

XVII General Chapter



Religious of Mary Immaculate
Claretian Missionary Sisters

PRESENTATION



From July 18 to August 12, we have celebrated in Rome the XVII General Chapter. We gathered to “discern the will of God for the Congregation and to project action lines for the next six years.”¹ Each of the participants has lived it as a call from God and has made every effort to be open to God’s inspiration.



During the preparation process and throughout the Chapter, we have felt a strong presence of the Spirit guiding with wisdom and harmony our prayers, reflections, sharing, in diversity and communion. The cries of world, the calls of the Church and of the Congregation have touched our hearts.

The participation of the lay people, coming from different situations, has been a valuable contribution, a rich testimony of their sense of belonging to the ‘family’ and their identification with the charism that is an ever new gift for the Church and the world.

This graced encounter has sought to respond to what the Lord expects of us during the 2017-2023 six-year period.

We have been able to deepen our MISSION and VISION already expressed and proposed in the Congregational Apostolic Project (CAP or PAC in Spanish), thus affirming its importance and referential value. Th Project is integrated in the Chapter Document and enriched with the VALUES that characterize us and give dynamism to our fidelity. They are a gift from God to our lives; thus, we are invited to contemplate in them the “lay out” of the Order that the Lord showed Maria Antonia Paris from the tree of the cross: New Apostles in Imitation of the Blessed Virgin

¹ Const. 126

Mary.² In God's project, that is our name, the one God sees and uses to call us since that foundational inspiration given to Paris and Claret.

The validity of the CAP is reinforced with the COMMITMENTS. They indicate the direction we will follow as we "WALK IN APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY" with others, sharing the way, MAKING IT EASY, being inclusive, caring for each other, guarding the greatest wealth we have, the people.

At the end of the General Chapter we move to the implementation phase of its orientations. We will do this with the attitudes Pope Francis encouraged us to have:³

- With **joy**, because it characterizes simple and available people.
- With **courage**, in obedience to the Spirit, because it characterizes prophetic life.
- With **fidelity to prayer**, because it is in prayer that we become conscious of our limitations and our need to surrender our lives in the Father's Providence.

To Mary of the Visitation we commend all we have lived. With her and like her we must "go forth." We all know where is the Ain Karim we need to go to, without delay! Let us discover the "departure" that the Spirit is inviting us to do.

Rome, September 3, 2017

Jolanta Kafka
Superior General

² Cf. Aut. MF 7.

³ General audience, August 9, 2017.

INTRODUCTION TO THE DOCUMENT

We offer the Chapter Document, as the fruit of our discernment nurtured in our daily morning prayer, Eucharist and examination on God's presence throughout the day, moments of retreat, work in groups, dynamics of elections, and accompaniment of a facilitating team.

Two experiences have been significant in our chapter walk: the interculturality lived in Claretian fraternity and the presence of the laity.

We have realized in an experiential way that the Claretian charism is a gift for the Church for both religious and laity in order to share the mission of Christ. It does not belong exclusively to us.

The Chapter has elaborated the document taking into account the CAP, the Evaluation of the XVI General Chapter, the six-year Report of Governance and Administration, the contribution of the sisters, the Working Instrument, and the themes presented: Human mobility, Intercultural Reality, Retreat on Calls of the Church, Shared Mission, and General Principles of Economic Management.

The document consists of two parts:

In the first one: "Walking with the Church going forth", we identify some of the calls that emerge from reality from which the transversal lines arise: Missionary reform, Interculturality, Discernment as an attitude of life.

The second part: "Make the same way easy for others", points to the Congregational Apostolic Project and asks: What do we do (mission)? Where are we going (vision)? What is our identity (values)? What commitments do we take up for the next six years?

After prioritizing some elements of the mission and vision proposed in the CAP, charismatic values have been added: "I want nothing more, but Christ", "Oh poverty of my God", "May I know myself and know you" "One family" "Announce the Gospel." This charismatic identity supports the COMMITMENTS (action lines) with which the document ends.



