

Lineamenta of the XIII General Chapter

Methodology and Deadlines for the Questionnaire

1. **Sending of the questionnaire to the circumscriptions.** By February 15, 2021, the Secretary General sends the questionnaire to the superiors and secretaries of the circumscriptions.
2. **Transmission of the questionnaire to the communities.** As soon as possible, the secretaries of the circumscriptions send the questionnaire to the superiors of the communities and, for information (i.e., Cc), to all the confreres of the circumscription.
3. **Community's reply to the questionnaire.** At the local superior's initiative, each community meets and agrees on the modalities and methodology to reflect, discern, discuss, and respond the questionnaire.

Reminders to the community:

- a. A religious of the community acts as secretary and takes note of the confreres' interventions and contributions and prepares the synthesis.
- b. The responses to the questions must be in line with the XIII General Chapter's theme, "*Rogationist religious life today - unity, sharing, coordination*".
- c. The questionnaire presents nine topics, with questions to help and guide the community's reflection. It is not required to address all the topics and to respond all the questions. Each community chooses what it considers most relevant to its life and experience.

The Commission asks each community to provide a shared response to the questionnaire, which results from the community's reflection, research, and discernment. However, this does not prevent individual confreres from sending personal contributions to the secretary of the circumscription, provided their author signs them.

4. **Sending of the responses to the secretary of the circumscription.** By April 15, 2021, the local superior will send to the secretary of the circumscription the text of the responses to the questionnaire. The secretary of the community prepares it.
5. **Summary of the responses of the communities.** The secretary of the circumscription gathers the responses of the communities and eventual personal contributions. Then, he prepares a final summary of the responses received, which is translated into Italian.
6. **Sending of responses to the Secretary General.** By May 15, 2021, the secretary of the circumscription will transmit to the Secretary General, Fr. Fortunato Siciliano, the following:
 - a. the circumscription's final draft in Italian;
 - b. all materials in the original language received from the houses, both at the community level or in the form of personal contribution.
7. **Final draft of the *Lineamenta*.** The Commission on the *Lineamenta* examines the responses to integrate them in the final elaboration of the *Lineamenta*. The Commission meets in Rome (possibly between 5-15 July 2021) for the document's final draft.
8. **Final edition of the *Lineamenta*.** The Commission shall complete the work of drafting the document of the *Lineamenta* by September 2021. The final document will be given to the General Government, which will then hand it over to the Pre-Capitular Commission that will draw up the *Instrumentum Laboris* of the XIII General Chapter of our Congregation.

Rogationist Religious Life Today: Unity, Sharing, Coordination

Lineamenta

in Preparation for the XIII General Chapter

INTRODUCTION

In the VII General Chapter of 1986, the Congregation officially started the “decentralization” by dividing the Institute into parts (provinces, quasi-provinces, delegations), as provided in the Code of Canon Law, c. 581. It has led to a shift from centralization to decentralization, and this has resulted in an important and significant change for our Institute.

From 1986 to today, 35 years have passed, a time long enough to make the first evaluation and propose guidelines that can help us make the Congregation’s journey more expeditiously. For Pope Francis, what “God expects from the Church of the third millennium” is “the path of synodality”.¹

Learning to “walk together”² in unity and communion: this is the invitation that the Church today addresses to her children. Synodality in fact “indicates the specific *modus vivendi et operandi* of the Church, the People of God, which manifests and concretely realizes its communion in walking together, in gathering together in the assembly, and the active participation of its members in its evangelizing mission.”³

Therefore, it is permissible to ask ourselves how our journey as a Congregation is progressing, which today experiences a plural physiognomy, that is, of circumscriptions present in different geographical and cultural areas, but at the same time thinks and wills as “one”.

The unity we refer to is much more than a legal, institutional, organizational datum. Unity is first and foremost a gift of the Holy Spirit, which must be asked for and invoked with prayer. The Holy Spirit summons into unity humanity that speaks different languages (cf. Acts 2). The Holy Spirit is the creator of communion, the one who unites distinct peoples in the bond of charity. “So that they may be one, as we are one” (Jn 17:22). Jesus prays to the Father to ask for the unity of his disciples, *ut unum sint*.

