

SECULAR BRANCH

STATUTES



Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary

**STATUTES
OF THE
SECULAR BRANCH**

*Congregation of the Sacred Hearts
of Jesus and Mary and of Perpetual Adoration
of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar*

General Houses
Rome
2022

DECREE OF APPROBATION
LETTER OF THE SUPERIORS GENERAL



**CONGREGATIO
PRO INSTITUTIS VITAE CONSECRATAE
ET SOCIETATIBUS VITAE APOSTOLICAE**

Prot. n. P. 61⁻¹/1993

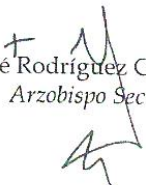
DECREE

The Superiors General of the *Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (Picpus)* have undertaken an updating of the Statutes of the Secular Branch, according to current needs and requirements. The Superiors General have submitted the new text to the Dicastery for approval.

After careful study of the document, in which some clarifications have been made, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, with this present Decree, approves the new text of the Statutes according to the copy drawn up in the Spanish language which is preserved in its Archives.

This Dicastery strongly hopes that the members of the Secular Branch, identified with the charism and spirituality of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts, will continue to contemplate, live and proclaim to the world the Love of God incarnate in Jesus.

Notwithstanding any disposition to the contrary.
Vatican City, 19 February 2022

✠ 
✠ José Rodríguez Carballo, OFM
Arzobispo Secretario


João Card. Braz de Aviz
Prefecto



Letter of the Superiors General

Rome, 10 March 2022

Religious and Seculars of the Sacred Hearts

Dear brothers and sisters,

Fraternal greetings from our general governments. Through this letter, we share the joy of sending you the updated Statutes of the Sacred Hearts Secular Branch that have been approved by the Holy See, some 29 years after the first Statutes were confirmed by Rome (1993). The world has changed in these years and so has the Church and the Congregation. As brothers, sisters and secular members we have deepened together the radical equality that comes to us through baptism and which makes us one in Christ through his Spirit and binds us to one another in the Body of his Church. As a result, we contribute the diversity of our gifts and charisms to the building up of the Church and to the construction of a more just and united world, which pays special attention to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth. We also recognise our common vocation to holiness, our call to participate in the life that God gives us in the here and now, a life that we receive as a pilgrim People of God, companions on the journey to the men and women of our time.

We have received from our founders, a charism, a gift of the Spirit that is the spirituality of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Our Founders discovered and knew how to transmit to religious and lay people the depth of the love of God the Father for humanity: through

the contemplation of Jesus in his Word, in the Eucharist, in adoration and in the service of reparation, in the company of with the maternal support of Mary. Today, religious men and women and seculars associated with the Congregation draw from this same spiritual source. This translates into a form of community life marked by a family spirit, mutual acceptance and service, so that we might love Jesus and his Gospel more and collaborate with him in the building up of his Church and in his work of reparation in the gaps and fractures of our world.

As Pope Francis states in his encyclical letter *Fratelli tutti* (3 October 2020):

"Each day offers us a new opportunity, a new possibility. We should not expect everything from those who govern us, for that would be childish. We have the space we need for co-responsibility in creating and putting into place new processes and changes. Let us take an active part in renewing and supporting our troubled societies. Today we have a great opportunity to express our innate sense of fraternity, to be Good Samaritans who bear the pain of other people's troubles rather than fomenting greater hatred and resentment."

(Fratelli tutti, n. 77)

The vitality of this charism is precisely manifested when we, Sacred Hearts religious and seculars, brothers and sisters all, walk and search together for ways to be witnesses to God's merciful love, wherever we find ourselves. These statutes are therefore a sure guide to animate and orient the journey and search that we make together. We do this in communion with the whole community of believers, with its diversity of ministries, services and gifts, in order to be "useful" to the Church, especially "to the suffering and persecuted members of Jesus

Christ". We also make our own the yearnings, tensions and hopes of the men and women of our time.

We hope that these statutes will encourage the journey together of the members of the Sacred Hearts Secular Branch and stimulate their joyfully living and witnessing to fraternity and service.

Fraternally in the Sacred Hearts,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Villarroel". There is a horizontal line underneath the name and a small flourish at the end.

Patricia Villarroel ss.cc.
Superior General

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alberto Toutin". It features a prominent, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Alberto Toutin ss.cc.
Superior General

STATUTES

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Chapter I

NATURE AND PURPOSE

The members of the SS.CC. Secular Branch are lay men and women who identify with the charism and spirituality of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts. Belonging to a community with the same charism, they go through a process of personal discernment to assume the formal commitment to share the SS.CC. mission inserted in the realities of the lay vocation: family, work, community and society.

