



CONGREGATION OF THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST

## 47<sup>th</sup> GENERAL CHAPTER

Rome, 6-27 October 2018

# Report of the Configuration of JESUS CRUCIFIED - CJC

## I. DATA

### ✓ Number and name of the Provinces:

In the CJC Configuration, there are five provinces. When the Configuration was created there were nine entities composed of Provinces, Vice-Provinces and Vicariates.

#### 1. Gethsemane (GETH):

Number of Religious 74  
Median Age: 57  
RE: Residences: 9  
DE: Domus Erecta: 9  
SM: Statio Missionalis: 1  
Presences administered by laity: 2  
Students:  
Novices 0  
Professed students 7

#### 2. Christ the King (REG):

Number of Religious: 53  
Median Age: 51  
DE: Domus Erecta: 7  
Students:  
Novices: 7  
Professed students: 11

#### 3. Exaltation of the Holy Cross (EXALT)

Number of Religious: 63  
Median Age: 46  
RE: Residences: 2

DE: Domus Erecta: 7  
SM: Statio Missionalis: 5  
Students:  
Novices: 0  
Professed students: 6

#### 4. Holy Cross (CRUC):

Number of Religious: 49  
Median Age: 73  
RE: Residences: 1  
DE: Domus Erecta: 6  
SM: Statio Missionalis: 2  
Students:  
Novices: 0  
Professed students: 2

#### 5. St. Paul of the Cross (PAUL):

Number of Religious: 107  
Median Age: 73  
RE: Residences: 11  
DE: Domus Erecta: 8  
SM: Statio Missionalis: 2  
Students:  
Novices: 1  
Professed students: 2

### Total numbers of the Configuration

Number of Religious: 346	SM: Statio Missionalis: 10
Median Age: 60	Presences administered by laity: 2
Number of retreats: 72	Novices: 7
RE: Residences: 23	Professed students: 28
DE: Domus Erecta: 37	

## II. ANALYSIS

### -- The vision that the Religious have of the Configuration

At the time of the creation of the Configuration its objectives were:

- Foster [community] life, charism and mission.
- Strengthen the areas of community and apostolic life.
- Increase our vitality in the world and our response to the challenges of today's world.
- Promote the exchange between different religious worldviews of the various entities.
- Increase respect, esteem and mutual enrichment between cultures and promote a sense of communion.
- Create space to share different theological and charismatic outlooks.
- Promote solidarity in formation, personnel and finances.

The process that was undertaken involved, above all, the Major Superiors of the various entities. However, simultaneously, the individual religious of the communities were not helped to discover and take responsibility for this transformation. An adequate catechesis was lacking concerning the new experience of uniting in Configurations, which involved a change of mentality, attitude and decision-making. Many religious noted that a catechesis was missing concerning this topic at both Congregational and Configurational levels as was presented at the 46th General Chapter. Therefore, many religious still do not understand the meaning of the new structures of Configuration and do not feel that this has aided the vitality of the Congregation. Additionally, the laity that work with them were not sufficiently prepared.

On the other hand, the two different structures of Configurations - those that are a single entity as well as those composed of several provinces - are still only at the beginning of the process and it is difficult to assess the impact of one or the other mode of Configuration. The religious, however, feel that the pursuit of solidarity seemed confined to some small gestures or some exchanges of personnel. Namely very few experiences. We have seen that few religious are aware of this new way of living as Passionists in Configurations. It does not seem that much has

changed on a grassroots level concerning the way of conceiving structures that seeking to promote life.

Furthermore, the decision regarding the various countries involved in each of the Configurations has led to very large structures that do not always enable greater dynamism or have divided or separated significantly the countries of a continent, as it is the case in [Latin] America.

The new structure of Configurations has created a great impoverishment of the cultural, educational, and theological exchange of the Passionists of Latin America and the Caribbean. The experience of CLAP, FORPAL, and ERPAL was cut short by the new structures and now there is a sense of fragmentation and isolation in this region. In many sectors, both in SCOR and CJC, there is sense that CLAP needs to be reinstated so that [Latin] American Passionists return to working in common. That this is not only true for the religious but - as it was for many years - with the Passionist Sisters of different Congregations and even lay Passionist organizations. The aim is to share, search and deepen our experiences of the Passionist charism, mission, religious life, the future and possible cooperation between us in the concrete reality of this continent. In this sense, the men and women religious of the Americas desire and dream to be able to participate in this formative and theological quest at the levels of North, Central and South America. This has certainly been a great loss that was caused by the new structures of the Configurations.