But the primacy of prayer must be combined with action, commitment, and responsibility. Unity is also the fruit of our commitment: to live and bear witness to the charism in a particular culture, to know and imitate our Holy Founder Hannibal Mary Di Francia, to be faithful to the Rule of Life, to value formation understood as a continuum, to use with responsibility the communitarian moments and instruments of participation, sharing, discussion and dialogue, such as the family council, house council, formation council, provincial council, etc. If unity is vital to us, these are the instruments that encourage its growth and realization.

Unity must be built together. It requires the participation, sharing, and contribution of all. In 1 Cor 12:12-27, the Apostle Paul explains that the reality of the Church is not founded on principle of opposition and competitiveness, but on the ideal of “communion” (*koinōnia*). Such communion has, as a condition, the Spirit’s dynamism, the only one capable of transforming and harmonizing differences and contrasts. To

¹ Pope Francis, *Address on the Occasion of the Ceremony Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops*, 17 October 2015: AAS 107 (2015) 1139.

² “Synod’ is an ancient and venerable word in the Tradition of the Church, whose meaning recalls the deepest contents of Revelation. Composed of the preposition σύν, “with”, and the noun ὁδός, “way”, it indicates the journey made together by the People of God” (International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, 2018, n. 3).

³ International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, 2018, n. 6.

underline the unity and organic solidarity of all believers, in the diversity of their spiritual gifts and ecclesial tasks, Paul turns to the metaphor of the unity of the body, though composed of many parts. All the limbs are different from each other, but they are interdependent, and all concur to form one undivided body. No one can say: I do not need others. No one can say: They do not need me. “We need everyone, exactly each one in his place, with his vocation, with the task that the Lord entrusts to him, with his limits, his shortcomings, and deficiencies.”⁴

The Holy Spirit “gives to each a gift and then gathers them all into unity. In other words, the same Spirit creates *diversity* and *unity*... First, in a way both creative and unexpected, he generates diversity for in every age he causes new and varied charisms to blossom. Then, he brings about unity: he joins together, gathers, and restores harmony...true union, according to God’s will, is not uniformity, but *unity in difference*.”⁵

Unity is not uniformity, homologation, or cancellation of differences. Unity enhances and reassembles differences by making them interact together for the good of the one body, which is the Church, the people of God “gathered together in the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” (St. Cyprian).

The drive for autonomy compromises the good health of the body and “destabilizes” it. On the other hand, the flattening in uniformity brings emptiness to the body and the loss of values and riches contained in diversity. Unity and diversity must coexist together, enhancing tension, interaction, interdependence, and co-responsibility. Only this dynamic allows the one body to live and fully express its potentials and to grow in history.

There are undoubtedly many positive results of decentralization in the Rogationist circumscriptions, such as autonomy, subsidiarity, participation, sharing, collaboration, and responsibility.

But the history of these years has also been marked by some limits: the drive towards a relatively robust and devolved autonomy; the need to define particular programs without the needed consideration side by side with the entire Institute’s “vision of the whole”; the effective coordination between the General Government and circumscriptions, always spoken of but still far from being realized; the “difficult” and sometimes “arduous” sharing of human and economic resources; a decline in willingness to cooperate with the General Government, and more.

A religious institute dedicated to the apostolate, like ours, must know how to combine a central leadership with the local dynamics of communities and circumscriptions, a reality which we now struggle to express. Perhaps, this is also due to the legal-normative approach that we gave to it in 1986. It is appropriate to provide for regulatory provisions that allow the Institute to proceed expeditiously, without incurring errors along the way that may compromise the development and full expression of the charism and apostolic works.

Finally, let us not forget the irreplaceable contribution that the Rogationist laity may offer to the Congregation and the Church in sharing the charism and participating in the mission. Openness to the laity and the level of collaboration that we manage to achieve with them allow us to look to the future with serene trust in divine Providence. The Rogationist laity, in its many forms (the Union of Prayer for Vocations, the laity who are employed in our houses), maybe an inexhaustible source of spiritual and apostolic richness. It allows the charism to manifest itself in its unprecedented aspects and offers new potential to the missionary commitment to bring the Gospel to the furthest peripheries of human life.

⁴ Luciano Monari, *Esercizi spirituali diocesani*, Cavallino 2 December 2007, in <http://www.patriarcatovenezia.it/esercizispirituali-oders/2018/01/05/1-monari-che-siano-uno-la-preghiera-di-gesu-al-padre/>

⁵ Pope Francis, *Homily on the Solemnity of Pentecost*, St. Peter’s Basilica (Rome), 4 June 2017.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE COMMUNITIES

1. Our charism and its inculturation. We are called to give a prophetic face to our Rogationist consecrated life. Therefore, it is necessary to seek new ways to live the charism (the prayer, its diffusion, being good workers) with greater spiritual and apostolic dynamism.

