

25th General Chapter
Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

Phase II – November 2016

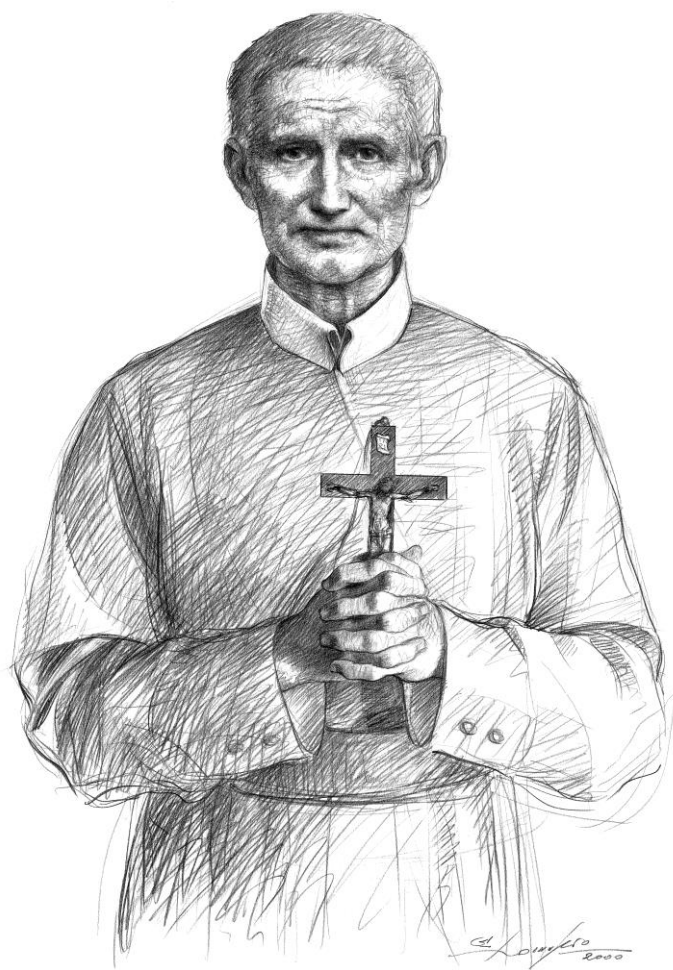
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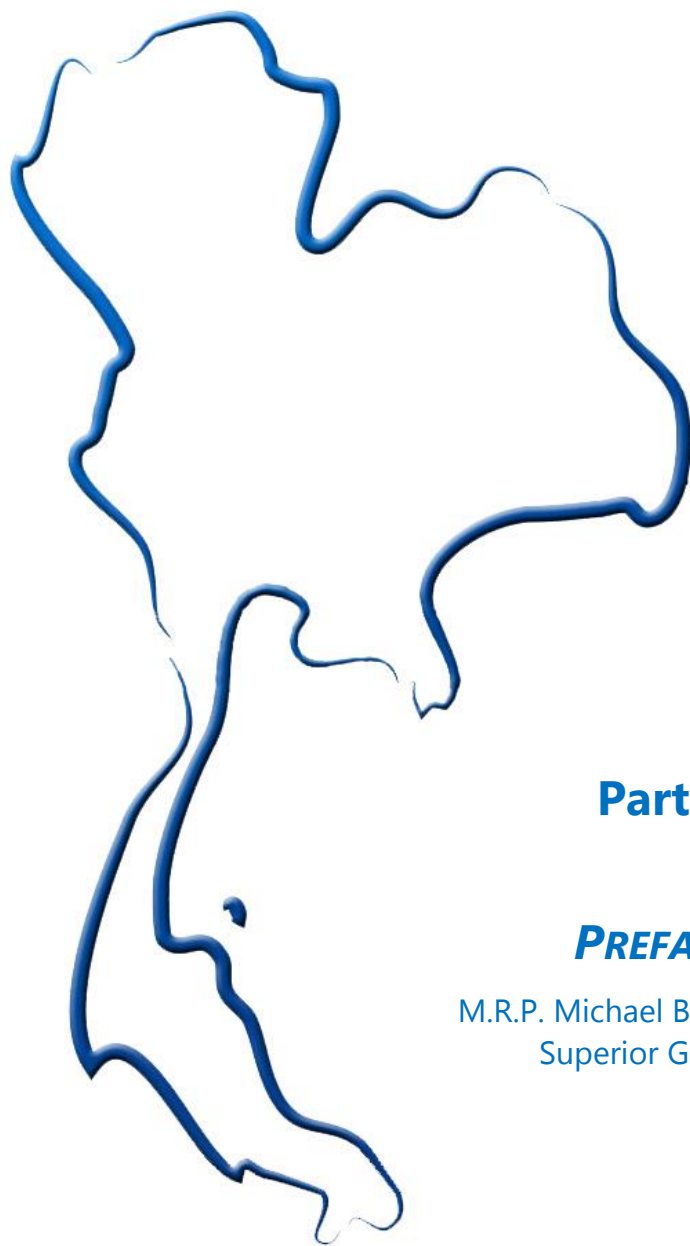
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Part I

PREFACE

M.R.P. Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R.,
Superior General



PART I

PREFACE

Most. Rev. Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R., Superior General

WITNESSES OF THE REDEEMER: *In Solidarity for Mission to a Wounded World*

Dear Confreres, Sisters, and Lay Associates,

Greetings in the name of the General Council! It is my privilege to present the Message and the Decisions of the 25th General Chapter (Canonical Phase) to the Congregation and to the whole Redemptorist Family. May this Document assist us in our missionary vocation to follow Jesus the Redeemer as he preaches the Gospel to the poor today! (Cons. 1).

The Process of the 25th General Chapter in three phases:

The 25th General Chapter entrusted the General Government with the task of editing and publishing the documents which are the fruit of the decisions of the Canonical Phase: the Message and Decisions. These documents are not only the result of the deliberations of the capitulars gathered together at the Redemptorist Centre in Pattaya, Thailand from October 31 – November 25, 2016. The Message and Decisions are the fruit of the Chapter process which began in 2015 with the questionnaire sent to every community, continued with the Working Document and the First Phase Meetings (January to May, 2016),

and culminated with the Canonical Phase in Thailand (November, 2016). As you know, the Chapter process continues with the Third Phase Meetings in the Conferences.

The 25th General Chapter has decided to continue the process of restructuring. This process is guided by the seven Principles for Restructuring for Mission adopted by the 24th General Chapter (2009), and was initiated with the creation of the Conferences (2010). Continuing restructuring is a process of conversion, renewal and revitalization of our Apostolic Life which involves all the Units of the Congregation.

