



ACTS OF THE 11TH GENERAL CHAPTER

**Rome
9th-27th January 2022**



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PARTICIPANTS

Colour of the participants' names

Red: Chapter members (with voting rights)

Blue: invited guests (without voting right)

Colour of the names of the guests invited to the 1st week: blue

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Nous reconnaître – Recognise us – Reconhecer-nos – Spoznajte nàs

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INTRODUCTION



Introduction to the reading of the Acts of the 11th Chapter

9th – 27th January 2022

Rome

Dear Sisters,

This long-awaited Chapter has finally come to an end! After months of interminable preparation, three postponements due to the pandemic, the Chapter finally took place in a simple, peaceful, happy and participatory way... What we thought was impossible, finally materialized: we met face to face, lived and exchanged, came and went under the sun of Rome¹, all tested against COVID and wearing face masks, nonetheless everything was so real! The social gathering – a fancy-dress party - with sketches, charades and songs reminded us of the need to laugh together, a lot and often.

I am grateful to the long chain of solidarity that made this Chapter at the Casa Generalizia La Salle possible: the French and Italian Embassies to the Holy See, the religious Congregations - Brothers of the Christian Schools, School Sisters of Notre Dame, the Dominicans, the Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco: so many opened doors and provided their fraternal support.

Gathered around Mother Alix from the evening of January 9th, we were accompanied by her presence throughout these days: a reproduction of the mosaic offered to Pope Pius XII for her beatification was placed in the Chapter Hall and in the chapel, and guided our work and prayer. 400 years later, we were able to draw on her courage:

When her companions were put off by the difficulties and contradictions that tried to destroy what they were working to establish, and when they were so downcast that they no longer knew what they should hope for, Alix always kept going, out of a firm belief that she felt in the depths of her soul, that God wanted this vocation from them... She revealed them her courage, saying that it was the work of God ("Remarks on the virtuous actions of Mother Alix" Spiritual Writings P. 225.)

On 10th and 11th January, Sister Anne Chapell, Superior General of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, introduced us to the true meaning of a Chapter: a communal search for the Common Good, a spiritual experience. Indeed, a Chapter calls us to grow in inner freedom. This implies reviewing our attachments to give them a new order; discerning the temptations that voting Chapter members may be exposed to; caring for apostolic religious life today, with realism...

Anne reminded us of the importance of all the members who are on the CND boat: we are not just passengers, but crew members. Sisters and lay people², we need each other.

¹ Catacomb of Domitilla, Via Appia Antica, Saint Sabina, Saint Peter's, the Vatican...

² The first week of the Chapter saw the attendance of Raymond Verley, Financial Director; Jean-Michel Battut, in charge of the Tutelle; Laurent Bonzom, Director of the PFALC Foundation and Director of NDO Educational Institute.



We then got down to the heart of things. Our work continued in three phases:

I. *The reports of the Superior General and the Bursar General*³

The reports of the CND countries in the form of:

- a. A shield with all key data, and educational challenges; a reflection on the Chapter logo “To harm no one, to serve all”: what ministries and challenges? The issues that the Vicariate/Delegation/Group want to bring up to the Chapter,
- b. A timeline with the key moments of the CND educational history in the respective countries⁴.

II. The priorities and orientations for the next six years were chosen on the basis of these reports: in line with the Chapter of Locquirec, we decided to retain only four elements, specifying as much as possible the relative expectations and actions, so as to provide the Generalate team with a "road map" for its mandate. We have therefore avoided lengthy considerations, while focusing on what had motivated the groups' reflections⁵.

These four orientations reaffirm the primacy of:

- The CND educational mission and the sharing of the CND charism with all. This orientation is connected with the "CND Educational Compact",
- Initial and ongoing formation.

They also take into account the key elements that have emerged since Locquirec:

- The need for an intergenerational bond between "old" Europe and "young" Asia and Africa. Connected to this orientation is a proposal on the Sisters in Europe,
- The care of the Common Home. Connected to this orientation is the Congregation's double commitment towards Laudato Si and safeguarding.

All these orientations demand of us, educators, a conversion to integral ecology.

III. The election of the Superior General and the three Councillors, and the appointment of the Secretary General and the Bursar General formed a new international team with members from the four continents where the Congregation is present.

³ Cf. Annexes

⁴ An edition will be published to complete “A Brief History of the CND”.

⁵ Cf. Annexes



Another characteristic of this Chapter was its openness to the realities of the world. Two guests allowed us to get out of our self-referentiality, and helped us look beyond "our" concerns and "our" organisation during the first week:

- Sister Florence de la Villeon (rscj) introduced us to international migration today and shared the work of the UISG⁶ and the JRS⁷ in favour of migrants.
- Dr Lucile Cornet-Vernet introduced us to the cultivation of artemisia, a medicinal plant used against malaria; a simple way to fight this endemic scourge effectively, and ensure that its producers develop fairly.

On 24th January, the private audience with Pope Francis was a time of grace: his presence - for each and every one -, his smile and humour seemed to suspend time, to sweep away all tiredness, and shone a bright light on the Chapter, like the cloudless sky of Rome. Despite the ancient and imposing palace, the impressive protocol, though reduced to the bare minimum, everything was pervaded by magnificence and simplicity. It was both a confirmation of our educational mission and a powerful call to participate in a new educational compact: *"I rely on you and I trust in you, the Church trusts in you"*.

Finally, the Cardinal Prefect of the CICALSAL⁸, Dom João Braz de Avis, closed our Chapter with a session of questions and answers and a Eucharistic celebration.

The following orientations include the CND Family: Friends, Associates, Partners in the Congregation's educational mission, as well as the pupils, students, young people and adults whom, by vocation, we are invited to join and help "grow".

The orientations express our renewed fraternity, and our desire that all the members of the "CND Family" commit to our mission: they are a road map for the Generalate, and for each member.

Let us take the time to read and re-read the orientations, to take them in. And, to do this, let us truly be "Sisters of Our Lady": the Gospel tells us that she "kept all these things and pondered them in her heart". One exegete even thinks that the correct translation is not "ponder", but "interpret."

Let us ask Mother Alix to help us to live fully the mission that these Acts outline for the Common Good.

⁶ International Union of Superiors General.

⁷ Jesuit Refugee Service.

⁸ Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.



A READING GUIDE FOR THE ORIENTATIONS

The orientations follow a **logical basis**: among the challenges to be taken up, we are called to be educators, **as Sisters of Our Lady**.

We will not empty the oceans of their waste, we will not heal all the suffering of the planet, we will not respond to all the world's calls for help... But:

- We commit ourselves to **sharing our charism**, without exclusion. Wherever there is a Sister of Our Lady, we educate,
- For this, we accept to **form ourselves** throughout our lives,
- We also want to share the precious wisdom of the older sisters with the younger ones, at the same time, the younger ones must inject their dynamism and rekindle the still burning embers. Our **inter-generationality** is as precious as our internationality,
- Finally, we know that our **Common Home** is threatened: caring for it is not an old ecologist's dream turned into mainstream ideology; it is an emergency that must mobilise us, bringing together all our intelligence, all our hearts, and our hands. Pope Francis did not hesitate to say that the planet embodies the poor today ("A Man of His Word" - Film by Wim Wenders).

This is the reason why we have signed, as a Congregation,

- o The Laudato Si commitment: *"A 7-year path that can transform our way of dwelling in the world, our styles of life, our relationship with the resources of the Earth and, in general, our way of looking at humanity and of living life."* Pope Francis, 25th May 2021,
- o The Commitment to safeguarding.

For each of the orientations, you will find the decisions of the Chapter members (texts approved by an absolute majority) and the tables of reflection for each orientation in the annexes. These tables offer more details on possible actions, they can be a source of inspiration.

Other texts were voted by the Chapter members and come into force immediately for our Congregation, and these are the Vicar's Handbook and the amendments to the Constitutions and the Supplementary Articles (texts approved by a 2/3 majority).

Enjoy your reading, with all my fraternal affection,

Sister Cécile MARION cnd-csa

Superior General



ORIENTATIONS

SHARING OF OUR CHARISM

We are fundamentally educators, that is to say, we are sent to each person to help him or her discover and live to the full his or her unique vocation as a man or a woman. We therefore want our charism to be alive, to continue to be shared and to respond to today's calls. It is the legacy of our Founders; as a gift of the Spirit, it belongs to the whole Church.

Conviction 1

We want our Charism to continue to inspire us and adapt to the different realities of today.

- *To make our Charism known, we ask the Generalate to produce a simple, illustrated, captivating document, translated into all the languages of the Congregation, and to encourage its dissemination by all means of communication.*

Conviction 2

We want to share our Charism with the CND Family: Sisters, Associates, Students, Alumni, Partners and all those who are connected with us and share the same desire to "grow and make him grow".