I. WALKING WITH THE CHURCH GOING FORTH

1. We want to contextualize our life and mission in this General Chapter to make appropriate decisions and to think about the future. All reality becomes a challenge and a call for a Claretian Missionary sister, because we live in it and we are sent to it. We highlight the following:



Facts of reality

2. We live in a globalized and multicultural world that poses serious challenges. A global economic system that has generated enormous, but unevenly distributed wealth, has widened the gulf between rich and poor. Millions of people have become immigrants, displaced persons, and refugees in search of better living conditions. Global conflicts have increased.

“These situations have caused sister earth, along with all the abandoned of our world, to cry out, pleading that we take another course. Never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home as we have in the last two hundred years. Yet we are called to be instruments of God our Father, so that our planet might be what he desired when he created it and correspond with his plan for peace, beauty and fullness. The problem is that we still lack the culture needed to confront this crisis. We lack leadership capable of striking out on new paths and meeting the needs of the present with concern for all and without prejudice towards coming generations” (Laudato Si’ 53).

These are general facts that affect all of us. Each entity can do its own analysis of reality focusing on the part of the world where they are.

The calls of the Church

3. We also welcome the calls of the Church. Since the XVI General Chapter, the Church has lived important events; among them, the election of a new Shepherd for the Church, Pope Francis, who is committed to the renewal of the Church and of Consecrated Life.

He has made prophetic calls through his exhortations, encyclicals, and messages, which we neither can nor want to ignore.

He urges us to be a Church **going forth**, of open-doors, welcoming, and missionary that heals and treats others with mercy, open to universal dialogue with other churches, cultures and ideologies, a Church that walks with the poor (EG 20-24). This attitude of "going forth" will affect all dimensions: fraternal life in community, mission, formation, spirituality... And so, we must live: always on the journey, going out to meet our brothers and sisters who walk by our side, listening, welcoming, accompanying....

The Pope dreams of a missionary option capable of transforming everything: lifestyles, schedules, language, in a constant attitude of discernment and apostolic availability (EG 26.27, 43.50).

As an event of grace, he summoned the Year of Consecrated Life in 2015, and challenged us: Be men and women of communion... Live an spirituality of encounter... I hope that

you awaken the world, that you keep utopias alive and not retract in yourselves ...⁴

Also, the CIVCSVA (Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life) published several documents that enlighten us. The last one, recently published "A new wine in new wineskins" invites us to an evangelical discernment, to respond to new forms of poverty... to reflect on interculturality and continuous integral formation. It calls for the necessary freedom to undertake processes and not to just be content with mere survival strategies... to avoid focusing on tackling problems instead of imagining the road ahead. It reminds us that stress due to pressing and overly urgent activities puts at risk a solid spiritual life, capable of nourishing and sustaining desire for fidelity...⁵

Calls of the Congregation

4. We are concluding the process of reorganization which affected the life of the entities, communities, and apostolic works. Questionnaires and studies have been done on the congregational reality and collected in documents such as "Insistent calls of reality" and the Evaluation of the XVI General Chapter.

During the experience of the Chapter we have welcomed and discerned the calls of the world, the Church, and the Congregation. Some of them have resonated more strongly and have become urgent calls and **inspiring transversal lines** that challenge us and affect all dimensions of our lives.

⁴ Cf. Pope Francis, Apostolic Letter on the Occasion of the Year of the Consecrated Life, Chapter 2.

⁵ CIVCSVA, *New Wine in New Wineskins*, 8

FIRST TRANSVERSAL LINE: MISSIONARY REFORM⁶

5. Restructuration has to respond to a new mission. The critical situation that religious life is experiencing in some latitudes may give the impression that the Congregation is living in a climate of survival. This is a very self-referential perspective, an ecclesial disease which the Pope constantly denounces. Let it be not among us: we restructure because we are glimpsing a new apostolic horizon, we want to generate something new in the missionary response to challenges, in a global way as an apostolic body, and not alone.



