

Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate

XI General Chapter 2018

Lineamenta



***Prophetic Communities
that announce the Gospel
in the Peripheries of the World***

Logo of the XI General Chapter by Sr. Marta Arosio

Explanation:

1. The sun rising from on high (Lk 1:76-79)

Jesus in His death and resurrection manifested to us the Father's Love, bringing light into the darkness of humanity. We too are called to be prophecy of this *Rising Sun from above*. By letting ourselves be enlightened by Him, and through our lives, we can light up the lives of those who inhabit the peripheries of humanity.

2. The road paths that cross the world globe

The roads divide the world in the background in many patterns of different but rather fading colours. The roads are known but are now abandoned. These roads do not lead to unity but divide the world. These paths were not always wrong, but the changes that have taken place in the world, made them no longer suitable to rekindle desire and to have encounter.

3. The central road path

The yellow colour (looking from below upwards) indicates our 'divine' origin. The brown colour recalls, instead, our humanity and the good soil that welcomes the Seed. This is the beginning of the path bringing forth the Kingdom. Divinity and humanity: the combination needed to be witnesses.

It is a path that allows itself to be illumined by *the Rising Sun from above*, from which it receives life and strength. It is a Way that goes across the world and opens it to eternity.

The movement seen in the central path recalls the ability of changing course, of mixing the vivid colours of the Kingdom, daring to journey across new paths and breaking the schemes.

It is a way that leads to the peripheries that are 'in the midst of the world', 'among us' and colours it anew. At this point, the colours get mixed; and, somehow, faded. While each of them retains their originality, they create unity in diversity. We too are to strive to 'get ourselves mixed and come out into different colouring tones', to be community-prophecy of the *Rising Sun*; and, therefore, brighten on our journey to all those who live in the peripheries of the world.

PRESENTATION BY THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

Dear Sisters,

With the handing over of the *Lineamenta*, we enter fully into the preparation of the XI General Chapter.

As we start the study of the *Lineamenta*, I wish to invite you to feel deeply in tune with the journey of the Church and the constant invitations of Pope Francis to *go forth* to the peripheries of humanity. The reference to the peripheries has a precise source: Jesus' life style. Since His birth, Jesus showed Himself 'peripheral' compared with the political and religious powers of his time. However, very much in tune with God's ways of acting in the History of Salvation. And He shared life first of all with the poor and the sinners. His desire to bring to everyone the Good News of the Kingdom drove Him always 'beyond'.

Pope Francis, in various occasions, has told us that to go out "*is the most concrete way of imitating Jesus, who went towards all the peripheries. Jesus went to all, really all*". And still, "*the great changes in history were realized when the reality was seen not from the centre but rather from the periphery. Being in the periphery helps us to see and to understand better, to analyse reality more correctly, to shun centralisms and ideological approaches*".

We are well aware that it is an inner urge to go far away not only geographically, but to go out of ourselves, from our own individualism, closures and points of view.

1 "WAKE UP THE WORLD!", Conversation between Pope Francis and the Superiors General about the Religious Life (La Civiltà Cattolica 2014).

2 Ibidem.



Prophetic Communities that announce the Gospel in the peripheries of the World

May these words be of encouragement in the preparation of the next General Chapter, a moment of great importance for our missionary family. We gather in the Chapter as one only Apostolic body to propose guidelines and take decisions for the future of the Institute and its fidelity to the Charism of the origins, for the good of the mission and the people with whom we share life.

The contents of this document are presented in the Introduction. In these pages, you will not find the proposal regarding the Revised Constitutions to be presented to the Chapter, because the study was done separately in the communities. The Commission of the Constitutions will analyse the contributions from the Organisms in view of the Working Document of the Chapter.

You have seen the logo with the theme of the Chapter, explained on the other side of the cover page. It will be good if you can find a way, according to your artistic abilities and technical possibilities, to reproduce and display it in an important place in the community, in order to remember the journey we are undertaking together.

All the best for a fruitful work!

Rome, 4.6.2017

Solemnity of Pentecost

Yours,

Sr. Rosilla Velamparambil

Sr. Rosilla Velamparambil
Superior General

INTRODUCTION

The pre-Chapter Commission is glad to present to you the *Lineamenta* of the XI General Chapter. It is the instrument, which will involve you in the preparation for this moment so important for our missionary family, called to be united in Chapter and to discern the future, as one Apostolic body, at the service of the mission that the Lord has entrusted to us.

With the help of Sr. Micheline Tremblay CSC, Facilitator of the forthcoming General Chapter, the General Direction and the pre-Chapter Commission have taken into account the responses of the Organisms to the fifth question of the study of the Revised Constitutions, those that could be of interest to the Chapter.

In the Commission, we then examined the evaluation of the journey of the Institute in these years, prepared by the GD for the VII Inter-Chapter Assembly - Rome 2016.

We have selected some of the themes to bring to the attention of all in the light of the theme chosen for the Chapter "*Prophetic Communities that announce the Gospel in the Peripheries of the World*", and the new perspectives and challenges that Pope Francis has launched in these years to us as consecrated missionaries.

I. THE CONTENT OF THE LINEAMENTA

In the following pages, you will find:

- **The themes for reflection:** starting from the priorities of the last six years (Missionary Choices, Evangelical Relationships and Spirituality) revised on the basis of the theme of the Chapter and on your observations, and some aspects that question us (Formation, Economy and mission, Lay Associates of the MSI, Modifications in the organization of the Organisms, New Presences), pp. 8-45.



- One page for the **Young Sisters** and another for the **Seniors**, for which each Organism will try to organize meetings based on the indications given, pp. 46-52.
- A guideline for the preparation of the **report of the Organism** to be presented to the Chapter, pp. 53-54 .
- A guideline for a **day of prayer** to start the study of the *Lineamenta* in the communities, pp. 55-58.
- Some **statistics** of the Institute, to give to all an overall vision of the reality of our missionary family, pp. 59-61.

II. INDICATIONS FOR THE PRE-CHAPTER ASSEMBLIES

Each community will deepen these *Lineamenta*; and, in answering the proposed questions will prepare their own contribution, which will be discussed during pre-Chapter assemblies. During the assemblies, we will work on all the themes contained in the *Lineamenta*.

The Organisms will ensure that all the Sisters can attend the assembly, by organizing one or more according to the need. The answers of the assemblies, where more than one will be held, are to be summed up during the last session, which will be attended by the Provincial/Delegation Government, the delegates of the Organisms to the Chapter, and some Sisters chosen from the assemblies previously held.

As far as possible, the members of the General Direction will help in the animation of the assemblies in the various Organisms.

The **answers** to the questions of the *Lineamenta*, synthesized by the directions of the Organisms, should reach the General Direction by **15 March 2018** and will serve as basis for the preparation of the Work Document of the Chapter.

The **reports of the Organisms** should reach the General Direction by **15 April 2018**.

III. SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

As noted in the letter of announcement , *"the Chapter is a spiritual event and for this reason it must be lived in an atmosphere of prayer starting from the time of preparation, with personal and community prayer ... involving also our Lay Associates and the people with whom we work in the apostolate"*. We invite all to value the day of prayer that initiates the study of the *Lineamenta* and the indications for the other moments of spiritual animation that will be suggested later on.

The direction of the Organism will give some practical guidelines and help to prepare a calendar for the study of the *Lineamenta* in the communities. As members of this 'family of apostles', both in the community and individually, we have the responsibility to contribute to the best of our ability to help the journey of all.

We desire that this phase of reflection in view of the immediate preparation of the Chapter may be guided by the example of life of our Foundresses, fervent in aspiration to a life of holiness; devoured by an unquenchable thirst for the proclamation of the Gospel. Our Charism and our Spirituality stem from their passionate desire to be 'tireless sowers of the seed', with a special desire to go 'far, far away'.

May the Immaculate Virgin, Queen of the Apostles, help us with her maternal protection in our commitment to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, the Apostle of the Father, the Sower and the Seed, to be able to be authentic witnesses to his Good News for the humanity of our time.

Sr. Antonella Sr. Maurei Sr. Bodo
 m. Laura Sr. Blanche

The Sisters of the Pre-Chapter Commission



1. PROPHETIC COMMUNITIES THAT ANNOUNCE THE GOSPEL IN THE PERIPHERIES OF THE WORLD

We propose for the reflection in view of the next General Chapter the most important topics that have emerged in the life of the Institute in these last six years.

This first part is, therefore, divided into two sections:

- 1.1 *"Prophetic Communities"*: within it you will find the themes related to 'Evangelical Relationships' and 'Spirituality';
- 1.2 *"That announce the Gospel in the peripheries of the world"*: in which you will find the themes related to 'Our Missionary Choices': *ad extra, ad gentes, ad vitam*.

In each section, we have chosen some themes to focus on. Finally, we have formulated questions for each theme that encourage towards the common search on how to continue our journey in order to be more creatively faithful to our religious missionary vocation.

