

33rd General Chapter

Congregation of the Resurrection

11-25 June 2017

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Official Chapter Document



WITNESSES TO THE RESURRECTION

PREAMBLE

“Now we no longer believe because of what you told us; we have heard him ourselves and we know that he is really the Savior of the world” (Jn 4:42).

At the Thirty-Third General Chapter of the Congregation of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we affirm that as a community we are called to be witnesses to the world of the presence of the Risen Lord. We have come to recognize the Risen Lord through our relationships with other people. In particular, our encounters with other Resurrectionists, who have received the charism of our founder Bogdan Janski and his disciples for the resurrection of society, have led us to a deeper personal encounter with the Risen Lord. Like those evangelized by the Samaritan woman, our pilgrimage, which has enabled us to personally encounter the Risen Lord, now empowers us, in turn, to believe for ourselves that “he is really the Savior of the world.”

Now we are called to be a witness of the presence of the Risen Lord to the world, especially through our proclamation of God’s unconditional love for us, which is revealed most clearly in the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ. As an international religious community, we affirm that we have the opportunity to be “experts in communion” (Pope Francis, *To All Consecrated People*, no. 2, 2014). We closely collaborate with the laity—including those who belong to “communities of the Risen Christ”—recognizing that, as witnesses of the presence of the Risen Lord, we enrich the laity through our encounters with them, and that they, in turn, enrich us through these same encounters, encouraging and challenging us to live our charism and vows with passion and fidelity.

Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we know that the challenges of the world can lead us to discouragement and disillusionment. However, we have hope and confidence in the Risen Lord who continues to walk with us, inviting us to encounter him in new and surprising ways. Jesus proclaims to us over and over that, “I am the resurrection” (Jn. 11:25), inviting a response from us. With every fiber of our being, we respond with joy and gratitude, saying, “Yes, Lord. [We] believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world” (Jn. 11:27).

Today we are those witnesses of the presence of the Risen Lord. It was providential that we began the Thirty-Third General Chapter on the Feast of the Blessed Trinity, a community of persons, as we are called to be a community of persons. That same Lord sends us out, not as individuals and alone, but as a community, to bear witness, to heal and raise up, and to announce the kingdom of God. We have experienced a call to community, to live and labor with other disciples, to fulfill the mission of Jesus and the Church.

I. SPIRITUALITY

Encounter with the Risen Lord

As witnesses of the Risen Lord, we have seen for ourselves the transforming power of God's love in our lives and in our communities. Yet, a sense of malaise may be seen among the brothers, which could be emotionally and spiritually contagious (allowing ourselves to stay in Sheol without coming out of the tomb). This might in some cases even lead to a loss of faith and/or vocation. Within this context, we urge that:

Resolutions

- 1) All sectors of the Congregation will look for opportunities to celebrate and share in community the joys and fruits of our apostolic labors.
- 2) Continued efforts will be made by superiors to assist members to grow in their understanding and appropriation of our Resurrectionist charism and spirituality. (A particular aid for the latter is to read and reflect upon *The Principles of Resurrectionist Spirituality* updated by the International Formation Committee, 2017).

Action Resolutions

- 3) All members will have a spiritual director or spiritual companion who will help them reflect upon their faith and assist them with discernment in individual and communal matters (cf. *Constitutions*, § 43). All provincial and regional superiors will report on the status of this endeavor at the next General Chapter.
- 4) The Resurrectionist Renewal Program will be held at least twice before the next General Chapter. The extended general council will determine the coordinator of the program, as well as location, time, and other details.
- 5) The International Resurrection Studies Commission will encourage and assist each sector of the Congregation in organizing symposiums, workshops, and retreats on the themes of Resurrectionist spirituality, and will avail themselves or identify other members of the Congregation as a resource for retreats and conferences at the request of a province, region, or group of laity.

Communion with the Laity

All sectors of the Congregation are encouraged to continue the development of "communities of the Risen Christ" that would enable us to share our Resurrection charism and mission with the laity, while being open to transformative gifts that they offer us through collaboration. To this end, we urge that:

Resolution

- 6) Local Resurrectionist communities, within all sectors, will strive to share our Resurrectionist charism and spirituality with the laity on a regular basis. Examples of sharing might include Resurrectionist celebrations, adult formation sessions on paschal spirituality, experiences of community prayer, and spiritual activities during the liturgical year.

Action Resolutions

- 7) All sectors of the Congregation will share formation materials created for lay groups associated with the Congregation by sending them to the International Resurrection Studies Commission. These materials will draw upon the historical, spiritual, theological, biblical, and

liturgical aspects of our Resurrectionist heritage. The IRSC will compile and assess the materials useful for dissemination within the Congregation.