Religious, laity, and priests are all partakers and collaborators of the mission of Christ who came to save and not to condemn (Jn 3:17, Lk 9:56, Mt 18:11), to give life (Jn 10:10), and to reconcile all things in Him (Col 1:20). As followers of Christ, we discern together the will of God in order to perceive and follow the impulses of the Holy Spirit at every moment, in permanent conversion to recover the inner freedom that will make us fully available.

It is urgent to rekindle the missionary, prophetic, and apostolic zeal awakened by the Word of God that is prayed in community and shared with the people of God and to translate this new ardor into congregational apostolic structures.

⁶ “Every renewal of the Church essentially consists in an increase of fidelity to her own calling... Christ summons the Church as she goes her pilgrim way... to that continual reformation of which she always has need, in so far as she is a human institution here on earth” (UR 6). The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented (EG 26-27).

From this derives an attitude that is the APOSTOLIC CREATIVITY, the missionary enthusiasm rooted in God, lived in all that we are and do, however small and insignificant it may seem.

We have two clear examples of passionate, missionary and reforming people in our founders. Maria Antonia Paris tells us: "Proclaim the Gospel to every creature" and Anthony Mary Claret chose for his episcopal motto: "The love of Christ impels me."

SECOND TRANSVERSAL LINE: INTERCULTURALITY

6. Migratory phenomena, the possibility to move and communicate with great ease, favor cultural exchange among peoples. It is sometimes lived as a threat and at others, as an enriching experience. Multiculturalism is an inescapable reality, and we must realistically accept it.

The mystery of the Incarnation is a process of inculturation. God became man in Jesus who was incarnated in a culture. In order to enrich all, he gradually opened himself to other cultures, thus creating a path of inculturation and acceptance of all cultures. The first communities of the Church continued this task of inculturation of the Christian message. Dialogue with cultures belongs to the deepest mission of the Church and of our Congregation.

As a result of inculturation throughout history, religious congregations have become multicultural. But it is not enough to accept the diversity of cultures within our communities; it must be lived as an opportunity for rich exchange between cultures, thus contributing to greater social justice, fraternity, and peace on earth.

Interculturality calls us to practice an attitude of OPENNESS in everything we live and situates us in the reality in a new way. Today we have an opportunity to live this even within our own country and community.

Shared mission favors interculturality, and at the same time requires spiritual availability, constant formation, and an open mind to know and learn from other cultures, while being able to critique one's own from the perspective of the Gospel.

Interculturality will lead us to revise from the perspective of openness to diversity our practices in Religious Life: prayer, vows, community life. In order to reach interculturality, we will give more importance to community discernment as a means of seeking and finding the will of God in this situation of multiculturalism. Formation should help in these processes.

From its birth, our congregation has lived in dialogue with other cultures, we are called to be intercultural by vocation: "My spirit is for the whole world"⁷ and "the whole world is homeland to the missionary of Christ."⁸ What steps can we take to better live this intercultural dimension at our community or Province or Congregational level?

THIRD TRANSEVERSAL LINE: DISCERNMENT AS AN ATTITUDE OF LIFE

7. Discernment is not theoretical, but practical knowledge: we cannot know the will of God absolutely and abstractly, disregarding where we stand, where we have placed our

⁷ St. Anthony M. Claret, Letter to the Nuncio, Aug. 12, 1849.

⁸ MA II, 10.

affections, eyes, desires and interests. The attunement with God is a personal process that is given as a result of the conversion of heart and mind.

We need to live in constant discernment to seek and accept the will of God. As missionaries, evangelization presents us with new challenges that need to be discerned: inculturation of faith, interreligious dialogue, option for the poor, and social commitment, care for the common home, pastoral care of families, the alienated, youth, social media, concrete ecclesial situations, public testimony, new ministries, women's role, migratory movements, our missionary presence and works ... All this takes place through the small decisions we make each day, wherever we are. We are constantly making choices. How do we know if we are doing the will of God or not?



There are practices that facilitate the spiritual experience of listening to the Word and seeking the will of God; for example, becoming used to paying ATTENTION and LISTENING in our relationships, shared mission with others, in the analysis of our present reality, in our relationship with God and ourselves, in our reactions, affections, desires, ordinary daily praxis in small things, questioning and self-evaluation in our daily examen. A serious and deep analysis of reality and the attention to spirit of discernment will permit us to make choices in light of faith and our charism.

