
DIARY OF THE CHAPTER

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The General Chapter adopted the guidelines for the new “community organization” of the Congregation.

There was considerable relief, last night, among the members of the Chapter. First, of course, because they had successfully elected the tenth Superior General of the Congregation, in the best of conditions! But also because another “big item” on the Chapter’s agenda had finally been resolved definitively, at least in part. You’ve already guessed what it is: our new community organization.

Regular readers of the “Diary of the Chapter” remember an early article on the question (see #7, Monday, May 9th): the “logic of communion” that guided this revision of our structures led to a proposal that will result in a greater solidarity among the different levels of government.

Even before talking about a new geographic reorganization, the Chapter yesterday adopted by an overwhelmingly favorable margin the overall outline of this new plan. The keystone of the plan is the following: a sharing of the decision-making process by an Ordinary General Council, to include the Superior General and his Assistants (the General Treasurer will be one of these) (1) and a Plenary General Council, made up of the Ordinary General Council and the Major Superiors.

The Chapter spent most of its time talking about the Plenary General Council. It replaces the Council of Congregation, which met once a year and had fairly limited authority. In the revised article for the Rule of Life adopted yesterday (#124), this new organ of government, very clearly collegial, will meet “at least twice a year” and will have “as its mission to assure the well-being of the entire body of the Congregation.” “It will study the ways in which the Congregation must adapt itself in the light of the evolution of the world and the Church. Consequently, it will make decisions regarding the needs of the Congregation in terms of the formation that is needed and the advanced studies required in theology and in other disciplines, and will foresee what innovative foundations should be encouraged or launched.

This new Plenary General Council has yet other responsibilities. The Chapter decided that from now on, it will be the Superior General’s responsibility, with the consent of the Council,
- To authorize the opening of a house;
- To decide on the distribution of money from the Solidarity Fund;
- To ratify, upon presentation by the Provincial, the nomination of Directors of Formation for each Province, as well as those formators in major houses of formation;
- To give each religious his first apostolic formation at the end of his formation, in close consultation with his respective Major Superior.

Many articles of the Rule of Life have been altered to respect these decisions. Does all of this represent a revolution? Not really, but certainly a logic of communion!

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