- 8) The superior general and his council, with the assistance of the IRSC, will coordinate, before the next General Chapter, at least one international gathering of lay associates in Rome, in order to deepen their appropriation of the Resurrectionist charism and spirituality. Resurrectionists and lay associates will be invited from all sectors of the Congregation.

II. COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT

Common Life in Contemporary Context

In our reality today, we face many challenges – lack of vocations, aging membership, secularization, consumerism, and individualism. These challenges threaten the fabric of our common religious life. We want to address this situation as men of hope, remembering that, “if we start without confidence, we have already half lost the battle and bury our talents,” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n.85). With hope and positive effort, we will overcome these influences that threaten our community life. This hope always comes from the Paschal Mystery, which assures us that God will do the improbable and impossible if we share in his life and grace.

As we respond to our present reality in community life, we echo the words of Pope Francis and St. Paul: “Let us ask the Lord to help us understand the law of love. How good it is to have this law! How much good it does us to love one another, in spite of everything. Yes, in spite of everything!” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 101). That we might “Not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:21). And again that we: “Not grow weary in doing what is right” (Gal. 6:9).

In our human condition we are weak, vulnerable and broken. When we fail to admit to our condition, we can destroy our community life and eat away at personal relationships with our brothers. In response to our condition and its potentially destructive impact, we do well to recall the words of Pope Francis in his meeting with the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople: “Every time we put behind us our longstanding prejudices and find the courage to build new fraternal relationships, we confess that Christ is truly risen.” The Risen Christ brings hope, understanding, healing and reconciliation through our efforts.

Pope Francis further encourages us to see the quest for harmony in the common life as the way of true healing “since the way to relate to others which truly heals instead of debilitating us, is a mystical fraternity, a contemplative fraternity. It is a fraternal love capable of seeing the sacred grandeur of our neighbor, of finding God in every human being, of tolerating the nuisances of life in common by clinging to the love of God, of opening the heart to divine love and seeking the happiness of others just as their heavenly Father does. [...] Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of community!” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 92).

Community Life

Resolution

- 9) In the spirit of the *Constitutions*, § 222, our community life can be strengthened by the study of our *Constitutions*, supporting us and challenging us in our personal and communal life. To follow them more faithfully we need to read and study them with integrity. This should form a part of the monthly House Meeting.

Action Resolution

- 10) Under the direction of the provincial or regional superior, the local superior will play a more important role in leading and forming the local Community. He will unite the House members, seeking their collaboration in forming, reforming, and transforming their House. He will model

this process. He will animate opportunities to bring the individual members together. Celebrations of birthdays, name days, anniversaries, and community feasts should be a good start. Looking for occasions to pray together, to share a meal, and recreate together can enliven our desire for and satisfaction with community life.

Canonical Visitation

Action Resolution

- 11) The Canonical Visitation is an important moment in the life of the house and its members (Constitutions, § 88). For maximum effectiveness major superiors should follow the Action Resolution 02 of *New Horizons of Hope*, to have a realistic idea of the life and ministry of the individual religious, the house, and the province or region. *New Horizons of Hope* included:
 - a) the Resurrectionist's spiritual life, including prayer and spiritual direction;
 - b) his apostolate, specifically his identification and fidelity to the charism and mission of the Congregation;
 - c) sharing in community life in the local house; and
 - d) any concerns he may have about the life of the province/region or entire congregation.

Included in the visit should be active participation of the visitor in the pastoral activities of the institutions visited (parish, school, etc.). The Visitation should conclude with a report by the visitor, to be made available in written form to the house and province or region (Constitutions, § 129).

- 12) At least once before the next General Chapter the superior general or provincial/regional superior or his delegate, while making visitations, will engage our members about how they are living out their Resurrectionist identity in their ministry.¹

Roman House and Its Hospitality

Action Resolution

- 13) In Action Resolution 16 (b) of *New Horizons of Hope*,² the Roman house was asked to work toward self-sufficiency. The hospitality offered by the Roman house has contributed to self-sufficiency, helped by donations received from guests. We congratulate the members of the Roman house on this initiative and their personal efforts to bring it about. Taking into consideration the financial situation of the Roman house the superior general, with the extended general council, will determine the policy for religious hospitality for Resurrectionists and for other guests. Those who are in the House on community business, renewal programs, commissions, etc. should not be required to contribute. Missionaries should be given special consideration, due to their more difficult financial situation.