There can be no good discernment without personal accompaniment: it is the normal way for a person in the process of formation and maturation of faith to learn to discern in practice, by facing self-deception, lack of realism disembodied spirituality, superficiality... in confrontation with the person who accompanies.

“We have to give more importance to accompaniment. We need brothers and sisters who are experts in the ways of God, so that we can do what Jesus did with the disciples of Emmaus: to accompany them on the path of life and at the moment of disorientation and through the Word and Eucharist enlightens them in faith and hope (cf. Lk 24:13-35). We cannot resign ourselves to walking alone, we need a close, frequent, and fully adult accompaniment. All this will serve to ensure a continuous discernment that leads to discover the will of God, to seek in everything what pleases the Lord more.”⁹

We are heirs of the spirit of two great searchers: St. Anthony M^a Claret and M^a Antonia Paris who were in love with the will of God, for "in knowing the will of God no difficulty is offered."¹⁰ Let's get to work.



⁹ Pope Francis in Audience with CIVCSVA, Jan. 28, 2017.

¹⁰ Aut. MP 7.

II. MAKE THE SAME WAY EASY FOR OTHERS

8. This part is the projective dimension of the Chapter. It integrates some elements of the CAP that are now given special emphasis to work on them more intensively during this six-year period.

The title of this section includes several approaches to life:

- On one hand, it expresses the dimension of **testimony** that is asked of us, as Claretian Missionary Sisters.
- By saying "the same way," it highlights a change of mentality that has been suggested in the illumination – presentations– on shared mission: Not only to "do with others" but to "**walk with others**". It is our way of living the apostolic mission.
- This slogan also becomes a slogan that will serve as **criteria for discernment**.



In everything we live, we can ask ourselves: have I made the way easier for someone through what do I do, what I program, what I have lived today (in our night examine)? We are an Order called to be new in practice, and this criterion can help us take steps toward a new and discerned life.

CONGREGATIONAL PROJECT FOR SIX YEARS

9. It is necessary for any human group, as well the Congregation, to take time to define its Mission, Vision, and Values, for they reflect who we are, where we go, and with what charismatic style we are going to face this path.

The Mission mainly defines what we do. It answers the questions: What do we do? What are we dedicated to? What is our reason for being? What is our scope of action?

a. Our MISSION today as Religious of Mary Immaculate Claretian Missionary Sisters is:

- To live **and announce with joy the Good News of Jesus** seeking the Kingdom of God and His justice
- To contribute to **the renewal of the church** in fraternity and **evangelical poverty**.

b. VISION: It defines the goals we intend to achieve. God's dream for us. It has an inspiring and motivating character; it is the compass that guides the future. We carry on the vision that urged St. Antony Mary Claret and Ven. María Antonia Paris.

Answer the questions: what do I want to achieve? How do I dream of the Congregation in few years? How does God dream for us? Where do I want to be?

OUR VISION, as Religious of Mary Immaculate Claretian Missionaries is TO BE:

- **Women** who are cheerful, friendly, simple, human, open to all without distinction, living the charism of proclaiming the Gospel.
- **Missionary Communities "going forth"**, Samaritan, welcoming, family that favors personal growth and unity in diversity, building fraternity in a divided world.
- **Apostolic body** with Claretian identity, integrated by the different forms of life in constant adaptation of its structures to the signs of time, in universal mission.

c. CHARISMATIC VALUES are principles of conduct on which the culture of our charismatic family is based. They are

what people see in us as our concrete and real way of being.

They are not expressions of desires, but they show the reality of our identity. They provide criteria for action, so we do not to deviate from our Mission and Vision. Our charism and our Claretian spirituality give us a particular "character" and a shared identity.

When values are anchored in the mind and rooted in the heart, the whole person becomes committed in such a way that these values necessarily lead to choices of life manifested in concrete actions.

