



Final Document 112 General Chapter Ready and Apostolic

READY AND APOSTOLIC

Final Document 112 General Chapter

Let us often remember Fathers and Brothers
that the Congregation est opus Dei,
which through adversity had to be dissolved a thousand times,
and seeing also that amidst so much turbulence it has not only been standing
but that it has been growing, this is an evident sign
to be the work of His Divine Majesty.

I venture to say that I have not read of any Congregation which
great as it has been, has had so many and such continuous
adversity as our little Barchetta has had.

This is what I wanted to put before you, so that we may all take the courage to make ourselves
every day more instruments to correspond to the divine will;
and this will take effect when our will is no longer our own,
and that we will strive to die in everything to ourselves [...].

St John Leonardi Letter Rome 16 September 1603

1. We joyfully thank the Father of Mercies who in these days has made us experience how our little boat, despite so many adversities and situations, continues its voyage, towards new seas and villages, in full availability to the charisms of the Spirit, in openness to the signs of the times and in the ever up-to-date forms of pastoral care.

2. In this time of Chapter, a time of grace, of confrontation, of listening, of discernment, we have tried to understand better, the invitation of our Founder not to put obstacles in the way of the Spirit, but for perpetuity, we must take a different style, wanting to show ourselves ready and make ourselves apostolic men (St John Leonardi, Letter of 22 June 1601).



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3. We have been accompanied during these days by the Missionary Discourse according to the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 10) and we have combined it with that of the Gospel of Luke (Lk 9), an emblematic page that the Church attributes on the feast day of our holy Founder. The Word of God, as daily food, consoled us, confirmed us and sent us out again.

His Holiness, Pope Francis, in the audience granted to us on 14 July, exhorted us first of all to the witness of life. He invited us in our discernment to have evangelisation as our criterion, to recover fraternal life and adoration, to be joyful to be Christ's and to be so together, with our limitations and our sins. Joyful to be forgiven by God and to share this forgiveness with our brothers.

4. The journey we have made, through this small document, is handed over to each one, to each Community and Delegation and to all those who, together with us in different capacities, participate in the same charism and constitute a single Leonardine family.

5. For the new evangelisation we have given ourselves tools to be more ready and apostolic, with the intention of serving in the church and for the world.

READY AND APOSTOLIC: OUR MISSION TODAY

"He summoned the twelve and gave them power and might over all demons and to heal diseases. And he sent them forth to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. And he said unto them: Take nothing for the journey, neither staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money, nor bring two tunics. Whichever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. As for those who do not receive you, go out of their city and shake the dust from your feet as a testimony against them.

Then they went out and went from village to village, everywhere proclaiming the good news and healing" (Lk 9:1-6).

6. The 112th General Chapter, allowing itself to be guided by the Word of God, the Magisterium of the Church, and the charism of the Founder St. John Leonardi, wishes to open itself to the new evangelisation in an effective and project-oriented manner, and to make it the starting point of the six-year term that is about to begin.



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Pope Francis, citing the Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 6, of Vat. II says: The Second Vatican Council presented ecclesial conversion as the opening to a permanent reform of self out of fidelity to Jesus Christ (EG 26). And it adds: I hope that all communities will ensure that they put the necessary means in place to advance on the path of a pastoral and missionary conversion that cannot leave things as they are. Now we do not need a simple administration. Let us constitute ourselves in all regions of the earth in a permanent state of mission (EG 25).

7. In the thoughts and writings of the Founder (cf. Missionary Project) there is a precise and demanding indication: there are at least 20 existential peripheries, places of social distress or immorality, of slavery and exploitation, of immigration, of violence... none of these should be forgotten.

The Saint concludes chapter 1 by saying: "To these needs we are all bound to meet according to our own strength. As we read in the first letter of John in chapter 3: whoever, seeing one of his brothers in need, closes his eyes before him, how could the charity of God abide in him?" He goes on to quote the famous words of St Francis Xavier.

Today, the Order is making its choice of pastoral conversion necessary for all (an outgoing church, a church no longer standing still, locked safely inside the church, but searching for the lost sheep wherever they may be), embodied by the Delegations in the various countries, for example in the field of culture (Universities, educational institutions), sociality (family, young people, children, those far from the church), health care.

8. The charismatic motivation that cannot leave any of us behind are the words of the Founder: Christ must be the centre of our mission.

