

ECHOES

"Towards the other shore"
« Vers l'autre rive »
«Hacia la otra orilla»



Enlarged General Council
01-12 October 2024
Generalate, Rome

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Day 1

The Enlarged General Council (EGC), which consists of the General Council and the Leaders of the Units in the Institute across the world, was held in Rome from 1 to 12 October. The theme chosen for this EGC was “Towards the other shore”.

The objectives were:

- ⇒ Evaluate the progress made so far after the General Chapter 2021.
- ⇒ Form ourselves in the journey towards transformation.
- ⇒ Plan together for the years ahead.



After a few words of welcome, Geni invited the participants to introduce themselves. Each one received a stone on which was written the name of a sister to whom they had to present it, with a few words of wishes and encouragement. **These stones are special because they come from all the countries where we are present.** They were originally intended to be used at the Chapter. Now, since this is an “in-presence” meeting, it's an opportunity to do so.

Ana Maria Alcalde welcomed Sr. Marian Murcia, the Facilitator of the EGC: “She belongs to the Unit of Spain, she is the Bursar at this moment. She has facilitated many General Chapters of different congregations and is still accompanying them in their needs. So, we are happy to have our own Sister as a facilitator for this session, who can help us to move forward in order to live our chapter journey in a concrete way”.



Opening Prayer :

The opening prayer focused on leadership, taking the models of **Jesus and the Good Father**.

We are here as Leaders, our designated role for this time. We are aware of the big responsibility that weighs on each one of us. At the same time, we know that we do not carry it alone; we share it with each other and we trust in the action of the Holy Spirit who sustains us.

During these days of gathering, we have the opportunity to strengthen the bonds that unite us, to renew the ardour that should drive us as we contemplate God's action in the life of the Institute and of the Family. Our first model is the leadership of Jesus, the quintessential Leader, followed by Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, who left us some footprints to guide us – ‘**Good Shepherd**’.

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

(John 10: 10b -11)

“Being a Leader in today's World, Church and Religious Life” requires:

Leadership for communion, living co-responsibility, hope-infused leadership and healthy balance for leadership.

Pope Francis reminds us:

“It is Christ who called you to follow him in the consecrated life, and this means continually making an “exodus” from yourselves in order to centre your existence on Christ and his Gospel, on the will of God. This exodus from yourself means setting out on a path of adoration and service’.

Opening Address :

Ana María ALCALDE, SUPERIOR GENERAL



Dear Sisters, First of all, I would like to express the enormous satisfaction I feel at being able to meet you all for the first time, after 2019, in person. How many events we have lived and are living through as humanity, as Church, as Institute, as Family that will not pass without leaving their mark. Let us take a minute to remember them and pass them through our hearts.

Perhaps we make different readings of reality and of all that we have lived, but they will be complementary readings because each one of us can do so from her own perspective and 'every point of view is the view from a point'. I assume, however, that we all perceive small and large signs of a profound and irreversible change that affects us as an Institute and which, just a few decades ago, we felt alien to. What surprises us is the speed with which it is happening. In just a few years, the scenario in which we have acted for decades has changed a great deal and we cannot continue to act as we have always acted, or as we have been doing. It is not unusual for us to have difficulty in positioning ourselves and our leadership service in this new scenario.

We can perceive that, perhaps among ourselves, there is fear, insecurity and resistance to accept the critical situation that we are going through at various levels (mission, formation, leadership, structures...) and that the General

Chapter helped us to become aware of. We may be tempted to look more to the past than to the future.

To move towards the future, we need firm determination, realism and hope, to discern the possibilities that the present time offers us, even if we do not have all things clear and all the answers. The path is made by walking. What we must be clear about is that this time is a time of grace and salvation, for God continues to accompany his people faithfully. He has not given up his plan for humanity and creation.

It is not, therefore, a question of avoiding the profound crisis that is triggering this change of epoch, but of accepting that we are at a time of global historical evolution. It is not a question of paralyzing ourselves but of having the courage to make choices which will lead us, through new routes, to respond authentically, based on our charism, to the needs of the people of our time. I think that it is not so much a question of conserving our structures and habitual ways of doing things, but of being faithful to God's calls today and responding, according to our possibilities, aware of the historical reality we are going through.

The Spirit is at work intensely at this time and invites us to be open to the unexpected, to accept a good dose of uncertainty, to leave our deep-rooted mental schemes to

follow new paths that offer new responses to the needs of today. Do we listen to him? Do we allow ourselves to be surprised by him? Do we see the new that is being born? (Is 43:8).

There are words of the Founder which have a special meaning and force today. He wrote in 1851: 'It is very seldom that the ideas and needs of a century which is ending respond to the ideas and needs of the century which is beginning.... The aims they set out to achieve are the same, but they nevertheless adopt new forms and new means to adapt themselves to the circumstances which brought about their emergence'. And this one invites us to be in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in humanity when it says: 'Do not turn away from those who live under the common law... as far as you are able, share with them all the discomforts, labours and dangers of the journey' (GR 1851). In both, we find a call to incarnate the Charism/Mission in a way that is attractive and responsive to the needs of the society of our time.