Constitutional Changes

The Chapter examined all the proposals received from the Constitutional Change Commission formed by the superior general in 2016. All changes approved by the Chapter will be sent to the Holy See for final approval. In most cases the proposed changes refer to the conformity of our Constitutions to the universal church law.

Action Resolution

¹ See "Impact of Resurrectionist Identity upon Our Ministry" at the end of this document.

² 16b) The superior general and his council, in cooperation with the local house superior of the Roman house, are encouraged to investigate accepting more student/professor priests who would rent rooms for a semester or for one or more academic years, as well as other ways leading to the self-sufficiency of the generalate house operations.

- 14) Taking into consideration the final edition of the text of the Constitutions after approval by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, the General Chapter obliges the superior general and his council to make the final edition of it. The superior general with the consent of his council will approve all official translations of the Constitutions.

III. FORMATION

As Jesus walked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, he formed them to be missionaries by breaking open the Word and revealing his presence in the breaking of the Bread. They were to go forth into all the world without fear and announce the Good News. The Risen Christ remains the first formator for men called into the Congregation of the Resurrection. We assist him by our work through our formation programs.

Reviewing Documents on Resurrectionist Formation

With gratitude to Fr. Charles Fedy, C.R. (and others) the *document "Principles of Formation in Resurrectionist Spirituality"* was and remains an important part of our patrimony, especially for use in the initial formation process. It is important to keep this work up-to-date making it pertinent for our times. Input from Resurrectionists from each province and region offered appropriate changes to this document. This document has been submitted for approval to the members of this Chapter.

Action Resolutions

- 15) It is with joy that the Thirty-Third General Chapter welcomes the updated version of the *Principles of Formation in Resurrectionist Spirituality*. This Chapter also recommends that the new text be used for initial formation, annual retreats, days of recollection and personal reflection.
- 16) In order to prepare a thorough Resurrectionist formation guide, the IFC will continue the work of reviewing and updating the remaining portion of the document *Resurrectionist Formation (Stages of Formation)*, the document *Admissions and Promotions*, and the document *Ongoing Formation*.
- 17) Since there is no "cookie cutter" way of doing formation, each province has created its own particular handbook of formation over the years. However, they may be out of date. Therefore, each province will review and update its own formation handbooks paying particular attention to the *Principles of Formation in Resurrectionist Spirituality*, as well as any new ecclesial and civil laws. In similar fashion, the South American Region will create their own formation handbook.

Renewal Program for Formators

As an effective tool for providing ongoing formation, the Roman Renewal Program has continuously brought together Resurrectionists from each province/region. In wisdom, the past general curia called for a renewal program for Resurrectionist formators as an opportunity to deepen their own spirituality and to grow in their vocation of leading men in initial formation.

Action Resolutions

- 18) Based on the success of the Roman Renewal Program addressed to formators held June 2013 at the Generalate, the Congregation will sponsor another such program during the next six years. It will be designed specifically for Resurrectionists involved in initial formation. The program will facilitate a universal understanding and appreciation of Resurrectionist formation.

- 19) During the Roman Renewal on formation, speakers will prepare and deliver presentations based on formation issues called for by the *New Horizons of Hope* document, number 11 (a and b).³ Namely, in the face of contemporary culture the vowed life will be looked at through the lens of biblical roots, its particular expression in the charism of the Congregation of the Resurrection, and its practical living in the various pastoral settings of our international membership.
- 20) These presentations therefore, will be compiled and published in booklet form. This booklet will be used throughout the different provinces, region, and mission by those working in formation.

International Formation Commission

From the foundation of the Congregation of the Resurrection it was clear that our men gathered together and formed community, not based on culture or nationality, but on the Spirit of the Resurrection. Community life and ministry will take place wherever the Risen Lord leads us, in such diverse places as Europe, North America, South America and Australia. It is with joy that in recent history God's Spirit has guided us into the continent of Africa.

Action Resolutions

- 21) The formator of the Tanzanian mission will be invited to participate in the International Formation Commission.
- 22) It is highly encouraged that the superior general and his council look throughout the provinces and region for other Resurrectionists to minister in Tanzania and take part in the formation work there. Meanwhile, members of the IFC may make themselves available for workshops, lectures, and formation retreats.

Vocations

Out of the many possible ways of fostering vocations, prayer was the single one our Lord specified: "The harvest, he told them, is plentiful enough, but the laborers are few; you must ask the Lord to whom the harvest belongs to send laborers out for the harvesting" (Luke 10:2). Therefore, if we persevere praying for vocations, God will surely inspire men with the same divine call that our Founders received and pledged in the Church. Moreover, as Resurrectionists we are profoundly grateful and joyful that we have been called to follow the Risen One in the Congregation of the Resurrection! This joy we find in our common life is infectious and often the instrument through which future members are drawn to us. Therefore, out of this joy we call others to join us! We acknowledge that it is the responsibility of each member of the Congregation to promote vocations. We need to be bold in imitating Jesus who said, "Come, follow me" (Mark 1:16).