The presence in Mexico of a Province of the CJC Configuration and two presences of the SCOR Configuration does not favor what Configurations intended, i.e. unity, mutual collaboration and solidarity.

It is important that we clarify better the concept of Configuration, because in fact two Configurations call themselves provinces. In this sense, this does not favor decision-making teams or facilitate the Religious of the Congregation choosing one form or another of Configuration as proposed by the General Chapter.

## **Strengths of the Configuration**

### **-- Bonds among the Major Superiors**

Throughout these years, the link between the Major Superiors has been growing and getting stronger. While several major Superiors and the President have changed, the relationship and the possibility of sincere exchanges has been enriched. In addition, having the Assembly annually in a different country has facilitated awareness of the different realities of our Provinces. A very deep and fraternal gesture has been the supportive exchange of fraternal letters between the major superiors of the USA and Mexico as a result of some political changes and governmental decisions which resulted in separations and prejudices between the two countries.

### **-- The continuity of the Annual Assemblies**

The first Assembly of the CJC Configuration took place in 2009 in New York City. Since then, there have been eleven Assemblies. The continuity of these meetings and the fact that they were extended from three days to four days favoured the joint process of communion.

### **-- Formation**

Formation is the area where most progress has been made. There was dialogue to design a unified plan-- we shared plans and methods for each of the stages of formation. A meeting of the professed students was organized in the Dominican Republic. A joint project was elaborated for novitiates and theology residences, and together there were mutually significant experiences of formation. We believe that these experiences of joint formation are very important. The presence in Mexico of novices and students from the two provinces of United States (and formerly of the PAC Vice-Province of Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic) has favored such awareness and commitment to solidarity in formation. At the beginning, when the territory of the Configuration was more extensive, our novices with their Master were in Falvaterra (Frosinone, Italy) -- the sole novitiate of the Configuration. Some religious studied English in Chicago, USA. In addition, the common novitiate among the provinces of EXALT and GETH (formerly involving two provinces and three vicariates, today unified) has been a very enriching experience. We also rescued the experience of the common theologate, which was located for several years in Belo Horizonte (Brazil) for the southern region, although the result was not positive. The Major Superiors of the Configuration decided in 2016 that there would only be two novitiates (Mexico and Brazil) for the Configuration.

### **-- The Annual Inter-council Meetings**

For several years, in the northern region of the Configuration, there has been an annual meeting of the Provincial Councils of the United States (CRUC-PAUL) and Mexico (REG) Provinces (and formerly also the PAC Vice-Province of Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic), Passionist women Religious, the members of the Secular Institute of the Passion and some laity. Soon the Passionist Nuns will be included. This annual event helps achieve some goals of the unified CJC Configuration.

### **-- Personnel for Missions the Laity**

During the first day of our annual meetings, we have a meeting with the laity of the region. This initiative of team solidarity in personnel for the Mission (which involved a layman, Joe Castro) has been a very important step to share our life, charism and mission with the laity. Due to work commitments and economic issues it has been difficult to involve laity of the other provinces. However, the experiences have been mutually enriching. It was also a way of understanding how the different entities work together with the laity, including their organizations and

movements. We reflected on this common identity for both religious and laity-- "Be disciples of Jesus Crucified-Risen" and we felt challenged. We feel that the Spirit is calling us to continue to pursue this process.

**-- Communication**

We developed a Newsletter for the Configuration with news from all the entities. Eleven issues have been published in recent years.

**-- Finances in the Configuration**

On the level of the Configuration, we have a simple, healthy and sufficient financial situation. We agreed on the amount of the contribution of each Province and the expenses we have are few. We practiced solidarity with our religious in Haiti to help them in a time of calamity and assisted our religious in Mexico with the purchase of a house of formation. At the same time, the offer of economic assistance on the part of our Major Superiors, on the occasion of Hurricane Irene in Puerto Rico was very laudable.

**-- Personnel for Mission**

The personnel commission for Mission, in addition to its work concerning the laity, has tried to promote an exchange of personnel. This resulted in greater dialogue between the Major Superiors than between the Commission and the Configuration. In terms of solidarity of personnel for mission, the religious believe that due to lack of personnel and, occasionally, due to lack of availability little has been achieved. However, it is good to highlight the different experiences of exchange between some entities at the level of the Configuration. At the beginning of the CJC Configuration, a religious of the REG province collaborated for two years in the Dominican Republic; another religious spent six years in the parish of Birmingham (Alabama, USA) and others have collaborated in retreat houses in Sierra Madre (California, USA) and in Houston (Texas, USA). A deacon of the REG Province served as a deacon in the former CALV Province (Brazil). Some religious have collaborated in substitutions and preaching in the parish of St. Ann, administered by Fr. Peter Grace (PAUL) in the Diocese of Raleigh (North Carolina, USA). In 2016, Fr. Amilton Manoel da Silva preached retreats to the religious of the REG Province. Religious of the PAUL Province traveled during one summer to celebrate Masses in English in San Juan, Puerto Rico. A religious of the CRUC Province is a member of the community of Haiti and previously participated in a mission of the REG Province. A religious of the EXALT Province works in the GETH Province.

