Dear Participant in the VIIth General Conference,

We are sending along the Instrumentum Laboris: it is the text that shall serve as the basis for reflection and discussion during our work on the topic “SCJs on Mission ad gentes” in Warsaw from May 16-24.

This working text is the result of a process begun as early as the XXIst General Chapter when people asked that “a General Conference be convoked on the missions: that a ‘mission ad gentes policy’ be set forth” (SCJs on Mission – A Heart Open and in Solidarity, 65).

This entire process has gone through various phases: a letter to all missionaries to collect their experiences and suggestions, a questionnaire sent to all provinces which obtained complete participation (each entity sent along its contributions), meetings of the conference preparation commission which evaluated the various contributions and drew up a number of texts in addition to devising a schedule and agenda for the conference, the Lineamenta text itself to which many contributed by responding with new additions, recommendations, and corrections.

Now basing itself on all this work which involved the entire congregation, this Instrumentum Laboris is set forth.

The text is succinct, with a preference for brief statements and the goal of highlighting what the conference should do: a time for reflection so as to arrive at an orientation for mission ad gentes work in our congregation and thus awaken a renewed missionary effort. We have tried to emphasize the importance of action proposals rather than other kinds of reflection. It will be the task of the assembly to make judgments on them and propose them to the congregation as tools to serve evangelization.

We ask those of you who will participate at the conference to study this material, and to allow confrontation by persons close to you so that your reflection be enriched and fruitful for achieving the objectives of the conference: to give a new impetus to missionary commitment with the congregation and to devise criteria and practical orientation for missionary endeavor.

Let us support our reading and study with prayer so as to receive the gift of the Spirit; by allowing ourselves to be guided by the Spirit, we will discover the paths we are called to follow in the “today” of God.


The Preparatory Commission

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1. **THE MISSION AD GENTES**

1.1 God wants all to be saved; to this end he sent his Son, the sole mediator of this salvation. He wished to associate the church in this work of salvation and he has made it capable of working in this mission through the action of the Holy Spirit.

1.2 The Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart was raised up by the Spirit in the church as a gift for the benefit of all. Just as for the church, so also for us, service to the mission is a constitutive element of our nature, and is our response to the invitation of Christ to work in his mission, faithful to the inspiration of our Founder for whom “missionary activity was a privileged form of apostolic service” (Cst. 31).

1.3 We recognize in the expression “missionary activity” (Cst. 31) all that which tradition and many church documents identify as the mission ad gentes. And even though this expression does not exhaust the mission of the church for saving all, it emphasizes an awareness that the church has as part of its task the proclamation of Christ, savior of the world, to all peoples.

1.4 The mission ad gentes has as its scope the initial proclamation and is therefore directed in a particular way to peoples, to groups, to socio-cultural environments that have not yet heard the Gospel (cf. Redemptoris Missio, 33, hereafter RM). It has a universal scope and therefore supersedes all traditional geographical criteria, making that initial proclamation even to new phenomena (yet present within countries that are Christian by ancient tradition) associated with urbanization, mass migration, the sectors of the world of communications, scientific research, international relations, and other realities that constitute the new Areopagus (cf. RM, 37).

1.5 Presently, the mission ad gentes takes place in a setting of communion and collaboration among local churches that are open to mutual giving and welcome.

1.6 With the call to sharing the Gospel in mind, we open ourselves to sincere dialog with the man of today, with various cultures and religions. For us dialog is the preferred tool and method for evangelization.

1.7 The task for initial evangelization is the witness of faith, of the vitality and fidelity of the congregation to the Spirit which raised it up and fulfillment of this task gives it new vigor.

**Action**

1.8 This task moves us to see the reality around us with fresh assessment and attention, discovering the areas in which we live and act as scenes in which the Gospel needs to be proclaimed anew, arousing ourselves from the torpor and temptation of being content with what we already do.

1.9 The mission ad gentes must become the way we look at each of our apostolic activities. The task of making the Gospel known to every creature must serve as motive for each person and activity of the Institute.

1.10 Each entity is therefore called to promote and support initial evangelization either from within or outside those areas in which we already work, making our personnel and the necessary resources available.

