



Society of the
Sacred Heart
of Jesus

TOWARDS CHAPTER
2024

SYNTHESIS OF THE
PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ASSEMBLY OF
PROVINCIALS 2022

ANNEX B

Contents

Synthesis of the Assembly of Provincials	3
1. Encounter with Each Other.....	3
2. International Planning Commission’s Revised Proposal and Recommendations.....	3
3. Going Back to the Sources.	5
4. Discussion on the New Entities.....	5
5. Discussion on the Apostolic Priorities and Governance.....	7



Synthesis of the Assembly of Provincials

The Assembly of Provincials was divided into two parts, but connected: the first centered on the proposal of the International Planning Commission (IPC) on the reorganization of the Society and the second was the preparation for the General Chapter in 2024. In this document, we outline the first part of the process that we have lived through these days as a community of discernment.

1. Encounter with Each Other

The process of the Assembly began with a day and a half of prayer and reflection. In order to build a community of discernment, we were led in a process of a deeper encounter with each other, and the unique contexts we carry with each of us. The provincials were given the icon of the Visitation, with the encouragement that we hold Mary and Elizabeth as our model in this journey: women working and being together, giving hope and confidence to each other as they cooperate with the plan of God, living the mystery and uncertainty, to welcome the new that is emerging in their midst.

The group was also reminded of the significance of generative listening and speaking as we engage in meaningful conversations that would impact both the Society and the people we serve, now and in the future. The encouragement of the IPC was for us to live these days with attention and intention.

The daily morning prayer always led us to the center; to the main reason for our gathering i.e. for the life and mission of the Society and to the One who constantly calls us. Sophie accompanies us daily and reminds us to live with courage and confidence.

2. International Planning Commission's Revised Proposal and Recommendations

The Assembly proceeded with the presentation of the IPC of a revised proposal which was the fruit of their careful listening to all the responses to the draft proposal that was circulated in September 2022. The IPC shared with the assembly the explanations of the proposal, points of convergence as well as questions and concerns expressed in the responses from the Society. They likewise recommended points for further clarification and discussion.

Elements of the revised proposal:



1. A new configuration that is comprised of 8 entities.
2. The four main mission priorities are Education, JPIC, Spirituality and Formation and the possibility of considering Youth and Vocation Ministry as a fifth priority.
3. Form follows function: The structure of government (form) can only be designed once we have a clearer idea about the function of the parts, separately and together.
4. The IPC proposed to begin the process at this time by moving forward, structuring and implementing the mission priorities.

Recommendations / Points for Discussion:

Concerning the New Entities:

1. Many have expressed discomfort with the terms Entities and Apostolic Axes. The IPC recommended to the Assembly the need for these terms to be replaced but that the final decision can be made either during the Assembly or at the General Chapter in 2024.
2. The IPC expressed the concern of some sisters that some entities consist of units with fewer resources, than others thus the recommendation for the Assembly to clarify what constitutes the sharing of resources.
3. As we consider that each province/district moves at its own pace towards this restructuring, the body needs to consider how slow we want to go and how long we envisage this process will take.

Concerning the Mission Priorities:

4. Revitalize our sense of mission in the world today.
5. Generate a process of reflection and systematization of each of the mission priorities.
6. Work on the definition of each mission priority.
7. Explore how to implement these mission priorities and their functioning at an entity level.
8. See how to coordinate these mission priorities at an international level.
9. In the context of potential entities and/or with other entities, plan meetings, work-team meetings, and meetings regarding the articulation of mission priorities.

Concerning Governance:



10. Recommendation for training in leadership, change management, financial, and intercultural competency.
11. Recommendation to look into the financial and legal management and implications
12. There were some recommendations that action steps need to begin now.

In order to ensure that the proposal was well understood, time was given to listen to questions of clarification and for the IPC to respond to it, before any discussion began. The provincials and district superiors expressed their appreciation for the care and hard work that the IPC put into all that they have presented to the group.

3. Going Back to the Sources

The Assembly highly appreciated the input and responses given by Mary Wright (Canon Lawyer) regarding some canonical questions related to the task of reorganization. Time was given for us to go back to our Constitutions, related texts from the Canon Law, Special Chapter 2021 document, the responses of RSCJ and collaborators and the IPC responses. This exercise clarified many of the concerns/questions we had and reminded us of the freedom and creative possibilities our Constitution offers us. This prepared us better to enter into different group conversations about the new entities, mission priorities, and governance structures.