1.1 PROPHETIC COMMUNITIES

a) Community holiness



Pope Francis in EG underlines that “Jesus wants evangelizers who proclaim the good news not only with words, but above all by a life transfigured by God’s presence” (259) “and how the Gospel tells us constantly to run the risk of a face-to-face encounter with others, with their physical presence which challenges us” (88). In fact: “true faith in the incarnate Son of God is inseparable from self-giving, from membership in the community, from service, from reconciliation with others” (88).



We are reminded that the “apostolic effectiveness of **consecrated life** depends on the eloquence of our lives, lives which radiate the joy and beauty of living the Gospel and following Christ to the full. Consecrated life belongs to the life and holiness of the Church, is at the heart of the Church, a decisive element of her mission, in as much as it expresses the deepest nature of the Christian vocation” (Letter for the Year of Consecrated Life).



Looking at the journey made

We have been invited to give value to our Spirituality in order to continue, in the light of the Word of God, the deepening and assimilation of it, so that it may transform and give colour to our life and apostolic mission. Particular attention was laid on the assimilation of the values and attitudes that enhance community holiness, as it is a convincing witness in today’s cultural atmosphere.

The evaluations put in evidence the beauty of re-discovering and actualizing the spiritual attitudes found in our foundresses. This commitment is a real ongoing challenge, as the human logic often tends to take the upper hand. This commitment will require that each one pays greater attention to the conversion of the heart and to journey towards holiness, making use of all the means for human and spiritual growth, both at personal and communitarian level.

For instance, this challenge could be visibly seen in particular situations, in the form of resistance towards mobility and detachment regarding redimensioning and transfers, lack of apostolic obedience, issues regarding the exercise of power and the service of authority, a weak response when facing particular difficulties and trials, etc.

A certain individualism and weak sense of belonging is growing among us, as well as the temptation to carry out our mission as an ‘individual project’, which has in a certain sense, inspired the theme of the forthcoming Chapter. We are called to make the community the subject of evangelization. And, in doing so, we will be prophetic!



In the study of the revised text of the Constitutions, we have expressed the conviction that the spiritual life is the foundation and source of truth and fruitfulness of our life as consecrated missionaries. Valuing not only the orientation that prayer helps to do mission after God's own heart; but also that mission itself help us to pray and to experience the Lord's face in a different way, because the Spirit speaks not only in prayer but also through missionary action.



In view of the Chapter

- a) *Considering the lack of mobility and detachment as well as a certain individualism, how do you see them in the life of your community and Organism? What do you concretely suggest in view of a journey towards community holiness?*
- b) *As far as our community organization/structures are concerned, what concrete changes can be done to help us to be prophetic communities?*
- c) *In this regard, what do you expect from your own Organism and from the Institute as a whole?*



b) Interculturality: among cultures and generations



Pope Francis in EG reminds us that “we are called to bear witness to a constantly new way of living together in fidelity to the Gospel. It is the fraternal love, capable of seeing the sacred greatness of our neighbour, of finding God in every human being, of tolerating the nuisances of life in common by clinging to the love of God, of opening the heart to divine love and seeking the

happiness of others just as their heavenly Father does. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of community!” (92).



As consecrated persons, we are asked “to find ways to create ‘alternate spaces’, where the Gospel approach of self-giving, fraternity, embracing differences, and love of one another can thrive. We need to ask ourselves about the way we relate to persons from different cultures, as our communities become increasingly international. How can we enable each member to say freely what she thinks, to be accepted with her particular gifts, and to become fully co-responsible?”.

Pope Francis, therefore, invites us “to be actively engaged in dialogue between the generations. In this way, the entire community can join in finding new ways of living the Gospel and responding more effectively to the need for witness and proclamation” (Letter for the Year of Consecrated Life).



Looking at the journey made

The evaluation puts in evidence that, in general, interculturality is considered as a gift and that there is greater sensitivity to the need to pursue the process of transition from internationality to interculturality.

There has been growing awareness that cultural diversity depends on the different socio-cultural environments of origin, as well as also the increasingly rapid changes due to globalization and the spreading of media, whereby the generation gap today is more felt than previously. Various initiatives have been taken to grow in the dimension of interculturality in the different Organisms. Indeed, it can be seen that the number of Sisters sent *ad extra* in these last six years have consistently increased. In considering the particular situation of India, it was taken into account the fact that it cannot receive Sisters from other Countries due to visa related problems. Care has been taken to look for interculturality in the composition of the local communities.



As for facilitating the meeting between the different generations, very little was done. It appears that in the daily life there are several difficulties, related to the difference of age groups, cultures as well as of personality. Misunderstandings, prejudices, the feelings of superiority/inferiority often block relationships in the community. When conflicts arise the tendency is to withdraw in silence, avoiding facing the challenges openly.

The evaluations expressed the attention to promote an atmosphere of mutual dialogue, forgiveness and reconciliation. However, there is still a long way to go; there is the desire to change, but often there is lack of courage to take the first step. We still tend to 'tolerate' what is different rather than really respect, promote diversity and come to the appreciation of the uniqueness of cultures and generations.

In these recent years, greater reflection has led us to deepen interculturality in the relationships between us. However, as *ad extra* missionaries, the real challenge seems to be how to become an intercultural community inserted in the culture of the place where we live and work.



In the study of the revised text of the Constitutions, we have expressed the desire to promote interculturality among us, also through our way of living relationship with feminine sensitivity.

We are called to live, in a more natural and courageous way, our being in non-homogeneous cultural contexts, recognizing in it an opportunity to rely on 'our common humanity'³ to witness to the universality of the Gospel, thus standing against all forms of nationalism, cultural individualism and the defensive protection of one's own identity.

³The fact that we are all human beings and share the same nature.



In view of the Chapter

- a) *How do you see the influence of globalization and the spreading of media in widening the generation gap in the reality of your community and Organism?*
- b) *What could be changed so that the community organization/structures can concretely promote greater appreciation of the uniqueness of cultures and generations and better strategy for conflict resolution?*
- c) *What do you suggest in order to take concrete steps forward in being more prophetic and having greater apostolic courage as intercultural/intergenerational communities inserted in a specific cultural context where we live and work?*



c) One Apostolic body



Pope Francis in EG invites us to welcome “the challenge of finding and sharing a ‘mystique’ of living together, of mingling and encounter, of embracing and supporting one another, of stepping into this flood tide which can become a genuine experience of fraternity, a caravan of solidarity, a sacred pilgrimage. Greater possibilities turn into greater possibilities for encounter and solidarity. If we were able to take this route, it would be so good, so soothing, so liberating and hope-filled!” (87).



Looking at the journey made

We are challenged to think beyond the boundaries of our own Organisms in view of a common project and future by concretely contributing with personnel as well as spiritual and material resources in the best possible way, even by making sacrifices.



It has been very encouraging to note the response of the Organisms regarding the Chapter orientation for continuing and strengthening the common initiatives, and the steps taken by them to start new ones. Common initiatives have been taking place between Cameroon and Guinea Bissau, the two Provinces of Brazil and among the four Organisms of India. The evaluations highlight the positive contribution from the common initiatives, particularly in facilitating greater communion and collaboration among the Organisms as well as in the commitment to journey together with the same charismatic vision.

However, at times, the reflections and evaluations on the common initiatives tend to remain rather superficial. It also seems that the zeal with which the interest of one's own Organism is pursued, does not remain the same when the initiatives become common!

It is necessary to animate the Sisters towards knowing more about the reality that happens 'beyond' their communities and their own Organisms; and foster the awareness that the decisions made locally, have an impact on the journey of our entire missionary family. We should not participate in the common initiatives simply because of the need, but rather because we are one Apostolic body.

At the level of the Institute, in view of a common journey, the GD introduced a precise methodology: a feedback to the Yearly Project, the feedback given by the Superior General at the conclusion of the canonical visit, the letter on the challenges and needs of the Organism sent during the process for the formation of the new directions and the Mission Letters. There has been a progress in the acceptance of these structures of dialogue. However, we need to reflect how to improve.



In view of the Chapter

- a) *What are the concrete steps you must take in view of strengthening and sustaining the common initiatives in your Organisms?*

- b) What structural/organizational changes are needed in view of animating our Sisters concretely towards knowing more about the realities 'beyond' their communities and Organisms as well as growing in zeal towards what is 'common'?*
- c) What are your concrete suggestions for making a better use of the methodology introduced by the GD in view of the animation towards one Apostolic body?*





1.2 THAT ANNOUNCE THE GOSPEL IN THE PERIPHERIES OF THE WORLD

d) **Going forth to the new frontiers**



Pope Francis in EG confirms the vital importance for the Church, of the mission *ad gentes*, towards “those who are far from Christ” (ref. EG 14-15). The Word of Jesus calls us to ‘go out’ and have the courage to reach out to all the peripheries that need the light of the Gospel: “In our day, Jesus’ command to ‘go and make disciples’ echoes in the changing scenarios and ever new challenges to the Church’s mission of evangelization” (20). In this ‘going forth’ in the name of the Gospel, Pope Francis asks us to dare, without being afraid to go wrong: “I prefer an unsuccessful, wounded and dirty Church for having gone out on the streets, rather than a sick Church for the closure and comfort” (49).