The Third Phase Meetings in the Conferences will set directions for implementing the Decisions contained in this document. These Decisions cannot be understood without taking into account the entire Chapter process, the Working Document, and especially, the concerns which came from the whole Congregation. A careful reading and reflection on the Message and the Theme for the Sexennium individually and with others will be especially important to understand these Decisions.

The Theme for the Sexennium: a call to prophetic witness today

The theme chosen for the 2016 – 2022 sexennium – “*WITNESSES OF THE REDEEMER: in Solidarity for Mission to a Wounded World*” – offers us a valuable key for continuing the process of restructuring for mission in a way that will renew and revitalize our Apostolic Life. Carefully choosing language from our Redemptorist heritage and Constitutions, the Capitulars adopted this theme to inspire and challenge us to a new missionary solidarity and availability for the sake of the Mission, as well as a conversion of minds, hearts and practices for the renewal and revitalization of our Consecrated Life. Following in the spirit of St. Alphonsus Liguori, Redemptorist Missionaries can never separate our Mission from our Consecrated Life in community.

We live in a wounded world – a world wounded by sin, by violence, by injustice, and, increasingly so today, by fear. The degradation of the environment has wounded our planet, and it is the poor who feel most dramatically the impact of this degradation. Once again, in the spirit of the 24th General Chapter, the Capitulars took up the question of the many displaced peoples of the world, especially migrants and refugees whose situation has become even more critical today. We reflected on the alienation and

loneliness experienced by so many young people in contemporary society. The Chapter also recognized that our confreres, our communities and our Congregation experience the same wounds. We recognized the devastating effects of poverty, violence, war, and divisions which marginalize whole peoples and societies. We are living in a moment of epochal change, a clash of cultures, even a clash of civilizations, which pits secularized societies and religious fundamentalism against one another.

As Pope Francis stated in his homily for the World Day of Consecrated Life (February 2, 2017), in this “multicultural transformation we are experiencing”, the mission of consecrated men and women means “discerning how God is walking through the streets of our cities, our towns and our neighbourhoods... [It] means taking up and carrying the crosses of our brothers and sisters. It means wanting to touch the wounds of Jesus in the wounds of a world in pain, which longs and cries out for healing”.

Our reflections on the world in which we live led us to a deeper appreciation of our call to solidarity: solidarity with God, with one another, with the poor. This call to solidarity is not a political or protest movement. Rather, it is a call to fundamental conversion in such a way that each confrere, each community, each Unit and the whole Congregation is transformed so that we truly form “one missionary body” (Cons. 2). This conversion opens the path to a missionary availability that witnesses to our solidarity with all humanity, especially with the abandoned and the poor.

Such solidarity is only possible because of God’s solidarity with us. At the heart of the mystery of Redemption is the mystery of God’s solidarity with the world: in the Incarnation, God draws near to us and becomes ‘Emmanuel’ – ‘*God-with-us*’; in the Passion and death of Jesus, God shows us the lengths to which solidarity will go; in the Resurrection, God reveals the transformative power of such solidarity in Jesus; in the Eucharist, Jesus remains forever in solidarity with us, and transforms us into his living Body in the world today. Such solidarity is truly transformative – and sends us forth together in mission to this wounded world.

We are called to be “*Witnesses to the Redeemer*”. Thus, “We choose the person of Christ as the centre of our life, and strive day by day to enter more intimately into personal union with him” (Cons. 23). With the Redeemer at the heart of our community, in and through that community, we become

“witnesses of the Good News of the grace of God” (Cons. 7), and prophets of the plentiful redemption which God offers the world.

The Message of the Capitulars in the Canonical Phase to the Redemptorist Family

The Message of the Chapter members gathered for the Canonical Phase challenges us to a profound renewal of our Consecrated Life and our structures, so that we can more effectively strengthen our mission. It highlights a new spirit of solidarity and co-responsibility, among ourselves and with the lay women and men who share our charism. Above all, the Message calls us to live our missionary vocation as a prophetic witness of joy and mercy, available and sent forth to the most abandoned, especially the poor.

The Decisions of the Canonical Phase of the 25th General Chapter

Entrusted with the task of preparing the documents for publication, the General Council decided to order the decisions according to the chapters of our Constitutions. Without changing the content, we also edited and placed together decisions which were clearly connected.

The Decisions remind us that the call to conversion and transformation urges us to concrete actions, taking into account the real situation of the Congregation and the world today. To understand this situation, the Working Document and the Report of the Superior General to the canonical phase remain important resources.

The process of restructuring must involve every Unit. The changing demographics of the Congregation are a serious challenge – especially, but not exclusively, in the Northern Hemisphere. The Conference structure offers us an important instrument for continuing to restructure the number and composition of the Units to ensure a stronger missionary presence as we respond to the call of the Spirit to the Congregation at this time. The Conference can also become a more effective body for missionary discernment and pastoral planning, as well as fostering dialogue and collaboration at all levels.

The Chapter continues to invite us to renew and strengthen the life of our communities. A renewed Plan for Community Life will not in itself resolve the

challenges facing our communities. Authentic apostolic communities cannot be legislated. However, we need the structures which will facilitate facing together the challenges of community living in authentic relationships, especially in intercultural communities. Such 'gospel friendship' (Cons. 34) is a prophetic witness in contemporary society, and a proclamation of the Good News.

Significant attention must also be given to ongoing and initial formation, as well as the promotion of our missionary vocation, including for brothers and lay missionaries. The Congregation needs good and experienced formators, who are adequately prepared for their ministry and capable of handing on the Redemptorist missionary identity to others.

Growth in solidarity requires transparency, trust, and availability. Careful attention was given to the report of the Commission for Economic Solidarity mandated by the 24th General Chapter, and decisions were taken that provide us with principles as well as concrete practices to improve this important dimension of solidarity.

Recognizing the important place of moral theology in today's world, especially in the light of the pastoral Synod on the Family and the teaching of Pope Francis, the Chapter, asks the Congregation to strengthen its contribution to this field through the Alphonsian Academy and other initiatives, as well as in the areas of initial and ongoing formation.

The Chapter also recognizes that God shares the Redemptorist missionary charism with the Order of the Most Holy Redeemer, with other Congregations and with many lay women and men who accompany us in our mission and our ministry. For this reason, the Chapter made decisions concerning this dimension of our charismatic and prophetic identity.