Answering the following questions will help us define our charismatic values: How are we? What do we believe in? What is our own style? What do people say about us?

The values we highlight at this moment do not exhaust all the charismatic wealth. These are traits we are already living and give us identity and strength to continue growing through the implementation of the commitments that are indicated later on.

I want nothing more, but Christ

- 10.** We rekindle the **desire for a profound encounter** with God who called us together, transforms and sends us (cf. Priority Option, 1). We privilege quality spaces and times for this encounter in our personal, community, and apostolic projects (cf. CAP, 1.2).

We foster a **contemplative attention** that allows us to know and consciously accept our own reality, that of others, and of the world as a place of encounter with God (cf. CAP 1.1). We

know that the seeds of the Word are present in every culture. (CAP 4.5). We are contemplatives in action.

We choose Christ every day as the center of our lives (cf. CAP Mission 1). We practice personal, community, and missionary **discernment** with others (cf. CAP 1.5). We constantly ask ourselves which Jesus do we follow. What image of God nourishes my spiritual life? What is the face of God that underlies our structures? Is He the God of Jesus? What face of Jesus are we revealing to others with our life and mission, our way of living authority and obedience? Do I find Jesus in the poor, in the weak?

The Word is a significant place of encounter with Jesus, Word that is **listened**, contemplated and shared, put into practice and celebrated (cf. CAP 4).

As an expression of our charism for the renewal of the Church, we **insistently pray** for its needs and those of the world (cf. CAP 5.2).

Oh, poverty of my God

11. We live poverty with **deep attitudes of the heart**: faith in God the Father, confident that in Him we have everything: brothers and sisters, common home, meaningful life. We give up attitudes of power in relationships with others (cf. CAP 2.2, 2.4).

We are aware of the **reality** in which most of humanity lives, and we want to change our criteria and values, our way of relating to others, things and creation, to avoid being overly demanding and living in a comfortable way, experiencing joy if at any time we lack what is necessary.

We practice poverty by **conforming** our lives with Christ, **poor and missionary**, who commits us to the poor and the excluded (cf. CAP Option 2).

For an incarnate experience of the value of poverty we ask ourselves: How do the words, "evangelical poverty is the foundation of new apostles," resonate in us and what do they mean in my daily life? How do I live in trust, in abandonment to the Father? Who are the poor today in the context where I live? What are the new frontiers of poverty at the organizational and congregational levels that we can embrace?

We work to earn our living, and we commit ourselves to administer resources in a way that promotes effective communication of resources and solidarity with those who are in most need (cf. Dir 425, CAP 2.3).

May I know myself and know you

12. We encourage an attitude of **learning to learn**: from reality, from ourselves, from others and above all from LIFE.

We develop a habit of reflection that favors **discernment** since the beginning of religious life and continue it through the different stages of life.

In our personal projects, we commit to **staying updated** in everything related to the teachings of the Church, Social Doctrine, social analysis, new theological reflection on consecrated life, ecumenism, etc. (cf. CAP 4.1).

As we walk with others, we deepen the theology of mission and charism, which fosters growth in identity and belonging. We live with joy and openness the richness of diverse cultures at every level, which implies a **critical knowledge of our own culture**.

We are formed to be able to undertake **responsibilities and apostolic commitments**. We prepare to use **social networks** with missionary creativity.

We can ask ourselves: Do I consider formation as a process that lasts a lifelong and encompasses all dimensions? Do I know myself well and continue to grow in confrontation with someone who helps me? Do I have an attitude of openness and acceptance of other cultures? How can I prepare myself better in the area of communication and to share our charism?

One family

13. We pay attentive care to **fraternity** through community prayer, prayerful reading of the Word, active participation in the sacraments of the Eucharist and reconciliation, fraternal dialogue and sincere communication among the sisters, fraternal correction, missionary sending, and in shared responsibilities.

We **discern** in community the apostolic commitments each one can accept, prioritizing the common good and teamwork (cf. CAP 3.3).

We promote attitudes that **make the way easier for others**, discovering and affirming the best in each person and the richness of diversity, inside and outside of our communities (cf. CAP 3.2).