1.11 Each entity in the congregation must review its apostolic activities and in their services pay particular attention to those who either do not know or are distant from Christ.
2. **SCJ Qualities of the Mission *ad gentes***

2.1 The *Ecce Venio* of Christ has a privileged place in the Dehonian spirit; from it our availability derives. From solidarity of Christ with our humanity, we learn to live solidarity with the man of today, particularly with the poor and disadvantaged. Our manner of being missionaries *ad gentes* takes its origin from this spirit.

2.2 The SCJ missionary is characterized as one who finds the strength that sustains him, that motivates him for mission, that urges him to cross over beyond the limits of his own safety nets and makes the God of Jesus Christ known from his personal experience of the love of God, from the attentive listening to the Word, and from the primacy given to the Eucharist both celebrated and adored. He responds to God’s love by accepting His will for salvation and by dedicating his energies to the coming of His kingdom.

2.3 Fr. Dehon maintains that the mission *ad gentes* is a condition that favors the “living out of one’s vocation” (*À mes missionnaires* AD B 38/6; Inv. 668.01), especially in situations where poverty prevails and where one must leave “one’s own country”. Even today, we can state that the mission *ad gentes* helps us live out our vocation and, in turn, our very spirituality turns us toward mission and gives it its qualities.

2.4 The spirit of oblation readies a person and gives him the disposition necessary to leave behind all the assurances that derive from a familiar culture and environment, from a homeland. At the same time, the readiness called for by the mission *ad gentes* is itself a stimulus to live out our oblation in a concrete way.

2.5 The spirit of reparation that urges us to remedy the many evils caused by a rejection of God finds a meaningful and provocative expression in the mission *ad gentes*.

2.6 The spirit of communion lived in a community sharing of what one is, what one possesses and does, within a multicultural setting, gives witness to the message brought by the bearers and teaches the way of dialog and reconciliation; it urges us to give our lives as gift and to commit ourselves to build up the Reign of God “in souls and in societies”.

**Action**

2.7 Our spirituality illumines the process of the required discernment prior to taking on pastoral commitments in the immense field of the mission *ad gentes*. There are two fundamental aspects, two sides to the single mission: the proclamation of the Gospel and the task of an integral development of the human person.

2.8 The apostolic fields that deserve special attention are:

2.8.1 In proclaiming the Gospel:
- Ecumenical and inter-religious dialog; the establishment of believing communities that are alive and open to witness; evangelization of culture and learning by making use of the means of mass communication; formation of the laity, clergy, and religious; the urban mission in the slum areas of large cities.

2.8.2 In the task of an integral development of the human person:
- Paying attention to youth and to education; recognition of the dignity of women; work on behalf of justice and peace by allying ourselves with the most poor; protection of creation as an important element of our social commitment.
3. PREPARATION FOR THE MISSION \textit{AD GENTES}

3.1 One helpful response to the mission \textit{ad gentes} to which the Spirit calls us requires a person to be humanly mature and in possession of an adult faith.

3.2 Openness to the mission \textit{ad gentes} calls for a suitable initial formation and presentation right from one’s earliest formation in religious life.

A) Initial Formation

3.3 Human, spiritual, and intellectual formation that prepares one for religious life and priesthood fully coincides with the preparation that the mission \textit{ad gentes} requires.

Action

3.4 During this phase, it is necessary to put a higher value on certain elements and experiences by paying particular attention to the following:

3.4.1 A spirituality of union with Christ and his oblation making the search for God’s will a life-long criterion;

3.4.2 A community life, learning to plan, bring about, and make judgments with others by developing those human qualities that underlie all dialog, availability, and service.

3.4.3 The apostolic dimension of our charism, of looking out and beyond, proclaiming and witnessing through a life that is given in a response to the love that God has for us;

3.4.4 An awareness and respect for one’s own cultural identity, and to the intercultural dimension;

3.4.5 A sense of communion among provinces and a sense of congregation.

3.5 Formation to a missionary mentality and preparation for a missionary commitment \textit{ad gentes} calls for:

3.5.1 The presentation of the mission \textit{ad gentes} dimension right from the beginning of the vocation discernment ministry.

3.5.2 The guarantee that during his studies the candidate is given a systematic exposition of missiology.

3.5.3 Keeping people in formation in close contact with missionary reality: the missionaries themselves, their experiences, missionary newsletters and magazines.

3.5.4 Instruction in being aware of and in analysis of surrounding reality.

3.5.5 Instruction in achieving a life-style that is sober, restrained, and capable of achieving an appropriate management of material things.