Conclusion: Sent forth as Witnesses of the Redeemer in solidarity for mission to a wounded world

Once again, I would like to quote from the homily of Pope Francis on the 21st World Day of Consecrated Life (February 2, 2017):

"To put ourselves with Jesus in the midst of his people. For this reason, we sense 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, while chaotic, can [with the Lord] become a genuine experience of fraternity, a caravan of solidarity, a sacred pilgrimage...If we were able to take this route, it would be so good, so soothing, so liberating and hope-filled! To go out of ourselves and join others is not only good for us; it also turns our lives and hopes into a hymn of praise. But we will only be able to do this if we take up the dreams of our elders and turn them into prophecy.

Let us accompany Jesus as he goes forth to meet his people, to be in the midst of his people. Let us go forth, not with the complaining or anxiety of those who have forgotten how to prophesy because they failed to take up the dreams of the elders, but with serenity and songs of praise. Not with apprehension but with the patience of those who trust in the Spirit, the Lord of dreams and prophecy."

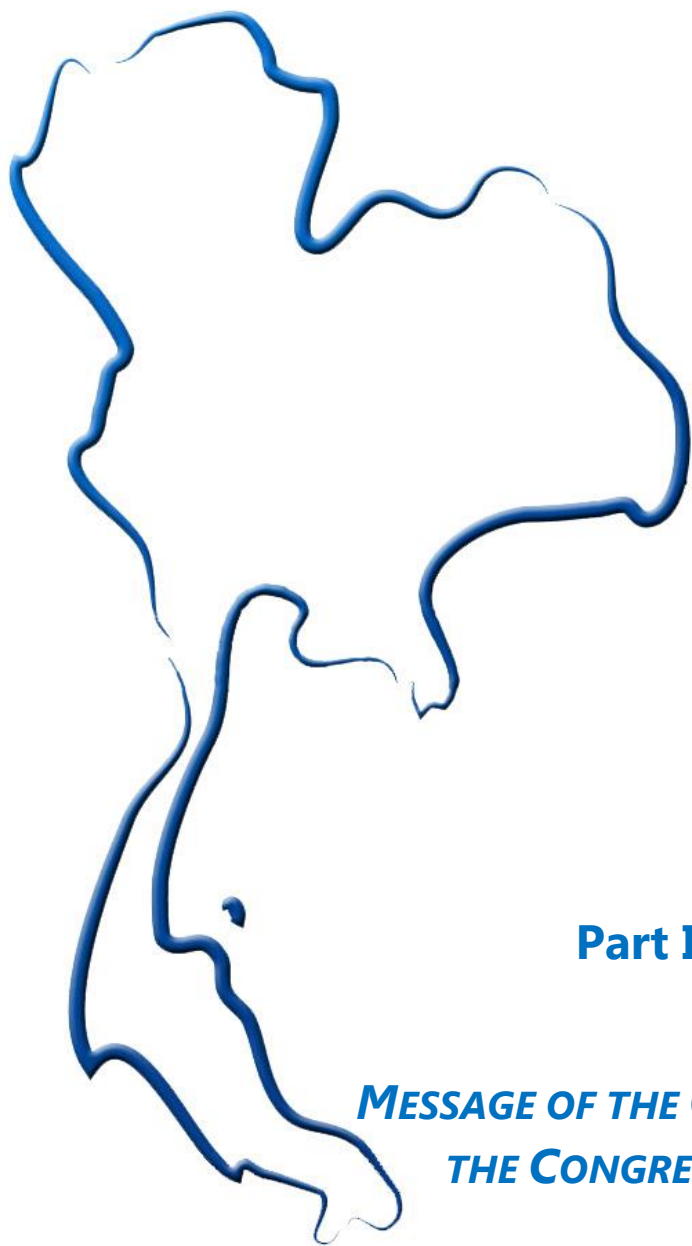
Confreres, Sisters, lay women and men who share our mission, I believe that we are living in a graced moment for the Church, and for the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. Yes, it is a time of epochal change, clash of civilizations, uncertainty and fear. Our world is wounded by violence and war, hatred and sin, poverty and exploitation. Yet, God loves this world so much that he continues to send the Son into our midst as our Redeemer and brother. God keeps the promises made to our ancestors – to Alphonsus and Gerard, to Clement and John Neumann. "Therefore we strive to encounter the Lord where he is already present and at work in his own mysterious way" (Cons. 7). Jesus is in the midst of his people! Let us accompany our Redeemer in solidarity for mission to this wounded world he loves so much.

The "copiosa redemptio" we proclaim is the gift and the mission of the Redeemer. The process of restructuring and discernment is truly the work of the Spirit. Guided by the example of Alphonsus, accompanied by the prayers of Mary, our Perpetual Help, inspired by the dreams of our elders, and close to the abandoned and the poor, let us dare to continue as prophetic witnesses of the Redeemer and preach the Gospel ever anew with joy and hope.

May God bless us in this great adventure!

Michael Brehl, C.S.R.

Fr. Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R.
Superior General



Part II

MESSAGE OF THE CHAPTER TO THE CONGREGATION



PART II

MESSAGE OF THE CHAPTER TO THE CONGREGATION

WITNESSES OF THE REDEEMER: *In Solidarity for Mission to a Wounded World*

We have no right to proclaim Jesus as our Lord and God if we do not touch his wounds (cf. Jn 20:27).

1. In an atmosphere of joyful hope, the canonical phase of the 25th General Chapter, the first ever to be held in Asia, was celebrated at the Redemptorist Center in Pattaya, Thailand. The 101 members of the Chapter, including seven Brothers, lived among the most disadvantaged and vulnerable people of the city to whom our Redemptorist confreres minister. At the opening of the Chapter, Fr. Michael Brehl, our Superior General, invited us to allow ourselves to be touched by the presence of the Holy Spirit challenging the Congregation to go out to the peripheries.
2. We are in a process of discernment. During the First Phase of the General Chapter we identified areas of serious concern. At this Second Phase we recognized that the Congregation continues to experience the

same call heard by St. Alphonsus, our saints, blessed and martyrs, and those who have gone before us, to leave our comfort zones and let go of anything that keeps us from being free and prophetic. The Third Phase of the Chapter will be our opportunity to discern in each Conference the concrete application of the decisions taken here.