We must not seek our own interests, but only those of Christ. Truly he who has a passion for proclamation in his heart knows no rest. Indeed, as Fr Dominic Tucci wrote, St John Leonardi was constantly seeking "continuous inventions and new ways" to spread the faith.

9. In the 2022-2028 Missionary Project, each Delegation indicates the times and rhythms of this process: pastoral conversion must be achieved, but this needs community and personal conversion.

Therefore, in both Initial and Ongoing Formation, the urgency of creating cohesive communities, capable of true communion and witness, is reiterated.

10. Great commitment and a great sign of hope will be the development of the community phase. All tools from spiritual, cultural, psychological will be used so that each community feels the joy of participating in the proclamation of the Kingdom with the contribution of all.



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11. In the synodal style desired by Pope Francis, the first step will be listening. Accompanying the disciples to Emmaus, Jesus listens to them at length (Lk 24). And only after entering into intimacy does he manifest himself and immediately make them evangelisers. They return immediately, at night (ready) to give the news to the apostles.

Listening spreads at all levels, between brother and brother, in community meetings, with superiors. Listening means opening not only the ears but the heart.

12. Also in the various forms of solidarity that the Order supports, listening should be valued, remembering that human promotion must not be separated from evangelisation, according to the motto: Christ fed, Christ adored.

13. The Delegations should arouse the interest of young people by assigning them to specialised studies in the theology of evangelisation.

Lay people should be involved in the various Associations, making them breathe the charism of the Founder, especially pharmacists.

The involvement of the laity, in addition to being so much recommended by the Church, as well as being the exhilarating experience of the young pharmacist Leonardi, is one of the priorities indicated by the Church: in fact, there are so many spaces where the priest cannot enter; therefore, only trained lay people will be able to bring the proclamation.

14. In pastoral collaboration with the dioceses, after a reasonable trial period according to local custom, the duration and modalities of the service should be established, offering our religious the necessary time to recuperate within their respective communities.

15. Let modern means of communication (social media) be properly used in the service of the Gospel. Create a social network of the Order. Enhance the Order's website and those of the Delegations.

16. Each Delegation should form a Commission for Evangelisation to set up a project, in due time make proposals and evaluate the path taken, remembering that we will not move forward without an authentic community conversion: to feel that mine is a community at the service of the Gospel, that the Gospel has been entrusted to my community, and I will be a witness with my brothers wherever I am asked to go: this is what it means to be a Leonardo religious.



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17. Father General will provide the necessary liaison and animation for the exchange between Delegations and mutual support.

READY AND APOSTOLIC: THE LIFE OF THE ORDER

18. Chapter 112 of the Order Mother of God continues to listen to the Word from our Marian identity, in full continuity with the previous Chapter which invited us to live discipleship from the first disciple who showed us the way.

Marianisation has been the invitation for six years, in which we have experienced various situations that have challenged the world, and our religious family has been no exception.

19. In the Gospel there are several passages where the Lord invites us to go out, to fish, to row, not to fear, to continue, to cast the nets, to go up, to cross the sea... He questions us through the Angel with sentences: What are you doing standing there?

He invites us to participate in the mission in fraternity, under the protection of Mary.

20. To understand the current context of our Church, the key is synodality, proposed by our Pope Francis during his pontificate.

Walking together, in fact, must be the horizon towards which our Leonardian community is heading. Synodality demands a pastoral conversion that moves from a logic of personal and even individual apostolic work, to a perspective of community work that stems from the apostolic community.

21. We renew the desire for an authentic community conversion that transforms the work into a synodal pastoral structure. Walking together means that all the actors of the mission are participants and protagonists, each in their own commitment.

The religious community becomes a theological space where one lives the enthusiasm of serving and loving what one is and what one does. The quality of the community that is capable of living this missionary desire makes pastoral care a reflection of the fraternal love that is lived in intimacy, so the success of the apostolic commitment will be linked to the quality of community life.

22. Every community transformation or conversion must be preceded by an authentic individual conversion.



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In fact, fraternal life is built by its members with the grace that has been given to us: if the initial love of consecration is maintained, the joy of the life of faith, the baptismal commitments that we honour with our vows, we cannot doubt the sanctity of the apostolate because love is in itself diffusive.

Everyone feels a clear need to belong and have an identity with the Order.

The necessary conversion heals wounds and disposes us to walk beside our brother, whoever he may be and wherever he may come from.

23. The mission begins in the life of the community, is the starting point of every pastoral effort and ends there; it is the community itself that will give us the opportunity to verify the work done.

