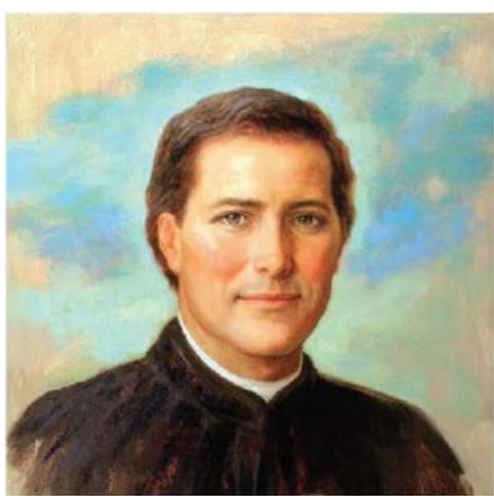




Edition 5, July 2024

ENCOUNTER OF HEARTS

A Newsletter of Reports and Activities from lay members of the Chevalier Family across the world.



Spirituality of the Heart

A way to open our hearts and participate in the healing of the world



How To Use This Edition

Encounter of Hearts is one of the most important modes of communication within the Chevalier Family. It has been compiled by the International Council. This edition offers reflections from significant Chevalier Family members, reports and articles on the Assembly, and information following the Assembly for distribution and discussion with your members.

Our sincere hope is that it does not get lost in your inbox but rather, that it becomes a resource and guide for your group discussions and formation for the upcoming year.

Section One offers introductions to those who have committed to work with you and to support you in their leadership. Of particular importance is the Editorial by Sr Merle and the Reflection by Sr Fabilene on behalf of the Trigeneralate group.

Section Two is a very important part of the newsletter. It contains the final and definitive documents that guide our structures and operation and is the place you can go when you need to access those documents for your own use.

Section Three contains reminders of the personal and national commitments that were made during the Assembly in response to the formative challenges that were a feature of the Assembly program. They serve as a reminder for those who were present and an ongoing formative challenge for the whole membership.

Section Four is also a very important part of the newsletter. The articles and links are for individual reflection, but more importantly, as material to be included in your National newsletters and to be used as a part of your initial and ongoing formation processes.

Section Five – Enjoy the photos.



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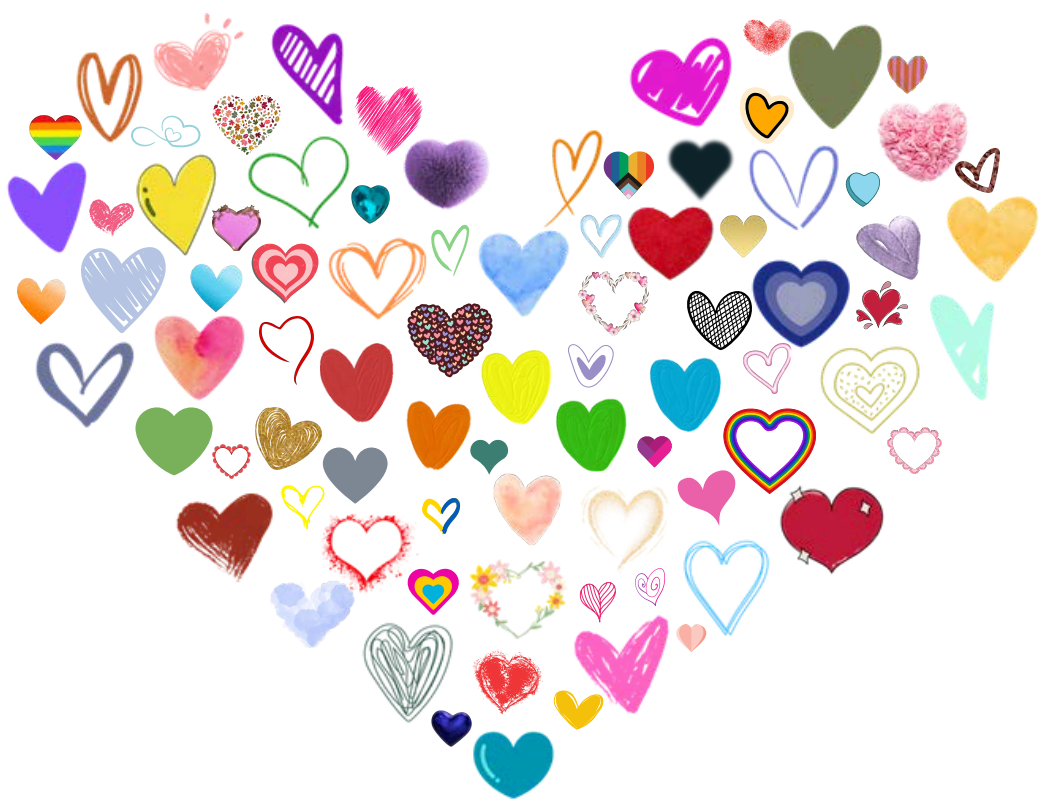
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Reminders of the Fourth Assembly of the Laity of the Chevalier Family (21 - 29 January 2024)



Assembly Theme:

One in Heart in Caring for Our Common Home



This General Assembly will occur in the midst of troubled times. These times will be viewed through the lens of Spirituality of the Heart as the remedy for the ills of our time.

The shared experiences of 2024 may well include:

- the consequences of a global pandemic that may or may not yet be controlled.
- an urgent imperative to find ways to live sustainably on the earth and justly for the earth's peoples.
- a loss of hope in the face of inequality, injustice, violence, over-consumption and greed.
- and more ...