As Consecrated persons, we are asked in a special way to have the prophetic courage to ‘wake the world’, because: “the distinctive sign of consecrated life is prophecy. Prophets receive from God the ability to scrutinize the times in which they live and to interpret events. They are able to discern and denounce the evil of sin and injustice. Because they are free, they are beholden to no one but God, and they have no interest other than God. Prophets tend to be on the side of the poor and the powerless, for they know that God himself is on their side” (Letter for the Year of Consecrated Life).



Looking at the journey made

In these last few years, we have taken effort to re-orient our activities in the light of our Charism *ad gentes* and *ad extra*, even in the Churches of ancient Christian tradition.

With joy, it was noted that almost all the Organisms had been able to somehow plan for sending *ad extra* the young Sisters in spite of the challenge of the shortage of personnel. It was noticed that the Indian Organisms too have made significant efforts in these years, not only in increasing the number of destinations, but also in the positive disposition towards it.

A good number of interesting initiatives have also been taken to make our activities more and more places of openness to universality and evangelization. We could perceive the progress made in the commitment to the new poverties and new frontiers of today in the different Organisms.

It is important to reflect more deeply about the obstacles that are still hindering us: we fail to plan more systematically for the theological preparation of the Sisters in view of sending *ad extra*.

We have fear of change and of what is new. There is lack of prepared personnel, work overload, sickness and ageing of the members as well as changing laws of the country that restrict our services. However, what we may feel or what may really be an obstacle, can also be used as an excuse to remain as/where we are, instead of seeing them as an opportunity to be more creative and to do something new.

We also need greater education to promote the safeguarding of creation by caring for our 'common home' and more awareness towards justice and peace issues.

To reach out to the new frontiers *ad gentes* and *ad extra*, to which we are called, we need to grow in 'mobility'. Some practical strategies in this regard need to be devised: encouraging the Sisters not to be 'eternally' in some positions and places and/or carrying out the activities in an autonomous manner; improving the practices of handing over and introducing others, preparing lay people to take up responsibilities, etc.



In the study of the revised text of the Constitutions we have expressed the desire to commit ourselves in all contexts, mainly among people of other faiths and to move forward, to go out of our places, to look for 'other towns' and other types of



missionary services. The search for the frontiers of mission goes along with a freer and more dynamic missionary style, with greater openness to the new: the new challenges of the Church and of the mission the new forms of poverties, according to our Charism.



In view of the Chapter

- a) How can we all grow in courageous openness towards 'what is new' and 'mobility', both demanded by the charismatic appeal to 'go elsewhere', where the proclamation of the Gospel is more urgent and necessary?*
- b) Taking into consideration the challenges and obstacles but also the opportunities, what do you suggest to reach out to the new frontiers of ad gentes and ad extra for your Organism?*
- c) What do you propose so that our Institute will grow in prophecy and apostolic courage in reaching out to the new frontiers of ad gentes and ad extra today?*



e) Missionary Animation

The same urgency of evangelization that moves us to leave in order to proclaim the Gospel, also leads us to commit ourselves wherever we are to missionary animation, so that every ecclesial community becomes the protagonist of the evangelizing activity, within and outside of its territory.



Pope Francis in EG reminds us that “in virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples. All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are

agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus” (120).



Looking at the journey made

It is worth noting that steps have been taken for missionary animation also in the non-Christian contexts.

Though there has been greater reflection about our specific role on missionary animation wherever we are present, and some new initiatives have been started; yet, not all the Sisters feel themselves protagonists in this field. Missionary animation is still seen as something belonging to a ‘team’ or as the particular work of some Sisters.



In the study of the revised text of the Constitutions, we

have expressed the desire that missionary animation may qualify all our activities of evangelization. It needs better organization at all levels.



In view of the Chapter

- a) *What do you suggest in order to animate each Sister regarding her leading role in fostering Missionary Animation in her own apostolic activities? How can it be organized better in your Organism?*
- b) *What do you expect from the Chapter in order to sustain and to strengthen Missionary Animation in our Institute as a whole?*



f) Interreligious Dialogue



Pope Francis in EG emphasizes the importance of interreligious dialogue in the Church's mission, in an attitude of openness in truth and love. Announcement of the Gospel and dialogue are not opposed ministries, as if one can substitute for the other (ref. EG 250-254.257).

In fact, the dialogue extends to the mystery of God working in others; the announcement testifies to the mystery of God as it has been manifested in Christ. Our daily encounter and working with believers of other religions helps us to discover the deeper dimensions of our Christian faith and the broader horizons of God's saving presence in the world. The purpose of the dialogue is to make people of different religions understand each other better, live in peace, work together for the good of humanity and join in the search for Truth, responding to God's call.

Although interreligious dialogue is an integral part of the mission, the forms of its practice depend on the actual situations of the place and type of work. The great religions of the world, indigenous religions, new religious movements, and fundamentalist groups invite us to an appropriate dialogue on the prospects and challenges of each.



As Consecrated persons we are asked "to become 'experts of communion', witnesses and artisans of that 'project of communion' which is at the top of the history of man according to the plan of God". We are asked "to live the mysticism of encounter" (Letter for the Year of Consecrated Life).



Looking at the journey made

Many times, in our official documents, we have committed to be involved in interreligious dialogue. In recent years, a few initiatives have been taken to acquire knowledge of other religions, as well as on interreligious dialogue.

Though many concrete experiences of collaboration with the people of other creeds are taking place in the various apostolic activities, not much reflection is done on them.

Since ours is an exclusively missionary Institute, with the priority to go towards the people of other faiths and being aware that the geographical presence of the religions is changing because of the mobility of peoples, it is very important that we reflect on how we can commit more in the area of interreligious dialogue, by taking more advantage of the opportunities provided by our daily evangelizing activities and engaging in new ones.

We need to grow in dialogue of life and action with the people belonging to other religions; in sensitiveness and interest, and in finding out common values so as to work together for a better world.



In the study of the revised text of the Constitutions we have expressed the desire to invest in interreligious dialogue, through more concrete initiatives and with better preparation, since it is an essential element of today's mission.



In view of the Chapter

- a) *We all agree that interreligious dialogue is a priority of the mission ad gentes. However, we need to ask ourselves why is it so difficult to deepen the reflection and put it into practice?*
- b) *In your Organism and working place, how can you be more creative in making concrete apostolic choices in view of finding greater space for interreligious dialogue of life and action?*
- c) *What do you suggest that the Institute should do regarding the deepening and promotion of the interreligious dialogue?*



Prophetic Communities that announce the Gospel in the peripheries of the World



g) Re-organization/re-dimensioning within the Organism



Pope Francis in EG encourages us in the journey of reorganization/re-dimensioning of our structures and activities to be “permanently in a state of mission” (ref. EG 25-27) and urges us to rethink with courage and creativity the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization of the communities, through a wise and realistic discernment (ref. EG 33).



As Consecrated persons we are asked “to examine our fidelity to the mission entrusted to us. Are our ministries, our works and our presence consonant with what the Spirit asked of our founders and foundresses? Are they suitable for carrying out today, in society and the Church, those same ministries and works?” (Letter for the Year of Consecrated Life).



Looking at the journey made

It is indeed positive that almost all the Organisms have taken steps to realize the orientation on re-organization/re-dimensioning of their activities and presences.

There are signs of growth as well as many challenges being encountered in the process. It could be noted that there is lack of deeper evaluation of our presences and activities and of a realistic plan. We still struggle to leave those presences that no longer correspond to our priority, in order to facilitate the sending *ad extra* and the opening of more flexible and simple presences, where there is more need.

We frequently remain satisfied with closing down one presence, or re-organizing another, but we fail to evaluate all our activities as a whole and make re-dimensioning part of our evangelizing efforts and style of mission.



In the study of the revised text of the Constitutions we have expressed the desire to go ‘always elsewhere’ and ‘where there is more need’, and that these become part of the style with which we carry out our mission.



In view of the Chapter

- a) *What do you suggest in order to take concrete steps forward regarding the process of re-organisation/re-dimensioning of your Organism?*
- b) *What do you propose so that our Institute may grow in greater prophecy and apostolic courage about the process of re-organization/re-dimensioning?*

h) Networking with other Congregations, ecclesial forces and collaborators



Pope Francis in EG tells us that “pastoral activity needs to bring out more clearly the fact that our relationship with the Father demands and encourages a communion which heals, promotes and reinforces interpersonal bonds.