We learn at personal and community level, to recognize, accept, and transform **conflicts**, by being reconciled and reconciling communities (CAP 3.4).

We open ourselves to dialogue before making judgments about the actions of the other. This dialogue can enrich our own vision or experience of **diversity**.

For a deeper community experience, we ask ourselves: How does the Word illuminate my daily life? Does the experience of the Eucharist and reconciliation help me to grow, make me more free and human? Am I open in dialogue to discuss

my apostolic choices with my community, to work as a team?
Do I look for collaboration or protagonism?

Announce the gospel to all creatures

14. We bring the **words and gestures of Jesus** closer to the hearts of men and women to enable paths of humanization and hope (CAP 4.3). We are involved in the reality of people, like Jesus who touched the daily lives of the sick, the poor, women, children, foreigners...



We accompany each other experiencing the different charisms that make up the congregational body in **shared mission**.



We use all possible means for spreading the Gospel. We use information and communication technologies as a platform for evangelization and encounter. We focus on communicating experiences (cf. CAP 6.3).

We foster experiences and encounters of missionary fraternity that are "**mystical and contemplative**" (cf. CAP 1.6).

To better respond to our missionary vocation: How can we use mass/social media more effectively? Do I live with a sense of evangelizing mission all my apostolates? Am I aware that the charism received is for the whole Church?

COMMITMENTS

15. The discernments of the Chapter have led us to five general commitments that express "in practice" the paths we are going to take and how we will walk in these six years, supported by the values that give us identity. We want to see in them the possible answers that the Lord expects from our charismatic family at this moment in history; we will help each other to make this walk easy.

RENEWED COMMITMENT IN JPIC,

"I saw all things in Christ Crucified"

16. The first part of the document presents some facts of our world's reality which demand action from JPIC: inequalities, ecological disasters, violence, wars, clash among peoples, fundamentalisms. Our mission as Religious is to contribute to the transformation of reality according to the spirit of the Beatitudes. It is important to help our communities reflect and act on the causes of injustice. JPIC is not only something we do, it is primarily an attitude, a vision that influences what we do and how we carry out our mission.

16.1. To make a **re-reading of reality**, in the context of each entity, from the presence of Christ in it, especially in those who are suffering (EG 24 198): refugees, impoverished, immigrants...leads us to become involved in concrete transformative actions.

16.2. To recreate in **prayer the attitudes of Good Samaritan**, to be compassionate as God is with us, and not to ignore the marginalized.

16.3. To form ourselves in the **methodology of social transformation and integral ecology**: Social Doctrine of the Church and other documents (cf. PAC 8.2)

16.4. To examine our **lifestyle** and make decisions that reflect our prophetic and transformative commitment to JPIC. Include them in community and apostolic projects and have them evaluated (cf. CAP 8.1 and 8.3).

16.5. To embrace the **care for creation** as instruments of God, and to adopt ecological habits each one from her culture, experiences, initiatives and capacities. (LS 14)

16.6. To discern the possibility of **welcoming** in our communities people who are excluded in society (cf. CAP, 8.6).

16.7. To manage responsibly **solidarity projects**. To study and channel the Solidarity Project for the Congregational Mission in order to unify various action lines.

16.8. To actively participate in the existing **JPIC networks** in the Church and society.

16.9. Since **the early stages of formation**, make apostolic options that reflect an intentional commitment to JPIC: work with refugees, migrants, human trafficking, gender violence, prison ministry, and with children who at risk in society, etc...

RENEWED COMMITMENT IN VOCATIONAL CULTURE

"We follow in the footsteps of Christ"

17. Vocation culture (VC) is a way of understanding life as a gift and as God's project that demands a response at every stage

of life, and this becomes concrete in the experience of following Christ. It refers to **values** such as gratitude, acceptance of the mystery, openness to transcendence, surrender and availability to let oneself be called by another (or by the Other), listening ... admitting that the life received is undeserved, and it is a source of responsibility.

Vocation culture intends to create an **atmosphere** where all vocations may emerge: to life, to faith and to one's mission in any apostolic place.