- *We recommend that the Generalate propose to the Vicariates, Delegations or Groups ways to energize the CND Family in all countries according to the contexts.*
- *We ask the Generalate to organise international face-to-face and/or online meetings on the CND educational compact, that are open to the whole CND Family.*

Conviction 3

We want to continue to walk with the Associates committed to the Congregation's charism and mission.

- *We ask the Generalate to encourage the vitality of the Associates (meetings, formation sessions, etc.) in collaboration with the Vicariates, Delegations or Groups.*

Conviction 4

All of us want to listen to the urgent calls evoked by the two recent encyclicals (Laudato Si' and Fratelli tutti) to contribute to building a more just, more united, more human world and to awaken in humanity concern for the climate, water, food, transport, refugees and the dignity of the human person.

- *We ask the Generalate to encourage the CND Family to participate in local networks and services committed to these causes.*



Towards a CND Educational Compact



“I have always felt it necessary to explain that they were schoolmistresses first and that in order to be stronger, they desired, sought and pursued religious life, lest it be thought that they were first religious and then became engaged in schools”

Pierre Fourier

Letter to Frs Guinet and Lemulier 17th September 1627

(Correspondance T. 2 p. 347)



Towards a CND Educational Compact



Education in the CND revolves around 3 pillars:

- A vision: "To educate means to change the world"
- A mission: To give everyone the possibility to "grow"
- A pedagogy for all, without excluding anyone: "Both poor and rich"

Cf. Pierre Fourier and Alix Le Clerc



Towards a CND Educational Compact



These 3 pillars are embedded in:

- **Prayer based on the Word read, meditated and contemplated** (*"Always walking before God and seeking Him with a simple heart" Alix Le Clerc*)
- **Fraternal life** (*"To live among ourselves with great frankness and cordiality, banishing any complacency, duplicity and surprise as if they were plagues in any human conversation... Putting aside our interests for those of the community and never seeking our advancement to the detriment of the public or of any individual" Pierre Fourier*)
- **The mission of evangelization** (*"It is not only proclaiming the Gospel but living the Gospel" Cardinal Martini*)

"Desire, pray, think, put your hand to the work, and then often examine yourself, and you will be perfect" Pierre Fourier



Towards a CND Educational Compact



From the beginning, we have been invited not to separate religious life and education, but to embed and bind them together in us ...

“They will do all that they can for the greater honour and glory of God, for their salvation and perfection, and for the corporal and spiritual care of their neighbour” (Trilogy of Poussay)



Towards a CND Educational Compact



These 3 pillars commit us – CND Family - to an integral and inclusive education which means:

- A pedagogy of desire: "Who am I? Who do I want to be? What do I want to do with my life? (*The important thing is the "response" that education provokes, much more than the "acquisition" of knowledge and skills*),
- "Educational villages" forming a "we" living in a "common home", caring for one another, through a culture of encounter and a pedagogy of encouragement (*Pope Francis*),
- An international network for the training of educators.



Towards a CND Educational Compact



Concretely, in our practice as educators, we are called to:

- **Give time for interiorisation and honour the spiritual dimension (talent/vocation... *"All are born as individuals but many die as photocopies" Carlo Acutis*)**
- **Engage in conversation and show the horizon (*fraternity integrated with the good/just, beauty, and the truth*)**
- **Cultivate a favourable starting point (*"Do not consider people as they should be but as they are or can be" Pierre Fourier*)**
- **Meet the needs of the times and promote resilience**
- **Form other educators who can create community (*"What could never be done by each one if he remained apart, will easily be done by all being closely linked" Pierre Fourier*)**

Reference of quotations

III.

1. **"To educate is to change the world"**: From the Constitutions of 1640 – 3rd part – On the instruction of secular girls – paragraph 1
2. **To give to each the possibility to "grow"** : From the Relation n°23
3. **"Both rich and poor"**: Constitutions of 1640 – Preface

IV.

1. **"Always walking before God and seeking Him with a simple heart"** - Ecrits Spirituels – 'The Mother's feelings about the Institute'
2. **"To live among ourselves with great frankness and cordiality, banishing any complacency ..."** Testament of Pierre Fourier to the Canons of Our Saviour – Six beaux avis
3. **"Desire, pray, think, put your hand to the work, and then often examine yourself, and you will be perfect"** Pierre Fourier – OP – CNS II, 147

V.

"They will do all that they can for the greater honour and glory of God, for their salvation ..." Trilogy of Poussay – from the Sommaire du Desein (1610)

VII.

1. **"Do not consider people as they should be but as they are or can be"** Pierre Fourier – Letter to the sisters of Nancy – 26th September 1620
2. **"What could never be done by each one if he remained apart, will easily be done by all being closely linked"** Constitutions of 1640 – 6th part – On the union of monasteries

Formation

Our reflection is in line with the Acts of the Chapter of Locquirec 2014 and the Initial Formation Handbook.

We are called by God to form ourselves to live the Charism, our discipleship and mission.

Formation is also essential to prevent and denounce all forms of abuse and exploitation, something which requires open spiritual and human accompaniment.

Vocation ministry

Our conviction: God calls: religious vocation is a gift from God and our life must be meaningful.

We ask the Generalate:

- *To foster the vocation ministry in all Vicariates, Delegations and Groups,*
- *To promote and coordinate the creation of an international itinerant group.*

Initial formation

Our conviction: Spiritual formation is essential as well as human and psychological formation. We live throughout our lives what we learn in Initial Formation.

We ask the Generalate:

- *To update the Handbook, especially on the themes of safeguarding, and integral ecology.*
- *To continue the International Juniorates and international formators' meetings.*

Ongoing formation

Our conviction: At every moment of our religious life, there is a need to:

- Revive and adapt the essentials of Apostolic Religious Life in today's world,
- Develop and consolidate our belonging to the Congregation,
- Be converted and be reconciled with others and with ourselves.

We ask the Generalate:

- *To organise sessions for perpetually professed sisters, according to the needs of the different age groups,*
- *To organise international exchanges more systematically (preparation of places of welcome, Sisters ready to go).*

Formation to leadership

Our conviction: Every person has potential, which must be identified and developed, especially among the youngest members, in order to prepare them to take on leadership roles.

We ask the Generalate:

- *To organise, in collaboration with the Vicariates, Delegations and Groups, formation courses for bursars who are also educators,*
- *To provide the means to develop skills in spiritual accompaniment by diversifying the places of formation,*
- *To continue coaching sessions,*
- *To ensure that anyone entrusted with a responsibility has a road map.*

THE INTER-GENERATIONAL DIMENSION

MAKE HIM GROW - GROW TOGETHER

“You are to love one another with a spiritual rather than an earthly love”

(Rule of Saint Augustine 6,3)

WE CALL

For a positive outlook towards all the phases of life,
For an organisation of life that considers all the real needs of every stage of life,
For an acknowledgement of aging and the formation of younger sisters as two challenges requiring our creativity today.

CONVICTIONS AND ACTIONS

1. WE BELIEVE that the vitality of each person and each generation is essential to our charism.

We ask the General Council

- *To organise international inter-generational meetings,*
- *To encourage Sisters to go to another Vicariate, Delegation or Group (1-2 months and more) for a period long enough to absorb the culture and share the life of the place,*
- *To encourage Vicariates (Cf. EGC) to forge bonds among the sisters and the communities of the Congregation through the use of the modern communication means in the various countries.*

2. WE BELIEVE that the dynamism of the Congregation lies in the richness and sharing of its diversity, in the circulation of life among the generations.

We ask the General Council

- *To inform frequently the Vicariates, Delegations or Groups and the whole “Family” on the life of the Congregation.*

3. WE BELIEVE that the CND must take care of the sisters and we draw attention to their

- Human,
- Spiritual,
- Organisational

needs.

We ask the General Council to ensure

- *That the Sisters reflect on this subject in each Vicariate, in particular to anticipate any future concrete implications,*
- *That the human, economic and real estate resources are commensurate to cover these needs in the Vicariates,*
- *That the EGC programme include an exchange among the Vicars on this issue.*

In all this, we recommend that the General Council

- Give **new dynamism** to the Congregation,
- And act in accordance with the principle of **subsidiarity**.

