



Prot. SG/10-S/09

INFORMATIVE CIRCULAR LETTER ABOUT THE CHAPTER

(Number 1 – January, 2009)

INFORMATION TO THE ORDER ABOUT THE 46th GENERAL CHAPTER- 2009

With the new year of 2009 already begun, we start this series of Letters we have entitled “*Informative Circular Letter About the 2009 Chapter*”. This year is especially important for our Piarist Order. Its first half will be devoted to the preparation of the General Chapter. Not all of us will be similarly implied in its preparation, but we would really like everybody to receive information about it. In the *Calendarium Ordinis 2009* we have asked everybody, persons and communities, to pray for the success of the Chapter. Our prayer will be better motivated if we know everything concerning its preparation and development. Such is the purpose of this first “Informative Circular” and some others we intend to go on sending, even though not keeping a determined periodicity.

As Circular Letter, it is addressed to the whole Order, especially to all the Religious, even though from the General Curia will be only sent to Major Superiors. We eagerly beg them to communicate the information to all the Communities of their Demarcation.

1. **Intimation or convocation to the 46th General Chapter.** On 11th of May, 2008, Pentecost Feast, the Chapter was convened through Circular Letter from Fr. General convoked, published in *Ephemerides calasanctianae* of that same month (pp. 307-330). It is written in four languages: Spanish, English, French and Italian. As you may have noticed, those are the four languages in which the General Curia is getting in touch with the whole Order. With the intimation of the Chapter, a new Chapter time is opened only at general level, not at local or demarcational level. The latter took place between 2006 and 2007 and will take place again between 2010 and 2011.

2. **Meaning and Purpose of the General Chapter.** Both are indicated by our Constitutions: “*The General Chapter is the supreme authority in the Order and shall be convoked... a) To examine the state of the Order and to render an account of the government and administration since the last General Chapter; b) To elect the Superior General and his Assistants; c) To discuss the propositions brought to the attention of the General Chapter; to study the more serious matters; to plan the activities of the Order; and to revise our law. (C 216). “In the General Chapter, our religious must manifest in a very special way, their effort and determination to seek the will of our Heavenly Father regarding their service to the Church and to all people, always with complete fidelity to the Gospel and to the charism of our Founder”. (C 218).*

Concretely, the General Chapter indicates and points to the roads for the new sexennial period with the gaze towards the common good of the whole Order. Along with these indications for a march forward, it also offers means to keep the vigour and stimulate the step. They are like food for the road. In this way, hope goes on alive in us; the life and mission of the Order get more

authentic significance and we become more efficient and useful in the service to the others through the generous exercise of our educational and evangelizing mission.

3. **Chapter members.** The number goes up to seventy-four counting those according to Law and the elected ones. According to their place of origin, 57 are European (37 from Spain, 7 from Italy, 5 from Hungary, 4 from Poland, 2 from Slovakia), 17 are Americans (6 from Mexico, 3 from Colombia, 2 of Argentina, 1 from Ecuador, Venezuela, United States, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica and Cuba) and 2 are Africans, from Senegal, though there are some who are in Demarcations outside the continent of origin.

4. **Organisms for the preparation. Central Commission,** made up by the General Congregation. **Technical Coordination:** Fr. Diego Bernal. **Logistic Commission:** FF. Jaime Pellicer, Vicente Climent and José Ignacio Bilbao. **Collaborator in the preparation of texts:** Fr. Emilio Martínez de León. **Group of preparation of liturgical celebrations and moments of prayer:** FF. Francesc Mulet, Camilo Llorca and Genis Samper. There is a prevision of some ten persons more that will be present in the Chapter as technical and of service personnel in different sectors (Technical Secretary, translators, chroniclers, communications, liturgical service...) .

5. **Dates.** The General Chapter will begin in the morning of the 1st of July and will be closed on the 25th of the same month. The Chapter members must be congregated in the evening of June 30th and will be able to go back on starting from July 26. .

6. **Place of celebration.** It will take place in our House sanctuary of Peralta de la Sal, birth place of Saint Joseph Calasanz. The General Congregation, on determining the place, has been moved by the meaning of Peralta as a privileged Calasanzian place; the real possibilities of the House to receive the Chapter, the atmosphere of retirement and peace of the place, and the fact of being able to use our own structures much more economic than those of outside.

7. **Logo of the Chapter.** Its author is Fr. Javier Agudo, Provincial of the Third Demarcation of Spain. He explains it in the following way: “The idea turns around our shield. I have among my photographs one I took on the front wall of Peralta in which a Pious School shield can be seen. It is a very well known symbol for all of us, not at all strange. But on looking at the picture I was struck by the way in which the engraver solved the anagram of the M and the A superposed. The artisan of reference obtained that effect engraving a kind of big comma in four different positions.