1.1 The unity of each Institute of consecrated life has its roots in the charism, a gift of the Holy Spirit. How do you promote knowledge and study of the charism of Rogate both personally and at the community level?

1.2 In your opinion, what is the apostolic mission in your circumscription that best responds to “being a good worker in the Church”? What apostolic mission - an expression of the charism - should be promoted and valued more today?

1.3 In your geographical area and circumscription, how do you evaluate the process of inculturation of the charism of the Rogate? Do you have proposals and initiatives to suggest?

2. Knowledge of the Founder is of fundamental importance in forming the charismatic identity and building the Institute’s unity. How can we encourage the deepening of his thought and the acquisition of his spiritual and apostolic traits?

3. The Rule of Life (Constitutions and Norms) is “*the expression of consecration, the guarantee of charismatic identity, the support of fraternal communion, the project of mission*”.

3.1 In your circumscription, what value and importance are given to the Rule of Life? Is it of help in defining the identity of the Rogationist and a means to build unity, communion, and sharing in our Congregation?

3.2 Based on your experience, does the Directory of the Circumscription effectively inculturate the Rule of Life? What are its strengths and weaknesses, today?

4. Continuing Formation: initial and ongoing formation

4.1 What are the main initiatives for ongoing formation present in your circumscription? Do they help build communion and unity in the Congregation?

4.2 (*If you work in a house for initial formation*) How do you evaluate the inculturated formation of your “Directory/Manual of Formation”? Do you use it? Does it help you in your work as formators?

4.3 Concerning continuing formation (i.e., the whole arch from the initial to the ongoing formation), do you have any proposal, especially about the Chapter's theme: unity, sharing, coordination?

5. Communion and community: meetings and community councils

5.1 How do the various community meetings or councils help your community live communion in fraternal life? Are they experienced as significant moments of participation, sharing, confrontation, and dialogue? How should they be improved in terms of their quality and effectiveness?

5.2 Regarding *synodality* (= walking together), how are the moments of dialogue and communion lived in your circumscription: provincial assemblies, local councils, circumscription councils, and the respective sectors of the circumscription’s councilors?

5.3 How do you see the service of authority in your community and circumscription, in the superiors' relationship with the other religious? Do you consider it appropriate to rethink our understanding of authority and review the terminology we use?

5.4 What initiatives are already underway? Do you think it is necessary to provide, at the circumscription or general level, the skills needed for a credible and effective service for those in authority?

5.5 How can we deal with the “language barrier” problem that is always present in our international meetings?

6. Intercultural Communities

The future Rogationist community will be increasingly intercultural. To build a fraternal life in unity and communion, we must take into account some problems:

6.1 An international and intercultural composition of communities and circumscriptions requires the acquisition of “cultural intelligence” (cultural intelligence - CQ) and intercultural competence/skills in both initial and ongoing formation. How do we promote them?

6.2 generational gap in communities and circumscriptions;

6.3 aging of religious personnel and difficulties in ensuring generational turnover;

6.4 reorganization and down-scaling of apostolic works in some geographic areas and possible territorial and geographic expansion in others;

6.5 the inclusion of the lay “employees” (= direct collaborators) in our apostolic works: role, responsibility, and formation.

7. Consecrated persons and laity: sharing of charism and participation in the mission

7.1 In your community and circumscription, what are the forms of the laity’s participation in our charism and apostolate?

7.2 How do you plan to form the laity in our charism at the community and circumscription level? Do you have any proposals to present?

8. From centralization to decentralization

8.1 What are the positive points of decentralization in your circumscription?

8.2 Regarding difficulties and limitations of decentralization, are they manifested at the level of the circumscription and the Congregation? How could the relationship, cooperation, and coordination between the General Government and the circumscriptions be improved?

8.3 What initiatives and structures could facilitate the sharing of human and economic resources between circumscription, under the General Government's leadership? To this end, would it be useful to have a “common project” of formation (initial and ongoing), apostolate, and mission *ad gentes*?

9. Concerning the theme of the XIII General Chapter: “**Rogationist Religious Life Today - Unity, Sharing, Coordination**”, are there any topics you consider relevant to discuss and propose, which were not mentioned above? Which ones?