By the grace of God, we have come this far, because we have had your indispensable collaboration, with the invaluable support of the Teams of

Participation, with the faithful and prayerful support of the Sisters, of the members of the Family and the contribution of some advisors.

With all this background and in the present circumstances, we are preparing to hold this Enlarged General Council (EGC). We can consider it as a pause in the journey we have started after the General Chapter of 2021. We will be grateful for the miles we have travelled; become aware of where and how we are now as an Institute; strengthen our service of leadership and continue the journey, well oriented in the direction of the harbour we envision on the horizon.

We are gathered at a favourable time as our small synodal assembly coincides with the large assembly meeting here in Rome for the second stage of the Synod. May the Spirit blow upon us all and impel us to walk together in an attitude of mutual listening, dialogue and discernment in order to continue rowing towards the other shore.

It is time to renew hope, as Pope Francis proposes to us in the Bull of Convocation of the Ordinary Jubilee of 2025. He offers us solid foundations on which to base our hope today and sets before us those whom we must offer tangible signs of hope.

The Pope speaks to us of

Christian hope, which is not a cheap or deluded optimism that does not take into account the weight of reality or dreams that serious world situations will easily change. On the contrary, it is hope against all hope, i.e. hope against the tide. It is historical hope that translates into critical intelligence and transformative action.

This hope requires patience, a serene and persevering attitude that trusts in God who leads history, sometimes paths ahead that are incomprehensible to us, but always with tenderness and compassionate love.

Supported by this hope, let us live these days intensely. Thank you very much....



Marian, the facilitator, invited each one to recall the invitation of the opening prayer, as well as the opening address of Ana Maria.

In the prayer we heard some characteristics of leadership, according to our Charism: **to listen, to discern, to respond to the will of God.**

The objectives ask us to evaluate and to plan. To make it possible we need to listen and see in order to know what is working and what is not

working. We're ready for the future, aware that we don't know where we'll be.

This day is a **"Transition Day"** – from our particular contexts towards the reality of the Institute.

Our General Chapter 2021 invites us **"to go over to the other shore."** Looking at the theme, let us ask ourselves:

- ☞ **Where do I/we stand in the midst of this journey? As a person? As Unit?**
- ☞ **Are we still repairing the boat?**
- ☞ **How is our journey? Was it easy, comfortable, peaceful, etc.?**
- ☞ **Look at the congregation as a whole: Where do we stand as a whole?**

Some echoes of the sharing

- ✓ We are in the boat; sometimes we repair, sometimes we go back because each one's realities are different in our journey.
- ✓ Willingness to travel and listen to one another in our journey.
- ✓ We have the energy to progress from the beginning of the Chapter to the present.
- ✓ We are always at the crossroads, but we take our turn to continue our journey.
- ✓ Accept the vulnerability.
- ✓ What is newness to us?
- ✓ We have a lot of stories in our journey: joyful, sad, surprises, challenging, etc.
- ✓ We are not alone in our journey.
- ✓ Inner transformation is taking place in each and every person...

- ✓ The life of our elderly Sisters brings hope to move in the deprivations of our lives.
- ✓ There is a feeling that we are walking very slowly.
- ✓ Our boat needs to be repaired in order to cross...
- ✓ Nothing is impossible with God.

All were invited to ponder the resonances, hopes, vulnerability, risks, mission responses and transitions that arise in their hearts.

In the afternoon, all EGC members took part, with the Synod participants, in the Penitential Prayer Service, led by Pope Francis. Some



participated in person in St. Peter's Basilica and others, from home, by TV transmission. In this prayer, women and men from different parts of the world have shared experiences

of being abused. All the participants, as Church members, have expressed shame for our sins and asked pardon from the victims and from God.

Day 2,3,4 Evaluation from the Chapter so far...

The morning prayer helped the participants to enter the day's work: ***"Our Consecration is a call to communion at the service of mission. It is an expression of our passion for God's purpose in the world."*** (Vowed for Mission 4:1)

The Facilitator reminded the assembly that the first part of the program was to evaluate each aspect of the Chapter mandate: We'll start with **Mission: Passion and Response**. First of all, let's take time to evaluate our response to **"letting go"**.

Let's take some time to reflect personally:

- What have I been able to "let go of" in my mindset in order to move towards bold steps?
- Have I tried to think more objectively, concretely, without fantasies?
- Have I taken more risks and responsibilities for the Institute?

Some echoes in the plenary session...

- ⊙ The mentality is changing from **"my ministry" to "our ministry."**
- ⊙ Action taken to care for our common home
- ⊙ The new ministry has included areas such as youth, children, women, trafficking,
- ⊙ Closing communities in order to respond to the new needs
- ⊙ Collaboration of PBN members
- ⊙ Animation through Teams of Participation
- ⊙ Train the Sisters for anti-trafficking and safeguarding children.
- ⊙ Animated the Sisters to accept the new situation and take care of the other sisters...