The reality of the pain and suffering of the world at that time and the possibility of hope and healing that can come through Spirituality of the Heart will be woven into the Assembly program. We hope that participants go home more deeply formed in Spirituality of the Heart and better able to be the Heart of Christ in their communities as a result of the Assembly.

The phrases that make up our Assembly theme are drawn from Pope Francis' encyclicals 'Laudato Si' and 'Fratelli Tutti', which together offer a road-map for humanity to face the challenges of these times. The Assembly content will draw upon these two important documents. One in Heart reminds us that we are one in the Heart of Christ. This oneness does not happen automatically, it must be worked towards. The content of the General Assembly must allow for the diversity of experiences of life and of church and a variety of understandings and expressions of Spirituality of the Heart. We begin as separate hearts and leave 'Heart-Bonded' as One Heart to carry out our mission to care for our common home.

Heart, in Spirituality of the Heart, draws us to our belief in Jesus' compassionate Heart that 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. Our prayer is that God's loving presence will draw each person deeper into their own hearts, in an encounter with our God of love that offers renewal and transformation.

The mission of the laity is to live our lives undertaking our obligations, while at the same time, looking for every opportunity to go beyond those commitments to be a source of kindness, understanding, compassion, mutual forgiveness, gentleness, humility and simplicity to those we encounter. In other words, the mark of our lives is to try to live our whole life in a spirit of family, and thus, to be a source of hope and healing to the world. This is our shared mission and what we hope to home with hearts burning to offer.

Assembly Logo



The logo is an abstract representation of the theme: 'One in Heart in Caring for Our Common Home'.

The first element is the **Hands**. The hands in the centre symbolize the unity of the Laity of the Chevalier Family. Facing downward, it gives us an image of a dove that is engulfed in flames. The colour denotes the colour of an inflamed heart, reflecting the virtues of love, passion, and care.

The second element is highlighted through the colours green and blue. They represent **Mother Earth**, our common home. Our home is enclosed in the flaming hands to convey that with love and passion, the Laity of the Chevalier Family is committed to care and protect our common home.

The last element is a "**Salakot**", a symbol of our Filipino culture and identity. It is commonly worn by our farmers in their day-to-day lives, thus representing resilience, dedication, and hard work. As members of the Laity of the Chevalier Family, we must have inflamed hearts, imbued with commitment and hard work, to become true stewards of God's important creation, our common home.

A note about the artist:

James Clyde Ranario is a graduate of a Bachelor of Philosophy at University of San Carlos, Cebu City, Philippines. He is a former collegian of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. James is a person who is dedicated to arts and design. He is currently teaching humanities and social sciences at Mother of Mercy Academy, Inc., Barobo, Surigao del Sur.

Assembly Venue



Welcome Sign

Don Bosco Retreat Centre, Cebu



Conference Room

Philippines Planning Committee



Not Pictured: Beinvenida Usog, Nicanor Calumba, and Jessa Amodia.



International Council (2017-2024)



(L-R) Rita Cleuren, Doris Machado, Fr Richard JunJeong Kim, Olguita Garcia Ocampo, Hannie Jansen, Sr Merle Salazar, Peter Cheong, Maria-Olimpia Klose, and Alison McKenzie (inset).

Official Photo of the Assembly Participants



Assembly Song

Lyrics

*One in heart, we are
Chevalier's sons and daughters.
Together we are gathered,
Disciples of the Sacred Heart.
In His Heart we are one.
Together one in heart.
Called and sent to care.
To care for our home, the Earth.*

Open the ears of your heart,
do you hear Jesus crying?
Open the ears of your heart,
hear Him in Creation groaning!

Open the ears of your heart,
do you hear Jesus calling?
Open the ears of your heart,
hear Him in the poor suff'ring!

Together let us listen.
Together let us act.
Together we can do something.
Together in one heart.



Credits

Words by Sr Merle Salazar FDNSC
Music by Fr Ricky Bermudez MSC

Link

Watch or download the dance and lyrics music video [here](#).



One in Caring for our Common Home

Moderately Fast $\text{♩} = 118$

Lyric by: Sr. Merly I. Salazar, FDNSC
Music by: Fr. Ricky R. Bermudez, MSC.

mf

f

REFRAIN:

f

One in heart, we are, ——— Chev-al-ier's sons ——— and daught - ers. To-

geth - er we are gath - ered ——— Disc - ip - les of ——— the Sacr - ed Heart. ———

In His Heart we are ——— One. Tog - eth - er One in heart. Called and sent to

care. ——— To care for our ——— home, the earth. ———

mf

1. O - pen the gates of your heart. ——— Do you hear ——— Jes - us cry - ing?
2. O - pen the ears of your heart. ——— Do you hear ——— Jes - us call - ing?

Op - en the ears of your heart, ——— Hear Him in cre - at - ion groan - ing! ———
Op - en the ears of your heart ——— Hear Him in the poor ——— suff' ——— ring! ———

©MSC Music Ministry 2023



Assembly Song

One in Caring for our Common Home

2

37 *f* *f* *mf* *f* *f*

earth. 3. Tog - eth - er let us list - en. Tog - eth - er let us

act. Tog - eth - er we can do some - thing. Tog - eth - er in one heart.

48 (heart). *f* *f* One in heart, we are, Chev - al - ier's sons

52 and daught - ers. To - geth - er we are gath - ered Disc -

56 ip - les of the Sacr - ed Heart. In His Heart we are One. Tog -

60 ether One in heart. Called and sent to care. To care for our

65 home, the earth. *mf* Finale: To care for our home, the earth.

71 *f*

Like A Bridge Over Troubled Waters...