Action Resolutions

- 23) The Chapter highly encourages each sector of the Congregation of the Resurrection to be faithful to the monthly prayers for vocations to the Congregation. In order to facilitate this, once a year, on a rotating basis, each formation house will prepare a vocation prayer, which will be made available to all Resurrectionists. The IFC chair will receive the prayers and have them translated. It will be the IFC chair's responsibility to send them to the Tanzanian

³ 11a) In the face of negative aspects of our twenty-first century culture, the International Formation Commission will consider as a priority further study and reflection, discussion and creation of constructive policies concerning the religious vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, in both initial and ongoing formation.

11b) The vowed life will be a subject of concern for the International Formation Commission, including the study of the biblical roots of the evangelical counsels, their particular expression in the charism of the Congregation of the Resurrection, and their practical living in our contemporary context and the various pastoral settings of our international membership.

mission, and to each provincial/regional superior so that they may disseminate them to all members of their respective province/region.

- 24) The Chapter encourages each province and region to share all vocation-related material with the IFC chair. His task then will be to compile and assess the material that might be helpful for wider usage within the Congregation.
- 25) Every sector of the congregation will have a vocation promoter. The vocation promoter will assist each of us to create a vocation culture by providing us with required materials (whether printed or electronic) to assist us in this work. The provincial/regional superior will publicly support the vocation promoter in his efforts. All members should give their full support and cooperation to the activities and initiatives of the vocation promoter.

IV. APOSTOLATES

The General Chapter theme has come from the impulse flowing from St. Francis of Assisi and Pope Francis. As Resurrectionists this theme of witnessing to the Risen Lord leads us to reflect upon the Resurrection accounts. Among these, we recall the gospel passage where the Risen Lord asks Mary Magdalene to let go of the “old order” of relating to him as rabboni and to embrace the “new order” of having him always with her as the Risen One (Jn. 20: 17-18). He also entrusts her with the joyful news of his resurrection and commissions her to be an apostle to the apostles.

So, too, the Risen One calls us together in community to sit at his feet and be nourished as his disciples, not for our own sake, but so that, like Mary Magdalene, he may send us out to witness to the transforming power of God’s love. All apostolic endeavors of the Congregation begin from this place of intimacy with the Risen Lord and flow into sharing this relationship with our broken world. He is calling us together to dwell in him! He then calls us to mission! His Spirit directs that mission! Our call is to listen to him and to follow his will!

We are called to form communities of the Risen Christ and from them we are sent out into the world. Therefore, great care should be made to preserve our common life while we respond to the apostolic needs of today.

Educational Apostolates

We, the members of the Thirty-Third General Chapter, are convinced of the dual nature of our apostolate. Rather than two different apostolates, we envision a single one which incorporates both pastoral and pedagogical dimensions. When we teach on any level, it is always with a pastoral heart. When we serve in some capacity in parishes, it is always done to enhance learning and to lead parishioners to a deeper understanding and appreciation of our faith, in particular, the transforming power of God’s love as experienced in the Paschal Mystery. It is thus like two sides of the same coin to say our pastoral ministry is always educational and our teaching is always pastoral.

Although we do not currently operate secondary schools or colleges, the Congregation does sponsor some institutions of learning and also is engaged in parochial or elementary-level schools. Furthermore, some of our members are engaged in academic work on the university or seminary level and many more are working in local parishes in the area of adult education. Opportunities for growth in Tanzania and Brazil, among others, suggest hope for new developments.

Action Resolution

- 26) As the Thirty-Third General Chapter, we reaffirm the retention of the paragraphs in our *Constitutions* that pertain to Resurrectionist principles of education with the hope that present educational efforts will continue and grow and that future efforts will emerge.

Parish Apostolate

Since the last General Chapter most of us continue to work in parish ministry. Pope Francis in *“Amoris Laetitia”* challenges the Church to have special concern for families. Our Mission Statement especially calls us to form youth and families into communities of the Risen Christ.

Resolution

- 27) Provincial/Regional superiors, recognizing the signs of the time, ought to be open to the needs for new forms of evangelization in our parishes. Wherever possible, they ought to identify and allow opportunities for Resurrectionists being formed for parish ministry and those working in parishes to be trained and then exercise leadership in their ministry.