The facilitator invited the General Leadership Team to share the bold steps they have taken so far, after the **General Chapter 2021**.

MISSION : PASSION AND RESPONSE - CONCRETE STEPS

- ☞ As requested by the Chapter, the evaluation of the presence and activities in each Unit was made through a questionnaire.
 - The summary of the responses was given to be reflected in each Continent, during the Continental meeting.
- ☞ Each Continent, after reflection and discernment, has taken some decisions regarding the Holy Family response for today's world, according to the context.

Asia

1. Rooted in spirituality/inner transformation
2. Financial Sustainability
3. Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation - "Rise Up Asia"
4. Intercultural living

America

1. Working with migrants
2. Community living
3. Accompaniment and caring for life

Africa

1. Intercultural living
2. Continental Novitiate
3. Financial Sustainability
4. Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation.

Europe

1. Participative leadership in living our mission
2. Care for the common home and sense of life
3. Deepening the Spirituality - Accompaniment till the end of life

Personal reflection and group sharing



What concrete steps have you taken in the Unit regarding bold steps in mission?
If not, what would we have to give up in order to move forward?



Some points brought up for the plenary

Session

- All very much committed to the post capitular process, i.e. to live the purpose.
- Many personal and community responses to the common mission.
- Learning a new language in order to strengthen the future.
- A huge effort has been taken by the elderly and aged Sisters in the community.
- New platforms have been given to the Sisters in order to work and move forward and tune themselves for the mission.
- Collaboration with government sectors and other Religious Congregations for the Common Home.
- Lay member appointed as a community co-animator in order to move forward for greater transformation.

- Growing awareness of moving from “my Unit” to “Institute level”.
- Family - Intervocational Teams.

Some common points from the dialogue and sharing in the room:

- Difficulty to move forward
- Seeking to work as a community, not as an individual.
- Greater awareness of our being Family
- Working with other vocations and other organisations.
- An awareness of the need to form and prepare the Sisters for new ministries and services.
- One of the challenges we’re facing is to connect the desires and reality – How do we manage to match our desires with reality?



In the afternoon, continuing the evaluation, the **teams of Interculturality and Information** were dealt with. **The same process was followed: presentation of the General Council, the respective Participation Teams and the steps that were done in the Units.** All the Teams shared their evaluation in the following process:

- ☞ **The purpose of the team**
- ☞ **The Mandate**
- ☞ **Introducing the team members**
- ☞ **The function of the team**
- ☞ **The work done by the team until today**
- ☞ **The Challenges**
- ☞ **The future plan**

INTERCULTURALITY

The 20th General Chapter invite the whole Institute to look more closely at our understanding of Intercultural living:

Chapter Declaration – *“In a world that separates and divides, intercultural living is an imperative of our mission of communion”.* (p. 8).

Demographic Change/ Communities in the Twilight of Life

LETTING GO: Not taking seriously our formation for the **multicultural reality of the Institute** and our insertions.

AUDACIOUS STEPS:

- ☞ The General Council will create, in the diminishing units an **intercultural presence...**
- ☞ The General Council will take into account **the theme of interculturality:**

- ☞ Create a team during the first year of mandate, to deepen the **conversations/ formation on Interculturality.**

Structures / Leadership

Name new places of **presence and insertion to include intercultural communities.**

Mandate given to the interculturality team

- ☞ Formation on interculturality/ deepening conversations: to better live our charism today
- ☞ To help the present multicultural communities to live a new step towards interculturality.
- ☞ To prepare sisters who will move to other cultures and to prepare the Units to welcome them.

Objective of the Team: To build a new awareness of interculturality. The team focused in two priorities:

- ☞ Missionaries beyond the borders of their culture
- ☞ Sisters who are preparing to leave their countries or who have recently left.

Development in the Units through link persons

- ☞ Preparation of the sisters nominated by the Units as link persons to deepen develop the theme in their respective Units

INFORMATION

The International Information Team express its objective in this way:

- ☞ To strengthen our Family bond by circulating the information within the Family
- ☞ Collaborate with the teams of participation
- ☞ Use the communication to evangelize and to make our Charism known

PUBLICATIONS at General Level

- ☞ Interconnections
- ☞ Echoes – from the Sessions
- ☞ Flashes – Events or any news
- ☞ Social Media: Website
YouTube
Facebook
Twitter

PUBLICATIONS at Units Level

- ☞ 3 website updated (Canada, Poland, Britain and Ireland)
- ☞ Magazines
- ☞ Newsletter
- ☞ Facebook
- ☞ YouTube (some)
- * **Vicariate: Newsletter once a year**

Echoes of the conversation on this topic between the Leaders:

- ☞ Appreciation of Facebook posts.
- ☞ Flash and Echoes are good.
- ☞ There's a call for a change of mentality - we've been doing the same things for years.
- ☞ A global question - How do we reach young people with our communication?
- ☞ There is a need to improve the quality of our communication in a more 'professional' way.