It is a task of the whole Christian community to promote all vocations, although not everyone should do the same or in the same way.

17.1. Generating a new vocational culture **begins with ourselves: to live life as a vocation** in everyday experience, our community relations, our dealings with people, our way of praying, and our commitment to the most vulnerable.

17.2. To commit ourselves to a ministry of **“open-doors”** (EG 46), giving priority to personal encounter. To create an environment of welcome and accompaniment.

17.3. Every vocation is born out of an experience of **encounter and listening**. Every personal encounter with Christ is a grace and a mystery. Let us not tire of begging the Master of the harvest. We are committed to offer spaces to deepen the experience of God in our communities.

17.4. Let us accompany young people in **meaningful experiences** that lead them to think about their purpose in life and to make decisions accordingly. (cf. CAP 7.5). NGOs and volunteer programs are appropriate **platforms** to present the vocational question.

17.5. **To be faithful to one's vocation**, walking with other forms of life, in communities and apostolic fronts that facilitate an encounter with the Lord who calls.

17.6. To establish **processes of integral evangelization** with a vocational culture dimension, properly programmed and evaluated. (cf. CAP 7.4). To create a team to carry it out.

2.7. To create and accompany **itineraries of interiorization** for children, young people, and families where vocational attitudes can emerge (cf. CAP 7.1; 7.2).

ACCOMPANYING

"The same way"

18. Life involves a process and relationship; nobody grows up alone or suddenly. Accompaniment is a pedagogy, knowing how to be with discretion to help develop all the potentialities of the person or the group. It is walking patiently, believing in the goodness of others. It makes love palpable in a journey of shared search in fidelity to what each one is called to be.

We understand accompaniment not only as a tool for discernment, but also as a way of evangelizing and being evangelized (cf. EG 169-173). Due to the complexity of the dimensions it involves, we emphasize the importance of specifying the different areas and levels of accompaniment to make it operative through a plan.

18.1. To **accompany** young people “requires going beyond a preconceived framework, encountering young people where they are, adapting to their times and pace of life and taking them seriously. This is to be done as young people seek to make sense of the reality in which they live and to utilize the

message which they have received in words and deeds in their daily attempts to create a personal history and in the more-or-less conscious search for meaning in their lives.”¹¹

18.2. To **accompany** our under privileged brothers and sisters in their efforts to uphold their human dignity, so that they become agents of their own history. (CAP 8.5) "We are called to discover Christ in them, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them" (EG 198).

18.3 To practice mutual accompaniment, taking care of each other. To look for systematic forms of accompanying government teams at different levels, formation communities, apostolic works, sisters in each vital stage especially the young professed.

18.4. **To walk with the laity**, in mutual accompaniment of life, sharing the charism, the Word, prayer, and apostolic projects.

18.5. This accompaniment will require all of us an **up-to-date and practical formation**: attitudes of authenticity, sincere search for truth, experience of being accompanied and confronted, practice in listening, empathy, knowing how to put oneself in another's place.

¹¹ Preparatory document of the XV GENERAL ORDINARY ASSEMBLY of Bishops: *The youth, faith and vocational discernment*.

COMMUNICATION OF GOODS

"May you share in each other's gifts"

19. This section refers to sharing material and personal resources. In practice, it consists of making effective communion in the management of human and economic resources, avoiding self-centeredness, individualism... as our Constitutions tell us, "each sister should be like another self" (Const. 35).

19.1. To take personal **responsibility** in managing our economy, living an austere and simple lifestyle and sharing with generosity the goods and gifts received.

19.2. Moving from a subsistence economy to a **sustainable economy** in a discernible way in all our communities and apostolic works. Promoting self-financing in communities and entities.

19.3. Discern and plan **budgets and long term/short term construction** projects or building renovations for our communities and apostolic centers. Submit them at the appropriate time to the major entity for approval.

19.4. In order to have an efficient and transparent economy, incorporate **technical assistance** in accounting and legal matters. Maintain accurate accounting following congregational accounting principles and criteria. Keep clear accounting records and submit periodic information.