In our world, especially in some countries, different forms of war and conflict are re-emerging, yet we Christians remain steadfast in our intention to respect others, to heal wounds, to build bridges, to strengthen relationships” (67).



As Consecrated persons “we are asked to grow in the communion between the members of different Institutes. We need to step out more courageously from the confines of our respective Institutes and to work together, at



the local and global levels, on projects involving formation, evangelization, and social action. This would make for a more effective prophetic witness.

We are also called to true synergy with all other vocations in the Church, beginning with priests and the lay faithful, in order to spread the spirituality of communion, first of all in their internal life and then in the ecclesial community, and even beyond its boundaries” (Letter for the Year of Consecrated Life).



Looking at the journey made

The evaluation of the post-Chapter journey of the Institute showed that some Organisms have interesting experiences of networking with other Congregations and ecclesial forces. It is important to carefully discern the personnel to be sent for these networking projects and to make known and evaluate such experiences, seeing how they can animate the lives of the concerned Organisms and of the whole Institute.

At the same time, greater openness towards networking is yet needed, since we still prefer to have our own structures and lack in the ability to cooperate in joint projects. The sharing of resources, projects and activities should not be seen primarily as to safeguard the continuity of our works, but rather to promote the charismatic and ecclesial contribution. Networking may also help us to get relief from the burden of managing structures with all that it entails. Thus, it can also promote mobility as we can be freer for other pressing needs of evangelization.

In most of the Organisms, and also at the level of the GD, there is good relationship and collaboration with PIME, in the field of pastoral ministry, missionary and vocation animation as well as in the reflection to find more suitable ways to carry out our specific mission in the particular contexts. We note with joy that, in India, in the last six years, there has been greater sensitivity to our common spiritual heritage; thus, relationship and collaboration with PIME have noticeably and positively increased.

We are becoming more aware of the importance for evangelization in keeping good relationship and working together with the Association of the Friends of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate (AMICI) and the various beneficiaries of our services (for instance, the past students, ex-boarders, etc.). Moreover, this also give us good opportunity to join with people of other beliefs who are willing to work together for the transformation of society.

Nevertheless, we still find hard to collaborate with the laity in our apostolic work, mainly seeing them as ‘receivers’ rather than ‘partners’ in the mission. We fail to see them as people from whose vocation to be ‘the light and the salt’ of the world, we can also learn.

Collaboration with lay people, other Congregations or Dioceses will require from us to learn to work as a team but at the same time will give us the possibility to create new spaces and opportunities to live our own specific charism.



In the study of the revised text of the Constitutions we have expressed the desire to work together with other forces and to do mission in communion as part of the style with which we carry out our evangelization work.



In view of the Chapter

- a) *What do you suggest in order to improve the collaboration with the ecclesial forces and collaborators in your Organism?*
- b) *What are your proposals regarding the strengthening of net-working in the Institute as a whole?*



i) Missiological reflection and missionary life

There are some themes of reflection on missiology that we feel are important for our missionary life, but on which our deepening is yet at an initial stage and little has been done concretely. We propose them once again as a reflection to be continued.

o ***Ecclesial dimension***



Pope Francis in EG reminds us that we are born of the creative womb of the Spirit who distributes the charisms for the good of the Body of Christ and the world. We are therefore, asked to integrate ourselves in the life and pastoral activity of the Church, for it is only in communion that a charism is authentically fruitful (ref. EG 29.130).

We live our ecclesiality in the Catholic Church, between particular Churches and even among the various Christian Churches, whose disunity is against the plan of God (ref. Jn 17) and scandal for the mission *ad gentes* (ref. EG 246. See also Father Manna's reflection on ecumenism in *We and our separated brethren, Observations on the modern method of Evangelization*).



Looking at the journey made

In the evaluation of these years, it is emphasized how, at times, not much attention was given to the journey of the Universal Church and of the local Bishops and Religious conferences.

As for ecumenism, a few initiatives were taken to acquire knowledge of other Christian denominations, but not much reflection is done on it. We need to grow in sensitiveness and interest.



In the study of the text of the revised Constitutions, it is underlined that in the beginning we worked to plant and build the Church. Today, nearly everywhere, the Church has grown and developed. We feel the need to deepen the ecclesial dimension of our vocation and mission: we are always inserted in the local churches

and we are both ‘foreign and universal’, therefore, ‘bridge’ between churches and ‘sign’ of the Catholic dimension of the Church.

We feel the desire to give value to ecumenical dialogue and to carry out the mission in communion.

- ***Proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom: relationship between first proclamation, witness, service of charity***



Pope Francis in EG reminds about the need for the explicit proclamation of the Gospel of Christ, even in the midst of difficulties and persecutions (ref. 24; 76), because we know in our hearts that “it is not the same to live without Him” (121).

In fact, “evangelization is first and foremost about preaching the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him. All of them have a right to receive the Gospel” (14).

In the same time, “the task of evangelization operates within the limits of language and of circumstances. It constantly seeks to communicate more effectively the truth of the Gospel in a specific context” (45) and do so by means of charity (ref. 177).



In the study of the text of the revised Constitutions it is emphasized the importance of the ‘Word of God’, at the heart of our Charism, in the following of Jesus, sent as the Sower and the Seed. It drives us to deepen the relationship between the proclamation of the Word (in particular the first proclamation); the witness to the Gospel through our lives and activities; and the building up of the Kingdom through the service of charity.

The study highlights that the explicit proclamation of the Gospel is the heart of our apostolic activity. This should make a difference in the missionary choices that we make.



Prophetic Communities that announce the Gospel in the peripheries of the World

- ***Study: Theology of mission, cultural anthropology, local languages and cultures***



Pope Francis in EG invites the evangelizers to reflect carefully on the method and content of their proclamation, so that what they proclaim and manifest may really be “the heart of the gospel” (34). Taking into consideration the context in which we operate and the people to whom we address, because “today’s vast and rapid cultural changes demand that we constantly seek ways of expressing unchanging truths in a language which brings out their abiding newness” (41).

This is one of the reasons, for which the Bishops “invited all missionaries to work in harmony with indigenous Christians so as to ensure that the faith and the life of the Church be expressed in legitimate forms appropriate for each culture” (118).



Looking at the journey made

Almost half of the Organisms affirmed that they have tried to organize moments of study on the theology of mission. Being an exclusively missionary Institute, it is very important that we continue to find suitable ways of deepening the theology of mission in the particular contexts so as to be able to live more dynamically the specific mission entrusted to us. It is also important to search for and to develop a systematic method of evangelization according to the various contexts and peoples.

Few Organisms have undertaken the reflection on culture in general. Regarding the study on cultural anthropology, there has not been realistic planning to give continuity to this reflection in view of acquiring the skills required for the building of intercultural communities and better knowledge of the cultures of the peoples we are sent to evangelize.

Often the studies of these topics could not be realized due to lack of interest in reflecting, being busy with other emergencies, difficulty to find suitable materials or resource persons, etc.



In view of the Chapter

- a) *How do you think we should insert ourselves in the local Churches, keeping in mind our Charism ad extra?*
- b) *The explicit proclamation of the Gospel is the heart of our apostolic activity. How this can affect our activities and choices of reorganization? What do you think about the relation between proclamation, witness of life and social service?*
- c) *What do you suggest in order to take concrete steps forward regarding the study of the theology of mission and cultural anthropology at level of the Organism as well of the Institute?*



j) *Ad vitam*



Pope Francis in EG always brings us back to the very heart of the Gospel: “Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction. Here we find the source and inspiration of all our efforts at evangelization” (7-8).



As Consecrated persons we are called “to know and show that God is able to fill our hearts to the brim with happiness; that we need not seek our happiness elsewhere; that the authentic fraternity found in our communities increases our joy; and that our total self-giving in service to the Church, to families and young people, to the elderly and the poor, brings us life-long personal fulfilment” (Letter for the Year of Consecrated Life).



Looking at the journey made



The evaluation of the post-Chapter journey of the Institute led us to re-affirm with joy our 'yes' to the call of the Lord who has made us missionaries for life and to live joyfully the fundamental values of the Kingdom.

It is noted that our way of understanding and living *ad vitam* has changed over time: in relation to the *ad extra*, as it is no longer departure for the 'mission field' forever; and in relation to travels, family, vacations etc...

It has grown in giving the right value to rotation service without no longer 'measuring' our being missionary, as in the past years, by 'being out of our Country'; but by the quality of a life entirely given to the Lord for the proclamation of the Gospel.

The mentality of a programmed rotation seems to have entered among us, though still there are some resistances to live it more willingly and fruitfully. At the same time, a trend that seems to emerge is that the Sisters themselves are asking to return to the Organism of origin because they feel they have spent enough years in the mission. Regarding the style of spending holidays in our Organisms of origin, there has been some improvement. It is an opportunity to be more in touch with the Church and Organism of origin, to renew the ties with the members, to contribute through Missionary Animation, etc.

