sup> By "stable patrimony" is understood that part of material goods that are considered as such, by indication of the corresponding superior, because they are of prime importance for the life and mission of the congregation, and are devoted to advancing its specific aims. Cf. can. 1291

## Appendix - Reflection on ecclesiastical goods

261. Cardinal Velasio De Paolis took advantage of the opportunity to remind us of some of the provisions in the Code of Canon Law for the administration of ecclesiastical goods and, in particular, those which refer to religious institutes and which at times we have not applied with precision and constancy.
262. The Pontifical Delegate dwelt upon the explanation in Church law and the proper law of religious institutes regarding the acquisition, retention, administration and alienation of temporal goods. He also dwelt on the principles of subordinated administration.
263. He took the opportunity to stress that all goods of the Congregation, which is a public, ecclesiastical, legal entity, are ecclesiastical goods and should therefore be governed by Church law, even when it is also necessary to adapt to the civil law of each country. At the same time, he reminded us that there are countries that have not established concordats with the Holy See and that do not recognize Canon Law in this way. In such cases, one must seek the way to express the precepts of Canon Law in the civil statutes or guidelines of the associations and societies through which the congregation acts in those countries.
264. He also explained the relationship between superiors and administrators. He presented their different functions and responsibilities, leaving clear that the former govern the people and the latter administer the temporal goods in dependence on the superiors. The superior is the one ultimately responsible for the administration, but he is not the one who runs it; rather, he is the one who looks after its management according to the approved budget. The administrator is not autonomous, for he must act according to the superior's indications and give an account of his management.
265. Another point that Cardinal De Paolis amply explained was the distinction between ordinary and extraordinary administration.
266. Ordinary administration, which we have usually called or identified as "management of the approved budget", is not subsequently regulated by common law, but rather by proper law.
267. Extraordinary administration is that which goes beyond the ordinary and legitimately established measure (*quae excedit finem et modum*). The acts of extraordinary administration, which are defined diversely for each of the three levels of government, must be approved by the corresponding authority with the consent of the respective council and, on occasion, of the Holy See. That is to say, if a certain act of administration exceeds the established

parameters regarding the “*finem et modum*”, the administrator must turn to the corresponding authority, under pain , depending on the case, of the invalidity of his acts.

268. The acts of extraordinary administration can refer, among others and according to the established limits, to the following areas:

- patrimonial operations regarding movable or immovable goods of the congregation;
- construction projects;
- modification of buildings/properties or extraordinary maintenance of a cost superior to the limits approved by the corresponding superior;
- acquiring of credits approved by the corresponding superior;
- use of properties as mortgage collateral;
- constitution, dissolution, or sale of societies or foundations and the changing of legal structures approved for the territory;
- investments in financial instruments;
- lease of buildings/properties for amounts or duration superior to the limits approved by the corresponding superior;
- the defining of stable patrimony.

[Translated from the Original Spanish]

**Attachment 1: Statement of the Extraordinary General Chapter of the  
Legionaries of Christ  
about the path of renewal that we are traveling**

*Approved in a plenary assembly of the General Chapter, January 20, 2014*

269. The Extraordinary General Chapter, which is convened in Rome and is being presided over by the Pontifical Delegate, Cardinal Velasio De Paolis, publishes this statement about the path of renewal that we are traveling. We address this statement to all those who have followed the recent events in our religious congregation, especially to our brother Legionaries of Christ, to the lay consecrated men and women, and to the rest of the members and friends of the Regnum Christi Movement.

270. This is the first meeting of the General Chapter since 2005. Since the Chapter is the highest internal authority that represents the whole Congregation, it seems necessary for us to take a stance regarding the significant events that have occurred in the past nine years. With this, we want to define conclusively the posture of our Congregation with respect to the behavior of Fr. Marcial Maciel and his role as founder, in continuity with the decisions of the Holy See and the previous declaration of all the major superiors of the Legion of Christ<sup>76</sup>. As well, we offer some initial reflections on the most important points of the process of renewal of our Congregation. Throughout the coming weeks, we will continue to analyze the different issues that demand our attention, and we will give orientations to the new government of the Legion for the journey yet to come.

271. When we ponder the magnitude of the evil and scandal caused, we realize that we are under the merciful gaze of God who, with his providence, continues to guide our steps. United with Jesus Christ, we hope to be able to redeem our painful history and overcome with good the consequences of evil. Only in this way can we consider what has taken place in light of the Gospel and build our future on the solid foundations of trust in God, of fidelity to the Church, and of the truth.

