

The Vision of the International Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family



Following thirty years of work around the globe by many, many significant professed and lay members of the MSC,FDNSC and MSC sisters a structure by which to hold the emerging movement has been developed and ratified both by the laity in Brazil in 2017 and the members of the Trigeneralate. Fr Hans Kwakman msc has been appointed as Spiritual Accompanier for the global movement and Fr Polce Pitoy msc, Sr Nicola Sprenger msc and Sr Merle Salasar fdnsc are the contacts for the movement with the Trigeneralate.

The vision and mission of the international movement is expressed in the opening statements of the Guiding Principles and Statutes document:

1. The Identity of the Laity of the Chevalier Family

We, the lay members of the Chevalier Family, are a communion of people, animated by a Spirituality of the Heart, which has its roots in the charism of the Founder, Fr. Jules Chevalier. Together with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, we belong to the Chevalier Family, and share the same charism, Spirituality and Mission with Father Chevalier's religious families.

2. Charism and Spirituality of the Heart

We believe that Jesus' compassionate Heart reveals God's unconditional love for every human being and all of creation. Belief in God's unconditional love, which is the remedy for the ills of society, transforms our own hearts. We draw strength from the pierced Heart of Jesus as a source of new life and the birthplace of a new world. We trust in the Holy Spirit who empowered Jesus Christ to love people unconditionally with a human heart. We also believe that the same Spirit enriches our hearts with gifts of love, gratefulness, joy, courage and faithfulness, as well as respect for every human being and creature. In Mary, honored as "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart", we discover a mother, who leads us to the Heart of her Son, and forms us in living a Spirituality of the Heart. Our motto is: "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved everywhere."

3. Mission

We participate in the mission of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the world, and are committed to live and spread a Spirituality of the Heart, as shown by the Heart of Jesus Christ. The Heart of Jesus was concerned about people, cared for their needs and took action accordingly. We experience that God has a heart for us too and sends us to be God's heart in the world. This commitment gives our lives meaning and content. In our personal relationships, professional occupations and social engagements we try to make visible and real God's love and compassion, while particularly paying attention to our sisters and brothers in society, who are poor, excluded and treated unjustly.

This is a bold vision and the International Council in collaboration with National Councils has begun the work of implementing these Guiding Principles and Statutes globally. The steps we have taken thus far are:

To create a movement that includes the entire Chevalier family

To do this:

- We are reaching out to everybody who sees themselves as members of the family and incorporating them, as they are into the international structures;
- We are actively trying to break down divisions that result from differing families of origin or reflection traditions and encourage and sense of unity in diversity amongst the laity.

To formalise the place of the laity as an entity within the wider Chevalier Family:

To do this we have:

- Recognised that there are fundamental questions pertaining to our common mission at the centre of this formalizing process and practical questions about how we achieve that common mission. We are addressing both in our work;
- Established collegial and co-operative relationships with the Trigenalate group by regular reports and updates. Significantly, we met together in Rome in December 2019;
- Developed close working relationships with the contact people appointed by each of the Trigenalate groups;
- Identified that our working relationship is interdependent but autonomous. We see ourselves and are seen at the top level as a fourth entity within the family.

To develop international structures that support the global movement

To do this we have:

- Placed significant emphasis on assisting the development of National Councils, aligned with the International Council who are responsible for the movement in their region;
- Established an international Contact List with processes that enable regular updates of National Co-coordinators and Accompaniers to occur;
- Established systems of regular communication back and forth between the Council and local and national groups. Notably, we have produced the first ever international Newsletter in the three languages of the family and are in the process of developing a Website and a closed Facebook page;
- Begun to organise the first Asia/Pacific regional gathering, that will occur concurrent with the APIA Conference in November. This aligns our region with Central/Southern America and Europe who already have a regional structure;
- Begun to plan the fourth international gathering to be held in Cebu, Philippines in 2023.

To work towards financial independence as a sign of our emerging maturity

To do this we have:

- Begun to develop a culture of responsibility amongst the laity with regard to the obligation to support both national and international structures. Europe, Central/Southern America, Philippines have already assumed this responsibility and other regions and countries are being encouraged to do so, particularly those who have the means to pay.

We recognise formation as the key element in the emergence of a lay movement

To offer this formation we have:

- Prioritised the need for spiritual and personal formation for those laity who hold leadership positions;
- Recognised the need for formation of spiritual companions who accompany laity so we can work towards autonomy and interdependence and not foster a culture of dependency and immaturity;
- Highlighted the need for a deep heart encounter with the Heart of Christ as central to the formation of all members of the family;
- Identified the beginning point in all cultures and contexts of formation in Spirituality of the Heart as a recognition of the yearnings and experiences of our hearts and lives;
- Begun to develop and disseminate formation material suitable for lay people.

We envision the lay movement as an outward movement

To do this:

- all communication identifies our compassionate engagement with our families, communities and the world around us as the mark of a member of the Chevalier Family;
- A commitment to JPIC is central to our focus.