3.5.6 The requirement of knowledge of a second language learned prior to the conclusion of initial formation (preferably English or one of the Romance languages for native English speakers).

3.5.7 Allowance of a living experience of sufficient duration in another country in a community of the congregation, an even the possibility of a period of one or two years as a missionary intern.

B) Specific and Ongoing Formation

3.6 In addition to initial formation, attention must be paid to a specific and ongoing formation for those who take on the task of a mission \textit{ad gentes} in order to learn to be open to the situations to which one is called to evangelize, situations which are so varied and fluid; to learn to be open and in rapport with persons who have a personal history and a vision of the world that differs from our own.

Action

3.7 In response to such needs we propose:
3.7.1 The establishment of centers of formation at the various geo-cultural levels to deal with various aspects of specific and ongoing formation, not merely missionary formation.
3.7.2 Making the General Curia the reference point for exchanging information as regards on-going formation possibilities and aggiornamento courses, both inside and outside the congregation.
3.7.3 The organization of on-going formation course for missionaries about once every six years.
3.7.4 The promotion of participation in existing on-going formation courses at formation centers in the local area as well as outside the congregation.
3.7.5 Participation in ongoing formation programs that are offered by one’s province of origin.
3.7.6 Taking advantage of a sabbatical year by making arrangements for its convenient implementation.
3.7.7 Acquisition of the habit of personal study and reading.

3.8 Taking care of missionaries is a missionary work. Preparation and proper supervision should be used in the re-insertion of missionaries who return to their province of origin. Elderly and ill missionaries seeking to return to their native land should be accepted as a special gift.

4. MISSIONARY SPIRIT AND ANIMATION

A) Missionary Animation within our Entities

4.1 Several provinces of the congregation promote a missionary spirit or animation by making use of mission secretariats or individual religious. This activity forms part of the mission *ad gentes*.

4.2 The activity of arousing a missionary spirit, or animation, consists in (Cf. RM, 83):
   4.2.1 Informing and training both our religious and the people of God in the universal mission of the church via initiatives that raise consciousness and allow for involvement.
   4.2.2 Promoting the development of vocations *ad gentes* by working in vocational ministry.
   4.2.3 Assisting cooperation in the work of evangelization by collecting the necessary financial means.

4.3 Mission secretariats have an important part to play in the field of missionary animation and are the means by which collaboration among the various entities of the congregation takes place; they help in building up “We, Congregation”.

*Action*

4.4 To have a new missionary thrust in our congregation, missionary animation is essential; for this reason we propose that;

   4.4.1 Every congregational entity set up a secretariat or at least name a person for the task of missionary animation. Some types of animation or arousing a missionary spirit are: meetings of missionaries with parish groups or communities, promotion of missionary days, meetings with families of missionaries, publication of missionary bulletins, media releases, conducting prayer groups.

   4.4.2 Mission secretaries collaborate among themselves to exchange experiences and coordinate efforts.

   4.4.3 Missionaries cooperate chiefly in arousing a missionary spirit by sharing their experiences and making themselves available for activities aimed at consciousness raising while they are at home on visits, even to the extent of preaching retreats or giving courses of missiology at formation houses.

   4.4.4 A rotation of personnel take place and some missionaries come home for awhile to engage in missionary animation and vocational ministry in their province of origin.
4.4.5 Every geo-cultural zone of the congregation hold a conference on the missions.

B) Relations with the Laity

4.5 The objective of any missionary animation effort is to involve the people of God in coming to know the plan of salvation for every human being. The work of evangelization requires the participation of the laity not just as sharers in the work but also as subjects of evangelization and missionary animation.

4.6 Our initiatives in the mission *ad gentes* are called to be open to the presence of and collaboration by the laity alongside our brothers in specific activities and in sharing a spirituality which lies beyond simple missionary service, making it possible for lay Dehonians to be involved.

**Action**

4.7 To achieve this:

4.7.1 We should promote initiatives that allow laity, especially youth, to have leading roles in the activities of evangelization and the promotion of human development by giving them the opportunity of serving as volunteers, for a relatively lengthy period.

4.7.2 We should make sure that lay missionaries who wish to work with our communities have a certain understanding of our spirituality, be given spiritual and logistic support, and an introduction to the cultural and ecclesial situation which is new to them.

4.7.3 We should make sure that they have human maturity, a professional approach, a lived Christian faith, an attitude of respect, dialog, and the ability to work together with others.