- ☞ Suggestion to carry out a survey among Associates and Young People about the Website.
- ☞ To help the Institute better understand Artificial Intelligence

At the end of the day, the facilitator asked everyone to take some time to do a contemplative review of the day:

- ⇒ What remains in me?
- ⇒ What is the Spirit saying to me?

The 3rd Day continues the evaluation of the steps we have taken since the Chapter.

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

This topic has not been taken during the Chapter. Given the need for the Institute, the GLT has constituted the **Team Prevention of Abuse**.

The objective of this team is:

- ✓ Prepare a Document of safe guarding for the Institute;
- ✓ Make the evaluations and update each three years.

- ✓ To ensure the necessary formation.

The Church requires each Religious Congregation to draw up its own policy to which it will have to commit itself. This safeguarding policy is therefore mandatory for all members of the Institute and all those who collaborate with us.

The final draft of the Guidelines for the Prevention of Abuse, which was prepared by the team, with Tina Campbell's expertise, was given to the participants to work in a small group in order to change, modify, or give suggestions, etc. With all the corrections, suggestions, and modifications, **the Guidelines will be published for the Institute very soon.**

TWILIGHT OF LIFE

The second theme to be taken this day was **Demographics/Communities (Units) in the Twilight of Life**. This is one of the options defined by the Chapter, who asked to GLT:

- ☞ **To create a Team to monitor the aspects:**
 - **A 10 years plan for Units in the twilight of life;**
 - **Leaving with dignity, places where we can no longer continue.**

The Team tried to develop its work, which is not easy. They found some resistances regarding this issue in some Units. They sent some questions to the Units in order to help their reflection about the reality and have also organized meetings by Continent. The team has made itself available for any request from the Units. So far, they haven't received any requests.

STRUCTURES AND LEADERSHIP

This theme was worked on in a different way. The facilitator proposed two questions to be worked on in groups, by Continent:

- ☞ **What do we mean by the word structure?**
- ☞ **Evaluate the decisions taken at the Continental Meetings.**

Some echoes from the conversation in the room:

- ☞ **Sometimes we feel our structures are heavy.**
- ☞ **The experience of the Continental Meetings**

FORMATION

The presentation of this topic brought to mind the Declaration of the Chapter and the mandate given to the Formation Team - to work for a change of mentality: considering formation as a life process, not just a sequence of phases that end with perpetual vows.

After the sharing, the Leaders expressed their appreciation:

- ☞ **12 steps given to reflect on the transformation as a whole;**
- ☞ **Continental-wise meeting for the formators.**
- ☞ **Zoom session for age groups.**

Some questions were given for the reflection and group sharing:

1. **Best option for the formation for the sisters**

The facilitator invited each one to reflect: **What are the signs and symptoms that some Units are in twilight phase? Are we able to identify them?**

Some of the echoes in the plenary

- ☞ **Age is an issue in many places.**
- ☞ **The closing of many communities and selling of the properties**
- ☞ **Fewer people entering and high death-rate**
- ☞ **Difficulty to assume leadership and other services for the Institute.**
- ☞ **Lack of joy in our communities.**
- ☞ **Decreased charismatic strength.**
- ☞ **Lack of taking personal responsibility.**
- ☞ **No response to the reality of the world.**
- ☞ **No long-term vision and lack of energy**

gave us a feeling of something new emerging.

- ☞ **Maybe we're centered more on what we can't do than on what we can.**
- ☞ **We need to ask ourselves: What are the alternatives for the new we're looking for? What can we do to really find a new alternative, not only change the names of the things?**
- ☞ **The reality of each context is different.**
- ☞ **The heaviest structures are the mental ones.**

within 10 years after final vows (For the year 2025 and later).

2. **Looking at the themes and phases of formation suggested by the Formation Teams, what else would you like to propose for the new guidelines for the integral formation of the Institute?**
3. **Continental Novitiates: "Having two continental novitiates with flexibility of movement according to the need"?**
4. **"Transformation program" - what are your proposals for the next step in the Institute?**
5. **About Martillac – echoes from the Leaders about Martillac sessions.**

Suggestions were shared and given to the Team.

Days 5 and 6 were dedicated to **Formation**, which was the second objective of the meeting: **To form ourselves in the journey towards transformation.**

The morning was free in order to reflect over the experience of the last four days...



In the afternoon, Sr. Nadia Coppa (Congregation of Adorers of the Blood of Christ), the Former President of the UISG (International Union of Superiors General), focused on the theme “Charismatic

Leadership: Forming Leaders for today's Transformation”.

The theme developed in three main moments interspersed with experiential workshops:

1. The service of authority, today
2. Charisms in Communion for a Prophetic Evangelization
3. Mary, Model Leader for a Synodal Church

Here we share with you the main points of Sr. Nadia's presentation

The synodal journey that we are experiencing in this particular historical time confirms how the vision of **Vatican II** must not only be revisited, but developed in many aspects.