## **Weakness of the Configuration**

### **-- Old mentality about the autonomy of the provinces vs. a new mindset of Solidarity at the level of the Configuration.**

Something that is a source of conflict for the religious and for all of the Provinces is the tension between decision-making autonomy within the Provinces and the need to coordinate with the larger Configuration. The long years of living and working under the autonomous structure of Provinces has created a mentality that is difficult to harmonize with the new structure of the Congregation. Discerning together within the large Configuration structure is not understood as Solidarity but as subjugation to provincial autonomy. This tension is aggravated in some cases because, according to the rules of the Configuration, the decisions made unanimously by the Major Superiors have a normative character for the provincials.

While we have had and have very positive collaborative experiences with formation communities, both in the northern as well as in the southern region of the Configuration, it is still difficult for us to conceive of new foundations or make decisions about formation from a configurational mentality and not just a provincial one.

### **-- The tension between Solidarity and cultural identity.**

Some religious have the impression that the Configuration may cause them to lose their cultural identity and their history as a province. This creates difficulties for sending personnel abroad for ministry and for greater international solidarity and mission awareness.

### **-- The difficulty of founding a new collaborative presence.**

The Major Superiors have been discerning and developing a project of beginning a new mission together, a foundation administered by the five entities. In this process, two provinces opened and/or closed houses; two others separately formed a new province and generally encountered difficulties finding personnel for this new mission. All these situations made it impossible for this configurational project to evolve. This situation is also an example of our tension between the autonomy of provinces and joint projects.

### **-- Difficulties of international borders and Visas.**

For more international work in the North, it is important to take into account the political difficulties and problems obtaining a Visa in order to work in the USA.

### **-- The work of Solidarity and the Annual Assemblies.**

The Configuration has reduced its activities during the assemblies. While we see that there are many positive aspects in the work of the Configuration, however,

the richness of the assemblies was not reflected sufficiently in the eventual joint projects during the year.

**-- Charism and Mission**

There has been no mutual discernment for seeking ways to expand our charism and mission and the matter of Solidarity in personnel and finances was not sufficiently treated.

**-- Communication**

While the Newsletters are a means of communication, they are insufficient for the communication information about what is happening in other parts of the Configuration, beyond the individual entity. For many years, we have been living in provincial structures and communication experiences have not been sufficiently effective. On the part of the religious, there is an interest in becoming more aware of and more involved in the life of the Configuration; however, we have still not found the means for better communication.

**- The Role of the President/ General Consultor**

It is not easy to understand the role of a President in this new structure. It would seem that his role is understood as a coordinator. The President is an animator and not a super-provincial. However, the structures of the Provinces, sustained for many years, causes questioning of certain decisions by a President or the Configuration itself and a sense that they interfere with the autonomy of provincial decisions.

On the other hand, the role of a General Consultor and a President is not clear since both have a responsibility to encourage the same Configuration.

**-- Cultural Differences and geographic distances.**

Something that undermines collaborative work is the great geographical and cultural distances of the Configuration-- from Canada to Argentina (and in between a great geographical vacuum) and, including Africa, Mozambique. The big question is-- How are we overcoming geographical barriers, taking advantage of the cultural differences and solving the issues of different languages?

**-- The decrease in the number of Religious**

The death of some religious of our entities, the departures of others and the low number of young people who enter and persevere in our Provinces decreases the total number of religious of the Configuration and, therefore, the possibility of an exchange of personnel.

**-- Finances**

While the economy of the Configuration is healthy and it has not caused conflicts, it is good to seek greater solidarity in finances between the Provinces.

Currently, each entity cares for itself and aims to strengthen its own finances. We have shared reports from each of the entities, but we have not expressed our needs.

**-- The need to strengthen the new entities.**

The union of the three vicariates of Brazil (DOMIN - VICT - LIBER) which formed the EXALT Province and the union of the two Provinces (CALV-CONC) that formed the GETH Province forced these entities put more effort into strengthening their new Provinces than to devoting sufficient time to the Configuration.