272. From this point of view, we have considered the reprehensible and objectively immoral behavior of Fr. Maciel, which merited the sanctions that, at the time, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith justly imposed on him.<sup>77</sup> Our founder died in 2008. We ask God to have mercy on him. At the same time, we want to express our

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<sup>76</sup> MAJOR SUPERIORS OF THE LEGION OF CHRIST, *Communiqué on the current circumstances of the Legion of Christ and the Regnum Christi Movement*, March 25, 2010.

<sup>77</sup> PRESS OFFICE OF THE HOLY SEE, *Communiqué*, May 19, 2006.

deep sorrow for the abuse of minor seminarians, the immoral acts with men and women who were adults, the arbitrary use of his authority and of material goods, the indiscriminate consumption of addictive medicines and the act of presenting writings published by third parties as his own. We find the incongruity of presenting oneself as a priest and a witness of the faith continuously for decades while hiding this immoral behavior to be incomprehensible. We firmly condemn this. We are grieved that many victims and other affected persons have waited so long in vain for an apology and an act of reconciliation on the part of Fr. Maciel. Today, we would like to issue that apology as we express our solidarity with these persons.

273. We have heard reports about how the major superiors of the Congregation discovered these hidden aspects of the life of our founder, how they sought to discern the appropriate response in light of ethical and moral demands, and how they carried out the process of communication. Together with them, today we acknowledge with sadness the initial incapability of believing the testimonies of the persons who had been victims of Fr. Maciel, the long institutional silence and, later on, the hesitations and errors of judgment when setting out to inform the members of the congregation and others. We apologize for these shortcomings, which have increased the suffering and confusion of many.

274. These events and situations could have done away with our religious Congregation had we not been accompanied by God's mercy and the Church's maternal care, which found expression in the resolute interventions of His Holiness Benedict XVI. The Pope determined that the Legion of Christ, by and large, was a sound community, but that corrections needed to be made.<sup>78</sup> The help of the Holy See was essential in discovering how Fr. Maciel's personality and way of acting affected our religious congregation. In fact, the Apostolic Visitation – carried out by order of the Pope between 2009 and 2010 – ascertained that “the conduct of Father Marcial Maciel has given rise to serious consequences in the life and structure of the Legion, such as to require a process of profound re-evaluation.”<sup>79</sup> The visitators indicated three areas: the redefinition of the charism, the exercise of authority and adequate formation<sup>80</sup>. The Pope desired to “follow closely, support, and guide this journey” by means of a personal Delegate, conferring on him “the task of governing this religious institute in my [his] name for as long as it takes to carry out the path of renewal and lead it to the celebration of an extraordinary General Chapter, whose main purpose will be to bring to completion the revision of the Constitutions.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Light of the World*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2010, p. 38-39.

<sup>79</sup> PRESS OFFICE OF THE HOLY SEE, *Communiqué of the Holy See regarding the apostolic visitation of the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ*, May 1, 2010.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> BENEDICT XVI, *Appointment Letter for the Pontifical Delegate*, June 16, 2010.

275. We have listened to the reports of the Pontifical Delegate and of our Pro-General Director about the work carried out in these three-and-a-half years. We would like to share briefly the analysis of some aspects connected with the findings and recommendations of the Apostolic Visitation. We know that this is only the beginning of a journey and that there is still much to be done. We are committed to continuing this process of renewal and conversion humbly.

a. In the area of **the revision of our charism**<sup>82</sup>, the Pontifical Delegate has first of all led us to an adequate comprehension of the role of Fr. Maciel in relation to the Legion. In the past, the Congregation stipulated that it cannot propose Fr. Maciel as a model, nor his personal writings as a guide for the spiritual life<sup>83</sup>. We recognize his condition as founder. Nevertheless, a religious congregation and its essential features do not have their origin in the person of the founder; they are a gift of God that the Church accepts and approves and that afterwards live in the institute and in its members.

Many times we gave undue, universal value to Fr. Maciel's directives and clung too much to them because of an inadequate understanding of the concept of founder and an excessive exaltation and uncritical way of considering his person. For this reason, one of the primary tasks in the revision of the current constitutions has been to distinguish what really expresses the charismatic patrimony of our Congregation from other accidental elements. As well, we are ensuring the conformity of the whole of our governing documents with the universal norms of the Church. The three years of the revision process have been similar to a prolonged examination of conscience, carried out in community, in order to discover and purify those elements of our personal and institutional behavior that were not proper to religious life. We noticed some tendencies that have overshadowed the understanding of our charism, among others: insufficient collaboration with the local Church, excessive emphasis on the role of personal effort and merely human effectiveness, striving after prestige, and an indiscriminate fulfilling of minute norms. All of this demands of us not only a change in legislative texts, but also a continual conversion of mind and heart.