Furthermore, changes in the concrete possibilities of traveling and in the way of seeing the relationship between 'consecrated life and the world' has rendered possible to have closer relationships with family, benefactors, the Church of origin and friends. Sometimes, however, it seems that we have no responsibility towards our apostolic work, nor to the community that is our religious missionary family, nor to the financial implications, etc. All of these, end up being taken for granted.



In the study of the revised text of the Constitutions, we have expressed the desire to deepen the meaning of *ad vitam* for us today and to reflect on the novelty that challenges us, in particular the stress on the human and prophetic aspect of a consecrated life. This calls for a revision of the way of understanding and

living consecration (the vows in post-modern contexts), and ask ourselves about what prophetic witness we give to the world as consecrated missionaries.



In view of the Chapter

- a) *According to you, in the recent years, what has changed in the relationship between 'the consecrated life' and 'the world'? What do you see as positive as well as negative changes? How these changes are asking us to transform ourselves so as to be 'women of God' today?*
- b) *What do you suggest in order to strengthen the commitment ad vitam at the level of your Organism and of the Institute as a whole?*
- c) *In view of this, what concrete steps can be taken to improve our process of insertion, rotation/ re-insertion, holiday planning and transfers?*





2. OTHER ASPECTS TO BE CONSIDERED

We call your attention also to the themes of Formation, Economy and Mission, Lay Associates of the MSI, Modification in the organisation of the Organisms, New Presences.

We invite all of you to express yourselves by answering the questions formulated here below.

2.1 INITIAL AND ONGOING FORMATION



“A missionary heart makes itself ‘weak with the weak... everything for everyone’ (1Cor 9:22). It never closes itself off, never retreats into its own security, never opts for rigidity and defensiveness. It realizes that it has to grow in its own understanding of the Gospel and in discerning the paths of the Spirit, and so it always does what good it can, even if in the process, its shoes get soiled by the mud of the street” (EG 45).

a) Formation of conscience / discernment

The formation of conscience has always been central to Christian life. Today, the complexity of the world and the ample possibilities demand choices that require greater personal responsibility and discernment. In living our consecration, in community life, in our apostolate, in using the modern means of communication, in the management of our house/structures and activities, etc., we are called to choose not simply between good and bad; but between good and better! It means choosing what is best in a given situation, in the light of our vocation and charism, by following the doctrine of the Church and respecting the civil law.

b) The sense of being called and belonging to the Institute

The statistics of the Institute invite us to be aware of the recent experiences of vocation crisis of the young finally professed Sisters and their leaving the Institute.

It seems that often the choice to leave the Institute is made without proper discernment, revealing certain superficiality towards our own vocation, the weakening of the life of faith, and the sense of belonging to the Institute.

It is noticed that one of the reasons seems to be the difficulty in community life. It is necessary to nurture genuine relationships within the community, so that the young/middle-aged Sisters may find in it, support for their growth.

c) Moments of crisis

Moments of crisis are part of our consecrated missionary life. We have the responsibility to support the Sisters who are experiencing moments of crisis. We need to think about improving the quality of their accompaniment. It is important to guarantee psycho-spiritual and therapeutic help to those in need.

d) Insertion / Re-insertion

As for welcoming and supporting the process of insertion of the new missionaries, we notice a certain growth in the commitment on the part of the Organisms to facilitate and support the insertion of the newly-arrived Sisters and almost all Organisms have prepared a plan for their insertion. In the evaluation, some Organisms expressed the desire to improve the programme for their accompaniment.

There is also greater awareness about the need for a better organization of the period of re-insertion of the Sisters who return from the mission. It is also necessary to grant the Sisters transferred from one



Organism to another or from an area to another within the same Organism, the chance and time to learn sufficiently the local languages, in order to carry out their service at best.



e) Study of the language

Our situation regarding language studies seems to be complex in view of ensuring that every Sister is offered sufficient time and materials to satisfactorily learn the language, taking into account each one's background and abilities. Many are still the challenges that we face in the process of the study of the languages of the people, Organism and of the Institute.

In some Organisms, there is the need to learn more than two or three languages according to the area and the groups with whom the Sisters are carrying out their ministry. At times, there is the lack of interest on the part of the Sisters. In some other contexts, the Sisters feel the importance of learning the language; but the Organism has yet to find a satisfactory way of organising it.



In view of the Chapter

1. *What do you suggest in order to improve the formation of conscience, thus helping the Sisters to discern and assume more responsibly the choices made?*
2. *Taking into consideration the importance of our emotional needs and sensitivities, how can we nurture genuine relationships within the community, so that we may find in it, support for our growth, especially in times of crisis or difficulty?*
3. *What do you suggest in order to take concrete steps forward in finding more systematic and personalised programmes for the language studies, both at the level of the Organisms and the Institute?*

4. *In order to guarantee to the newly arrived Sisters to have sufficient time to insert into the new setting, what do you think about the following suggestion:*
 - *The Sisters who are assigned ad extra and are going to another Country for the immediate preparation, will go back to their Organism after the due preparation and from there they will leave for the place of their destination.*
5. *What prophecy and apostolic courage regarding Formation do you expect from the Institute as a whole?*

f) Proposal for an International Novitiate

The VII Inter-Chapter Assembly in 2016 made a proposal to study the possibility of having an International Novitiate. Though its erection is the decision of the Superior General with the consent of her council, we invite you to study the proposal to join all our formation forces in order to open an international novitiate.

Our realities:

- ❖ The Numbers: taking into account our current statistics, most probably the total number of novices in the next few years may not exceed the current one (15 to 20).
- ❖ The Formators: It is not a guarantee to have a novice mistress for each Organism, despite having a few novices or even one novice.
- ❖ It is difficult to give a good formation due to the small number of formees and lack of formators.

Proposal: To have an international novitiate.



Reasons:

- To provide better formation for our young people to journey together, being enriched both humanly and spiritually by cultural diversity.
- To give a greater mission-oriented and international formation.
- To express our being one 'Apostolic body' and encourage a common orientation for the formation.
- To offer young people the opportunity to have international living before being sent to another Country.
- To have a qualified international formation team.

Criteria

- ✓ Time to learn language and to insert themselves into the new reality.
- ✓ Juridical dependency on the General Direction.
- ✓ A team of international formators.



In view of the Chapter

1. *Reflecting on the present realities, what do you think about the proposal?*
2. *Do you have any other suggestions?*

2.2 ECONOMY AND MISSION

a) **Prophetic communities: Community Holiness**



Looking at the journey made

During these years, it has been stressed several times the urgency to adopt a simple and sober way of life so as to grow in the spirit of sharing and communion. Wherever we are, we are challenged to be a prophetic sign through a modest and moderate way of living, and we are called to live in solidarity with the poor scattered around the world. Our being inserted in the peripheries of the world, sometimes in particularly deprived areas, requires a spirit of sacrifice and adaptability to the most diverse situations.



Draft of the **Economic Policies of the Institute** (ref. Acts of the VII Inter-Chapter Assembly 2016, n. 7)

“There should not be unnecessary loss of resources that could be utilized in other institutions/activities, for our livelihood and formation as well as for sharing in solidarity with the poor”.

“Adopt the praxis of the preparation of the budget for the institutions/activities and the local communities as an instrument of formation for every Sister. This helps to foster the sobriety in the choices and to verify the real standard of personal and community poverty”.



The study of the text of the revised Constitutions

reminds us that all our resources should be used in view of the mission. We are called to have special attention to avoid waste, to live evangelical poverty and transparency in fraternal dialogue.

The elaboration of the budget and the presentation of the yearly financial statements may be favorable opportunities to evaluate our choices in the economic field in the light of the evangelical values and the preferential option for the poor.



Prophetic Communities that announce the Gospel in the peripheries of the World



In view of the Chapter

- a) *What aspect of the poor mostly challenge our present life-style and should be reflected by the Institute, in view of stimulating us to assume concrete commitments for a Community journey of conversion in relation to the economic dimension?*
- b) *List some concrete challenges encountered in your Organism/community to understand and to prepare the annual budget and the presentation of the financial reports.*



b) Prophetic communities: One Apostolic body



Looking at the journey made

We have taken steps in sharing the goods. In many Organisms, the surplus of activities and communities are pooled and redistributed according to the need. At the Institute level, the General Direction, after having reflected together with the Superiors of the Organisms of the Institute, approved *ad experimentum* for each Organism in surplus, a yearly contribution for the triennium 2015–2017 in order to share in spirit of solidarity among the Organisms (ref. Acts of the VII Inter-Chapter Assembly 2016, n. 7). The Organisms which are not yet self-sufficient were also asked to share according to their possibilities. Common boxes have been created to encourage communitarian choices and to support apostolic projects without creating distinction of origin or economic possibilities.



Draft of the Economic Policies of the Institute

“We should be particularly sensitive towards the needs of all the communities, Organisms and the Institute for a just and evangelical redistribution of the financial resources, in spirit and in praxis to favour a greater communion of goods among us.