Sr Merle Salazar FDNCS

“

The Laity of the Chevalier Family, inspired by Jules Chevalier’s charism, lives Spirituality of the Heart. It leads people to an encounter with the Heart of God and to move from this inner encounter to an outward embodied and lived mission. We are one in heart and yet diverse, and so with open hearts and by being present, we will participate in the healing of the world. We are like a bridge over troubled waters, connecting people and encouraging them to cross safely during these challenging times.

”

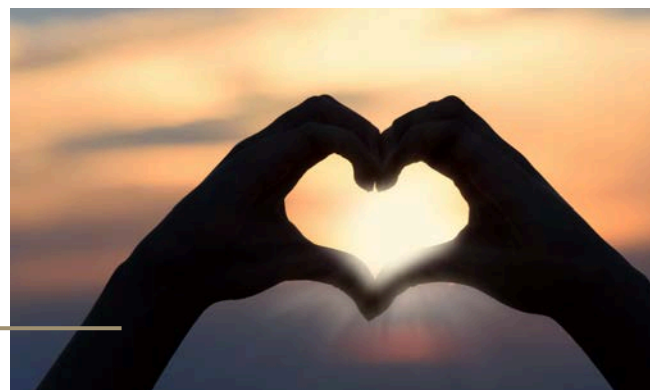
(Statement from the Fourth International Assembly of the Laity of the Chevalier Family, Jan 2024)

Last January, we had our Fourth International Assembly of the Laity of the Chevalier Family. This ‘Encounter of Hearts’ is one way by which the International Council is sharing the fruits of the Assembly to as many lay members as possible. During the Assembly, a Statement was written, presented and approved by the body to capture the meaning of the Assembly experience for those present. I begin this message with the first paragraph of the said Assembly Statement for three reasons.

First, this statement gives us a very concrete image of how we are called to be in today’s world, an image that Fr Hans Kwakman, MSC, the former Spiritual Companion, gave us in his online message to the Assembly. He said, the Chevalier Family is “like a bridge over troubled waters.” He did not only say it, by the way, he even sang it! As I write this article, war rages on and escalates in so many parts of the globe. Here in Southeast Asia where I am currently based, the bombing of villages in Myanmar by the country’s military government continues. In the Middle East, the war between Israel and Gaza has expanded and escalated. Now Iran and other countries are actively involved. In Europe, the war between Russia and Ukraine

shows

shows no signs of abating. Troubled waters indeed! And not to mention the heatwave hitting so many parts of the world even as I write. Climate change is more real than ever before. These are challenging times. And in these challenging times, we are called to be “a bridge” – not a dangerous one where people will jump from and kill themselves, but a safe bridge, a bridge of love. We see ourselves as a bridge that connects people and encourages, helps them cross safely. I invite you to reflect on this image, engage with it. Let the bridge speak to you and show you how you can be this safe bridge of love in your own families, communities, and institutions.





Second, I also see this issue of the ‘Encounter of Hearts’ as a bridge in two senses. It is a bridge across time – connecting us again to the January Assembly. As you read the reports, reflections, and documents and enjoy the photos, go back in time and re-enter your Assembly experience. Keep the fire of the Assembly burning in your heart. Sing our song again! Although spread in different parts of the globe, we are, in spirit and in truth, one in heart in the Heart of Christ! It is also a bridge across people – connecting those who were not able to attend the Assembly to the Assembly itself and to the brothers and sisters who were at the Assembly. This experience is not only ours it is an experience shared with many, not only with the current generation of the Lay Chevalier Family but also with future generations.

Finally, I also see the image of the bridge symbolizing the International Council led by Alison McKenzie. They, as a council, are the “bridge” holding all of you out there together. The council is the bridge too between the lay and the religious branches of our Chevalier Family. And how true that sometimes, they must be a bridge over troubled waters within the lay branch and within the Chevalier Family. Is it not true that the divisions we see in our world are the same divisions we experience in our own groups, big and small?

What a challenging call we have today – to be “*like a bridge over troubled waters, connecting people and encouraging them to cross safely during these challenging times.*” Let us heed our call and as individuals and communities, let us be safe bridges of love spread out in all the world!

A Time of Grace and Renewal: Assembly of the Laity of the Chevalier Family 2024

Sr Fabilene Castro FDNCS

We were very blessed to have had the opportunity to experience the Chevalier Family Lay Assembly in Cebu, Philippines, from 21- 29 January 2024. It was a graced moment in which to share our experiences, which confirmed our missionary energy, without denying our difficulties. The Assembly enabled us to experience our hearts renewed by the compassion of Christ, to listen to the heart of the world, and to seek to respond in a way that is committed to justice, peace, and the integrity of Creation. We are aware that we have been called and sent to "care for the Earth, our common home" from the perspective of living our charism and spirituality in an integrated dimension, respecting its various forms of expression.

It was wonderful to see, feel, and realise the diversity and creativity with which the laity live the Spirituality of the Heart, and how that Spirit responds to the challenges and desires of this present time. During the nine days of the Assembly, we were immersed in a true Pentecost of languages and cultures. People from 25 countries were present, with approximately 150 participants. We broke a record with the largest number of countries and with the largest number of participants in this 2024 Assembly in Cebu.

There was a constant atmosphere of joy, enthusiasm, love, fraternity, respect for diversity, and Creation, which overflowed through our eyes and hearts, infecting everyone around us. We were immersed in an itinerary of experiences of the charism and spirituality at our fingertips, with practical, simple,

simple, and effective experiences, committed to caring for the Earth, our common home.

It was also a time to think about the organisational and financial structure of each country in order to better meet the needs of the international team and also to broaden the participation of countries in future assemblies. The Chevalier Family Lay Assembly was a great success – and the Chevalier Family is well, and strong, and continues to grow and make the heart of Jesus known and loved everywhere. We thank you for the welcome, the affection and the opportunity to take part.

