



International Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family

General Guiding Principles and Organisational Directions of the Laity of the Chevalier Family

After being reviewed and accepted by the General Assembly in January 2024, the final text of these amended “Guiding Principles and Organisational Directions” will be made available to the National Councils and Local Country Groups.

These “Guiding Principles and Organisational Directions” may be elaborated and specified in accordance with the local situation and cultural needs. However, faithfulness to the spirit of the Guiding Principles and adherence to the Organisational Directions is requested.

PART I: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. The Identity of the Laity of the Chevalier Family
2. Charism and Spirituality of the Heart
3. Mission
4. Formation
5. Resources

Section I.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 Holy Scriptures, as envisioned by Father Jules Chevalier and faithful to the charism he received and shared with others.

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 various religious congregations that were founded by or through the inspiration of Father Jules Chevalier or were inspired by a Spirituality of the Heart.

Section I.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, or an experience of God’s unconditional love is what transforms our own hearts and is the remedy for the ills of society.



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, gratitude, joy, courage, faithfulness, and respect for every human being and creature.

In Mary, honoured as “Our Lady of the Sacred Heart”, we discover a mother who guides 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.”

Section I.3: Mission

We participate in the mission of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the world and are committed to living and spreading a Spirituality of the Heart, taking as a model the Heart of Jesus Christ.

Jesus was concerned about people and cared for their needs. His Heart went out to them, and he took action accordingly. In him, we experience that God has a heart for us, too. He calls us and sends us to be God’s Heart in today’s world. Our commitment to him and his mission gives our lives meaning and purpose.

In our personal relationships, professional occupations and social engagements, we try to make God’s love and compassion visible and real while paying particular attention to people experiencing poverty, exclusion, or unjust treatment.

We commit to a ‘greater love for our Creator, each other and the home we share’ (Laudato Si, 14). We recognise our interconnection with our Creator, each other, and Creation. Love and care for Creation is at the centre of the Spirituality of the Heart. We will advocate, educate, and celebrate actions that show our embodied love and care for our common home.

Section I.4: Formation

To answer our call to mission, we need formation. This formation is a life-long process that leads to an integration of Spirituality of the Heart into every aspect of our lives.

New members will be offered an initial formation program, and permanent members an ongoing formation program. Allowing ourselves to be formed by the experiences of daily life and by prayerfully reflecting on them in the light of the Gospel and our charism provides an opportunity to be constantly renewed.

Formation enables us to move from a personal encounter with a God of love to a life of mission and service in our families and communities and beyond.

Formation is necessary and an incentive to live Spirituality of the Heart joyfully.



Section I.5: Sources We Draw On

- The Word of God by reading and reflecting on the Holy Scriptures and living by it;
- Writings from the tradition of the Church, Papal Documents, and other publications reflecting a Spirituality of the Heart as lived, especially by the laity;
- Our understanding of the charism given to Jules Chevalier as entrusted to us through his life and writings and the development of these through the writings of others;
- The history of the Chevalier Family in the local area;
- Personal and communal prayer; and,
- The support of a group whose members try to live a Spirituality of the Heart.

PART II: ORGANISATIONAL DIRECTIONS

1. Organisation
2. Membership
3. Finances

Section II.1: Organisation

The communion of lay members of the Chevalier Family consists of members who are related to any of the religious congregations founded by or through the inspiration of Father Jules Chevalier or inspired by a Spirituality of the Heart.

Some members are committed to living a Spirituality of the Heart as individuals, and others are committed to living the same spirituality while belonging to one of the local groups within their country.

Section II.1.1: Local Country Groups

Each Local Country Group of the Laity of the Chevalier Family:

- Is free to organise its local administration according to its needs and customs;
- May develop its own program while respecting the “Guiding Principles and Organisational Directions”; and,
- Will accept the accompaniment of the National Council of the Chevalier Family in the particular country (if there is one already) or, in the absence of a National Council, the accompaniment of the Chevalier Family congregation to which the Local Country Group is related.



Section II.1.2: National Councils

The National Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family relies on the support and collaboration of the leadership of the Chevalier Family congregations in each country for its establishment.

As far as it is possible, the National Council will consist of one or more representatives of the local administration(s) of the lay group(s) in the country, together with one or more officially appointed representatives of the leadership of the Chevalier Family congregations present in that country.

The tasks of the National Council include:

- Acknowledging the Chevalier Family congregation leaders and their plans and collaborating with them;
- Encouraging and supporting the ongoing formation of the members in a Spirituality of the Heart;
- Ensuring that each Local Country Group has a Spiritual Companion, lay or religious, who practises and promotes a Spirituality of the Heart;
- Supporting collaboration of the administrations of the Local Country Groups with the wider Chevalier Family;
- Promoting the continuous presence of the Laity of the Chevalier Family in a country, even when religious congregations founded by or through the inspiration of Fr Jules Chevalier are no longer present in the country concerned; and,
- Sending, if possible, at least one representative to the General Assembly, preferably appointed by the National Council.

Section II.1.3: General Assembly

The General Assembly is a meeting of representatives of National Councils or local groups from different countries where members of the Laity of the Chevalier Family are present. It is called and organised by the sitting International Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family. The General Assembly deals with matters of a general nature that are relevant to all participating groups. Upon the agreement of those present, decisions made by the General Assembly are binding on the groups represented at the General Assembly. These include the Local Country Groups, the National Councils, and the International Council.