Perspectives on authority in religious life after the second Vatican council. The Second Vatican Council is one of the greatest events in the history of the Church. It has witnessed revolutionary and far-reaching changes. It is the fruit of the Council that has favoured changes and progress at the liturgical, social, cultural and economic levels.

While Vatican II did not produce a specific document on authority in religious life, it introduced concepts in several documents that have strongly influenced the perception of religious leadership after the Second Vatican Council. Now we are experiencing the novelty of the magisterium of Pope Francis, the synodal push, the Ordinary Assembly of Bishops for a Synodal Church... a new

air that we all perceive and that has a decisive impact on our way of feeling like a community.

➤ 1. Authority at the service of harmony

An authority at the service of a synodal style is one capable of gathering and composing into unity every gift that the Spirit pours out on people and on different communities. (*Instrumentum Laboris, Come essere chiesa sinodale missionaria 38*)

The influence of **Vatican II** on the way of understanding authority in religious life

- ☞ Participation
- ☞ Collegiality
- ☞ Subsidiarity
- ☞ Accountability/interdependence

Three models of religious (synodal) authority needs:

- ☞ Servant Leadership
- ☞ Shared Leadership
- ☞ Religious Leadership and Power: From Control to Compassion

“ Leaders generate other leaders and this is how leadership becomes a shared and communal process.”

Leadership and / or Management?

Two words commonly used in the business world, words that become interchangeable: If we want to be careful and precise, according to Loredana Abate, author of articles and reflections on leadership in consecrated life, the manager has subordinates, the leader has followers. The manager is a member of an organization who is responsible for performing 4 important management functions:

- ☞ **Planning:** ability to execute an idea/project
- ☞ **Organize:** ability to direct
- ☞ **Lead:** Process and Procedure Management
- ☞ **Control:** Focus on people

Leader Characteristics:

1. Vision
2. Honesty and integrity
3. Communication skills
4. Ability to face challenges

Challenges: A study by Nayar it offers us three elements for a comparison between managers and leaders:

Manager

- ☞ Quantifying the values
- ☞ Circles of Power
- ☞ Manage the work

Leader

- ☞ Creating Values
- ☞ Circles of influence
- ☞ Accompanying people

➤ 2. Charisms in Communion for a Prophetic Evangelization.

At the service of prophetic evangelization requires (prophecy, evangelization, communion)

- ☞ Relationships
- ☞ Places
- ☞ Paths

A prophet:

- ☞ Constantly reminds God's people of the demands of the covenant
- ☞ Has an eye on the past, on the present and on the future.
- ☞ The prophet is the man/the woman who, in the name of God, has something new to offer.
- ☞ Is able to rely on God and help other in their helplessness, fear, poverty and in all circumstances.

Characteristics of the prophet:

- ☞ Prophetic vision and passion for humanity and for the whole creation
- ☞ Charismatic leader
- ☞ Welcoming attitude
- ☞ Inculturation of the Gospel

The synodal path calls for a careful and harmonized discernment of the challenges of our time, **'in view of the renewal of the mission'**. 'Important elements for a fruitful insertion of the institutes in the process of the new evangelization' require, along with fidelity to the charism,

'communion with the entire Holy People of God'.

As leaders, we are called to make a commitment to **'caring'** in many ways:

- ☞ taking care of thinking
- ☞ taking care of personal relationships
- ☞ taking care of decision-making processes
- ☞ taking care of rethinking structures.

In my opinion, it is a matter of looking at the community as a place where it is possible to think, to generate new thoughts, to nurture visions; where it is possible, above all, to become aware of unthought thoughts, those that are inside what we live and what we do, to make them emerge, to make them explicit.

➤ 3. Mary, Model Leader for a Synodal Church

We need a different, mature leadership, focused on a sustainable future, a leadership that we can find in the Mother of God. How can Mary serve as a model of life in authority?

Mary's leadership is contemplative because she has always remained in touch with the truth of herself, has embraced change as part of the divine plan, has taken on the contradictions and struggles of the emergence of the new body of Christ, and has continued to nurture the Word of her heart and convey it as lived and full of hope.

True leadership must be contemplative, capable of overcoming blind spots, its own shadow areas, promoting awareness and self-discipline, and providing the strength to face problems and challenges.

Mary's leadership is collective because she has always acted out of love to highlight others. Let's think about how she was able to highlight all the disciples called to play a specific role in the early Christian community.

Mary has managed to stay in her place and, with a mother's heart, has supported all the difficult yet exhilarating moments of the early Christian community.

Day 7: FINANCE

On the **7th and 8th days**, the evaluation of the steps taken since the General Chapter continued. The 7th day focused on **“Finance.”** **Veronica Rapitso, the General Bursar**, shared on the following aspects:

Administration of Goods Team, whose Mandate given by the General Council is: To help the GLT, particularly to deal with the Chapter decisions.