We need to foster the growth of a personal, community and institutional sharing mentality that freely overcomes the boundaries of

our Organisms and every form of selfishness, in favour of the weaker ones among us. The reflections together on issues related to money and economy is still difficult in many contexts and creates contrasts and divisions”.



In view of the Chapter

- a) *What difficulties do you find about the sharing of goods both at the community and Organism levels?*
- b) *What do you suggest in order to take further steps regarding the sharing of economic resources in our Institute?*



c) To announce the Gospel in the peripheries of the world



Looking at the journey made

During the canonical visits, in most of the Organisms the draft of the Economic policies of the Institute and the Charter of Values were proposed as a methodology to help in discerning about re-dimensioning, with an attention to the new poverties and challenges of the mission.

The Letter of the Congregation for Consecrated Life, *Guideliness for the Administration of Assets* (2014), the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) and the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (2015) have offered us many points for reflection.

However, it has been seen that in evaluating the sustainability of our single presences, we find very difficult to define a scale of priority in the light of the Charism, because of the temptation to justify and save everything. We are afraid of being 'pruned', of losing something. Sometimes there is no courage to question ourselves with regard to what is really at stake and to identify the concrete steps to be taken for a serious assessment and re-qualification.



Draft on the **Economic Policies of the Institute**

“Every institution/activity, every apostolic action, primarily, in every time and circumstance has to be an expression of our Charism, of the proclamation of the Kingdom of God to every people, *ad extra* and *ad vitam*; they should be organized by perspective and a style of communion and sharing.

In every activity and apostolate the concept of **SUSTAINABILITY** should be pursued”.



The study of the text of the revised Constitutions invites

us to periodically evaluate the activities and institutions by assessing their sustainability in the different aspects (spiritual, relational and economic) so that they do not become an end in themselves.

We can say that an activity/Institution is sustainable when:

- In it are lived the values contained in the Constitutions, summarized in the Chart of Values;
- It becomes the space in which healthy relationships may favour the integral growth of the person with a vision open to the world.
- The beneficiaries contribute, as much as they can, according to their living conditions.
- In it is recognized the action of the Providence and solidarity.



In view of the Chapter

- a) *What criteria do you use for the periodical evaluation of an activity or institution?*
- b) *How can the proposed methodology of the Economic Policies and the Chart of Values be of help to evaluate and re-qualify our presences?*

2.3 LAY ASSOCIATES OF THE MSI



“Around each religious family there is a larger family, a ‘charismatic family’, lay faithful who feel called, precisely as lay persons, to share in the same charismatic reality” (*Letter for the Year of Consecrated Life*).



Looking at the journey made

It is noticed that the groups have been helped to know better our Spirituality, even if not all the Organisms might have prepared a study guide. Some Organisms have made a great effort in translating the material regarding our Congregation and Spirituality in various local languages.

In general, the groups have also grown in the knowledge about the mission of the Congregation: they are becoming more involved in our missionary activities. Some groups have also taken various concrete steps in their search for what can be for them ‘going beyond borders’.

However, there is the need for greater care regarding the path of discernment of the vocation to be a Lay Associate of the MSI, so that those aspiring to be our Associates will better understand the ‘specificity’ of their call. There seems to be the need to have more clarity among us; since, in most of the cases, we are the ones to propose and welcome the Lay people in the groups already formed.

Seen the desire expressed by the Lay Associates of the MSI that we facilitate missionary experiences *ad Extra* for them, the Organisms were requested to study the real possibilities of involving them even in our activities *ad extra* taking into account the formative, logistic, and financial aspects.



In the study of the revised text of the Constitutions, it is underlined that the richness of our charism is expressed in different forms of life and mission. A special fraternal relationship binds us to the lay people who share in our charism, enriching our missionary family.



Prophetic Communities that announce the Gospel in the peripheries of the World



In view of the Chapter

- a) *What concrete steps were taken in your community/Organism for the better participation of the Lay Associates of the MSI in our missionary activities?*
- b) *What do you expect from the Chapter in order to sustain the future journey of the Lay Associates of the MSI?*

2.4 MODIFICATION IN THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ORGANISMS

1. The reality

The countries and communities where we are, even the most isolated ones, are inserted in an increasingly accelerated and globalized world in which everything is connected (cf. LS 16.231). Cultural, economic, social, and political processes worldwide interact with local realities (cf. EG 51.62), and challenge us to think and act “*glocally*”⁴ in order to fulfil the mission today (cf. EG 33. 183-184).

2. The challenges



Pope Francis in EG invites us to be bold and creative in rethinking the structures, in a true missionary conversion (cf. EG 27. 33). He also indicates the principles that should guide this renewal:

- being concerned about initiating processes rather than possessing spaces, because time is greater than space (EG 223);
- develop the communion in the differences to generate new life, because unity prevails over conflict (EG 228);
- putting into practice the Word through works of justice and charity, because the reality is more important than ideas (EG 233);

⁴ Glocal: Reflecting or characterized by both local and global considerations (Oxford Dictionary).

- working on small scale, with a wide perspective, because the whole is greater than the part (235).

These are challenges that not each Organism has to face alone; but it is a journey that we are called to make together, as one Apostolic body. Let us reflect: is our presence really significant according to the specific contribution we are called to give to the Church and society today? It might have been meaningful years ago when we started; but it is not guaranteed that it is meaningful or the most meaningful according to today's needs. In addition, we have less vocations, we are aging, etc. Therefore, we must be on a state of continuous discernment and make some choices as well as establish some priorities.

3. Reasons for a new organization of the Organisms:

- The reality changes, the needs of the mission change, the Congregation changes.
- Re-qualify and re-dimension our presences in order to fulfil our mission.
- In the process of changing, there is the possibility of retaining and bringing together the values and the richness acquired over the years; which we risk losing if we do not reorganize ourselves.
- We revitalize our charism by sacrificing something of our 'comfort zones'.



In view of the Chapter

- a) Do we have something to change in the organisation of our Organisms in order to live our mission more meaningfully?*
- b) Based on your experiences and keeping in mind the whole Institute, which are the Organisms that may need to be re-organized?*



2.4a Change of the text of the Constitutions

The article 138 of our Constitutions says the erection, subdivision and suppression of Provinces are the faculty of the General Chapter.

Proposal

To give the faculty for the erection, subdivision, and suppression of Provinces not to the General Chapter, but to the Superior General with the consent of her Council.

Reasons

- The Organisms concerned will be in a good position to discern better, rather than the whole Institute.
- To have more flexibility rather than waiting for 6 years.



In view of the Chapter

- a) *What do you think of this proposal?*

2.5 NEW PRESENCES



The journey made

In 2013, as a result of the decision taken by the X General Chapter, we joined the project *Solidarity with South Sudan*. Our participation in the project lasted for one year (*see Letter from the Superior General, 06/05/2014*).

During the VII Inter-Chapter Assembly - 2016, the participants were asked for a discernment about the possibility of giving continuity to our collaboration with the project *Solidarity with South Sudan*. Given the very difficult situation in the country and the project's demands (*again refer to the same letter*), it was seen that we could not make a commitment on our part. However, it was considered important to remain open to possible future collaboration.

Furthermore, the GD invited the participants to reflect on the possibility of opening new presences (in South Sudan or elsewhere), as it would give new vitality to our Institute.



In the study of the text of the revised Constitutions, the Organisms expressed themselves positively, in particular by expressing the desire to open small and meaningful presences in Countries like South Sudan or Myanmar.



The GD, taking into account its own reflection as well as the wishes expressed by the Organisms, is studying a concrete proposal to be presented to the XI General Chapter, regarding the possibility of opening new presences.





3. A SPACE FOR THE SENIOR SISTERS

Dear Senior Sisters,

In order to meet the desire expressed by many of you, as well as in attention to the importance that Pope Francis is giving to the role and mission of the elderly in the Church today; we have created a 'Space for the Senior Sisters' in the Lineamenta.



As Pope Francis says:

“The Lord calls us to follow Him in every age of life, and old age has a grace and a mission too, a true vocation from the Lord. It is not yet time to “pull in the oars. How beautiful it is the encouragement an elderly person manages to pass on to a young person who is seeking the meaning of faith and of life! It is truly the mission of the vocation of the elderly” (Audience of 11th March 2015).

“We do well to take up the dreams of our elders, so that we can prophesy in our day and once more encounter what originally set our hearts afire. Dreams and prophecies together. The remembrance of how our elders, our fathers and mothers, dreamed, and the courage prophetically to carry on those dreams. This attitude will make our consecrated life more fruitful” (Homily on the World Day of Consecrated Life, 02/02/2017).

Therefore, taking into account the growing number of elderly Sisters in our Institute, we consider the time of preparation to the Chapter as very opportune moment to be enriched by your lived experiences and wisdom in view of our common future mission.