In these years, we have also arrived at a better understanding of our role within the Regnum Christi Movement. We are coming to value and respect the vocation and autonomy of the rest of the members, especially of the consecrated men and women. Together with them, we have begun a joint reflection on the role of each

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<sup>82</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Cf. MAJOR SUPERIORS OF THE LEGION OF CHRIST, *Communiqué on the current circumstances of the Legion of Christ and the Regnum Christi Movement*, March 25, 2010, and, GENERAL DIRECTOR OF THE LEGION OF CHRIST, *Decreto sobre criterios y disposiciones relacionados con la persona del P. Marcial Maciel, L.C.*, December 6, 2010.

branch of the Movement, on our shared charism and on the way of carrying out our apostolate. The numerous lay members of Regnum Christi are a very beautiful part of our ecclesial reality. We want to foster communion even more and support them by means of our priestly ministry.

b. In the **exercise of authority**, the accompaniment of the Pontifical Delegate has been an ongoing and effective learning experience regarding how to put into practice all the Church's directives regarding the governance of institutes of religious life. We have sought to implement a clear separation between the ambit of the conscience (spiritual direction and confession), the internal forum, and the external forum (the guidance of the superior and religious discipline) in order better to guarantee the freedom and the confidentiality of each religious. We are seeking to prevent potential arbitrary behavior and abuses of authority by means of a more frequent change of the persons who occupy the different positions of government, and by means of active councils that meet on a regular basis to analyze important issues, thus helping them in the exercise of their authority. The Pontifical Delegate and some of his personal councilors participated almost weekly in the meetings of our general council and contributed their knowledge and experience. As well, the fragmentation of authority that resulted from an excessive multiplying of assistants and auxiliaries of superiors and the areas of authority assigned to them has been progressively eliminated. As well, formal consultations of the members of the congregation prior to the naming of superiors have been instituted. Also, prior to a change of community or apostolic mission, we are seeking to involve the one who will be affected by the decision in order to better discern God's will. Finally, thanks to the suppression of one of our two private vows and the numerous community meetings for the revision of the constitutional text, we are learning how to share reflections and suggestions with our brothers and freely debate about any issue that affects the life and mission of the Congregation.

c. As regards **the formation of our religious**, above all we have confirmed the need to improve the accompaniment in vocational discernment so that the novices and religious will mature in their personal decision before God prior to making their religious profession. The reports have shown that, in these past four years, not a few priests and a great number of our brothers have left the Congregation. In some cases the cause has doubtlessly been the negative impact related to the news about the founder and the way in which it was made known. However, we have also ascertained shortcomings in the formation program and our way of life. Among others, we must foster a deeper living of the evangelical counsels, spiritual discernment and fraternal life. Formation and religious life continue to be an object

of reflection of this Chapter and will be one of the priorities of the next central government.

276. In the first days of the Chapter, we also heard the reports of the two commissions that the Pontifical Delegate established:

a. The “Outreach Commission” has attended to the persons that have requested a response from the Legion of Christ because of the events that have a direct or indirect relation with Fr. Marcial Maciel. The president of the commission, Msgr. Mario Marchesi, informed us about the twelve cases that were presented. The commission has completed its task and no case pertaining to its area of responsibility remains open. In each case, the Congregation has acted in accord with the proposals of the commission. The opportunity to be listened to and the material help offered to the victims have contributed, insofar as is humanly possible, to relieve their wounds and foster reconciliation.

We also thank all Legionaries for their efforts to approach and personally meet with other affected persons. We ask the new government to maintain this commitment to continue seeking reconciliation.

b. The “Economic Affairs Commission” had the purpose of analyzing the handling of funds and the financial situation of the Congregation. The report presented by Msgr. Mario Marchesi, member of the commission, underlined that they did not find embezzlements of money or other irregularities in the fiscal actions that were reviewed.

The first urgent aspect to address in this area is that of the reduction of the debt with banks that has resulted from various causes: the excessively rapid expansion of the institutions of the Congregation, the world economic crisis and the fall-off in donations. In some countries the debt is very high, but continues to be manageable considering the income and the assets of the Congregation as a whole.

On the other hand, the Commission has pointed out the need – and this will be a task of the next government – of adjusting and simplifying the administrative structure to foster the responsibility proper to the territorial and local superiors, to both the branches of consecrated members of Regnum Christi, and to the directors of the works of apostolate.

The General Chapter, as the highest authority in the Congregation, also has had access to the ample and detailed documentation prepared by the general

administrator and the report of the internal and external audits of the financial operations of the Congregation throughout the world.