- ☞ **The belief that there is a lot of money in the General Administration.**
- ☞ **The political situation in some countries makes it difficult to receive resources.**

Action taken on audacious steps:

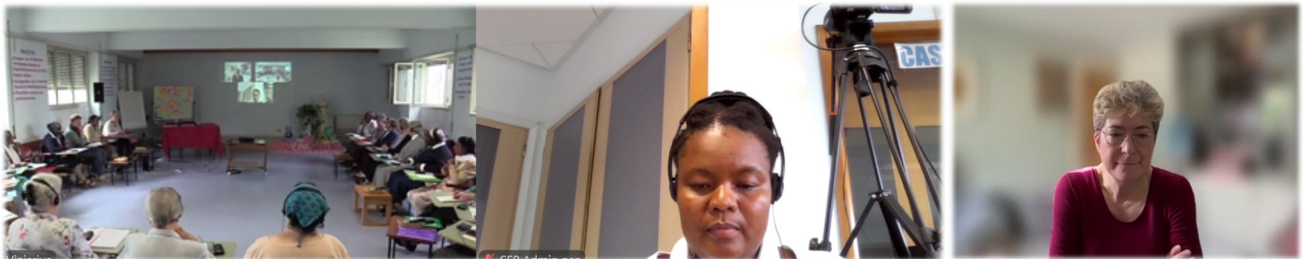
- ☞ **Collect data to prepare the 10-year plan**
- ☞ **New office for a Permanent Accountant - Rome**
- ☞ **Project Manager Office: General Level – Rome**
- ☞ **Update the property registers**

Challenges:

- ☞ **Sustainability of the Units.**
- ☞ **Pooling and Sharing.**
- ☞ **Delayed actions**
- ☞ **Request from Units that are not in their 10-year plan.**
- ☞ **Not following the Guidelines for Administration of Goods of the Institute.**

Veronica welcomed Amanda Francis, who connected with the participants via Zoom. Though the participants have already listened to Amanda’s sharing on the CIO and property register, during the Continental meetings, this session gave a clear picture of the property of the Institute - at the Unit level, Continental level, and as a whole.

(N.B.: Amanda’s sharing on CIO and Property Register already published in the Bursar Session on 9 May 2024, on the fourth day of the session.)



Three Calls :

In the afternoon the participants were invited to write three calls which resonated for them from this gathering. Some of the calls were as follows:

- ☞ **Conversion and transformation**
- ☞ **Inclusive of all**
- ☞ **Financial sustainability**
- ☞ **Synodal way of life; listening and dialogue**
- ☞ **Formation at all levels; professional training for Formators**
- ☞ **Compassionate leadership**
- ☞ **Spiritual direction for Sisters**
- ☞ **New insertions**
- ☞ **Intercultural living...**
- ☞ **To learn a new language**
- ☞ **Train the leaders to lead...**
- ☞ **A call to welcome life...**
- ☞ **A call to communion...**

Day 8: "WHOLE FAMILY"

This day focused on "Whole Family of PBN". Ana Maria Alcalde shared a synthesis of what is meant by "Whole Family". She mentioned that the General Chapter asked us to abandon our self-sufficiency as an Institute, breaking the mentality that some give and others receive. Steps are being taken in this regard on both sides. She stated that there is a noticeable change in this mutual relationship, and asked whether the Leaders were seeing this in their respective countries. In some countries, Lay Associates and Priests are responsible for the organization of their own vocational groups.

Steps taken:

- ✍ **Inter-Vocational Teams have been created in several Units.**
- ✍ **Are there common action projects to respond to urgent needs?**
- ✍ **"Meeting Point 7" has been shared and deepened and we will continue to deepen the topic of synodality with the supports of the 'Common Formation Team'.**

The Council of the Family has a "Permanent Committee", formed by the Leaders of each vocation (5 members).

Manuel PLAZA (Lay Associate) - Spain
M^a Pilar SERRANO (Secular Institute) - Spain
Malini JOSEPH (Contemplative Group) - Rome
Ana María ALCALDE (Apostolic Group) - Rome
Josephdas Jebaratnam PATHINATHAM (Priest Associate) – Sri Lanka

This Committee has launched the implementation of the commitments made by the Council of the Family in 2023:

- 👉 **Living the synodal dimension of our Charism as Members of the PB Noailles Family.**
- 👉 **Walking creatively with young people.**
- 👉 **Life is precious and sacred: the synodal path invites us to guard the web of life.**

Three inter-vocational teams have been appointed to energize and implement these commitments.