Attentive to the Wounds of the World

3. Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, Archbishop of Manila, while preaching the retreat of the Chapter, invited us to live in solidarity, attentive to the wounds of the world. Many confreres feel wounded by the difficulties they face. Others feel the wounds of dissatisfaction or awareness of their own poverty. Like Thomas in the Gospel (John 20:27), we are invited to touch the wounds of Jesus in those who suffer today (LG 8.3), and encounter in these a healing of our own wounds (1 Pt 2:24).
4. It is important for us to develop a listening attitude. Let us listen to God, who continues to speak to people's hearts. Let us listen to our confreres in community who are our companions on the journey, and to the most abandoned, especially the poor, to whom we are sent. Let us live in an attitude of continuous dialogue with the cultures and religions in which our communities are inserted.
5. We must not fear the secularized world. It has offered us many important insights that we can use in carrying out our mission. All our theological reflection, especially Moral Theology, should be open to dialogue with these realities (Cf. C. 19).

The Renewal of our Consecrated Life

6. Consecrated Life is one of the most precious treasures in the life of the Church. Pope Francis invites us to "live this ministry with gratitude and joy, certain that there is nothing more beautiful in life than belonging forever and wholeheartedly to God, and giving one's life in the service of your brothers and sisters" (Address of Pope Francis to Formators of Consecrated Men and Women, April 11, 2015). Even though Consecrated Life is going through a period of serious crisis, we believe that this is a privileged moment in which to witness to the beauty of a life built upon the Evangelical Counsels. People everywhere search for

authenticity in their relationships. Through our Consecrated Life, we can incarnate the authenticity of Gospel friendship (Cf. C. 34)

7. Let every confrere carry out a serious examination of his consecrated life, and recognize those areas where conversion and renewal are needed. Doing so requires an intimate communion with Christ the Redeemer, who touches and heals our personal and community wounds and strengthens our spiritual life, making us available for mission. Indeed our vision of the Redemptorist apostolic community would not be complete without the joyful promotion of our vocation. We call on all confreres to rediscover the beauty of our Redemptorist vocation and to become the primary agents of vocation promotion in their Units, and to create a culture of vocation so that many people will be inspired to join our Redemptorist family.

A Congregation Sent Forth

8. During the Chapter, the call of Pope Francis resounded strongly to “go forth from your own comfort zone in order to reach all the ‘peripheries’ in need of the light of the Gospel (EG20),” and to evaluate our structures because such structures “can hamper efforts at evangelization” (EG26; Cf. Cons. 15). In this context, our missionary vocation in the Church takes on new and timely significance.
9. Our Constitutions remind us to respond “with missionary thrust to the pressing pastoral need of the most abandoned, especially the poor” (C. 1). Will we have the courage to ask ourselves where are these peripheries in our Units that need our presence and our evangelizing activity? Are we ready and willing to demonstrate our missionary availability? Each Unit should be attentive to these areas of urgent need, paying special attention to young people, migrants, and the most disadvantaged people.

Missionaries of Mercy and Joy

10. Redemptorists today are called to tell the story of redemption, the story of a God who became one with us in Jesus of Nazareth; the unique personal story of each one of us. We believe that “a renewal of preaching can offer believers as well as the lukewarm and non practicing, new joy in the faith and fruitfulness in the work of

evangelization.” (EG 11). This task requires that we enter into a lifelong process of ongoing formation, a life project of conforming ourselves to Christ. We call all Redemptorists to be a living testimony to God’s love, by their closeness to and love for all persons. It is not enough to experience God’s mercy in our own lives: we must become an instrument of mercy for others.

As One Missionary Body

11. “In carrying out its mission in the Church, the Congregation unites members who, live together and form one missionary body (Cons. 2).” And so all Redemptorists know themselves to be members of a common project shared by all in the Congregation. We encourage all to nurture this sense of belonging and thus cultivate a true community life. The community we long for is a place where all confreres, old and young, with their gifts and wounds, are included and where co-responsibility becomes a reality.
12. This community reads the signs of the times, is creatively faithful to the Gospel, and constantly promotes new initiatives that enliven the spiritual and community life of the confreres. Since it is an essential law of life that the members of the Congregation live in community, and carry out their apostolate through the community, we must always consider this community aspect when taking on any missionary project. (Cf. Cons. 21)

In a Shared Mission

13. Five Lay Redemptorists, representing the Conferences were present at our Chapter. We recognized in them the richness of our charism, which the Lord gives to the Lay Persons so that a prophetic word and presence can exist in the world. We feel called to build the Reign of God together with the wider Redemptorist family, formed by the Order, many Congregations and Associations with whom we share our charism.

New Leadership for Mission (John 10:11ff)

14. In order to more effectively respond with a renewed missionary presence in the world, the General Chapter has chosen to continue the process of restructuring for mission. The Conferences, which the

General Chapter has decided will continue, are a valid instrument to make this new missionary presence effective.

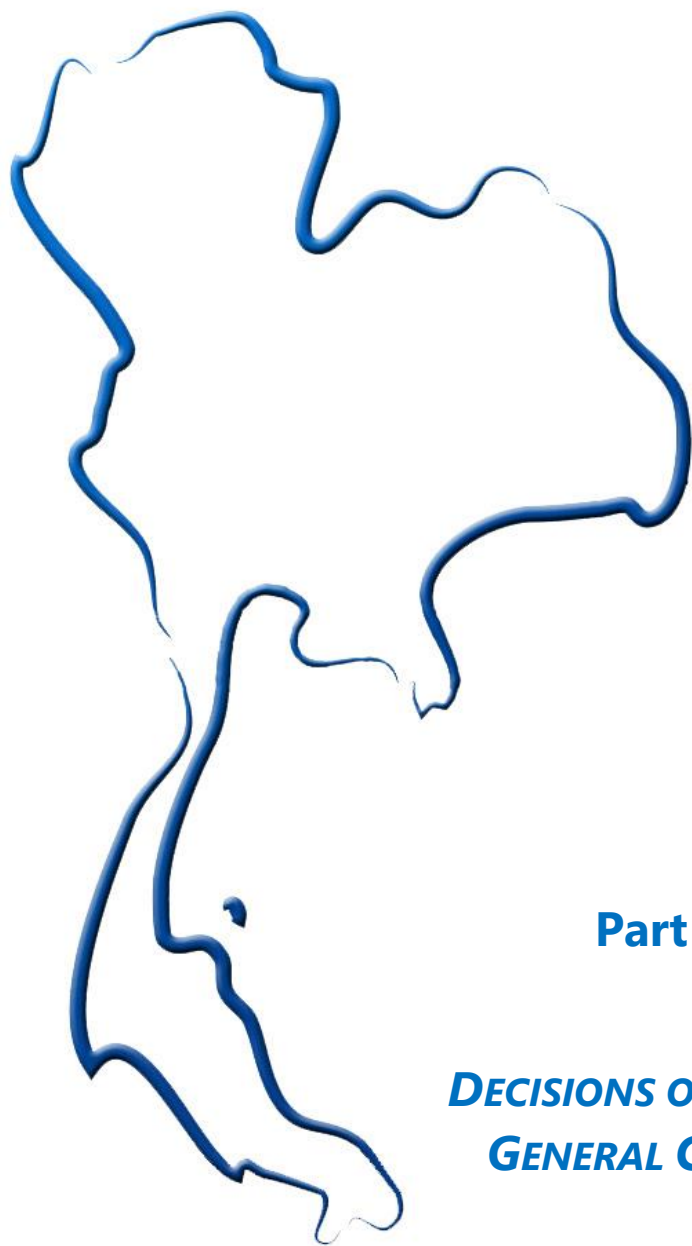
15. The Congregation needs leaders in the style of Jesus Christ, communities and persons: who exercise leadership in the mission, who have a vision of the future, who show us the direction to follow, who are authentic and persons of integrity, who are capable of teamwork and obedient to the mission.