1) Prophetic communities: Community Holiness, Inter-generational and Inter-cultural dialogue, One Apostolic Body.

As proposed for your study in the Lineamenta Document, pp. 8-15.



In view of the Chapter

- a) *How do you see your role as a senior Sister regarding the above-mentioned topics? What are the encouraging aspects as well as the challenges in the life of your Organism and of the Institute?*
- b) *What do you suggest to the Chapter in order that concrete steps be taken forward in animating our elderly members to contribute to their best in view of our growth as prophetic communities?*

2) That announce the Gospel in the Peripheries of the world: New frontiers, Missionary Animation, Interreligious Dialogue, Re-organization, Networking, Study and reflection on Mission, Ad Vitam.

As proposed for your study in the Lineamenta Document, pp. 16-31.



In view of the Chapter

- a) *As a Senior Sister, do you have anything in particular to say regarding the above-mentioned aspects of our mission, in the life of your Organism and in that of the Institute as a whole?*
- b) *What do you concretely suggest to the Chapter in view of the animation of the Senior Sisters so that you can continue to carry on and meaningfully contribute, according to your possibilities and with your unique characteristics, to the mission of the Institute today?*



NOTE

Who will participate?

- All the senior Sisters who have already celebrated their **Golden Jubilee** of Religious Life.

Methodology for answering and sharing

The Organism will plan for the meeting of the elderly Sisters according to the number of Sisters and location.

After the personal reflection, the Sisters will gather to share and put down their reflections and answers. If a Sister, for an unavoidable reason, is not able to participate in the group discussion, she will reflect by herself and send her contribution.

During the meeting, it will be important to prioritise the most important points to be taken for the assembly.

You are invited to choose one or two Sisters to represent the 'Senior Sisters' in the pre-Chapter assembly/ies, where you will share the summary of your work with all the Sisters.

4. A SPACE FOR THE YOUNG SISTERS

Dear Young Sisters,

As you all know, the theme for the forthcoming XI General Chapter is "Prophetic Communities that announce the Gospel in the peripheries of the world". We, invite you to share your lived experiences, expectations, challenges and future vision in relation to the Chapter theme.



1) Prophetic communities



"In the consecrated life we live the encounter between the young and the old, between observation and prophecy. Let us not see these as two opposing realities! Let us rather allow the Holy Spirit to animate both of them, and a sign of this is joy: the joy of observing, of walking within a rule of life; the joy of being led by the Spirit, never unyielding, never closed, always open to the voice of God that speaks, that opens, that leads us and invites us to go towards the horizon" (Pope Francis' Homily on the World Day of Consecrated Life 02/02/2014).

Yes, borrowing the words of Pope Francis, we too are counting on you "to be the prophets in the world". It is demanded of every religious to follow the Lord in a special way, in a prophetic way. This is the priority that is needed right now: "to be prophets who witness to how Jesus lived on this earth... a religious must never abandon prophecy" (Letter on the Year of Consecrated Life).

Sharing of the Experiences

Pause for a moment at that invitation scene: *"The joy of the moment when Jesus looked at you and called you"* and recall the important and



demanding, and at the same time beautiful, underlying meaning of your vocation: *“It is a response to a call, a call of a Love that loved us first”* (REJOICE! A Letter to consecrated men and women).

This vocation call us to live: in the spirit of Apostolic Obedience, in a daily attitude of seeking the will of God, in the light of faith, and together, we search which steps to take to realize, in different situations, the mission entrusted to us and to which we are sent.

Called to manifest to the world the newness of his love, the Father offers us the gift of Chastity, as a personal experience of the love of Jesus, who finds in the most intimate communion with Him the source of a boundless love for the whole humanity.

In order to live in detachment from things, which Jesus asked his disciples, on sending them into the world, we shall try to do everything in a spirit of Evangelical Poverty, not content with a formal observance (*From the text of the Revised Constitutions*).

1. *Share your lived experiences of Apostolic obedience, Consecrated chastity and Evangelical poverty in our Religious Missionary family.*

Having deepened our spirituality: the missionary passion, the logic of the small seed, the love that knows to build up relationships of fraternity, faithfulness, friendship, etc...

1. *How do you practice them in your daily life, in the community and missionary activities? How do you nurture your missionary passion?*
2. *How to cultivate, personally and in community, a life of deep and missionary prayer, well harmonized in the concrete life of apostolic fraternity?*
3. *As a young Sister, what would you like to ask the Chapter so that the Institute can help all to grow in these spiritual attitudes?*

To announce the Gospel in the peripheries of the World



Pope Francis exhorts all the consecrated people “to come out and go forth to the existential peripheries. ‘Go into all the world’; these were the last words which Jesus spoke to his followers and which he continues to address to us. A whole world awaits us: men and women who have lost all hope, families in difficulty, abandoned children, young people without a future, the elderly, sick and abandoned, those who are rich in the world’s goods but impoverished within, men and women looking for a purpose in life, thirsting for the divine. If you go forth and help others to resolve their own problems, and proclaim the Good News, you will find life by giving life, hope by giving hope, love by giving love”. (Letter on the Year of Consecrated Life).

As one Apostolic Body, we are desiring to strengthen those initiatives that aim at reaching out humanity's new frontiers, taking into account our human resources. We wish to have courage for re-dimensioning, leaving with courage those presences that do not correspond any more to our priority, in order to orient our choices towards the ‘emerging peripheries’ of our society, and to facilitate the sending ad extra and the opening of more flexible and simple presences. We also wish to better qualify all our activities so that they become ever more places of evangelization and of openness to universality.

Questions

1. *How do you encounter the challenges of the mission today? How do you train yourself to welcome the changes and educate yourself to have broad vision?*
2. *What are your suggestions towards our going to the peripheries, having small and new presences and better qualifying our activities?*



3. *Taking into consideration the post-Chapter journey, what do you expect as a young Sister, from the General chapter? Have you any other proposals to be considered in the Chapter?*

NOTE

Who will participate?

‘Young Sisters’ can be young in age, young in religious life, young in mission experience, etc. Considering these, we suggest the participation of the following group of Sisters:

- All the junior Sisters.
- Young perpetually professed Sisters up to 5 years.
- Sisters who have 4 – 5 years of experience in the mission Ad Extra.

Methodology for answering and sharing

The Sisters will gather to share and put down their reflections. The answers are given in groups and not individually. If a Sister, for unavoidable reasons, is not able to participate in the group discussion, she will reflect by herself and send her contribution.

The Organism will plan the young Sisters meeting according to the number of Sisters and location.

During the meeting, the sharing will be done and written down. The most important points will be prioritized to be taken for the Assembly. You are invited to choose one or two Sisters from each group to represent the ‘young Sisters’ in the pre-Chapter assembly/ies; during which, they will share the summary of their work with all the Sisters.

5. GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE REPORT OF THE ORGANISM

The life and mission of our Institute will be reflected upon during the General Chapter. In order to evaluate the journey made in the last six years, we propose that the members of the Organism be involved in planning and preparing its report during the pre-Chapter Assembly.

This time, the report will be presented in a creative way called “**Market place**”. The Market place is a location where we meet people, see new things, buy and sell items.

You will be given a space at the “Market place” to display your Organism and will have time to interact with the Chapter members. In your display, you can show how you want to be a testimony of hope and life and create an atmosphere to interact with one another. While sharing, we are building one Apostolic body by learning about others, learning to communicate, to be creative, conducive for changes, accept and appreciate the values and richness found in each Organism.

In view of preparing to display your reports, we invite all the members to present the life and mission of your Organism as the markets in your culture: with your realities, your activities, your challenges and your future vision to the other participants of the Chapter.

Hence, during the study of the Lineamenta, each community is encouraged to evaluate the apostolate carried on, keeping in mind the whole situation of the Organism and to indicate the vision and mission, successes and challenges for the Report, based on the following points:

The report will focus on:

- The progress made: Give three most successful “events” in line with the project of the Organism focused on the three priorities (plus one focused on the economic matters).



Prophetic Communities that announce the Gospel in the peripheries of the World

- ↳ Challenges: Prioritise the main four challenges in living our Charism (plus one focused on the economic matters).
- ↳ Future vision: What is the future vision of your Organism?
- ↳ Recommendation/Proposal to the Chapter: What does the Organism mostly desire/want?

Keeping all these in mind, the report will be drafted during the pre-Chapter assembly.

The Report will be presented in two ways:

1. A two-page written report (it should reach the GD by 15 April 2018).
2. A creative display at the “Market place”, through the following means: PPT, Video, brochure, cultural/traditional items... to show who you are and the context where you are living your mission.

6. OUTLINE FOR A DAY OF PRAYER

**Called to be
PROPHETIC COMMUNITIES
THAT PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL IN THE PERIPHERIES OF THE WORLD**

We propose some guidelines for a day of prayer at the beginning of the work of the “Lineamenta”. We can start together, leaving a time for personal prayer, which can be deepened by the help of the texts proposed. We can conclude together in the evening, with a sharing and with the prayer entrusting to Mary the preparation of the XI General Chapter.