International Intervocation Team:

1. Sr. Winifreda WASALATHANTHRIGE, Apostolic: Rwanda
2. Sr. Rishmala MICHAEL, Contemplative: Rome

3. Anne-Marie SIBILLE, Lay Associate: Ireland
4. Benedict FURO, Priest Associate: Philippines
5. Pat KELLY, Secular Institute: South Africa

Youth Engagement Team:

1. Mercedes PEÑA, Lay Associate: Spain
2. Susana APAZA, Secular: Peru
3. Irushi GUNATHILAKE, youth group: Colombo, Sri Lanka
4. Sr. Dolcita KALEMA, Apostolic: Canada
5. Sr. Annualita BUSINGE, Apostolic: Rwanda
6. Victor VARUVEL, Priest Associate: India

Care of Life Team:

1. Pascal DJEUMEGUED, Priest Associate: Cameroun
2. George FAJARDO, Priest Associate: Philippines
3. Anne DOYLE, Lay Associate: Ireland
4. Sofia Mariela RUIZ SANTANA, Lay Associate: Peru
5. Melani Manel, Secular Institute: Colombo, Sri Lanka
6. Sr. Selvarani ALAS, Apostolic: Jaffna, Sri Lanka
7. Sr. Josephine KANGWA, Apostolic: Congo
8. Sr. Adelina LESAOANA, Apostolic: Lesotho

Request from the General Chapter;

⇒ **The Council of the Family should convene an annual meeting for all members of the Family, via Zoom in 2022.** The objectives were not made explicit. It did not take place because the new members of the Permanent Committee were not appointed. There was a common prayer on February 3, 2023. The participation of the Family was very good.

⇒ **That young members to become part of the Council of the Family and the Congress.** So far, these events have not taken place. When the Family Congress is held, that will be integrated, but in the Council of the Family, they are not a separate vocation with the right to participate. We should think about this...

Vicariate:

Malini Joseph the Vicar of the Contemplatives shared briefly about the situation of the contemplatives. **The total number of the contemplatives are 26** and they have **two communities: Oteiza**

(Spain - 9 sisters) and Nagoda (Sri Lanka - 9 sisters). Other Sisters are staying with the Apostolic Sisters in the following Units – **Rome, Canada, South Africa, Britain & Ireland, and a residential home in France.**

Day 9,10

Plan for the years ahead

These three days were focused on the 3rd Objective: **PLAN TOGETHER FOR THE YEARS AHEAD.**

The facilitator introduced the work:

- ☞ **When we look at the whole picture, taking a global view of the congregation, we see the diversity. We need to have a vision of the future. The decisions to be made are for the whole congregation and we are all responsible for them.**

Ana Maria introduces the draft for a plan that must be worked on and defined by the EGC:

The participants spent time to work personally and in small groups on the **future plan of the Apostolic Group** on the following aspects:

- ☉ **Spirituality**
- ☉ **Formation**
- ☉ **Finance**
- ☉ **New insertions and twilight of life**
- ☉ **Structures and leadership**

- ☞ **“In what spirit should we approach the 10-year plan?”**
- ☞ Recalling the text of Lk 14:28 – **‘Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?’**
- ☞ In order to build a future, we must first dream of it.
- ☞ The 10-year action plan is an instrument.
- ☞ No plan on its own guarantees the future, which is in God's hands.
- ☞ The areas we have to think about are all related to the centre: **for the Mission.”**



Day 11

Final Draft

Each team brought the final draft of the future plan and submitted it to the plenary. With much discussion and many clarifications, the final draft of the plan was approved in the plenary session.

The facilitator concluded this session:

“The document presented here is not a final document, but rather a reflection to help the General Council to finalize the Plan to put into practice the decisions of the General Chapter in the coming years.”

(The GLT will send the Plan to Leaders as soon as possible.)

☉ **Process of Consultation in the Units**

There was a discussion on the consultation process. Each participant shared their experiences. Some of the common echoes;

- ☞ **The same process of the consultation can continue in its present form.**
- ☞ **Need to reduce the Councillors in some of the Units...**
- ☞ **It is not mandatory that the Councillors have**

to live in the Provincialate

- ☞ Need for shared and participative leadership
- ☞ A person needs to have the discerning process
- ☞ There is a need for a change of structure by allowing new members to take up the role

☉ General House:

Some discussion occurred regarding the General House and how to use the property in the right way according to the reality of the Institute in the next years ahead.

☉ Secretaries:

The secretaries, Marie Pierre OTIBA (General Secretary), Maria Lourdes (French), Amaleswary



PARIPOORANAM (English), Daniella MUZZACHI (Spanish), and Claudine GAYONGO (Archivist), shared their function of their service. Also, they shared common information with the participants, asking everybody to take the responsibility to follow the Guidelines for this service in the Units. They shared their desire to have on-line meetings with the Unit secretaries and archivists in the future .

Day 12

Final Day

The last morning was the time to evaluate the lived experience of the process.

The Opening Prayer invited the participants to listen deeply to the song **“Go light your world; there is a candle in every soul, some brightly burning and some dark and cold...”**

The facilitator asked the participants to take some time to evaluate, regarding some main aspects:

- ☞ Personal involvement and participation
- ☞ Objectives - achieved or not?
- ☞ Duration
- ☞ Dynamic
- ☞ Level of satisfaction

The participants shared briefly on the overall programme of the EGC and what needs to be taken into consideration for future sessions.