19.5. Look for **paid work** and other means of financing to ensure the continuity of our mission among the poor. Manage resources wisely and make them render profit in order to increase our presence areas of need.

19.6. To seek, as much as possible, that the sisters have **medical insurance** and pension.

19.7. To promote **communication** from the General Government as a way of sharing goods: information, life, experiences, resources.

19.8. To create a team that facilitates an exchange of experiences and resources to **support Formation**: the translation of the Congregation materials, collaboration in workshops, etc.

REVISION OF APOSTOLIC WORKS

"Measuring the works with the compass of the Gospel"

20. "The Church asks all of us to make some changes. It asks us to put aside irrelevant structures: **They don't work!** The Church asks us to take new wineskins, the Gospel. The Gospel is a novelty, the Gospel is a feast and only a joyful and renewed heart can live the Gospel joyfully!¹²

20.1 Privileging the announcement of the Gospel among those who do not know Christ and in places where there is no presence of the Church (CAP 4.4).

20.2. Establishing a process to analyze and **follow up on apostolic works**. To discern their continuity, paying attention to their spiritual, relational, and economic sustainability. Evaluate whether the apostolic presence and work respond to the real needs of the place¹³.

20.3. Where possible, open to **new forms of mission** and presence, bearing in mind some guarantee of continuity and availability of prepared sisters.

¹² CIVCSVA, *A New wine, in New Wineskins*, 10

¹³ Cf. CIVCSVA, Letter on the Management of Goods, Aug. E, 2014.

20.4. Plan the sisters' professional education in various areas for the service of the Church and the Congregation. Also include the study of languages from the first stages.

20.5. Learn from other fields **techniques and ways** to help us manage our works and communities, analyze social problems, and face conflicts for a better experience of authority and obedience. **Renewing styles of government** that favor participation in decisions and fraternal life, making the path of consecration easier.

20.6. To give a **new focus** to our work in **shared mission** beginning with a change of mind and structural schemes that incorporates the challenges that the Congregation marks for these six years.



CONCLUSION

*Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped with joy in her womb.
(Lk 1:39-41)*

21. At the end of the Chapter experience, we turn our gaze to Mary in the icon of the Visitation. Her vocational experience urges her to set out with great joy, and does it promptly, without looking at her own interest. She does not remain in her comfort zone, in the easy plains, fear nor danger stop her; she climbs the mountain and goes to meet those who are in need to share faith and service; while carrying Jesus in herself, she accompanies her cousin in the day-today life.



As a pilgrim in faith, she later makes the way easy for the disciples who move from dispersion to communion, from fear to firmness, from impasse to missionary expansion.



At the end of the Chapter, a powerful experience of the Spirit, we ask ourselves, how shall we proceed so what the Spirit inspired us becomes a reality? How will we continue the congregational renewal, walking in apostolic communities, **in an attitude of going forth and making easy the same way for others**, which is the motto of the Chapter?

Mary is our sign. A model of faith and reception of the Mystery, and in her, Woman of the Visitation, we find the suggested answer: going out to meet life, living in practice the way of the Gospel and making easy the way for others with whom we walk.

We are called to be new women in practice. Let us move on, because this is our reason for being, and as Mary of the Visitation, lets take steps, promote encounters, accompany, share life and mission, horizon and hope. May this icon that we carry in our hearts propel our missionary zeal.

Mary of the Visitation, pray and walk with us so that it will be done!

Mary, God has looked at you with mercy
And you overflowed with joy and ardor
to proclaim the beauty of God's love.
You went on the road,
Make us go in apostolic march!
May we never hold back the desire to
announce the Good News due to our
limitations.

You showed us that the humble and
simple are privileged by God;
that the hungry and beggars will sit at
the banquet of the Kingdom,
if we are in the crossroads to welcome
them and accompany them,
this will be the place of encounter with
Jesus.

Give us your faith and wisdom to teach
the same way,
because being with others makes it
always easier at the end.
Mary of the Visitation lighten
our feet and fill our hearts
with a song of gratitude.



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