4. Discussion on the New Entities

There were various discussion groups designed to encourage dialogue regarding the revised proposal of the IPC. Time was given to listen to different reactions and interventions. There were conversations among members of the new entity as well as across different entities. During the course of these conversations, specific changes in the membership of some of these entities were proposed and explored. Important points of discussion were around the particularities and challenges we see in our new entity, our understanding of the specific role of the entity major superior, the kind of structure which we think would answer the needs of mission and life, and the name we propose for the “entities”.

After much discussion about the different terms to replace the word “entity”, ***the Assembly decided to use the word “new province” until the General Chapter in 2024 when it will be decided definitively. We agreed that we will have a consultation with the members regarding the term to be used and the specific name each would choose for their “new province”.***



The Assembly arrived at a consensus that the Society will be organized in eight (evolving) new provinces:

- 1. Democratic Republic of Congo-Chad and Uganda-Kenya*
- 2. India, Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam*
- 3. Australia-New Zealand, Japan, and Korea-Chinese*
- 4. Antilles, Mexico and United States-Canada*
- 5. Argentina-Uruguay, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela*
- 6. Austria-Germany-Hungary, England-Wales, Ireland-Scotland, and Malta*
- 7. Belgium-France-Netherlands, Egypt, and Italy*
- 8. Poland and Spain*

Feedback of the IPC on what they had observed from the conversations concerning the (evolving) new provinces:

- Reinforcement that not everyone is at the same stage of readiness and those who are ready are asking to be able to move.
- We recognize that the (existing) provinces have a different starting point for engaging lay collaborators, but we all share a commitment to grow and deepen these relationships.
- Some questions remain, many of which have evolved. At the same time, there is a willingness to stay in dialogue.
- Concrete plans and initiatives are beginning to take shape between and among (existing) provinces within an “entity”.
- Concrete ways of sharing resources in a variety of areas of experience and expertise.
- Growing realization that each “entity” will develop its own government plan.



5. Discussion on the Apostolic Priorities and Governance

Mixed group discussions were made on the Apostolic Priorities. Conversations were focused on the name we want to use for “apostolic axes”, how to integrate these into the life and mission of the Society, the leadership roles in the entity level and international level and the possibility of adding a vocation and youth ministry as a 5th priority.

The series of group sharing and synthesis brought the assembly to the following points regarding the apostolic axes/ mission priorities:

- *There was consensus on the use of the term “apostolic priorities”*
- *We agreed to maintain the four apostolic priorities of Education, Spirituality, Formation and JPIC.*
- *We want to include the youth as an explicit and visible option within each Apostolic Priority.*

Other points that emerged were:

- We see clearly the distinction between youth work and vocation ministry. They are different apostolates and respond to different needs.
- The apostolic priorities are born and live in the local reality. We see the need for a process of getting to know the reality and articulating the different experiences around a priority.
- We see the need for a period of transition and experimentation in which each entity understands its own reality and only then will we be able to shape the structure and organizational form that responds to each entity. An agile and flexible structure according to Life.
- The International Commissions will play an important role in this experimental phase.
- We agree with the organizational scheme proposed by the IPC. Taking into account that the representatives of each apostolic priority would form part of the Extended General Council. As well as the representatives of the apostolic priorities present in each (evolving) new province, not necessarily all 4 priorities, would form part of that Extended Council.
- The role of the persons elected as representatives of each priority has to do with facilitating communication, articulation and sharing. They must be people of discernment, attentive to reality, who revitalize local life.



As the first segment of the Assembly ended, the IPC left us with the following points on the way forward:

- Training and formation based on the articulated needs.
- Communicate when help is needed (e.g., other members of the (evolving) new province, international commission, IPC, General Council)
- As concrete steps and initiatives take shape, ensure periodic space for reflection and evaluation, and adjust the course as needed.
- Each must determine how best to keep lay collaborators engaged while also being attentive to deepening the relationship. This requires expanding the circle of participation.
- Consider how all of this informs the Chapter preparation and process design.

The second part of the Assembly of Provincials focused on an integrated process for the reorganization of the Society. The conversations centered around the preparation for the General Chapter and the proposals for the criteria to elect delegates and will be communicated to the preparatory commission.