4.7.4 We should guarantee the necessary social support for those lay persons who work in our missionary communities for a lengthy period or in light of a permanent commitment.

5. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

5.1 The missionary life and the proclamation of the Gospel demand solidarity and financial support to guarantee what is needed and to assist a quality presence, even with simple means.

**Action**

5.2 The means through which a mission is sustained and developed should be the outgrowth of a sharing throughout the congregation and should be sought on site. It is proposed that:

5.2.1 The finances of the missionary effort should be governed by the principle of the “common purse”.

5.2.2 Better planning and the preparation of financial budgets should be made with the help of competent people, observing the congregation’s three year planning system.

5.2.3 Greater reliance on financial analysis should be made by experts to identify and appreciate possible local resources, thus avoiding excessive dependency on outside assistance.

5.2.4 Promotion of social projects that are self-perpetuating and that result from community planning should take place; a calculation of costs sustained by the community in managing the project should be included in presenting the funding plan; attention should be paid to relationships with NGO’s and other funding sources.

5.2.5 Study should be made of the possibility of a congregation-level center for assistance in funding development projects.

5.2.6 There should be a consolidation of the General Aid Fund (FAG) by sharing the investment gains and extraordinary revenues (as: donations, bequests, property sales …), so that it will be able to support the missionary activity of the congregation.
5.2.7 More direct contact with benefactors should be promoted and a true and professional solidarity with them developed.

6. A MISSIONARY PLAN FOR THE CONGREGATION

6.1 The continuance and renewal of the missionary commitment of the congregation requires its evaluation and the establishment of a common plan based on the spirit of “We, the Congregation”.

6.2 We must keep in mind the current situation of the congregation, its new undertakings, the growing call to be open to internationality, the need for closer collaboration at the level of personnel, the spirit of resource sharing, and the need for greater coordination.

Action

A) Coordination of Missionary Activity

6.3 To implement all this it is necessary to seek coordination at the general level of the management of human and financial resources.

6.4 Coordination at the general level requires that it be provided with the competency to obtain information about the availability of candidates, missionary animation activities, specific and ongoing formation of missionaries, and be allowed to promote and participate in evaluations of missionary undertakings.

B) Missionary Personnel

6.5 To be able to achieve a common mission plan, it is necessary to have available personnel. To this end, it is proposed that:

6.5.1 A survey be conducted of those tasks being conducted by the congregation that involve initial evangelization and the actual need they have for personnel.

6.5.2 Each member have the possibility of declaring his availability to participate in missionary activity according to existing needs and requirements. The Superior General will dialog with their respective superiors and extend invitations according to the needs created by plans of the congregation.

6.5.3 Each entity (including those recently established) set some disposition in motion for an ad gentes commitment beyond the boundaries of the province, region, or district of at least 10% of its members.

6.5.4 Each SCJ be presented and granted the possibility of a missionary commitment ad extra, even if for a set period.

C) Mission Projects or Plans

6.6 When requests or proposals are made for new establishments, agreed-upon evaluative criteria should be employed and consideration of the needs arising from the global congregational plan should be kept in mind.

6.7 These are the conditions to observe in establishing a new mission undertaking:

6.7.1 The undertaking should respond to verifiable needs and be the mature outgrowth of involvement at the level of the entity/ies in dialog with the local church.

6.7.2 The undertaking should be stated in clear, realistic, and agreed-upon [contractual?] terms, with a plan for availing personnel and funds, as well as the necessary replacement of personnel and consideration of its future development.
6.7.3 Local participation must be taken into consideration from the very outset in seeking resources on site, whether of personnel or for funds, and in matching the life-style of the religious community life to the area into which it is to be inserted.

6.7.4 Presence at a mission should have the guarantee that religious may observe a community life, a community being made up of a minimum of three persons.

6.8 We should study the possibility and do-ability of consolidating our initial evangelization efforts in Asia.

D) Internationality

6.9 Our experience derived from our newly established missions force us to appreciate, value and promote greater internationality at every level.

6.10 It seems timely therefore that:
   6.10.1 We promote and value international communities for the formation of our candidates and favor student exchange right from the stages of initial formation.
   6.10.2 We be disposed toward collaboration in inter-province projects by seeking personnel exchange for specific tasks and for specified periods.
   6.10.3 We undertake more reflection at the congregational level for setting up structures that are more suitable for managing and being responsive to the increasing internationality situation.