277. The consideration of all of these issues has led us to conclude that the journey towards an “authentic and profound renewal”, confirmed by Pope Francis<sup>84</sup>, has advanced, but has not yet ended. The events of these years will mark the identity and the life of our Congregation. When seen in light of Providence, we can accept, confront and transform them into a stepping stone towards a new stage in our history. In the next weeks of Chapter meetings, we will conclude the revision of our constitutions in order to submit them to the Holy See for approval. We will also delineate priorities and an orientation to continue with renewed hope along the path that the Church has marked out for us, under the attentive care of the competent authorities.

278. We conclude this message by giving thanks to God for his merciful love, to the Church that has guided us in the person of the Successor of Peter, and to His Eminence Cardinal Velasio De Paolis and his four personal counselors, His Excellency Bishop Brian Farrell, LC, Fr. Gianfranco Ghirlanda, SJ, Msgr. Mario Marchesi, and Fr. Agostino Montan, CSI, for their firm and respectful presence among us. At the same time, we thank all the Legionaries of Christ for their witness of faith, of self-giving and of fraternal charity that unites all of us in spite of all our differences. In a special way, we think of those older priests who, for so many years, have offered an example of authenticity and of self-giving to the mission. We cannot “lose sight of their [our] vocation: this has its origin in Christ’s call and its inspiration in the ideal of bearing witness before the world to his love, and it is an authentic gift from God, an enrichment for the Church, and the indestructible basis on which to build their personal future and that of the Legion.”<sup>85</sup>

Finally, we would like to thank the members of Regnum Christi and so many persons who have accompanied us during these years with their prayers and concern.

To all of our brothers, religious and priests, who during this period have left the Congregation, we want to express our sadness that we no longer have you among us. We sincerely apologize for the times we have not listened to you or been there for you in the spirit of the Gospel. We would like to maintain your friendship and fraternal dialogue.

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<sup>84</sup> POPE FRANCIS, *Letter to Cardinal Velasio De Paolis*, June 19, 2013.

<sup>85</sup> Exhortation of the Holy Father, PRESS OFFICE OF THE HOLY SEE, *Communiqué of the Holy See regarding the Apostolic Visitation of the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ*, May 1, 2010.

We would like to apologize and reiterate our desire to reconcile with all those who in one way or another were hurt by the sad events of these years and our shortcomings.

Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows, was a witness of the redemptive power of Christ that conquers evil and sin. To her, our Mother, we entrust our future with great confidence.

## ATTACHMENT - ON THE CONGREGATION'S NAME

279. Over the course of the revision of the constitutions, and during the General Chapter itself, the question of changing the name “Legionaries of Christ” came up, but only tangentially. However, since some Legionaries had raised this question with the Chapter, we dedicated one of the closing sessions to reflect on this issue. We did not, however, see a need to take an official stance at this time.
280. Three reasons, of varying kind and importance, lie at the root of a possible change. First of all, the name’s military connotation causes difficulties in certain cultures. Secondly, some desire to overcome decidedly a stage of our history that is marked by the deplorable deeds about which the Chapter has already pronounced itself. And finally, some desire to express more accurately our identity as religious priests of Regnum Christi.
281. In our discussion, we realized that though these cultural difficulties have been present for decades, the suggestion to change our name is a recent development. This suggests that such a decision be approached with caution. In addition, many people have said that their misgivings connected with the name disappeared when they got to know us better. Still others have seen the symbolism in the name “Legionaries of Christ” as something positive, and this has been evident in our history. And finally, we agreed that although the name is important because in a certain way it expresses the charism, the most important thing is the people who bear the name and the way in which they live.
282. As regards the need to definitively overcome our painful past, we believe that a simple name change – a sort of marketing strategy – would not achieve the desired objective. The shadows of history are still there. However, Christ has rescued our history, thanks to the intervention of the Church and the Pope. When we recall our journey of maturing and purification, we will be moved to a greater humility and gratitude towards God. And this will strengthen our faith. In addition, merely changing the name in an attempt to break away from the past could also inspire a sort of fleeing forward without our having consciously accepted our history. This could result in a failing to see God’s providence in our history or in an inability to accept the blessings that come to us through the cross.
283. Regarding the possibility of more adequately expressing our belonging to Regnum Christi, some recalled that that many congregations have taken on a second, “popular” name. This has happened in a spontaneous manner. By way of example we could take the “Priests of Communion and Liberation” (The Fraternity of St Charles Borromeo), the “Jesuits” (The Society of Jesus), and many others. It could be that some day we will be known by a popular name. The central government will be attentive to the development of this topic among the congregation’s members in the upcoming years.

Per Regnum Christi ad Gloriam Dei

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