Lay Associations and Laity

Our Mission Statement asserts that “we assist the laity in their own efforts to become prophets to the world and to transform it” This means that the laity are not only invited to share in our Resurrectionist apostolate but that we Resurrectionists are called to assist the laity in identifying and carrying out their own proper mission. This is a subtle but significant way in which Resurrectionists identify and carry out their sense of mission, together with the laity. Thus, we invite the laity to join us as fellow collaborators in the mission of the Gospel; but we also seek to listen to their needs, to address their hunger, and to walk with them as they live out their own vocation. These are not mutually exclusive manners of thinking and working, but rather “both and.”

Action Resolution

- 28) All sectors of the Congregation will study and develop models that would enable us to impart our Resurrectionist Charism and mission to the laity. Wherever possible the superior general and his council will encourage collaboration and the exchange of experiences and ideas among the various sectors of the Congregation.

Encouraging New Apostolates

Jesus said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old” (Mt. 13:52). In the fledgling beginnings of our community the founders had not identified any specific Resurrectionist apostolates (Bogdan Janski, *“Under the Standard of the Risen Christ,”* pp.49-50). However, new wine requires new skins (Mt. 2:22) and this postmodern world, in which we find ourselves, is more than ever in need of our witness to the transforming power of God’s love.

Resolution

- 29) Groups of Resurrectionists are encouraged to ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to reflect upon their interests, abilities and the signs of the times in order to respond to the need for their ministerial presence. Provincial/Regional superiors and their councils ought to give special attention to their requests and where possible allow for new Resurrectionist apostolic endeavors.

Tanzania and Mission Ad Gentes

“The missionary dimension, which belongs to the very nature of the Church, is also intrinsic to all forms of consecrated life, and cannot be neglected without detracting from and disfiguring its charism. Being a missionary is not about proselytizing or mere strategy; mission is part of the “grammar” of faith, something essential for those who listen to the voice of the Spirit” (Message of Pope Francis, “World Day for Missions,” 2015).

Resolutions

- 30) With great joy we once again recommit ourselves to the Tanzanian mission and pledge our support for our brothers and their fruitful apostolic and formation efforts.
- 31) We are committed to continue this ministry and are open to future opportunities to expand our ministry when we are able to do so.

Action Resolutions

- 32) The evaluation of our presence and work in this mission will occur at the annual meeting of the extended general council. Such an evaluation will be based on the mission's religious and apostolic life, its vocation and formation work, and its finances.
- 33) In accordance with *Constitutions*, § 221-c, the Tanzania Mission will be the primary recipient of the various provincial funds established for Resurrectionist missions.
- 34) The superior general and his council will maintain an internally restricted fund for the support of Resurrectionist missions.
- 35) In order to help support the Tanzanian mission all sectors of the Congregation will:
 - a) Promote preaching and the collection of donations on an annual basis in their own territories.
 - b) Encourage the faithful to pray for the mission, the intention of missionaries and where possible, to create missionary prayer groups to pray for the mission.
 - c) Properly prepare volunteers, Resurrectionists and laity, where possible for ministry in the mission.

Beatification

As Resurrectionists, we recognize what a grace it would be for the life and vocations of our Congregation if one of our members who has gone before us were canonized.

Action Resolutions

- 36) The major and regional superiors will encourage prayer for beatification and the intercession of Bogdan Janski and Paul Smolikowski, incorporating this form of prayer into the life of the local houses and our various parishes and apostolates.
- 37) The major and regional superiors will encourage preaching and teaching about our founders and will seek to extend the *fama sanctitatis* of Bogdan Janski and Paul Smolikowski. This will happen under the direction of the postulator general, who will provide sources published in the various languages of our apostolates. Sharing of local activities in this vein will occur through the provincial/regional superiors at meetings of the extended general council and of a Beatification committee comprised of the postulator general and delegate(s) from each sector of the Congregation.
- 38) The postulator general will present an annual report to the extended general council which will express in detail the current status of the beatification processes of Bogdan Janski and Paul Smolikowski.

- 39) Each member of the Congregation should make it a priority to cooperate with the Beatification committee and promote the *fama sanctitatis* of Bogdan Janski and Paul Smolikowski in whatever means are available to him.

Language and Culture

As the apostle Paul writes: “Let us therefore no longer pass judgement on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of another” (Rom. 14:13). Any attempt by an individual or small group of Resurrectionists to segregate themselves from the people of the new place they live ought to be discouraged. Such activity is a choosing of the private tomb of segregation over the risen life to which we are all called to live by St. Paul for whom there is no male or female, no Jew or Greek (Gal. 3:28).