1. The commitment of the members of the Secular Branch of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts is rooted in baptism and confirmation, sacraments which express belonging to the Catholic Church.
2. As lay persons, they share in the mission of the Congregation according to their own vocation.
3. Members of the Secular Branch share in the mission of the Congregation as it is expressed in the First Chapter of the Constitutions, which is common to the two Branches of Brothers and Sisters:
 - a) to contemplate, live and proclaim to the world God's Love incarnate in Jesus (Art. 2);
 - b) to make our own the attitudes, options and tasks that led Jesus to the point of having His Heart transpierced on the Cross (Art. 3);
 - c) to identify with the attitude of Jesus and with His reparative work; to be in solidarity with the men and women who are victims of injustice, hatred and

sin in the world; to collaborate with all those who, led by the Spirit, work to build a world of justice and love, sign of the Kingdom (Art. 4);

d) to assume a ministry of intercession through eucharistic celebration and contemplative adoration (Art. 5);

e) to engage in evangelizing action; to make the Kingdom of God present by transformation of the human heart and by endeavouring to be agents of communion in the world; to exercise our apostolic service where we are sent to bring and receive the Good News (Art. 6);

f) to live our vocation and mission in community characterised by simplicity and the family spirit (Art. 7).

4. Their mission is undertaken in the milieu that is proper to the laity, and their options will always be the fruit of personal discernment, in the light of prayer, community accompaniment and the mission of the Congregation.

5. The members of the SS.CC. Secular Branch are called to participate in the transformation of the social reality in which they live, drawing from a missionary, prophetic and evangelizing perspective that is in solidarity with the poorest and vigorously committed to our Common Home.

Chapter II

PROGRAMME OF LIFE

The members of the Secular Branch of the Congregation will deepen their Christian life, incarnating in a special way the charism of the Congregation as mentioned in the previous chapter, especially in regard to the following areas:

A. Prayer life

6. Personal and common prayer is an essential dimension of the life of faith of the members of the Secular Branch.
7. Common prayer life can be expressed in various ways in accordance with SS.CC. spirituality. In particular it is expressed through the Eucharist which is a source of communion and inspiration for the members and for their common objectives.
8. In the spirit of our charism they will give special attention to reparative adoration – the prolongation of the Eucharist - and to the deepening of their personal relationship with God.

B. Communal life

9. The members of the SS.CC. Secular Branch meet periodically and stably to share aspects of life in common, having as essential elements a listening and meditation of the Word, a reading of the signs of the times and fidelity

to the lay commitment, all of this with the particular seal of the charism of the Sacred Hearts.

10. Each one experiences and accept their cultural roots as the liberating foundation for their personal and community life project. The diversity of history, culture and tradition of the SS.CC. Secular Branch is a richness for living and sharing the charism with other communities of the Secular Branch, and with other groups in the Church.

C. Apostolic life

11. The apostolate of the members of the SS.CC. Secular Branch must be lived as an integral part of their life project, and not only as a marginal or temporary activity. The family environment, one's professional or daily work has to be lived as a vocation of service for the Kingdom. "To make God's reign present, we seek the transformation of the human heart and strive to be agents of communion in the world. In solidarity with the poor, we work for a just and reconciled society" (Const., Art. 6).

12. Members of the SS.CC. Secular Branch share in the apostolic dimension of the Congregation by participating in its ministries either as an integral part of their reference community or by a personal commitment to some type of mission. This may be a common project or a participation in the pastoral or social ministry of the Congregation or in other works in line with the mission of the Congregation.

13. Apostolic service, whether at the personal or community level, must be lived as a participation in the mission of the Congregation. Apostolic activity must be the fruit of discernment and accompanied by each community.

14. The spirit of reparation of the charism of the Sacred Hearts moves us to ensure that the apostolate be clothed with an ecumenical spirit, recognizing the spiritual values of all peoples and individuals (cf. Brs. Const., Art. 42.3). The commitment to justice and peace leads us to make the cry of the poor and of the earth our own. This enters in a particular way in the sense of the SS.CC. vocation. (cf. Srs. Const., Art. 59) as well as the commitment to those who suffer violence, exclusion or other forms of discrimination.

15. “Availability to the needs and demands of the Church, discerned in the light of the Spirit, and the capacity to adapt to circumstances and events are characteristics inherited from our Founders.” (Const., Art. 6).

16. The members of the SS.CC. Secular Branch community undertake their apostolic service according to the guidelines of the local Church, and always as a mission of the Congregation. Their apostolic service is to be evaluated regularly.

D. Solidarity at different levels

17. Solidarity brings with it a way of life and has repercussions in different ways. Solidarity among the

members of the SS.CC. Secular Branch community itself, i.e. caring for one another, fraternal relations. This solidarity is to be regulated in each sector. (cf. Art. 24 and 25)

18. Solidarity-with the SS.CC. brothers and sisters, with whom we share the same mission, presupposes exchanges and relationships between brother and sisters and the Secular Branch communities: meetings and/or events (assemblies, chapters, conferences, canonical visits, retreats, etc.).

19. The members of the SS.CC. Secular Branch have to be aware of the international dimension of the Congregation, and be open to an experience of communion with the universal Church, and always available to the calls of the Spirit from a missionary perspective.