The CND in Europe

Some demographic data

	2025	2030
Belgium	5 Sisters - 1 < 75 years	2 Sisters - 1 < 75 years
France	50 Sisters - 6 < 75 years	30 Sisters - 1 < 75 years
GB	13 Sisters - 2 < 75 years	8 Sisters - 1 < 75 years
Hungary	1 Sisters - 1 < 75 years	1 Sisters - 1 < 75 years
Slovakia	13 Sisters - 11 < 75 years	12 Sisters - 4 < 75 years
Total	82 Sisters - 21 < 75 years	52 Sisters - 8 < 75 years

In connection with the survey on European Sisters

Webinar UISG – UCESM

15th May 2020

The future of religious life in Europe:

- Called to a different form
- Mystical
- Only together will we address every challenge: we must put an end to the competition among congregations and forget old views about the place of women
- Religious life has favoured the well-being of people (education, health); today, States have taken over these services. Even if this is insufficient, spiritual needs are enormous: men and women are more than what they can buy.

We organized a common reflection on the future of the Congregation in Europe according to three stages to then bring some questions or ideas to the Chapter:

- 2020: each sister in the group expressed her vision of the future in her own way (see website)
- October 2021: the sisters met in two groups to exchange their ideas and make concrete proposals
- November 2021: sharing and exchange with the GC.

Desires and ideas

- To get to know each other personally, but also to get to know our cultures and our histories as Eastern and Western Europeans.
- To put relationships at the centre; forming bonds; meeting in other countries.
- Some expressed their reluctance to set up structures (such as a European Vicariate). Others see that congregations with decreasing numbers are bringing East and West together, though they speak different languages.
- To exchange, re-energize and form ourselves together; to share our experiences on subjects that are important to us in order to better accompany young people: Mary, the Founders, the great questions of the world (migrants, divorced families, Roma people, gender neutrality, eco-spirituality, the social doctrine of the Church...)
- To encourage international exchanges to live the family dimension in the CND:
 - Welcoming sisters for a longer period of time as their mission,
 - Participate in inter-juniorates,
 - Get to know the projects better and offer financial solidarity.

SISTERS IN EUROPE

In Europe, with a view to moving forward and opening new horizons, we propose to:

1- Strengthen the links among the sisters in Europe by:

- Encouraging the sisters in different European countries to communicate more,
- Organizing meetings through modern communication means but also face to face (mutual visits, European meetings) with the aim of getting to know each other personally, our cultures and histories as Eastern and/or Western Europeans,
- Receiving formation and exchanging on current challenges; sharing our experiences as a congregation where we are,
- Reflecting together to take into account the needs of the elderly Sisters.

2- Consider the demographic reality at the international level and reflect on the implications of this for all of us:

- How does this challenge other Vicariates? How can we help each other?
- In connection with the orientation on the Inter-generational dimension, we intend to encourage international exchanges and send sisters for long periods of mission.
- We intend to implement the necessary changes in the statutes (Vicariate - Delegation - Group)

Every sister is responsible for living these proposals under the leadership of the Generalate.

OUR COMMON HOME – INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

We hear the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth that resonates with our charism and urges us to a profound change in our spiritual life, our educational mission and our lifestyle.

We propose 3 orientations "to build a common plan around our charism and ecological education" with a view to concretising the desire of the "Laudato Si'" group.

For each of these orientations, we need to re-read "Laudato Si'" and immerse ourselves in everything that concerns the following:

- an integral ecological spirituality,
- our educational mission,
- our lifestyle.

In compliance with the commitment of the religious communities that the CND signed,

1. We believe that as a Congregation, at the community and personal level and in our mission, we are called to convert to "an integral ecological spirituality".
 - *We ask the Generalate to encourage us to live all the steps proposed by Pope Francis, by publishing the calendar of international days devoted to integral ecology.*
2. We believe that **our educational mission** shows care for Life, and concern for the Common Home.
 - *We ask the Generalate to encourage our apostolic choices to reach out to both poor and rich and to promote relationships of reciprocity and friendship in the spirit of Laudato si'.*
 - *We ask the Laudato si team, supported by the Generalate, to collect and share the experiences of all our apostolic works in relation to education on integral ecology.*
3. We believe that **our way of life** demands conversion and must contribute to caring for Life: nature and humanity.
 - *In consultation with the Vicariates and Delegations, we ask the Generalate to ensure consistency between our vows and our lifestyle.*
 - *Every 2 years, organise a forum (e.g. video conference) to share experiences that contribute to the care of Life: nature and humanity.*



Commitment

Religious communities

We publicly commit to join the global Catholic community in responding to Pope Francis' call to participate in a seven-year journey towards sustainability and integral ecology through the development of a Laudato Si' action platform.

This commitment marks our willingness:

To take up the "urgent call" to respond to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor, by turning it into a priority for our communities;

To foster our ongoing ecological conversion by bringing our members to a better understanding of their socio-ecological vocation in the spirit of our charism;

To integrate each of the seven Laudato Si' goals into our lives and ministries by developing a systematic process of transition to an integral ecology;

To take bold concrete steps in the spirit of Laudato Si' to address the multiple crises that afflict our common home - the planet and its inhabitants.

To practice non-violence as we reconcile and heal the suffering of the Creation and sow the hope of peace.

This commitment is made in faith, hope, and love, knowing that we are participating in God's work of transformation, "*for we know that things can change*" (LS 13).

The seven Laudato Si' Goals

1. Response to the ***cry of the Earth*** (greater use of clean, renewable energy and reduction of fossil fuels to achieve carbon neutrality, efforts to protect and promote biodiversity, access to potable water granted to all, etc.)

2. Response to the ***cry of the poor*** (defense of human life from conception to death and of all forms of life on Earth, with particular attention to vulnerable groups such as indigenous communities, migrants, children at risk of slavery, etc.)

3. Achieving an ***ecological economics*** (sustainable production, fair trade, ethical consumption, ethical investments, divestment from fossil fuels and any economic activity that is harmful to the planet and its people, investment in renewables, etc.).

4. Adoption of ***simple lifestyles*** (sobriety in the consumption of natural resources and energy, avoidance of single-use plastic, adoption of a more vegetable-based diet and reduction of meat consumption, increased use of public and less polluting transport means, etc.)

5. Achieving ***ecological education*** (by reconsidering and redesigning educational curricula; reforming educational institutions in the spirit of integral ecology in order to generate ecological awareness and action, promoting the ecological vocation of young people, teachers and educational leaders, etc.)

6. Achieving an ***ecological spirituality*** (by recovering a religious vision of God's creation, encouraging greater contact with nature in a spirit of awe, praise, joy and gratitude, promoting liturgical celebrations centred on creation, developing ecological catechesis, prayer, retreats, formation, etc.)

7. Emphasis on ***community involvement*** and participation to protect creation at local, regional, national and international levels (promoting advocacy and grassroots campaigns, encouraging integration in the local territory and neighbourhood ecosystems, etc.)

CND COMMITMENT ON SAFEGUARDING

With regard to the safeguarding of children/women/vulnerable persons, the Congregation of Our Lady is committed to guaranteeing the values of the charism of its founders and its educational mission: unconditional respect for the person, in the service of his or her growth and dignity. The values that underpin its mission must be promoted throughout the institution (Congregation and works) and known to all those who work in it. These values refer to our commitment to make the young and adults in our care "grow".

These values are manifested first and foremost in our priority and active care for all victims of abuse and exploitation, whether they be children, women or vulnerable persons. The term "vulnerable person" refers to adults in a fragile or dependent situation, who may therefore be victims of abuse of power or sexual abuse.

Our commitment must be translated into decisions, recommendations and concrete measures, which ensure a safe environment and the vigilance required of all. Each Vicariate or Delegation will have to implement this commitment taking into account not only the recommendations of the Church¹ and the Code of Canon Law, the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), but also national legislations and local ecclesial documents. In all the procedures, the well-being of the most vulnerable and their human rights will remain a priority.

Each Vicariate or Delegation will prepare a written code of conduct for the sisters and their collaborators of the various works, indicating:

- The behavioural guidelines to be observed to respect the child/adolescent/woman...,
- The preventive measures and concrete procedures to be implemented in case of risk situations or warning signals.

Any inappropriate behaviour may lead to sanctions.

Every Vicariate or Delegation will designate a Safeguarding Officer for the rights of children and vulnerable people, depending on its circumstances, and will establish specific responsibilities required of specific persons.

These elements will be communicated to all. They may be revised on a regular basis as required and as experience is gained.

¹ A source is the *Motu proprio "Vos estis lux mundi"* of Pope Francis on the fight against sexual abuse in the Church.



AMENDMENTS

Constitutions

Supplementary Articles

I. Constitutions

N. 63: “The Novitiate is the stage of discernment in view of integration into the Congregation. Its object is to give the novice a fuller understanding of her own vocation and that of the Congregation, and subsequently, an initiation into the apostolic religious life, leading to temporary profession.” (CIC 646)

II. Supplementary Articles

7 A Admission or non admission to a stage of formation is decided by the Vicar in a spirit of co-responsibility and with respect for the principle of subsidiarity in regard to the sister in charge of formation at the stage concerned.