24. With the passing of the years and the many difficulties, thinking differently, the phenomenon of interculturality, which is growing exponentially, especially in the new delegations, are moments of grace and opportunities to grow in numbers and in holiness.

It is necessary to reconsider the sense of belonging in order to create spaces for dialogue and opportunities to continue to grow from the new and nourish from the old.

25. The Chapter invites us to listen, attentive to God's will in order to be available in the apostolate. We are attentive to the voice of God in his Word, in the Magisterium of the Church, in our own Sources; in the voice of God speaking to us in his people whom we serve; in the will of God expressed in our communities when we meet in his name.

Listening to God, in the sources indicated, opens us up to mission and moves us away from personal voluntarism.

26. The service of authority should be attentive to listening to the needs of each brother without losing sight of the fact that the legitimately appointed superior is the one who, at the end of the day, must decide on the most complex matters, always inspired by the evangelical counsels and the good of the Order.

27. It is becoming increasingly necessary and urgent to perfect the mechanism of union and coordination between the Delegations and the General Curia, so as to avoid confusion and parallel spaces for confrontation and decision-making.

28. The administration and the economy must be more solid and clear in its presentation. Technical instruments must be created.

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READY AND APOSTOLIC: STRUCTURES OF THE ORDER

29. In order to be ever more at the service of the Church, considering the growth and development of our Order in recent years, for better evangelisation and with a view to better and more appropriate discernment, this 112th General Chapter establishes the following

30. Province

The Father General and his Council should establish a Commission to study the insertion of the Province, in our Constitutions and Rules, which within one year should provide a document, approved by the General Council, to be brought to the attention of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

The Commission should consult all the Delegations; in addition to canon experts, it should also consult Institutes similar to ours.

31. Curia

Let the Community of Santa Maria in Portico in Campitelli, which has always been the seat of the General Curia of the WCO, be a supranational community, and let the Curia itself take charge of the Parish and the House.

32. Delegation

We reiterate what was established by the previous General Chapter 111 (DF 42): each Delegation will present its Particular Statute to the General Council for approval in the next three years.

33. Without prejudice to what has been established in Art. 3 of the General Statute of the Delegations, the Father General for the nomination of the Delegate shall carry out an exhaustive consultation of the religious also by requesting a triad of names, which he is obliged to take into consideration, but not to execute, although he should not deviate from it without a considerable reason.

34. It is necessary to emphasise the role of the Delegates as representatives of the Father General and fulfil the mission of representing him before the brothers and being a bond of communion. It is worth noting that the Delegate performs the role of representative of the Father General in the Delegation, but is also a brother who mediates and shares the voice of the Delegation.



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35. Should the Delegate resign or be impeded, the Father General shall appoint a new Delegate in the prescribed manner. Should the Vice Delegate or any member of the Council of the Delegation resign or be impeded, the Father General may freely choose a replacement with the consent of his Council.

36. Regarding the requirements for the appointment of the Delegate, please note what is written in our Ratio Institutionis.

37. In each Delegation, there should be annual meetings of all solemnly professed religious, to deal with the life of the Delegation.

Let each Delegation choose the most appropriate method for holding these meetings.

38. Italian Delegation

The Italian Delegation should continue its journey of growth in order not to lose the experience gained in this first six years of life.

39. Indian Delegation - Diecimo

For the next three years, and in view of the possibility of the Province, the Community of Diecimo remains in the Indian Delegation, following the path of Ongoing Formation of the Italian Delegation.

40. Indian Delegation - Indonesia

The Father General and his Council will make a proper discernment, listening in particular to the Indian Delegate and his Council, regarding the Community in Indonesia.

41. Particular Norms

Regarding the length of stay of a religious in a community, the norms of the Constitutions and Rules are to be followed.

The length of stay of a religious in a community is not to be exceeded, nor is it to be prolonged in a particular role. Care should also be taken not to fall into the opposite direction, frequently changing Community.

The stability of the Community, led by the Rector, must be guaranteed.



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42. Bodies for the Protection of Abuse and Fragility

We embrace the strong appeal of Pope Francis regarding abuse: "Please remember this well: zero tolerance on abuse of minors or incapacitated persons, zero tolerance. Please do not hide this reality".

Let Father General and his Council, bearing in mind the Magisterial Documents and Instructions, provide for the selection and appointment, in each Delegation, of a religious, adequately prepared, as Mediator of Justice for cases of abuse. There should also be an office dedicated to this task in the General Curia itself.