Building the Reign of God on the foundation of solidarity

16. We issue an urgent call to all Redemptorists, especially to those in initial formation and our younger confreres, to embrace the present with hope and go to the peripheries so that the freshness of the Reign may reach everyone, especially the most vulnerable and the abandoned. We encourage our older confreres, who have so generously given their lives proclaiming the Gospel, to support through their solidarity, efforts and prayers (Cf. Cons. 55), the new initiatives that the Holy Spirit inspires in the coming years.
17. Let us take up the challenge of building and living solidarity: solidarity with our world, with creation, and with the men and women of our age; solidarity with the most disadvantaged of our society.
18. We extend the practice of solidarity to every dimension of our lives:
 - Solidarity with the General Government in the sharing of resources and personnel;
 - Solidarity between Units in helping those Units which are most in need;
 - Solidarity within our communities by encouraging co-responsibility for common tasks and services and by taking on concrete commitments in favor of the most abandoned;
 - Solidarity at the personal level, as each of us examines whether our lifestyle is consistent with our calling, and by carrying out concrete actions which incarnate the option for the poor (Cf. Cons. 92-96).

- 19.** Let us be prophetic in our world through our lifestyle, denouncing all sinful structures and proclaiming the plentiful redemption that comes to us in Jesus Christ who liberates and dignifies every human being.
- 20.** We share this message in the missionary spirit of St. Alphonsus with his moral approach of pastoral kindness and mercy. May our Mother of Perpetual Help, the Mother of Mercy, accompany us in our proclamation of plentiful redemption and new life.

Pattaya, November 23, 2016



Part III

DECISIONS OF THE 25th GENERAL CHAPTER



PART III

DECISIONS OF THE 25th GENERAL CHAPTER

Theme of the Sexennium:

WITNESSES OF THE REDEEMER:

In Solidarity for Mission to a Wounded World

CONTINUING THE PROCESS OF RESTRUCTURING FOR MISSION

*"The Congregation must adapt its own structure and institutions to its apostolic needs, and adjust them properly to the different character of each particular mission, always of course, in fidelity to the charism of the Congregation.
(Cons. 96).*

The 24th General Chapter mandated that a process of "restructuring" be undertaken throughout the Congregation, a process through which the Congregation would be organized into five Conferences that would enable greater missionary discernment (*Decision 2*, 24th General Chapter). This process would be guided by seven "Principles" (*Decision 1*, 24th General Chapter):

- 1. Restructuring is for Mission.**
- 2. Restructuring for Mission should stimulate a reawakening of our *Vita apostolica*. It should prompt a new availability for mission.**
- 3. Restructuring for mission should seek out and accompany the most abandoned, especially the poor. To this end it should be a restructuring within Units and Conferences, and also across the boundaries of Units and Conferences.**
- 4. Solidarity in mission includes an ability to optimize resources, both human (professed members and lay associates) and financial.**
- 5. Restructuring for mission requires association among Units, always searching for a common way forward.**
- 6. A vital part of our mission, both historically and in our time, is theological reflection rooted in spiritual and pastoral experience. New deployment of our theological resources is essential to the challenge of restructuring for mission today.**
- 7. Participation and Co-responsibility: the restructuring process will involve all Redemptorist confreres and lay associates and in some way all those people in the midst of whom we exercise our ministry. For this, a process of conscientization will accompany the Process of Restructuring.**

For six years the Congregation has been engaged in this process of restructuring. To evaluate the process, and to ensure a greater participation of the confreres in preparation for the 25th General Chapter, a questionnaire was sent out to the entire Congregation. The 25th General Chapter, at its Canonical Phase, taking into consideration the responses given by the confreres to the questionnaire, and the input coming from the discussions at the First Phase, evaluated our missionary presence in the world. In view of the mission of the Congregation in the world today the Chapter decided to continue the process

of restructuring, already begun in the previous Sexenniums, continuing the structure of the Conference and the figure of the Coordinator.

1. The General Government, in coordination with the Conference Coordinators and the Units of the Congregation, will continue the process of restructuring for Mission with all its implications. This process will involve all the Units of the Congregation. Special attention is to be given to GS 088.
2. The process of restructuring will continue to be guided by the Principles adopted by the 24th General Chapter. In addition, and to ensure greater solidarity in the Congregation, a further four Principles will guide the process:

- I. **The Resources of the Congregation are at the Service of Mission** (Cons.1 & 144; Principles for Re-Structuring, 1).
- II. **We live Simply and Generously in Solidarity with the Poor** (Cons. 61-68; Principles for Restructuring, 3).
- III. **Managing our Resources with Integrity is part of our Witness to Missionary Solidarity.**
- IV. **Leadership and Governance Strengthen and Deepen Missionary Solidarity at all levels.** (Cons. 92 & 95)

The process will involve re-configuration between the Conferences, within the Conferences, and of the Units of a Conference.

3. Those (V)Provinces that in the past 5 years have not met the criteria of GS 088, and taking into account other criteria based on the Constitutions and Statutes (for example, missionary dynamism, vocations, enough confreres for leadership, etc.), will begin a process of union/fusion/federation with other Unit(s), under the guidance of the General Government and the Coordinator(s) of the Conference(s).
4. The Conference Coordinator has the right to participate in the Assemblies and Chapters of the Units.

I.

THE MISSIONARY WORK OF THE CONGREGATION

All Redemptorists ... must be humble and courageous servants among the people of the Gospel of Christ.

(Cons. 6)

The 25th General Chapter recognized the wealth that the missionary work of the Congregation is for the Church and for the world at this time.