7.3.0 Membership of the Congregation starts at the stage of temporary profession, when members are integrated into the Institute with the rights and duties specified by Law (CIC 654).

9.1. All goods belonging to the Vicariates, Delegations and Groups belong to the Congregation and therefore to the Church. The Superior General is responsible for them and must give her authorization for any new implantation (community, work...), purchase, change in usage or ownership. The Generalate must be consulted before any process is implemented.

The Vicars, Delegates and Sisters-in-charge of Groups will therefore make sure they give the Generalate all the relevant information as and when it becomes necessary.

9.5. The Vicar with the consent of her Council, the Delegate, or the Sister-in-charge of a Group may decide, after authorization by the Superior General, to buy or sell properties according to the needs of the Vicariate, Delegation or Group.

When the price of a sale exceeds the threshold laid down by the local Bishops’ Conference, the Vicar must obtain not only the authorization of the Superior General and her Council, but also the authorization of the Holy See.

She may not dispose of a property which plays a significant part in the pastoral strategy of the Diocese without consulting the local Bishop.

9.11 The Caisse Commune (Common Purse) is destined to finance:

- projects concerning the life of the sisters,
- apostolic projects,
- the operations of a Vicariate, a Delegation or a Group in difficulty.

It ensures the sustainability of the future of the next generations.

The rules of the Caisse Commune are described in the Vicar’s administrative Handbook.

10 A To move to another institute, a Perpetually Professed Sister needs the consent of the superiors of the congregation that the sister intends to leave as well as of the superiors of the Institute she wants to join. The probation period lasts a minimum of 3 years during which the person does not have any (passive and active) voting right.

In case of negative opinion at the end of the three years, the person will return to her institute of origin (CIC 684).



THE VICAR'S HANDBOOK



The Vicar

The Vicar¹ is at the service of the Congregation's mission in a specific (cultural, social...) territorial reality (Constitutions n.104 to 115). Her responsibility consists in serving as a bridge between the sisters of her territory and the whole Congregation. This requires personal, spiritual and human qualities, full-time availability and a specific ongoing formation, as well as past experience in animating groups or institutions.

More precisely, her responsibility comprises the following:

1. A global and dynamic vision of:

- Religious life that needs to be permanently updated (formation sessions, lectures, participation in conferences of major superiors ...),
- The CND, that will be promoted through her participation in EGCs, meetings at the Congregational level and regular contacts with the Generalate,
- The Congregation's educational mission and, in particular, educational networks,
- The future of the Vicariate, with the adoption of a development policy that comprises the people, the connections among them and with the Congregation's other Vicariates.

2. Care for people, with a specific focus on the sisters' well-being and mission:

- By accompanying and caring for each sister in view of a dynamic religious life,
- Through regular meetings, active listening and fraternal dialogue,
- Through initial formation – in compliance with the Congregation's Handbook on Initial Formation - and ongoing formation,
- Through the development of fraternal bonds and mutual support, conflict management skills, in order to promote peace and communion in the mission, as these are fundamental for a prophetic religious life.

3. Team work at all levels (Vicariate Council, General Council):

- To lead the VC meetings in view of developing a participatory decision-making process,
- To favour the circulation of life among the sisters and team work at all levels, especially in the mission,
- To define, entrust and follow the delegated responsibilities given for specific tasks,
- To favour a shared mission, forge bonds with lay people (partners, lay associates ...),
- To manage and administer the assets with a view to making the sisters accountable, and to work with the Vicariate bursar regularly,
- To follow up on all the administrative and economic files and the Vicariate's archives,

¹ This Handbook is also designed for the Delegates, except for the part about the elections.



- To work with the Generalate in view of the common good of both the Vicariate and the Congregation.

To carry out these main functions in the long term, the Vicar will also prepare a vade-mecum (a manual of detailed procedures) to hand over the administration to the following Vicar.

This description of the Vicar's role may be used for election and ratification processes. According to n. 158 of our Constitutions, the Superior General, with the consent of her Council, ratifies the election of the Vicar. The ratification is not to be made automatically: it is a matter of the common good and not the majority; it does not have to be justified.

The Vicar's Handbook

Economic and Administrative Section¹

Economic matters are an integral part of our religious life; they are one of the ways in which our mission is expressed.

Management, accounting and finance are at the service of the educational mission; they enable us to make choices in accordance with our charism, to objectively review our way of life and bear witness to our discipleship of Christ.

Each sister and each community is called to cultivate a responsible attitude towards financial matters.

Vicars are responsible for all the goods of a Vicariate².

“Vicars and bursars³ collaborate in a spirit of mutual trust. Bursars are responsible for the ordinary management of the assets and report regularly to their Superiors. For the extraordinary administration (alienations, purchases, loans, mortgages, guarantees), they prepare a legal, fiscal and financial file to help the Superiors to take decisions.

Vicars give time to Bursars to deal with temporal matters and involve them in any financially relevant decision. The Generalate periodically organizes meetings for the Vicariate Bursars and their teams to exchange experiences and reflect together on the management of goods, so that the needs of the world and the Congregation as a whole can be addressed. This common search is informed by the desire not to do any injustice in the management of goods, but to collaborate in all that we do for greater justice and fraternity.”

This Handbook gives common guidelines to the whole Congregation.

1 Management and accounting

1.1a Accounting and budgets of the Sisters and Communities

The way we concretely practice our vow of poverty will clearly show that we belong to the Congregation both on a personal and collective level:

- each year, we submit our accounts to the Bursars at all levels,*
- we commit to transparency in handling our goods,*
- evangelical criteria⁴ lead our common discernment on future commitments in favour of justice.*

Consequently:

Each Sister submits her accounts.

Each Vicariate defines the frequency and deadlines to present one's accounts and budget.

Each community takes the time to exchange on its accounts and budget; it is an opportunity to analyse our needs, to question our lifestyle, our material solidarity within the congregation and with the outside world.

Each sister will express her opinion during this exchange.

¹ *“In practice, adjustments will be made according to the constraints and realities of each country (see local Vademecums).”*

² *In the case of a Delegation, the final responsibility lies with the Superior General.*

³ LA (Supplementary Articles) 9.7 and 9.8 as amended

⁴ LA 5.1

On the occasion of community visits, the Vicariate Bursar is called on to facilitate this exchange; she also contributes to the formation of the Sisters and community leaders on how to prepare the accounts in the format proposed by the Vicariate.

1.1b The Vicariate's accounts

The Vicariate Bursar prepares the Vicariate's accounts once a year (including the accounts of the communities) in the format proposed by the Generalate.

These accounts are discussed and exchanged in the Vicariate Council in view of drafting and approving the budget for the following year.

The accounts and the budget are presented and discussed at the Vicariate Assembly.

The Vicariate Bursar ensures that all the accounting obligations related to the Vicariate's civil structure are satisfied, as well as any other legal obligations.

1.2 Daily management

The vicariate bursar selects and monitors her current or one-off providers, regularly reviews contracts, and calls for bids at regular intervals to ensure that each provider is the best in terms of quality and price.

The bursar may seek paid external advice, if need be, before making any financial or technical decision that goes beyond the competence or experience of any member of the Congregation (examples: evaluation of work estimates, financial investments, evaluation of financial, fiscal, legal and reputational risks, dismissal procedures...).

Depending on the local context, it may be useful to set up an economic council.

1.3 Budgeting: preparing a budget and a plan

The Vicariates, Delegations and Groups must:

- *ensure that all communities and sisters have what they need to live on,*
- *strive for financial autonomy,*
- *and exercise their financial solidarity both internally (for the whole Congregation) and externally.*

They make a budget to set aside sufficient reserves as far as possible to ensure:

- *the formation of young sisters,*
- *ongoing formation,*
- *support for the apostolic works they are in charge of,*
- *support for sick or elderly sisters who live in homes suited to their health conditions, be they houses owned by the Congregation or other facilities.*

They set aside provisions with foresight and lucidity and share their resources with the Generalate.

The Generalate ensures that the Vicariates, Delegations and Groups have the necessary resources to live on⁵.

⁵ L.A. 9.10

Consequently:

From an evaluation of the accounts of the previous year, the Vicariate Council and the Bursar reflect on the economic situation of the Vicariate from different perspectives:

- The budget allows for an estimate of the balance of revenues and expenditures for the following year.
- Long Term Forecasts (LTF) are prepared in collaboration with the Generalate to evaluate our financial reserves for the next 25 years. This is an estimate of future resources and expenses based on demographic changes and economic assumptions. The LTFs force us to think about the houses we will need, the works we will or will not be able to develop given our forces, etc.