The membership of the General Assembly is made up of the following persons:

- Members of the International Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family;
- One representative of each country; and,
 - In countries with a National Council, this representative is sent by the National Council. Each National Council will decide how this representative is chosen;
 - In countries without a National Council, this representative is sent by the Local Country Groups. The Local Country Groups will agree among themselves how this representative is chosen;
- Other participants who would like to attend.

The following members of the General Assembly have the right to vote:

- One official representative of each country present at the General Assembly;
- Every member of the International Council.

A person is elected, or matters are determined, preferably by consensus or by a simple majority of votes. This means 50% plus one of the voting members present and participating in a particular vote.

The General Assembly will come together every six years.

The term of office for the General Secretary and the International Council members is for the six years between Assemblies. The General Secretary and Council members may serve no more than two terms of six years each.

The tasks of the General Assembly include:

- Reviewing the general situation and circumstances of the Laity of the worldwide Chevalier Family;
- Reflecting on and deepening their understanding of the Spirituality of the Heart and how it is lived;
- Evaluating the functioning of the sitting International Council;
- Reviewing and making amendments to these “Guiding Principles and Organisational Directions”;
- Electing the General Secretary and affirming the appointment of the members of the International Council; and,
- Making recommendations to the newly-elected International Council, including suggestions regarding the host country for the following General Assembly.



Section II.1.4: The International Council

The International Council is the international coordinating body of the Laity of the Chevalier Family. It calls, organises, and presides over the General Assembly. The role of the International Council is to exercise oversight over the General Assembly organisation in collaboration with the National Council of the host country. The International Council will assume responsibility for the General Assembly's program.

An International Council will be formed following the election of the General Secretary, based on nominations and invitations from the General Secretary and Spiritual Companion. The General Secretary will appoint a maximum of five members of the International Council after consulting the Spiritual Companion. In choosing the additional members of the International Council, the General Secretary will endeavour to have a balanced representation from the different parts of the world where lay members of the Chevalier Family are present.

The tasks of the International Council include:

- Determining how best to work together to carry out the vision of the International Council;
- Carrying out the recommendations of the General Assembly;
- Promoting unity in diversity among the various Local Country groups of the worldwide Chevalier Family per these “Guiding Principles and Organisational Directions”;
- Ensuring the communication and exchange of information among the various Local Country Groups in the worldwide Chevalier Family;
- Building a contemporary register of suitable formation resources for the Local Country Groups and making available, through different means, various formation resources;
- Promoting, in collaboration with the National Council or Local Country Groups of a particular country, the continuous presence of the Laity of the Chevalier Family, even when religious congregations founded by or through the inspiration of Fr Jules Chevalier are no longer present in the country concerned;
- Calling a General Assembly every six years;
- Drawing up the official list of countries with active members of the Laity of the Chevalier Family two years before the next General Assembly. Countries with “active members” are those with National Councils or Local Country Groups that regularly respond to communications from the International Council. Based on this list, invitations are sent for each country to send one official representative to the General Assembly; and,
- Keeping in regular contact with the Tri-Generalate for evaluation and planning.



Section II.1.5: Spiritual Companion

The International Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family will be accompanied and supported by a Spiritual Companion. The Spiritual Companion can be lay or professed and is a member of the Council but without voting rights at the General Assembly. The role of the Spiritual Companion and the process for appointment to that role is outlined in the policy document entitled “Role of and Process for Appointment of the Spiritual Companion of the International Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family, 20 September 2021”.

Section II.1.6: Tri-Generalate

The General Administrations of the three religious congregations related to Father Jules Chevalier and founded during his lifetime are collectively called the Tri-Generalate. They accompany the Laity of the Chevalier Family directly through their regular collaboration with the International Council and indirectly through the provincial/regional/union administrations of the three congregations in the different countries and the individual members of the congregations who are appointed as Spiritual Companions of the Local Country Groups.

Section II.2: Membership

Membership in a Local Country Group of the Laity of the Chevalier Family is possible for everyone who would like “to grow in love” (Chevalier) and live a Spirituality of the Heart, according to the charism expressed in the above-mentioned Guiding Principles. They may also be accepted by a local country group and/or the National Council as eligible for membership. Each National Council or local country group will determine their criteria for acceptance.

Membership of a Local Country Group and a National Council to the communion of the Laity of the Chevalier Family is established through regular communication with and financial contribution to the International Council.



Section II.3: Finances

Each Local Country Group determines how to raise funds for operating costs. Ideally, every member of a Local Country Group takes responsibility for and financially contributes to their own Local Country Group.

In the same way, each National Council determines how to raise the necessary funds to cover its operating costs. Ideally, each Local Country Group contributes to the National Council's costs.

The International Council depends on the financial support of the National Councils and Local Groups in different countries. These contributions will help cover the expenses incurred in carrying out the responsibilities of the International Council.

Each National Council, or (in the absence of a National Council) the one Local Country Group has committed (at the General Assembly, January 2024) to financially supporting the work of the International Council with a minimum contribution of US\$100 in June each year, unless alternate arrangements are made with the International Council.

The International Council has committed to transparent reporting on their financial activities in December of each year.

Alison McKenzie
General Secretary
International Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family