As an international community, our call is to become an intercultural community in which there is a deep understanding and respect for all cultures, the mutual exchange of ideas and cultural norms, as well as the development of deep relationships. In an intercultural society, no one is left unchanged because everyone learns from one another and grows together as we strive for the resurrection of all society.

Action Resolutions

- 40) Provincial/Regional superiors and those responsible for formation should include intercultural sensibilities in the initial formation process. We acknowledge and encourage our international seminary in Rome to be such a place of intercultural life now and in the future.
- 41) Provincial/Regional superiors, when considering whether a religious is suitable for ministry in a culture not his own, must consider the religious’ ability and desire to learn the language and culture of the people to whom he will minister as fundamental requirement for that ministry (cf. *Constitutions*, § 198).

V. FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

We as members of the Congregation of the Resurrection are called to administer our financial patrimony with due diligence, so as not to endanger the continuation of our mission or even our very survival as a religious community of consecrated religious. Our financial patrimony is intended to advance our many and varied apostolic activities, perhaps none more important than our missionary activity, to assist in the formation of our members, to attend to our elderly and sick members, to stand in charitable solidarity with those most in need, to advance the beatification processes of our members, to assist our general leadership as they fulfil their mandate, and to maintain the properties and institutions under our care. For as St. Mark reminds us, most especially consecrated religious, we have been called and sent to carry forth the message of salvation (Mk 3:13-14) and we are indeed aided in this mission through our financial patrimony. As our Charism Statement says, we are called to share our gifts, shared for God's glory. Most assuredly our financial patrimony is identified as gift flowing from God's grace which we administer in ways that always advance the glory of God.

We are further invited not to neglect the call of evangelical poverty as we administer the financial patrimony of the Congregation. Poverty calls us to detach ourselves from material things in imitation of the poor Christ, (*Constitutions*, § 21) thereby permitting us greater opportunity to carry out our mission of proclaiming the glory of God. In our imitation of the poor Christ we listen to the words of the beatitudes: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God” (Lk. 6:20). “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 5:3). This listening to the voice of the poor calls us to confront and correct unjust structures, to freely share our temporal goods, and to transform the world so that the poor will have what is properly theirs in justice.

The responsible and economical administration of the material goods and financial means of the Congregation is one of the genuine forms of practicing the vow of poverty and also an external testimony of faithfulness to the spirit of our founders and of honesty towards our donors and benefactors as well.

Action Resolutions

- 42) The superior general when considering a person for the position of econom general will consider seriously the person's qualifications for the office. Knowledge in the areas of bookkeeping, accounting and investment financing are essential, and training for the position, if necessary, is to be provided (cf. *Constitutions*, § 115).
- 43) The superior general and his council, in cooperation with the local house superior of the Roman house, will continue the work of resolution 16-b from the 32nd General Chapter.⁴ They will continue to work towards greater financial self-sufficiency of the Roman house.
- 44) All provinces, region, and general curia will ensure that resolution 16-d from the 32nd general chapter be continued. This ensures that the miscellaneous category will not be overused and that the total is not to be more than 3% of total expenditures.
- 45) The *General Directory on Temporal Goods* that has been revised and approved by the Thirty-Third General Chapter needs to be adhered to by all provinces, the region, and the superior general and his council.
- 46) The econom general, in consultation with the superior general and his council, along with provincial/regional superiors and economs, will develop a simplified format for the financial reporting of provinces/region at general chapter. This simplified format is for use at the general chapter only; fully detailed annual reports are still to be submitted to the econom general.
- 47) The Church invites us to use our temporal goods to serve humanity and to continue the mission of the Church. With this in mind, the fund established for the support of the missionary activity of the Congregation at the 31st general chapter (action resolution 32) is to be continued. Through this internally restricted fund the Congregation recognizes the on-going missionary activity of the Congregation as deserving of our highest priority by designating significant amounts of our financial temporal goods towards this end. The superior general and his council will designate a significant amount of the annual operating budget towards this fund, they will actively raise funds from our donors and benefactors for the missions to be placed in this fund, and following action resolution 48 (below), a portion of the monies from the international investment fund will be designated for the missionary activity of the Congregation and placed in this fund.
- 48) The superior general and his council, together with the extended general council, will work towards establishing a concretely defined purpose for the Congregation's international investment fund. They will establish any limits, if necessary, on the amount of funds invested, and give serious consideration to how these monies could be utilized. The first priority for these funds is to be the missionary activity of the Congregation, and in no particular order these funds could also be designated for (but not limited to): charity, formation of students, health and retirement of members, unexpected emergencies, beatification processes, care for the Mother House, and the ministry of the general curia.