1.4 The accounts of our works

The works⁶, either small or large, must prepare their accounts and budget.

They are submitted at least once a year to the Vicariate Council⁷ and are accompanied, if possible, by an annual social report (number of people reached, achievement of the objectives, difficulties encountered, etc.).

These management tasks are mentioned in the job description of the Sister/person in charge of the work. She will receive training to assume these tasks.

Accounting Records:

The past accounts of the Vicariate and of the works must be archived and stored at the Vicariate's secretariat for the period required by local regulations.

2. Management of financial and real estate assets

2.1 The Vicariate's financial assets and bank accounts

Bank and savings accounts are placed in an updated list specifying:

- The authorised signatures updated every time a leader changes,
- Bank accounts must operate according to double signature, internet access identification keys ...

2.2 Management of the Vicariate's real estate assets

The Vicariate's stable patrimony⁸ must be identified, validated by a deliberation of the VA and confirmed by the GC.

⁶ Work: educational and/or social activity with an economic dimension carried out in the CND's name.

⁷ *In the case of a Delegation, accounts are submitted to the General Council.*

⁸ The Vicariate's patrimony is governed by canon law that distinguishes between stable capital and patrimony that can be transferred. The stable patrimony is composed of goods that serve the charism directly (goods for housing the sisters and goods destined for the works.)

The Vicariate keeps an inventory of all of its properties, and contracts (e.g., leases) associated with them. It keeps the administrative or legal deadlines of each property (e.g. lease expiry, license renewal, etc.)

As for the goods held in a Sister's name, a notary deed - if possible – must be drawn up to acknowledge the ownership of the Vicariate.

The Vicariate ensures that its rented buildings are in a sufficiently safe and good condition, and that the maintenance of its properties is ensured; a specific budget is allocated for this purpose.

Buying or selling a building

All goods belonging to the Vicariates, Delegations and Groups belong to the Congregation and therefore to the Church. The Superior General is responsible for them and must give her authorization over any new implantation (house of sisters, work...), purchase, change in usage or ownership. Vicars, Delegates and Sisters-in-charge of Groups will therefore make sure they give her all the relevant information as and when it becomes necessary.⁹

The Vicar with the consent of her Council, the Delegate, or the Sister-in-charge of a Group may decide, after authorization by the Superior General, to buy or sell properties according to the needs of the Vicariate, Delegation or Group. When the price of a sale exceeds the threshold laid down by the local Bishops' Conference, the Vicar must obtain the authorization of the Superior General and her Council and also the authorization of the Holy See. She may not dispose of a property which plays a significant part in the pastoral strategy of the Diocese without consulting the local Bishop.

Consequently:

- The Generalate is involved in the process as early as the reflection phase in the cases of purchases and sales of real estate,
- The same consultation procedure applies to the establishment or closure of large works.

2.3. Management of the Vicariate's artistic heritage

An inventory of art objects and intangible heritage must be drawn up.
The Vicar consults the Generalate before selling any element of such heritage.

2.4. Donations of vicariates and delegations:

Donations that the vicariates and delegations wish to make to the outside world involve the funds of the entire Congregation; in case of large donations, they must be discussed with the Generalate.

⁹ L.A. 9.1 and 9.5.

2.5. Management of the Sisters' financial and real estate assets

Each Sister has another Sister as second signatory for her bank accounts.

Elderly sisters will extend this authorization (if necessary, by granting a Power of Attorney) to all areas concerning their personal affairs (bank, social security, pension, other service providers and managers, etc.).

If a sister entrusts the management of her patrimony to the Congregation, these goods are managed at Vicariate level... Upon a sister's death, the provisions of her will are put into effect. If a sister leaves the Congregation, her patrimony is returned to her.¹⁰

2.5 Sisters' Wills

The Vicar makes an inventory of the wills and stores them in a safe place. She reviews the legal validity of the wills at regular intervals, especially following changes in the legislation.

Every country must take measures to address any legal situation that could deprive the Congregation of the benefit of a bequest desired by a Sister (e.g.: absence of a civil structure of the Congregation that could receive the bequest locally.)

3. Safe classification and storage of important documents

Examples of the documents that need classifying: wills, contracts, property titles, administrative authorizations, court decisions, deeds of ownership when a property is in the name of a Sister, etc.

Important documents are stored in a safe place; a list of original documents is drawn up and constantly updated.

It is recommended that a scanned electronic copy of all important documents be made and stored in a safe place. An electronic backup should be placed on the Generalate's server.

4. Sharing

4.1. Rules and operation of the Caisse Commune

⇒ Founding principles¹¹

- The spirit of the Constitutions "We put into the common purse all that we acquire and receive..."
- To receive the CND assets and manage them in accordance with the charism; to transmit them to the next generations; to support apostolic projects according to need and to work for a more just world,
- Common formation on shared responsibility.

¹⁰ L.A. 9.9

¹¹ Acts of the 2014 Chapter (p.17)

- ⇒ The Caisse Commune is designed to finance the following:
 - Projects concerning the sisters' lives,
 - Apostolic projects specific to the CND or in partnership with others (NGOs, Congregations, public entities),
 - The operation of a Vicariate, a Delegation or a Group in difficulty,
 - The Generalate according to its needs.

- ⇒ The Caisse Commune fund management

In addition to these competencies, the Council for Economic Affairs (CEA), composed of the GC, the Financial Director and four experts, has the task of managing investments, analysing the financial situation of the CC and making recommendations to the Generalate regarding the management of funds.

- ⇒ Financing through the Caisse Commune

The funds of the Caisse Commune belong to all of us; Vicariates, Delegations, Groups or the Generalate can submit projects to the Caisse Commune.

The EGC (Enlarged General Council) guarantees the principles of the Caisse Commune. It is informed about the management of the funds and the projects financed. It is consulted on any relevant issues that may arise and gives its opinion on the evolution of the Caisse Commune (changes in operations, broader project selection criteria, etc.)

At any EGC meetings, participants submit medium-term projects.

4.2. Project set-up and financing

- ⇒ Projects eligible by the CC for the life of the Sisters or for the apostolic life:
 - Projects that were discerned within the Vicariate, Delegation or Group and studied in consultation with the Generalate,
 - Investment projects on real estate that must remain the property of CND
 - Projects to cover operating costs for a limited, pre-determined period of time.

For apostolic projects, particular attention will be paid to:

- The educational purpose (in the broadest sense of the word: not just schools, but anything that promotes the development of an individual or group).
- The beneficiaries of the project "both poor and rich", with a concern to reach out to the peripheries.
- Sustainable development: projects adapted to local conditions and cultures, capable of favouring improved sustainability and autonomy, creating jobs for people other than the Sisters and spreading out.
- Partnership: the legal framework regarding the ownership of the properties funded (in case of investment) or the duration of any operating support must be very clear for inter-congregational or partnership projects.
- Sustainability: ensuring the Congregation's ability to remain involved in the funded project.

⇒ **The stages of project analysis**

- Development phase in the Vicariates: Sisters, Bursar and Vicar. At this stage, the Vicar is in contact with the GC to validate the opportunity to further study the project.
A project file is prepared: project summary sheet; budget; one or more quotations, if needed.
- Study phase:
The General Bursar's Office investigates the projects, relying on the advice of experts.
The Generalate and the Vicariate, Delegation or Group at this stage exchange information several times, in order to clarify the project, remove possible obstacles and finalize the file.
- The General Council decides which projects will receive the CC funds.

⇒ **Project management and reporting**

- A reference person is identified for the follow-up of each project,
- A Project Report is prepared by the Vicariate/Delegation when the project is completed. It includes the following four parts:
 - Status and receipts of expenses with necessary comments,
 - Description of the implementation and the “final product” (photos),
 - Description of the project delivery to the beneficiaries,
 - Measures taken for the sustainability of the project.

A detailed form is available from the Generalate.

⇒ **Request of funds outside the Congregation**

Requesting funds outside the Congregation is essential.

Some points are to be considered:

- The objectives, purposes and activities of the funding entity must be consistent with the objectives of CND,
- The use of these funds must not deprive the Congregation of its freedom of action,
- The applications for funds to public and private financing entities must be made in consultation with the Generalate.

⇒ **Donors: precautions; transparency**

In the case of funds, material goods, or properties, before accepting a donation, we should make sure to study the following:

- the characteristics, qualities and purposes of the donor,
- the sources of these funds or assets
- any possible charges resulting from the donation (activity, capacity to carry out the new mission, legal procedures ...).

4.3. Meeting of Bursars

The annual meeting of bursars sees the attendance of the General Council, Vicars, Delegates and Bursars (both Lay and sisters). It is a time of information exchange on the Congregation’s economic and financial matters; a time to evaluate the needs and resources of every Vicariate and Delegation. The annual economic meeting aims to make us more co-responsible for our common resources.