May God always grant you joy, strength, enthusiasm, and fruitfulness in your mission.

“

**May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be
loved everywhere, forever!**

”



Reflections from the Tri-Generalate



Introduction of the Incoming International Council and the Tri-Generalate Members

General Secretary

Alison McKenzie - Australia

I have been involved with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and have been a member of the Laity of the Chevalier Family for most of my adult life. I taught for 27 years in an MSC College and was the Director of the Chevalier Institute, a formation institute for lay people for 10 years. I have formal qualifications in Education, Counselling and Theology and a passion and commitment to contribute to the vision of Fr Chevalier to assist in the creation of a movement of laity empowered and connected so as to be able to share the good news of the love of God in the Heart of Jesus as the remedy for the ills of our time. I gather for Eucharist with the FDNSC sisters and belong to a Christian contemplative prayer group with an intention to make space in our hearts for God's love to take root for the renewal of the world.

I am retired and alongside my commitment to the Lay movement I work with a Prison Ministry team, and I am a committed mother and grandmother. At home, I enjoy caring for creation by growing food and raising chickens and bees.



Introduction of the Incoming International Council and the Tri-Generalate Members

International Council Member

Petrus Sidarta Maringka – Indonesia

My name is Petrus Sidarta Maringka from Indonesia. I am married to my beautiful wife Shirley Mohidi, and we have three children, Findley, Fidela, and Florian. I am working as a dentist and have my practice in Jakarta. I am a passionate and driven individual with a keen curiosity for learning and exploring new ideas. I mastered organizational skills, thrive on challenges, and am always eager to push the boundaries of my knowledge and abilities. Whether it is through creative endeavours or problem-solving in my professional or religious life, I strive to bring enthusiasm, empathy, and a positive attitude to everything I do. I value integrity, authenticity, and continuous personal growth, and I am committed to making a positive impact on the world around me.

I grew up in the MSC parish of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Jakarta. Therefore, since childhood, many MSC priests influenced me a lot with their way of life and thinking as I became their altar boy. Their motto “May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved everywhere” is also very familiar to me. I have accompanied a community namely “New Heart Community” for single Catholic young adults since 2007 and this community used to be under the MSC lay movement. Along with my presence with this community, I also went to many places in Indonesia, visited some Parishes or Dioceses outside Jakarta, and gave motivational and personality workshops to lay people. In July 2022, I was elected as National Vice Chair of the Laity of the Chevalier Family for a three-year tenure and this is for the first time that Indonesia has its own National Board. Ametur.



Introduction of the Incoming International Council and the Tri-Generalate Members

International Council Member

Aidan Johnson - Australia

I am Aidan Johnson. I am married to Clare and I am a member of the Australian Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family. I completed my schooling at Chevalier College (MSC), Bowral and have remained heavily involved with the MSCs and the wider Chevalier Family. I have qualifications in forensic science, education and theology and I have been teaching science in Australian Catholic schools for over 10 years. My wife Clare and I are members of the Australian Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family. I established and continue to oversee Heartworks, MSC Young Adults Community and I manage the social media platforms for the Australian Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family.



Introduction of the Incoming International Council and the Tri-Generalate Members

International Council Member

Patricia Antonieta Rivas Molina – Guatemala

I was born in the capital city of Guatemala. I am single by vocation. I studied and was also a professor at the Jesuit Catholic University of my country as a Public Accountant and Auditor. Years later, I also completed a degree in Theology at the same university. Since university until today I work in Public Accounting and Auditing.

Since my childhood my parents instilled in me the “devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus”, which would accompany me throughout my childhood and youth. In 1998, at the parish Lenten retreat, we were invited to belong to the first community of lay people, and the experience of deepening devotion to the formation of “the spirituality of the Heart of Jesus” began. I participated in the Spirituality courses organized by Cor América, in Minas Gerais, Brazil (2014); in Lima Peru (2023) and at the Third Assembly of the Laity of the Chevalier Family in Sao Paulo, Brazil (2017).

In my lay community I took up formation after the first public promise. I am currently the coordinator of the National Council. I have coordinated the animation server team of the group of seniors, and the community of the neighbourhood to make the parish present in it, through the celebrations of the liturgical year.



Introduction of the Incoming International Council and the Tri-Generalate Members

International Council Member

Dorothy Pion – Papua New Guinea

Hello everyone! I'm Dorothy Pion from Papua New Guinea (PNG). Since 2012, I have been actively involved as an MSC Lay Associate, serving as the coordinator from 2015 to 2021. I am delighted to be part of the Chevalier Family as a Laity. My life is blessed with my marriage to Nicholas Pion, and together, we cherish our four wonderful children.

Professionally, I work with the Geological Survey of PNG, a division of the Mineral Resources Authority Papua New Guinea, where I hold the position of Senior Cartographer. In this role, I engage in map-making and work extensively with GIS and geological data.

Within the community of St Charles Lwanga Parish in Gerehu, Port Moresby, I actively participate in the Parish Pastoral Council, where I serve as the treasurer. Additionally, my husband and I are committed to facilitating Pre-Cana classes for couples preparing for marriage. I also dedicate my time as a Sunday School Teacher, contributing to the spiritual education of our parish community whenever I am in attendance.

I ask of your prayers to serve you in the International Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family and please be assured that I will be praying for you as well.



Introduction of the Incoming International Council and the Tri-Generalate Members

International Council Member

Eve Jaike Morandante (Ainne) - Philippines

Ainne has been appointed for a one-year term.

I am Eve Jaike “Ainne” Morandante. I’m the eldest daughter in our family: I have two sisters, one brother, one niece, one brother-in-law and a widower father. I studied Computer Science and work in Makati before my mother got sick that led me to go back home in Surigao.