IMPACT OF RESURRECTIONIST IDENTITY UPON OUR MINISTRY

The first line of our Charism Statement states: "We desire to be faithful to the grace received by our founders, a grace we now share by our call to the Congregation of the Resurrection." This grace is operative in our individual lives and in our apostolates and makes our ministry distinctive from the rest of our colleagues who are busy in the vineyard. The Chapter fathers would like to articulate six distinctive

⁴ 16b) The superior general and his council, in cooperation with the local house superior of the Roman house, are encouraged to investigate accepting more student/professor priests who would rent rooms for a semester or for one or more academic years, as well as other ways of leading to the self-sufficiency of the generalate house operations.

attributes of our Resurrectionist ministry. The list is not meant to be exhaustive but is meant to be nourishment for our reflection as “we herald the liberation and salvation of each person and society as a passage from death to life in which every situation of evil and injustice will be overcome” (Mission Statement).

1) The Paschal Mystery

- a) “Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4).
- b) The Congregation of the Resurrection announces and gives witness to the Paschal Mystery (Mission Statement).
- c) Therefore, as Resurrectionists we are committed to living the Paschal Mystery and giving witness to it by our lives and in our teaching, preaching and various ministries.

2) Nothing can separate us from God’s unconditional love

- a) “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” (Rom. 8:35).
- b) “We believe that God’s love for us is merciful and unfailing” (Charism Statement)
- c) Therefore, as Resurrectionists we witness to the transforming power of God’s love in our own lives as redeemed sinners by encouraging and nurturing that same love in the lives of the people to whom we minister.

3) Living joyfully in hope

- a) “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation” (Isaiah 12:3).
- b) “Love conquers all. Moreover, love always has hope; therefore it never becomes discouraged” (Mss 3567, September 1878, Peter Semenenko to Fr. Zbyszewski).
- c) Therefore, as Resurrectionists our joy comes from hope in the Risen Lord and this joy is attractive to those to whom we minister as they seek to move from despair to hope.

4) The hospitality of Abraham and Sarah

- a) “(Abraham) said, ‘My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant’” (Gen. 18:3).
- b) “Hospitality for guests is an important value and is a way of giving witness to Christian community living” (*Constitutions*, § 139).
- c) Therefore, as Resurrectionists we are committed to hospitality in our houses and in the places where we work as an icon of how the Holy Trinity invites us into its very life.

5) Our community life

- a) “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (Jn. 15:13).
- b) “Let us love one another! Though at times – not always, thank God! – we may differ in our opinions, may we never differ in our feeling and love for one another!” (Mss 928, February 1860, Peter Semenenko to Fr. Jelowicki).
- c) Therefore, as Resurrectionists we recognize that we are called to live and work together as brothers and that all our efforts that foster community life are to be seen as essential to our apostolate and not detracting from it.

6) We are an organism with “two lungs”

- a) “So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another” (Rom. 12:5).
- b) “Today lay people and families are called to live the perfect Christian life just as religious have done up to this point” (PAN mss 1835, p. 639, Bogdan Janski).
- c) Therefore, as Resurrectionists we acknowledge one common baptism with all God’s children and we collaborate with the laity in ministry and we empower them for their own baptismal ministry in the world.



**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE
CONGREGATION OF THE RESURRECTION OF LORD JESUS CHRIST**

Consistory Hall

Saturday, 24 June 2017

Dear Brothers,

I am pleased to receive you on the occasion of your General Chapter. I thank the Superior General for his kind words, and through you, I greet all your confrères present in fifteen countries on four continents.

As spiritual sons of Bogdan Janski, the apostle of Polish émigrés in France in the nineteenth century, you were founded in order to testify that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is at the basis of the Christian life, to proclaim the need for personal resurrection, and to support the community in its mission of service to the Kingdom of God. In close connection to the charism of the Institute, you have chosen as the theme of this Chapter: Witnesses of the Presence of the Risen Lord: From Community to the World. I would like to reflect with you on three particular phrases.

1. Witnesses of the Presence of the Risen Lord. In a word, missionaries, apostles of the Living One. In this regard, I would propose to you as an icon Mary Magdalene, the apostles to the apostles. On Easter morn, having encountered the risen Jesus, she proclaimed him to the other disciples. She sought Jesus dead and found him alive. This is the joyful Good News she brought to the others: Christ is alive and he has the power to conquer death and bestow eternal life.