CLOSING ADDRESS - Ana María

Dear Sisters, Our EGC has come to an end, the time of ‘pausing’ after having been tossed and rocked by the waves of reality, evaluating the journey so far and projecting where we want to go. The journey continues and so we set off again with renewed energy, with a clearer vision of the route to follow, with awareness of the challenges, turbulences and opportunities we will encounter on the journey. Also, with greater interconnection

and solidarity among us.

Not everything is so clear or certain, and yet we are called to keep walking, to accept the reality that is, the reality that we are, to look at it head-on and to discern it step by step, carried by the flow of life, without putting up resistance, or putting up as little resistance as possible. God, who has accompanied us up to this point, will continue to do so because God reveals Godself in

the present of our history.

As leaders, it is our responsibility to be attentive to the evolution of life, always in constant change in the world and in our respective contexts. No one has the complete vision, no one has all the answers or solutions, no one can control the future... hence the need for openness, listening, discernment, collaboration with others, the need to add synergies,



resources, etc. to support each other, to inspire each other, to risk taking new routes with particular attention to those people or parts of the Institute that we perceive to be more fragile. Everything belongs to us. We are one 'body'.

These days we have been reflecting on and practising charismatic and shared leadership.

I offer you a metaphor from the ancestral wisdom of the Makua people of Mozambique that can also inspire the kind of leadership we need to exercise in this period of our history: For the Makua, 'the moon is a humble satellite because, while the sun shines brightly in the sky and extinguishes the light of the other stars during the day, the moon likes to coexist with the brightness of the stars and planets in the night sky. The sun travels alone, it is the king of the day. The moon, on the other hand, travels in company, inhabits the horizon of communion and sharing, which finds a privileged expression at night'. What does this 'lunar' leadership suggest to you?

Sr.Simona BRANBILLA - secretary of the Dicastery for

Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, commenting on this metaphor, applied it not only to leadership but also to the way we situate ourselves as Consecrated Life today in the world. I consider her reflection very timely for us and so I bring it here. It goes like this:

'This image of the starry sky that Makua wisdom proposes to us can be understood as a mirror of the current world and ecclesial context, characterized by the plurality of perceptions, sensibilities, thoughts, movements, ways of understanding and living the Church, the mission, the consecrated life, the charism... This plurality calls us to review our deepest identity. We can realize that, a little like the sun of which the Makua wisdom speaks to us, we have fallen into the temptation of measuring the effectiveness of the Gospel with the yardstick of 'our own light', extinguishing the light of other stars, with a luminous spiritual and apostolic self-sufficiency. The polychromy of the present context, together with the more lucid awareness of our littleness, favoured in many cases by the decrease of numbers and the increase of middle age, stimulates us to

embrace a style of presence and mission in which the nocturnal expression, 'lunar', finds a space that refers to the feminine dimension of the cosmos: humble stars, called to illuminate together the firmament of this night that is our time.

The moon is not always full: it has its phases, its cycles, it disappears from sight and reappears, it goes through its deaths and resurrections, it lives by the Light of the Other.

Is not consecrated life, like the whole Church, called to a lunar conversion, to pass from the dazzling radiance of the sun to the sweet and fresh light of the lesser star, from the great to the small...?

Our time can be considered as a night: the sun has set, it is the time of the moon. The light itself gives way to reflected light. It is the time when the contours of reality do not appear so sharp. It is the time when sleeping ghosts awaken within us and among us, taking the form of a thousand questions, uncertainties and fears: Who are we? Where are we going? What will we be like?

The night can be terrifying. But night is also the creative moment par excellence, it leaves space of freedom so that the seeker can not only see with his eyes, but also imagine, feel, intuit... The moon enables the inner look... The moon introduces us to the invisible... in a time of transformation'. This is an invitation to live a

'lunar' leadership and to 'inhabit the nights of the world' in order to illuminate them.

At this time when we are preparing to return to our Units, to take up again the path, to assume the responsibilities proper to our role, we are comforted by these words of the Founder:

'Abandon yourself into God's hands and He will give you light and strength according to your needs'.

Let us go forward walking together in hope.

Many thanks to each one of us for all that we have experienced during these days.

Revista Vida Nueva n. 3.3.59, abril 2024

Closing Prayer

The participants gathered in the meeting hall for the final prayer to thank God for all the blessings that they received throughout these EGC.

This prayer invited them to recall the **story of the starfish**, which is an invitation to give life to the other in the web of life through our beings. Each one of us touches the lives of others knowingly or unknowingly by our small actions. We all have the opportunity to help and create positive changes with each other. We might not be able to change the entire world, but at least we can change a small part of it for someone. This story is a great reminder that even the smallest thing can make a difference. **Let us go make a difference!!!**



Finally, **Ana Maria** called each one by name and sent them out for their respective Units, by giving the same stone (written their own names) which was used in the opening prayer to make a difference...

Song:

*"Let the wind fill your sail; let your boat go for a moment.
Dream for a moment of reaching for a star to discover a new world."*