Today more than ever, urged on by our Constitutions, we feel the call to continue the mission entrusted to our Congregation to evangelize the poor by touching their wounds, by solidarity with them and by promoting their full liberation (Cf. Cons. 5). For this we have begun a process of restructuring and revitalization, and we have been invited, both religious and lay Redemptorists, to use those means that are more conforming to the Gospel and, at the same time, more effective. Hence the following decisions taken by the Chapter:

MISSION

5. *Apostolic Plan for the Congregation, to be implemented by the Conferences*

The General Government will produce criteria for the apostolic activity of the Congregation. Based on these criteria, each Conference will develop a Pastoral Plan for implementation.

6. *The Future of the Congregation in the Northern Hemisphere*

The General Government, in dialogue with the Conferences of Europe and North America, will develop a sustainable strategic plan for the future missionary presence of the Congregation in Europe and North America. In doing so, they will be guided by two determining principles:

- a) The Congregation cannot respond to every pastoral need. Prioritization is required. The basic question must be – where do we as Redemptorists want to offer our charism in these Conferences at this time and in the future.
- b) Bringing confreres from other Conferences to work in the Conferences of Europe and North America should be in the service of the missionary priorities of the Congregation and not to maintain existing structures, some of which may be obsolete.

The study of English and other languages is to be included in all initial and ongoing formation programs to prepare confreres for possible work in the future in the Conferences of the Northern Hemisphere.

7. *Common missionary projects*

The General Chapter mandates that each Conference, during the sexennium, realize at least one common missionary project, limited in time and scope.

8. *Collaboration between Units and sister-partner communities*

The General Government will continue to promote bilateral collaboration between Units through the establishing or forming of sister-partner communities in the Congregation.

9. *Redemptorist Churches and Pastoral Ministry*

The General Government will establish a Commission/Body that will undertake an in-depth study of how our churches and pastoral ministry in our churches (including our parishes) can respond to the challenges of evangelization in the twenty-first century thus ensuring that our churches become places of welcome and encounter with the Redeemer. Part of the task of this Commission will include a wide consultation of the Congregation in relation to our churches and their role and function today, probably organizing a Congress or Colloquium on Redemptorist Churches, and the publication of a *Directory* or *Ratio* that would provide a vision and direction for ministering in Redemptorist Churches throughout the world.

10. Structures for dialogue between the theologians and missionaries of the Congregation

Each Conference will have a Secretariat or Commission for Evangelization that motivates and facilitates dialogue between missionary activity and theological reflection, through various meetings and gatherings.

11. Office for shared mission with the laity

A permanent Office for shared mission with the laity will be created at the level of the General Government and a Commission for shared mission in each Conference.

This Office, assisted by the Conference Commissions, will prepare a *Directory* which will describe the profile of the lay Redemptorist, in all its diverse expressions. It will delineate clearly the duties, rights, responsibilities, and levels of incorporation.

The Office, with the help of the Conference Commissions, and the General Secretariat for Formation, will also produce a *Ratio formationis* for the preparation and formation of both lay partners and professed Redemptorists for shared mission.

12. Evangelization and care for our common home

In the spirit of *Laudato si*, and with a view to developing a greater awareness of our environment, the Chapter encourages Conferences, Units and communities to promote ecologically supportive themes in our various apostolic works and celebrations. The Conference Secretariat or Commission for Evangelization will seek ways of helping realize this project and be responsible for monitoring its progress.

13. Media in the service of Evangelization

Conferences, in collaboration with the various centers and offices of the Congregation for spiritual, ethical and moral training, will work together in the creation and support of media and educational channels that offer ongoing ethical reflection on contemporary issues that are important for civil society.

MORAL THEOLOGY

14. *Moral Theology as a priority and a common apostolate of the Congregation*

Continuing the moral tradition of St. Alphonsus and the Congregation is a priority of the Congregation. Among the common apostolates which continue this tradition is the Alphonsian Academy, as well as other institutes in different parts of the Congregation, that promote study, research, writing and the preparation of moral theologians.

15. *External Evaluation of the Alphonsian Academy*

The General Government will engage a team of international non-Redemptorist professionals from relevant fields to conduct an evaluation of the resourcing (economic and otherwise) of the Alphonsian Academy and to make proposals for future sustainable resourcing and resource management.

As part of their task, this team would be invited to explore and propose at least two further alternative ways that the Congregation might structure and sustainably resource that vision proposed in the founding goals and purposes of the Academy in the field of moral theology.

The fruits of this study will be presented to the mid-sexennial meetings.

16. *The Governance of the Alphonsian Academy*

The governance of the Alphonsian Academy will be restructured by establishing a Board of Directors with the authority to evaluate and shape the faculty, staff, program, and resources of the Academy in order to provide the best moral theology education available to students and to promote research in contemporary moral theology. The General Government will implement this decision and name the members of the Board of Directors. The Academic Council will facilitate the necessary changes in the Statutes of the Academy for the implementation of this

decision. The General Chapter directs the General Government to withdraw funding for the Alphonsian Academy in the case of a failure to cooperate fully with this new structure of governance.

MISSIONARY SOLIDARITY

17. *Africa and Madagascar: a priority of the Congregation*

Following the decisions of recent General Chapters that declared Africa and Madagascar a priority for the whole Congregation, the 25th General Chapter strongly recommends that each Unit outside of Africa and Madagascar consider possibilities for developing their relationships with the Units within that Conference.

The Coordinators will ensure that Africa and Madagascar is kept on the agenda of their respective Conferences.

18. *Solidarity in finance with the Conference of Africa and Madagascar*

Each Unit, both within and outside the Conference of Africa and Madagascar, should consider making a regular financial commitment to Mission Projects or to the Fund for Africa and Madagascar, as circumstances permit. Structures for financial accountability are already operative in this Conference.

19. *An Annual Congregation-wide Collection for the Solidarity Fund*

The General Government will institute a Congregation-wide Collection to take place every year in every public Redemptorist place of worship to strengthen the Solidarity Fund. The responsibility for ensuring that the collection takes place lies with each Unit, which will determine the time and form of the collection, taking into account local circumstances.

II.

THE APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY

"An essential law of life for the members is this: that they live in community and carry out their apostolic work through community"
(Cons. 21).

Redemptorist Missionaries, like so many religious, today feel a strong call to live in communities where faith, life and mission are integrated. In a context marked by autonomy, strong individualism and secularism, we are urged to deepen our Redemptorist charism, calling us to be 'One Missionary Body' (Cons.2). The Spirit speaks in and through the apostolic community, allowing us to experience the great joy of our being, by offering the Redemption of Christ through incarnated and renewed presences in the new geographical and existential peripheries of the world.