This brings us to a first reflection. Nostalgia for a past that was rich in vocations and impressive achievements must not prevent you from seeing the life that the Lord is causing to blossom, today too, in your midst. Do not yield to nostalgia, but be men who, moved by faith in the God of history and of life, proclaims the coming of the dawn amid the darkness of the night (cf. Is. 21:11-12). Men of contemplation, who, with the eyes of the heart fixed on the Lord, can see what others, caught up in the concerns of this world, cannot. Men capable of proclaiming, with the boldness born of the Spirit, that Jesus Christ is alive and is Lord.

A second reflection is this. Mary Magdalene and the other women who went to the tomb that morning (cf. Lk. 24:1-8) were women “on the move”: they abandoned their “nest” and set out; they took a risk. The Spirit is calling you too, Brothers of the Resurrection, to be men who set out, to be an Institute “on the move” towards every human periphery, wherever the light of the Gospel needs to be brought. The Spirit is calling you to be seekers of the face of God wherever it is to be found: not in the tombs—“Why do you look for the living among the dead?” (v. 5)—but where it lives: in the community and in mission.

2. From Community to the World. Like the disciples of Emmaus, allow the Risen One to walk at your side, both as individuals and in community, especially along the path of disappointment and abandonment (cf. Lk 24:11ff). This encounter will make you run once more, filled with joy and without delay, to the community, and from the community to the entire world, in order to tell others that “The Lord is risen indeed!” (v. 34).

Those who believe in the Risen One have the courage to “go forth” and bring to others the Good News of the resurrection, embracing the risks of testimony, even as the Apostles did. How many people are waiting for this joyful proclamation! It is not right for us to deprive them of it. If the resurrection of Christ is our greatest certainty and our most precious treasure, how can we not run to proclaim it to others?

A concrete way of showing this is fraternal life in community. It entails accepting the brothers the Lord has given us: not those whom we choose, but those the Lord has given us. As the Apostle Paul tells us, now that Christ has risen from the dead, we can no longer look at others from a human point of view (cf. 2 Cor. 5:16). We view them and we accept them as a gift from the Lord. Others are a gift not to be taken for granted or looked down upon, but a gift to be received with respect, because in our brothers, especially if they are weak and frail, Christ comes to meet us.

I urge you to be builders of evangelical communities and not merely their “consumers”. I ask you to make fraternal life in community your primary form of evangelization. May communities be open to mission and flee every form of self-absorption, which leads to death. Do not let problems—for problems will always be there—overwhelm you. Instead, cultivate the mysticism of encounter and, together with the brothers the Lord has given you, as you dwell “in the light of loving relationship of the three divine Persons”, seek ways and means to move forward (cf. Apostolic Letter *To All Consecrated People*, 21 November 2014, I, 2). In a society that tends to reduce everything to flat uniformity, where injustice gives rise to divisions and hostility, in a world torn and aggressive, ensure that the witness of fraternal life and community will never be lacking!

3. Prophets of joy and of Easter hope. The Risen Lord poured out upon his disciples two forms of consolation: interior joy and the light of the paschal mystery. The joy of recognizing the presence of the Risen Jesus draws you into his Person and his will: for this very reason, it leads to mission. The light of the paschal mystery brings new hope, a “trustworthy hope”, as Pope Benedict XVI has said (*Spe Salvi*, 2). Risen in order to enable others to rise, set free in order to bring freedom to others, born to new life in order to bring new life to birth in everyone who crosses our path: this is your vocation and mission as Brothers of the Resurrection.

“Why do you look for the living among the dead?” (Lk. 24:5). May these words continually resound in your hearts. They will help you to overcome moments of sadness and will open before you horizons of joy and hope. They will enable you to shatter tombstones, and give you the strength to proclaim the Good News in this culture so often marked by death. If we have the courage to descend to our personal and community tombs, we will see how Jesus can make us rise from them. This will enable us to rediscover the joy, the happiness and the passion of those moments when we first made of our lives a gift to God and others.

Dear brothers, I conclude by repeating something I have often said to consecrated persons, especially during the Year of Consecrated Life: remember the past with gratitude, live the present with passion, and embrace the future with hope. A grateful memory of the past: not archaeology, because charism is always a wellspring of living water, not a bottle of distilled water. A passion for maintaining ever alive and young our first love, who is Jesus. Hope, in the knowledge that Jesus is with us and guides our steps, even as he guided the steps of our founders.

May Mary, who in a singular way experienced and continues to experience the mystery of her Son’s Resurrection, watch over your journey with a Mother’s love. I give all of you my blessing. And I ask you, please, not to forget to pray for me.

Then he added, off-script: “Don’t forget.”