Initially, I was attracted with the Chevalier Family Lay Associates because of Sacred Heart of Jesus and upon completing the Formation (sometimes one-on-one session with Sr. Betty, FDNSC) I became a full member of the Chevalier Family in June 29, 2015. Until today, I’m trying to live out the Charism and Spirituality of the Heart of Fr. Jules Chevalier despite the challenges of everyday life. I was an Assistant Secretary in Surigao District in 2016 and District Secretary since 2017 up to this day and was able to attend various assemblies and meetings in local and national level.

Currently, I am the Parish Secretary of Virgen de la Paz y Buen Viaje in Bilang-Bilang, Surigao City since 2019, a Parish Formator, and PPC Secretary in 2017-2021. Aside from being a Chevalier Lay member, I’m also a Chevalier Partner in Mission with the DOLSH. Before the pandemic, I am actively present, volunteer, and participate in the apostolate of the DOLSH Sister with the Badjao Community here in Surigao City since 2015 especially in teaching basic lessons to our less fortunate brothers and sisters.

I believe through giving myself, my time, and some talents, I am able to give back all the blessings I continuously received from our Almighty Father with the intercession of Our Lady of Sacred Heart. And I commit myself to serve as Chevalier Family Lay Associate in the local community, national, and international as temporary member to the Council of the of International Laity of the Chevalier Family.



Introduction of the Incoming International Council and the Tri-Generalate Members

Spiritual Companion

Sr Merle Salazar FDNSC - Philippines

Hi. I am Sr Merle Salazar FDNSC, a member of the Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. It is my honor and pleasure to be the Spiritual Companion of the International Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family for these coming years. I stand on the shoulders of a great MSC, Fr Hans Kwakman, who finished his service as Spiritual Companion to the IC last January. I was at the 4th International Assembly in Cebu where I met a number of you in person and where we experienced very clearly that the Spirit is with us and is leading our Chevalier family. It is my wish and prayer that, walking together as companions on the journey, we may truly become more and more the Heart of God in the places and circumstances where we find ourselves. At the moment, I am based in Manila and my main mission is as Sabbatical Program Coordinator at the East Asian Pastoral Institute (EAPI), a Jesuit-run institute that forms pastoral leaders and missionaries for a renewed Church. Together, let us make the Sacred Heart of Jesus everywhere loved, forever!



Introduction of the Incoming International Council and the Tri-Generalate Members

Tri-Generalate Member

Fr Gene Pejo MSC - Rome, Italy (originally the Philippines)

My name is Gene Pejo, MSC. member of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Most of my ministry experience was in the initial formation, seven years in the post-novitiate formation and five years as Novice Director. I was elected Provincial Superior - Philippine Province for two terms- 2011-2017. I was also assigned in the Parish Ministry for six years, both as parish priest and assistant priest. My last assignment prior to my present assignment was a member of the Formation Team of MSC Vietnam under the Australian Province for one year.



Introduction of the Incoming International Council and the Tri-Generalate Members

Trigeneralate Member

Sr Deborah Reho MSC - Sutri, Italy (originally from USA)

I have been an MSC Sister for over 30 years. I am an administrator/teacher by profession and have been involved in schools throughout the U.S. and Papua New Guinea. For the past 11 years I was the Provincial Treasurer and Provincial Councillor for the US province. I am now serving on our General Council since November 2022.

I am happy to be the MSC Sister liaison for the International Laity of the Chevalier Family. After attending the International Assembly in 2024, I have a better understanding of the importance of the Laity of the Chevalier Family. You are spreading our Charism and Spirituality of the Heart wherever you are and in whatever you do. That gives me and our sisters hope for the future. May we continue to be 'One in Heart' in the Chevalier Family.



Introduction of the Incoming International Council and the Tri-Generalate Members

Trigeneralate Member

Sr Fabilene Santos Castro - Rome, Italy (originally from Brazil)

I am Sr Fabilene Santos Castro; my name means - Fabilene: relic, companionship; Santos: sacred; and Castro: Castle, fortified.

My parents are Joana Maria Santos Castro and Benedito Castro. I have five brothers and two sisters. I am the eighth child. I grew up in a simple, quiet, and poor family environment, based on good Christian principles and human values. My parents always made sure that we had a good school education.

I love religious life and my congregation. I try to be attentive to the needs of the sisters and maintain a good relationship with them. I have an open heart for the mission, and I have lived with the most vulnerable and the poor. During the time I was in Maranhão, Apicum-Açu and São Paulo, Eldorado, I had the grace to live with and encounter many people who shared their lives, pains, wounds, and miseries with me.

Our community developed some social projects to meet the needs of many families; we distributed many basic baskets, clothes, food, toys. We brought joy to many hearts. This gave me immense joy.

I am very grateful to be part of this new Generalate team that is at the service of the Congregation, and I thank God who led me here. I ardently desire to learn new languages and currently, I am learning English.



Roles and Responsibilities of the International Council and Subcommittees

Spiritual Companion

Spiritual Companion:

Sr Merle Salazar FDNCS

Line of Accountability:

Superior Generals of the MSC, FDNCS, and MSC Sisters (collectively called the Executive Committee of the Tri-Generalate).

Charter:

To accompany the International Council and to model Spiritual Companionship.

Responsibilities:

- To offer formation and guidance to the members of the International Council, particularly in the area of a Spirituality of the Heart and its practical implications, through their presence at digital and face-to-face meetings and international gatherings, as well as offering wise counsel and support, as requested and needed by the International Council.
- To offer assistance in forming Spiritual Companions on a national level, assisting them to work with lay groups towards the creation of mature 'faith-sharing' groups who can function with increasing autonomy.