20. A new style of community life

The life-style audit proposed by the Commission for Economic Solidarity is to be circulated to all communities and confreres to assist us in a regular review of our life-style. This could become a (V)Provincial Statute.

21. Plan of Community Life (PCL)

The General Government will offer orientations to facilitate communities in devising the Plan of Community Life as mandated by the 22nd General Chapter (Decision 3.1). This Plan will strengthen community solidarity through community meetings, moments of prayer, monthly and yearly retreats and provide for the practice of regular Review of Life. A Plan of Community Life is required of all the communities of the Congregation.

22. Length of stay of a confrere in a local community

To ensure that a confrere does not remain indefinitely in a particular community, confreres may remain in the same community for no more than two consecutive quadrennial terms. If a confrere needs to remain

in a community for a further quadrennium, the Extraordinary Council of the (V) Province must decide by a deliberative vote. In the case of elderly and sick confreres in need of permanent assistance, the Extraordinary (V) Provincial Council will decide on a case by case basis by a consultative vote. In the case of the Regions or communities directly under the authority of the General Government, the Superior General will decide following a consultative vote of his Council.

23. *Commission for Brothers*

The General Government will create a Commission for Brothers within the first year of the sexennium. This Commission will be tasked to raise issues specifically regarding the situation of the Brothers and to offer concrete programs and suggestions for the General Government's consideration for implementation in the Congregation. The Commission will report its findings to the General Government for discussion at the mid-sexennial meetings. The Commission shall contain at least five Brothers, representing each of the Conferences.

III.

THE APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY DEDICATED TO CHRIST THE REDEEMER

"Religious profession therefore becomes the definitive act of the whole missionary life of Redemptorists"

(Cons. 54).

Redemptorists, priests and brothers, through their religious profession founded on baptism and through the evangelical counsels, center their lives in Christ the Redeemer and form an apostolic body called to be a living witness of the Redeemer in this world (Cf. Cons. 46-76). That is why Redemptorist consecrated life is alive and dynamic. Each confrere is called through co-responsibility to live his consecration rooted in the joy of the Gospel, every day becoming a new man, and allowing him to break down the barriers that prevent creative fidelity, and silence the voice of the Spirit that speaks to the heart, encouraging one's vocation.

24. *The Promotion of Redemptorist Spirituality*

Each Conference, in cooperation with the Center for Spirituality, will promote our spirituality for the revitalization of our consecrated life.

25. *The Pastoral Guide for Superiors*

The General Government will revise and update the Pastoral Guide for Superiors, with a view to providing a clearer understanding of leadership in the Congregation.

26. *A Communicanda on Leadership*

The General Government will prepare and circulate a *Communicanda* on the nature of good leadership in the Congregation. This *Communicanda* will include reflections on the qualities and skills necessary for effective leadership in the Congregation, the necessary preparation for such leadership, the proper use of authority and the distinction between leadership and administration.

27. *Brothers: Co-responsibility and Leadership*

The General Chapter reaffirms that religious profession is the basis of our identity as Redemptorists and all are called to exercise co-responsibility in leadership according to their gifts. The General Government will seek ways to guarantee that Brothers be given an equal opportunity to exercise this co-responsibility in leadership at the Unit, Conference and General Government Level.

28. *Safeguarding of Minors and Vulnerable Adults*

The General Chapter mandates that every Unit in the Congregation prepare a policy for the safeguarding of minors and vulnerable adults, as well as a protocol for dealing with allegations when they are raised. Such a policy and protocol shall:

- Be sent to the General Government by December 31, 2017 for study and approval.

- Take into account the directives of the Holy See, the policies and protocols of the local church, and the legal requirements established by the civil authorities of the countries in which the Unit works.
- Have as a primary concern the protection of the vulnerable
- Protect the legitimate rights of those who make the allegations and the persons accused.

The General Government will offer assistance when requested.

IV.

FORMATION OF THE APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY

"The Congregation is continually in process of formation and development"
(Cons. 82).

In a world that is evolving and changing dramatically, the General Chapter was well aware of the need to promote formation in the Redemptorist Charism that is serious, interdisciplinary and continuous. Each Redemptorist Missionary is called to give witness to his own vocation through a life-long process of being formator and being formed. (Cf. Cons. 77). An integral formation that synthesizes life and knowledge will better enable us to be more authentic in our mission in the world and in the Church

29. Vocation Ministry as an authentic priority

Vocation Ministry must be a priority in the pastoral planning of all Units and local communities, ensuring that the necessary personnel and material resources are made available in order to realize the objectives of this ministry.

Every Unit, by itself or in collaboration with other Units, will appoint full-time Vocation Promoters who will work together as a team to promote the Redemptorist missionary vocation.

In the promotion of the Redemptorist missionary vocation, special attention is to be given to the promotion of the vocation of the Redemptorist Brother.

30. *An Evaluation of Every Formation Program in the Congregation*

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.

31. *Formation for Mission and Evangelization in a Secularized World*

In order that future Redemptorist missionaries will be better equipped to evangelize in a secularized society, each Conference Secretariat of Formation will engage the assistance of qualified professionals and confreres whose study, research and expertise in this area can be put at the service of Redemptorist formation.

32. *In solidarity with the poor*

All Units will ensure that initial and ongoing formation programs include components of “formation by insertion” which allow for experiences of real closeness to the poor. They will develop programs that will make provision for a period of a more stable sharing in the life and lifestyle of the poor whom we serve.

33. *Preserving the vitality of the Redemptorist tradition in Moral Theology*

Since knowledge of Moral Theology is part of our tradition from the time of Alphonsus, the Congregation will pursue a variety of ways to preserve and develop the teaching of, and research in, this science. Familiarity with the science of Moral Theology is to be considered a

requirement of the ordinary formation of every Redemptorist. As such, it is to be given priority in the initial and continuing formation of all confreres. Those confreres with a particular aptitude for study and research will be encouraged to pursue higher studies in this science to ensure the continuation of our tradition.

34. *Continuing Formation*

The General Government will expand the membership of the General Secretariat for Formation. This expansion will allow the Secretariat to take responsibility for both initial and continuing formation more effectively. The work of the Secretariat will endeavour to develop programs that aim at conversion of hearts, at more effective ways of achieving the vision we have in common, and at deepening our specific Redemptorist identity.

35. *Regular Courses for Formators*

The General Secretariat for Formation will continue to offer regular courses for the preparation and ongoing training of Directors of Formation, either in Rome, in the Conferences, or on-line. The same Secretariat shall continue to produce resources to aid Formation Directors in carrying out formation for Mission in the Congregation.