20. This international solidarity will be expressed in concrete forms: meetings, correspondence, exchange of news, openness to justice and peace movements, missions, etc.

21. Communication shall be such that it assures co-responsibility and facilitates collaboration in mission.

22. It is the duty of the national leaders of each sector to ensure that each community of the SS.CC. Secular Branch maintains regular communication with the other Secular Branch communities and with the communities of Brothers

and/or Sisters in their region. They should also ensure that there is increased communication with the other SS.CC. Secular Branch sectors throughout the world.

Chapter III
ORGANISATION

A. Structure

23. Each branch of our SS.CC. spiritual family enjoys autonomous legal personality, with its own legislation, government structures, formation, community life and temporal patrimony.

24. The SS.CC. Secular Branch is organised in sectors.

25. Each sector of the SS.CC. Secular Branch is composed of one or more lay communities, recognized by the competent authority of the Congregation of brothers and/or sisters in that sector, or by the General Governments depending on the particular reality of the sector.

26. Each community of the SS.CC. Secular Branch normally consists of at least five members. They will elect a coordinator or animator from among themselves for a fixed period of time and draw up a community project.

27. Each sector of the SS.CC. Secular Branch has its own organisation, which includes at least one national director or coordinator elected in assembly for a period of no more than 5 years. The coordinator looks after the life of the communities and the relationship with Brothers and/or Sisters, among others.

28. The national coordinators, together with the members of the sector, will draw up its own statutes which must be approved by the respective competent authority¹ of the brothers or sisters. They shall include, among other things, the process of formation and acceptance of candidates and the renewal of their commitments, the organisation of pastoral initiatives and adequate means for a good formation of sector members.

29. Each sector of the SS.CC. Secular Branch will, as far as possible, be accompanied by a religious community or by a Brother or Sister, specially designated for this purpose. The sector will organise its life and activities according to the mission of the Congregation.

B. Admission of members

30. Those who wish to belong to the Secular Branch will contact the coordinator of the sector, expressing their motivations for wanting to begin the formation process. The coordinator, together with the members of the lay community, can admit them to the process, in dialogue with the brother or sister who accompanies them.

31. Candidates of the SS.CC. Secular Branch are admitted in accordance with their own Statutes (cf. Art. 28 of said

¹ In the case of the brothers, the “competent authority” is understood as the Provincial Superior, Vice Provincial, Regional or Delegate Superior. In the case of the sisters, the “competent authority” is the Superior Delegate of the Zone and the Territorial Coordinator.

Statutes). After a period of preparation and formation, the candidates will write a letter expressing the reasons why they want to belong to the Secular Branch. This letter is to be addressed to the sector coordinator. The latter will share it with the competent authorities of brothers and/or sisters, with the knowledge of the other members of the lay community. The competent authority is the one who admits the candidates and receives their commitments. In addition, the competent authority may delegate a sister or brother or Sector coordinator to receive the commitments.

32. Each sector of the SS.CC. Secular Branch must prepare a ceremony for the acceptance or renewal of its members in accord with the liturgical norms of the Church. Each time a new member is admitted or renewed, a document must be issued and kept by the Sector Coordinator. In turn, the Coordinator must inform the competent authority of brothers/sisters about any new members and or renewals.

The following commitment formula shall be used in the ceremony of incorporation or renewal:

*“I,, before God
and in the presence of the Christian community here gathered,
freely commit myself (for 1 or 3 years)
to live my baptism in the Church,
as a member of the Secular Branch
of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary,
in conformity with the Statutes*

*approved by the Holy Apostolic See.
I promise to contemplate, live and announce
the Love of God incarnate in the Heart of Jesus,
and associated to the heart of Mary,
living as a witness to the Gospel in the world today.
In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
Amen."*

33. The duration of the first commitment of the members of the SS.CC. Secular Branch is one year. Thereafter, the commitment may be renewed for periods of three years renewable.

C. Formation

34. Always keeping in mind the lay character of their vocation, the members of the SS.CC. Secular Branch will receive a formation in their own faith and in their actual life situation. They need to deepen their own role in the Church and the world of today.

35. Personal requirements are:

- a) personal equilibrium and affective maturity;
- b) experience of God;
- c) love the charism and mission of the Congregation;
- d) a spirit open to collaborate and to serve.

36. Programme:

The program of formation can be understood as a process of ongoing formation over several years and should include:

- a) a study of Sacred Scripture, the teaching of the Church and other studies to help deepen their Christian faith;
- b) a study of SS.CC. spirituality as it applies to the present day and knowledge of the history of the Congregation;
- c) spiritual accompaniment: formation of lay leaders who can take responsibility for the spiritual animation of the members;
- d) formation of leaders;
- e) formation for pastoral activities in collaboration with the brothers and sisters;
- f) the study of a broad range of issues: social, political, ecological etc.

Rome, 24 December 2021