General Secretary

General Secretary:

Alison McKenzie

Line of Accountability:

Membership of the Laity of the Chevalier Family.

Charter:

To enhance the vision of Jules Chevalier for a Lay Branch within the Chevalier Family through pastoral and organisational leadership.

Responsibilities:

- To exercise pastoral care and support to the wider Chevalier Family.
- To work with the International Council to enable the vision of the Council to be realised.
- To work with the International Council to ensure that the recommendations of the General Assembly are carried out.
- To work with the International Council to form and inform the network of National Councils and local groups.
- To communicate regularly with the Lay Family and the other branches of the Family.
- To actively promote a deeper understanding of the process of formation in Spirituality of the Heart.
- To lead the International Council and the local organising committee in the planning and execution of the next scheduled Assembly of Laity.
- To actively seek to identify emerging leaders and offer them opportunities to ensure appropriate succession planning.

Roles and Responsibilities of the International Council and Subcommittees

Finance Committee

Chair:
Patricia Antonieta Rivas Molina

Members:
Linh The Huynh
Chris McDermott

Line of Accountability:
To act under the direction of the International Council.

Charter:
To take responsibility for the finances of the international Council and to report regularly on their work.

The initial task for completion before June 2024 is to explore ways in which member countries can deposit money into the International Council account incurring minimal transaction fees.

The primary and constant task is to explore is to explore ways in which member countries can deposit money into the International Council account incurring minimal transaction fees.

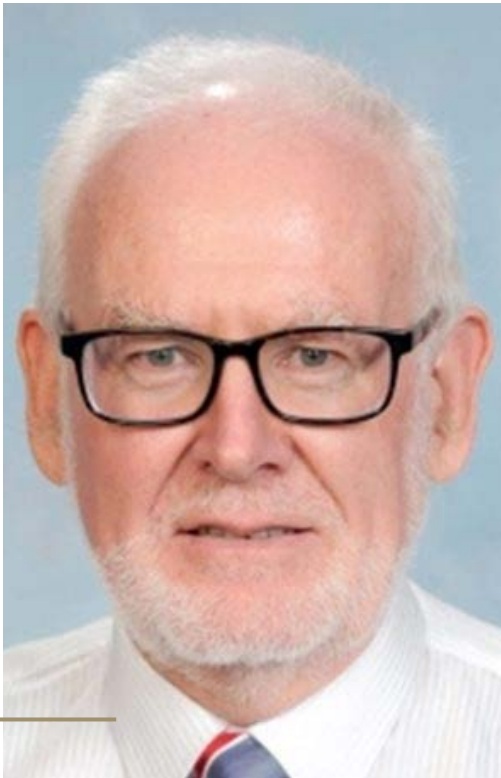
Responsibilities:

- To build and maintain a functional and accountable financial system.
- To continue working with the existing Catholic Development Fund Bank Account while exploring other options.
- To propose budgets and expenditure plans for approval by the International Council.
- Ensure all expenditures are approved.
- Together with the International Council and the wider Chevalier Family explore strategies for raising funds and acquiring resources necessary to support the organisation’s activities.
- Ensure that every transaction occurs in compliance with the appropriate legal and fiscal regulations.

Linh The Huynh



Chris McDermott



- Ensure that annual reports are submitted in accordance with appropriate legal and fiscal regulations in the host country of the Catholic Development Fund.



Roles and Responsibilities of the International Council and Subcommittees

Secretarial Committee

Chair:

Dorothy Pion

Members:

Lee Toll

Line of Accountability:

To the International Council through regular reports and timely completion of tasks.

Charter:

To facilitate effective communication so as to enable the International Council and the General Secretary to undertake their responsibilities with efficiency.

Responsibilities:

- To further develop and manage the digital filing system used by the International Council.
- In collaboration with the Information Technology Committee explore other options for digital storage of files and back-up.
- Assist in the transition to an alternative platform.
- Where required, formulate official correspondence from the International Council.
- Create a designated email contact for the General Secretary and the International Council and email signatures for the International Council with an agreed wording that reflects our core purpose.
- Record, transcribe and store meeting Minutes and distribute them with appropriate authorisation.
- Manage and update the existing Contact List for the Laity of the Chevalier Family and, where appropriate and legal share with other entities.
- Develop systems for acquiring updated information about the changing leadership of National Councils, local groups, and Spiritual Companions in member countries.
- Assist the General Secretary and the International Council where needed with secretarial tasks.
- Distribute official mailout material.

Lee Toll



Roles and Responsibilities of the International Council and Subcommittees

Formation Committee

Chair:

Petrus Sidarta Maringka

Members:

It is important that this committee has an intercultural membership.

Line of Accountability:

To the International Council through reports (where appropriate) and timely completion of tasks.

Charter:

To work collaboratively with religious spiritual companions to develop the capacity of lay people to become formators within their own groups.

Responsibilities:

- Continue to work on the two archivally significant projects begun by the last Council:
 - Collecting and recording the history of the emergence of the lay movement in member countries. We have some material currently stored on the website.
 - Collecting the names and stories of those Religious who used their position of responsibility to assist the emergence of the lay movement.
- To create an effective working team of Regional Coordinators to further develop the structural capacity of the International Council to communicate to the laity and to hear from them.
- In response to the needs of local groups, begin to develop formation material for initial and ongoing formation of the laity.



Roles and Responsibilities of the International Council and Subcommittees

IT Committee

Chair:

Aidan Johnson

Members:

To be determined.

Line of Accountability:

To the International Council through reports (where appropriate) and timely completion of tasks.