5. Personnel management – delegating and reporting

a) Lay staff.

Their paid and professional status requires the following:

- A job description,
- A work contract complying with the laws of the country,
- A clear description of hierarchical and functional connections,
- Respectful working conditions (time schedule, places, salary...),
- Social security coverage,
- On the part of the person, a minimum compliance with the CND charism and objectives.

Decisions are the responsibility of the Sisters.

b) Voluntary staff.

The contribution of the CND volunteers and friends is a strength for the Congregation. Their help and actions should take place within a framework that needs defining (mission/service or commitment, accountability, autonomy of action, accompaniment...).

c) Delegating a task, mission or responsibility¹² requires specifying the framework and determining the following (in writing):

- The content of the delegation,
- Limits (temporal, geographic...),
- Operational modes,
- The methods of "reporting" throughout the execution of the task, mission or responsibility assigned.

Attention should be paid to:

- Informing the Sisters of any delegation entrusted to a person,
- Following and accompanying the person; giving them confidence, if necessary,
- Regularly evaluating the approach and possibly renewing it formally,
- Helping the person to acquire the skills to carry out this task, if necessary, through specific training.

In all areas, and in the area of management in particular, it is recommended to avoid general powers of attorney, unlimited powers to act in the name and on behalf of the Congregation, as well as responsibilities that are not shared or subject to systematic reporting.

6. Civil structures

All properties situated within the boundaries of a Vicariate or Delegation belong to that Vicariate or Delegation or group, with the exception of those purchased by the Generalate.

*Should the Vicariate or Delegation cease to exist, ownership of the properties is transferred to the Generalate.*¹³

¹² Examples: delegating the power to engage the Congregation with outside entities, delegation of signing authority... Coordinator of the School Network; Project Manager ...

¹³ Supplementary Articles (SA) 9.2 and 9.3

When circumstances require us to create civil moral persons as owners of the Congregation's buildings, lay people who are members of the Administrative Councils must remember that, in the eyes of the Church, these goods remain the property of the Congregation.

Consequently: statutes of civil structures

The civil statutes adopted in a country must allow the Congregation to remain as close as possible to the provisions of Canon Law, and will strive to ensure that in all circumstances governance remains with the Sisters of the Congregation. Thus, if lay persons are legitimately involved in the governance of the structure, this governance must not escape the control of the Sisters who are canonically responsible in or outside the country. The statutes should provide for the transfer of governance to another canonical body of the Congregation, and ultimately to the Generalate of the Congregation when the resources of the sisters become insufficient locally.

The statutes of the civil structures must provide for the case of dissolution: the goods will go to another canonical structure of the Congregation, in particular the Generalate.

7. Healthcare and pensions

a- Social security contributions of working sisters

Working sisters (in the works of the Congregation or outside) must receive a remuneration to contribute to the obligatory or optional social security systems existing in the country (healthcare and retirement)

Whether or not such plans exist in a country, working Sisters must receive remuneration documented by a payslip.

b- Healthcare funds

When the local health scheme does not provide for sufficient care, a health fund is set up to replace or supplement public welfare.

A charter is to be set up by the Vicariate with a view to organizing the use of this health fund, particularly with regard to the coverage of small and large risks.

c- Personal documents

Each sister keeps a personal file; it contains all the information that can help in case of problems¹⁴: civil status; contact information of family members; health information; financial matters ...

It is recommended and with the sister's explicit acceptance, that these files be entrusted and stored at the Vicariate's secretariat.

Trusted person: As she gets older, each Sister should think about the medical and human accompaniment that she desires for the end of her life, especially should she no longer be able to express herself directly. She can designate a trusted person - sister, parent or relative, if possible, significantly younger than herself - who would be consulted in the event that she herself is unable to express her wishes.

¹⁴ Supplementary Articles.

d- Cemeteries: a list of the places where the sisters are buried will be kept.

8. Public communication

Any written or spoken communication by a Sister on public media speaks for the CND as a whole. For this reason, it is important to ask for advice and authorization, to reflect with others (Vicar, VC), to be clear about what one wants to say or can say or not say.

But also, what information can be put on the media, the editor or the social networks (objectives, charter...).

Projects for books and studies are considered in dialogue with the leaders of the Congregation - Vicar and Superior General - and their publication is subject to authorization.

9. Prudential safeguards

For the safeguarding of any person from any form of abuse, the Vicar and her Council must learn about and adopt any country-specific provisions.

The protection of minors will be constantly monitored in the Congregation's establishments in accordance with the law and the recommendations of the Church.

It is important to do the following:

- To appoint a reference person, not involved in the hierarchy of the establishments, and make his or her name known to all persons to be safeguarded,
- To clearly define how to proceed in the event of a report,
- To include prevention in the formation of the Sisters and the educators,
- To encourage opportunities to talk; each Sister, each person must be able to have recourse to an independent specialist when they feel mistreated.

Annex – The sisters' personal files

The personal file contains all the important information

- Birth certificate – ID card
- Bank account details (account number; signatures...)
- Deeds of ownership of any house
- Details about where the keys to such properties are located
- Doctor's name and contact details
- A file with the name of a person to contact in case of emergency and the family members to immediately inform
- Copy of the Last Will and Testament
- List of personal belongings to return to specified persons
- End of life wishes (end of life care, organ donation, burial/cremation...)
- A small biography on what the person wants to share about her life
- Details about IT devices (phone and PC) and passwords to obtain important information

The file is sent to the Vicariate, Delegation or Generalate (in the case of Groups).



PRIVATE AUDIENCE

POPE FRANCIS



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Fontenay-sous-Bois, 22nd September 2021

To His Holiness Pope Francis
V - 00120 VATICAN CITY

Most Holy Father,

I am writing to you as Superior General of the Congregation of Our Lady - Canonesses of Saint Augustine - on the advice of Father Landousies.

After three postponements, we are going to hold our General Chapter from 9th to 26th January 2022, in Rome, at the Casa La Salle, and we request the favour of a private audience with you.

I dare to make this request for several reasons:

1. The Congregation of Our Lady was founded at the end of the 16th century by St. Peter Fourier and Blessed Alix Le Clerc for the education of girls, who were totally neglected at that time.

Their aim 400 years ago was to "set up public schools", i.e. free schools for young people "both poor and rich". Since then, this priority has not aged a bit and is still relevant today.

As Peter Fourier and Alix Le Clerc were from Lorraine, and because Lorraine was not French at that time, they did not attract the attention of the general public. However, they inspired several congregations (the Brothers of the Christian Schools, in particular) and gave birth to other congregations (the School Sisters of Notre-Dame in the USA, the Congregation of Notre-Dame in Canada), all of which had an educational charism.

In an interview with Dominique Wolton in 2017, that I am attaching to this letter, you paid tribute to Saint Pierre Fourier.

After his canonisation, his statue was placed in Saint Peter's Basilica, in the choir on the second level.

2. Today, the Congregation of Our Lady is present in 12 countries (Brazil, Mexico, DR Congo, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Great Britain, Belgium, Netherlands, Hungary, Slovakia, Italy, France), with a majority of sisters in Brazil, Congo and Vietnam.

Its educational charism reaches 34,000 young people and 3,400 adults. An international educational network is being set up with the aim of implementing the "Educational Compact of the Congregation of Our Lady", a priority orientation of our Chapter. In keeping with our charism and following your call, we wish to help each young person to discover his or her "integral" vocation as a man or a woman and to give him or her the desire to take part in the life of the world.

3. There will be 42 participants, including 30 Chapter members. This last reason for my request is not of the least importance: it is a great desire for the sisters to meet our Leader, without an intermediary, and to be confirmed in our life as consecrated women... A dream that you yourself encourage!

I do not intend to exhaust your patience or take advantage of your availability, however, I dare to present my request as in the Gospel: with insistence, as it is said of women!

As the election of the Superior General and her Councillors is scheduled for 19th and 20th January, the Chapter would be happy to meet you afterwards.

In the meantime, I assure you, Most Holy Father, of our unanimous prayer and gratitude for the care you are taking of the Church in the World.

Sister Cécile MARION cnd-csa

Superior General

When Pope Francis paid homage to Saint Peter Fourier!