As you can see on the shield, this resolution can be observed. The anagram is made with a kind of four great commas, rounded on the exterior part and very thin in the interior. Hence, an interpretation of it would lead me to propose a symbol which is not well known by us, but inspired in that shield. I translate this symbol of our anagram in this way:

:



Living relief to the principal logo



Afterwards we can add the datum that it is the 46th General Chapter; the device chosen for the Chapter, the place, Peralta de la Sal, and the year, 2009. Finally the logo wants to gather our Marian tradition, linking us to Peralta de la Sal and expressing all that in a living way in colour and volume.”



8. **Motto of the Chapter.** Being “Piarist Ministry” the central topic of the Chapter, the General Congregation has determined as Chapter motto, the Latin phrase: **Docere audeo**. The expression may be translated as “I dare teach” and also as “I bet to teach”. We have decided to choose the second meaning, because we want to express our option for education, for its usefulness for the person and for society in general and for the renovating strength that a good education and careful instruction have. Looking at the needs of the present time and trying to give an answer to them from education, we return, besides, to get in touch with our original roots.

9. **Topics of the Chapter.** The General Congregation, having listened to the different voices and opinions of the Order, has fixed a central topic: the Piarist Ministry. It is convenient to clear up from the beginning that the Chapter is not invited to draft a new document about our Ministry. The one published in 1998 is valid at the present time: “The Piarist Ministry: to evangelize by educating in Calasancian style”. Consequently some topics much more concrete have been selected, within an almost exclusively school frame. About each one of them, the Chapter will offer, in a short text (10 pages at the most), orientation and directives for the next six year period.

Seven are the chosen topics of the sector: To educate the poor child; Profile of the Piarist School; School in pastoral key; Non-formal education; Religious Community and mission; Piarist Ministry and extension of the Order; An instrument improved to evaluate the Piarist quality of our Works.

Along with the central topic of the Chapter, there will be others, very well defined, that require a following of the Order, also for the next six-year period. They have been reduced to five: the restructuring of the Order; the Piarist Vocational Pastoral; the Economic management in the Order; The updating of the Directory of initial formation (“Formation of the Piarist – FES) and Development of the relation with the laity. We have called these topics, “of following”, because they have been worked on for about years, they keep a strong permanence and some were asked to be evaluated or studied in the previous General Chapter, after an “ad experimentum” time.

In total, then, the Chapter topics will have twelve points to study, debate and approve.

10. **Method or way to work the topics.** We have previewed, as it is logical, a preparatory stage and a chapter one, both in key of continuity. Each concrete topic (the twelve) will have a short written part, as a proposition and will be presented to the Chapter by the General Congregation. The text will begin with a first phase we have called “postulate”, that is, a text where statements are made that will have to be contrasted before arriving at conclusions. These texts will be sent to the Chapter members starting at the end of February. They will be available in four languages: Spanish, English, French and Italian. In this first part the Chapter member will be asked to study the “postulate” and the presentation of observations to it. For that purpose he will be free to consult other people, to submit it to the meeting of the group and of the community, to ask the opinion to the religious (also to lay men able to contribute), etc. Each Chapter member, however, will send to Rome only one answer if he wants to make a proposition or say he has no proposition to make.

Once received the answers to the consultation to the Chapter members, the General Congregation will take up again the “postulates” in order to revise them from the propositions that have been received. This second drafting will be the definitive one for the General Congregation and it will be considered as the “pre-Chapter proposed conclusion” The texts will be sent to the Chapter members for them to prepare the final Chapter topics. Insistence will be made for them to come prepared.

The Chapter will decide if the texts received as “pre-Chapter proposed conclusion” will remain as Chapter Decrees, according to our Law, or as “Declarations”, that is, recommendations to the General Congregation. According to the cases, the “Pre-Chapter proposed conclusion” will have a different treatment: Decrees, will have canonical treatment; Declarations will have priority.

11. The Chapter will have other important things in its agenda, as our Law points it out: the appraisal of the past six-year period starting from the Relation of the going-out General Congregation, the elections of Fr. General and Assistants, the study of the propositions arrived from Provincial Chapters, of the religious in the phase previous to the Chapter (already closed on January 1, 2009) and those that the Chapter members may present during the Chapter itself.

12. We already put a final period to this first informative Circular, inviting to pray for the Chapter (“ad hoc” prepared adoration); to follow it through the arriving information and to offer the collaboration to each one either required or offered the possibility of doing. Other topics remain, that will be appearing in the following Informative Circulars as well as the new things that may be rising.

=====