



WORKING DOCUMENT ON THE STATUTES PRESENTED

Alphonse Fraboulet

4

Some Questions or Concepts to clarify or specify :

A. In the communion of the Church, People of God, the Congregation . . .

1. The equal Christian dignity of all the baptized :

cf Christifideles Laici n° 55 : 'In Church Communion the states of life by being ordered one to the other are thus bound together among themselves. They all share in a deeply basic meaning: that of being the manner of living out the commonly shared Christian dignity and the universal call to holiness in the perfection of love.

2. Diversity and Complementarity in the different 'states of life' :

- The Priests and deacons,
- Men and Women Religious,
- Members of Secular Institutes, cf Vita Consecrata n° 54, 56.
- the lay faithful,

Cf Christifideles n° 55 : 'They are different yet complementary, in the sense that each of them has a basic and unmistakable character which sets each apart, while at the same time each of them is seen in relation to the other and placed at each other's service.

3. All the states of life, whether taken collectively or individually in relation to the others, are at the service of the Church's growth. While different in expression they are deeply united in the Church's "mystery of communion" and are dynamically coordinated in its unique mission.

4. Within the lay state of life, a great diversity of "Lay vocations":

Cf Christifideles n° 56 : 'Thus within the lay state diverse "vocations" are given, that is, there are different paths in the spiritual life and the apostolate which are taken by individual members of the lay faithful. In the field of a "commonly shared" lay vocation "special" lay vocations flourish.'

B. In the communion of the SSCC Congregation ...

Relations between the Secular Branch and the other 2 Branches:

1. Unity and Authenticity of the SSCC vocation and mission

- Brothers and Sisters guarantee the Unity among the Branches of the Congregation: "Brothers and Sisters, united in the same charism and the same

mission, form a single Congregation approved as such in 1817 by Pope Pius VII.” Art. 1 of the CC .

- And to make this more precise: “Since its foundation, our religious family has had but one charism, one mission and one spirituality.... The Brothers and Sisters assume together the responsibility to maintain and strengthen their unity.” Art. 8 of the CC.

2. Association and Participation in the life and the mission of the Congregation

“Since its origin the Congregation has had a secular branch. Its members commit themselves to live the mission and the spirit of the Congregation, and it has its own Statutes approved by the Holy See.” Art. 9 of the CC

According to the decree of approbation by the Holy See, “The Secular Branch of the religious Institute of the Sacred Hearts is an ‘Association of Christ’s faithful, whose members share in the charism and in the mission of the Institute, according to their own vocation.” - Cf CIC canons 298 to 329 on the ‘Associations of the faithful’.

And the Roman authority desired, in the same decree : « May the members of the Secular Branch, animated by the same spirit of the Brothers and Sisters of the Sacred Hearts, direct their lives and their particular mission in the world, according to their Statutes, and so strive for the perfection of their state.” (Decree of approbation of the Statutes of the SB – Rome 1993)

3. Autonomy of the Branches within the SSCC Family

- The Constitutions of the Brothers and Sisters take care to make precise their relationship : “The Brothers and Sisters of our religious family constitute one Congregation.
- Each branch has its own juridical autonomous personality, legislation, structures of government and formation, community life and temporal patrimony.” Art. 8 of the CC.

4. Organization, Formation, Accompaniment by the SSCC Brothers and Sisters

The groups or communities of the SB are divided into ‘sectors’ which can coincide with a Province or Region or can cover more. (Statutes art. 23).

Each SSCC lay community will ensure regular communication with other lay communities and with the SSCC religious communities of its sector. (art.29)

The sectors, recognized by the corresponding Major Superior or Regional, are accompanied by an SSCC religious community or a designated brother or sister. But, each community establishes its own life and work plan.

Each SSCC lay community will present an adequate structure for approval by the respective Provincial authority, including a procedure for the acceptance of candidates and for the renewal of their commitment. The structure shall also make provision for the adequate formation of the members. (art. 24 to 27). And the Statutes of the SB also add in n° 33: If the lay community cannot itself provide an adequate formation program, the Province should make provision for such a program.

C. Proposed Criteria :

1. For the Candidates and the Members of the SB

- An explicit will of responding to a personal vocation to be part of the SB. Having a personal prayer life.
- Being accompanied in a discernment by a B/S delegated by his or her Province/Region for this mission.
- Following an initiation and a formation to know the identity of our SSCC vocation, the elements of our history and the SSCC spirituality.
- Being open to sharing regularly with a group or community of the SB.
- Being in contact with and maintaining a relationship with a Province/Region of SSCC Brothers/Sisters.
- Not being already part of a SB of another Congregation.
- Being mature and free in his or her decisions.
- Establishing a personal 'life project', in accord with the orientations of the Congregation. (art.12)

2. For forming a Group or Community of the SB

- Having the possibility of meeting regularly with the other members of the SB.
- Having a common Apostolic Project with the Congregation (art. 13)
- Being accompanied by a Community or a designated B/S (art.26 and 29)
- Establishing a 'Common Project' or 'Rules' which will be presented to the Province/Region for approbation.(art.27 et 28)
- Having a formation program for its members. (art. 33 and following)
- Being a group of at least 4/5 people, with sufficient relationships.
- Being open to sharing with other groups or Communities of the SSCC SB and Religious Communities (art.29)

3. For the Celebration of the commitment of the Member of the SB

- Being proposed by the members of his or her community (art.30)
- Presence of the Person in charge or the Delegate designated by the Province: Who receive the commitment ? – the lay coordinator ? – the provincial delegate ?
- Pronouncing the recognized formula of commitment (art. 31) ; content of the 'formula' : essential and necessary elements ?
- Establishing a register of committed persons, depositing it in the Province.

4. For the Brothers and Sisters designated by the Province/Region to Accompany.

- Making sure to safeguard the specificity and the responsibility of the SB
- Taking care of the content of formation,(SSCC History and Spirituality)
- Not hesitating to call upon other SSCC contributors,
- Respecting the rhythm and the specificity of each group
- Getting in touch with other groups of the SSCC SB and Communities.
- Inviting to the SSCC celebrations and events ;
- Obtaining and sending the information on the SB and the whole Congregation.
- Discerning, within each group, the candidates for the SB

D. How to speak clearly about 'Community' ?

= The term 'community' is not always taken to mean the same thing ; this invites us to make it more precise; besides one is aware of 'a certain prudence' in the writing of article 9 in the Statutes of the SB : *'The SS.CC. lay communities meet on a regular basis to share **some form of community life** whatever its structure, but it needs **a certain constancy** to give it stability'*.

= In fact, life commitments, rhythms, space, content, regulation of the dynamic of community life are quite different in accordance with the 2 states of life : the lay state and the apostolic religious state.

= This would it be suitable to make more precise, if we are speaking of '**religious community**' or of '**lay community**'.

E. Possibility and convenience to participate to the Chapters ?

Cf Recommendation n°4 in the SB Chapter Document :

- in the provincial chapters ?
- in the general chapters ?