**-- Other Configurations.**

There is still lot of work to be done more openly and collaboratively with other Configurations. Especially with the SCOR Configuration, we feel that we could work much more together, sharing meetings for formation personnel as well as meetings of young religious in formation.

## **Opportunities For Greater Development Of The Configuration**

The geographic distances, cultures and very different social situations and different languages of the Configuration are good opportunities to learn about different realities. All this helps to open our mind, heart, and theology to other viewpoints, and thus unite us around similar interests relating to the charism, our life and our mission.

With the Configurations, we are discovering a new way of being Passionist. One of the dreams of the General Chapter in promoting these structures was overcoming the problem of racial discrimination that occurs in our societies by the phenomenon of migration. The way to deal with this evil is the internationality of our communities.

Working together with the laity (not "for", or "by" but "together with"), is a great opportunity for the Configuration. In several provincial Chapters, the laity participate with voice and some even with vote. Additionally, having one day every year (in Assemblies) for working together is a new way of sharing our charism, life and mission.

## **Threats to the Configuration**

**-- The geographical reality**

Although we do not work explicitly based on zones in the Configuration, as was done at one time (three zones), in fact there is communication, formation and meetings in two different zones: northern (Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Jamaica, Haiti, Canada and USA) and the southern (Mozambique, Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil). This situation was caused by geographical issues and calendars (in the south activities begin in March and the north in September) which facilitated some experiences.



**-- The former mentality about the autonomy of the Provinces vs. Solidarity at the level of the Configuration.**

In general, among the religious, there is little awareness about what this means and involves, i.e. the personal, community and provincial attitude concerning the new Configuration structure.

**-- The Personnel needs of all of the Provinces.**

The decrease in personnel due to the aging of the religious, few vocations and the departures of some of the religious create great difficulty in the Provinces. This means that it is not easy to find religious who are willing to go to another entity to provide a service because they would have to leave other important places.

### **III. PROPHETIC ASPECTS AND HOPES**

**--Successful Initiatives (see above)**

- ✓ The participation of the laity in Assemblies.
- ✓ The novitiate in Brazil (novices of the EXALT and GETH Provinces) and the student residence in Mexico (with students from Mexico, USA, Haiti, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic).
- ✓ Participation of the Major Superiors in the Provincial Chapters of the other Provinces.

**-- Hopes for the Future**

We need to initiate new dynamics that enable the religious of the Configuration to meet one another and to promote new forms of Passionist life, beginning with the new models that are emerging in order to facilitate a plurality of expressions of Passionist life.

**1- Catechesis**

It would be good to initiate and progressively study and reflect on the sense, the scope and the dynamics of this new structure of the Congregation, i.e. the Configurations. We need to promote spaces for reflection and deeper awareness of the implications of the Configuration-- the tension between the autonomy of each institution and solidarity; solidarity in formation, finances and personnel; the role of the President; etc., with the participation of other members of the Configuration who are not Major Superiors.

**2- Assemblies**

Facilitate the participation in the Assemblies of the Configurations Religious who are delegates in addition to the Major Superior. The assemblies need to be

more inclusive in order to allow a greater number of religious to become aware of the decision that are made and projects that are being developed.

### **3- CAP- FORPA-ERPA**

Recreate throughout [North/South] America, based on the new current structures, an organization of the different Passionist Congregations and movements and/or lay groups. This time, with the participation of the religious from the USA/Canada.

- **The New CAP (Conference of American Passionists)**

This new organization can involve a team that will help us and encourage us to reflect and deepen the charism and Passionist spirituality from within the religious, social, cultural and political contexts in which we live.

- **New FORPA (American Passionist Formation)**

This new organization can also encourage meetings of formation personnel and also those in formation in the various entities and Configurations.

- **New ERPA (American Passionist Study Team)**

A team be formed for theological reflection that will help us to deepen the Passionist spirituality within the realities of the Americas.

### **4- Finances**

Search for better ways of understanding the difficulties and the needs of the provinces of the Configuration and develop ways of living solidarity in finances.

### **5- SCOR/CJC**

Facilitate better and more fluid communication between the President and the religious of SCOR in order to be able to organize together meetings of formation personnel and those religious in formation and other projects in common.

### **6- Personnel for Mission**

Seek more concrete ways for developing solidarity in personnel in the Configuration. This will permit the exchange of religious among the different entities, even if for short periods. Further deepen the consciousness of Passionist Discipleship (religious and laity), in order to promote lay Passionist missionary volunteers to enhance our presences. The experience in the USA is very positive and other Congregations have done the same in a very organized way.

