***Evaluation (and assessment) of Every***

***Formation Program in the Congregation***

1. Among the 25th General Chapter's decisions, there is one on the analysis of Redemptorist Formation programs. With this presentation, we offer considerations as to what this decision is all about.

**Decision # 30 states:**

*The General Government will task the Secretariat for Formation to work with the Executive Secretary for Formation and each Conference Coordinator to ensure that during this sexennium, every Unit and Conference will engage in a complete and detailed analysis of its initial formation program at all levels, ensuring coherence and compliance with the Ratio Formationis of the Congregation and to determine whether its current program is truly preparing future Redemptorists for the mission of the Congregation as embodied in the missionary priorities of the Conference*.

**CLARIFICATIONS:**

1. Analysis and Evaluations at the different levels are essential components of the formation process to assure the organic, progressive, and systematic Formation of our future Redemptorists.
2. When speaking of "programs", we are not referring to academic, intellectual programs and content, but rather to the internal Redemptorist formation in our formation houses and through our formation structures. While not belittling the importance of solid academic, intellectual Formation in Philosophy and Theology, the analysis also confronts the Missionary aspects of this academic Formation. Another way of stating the question is: Are our Redemptorist formation programs erroneously orientated more to the Formation of priests, pastors, Moral Theology professors, etc., without any significant reference to our Religious Redemptorist Life and the Apostolic Plan of the Conference (Unit, Federation or Confederation) with it's priorities.
3. The overall vision and objective of the analysis of the initial Formation of Congregation programs are directed towards the future with the new Congregation's configurations, the Conferences' Apostolic Plans, and their influences on Formation.
4. Notice that Decision # 30 speaks of an analysis (assessment, examination), not necessarily an evaluation. Evaluations are subjective. They are the process of arriving at conclusions with judgments of the quality of the formation process. Analysis is objective. It is a search, an in-depth study to further understand the formation program, based on facts or observations. The analysis of our formation programs is usually done as the first step in the process of problem solving and change.

**CHALLENGES:**

1. On November 9, 2019, the General Secretariat of Formation prepared a letter to be sent to all the Coordinators, Major Superiors and Formators regarding Decision # 30 of the 25th General Chapter indicating the decision, the different formation stages to be analyzed, the objectives of the analysis, the possibility of physical visits in order "to help in the responsibility of the Units and Conferences to carry out this assessment", and a tentative calendarization of possible visits to each Conference by the General Council and the General Secretariat of Formation.

1. The continuation of these processes was to be complemented by the approval of the Apostolic Plan of each Conference and the updating of the *Ratio Formationis Generalis* with its translations into different languages.

1. Finally, as with so many other plans and initiatives of the General Government, COVID-19 has significantly imposed limitations on these processes, on travel, and other activities.
2. Worthy of note is that after the series of reports from the Units, the Conferences and reported by the members of the General Secretariat of Formation, we found that existing formation programs (and consequently their analysis), in general, are not well structured and, in some cases, the need not valued nor their elaboration even attempted.

1. There also seems to be some confusion about a formation program. What does it mean that the program be progressive, systematic, and integrated and who or what body is responsible for the elaboration, execution, and accompaniment of the formation programs.

In many cases, it is presumed that this is the exclusive responsibility of the formators, thus becoming the exclusive *owners* of the program.

At times, it appears that Formation is improvised because of the limited number of formandi, and the elaboration of PROGRAMS is not seen as part of a "lifestyle" for Formation.

1. Other factors that influence this lack of effective elaboration of formation programs are the difficulties related to the continuity of the formators and the lack of accompaniment of the formators by the major superiors and the corresponding Secretariats of Formation.

The lack of general Formation and the instability of the formators, that is, the constant changing of personal for Formation and in many cases the imposition of services from other Units, Conferences and ecclesial services and ministries on the formators that consume their time and energies, and result in many formators not being fully available for Formation.

**RATIO FORMATIONIS GENERALIS**

1. The **second part** of decision # 30 speaks about ensuring coherence and compliance with the *Ratio Formationis Generalis* of the Congregation.

In general, we found a lack of clarity between what is a *Ratio*, what are Directories, and what are Programs that concern Decision 30. After reflections and consultations with experts in Formation, we arrived at operational definitions.

Since the *Ratio* establishes the principles, values, and guidelines for Formation programs and should be the starting point and context for an analysis of formation programs, our reflections and findings lead to an examination of the then existent official *Ratio Formationis Generalis* (RFG), which was approved in 2003 and which we eventually discerned was inadequate for the current process of analysis of the formation programs.

The existing *Ratio* needed to be updated. Since 2003 the Vatican and the Congregation (for example, the Decree of 2015 and two General Chapters) have reflected on and produced a series of particularly important documents on Formation.

An updated *Ratio* would be needed to guide and reference point for any analysis of formation programs. The many drafts were circulated among experts and experienced formators in the Congregation. The process took approximately two and a half years (the process for the 2003 *Ratio* was done over 12 years, having been mandated by the 21st General Chapter of 1991). Copies of the updated *Ratio* can be found on the Formation webpage (www.cssr.news/formation), and printed copies will be available within the next few weeks.

1. Along with the actualization of the *Ratio* there were other necessary processes to be realized, for example, a) the translation of the updated 2020 RFG into the many different languages used in Formation in the Congregation other than the three official languages, and, b) the ongoing process of determining and effectively putting into practice the Apostolic Plans of the Conferences for which our formation systems are orientated, that is to "truly preparing future Redemptorists for the mission of the Congregation as embodied in the missionary priorities of the Conference".

**PROGRESS:**

1. Over the last two years, through a series of exchanges and reports from Units, the Conferences (through their coordinators) and as reported by the members of the General Secretariat of Formation, an abundance of analytical material, which include fundamental elements for each formation stage and listings of elements regarding formation program achievements and challenges (for a total of over a hundred and fifty pages), have been gathered, classified, and summarized. These findings are part of the General Secretariat of Formation report to the Preparatory Commission for the next General Chapter (XXVI).

**EVALUATION FORMULARIES**

1. To facilitate this petition by the 25th General Chapter, the General Secretariat of Formation has elaborated five formularies (questionnaires) that can continue to be used to analyze and eventually evaluate all the levels of our formation programs.

The five questionnaires can be found on the formation webpage ([www.cssr.news/formation](http://www.cssr.news/formation)) with the indication of who and what do they evaluate:

1. The programs of the (V) Provinces, Federations, and Confederations. The evaluation is responded to by the Units´ Secretariats of Formation and the Formators.
2. The second questionnaire can be used by the CONFERENCES and responded to by the Coordinator, the Conference Secretariat/Commission for Formation, members of the various Boards/representatives of the Conference superiors.
3. The third questionnaire can be used in the assessment of the FORMATORS. This assessment may be done by peer formators, major superiors, Unit´s or Conference/General Secretariat of Formation, Formation Boards, the Formandi, lay collaborators, etc.
4. and 5. The fourth and fifth questionnaires present general orientations for use when assessing with a group of formandi (fourth questionnaire), and when assessing an individual formand (fifth questionnaire).