Particular attention must be given to the "importance of missionary availability" as a determining factor in a vocation to Redemptorist life.

36. *Training of Laity in Moral Theology*

Each Conference will arrange for the regular formation of lay partners on the moral teaching of the Church, and investigate the possibility of sponsoring a capable Lay Partner in the pursuit of an advanced degree in the area of Moral Theology.

37. *Communications and the New Media*

Each of the five Conferences of the Congregation will appoint a confrere who will undergo study and training in the area of Communication. He will then assume responsibility for the Communication needs of the

Conference and act as a direct link or liaison person with the Units of the Conference and the Office of Communications of the Congregation. He will also be available to work with the various Formation Programs of the Conference to ensure that future Redemptorists are equipped to avail of the evangelizing possibilities of various forms of new media.

V.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY

"All members and communities must, in their own way, play an active and responsible role in the government of the Congregation"
(Cons. 92).

In order to carry out its apostolic work, the Congregation has established a structure which, suitably adapted to the diversity of each mission, seeks to safeguard the charism of the Institute. The new element in this structure is embodied in the Conferences.

Key attitudes for the growth of this new structure are co-responsibility, collegiality and dialogue, subsidiarity, solidarity, personal availability and fidelity to the common mission, respect for leadership, whose role is to encourage, guide and care for the confreres and ensure the continuity of the sole missionary project of the Congregation (Cf. Cons. 92-96). All this flows from the fundamental conviction that true authority is service.

DIRECTORIES AND "COMMUNICANDA"

38. Renewed "Communicanda"

The General Government will return to the practice of sending periodic "communicanda," as well as making use of new forms of digital communication.

39. Revision of the *Directory of Chapters*

The General Government will revise the *Directory of Chapters* to incorporate the Decisions of the General Chapters since the last revision (1991) to include the Conferences and their Assemblies as well as decisions regarding representation.

This revised document will be presented at the mid-sexennial meetings for acceptance as the 'working directory' until the 26th General Chapter approves or modifies the text.

40. *Choosing a Major Superior*

In revising the *Directory of Superiors* provision will be made to include the possibility for (V)Provinces to submit the names of three confreres to be considered for nomination by the Superior General and his Council for the office of Major Superior.

41. *Contracts for confreres engaged in pastoral ministry in a Unit other than their Unit of origin*

In addition to the requirements of GS0188, a confrere who works continually for 12 months or more, in the territory of another Unit, does so according to a contract signed by the Superior of the Unit of origin and the Superior of the Unit where he exercises his ministry.

42. *Lay Representation at the General Chapter*

In the revision of the *Directory of Chapters* provision will be made for lay representation at all phases of the General Chapter. For the Canonical Phase, the General Government will appoint one person as the lay representative of each of the Conferences from a list of three lay partners recommended by the respective Conferences. The General Government will also determine the duration of the presence of the lay partners at the Canonical phase of the General Chapter. Conference Assemblies or Statutes will determine the number and duration of lay partners at the First and Third Phase of the Chapter.

43. *The Implementation Phase of the 25th General Chapter*

After the Canonical Phase of the Chapter, each Unit will provide a forum(s) wherein confreres and lay partners will have an opportunity to study and reflect on the fruits of the Chapter and to develop strategies to ensure the implementation of Chapter decisions.

44. *Visitations by the General Government*

To revitalize the apostolic life of the Congregation and to promote a greater awareness among confreres of the process of restructuring, the General Government will integrate programs of Renewal of our Life and Mission with the Visitations during the sexennium beginning in 2016.

45. *Restructuring the General Curia*

The General Government will seek the assistance of a consultant or external facilitator in drawing up a plan for the restructuring of the General Curia.

46. *A Process for the Internal Resolution of Conflicts regarding Church Teaching*

The General Government will develop a process internal to the Congregation for the examination and resolution of conflicts concerning Church teaching involving confreres. This document would be presented at the mid-sexennial meetings for discussion and acceptance by the General Government as a “working document” until the 26th General Chapter approves or modifies the text.

FINANCES – ECONOMY – PATRIMONY

47. *A Manual for Administration and Financial Affairs*

The General Government is asked to accelerate the process for the publication of a *Manual for Administration and Financial Affairs* for use

in the Congregation. The Manual will be presented at the mid-sexennial meetings, with a view to endorsement by the General Government for use throughout the Congregation.

48. *An Independent Internal Audit Plan*

The General Government will oversee the development of a standard Internal Audit Plan. This will guide an independent Internal Audit of the financial records of any Unit in the Congregation that does not already conduct a formal external audit. The audit should be conducted on an annual basis, by a Redemptorist or lay person with a background in accounting, from a Unit other than the one being audited.

49. *Continuing Formation in Gospel Stewardship and Financial Management*

Each Conference will hold a Seminar on “Gospel Stewardship and Financial Management” as soon as possible after the completion of the *Manual for Administration and Financial Affairs* and the Internal Audit Plan. Participation in the Seminar is required for: the Conference Coordinator, the Consultor General from the Conference, Unit Superiors, Unit Treasurers (both Redemptorist and Lay), Directors of Formation and others involved in financial administration. The General Government, with the help of financial experts, will arrange the dates and specific content of the Seminar.

Subsequent to the Conference Seminar, the government of each Unit will facilitate (perhaps in conjunction with other Units) a Seminar/Workshop for Community Treasurers and others involved in financial administration. The agenda, content and Resource Persons for the Seminar/Workshop will be determined by the General Government, in consultation with the Coordinator of each Conference and appropriate financial experts.

50. *A Congregational Fundraising Team*

The General Government will appoint a group of confreres and lay people with appropriate skills and experience as a Congregational

Fundraising Team. This Team will report to the General Government and its work will be evaluated by the 26th General Chapter.

51. *Safeguarding the patrimony of the Congregation*

A Commission for the maintenance of all the historic houses of the Congregation will be established. This Commission will also draw up a pastoral missionary plan for those houses that represent the historical beginnings of the Congregation.

52. *Regarding the historical and artistic goods of the Congregation*

In the context of the present restructuring and taking into consideration the changing demographics and geographical configuration of the Congregation, it is a matter of urgency that the historical and artistic heritage of our Institute be safeguarded, particularly those associated with our origins.

The General Government must be vigilant that these precious goods are protected and esteemed for their value. It should guarantee the necessary financial support to those Units which have need of it.

This vigilance should be realized by means of a Central Commission or by requesting the Units involved to establish a (V)Provincial Commission which would be required to give an annual account of its work to the General Government.