43. Separations from the Order

The processes of voluntary or de jure resignation should be completed as quickly as possible so as not to cause serious harm to the life of the Order and to those concerned.

READY AND APOSTOLIC: OMD FORMATION

44. To be ready and apostolic, we recognise that we need continual individual, community and pastoral conversion, which translates, for us, into an aptitude for ongoing formation, so that our witness of life may be effective.

45. Let the Commission for the Ratio Institutionis be appointed, involving the Formators of the various Delegations. Let the Executive Secretary be the General Councillor who will be entrusted with the task of Formation.

In updating the Ratio, the directives of the Holy See should be taken into account (in particular the Ratio Fundamentalibus 2016, the documents of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life) and what has been indicated and updated by the Formators' Meetings (Samayapuram 2008, Santiago 2009, Lariano 2011, last online 2021).

When the Commission is formed, it is necessary to be clear about what is to be done, in addition to the names, and to establish when (how long).

There should be the possibility to meet remotely and attendance in presence (at least once) should be evaluated.

46. It is the responsibility of the Father General and his Council to support, supervise and accompany Ongoing Formation in the various Delegations so that there may be a common guideline for the contents of the PF.



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The Delegates should present the programme to the Father General and his Council.

The themes of missionary and interculturality should be present in the contents.

The Delegates themselves should provide the annual review of the journey made, highlighting the lights, shadows and resistance of the experience lived, both by individuals and communities.

47. Among the proposals that have emerged are: Community reading of some Documents (such as, for example, For new wine, new wineskins; Economy at the service of the Charism and the Mission...); a two-year period on the Constitutions, also in view of the 450th anniversary of the Foundation; each community commits to learning a language other than its own: in Italy English or Spanish; in India, Indonesia and Nigeria Italian or Spanish; in Chile-Colombia: Italian or English. This is not only to get to know the Sources but as a small step in interculturality.

48. It is the task of the Father General and his Council to discern the Formators, who will be presented by the Delegate and his Council.

The choice should be diversified, if possible, for the different formation stages (postulancy, novitiate, temporary profession, those in charge of the formation of young priests).

In identifying those who could carry out this ministry (VC 63), a good discernment should be made, not only on the basis of skills or abilities, but by recognising a specific charism, even before sending them to a school for formators in Italy and/or in their own country.

It should be avoided that Delegate and Formator are the same person. Indeed, the guarantees of proper discernment may be lacking. If this is impossible, alternative written opinions should be sought from the religious of the formation community.

49. The Fr. General and his Council shall appropriately evaluate the suggestions and indications concerning:

1) School for WCO Formators (sources, charism, history...) which could take place in online or in-presence mode.

2) The realisation of the International House of Studies in Rome (Campitelli) for solemnly professed priests in view of the Licentiate or similar type of studies.

3) The possibility of an International Novitiate (without excluding the community of Santa Maria Corteorlandini in Lucca).

4) The discernment of the Almost Second International Novitiate lasting three months (cf. Ratio Institutionis 361).



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50. The Formation Houses should have suitable religious, where fraternal and community life is lived to ensure a suitable climate (cf. Ratio Institutionis 39-44).

Now, dear brothers, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate a criterion that I consider essential in making discernment: the criterion of evangelisation.

When we question ourselves on our creative fidelity to the original charism, we must ask ourselves whether our way of interpreting and implementing it is "evangelising", that is, whether the choices we make - in terms of content, methods, instruments, lifestyle - are oriented towards witnessing and proclaiming the Gospel. We know that by their nature charisms are different and that the Holy Spirit always creates and distributes them with imagination and variety.

But one thing is certain: the charisms, as St Paul teaches, are all for the building up of the Church, - not for their own sake, they do not have a dimension of particularity, but they are all for the building up of the Church - and since the Church is not an end in itself but its end is to evangelise, it follows that every charism, none excluded, can and must cooperate in evangelisation. And this must be kept in mind when discerning.

Think that the vocation of the Church is to evangelise, indeed, the joy of the Church is to evangelise. This was said by Holy Pope Paul VI, in that Letter that even today, so many years later, has relevance, *Evangelii nuntiandi*.

The vocation of the Church is to evangelise, the joy of the Church is to evangelise.

Address of the Holy Father Francis to the participants at the General Chapter
of the Order of the Mother of God, 14 July 2022.