PAPE FRANÇOIS

Rencontres avec
DOMINIQUE WOLTON

Politique et société



Pope Francis meets Dominique Wolton

Politics and Society

Pope Francis: The Church must be charitable. My predecessors, Pius XI and Paul VI, said that one of the highest forms of charity is politics. The Church must get involved in “high” politics. Because the Church does “high” politics, that is the politics that consists in offering an evangelical perspective to people. However, the Church must not meddle in “low” politics, the politics of parties and that sort of things. Unfortunately, the Church is so exploited by low politics.... So much exploited. By fundamentalists, we already talked about that. Think about your history. The famous “Monsieur Abbé”. What did these “Monsieur l’Abbé” hide? Priests who served at Court and were engaged in low politics. They were not really priests. True priests were the Curé d’Ars¹, Saint Peter Fourier², who was confessor at Court, but always kept himself to himself. He waited for people to go and talk to him about matters of the heart. However, he never engaged in low politics. I do not think that this is good at all, priests at receptions, airports...

¹ Jean-Marie Vianney (1786-1859), parish priest of the Parish of Ars, venerated in the Catholic Church.

² Peter Fourier (1565-1640), Augustinian religious, parish priest of Mattaincourt, was very close to the Dukes of Lorraine. His commitment to the renewal of the educational ministry made him a pioneer of the Catholic Reform.



Address to Pope Francis

Most Holy Father,

On behalf of the Sisters of Our Lady - Canonesses of Saint Augustine, I would like to begin by expressing our gratitude: knowing - a little - your agenda, we wish to thank you wholeheartedly for this time that you dedicate to us.

Our gratitude expresses our affection for several reasons, allow me to mention three of them:

1. We are encouraged by the new dynamism that you have given to apostolic religious life. We have two Founders: Saint Peter Fourier - whom you know well! - and Blessed Alix Le Clerc.

It was not easy to be a religious woman living in the world at the end of the 16th century, but she kept going... And here we are before you! Perhaps we will even have the joy of meeting again for her canonisation.

In any case, our spiritual closeness is great: a former Superior General of the Congregation - Sister Marie-Alice Tihon - recently told me: "Our Constitutions were written with Jesuit ink!"

2. We are also energized by your call to re-found a "Universal Educational Compact". As religious educators, we desire to tell you that in our "small way", you can count on us. It is true that there are few of us, but we are on four continents and, according to a Brazilian bishop - Dom Lorscheider - who met a Sister of the Congregation on a plane, it seems that "we make noise"!

Another former Superior General who led the Congregation during the years of the Second Vatican Council - Sister Elisabeth Giron - used to say, taking up a Korean proverb: "Do not say: there are few of us; just say: we are"!

3. Finally, we wish to express our gratitude as women. Many of us have experienced - sometimes suffered - a second-class treatment in the Church and in the world. You are emphasising the necessary presence of women, and restoring our confidence by reaffirming the equal dignity of all.

Most Holy Father, allow me to say "Good Father Francis" - as we have been accustomed to calling Saint Peter Fourier for more than 400 years -, a final word.

You have before you Sisters who by their age are grandmothers, mothers, daughters and granddaughters. The great-grandmothers have stayed at home, but we carry them in our hearts, here before you.

You, who valiantly carry the weight of responsibility and the weight of age, encourage us to age well... Tell us, tell them: how do you do it? Share your secret with us!

Thank you, Most Holy Father - "Good Father Francis". Be assured that our prayers accompany you, and they will do so all the more closely after our meeting this morning.

Vatican City, Monday 24th January 2022

Sister Cécile MARION cnd-csa

Superior General



**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE
CANONESSES OF SAINT-AUGUSTIN OF THE NOTRE-DAME
CONGREGATION**

*Clementine Hall
Monday, 24 January 2022*

Dear sisters!

I welcome you on the occasion of your General Chapter. I thank the Superior for her kind words, also for her sense of humour, but good, *avec le sens de l'humour*. I heartily greet each one of you and, through you, I express my spiritual closeness to all the sisters of your Congregation in various countries.

Along with you, I thank the Lord for the work of his Spirit, made manifest in your educational charism, in the service of the new generations and families, for an integral humanism and a more fraternal world. Today, we find ourselves facing a challenge to the formation and education of the human person. Faithful to the evangelical intuition of your founders Saint Pierre Fourier and Blessed Alix Le Clerc, you are committed to a popular education, education in faith, education in justice and closeness to the poor. In the various countries where you work, I encourage you to be missionary disciples and communities of hope and joy, since "the great danger in today's world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience" – the tragedy of the blunted conscience. "Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor" (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 2).

Dear sisters, the theme you have chosen for your Chapter, "Educational Pact of the Notre-Dame Congregation", is a strong invitation to reflect on new possible ways of reaching young people in their daily lives, with the aim of contributing to their integral development. Indeed, "the journey of life calls for hope grounded in solidarity. All change requires a process of education in order to create new paradigms capable of responding to the challenges and problems of the contemporary world, of understanding and finding solutions to the needs of every generation, and in this way contributing to the flourishing of humanity now and in the future" [1]. Faced with the challenges and dangers that threaten young people, I hope that your commitment and your enthusiasm, forged in the strength of the Gospel, may restore to them the taste for life and the desire to build a society worthy of this name (cf. Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti*, 71).

Dear sisters, I count on you and I trust in you, the Church trusts in you. With your words, your deeds and your witness, you send a powerful message to the world that rejects the most vulnerable categories. May you drink from the wellspring of goodness and truth through prayer and adoration, and find in communion with Christ, who died and rose again, the strength to cast a positive gaze, a

gaze of love and a gaze of hope, a compassionate gaze, a gaze of tenderness, on the world, paying particular attention to the disadvantaged strata of society. It is in this way that your mission as educators will bear quality fruit among the people for the good of society. Thanks to your charism, which seeks to make each person discover the love of Christ, you contribute to opening up new horizons and creating spaces for fraternity. In fact, "to educate is always an act of hope, one that calls for cooperation in turning a barren and paralyzing indifference into another way of thinking that recognizes our interdependence" [2].

Dear sisters, at this time, in which the Covid-19 pandemic has produced a crisis with many aspects, in particular a strong impact on education and on the young, I invite you to be closer to people who experience isolation, sadness and discouragement. Indeed, "we need to use above all the language of closeness, the language of generous, relational and existential love that touches the heart, impacts life, and awakens hope and desires" (Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit*, 211).

I entrust each one of you, and all your sisters, to the Lord and to the Virgin Mary, and I bless you from my heart. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Thank you.

[1] *Video Message on the occasion of the meeting organized by the Congregation for Catholic Education: "Global Compact on Education. Together to look beyond"* (15 October 2020).

[2] *Ibid.*



PHOTOS

Casa Generalizia La Salle



Chapter room



Chapel



9th January 2022: 4th centenary of Mother Alix and opening of the 11th General Chapter

ROME FROM THE SPANISH STEPS AND THE CATACOMB OF DOMITILLA



16th January 2022 – “Do what he tells you”

PRIVATE AUDIENCE WITH POPE FRANCIS



Presentation of the Spiritual Writings of Mother Alix

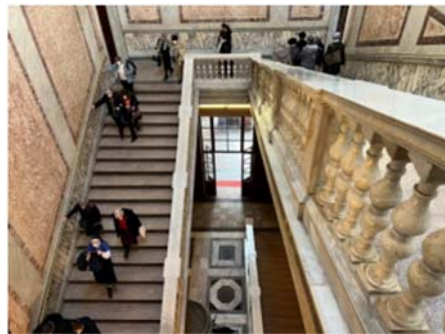


24th January 2022 – Clementine Hall

AFTER THE AUDIENCE



San Damaso Court



Staircase – Bronze Door



Saint Peter's Basilica

NEW GENERAL COUNCIL



19th – 20th January 2022

CLOSING OF THE CHAPTER



26th January 2022



ANNEX

Working Groups

The following tables present the working groups on the orientations.

They are interesting because they present ideas that were not picked up in the texts voted (text in green) and may be a source of inspiration.

SHARING OF THE CHARISM

We are fundamentally educators, that is to say, we are sent to each person to help him or her discover and live to the full his or her unique vocation as a man or a woman. We therefore want our charism to be alive, to continue to be shared and to respond to today's calls. It is the legacy of our Founders; as a gift of the Spirit, it belongs to the whole Church.

Convictions	Actions	Means
<p>We want our charism to remain alive, while being able to adapt it to the different realities of today.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowing our charism - Taking in our charism - Making our charism known 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Producing a simple, illustrated, captivating document, translated into all the languages of the Congregation, and encouraging its dissemination by all communication means - Circulating our various documents: Founders, CND history and spirituality, Educational Compact etc. - Formation and reflection: together and personally thanks to meetings, sessions, videoconferences, website, social networks, hymns and writings.
<p>We want to share our Charism with all the CND Family: Sisters, Associates, Partners and all those who are connected with us and share the same desire to "grow and make him grow".</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The educational Compact: how to know, to make known and to implement it - Giving new dynamism to the associates, including where the sisters are not or no longer present - Finding common projects to propose to as many members of the CND Family as possible without forgetting students and alumni 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dissemination of the Educational Compact through appropriate means in every country - Contact persons to establish contacts - Communication: forums, witnesses, international meetings open to all - Greater involvement of school directors and alumni
<p>All of us want to listen to the urgent calls evoked by the two recent encyclicals in order to "change the world" and to awaken in humankind the concern for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - refugees and the dignity of the human person - the climate, water, food, and transports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finding local movements active in these sectors, and getting involved in these same movements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participating in the reflection and acting concretely where we are; to this end, use all possible contacts.