Charter:

To research the most appropriate and contemporary technologies to assist the International Council in its primary task of connecting the global family. To upskill members of the International Council in the use of these technologies and to resolve technical issues as they arise.

Responsibilities:

- To develop centralised infrastructure for International Council file storage and communications.
- To ensure appropriate access and security is provided for International Council and public documents.
- To further develop social media platforms and the technologies used to distribute communications such as Encounter of Hearts.
- Explore contemporary research on communication in the digital age to assist the International Council to more effectively communicate through social media platforms and longer and more complex modes of communication.
- To manage the existing website in collaboration with Misacor Australia.

Revolving Seat

Revolving Seat:

Eve Jaïke Morandante (Ainne)

The person who holds this seat will be fully participating member of the International Council and will automatically be a member of the Regional Coordinator sub-committee.

Ainne has expressed an interest in joining the Formation Committee.



Roles and Responsibilities of the International Council and Subcommittees

Subcommittees

We are forming two sub-committees, an **Editorial Committee**, to help with formatting the formal newsletters and updates from the International Council. Shirley Mohidi and Clare Johnson are currently on the Editorial Committee which will be led by Dorothy Pion.

The other committee is to develop and oversee the emerging role of **Regional Coordinators**. Olguita Garcia Ocampo will meet with the International Council at our next meeting to discuss this role. This committee will be led by Petrus Marinka.

Clare Johnson



Olguita Garcia Ocampo



Shirley Mohidi



Introduction of Countries Participating for the First Time at an Assembly of the Laity

Welcome



Fiji

India



Introduction of Countries Participating for the First Time at an Assembly of the Laity



Indonesia

Kiribati



Namibia

Introduction of Countries Participating for the First Time at an Assembly of the Laity



Senegal

Vietnam



Wallis and Futuna

Section Two:

Formal Assembly Documents

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Formal Assembly Documents

This section of Encounter of Hearts contains the official record of and resolutions from the Fourth Assembly of the Laity of the Chevalier Family.

We encourage all National Councils and local groups to become familiar with these documents and to draw from them to assist in the development of local and regional “Guiding Principles and Organisational Direction” documents.

Alison McKenzie

General Secretary

on behalf of the International Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family



From Little Things Big Things Grow: Fourth Assembly of the Laity of the Chevalier Family 21-29 January 2024

Alison McKenzie and the International Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family

It is with great pleasure that I present this formal Report on behalf of the outgoing and incoming International Councils on our recent Assembly and on the future directions that are emerging as a result of the work undertaken at the Assembly. The Guiding Principles mandate the International Council to invite a member country to host the Assembly of Laity and, on behalf of the global family, thank you to the Philippines for accepting the invitation and for working so hard to create such a fruitful and Spirit-filled celebration. The Evaluations that were completed at the conclusion of the Assembly were overwhelmingly positive and congratulations are due to Debbie Mellijor, Fr Corpuz MSC, and to the entire organising committee. The Philippines Committee was responsible for the organisational and practical aspects of the Assembly and the outgoing International Council was responsible for developing and facilitating the program. These two groups worked tirelessly for several years to bring the Assembly to life, and it is very satisfying to see that their work was used by God in such a profound way. Special mention must be made of Sr Merle, both for her presence and wisdom in the preparations for the Assembly, and, for her outstanding moderation which helped considerably to achieve the Assembly outcomes.

There were 143 participants from 23 countries with 30 religious accompanying the laity. The photos in this edition are from the Assembly and they reflect the positive, joyful, and Spirit-led atmosphere that was present from the first moment of gathering until the moment we took our leave of each other.

We surely did achieve the hope of the Assembly as expressed in the theme:

“**To begin as separate hearts and leave
‘heartbonded’ as One heart to carry
out our mission to care for our
common home.**”



Report on the Assembly

From Little Things Big Things Grow: Fourth Assembly of the Laity of the Chevalier Family 21-29 January 2024

Alison McKenzie and the International Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family

Financial Update

Subsidised funding of participants – 1,659,000 pesos were raised to assist those who otherwise would not have been able to attend the Assembly. There were 23 initial applications for the funding, some were withdrawn during the process with 15 participants finally being funded to attend the Assembly. Several late withdrawals resulted in some funds remaining unspent after the Assembly. A total of \$7,978.07 AU was subsequently deposited into the International Lay account marked as Subsidy Funds to be used later for the purpose for which they were raised. Our hope is that those who were subsidised for this Assembly will begin now to raise the funds in their own country to send delegates to the next Assembly and to contribute, according to their means, to any future requests for financial assistance. On behalf of the recipients of the subsidised places and the whole family, I thank laity from Europe, Korea, and Australia for raising the funds and Chris McDermott for overseeing the process.

We have not yet received the figures of the final reconciliation of the budget from the Philippines Committee. Once we have that information we will publish it.

Future Directions for the Lay Chevalier Family

When we were planning the Assembly, we developed four aims to underpin the program. They were:

- To discern and decide together our mission as laity.
- To enhance global solidarity.
- To offer formation in Spirituality of the Heart.
- To discuss and resolve organisational issues pertinent to the ongoing work of the International Council.

The Evaluations, which will be published at a later date indicate that these aims were met, even exceeded during the Assembly.



From Little Things Big Things Grow: Fourth Assembly of the Laity of the Chevalier Family 21-29 January 2024

Alison McKenzie and the International Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family

The incoming International Council will continue the work of developing and deepening these Aims. The future directions listed below will serve as a guide to that work:

- To continue to make every effort to communicate with and connect the entire family of laity.
- To maintain our close and interconnected relationship with our religious brothers and sisters while operating with increasing autonomy.
- To strengthen and develop our structures and formal organisation while encouraging unity-in-diversity.
- To explore how Regional Coordinators can assist in connecting and enabling communication and formation to be more effectively undertaken.
- To deepen our understanding of the distinctiveness of the lay branch through formation in Spirituality of the Heart.

