

Congregazione dei Sacri Cuori

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Rome, October 21, 2014

To the CO-ORDINATORS of the SSCC Secular Branch

**Copies to:
Major Superiors
and those who accompany SB**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Spiritual Animation Team of the Secular Branch met in Rome at the General House of the Brothers, from the 7th to the 9th of October. One of the objectives of the meeting was the evaluation of the work carried out up to now. Generally speaking the evaluation is positive, considering that many aspects of programming are already underway. Another positive aspect is the good cooperation of all the coordinators throughout the Congregation.

However we would like to highlight the following points:

A. Index

The Animation Team is satisfied that all Sectors are represented in the Index of March 1st, 2014. This however, needs to be updated. For this reason we ask you to update the index of your Sector at the beginning of each year, adding new members or removing those who are no longer members of the Secular Branch.

B. Making the Secular Branch known

We are working with and are in contact with many lay people in our areas of ministry. However, not all are called to be members of the Secular Branch, which is perfectly normal. The invitation that the Animation Team is putting forward is to take advantage of the various meetings throughout the year (e.g. the week of the Congregation) to suggest and discuss with those who wish, the option of sharing our Charism and mission as lay SSCC.

C. Communication

The Animation Team encourages all members of the Secular Branch to submit news to the website of the Congregation (www.sccpicpus.com). The Congregation has a Blog where they can submit articles, either individually or as Sector. They will be published, as far as possible, in the original language.

They are also asked to submit various publications (newsletter, magazine etc ...) to the Animation Team for publication.

Another suggestion regarding communication, is for them to invite their friends to join the Facebook of the Congregation. It is also a way of publicizing what we do and what we live.

D. Commitment Formula

The Team had sent a reflection on the formula of commitment to all sectors. The ideal would be to see how this reflection has helped improve the various formulas used in different parts of the world, despite their diversity. One question that arises is: has the reflection really helped to enrich your sector?

E. Annual Evaluation

The Spiritual Animation Team thanks, wholeheartedly, the Secular Branch Sectors who have sent their responses to the questionnaire. The aim of this questionnaire was to help us understand what was been experienced in each sector, with its positive aspects and its challenges. We can say that this goal has been achieved, although four sectors have not responded (Peru, Mozambique, Indonesia, Brazil).

What is highlighted in your answers?

1. A strong faith in God.

In the project of life in each Sector a time spent with God is specified (Adoration, Community Prayer). This is embodied in the relationship with others, in commitment to the aspect of social service. It is a faith that goes out to meet others as neighbors.

2. Openness to Church and Ministry.

No Sector is contained within itself. The Secular Branch has a great openness to the Church. It covers all areas of life (sick, catechesis, prisoners, youth, children ...). This openness makes the Secular Branch well established pastorally in the Lord's vineyard. It is a reason for joy, because "the harvest is abundant but the laborers are few".

3. Experience of Charisma.

The replies received shows us to what degree the proclamation of God's love to the world, is the center of their concerns. Certain Sectors insist that they want to be "true witnesses" of Christ and actively collaborate with the Congregation.

4. Spirit of Family.

The family spirit is not just a pious slogan, but a real experience for the Sacred Hearts family. Proximity, joint participation in the events of the Congregation or to simply share with brothers and sisters in the same province, strengthen our family spirit.

5. Project of life in the Sectors.

The evaluation shows that many sectors have a Project of Life around which their activities (meetings, reunions, formation ...) are organized. The ideal would be to have one that would respond in a specific way to each Sector.

The challenges include:

1. Living out the Life Project of the Sector.

Certain Sectors experience difficulty in harmonizing the Sector Project in daily and personal life. The commitment made sometimes clashes with the reality of everyday life. It is difficult to keep strictly to what is written and accepted by all. Given this difficulty, dialogue within the sector could perhaps solve the problem. It would be better to commit to a few things but do them well. Each sector should gauge its forces before committing itself and have a Sector Life Project that is realistic.

2. Renewal of the group.

Another challenge is the advanced age of the members in certain sectors and the lack of new members, especially among young people. We believe that the Sectors who experience this problem should dare to suggest to young people an option of being SSCC lay people. The latter group may think that it is reserved only for the elderly or adults. Not so, we must take risks!

At this point we would like to highlight the lack of enthusiasm of some members, because of difficulties in life and the loss of some members. It is a great challenge, because being a secular SSCC is a free and voluntary commitment. We may regret this lack or these withdrawals, but what we must not do is lose hope. Always keep the flames burning this can serve to illuminate a whole people!

3. Lack of guides.

There are Sectors where there is a shortage of people to accompany the Secular Branch. The Team thinks it is an obligation on the part of the Congregation to make people available to accompany the Sectors. What we can suggest is to ask the coordinators who have had this experience to talk to their respective Major Superiors.

4. Ongoing Formation of the members.

The ongoing formation of the members is an important element of the group's growth. The Animation Team notes this challenge. In the future it may provide certain materials for ongoing formation as required. However, we would also remind them that in the Web page of Rome, in the Library section, "Documentation of the Secular Branch" there is a virtual library where you can find materials for formation.

<http://www.sccpicpus.com/en/documentation-on-secular-branch>

5. Program of Life of the Members.

The Team of spiritual animation urgently calls on sectors who have no Programme of Life (Sector Project of Life, Organization of communities, Rules for internal organization, etc. ...) to take the time to study the Statutes of the Secular Branch, in order to develop, in its own context, the programme of life. In case of difficulty, please contact the Animation Team, for help, or raise the issue with other sectors of the Congregation.

F. Other Information

From this questionnaire, we now have additional information that was not in the Index published last year. We can say that the Secular Branch has 56 communities (excluding Brazil, Indonesia, Peru and Mozambique). They are distributed as follows:

- Ecuador	5
- Chile	16
- Kinshasa	3
- United States (East, West and Hawaii)	12
-Paraguay	3
- England-Ireland	4
- France-Québec	5
- Spain	3
- Poland	5

Before finishing our letter, we suggest that different sectors of the Congregation send us their reaction to the reflection "formula for lay SSCC commitment". Your opinion is important to us. Thank you.

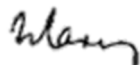
New address of the Secular Branch in Rome

In order to facilitate contact, dialogue and correspondence between the Spiritual Animation Team and the Sectors of the Secular Branch, the Secretariat of the brothers has created a special address:

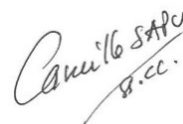
seculsscc@gmail.com

We ask the Secular Branch Coordinators to please inform their respective sectors of this change of direction. From now on, for our contacts, we will use: *seculsscc@gmail.com*.

On behalf of the Spiritual Animation Team of the SSCC Secular Branch,



Mary McCloskey, ssc



Camille Sapu, ssc