1st Moment (together)

Introduction

We start our preparation for the Chapter with prayer. We thank the Lord who called us to be “small instruments” (M. Igilda) and invites us to be more and more “Prophetic Communities that announce the Gospel in the Peripheries of the World”. We entrust to Him ourselves, our missionary family dispersed in the vast field of the world, our service to the Kingdom and the journey towards the Chapter.

➤ Song – Display of the LOGO

The Logo can be briefly explained (cf. inside cover), and exposed in a significant place.

PROPHETIC COMMUNITIES
**“We are called to be a prophetic sign
of a fraternity that is always possible” (revised Const, n°. 73)**



“The prophecy of consecrated life must be evident in the community life. It is essential to underline the importance of the communitarian dimension of prophecy. It is rather a group than an individual to be prophetic sign in religious life. The prophecy of fraternity can be evident in international communities with intercultural experience since they are opened to others: lay people, families, young people, other religions, etc”. (cf. Plenary Assembly USG 2016).



We listen to the Word of God: Lk 10: 1; Jn 13: 34-35

✂ We listen to the dream of our elders

I feel that I must say a word that is a programme: Love. ... Love must be the bond of your family and the hidden spring of every action of yours which blends together all characters and all tastes, all the inclinations and different tendencies, all ages and differences of every kind; so that there may be but one thought; that is, the glory of God through the sanctification, yours and of the souls of the infidels...

(L. M. Balconi, WG, Homily 10/1/1948, p. 179).

➤ *Hymn / Psalm*

THAT ANNOUNCE THE GOSPEL IN THE PERIPHERIES OF THE WORLD

“We shall journey with apostolic courage

along the ever new paths of the mission” (revised Const, n°. 16)

Communion and mission are profoundly interconnected, to the extent that: “The Gospel joy which enlivens the community of disciples is a missionary joy” (EG 21). This joy is a sign that the Gospel is bearing fruit, and it drives us to go out from ourselves, to keep pressing forward in our sowing of the good seed. “In fidelity to the example of the Master, it is vitally important for us today to go forth and preach the Gospel to

all: to all places, on all occasions, without hesitation, reluctance or fear” (EG 23).



We listen to the Word of God:

Mt 28:19-20

We listen to the dream of our elders

What a terrible sickness this is Father! I ought not to think any more of the missions, of the missionaries. But then I would be really unhappy because I would have destroyed that which is greatest in me, most beautiful in the world; because I would have put off the very scope of my life. No, no, Father, it is better to suffer like this; it is better to be consumed slowly, insensibly by this great missionary longing rather than enjoy a relative tranquillity, without this fire which never ceases to burn.



(GF. Rodolfi a Tragella, UT Doc 42, 24/8/1931, p. 68).

➤ Hymn



Time for personal prayer

For reflection:

-  The Word of God, the theme of the Chapter, our Founders.... Do they question my life? How?
-  What do we really desire while starting this preparation for the Chapter?

Conclusion

(The prayer can be concluded together with a time of adoration, or during the prayer of vespers, sharing the personal reflection and entrusting to Mary the pre-Chapter journey)

Final Prayer of surrender to Mary

In the Immaculate, Queen of the Apostles, we find a maternal presence, which efficaciously accompanies us in our life and mission.



The certainty of her protection and her intercession inspires us and sustains us in the work of evangelization (cf. Revised Const. no. 4).

With Mary we advance confidently towards the fulfilment of the promise of God, and to her we pray (cf. EG 288):

*Mary, Virgin and Mother, you who, moved by the Holy Spirit,
welcomed the word of life in the depths of your humble faith:
as you gave yourself completely to the Eternal One,
help us to say our own 'yes' to the urgent call,
as pressing as ever, to proclaim the good news of Jesus.*

*Obtain for us now a new ardour born of the resurrection,
that we may bring to all the Gospel of life which triumphs over death.
Give us a holy courage to seek new paths,
that the gift of unfading beauty may reach every man and woman.*

*Star of the new evangelization,
help us to bear radiant witness to communion, service,
ardent and generous faith, justice and love of the poor,
that the joy of the Gospel may reach to the ends of the earth,
illuminating even the fringes of our world.*

*Mother of the living Gospel,
wellspring of happiness for God's little ones, pray for us.*

7. STATISTICS

Below you can find some tables and charts that present the situation of the Congregation as at 31/12/2016.

The tables show a comparison with the situation as at 31/12/2012.

The purpose is to provide a help for the reflection giving an idea of the numerical situation of our missionary family.

Tab. 1 - General picture of the members by nationality

	ITA	IND	BGD	BRA	HKC	CAM	GBS	PNG	Tot.
2012	148	645	55	47	2	3	1	9	910
2016	142	650	54	46	3	3	1	15	914

Tab. 2 - Members of temporary vows

	ITA	IND	BGD	BRA	HKC	CAM	GBS	PNG	Tot.
2012	8	84	9	2	0	1	1	5	110
2016	4	63	3	3	1	2	1	7	84

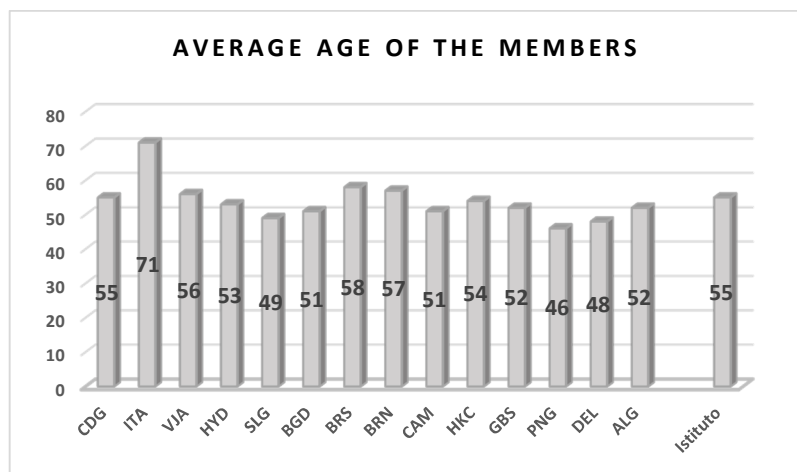
Tab. 3 - Novices by nationality

	ITA	IND	BGD	BRA	HKC	CAM	GBS	PNG	Tot.
2012	4	21	0	2	1	1	1	0	30
2016	1	8	3	1	0	0	0	2	15

The first two tables show the movement of the members in the given period. A slight and not significant increase is noted (as of 31/05/2017 the members are 907).

It should be noted that the numerical increase in these years has drastically slowed down.

In this regard, note the decline of the junior Sisters and, as shown in the third table, of the novices.



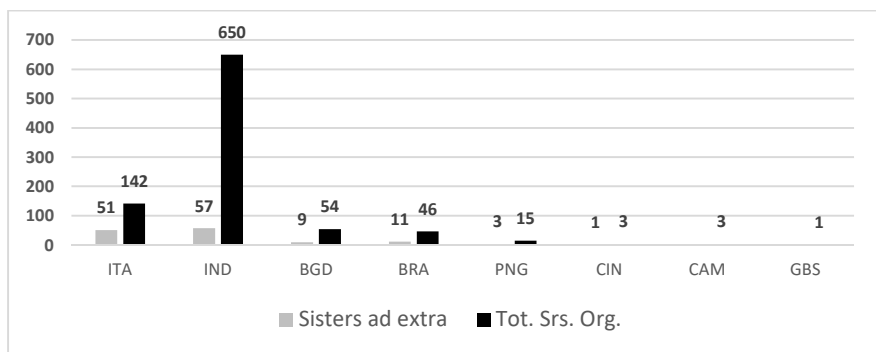
The average age of the Congregation at the end of 2012 was 52 yrs.
The table shows the current general situation and per Organism.

Tab. 4 - Communities

Organism	Tot. 2012	Opened	Closed	Tot. 2016
CDG	4		1	3
ITA	5	1		6
VJA	25	2	1	26
HYD	20			20
SLG	11	1	1	11
BGD	10	2		12
BRS	6			6
BRN	8		1	7
CAM	6	1	2	5
HKC	3			3
GBS	3			3
PNG	7			7
DEL	8	1	1	8
ALG	2	1		3
Tot.	118	9	7	120

The Tab. 4 shows the number of communities per Organism. Note that the community erected in the province of Italy is S. Cuore Community, born from the division of the already existing community. The two communities erected in the Province of Bangladesh have been there in the form of inserted presence for some years.

Fig. 2: Number of Sisters of various nationalities *ad extra*



The Sisters at the service to the DG are not counted.

Out of a total of 914 members, 132 Sisters are on mission outside their Country - 14.4% of the total.



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