FORMATION

Our reflection is in line with the Acts of the Chapter of Locquirec 2014 and the Initial Formation Handbook.

We are called by God to form ourselves to live the Charism, our membership and mission.

Formation is also essential to prevent and denounce all forms of abuse and exploitation, which require open spiritual and human accompaniment.

Vocation Ministry		
Convictions	Actions	Means
<p>God calls: religious vocation is a gift from God and our life must be meaningful</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Praying for and with young people - Having a fraternal, simple and welcoming life style - Caring for the young: knowing the young and their culture; getting involved in youth groups, accompanying them; investing in social networks - Establishing an itinerant vicariate group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Day of prayer for Vocations - Prayer and reflection groups - Accompaniment - Inviting the young to participate in actions of solidarity (ex. caring for nature) - Inviting the young to our liturgies – - Raising awareness among the sisters to welcome the young - Dynamic website with sisters or lay people as communication managers - Organization of the circuit; funds to be set aside in the Caisse Commune
Initial Formation		
Convictions	Actions	Means
<p>Every person has potential that needs to be discovered and developed especially in the young to prepare them for responsibilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing a process of accompaniment - Continuing the formation of formators - Updating and completing the IF Handbook (to be adapted to each Vicariate). Introducing the environmental and safeguarding issues. Reviewing this handbook with the formators in every mandate - Continuing international juniorates - Demanding open, welcoming, tolerating and edifying formation communities, in a spirit of subsidiarity - Insist on Community and Apostolic Life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Congregational and inter-congregational Local session - Resorting to experts - International sessions - Community formation sessions on constructive communication - Exchanges between formators and sisters-in-charge of communities.

Ongoing Formation		
Convictions	Actions	Means
<p>At every moment of our religious life, there is a need to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revive and adapt the essentials of Apostolic Religious Life in today's world - Develop and consolidate our belonging to the Congregation - Convert and reconcile with the others and ourselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deepening the spirit of Saint Augustine (inner freedom and more specifically against any inner or outer influence.) - Resorting to experts - Re-reading apostolic life and discerning the calls in the community - Learning languages (French/English) with stays abroad - Continued self-formation with determination - Learning modern communication means 	<p>Organizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inter-generational exchange sessions - Sessions for perpetually professed sisters (less than 10 years and more than 10 years), organization of international stays – formation vicariates - Organizing economic sessions for the sisters

Formation to Leadership		
Convictions	Actions	Means
<p>Every person has potential Developing potential to take on leadership roles</p>	<p>Every Vicariate defines a formation plan to develop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical competences - Teaching competences - Competences in spiritual direction (FAS) proposed by each Vicariate in agreement with the GC, diversifying the places of formation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sessions for bursars (local and international), sisters-in-charge of communities; IF formators - Sharing economic information - Coaching VC – GC - Preparation of Handbook for all the people in charge

THE INTER-GENERATIONAL DIMENSION

MAKE HIM GROW - GROW TOGETHER

“You are to love one another with a spiritual rather than an earthly love” (Saint Augustin)

WE CALL for a positive outlook towards all the phases of life; for an organisation of life that considers all the real needs of every stage of life, for an acknowledgement of aging and the formation of younger sisters as two challenges requiring our creativity today.

Convictions	Actions	Means
<p>We believe that in the Church “Family of God”, we are “sisters with one another” (PF 1640), a family in the broad sense, according to every culture, with our lay friends and collaborators. With the irreplaceable support of every person and generation, we live our charism: the educational mission – “Make him grow” – and the Augustinian spirit “to grow together”.</p> <p>We believe that as “members of one body” (PF 1640), “the essential element in it is - the quality of the relationships which unite us” (Const.13) - the circulation of life amongst us - sharing our diversities at the <i>local and International level</i>. The bond among the different generations is a great richness</p>	<p><u>Cultivating the charism of the Congregation everywhere and at any age</u>: mutual support and care; welcoming and promoting every generation; belonging to the “body” gives security, this helps us “leave our comfort zones”; leaving the attachments that limit us; spirit of openness, welcome</p> <p><u>Developing what creates bonds, Communicating and sharing among each generation</u>, at the local and international level: news; our life experiences and educational mission; the life experience lived with Christ; our dreams and challenges of the world; our economic resources; living history of the congregation, the Church.</p>	<p>FOR A STRONG CONNECTION AMONG GENERATIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PRESENCE through concrete gestures, visits - Use of COMMUNICATION MEANS <p>Recording the experience of the older sisters; Sharing by email, audio-visual... Talking through skype, social network, zoom, etc.; With 1 person (learning a language); And also a group (zoom)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial and ongoing FORMATION of the people, through sessions, work with experts (<i>fragility among young people; formation to responsibility; preparation for old age; mutual relationships; serving the common good; broad welcome (different experience and culture); spirit of initiative; modern technologies and their use in a spirit of freedom</i>)
<p>We believe that our strong sense of belonging to the congregation is nourished by the memories of our older sisters; their precious wisdom must be shared. Every Vicariate and Group must care for its elderly sisters. Young and old must learn from one another, sharing what gives them life, their worries, supporting one another with their care and prayer. This collaboration, based on the vitality of every stage of life, strengthens our charism today.</p>	<p>Laying the conditions -for our elderly sisters to feel integral part of the mission -to anticipate solutions depending on the decline of health</p> <p>THIS IS HOW THE CHARISM IS PASSED ON, enriched from generation to generation, at the service of the universal fraternity and the Kingdom of God</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International meetings - Experience of life long enough (a few months) for real absorption and lively sharing to understand one another and remove all prejudices - Preparation to old age; consideration of multiform, human, spiritual, material, property and economic needs. <p>FOR ALL OF THIS, TAKE SOME TIME (# activism)</p>

OUR COMMON HOME – INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

We hear the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth that resonate with our charism and urge us to a profound change in our spiritual life, our educational mission and our lifestyle. We propose 3 orientations "to build a common plan around our charism and ecological education." For each of them, we must re-read "Laudato Si" and take in everything that concerns an integral ecological spirituality, our educational mission, and our lifestyle.

Convictions	Actions	Means
<p>We believe that as a Congregation, at the community and personal level and in our mission, we are called to convert to "<u>an integral ecological spirituality</u>".</p>	<p>Integrating the spirituality of integral ecology in our personal and community prayer to strengthen and fortify our educational mission by taking in the wisdom of the Bible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Praying in inter-religious groups, if possible - Getting information on all the proposals connected to ecological spirituality and communicating them - Producing documents accessible to all and uploading them on the Congregation's website
<p>We believe that our educational mission shows care for Life, and concern for the Common Home.</p>	<p>An education to integral ecology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating a community educational compact among the schools, family and communities - Caring for nature and humankind: migrants, refugees, the poor, vulnerable people - In the schools and every educational community, educating to integral ecology. Having this same concerns in all the places of catechesis - Raising awareness among children on the values of the Gospel - All these actions are to be adopted according to the different places 	<p>Creating projects, workshops, in partnership with other institutions</p> <p>Accompanying vulnerable people, informing them of their rights; committing to actions aiming to promote access to rights.</p> <p>Informing and raising awareness among our staff to encourage concrete gestures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protecting bees, planting melliferous plants - Not buying polluting products and participating in actions to stop their sale - Daring to question our neighbour who uses them - Getting closer to organization working in this sense - Encouraging communities to plant vegetable gardens and medicinal herbs <p>Sharing our experiences concretely on the Congregation's website</p>
Convictions	Actions	Moyens
<p>We believe that <u>our way of life</u> demands conversion and must contribute to caring for Life: nature and humanity</p>	<p>Learning lessons from the pandemic</p> <p>Each through her style should embody the change that she desires for the protection of nature and humankind</p> <p>Reflecting on and witnessing our vow of poverty in community: sharing our finances.</p> <p>Our life style must help our societies realise the need for a commitment towards integral ecology.</p>	<p>Purchases: encouraging and supporting sustainable production networks and small producers, while prioritising agro-ecological productions</p> <p>Optimising the use of paper, water, electricity and recycling</p> <p>Prioritising responsible investments and environment-friendly constructions</p>