## **IV. CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS TO PRESENT TO THE GENERAL CHAPTER**

### **Three challenges that the Configuration is facing.**

✓ **JPIC (Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation)**

The reality of poverty extends throughout the world and, specifically, on our continent, and urges us to have timely projects that assist, encourage and address the reality of poverty of so many brothers and sisters. At the same time, the aggression suffered by our Mother Earth, urges us to develop projects that promote ecology and respect for the planet.

✓ **The Youth**

The new youth cultures are a challenge for all of humanity and for us in the Americas. We want to move forward by means of fruitful intergenerational dialogue that begins with an appreciation and assessment of all generations and the young in particular.

✓ **Migrants**

The reality of migrants is becoming more global. Very painful situations exist between neighbouring countries but there are also intercontinental situations. The Passionists are called to express our solidarity with those who do not have a place in the world because they are despised because of their race, nationality or social status.

### **Three questions or concerns to present to the General Chapter**

**- 1. The challenges of the reality**

Many times our pastoral projects are organized from what we, the Passionists, have to offer to the world. In other words, our charism, spirituality and mission. We repeat forms and formulas. We usually start with the reality of our countries in order to organize our ministry and our projects. This may also be the case at the level of the General Chapter. Should we not begin by asking ourselves what are the challenges of the crucified reality of our people?

*HOW DOES THE ECOLOGICAL, MIGRATION, ECONOMIC, HUMANITARIAN, SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS CRISES AFFECT US PASSIONISTS?*

**- 2. Review the structures that we have created.**

All models of religious life, after a time, start to be contradictory. Facing contradiction, they die or are renewed. Look at those institutes founded in the 19th

century – over 420 have disappeared because they could not re-elaborate their charismatic experience! We are facing this great challenge of renewing our model of religious life, in order to live it more profoundly.

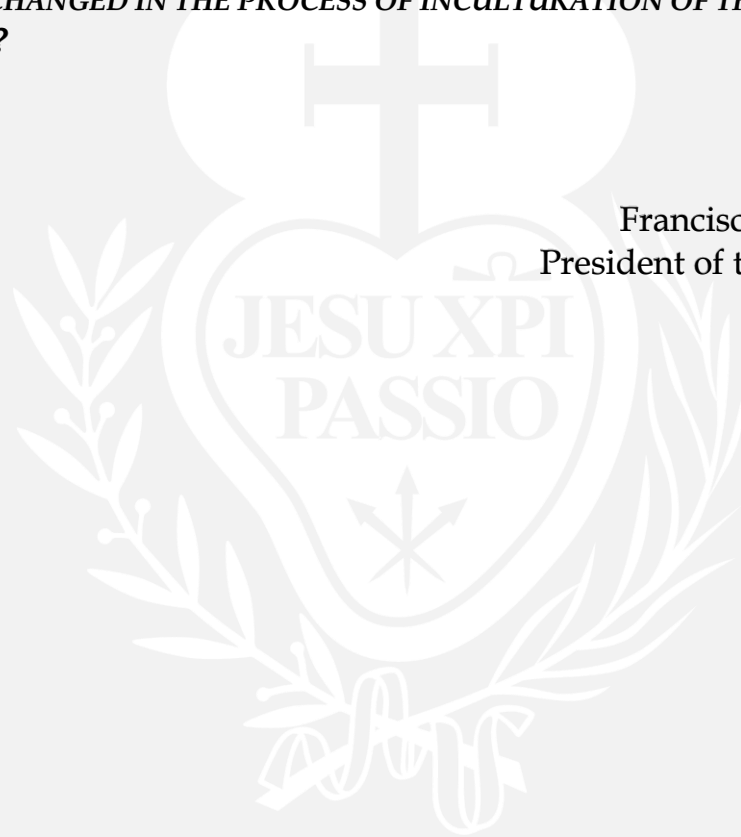
***DO THE STRUCTURES THAT WE HAVE CREATED REALLY FAVOR WHAT WE WANT TO LIVE, OR DO THEY HINDER IT?***

**- 3. The inculturation of the charism in new cultures.**

Concerning the charismatic process of inculturation, we need to review what is characteristic in each culture and what has changed in our structures during the past twelve years, i.e. we need to see if we have placed the same structure in different cultures or have we been adapting and becoming inculturated in the structure.

***WHAT HAS CHANGED IN THE PROCESS OF INCULTURATION OF THE CHARISM IN RECENT YEARS?***

Francisco José Murray cp  
President of the Configuration



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