- To consistently reiterate that our core purpose is to offer the Heart of Jesus through our commitment to justice, peace and caring for creation in our families, our communities and beyond.
- To identify and develop leaders within the global family to ensure we can continue to undertake our mission in the future.

During the Assembly we planted seeds which had germinated and sprouted by the last day. The seeds became a symbol that encapsulated the hopes and dreams that emerged over the days we were together. The phrase: *‘from little things big things grow’* gave voice to the growing seeds and to the hopes in our hearts as we went home, to be drawn ever deeper into the heart of Jesus and, little by little to become God’s Heart on Earth.



Official Assembly Statement



The following statement was developed during the Assembly of Laity to capture our mission as laity of the Chevalier Family. This statement will serve as a summary and reminder of Spirit that emerged during the Assembly and will guide the direction of the International Council during its term of office.

Fourth International Assembly of the Laity of the Chevalier Family Statement

21-29 January 2024

The Laity of the Chevalier Family, inspired by Jules Chevalier's charism, lives Spirituality of the Heart. It leads people to an encounter with the Heart of God and to move from this inner encounter to an outward embodied and lived mission. We are one in heart and yet diverse, and so with open hearts and by being present, we will participate in the healing of the world. We are like a bridge over troubled waters, connecting people and encouraging them to cross safely during these challenging times.

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 Spirituality of the Heart. We will advocate, educate, and celebrate actions that show our embodied love and care for our common home - *'from little things, big things grow'*.

The painting is made up of a series of layered symbolic images. In the foreground is a stylised heart with a faint cross following the contours of the form. The heart floats above the centre of a white flower known as a sampagiuta in the Philippines. This image, in turn, floats above an opalescent dark background. The painting has been framed in a simple white floating box frame.

The iconography of the work is related to the 4th International Assembly of the Laity of the Chevalier Family held in the Philippines from 22-29 January 2024. The Assembly theme is 'One in Heart in Caring for Our Common Home'.

We will accompany with love, compassion, and empathy those people experiencing poverty, exclusion, or unjust treatment. We take the inclusive, welcoming example of Jesus as our guide on how to be one in heart with the suffering and oppressed. We draw inspiration from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, mother-disciple of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, our model and companion. We accept the challenge of transforming our hearts to *'be on Earth the Heart of God'*.

We reviewed and approved the revised 'Guiding Principles and Organisational Directions of the Laity of the Chevalier Family' and are committed to supporting the work of the International Chevalier Family.

Artist: Bruce Woods



[Download](#) the PDF.

Assembly Signatories

At the closing ritual of the Assembly, each voting delegate was invited forward to sign the official list of attendance and participation at the Assembly.



Australia,
Belgium, Brazil,
El Salvador, Fiji,
Germany, Guatemala,
India, Indonesia, Kiribati,
Korea, Mexico, Namibia,
Netherlands, Papua New Guinea,
Peru, Philippines, Senegal,
Spain, United States of America,
Vietnam, and Wallis and Futuna.

The formal document has been preserved in the International Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family archives.



Guiding Principles and Organisational Directions

The following document is the official copy of the Guiding Principles and Organisational Directions for the Laity of the Chevalier Family accepted on Sunday, 28 January 2024.

[Download](#) the PDF.





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



Banking Details for Contributions to the Operation 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.”

(Guiding Principles and Organisational Directions, Section II.3)

The banking details for depositing the financial contributions to the International Council are as follows.

[Download](#) the PDF.





International Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family

Payment Remittances to MSC Lay Ministry International in Australia

The following account details are to be provided for arranging funds to be remitted electronically from overseas to **MSC Lay Ministry International in Australia**.

Swift Routing Number: CTBAAU2S

(AUST) Account BSB: 062-000

(AUST) Account Number: 10143845

Account Name: Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney Development Fund

Bank: Commonwealth Bank of Australia

Branch: 48 Martin Place, Sydney NSW 2000

Reference:
(max 18 characters) **21935400 -**

Please put the reference number 21935400 plus your organization (e.g., 21935400 - ACLCF), and inform us when your transfer has been processed so the International Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family can monitor the account accordingly. Notify pattyandrivasmolina@gmail.com and manager@misacor.org.au with the details requested above.



Section Three:

Assembly Commitments

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Assembly Commitments

During the Assembly, reflecting the theme, 'One in Heart in Caring for our Common Home', the following commitments were undertaken country by country.

Alison McKenzie

General Secretary

on behalf of the International Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family



A Summary of the Spiritual Conversations as a Word Cloud

On Day Three of the Assembly, we engaged in a process called a Spiritual Conversation. We sat in our table groups of mixed countries that shared a language.

We were each invited to reflect on the following questions:

- Note three highlights of what you have heard so far.
- What touched you deeply?
- What challenged you to change?

We reflected personally, then shared and listened deeply twice before the final sharing, where we discussed the following question:

- What have you heard as a group that you feel the Spirit wants you to share with the whole Assembly?

Our responses were used to create this Word Cloud, which reminds us of the highlights and challenges of the Assembly.



Environmental Commitments Made by Member Countries at the Assembly

On Day Six of the Assembly, the theme of the day was 'Spirituality of the Heart in Laudato Si' and Fratelli Tutti'. After a keynote lecture by Father Hans Kwakman MSC and a workshop by Aidan Johnson, we explored the following questions in country groups:

- What do we need to do in our local groups to implement the principles we have heard from Father Ritchie, Boni, the Regions, Father Hans, Sister Euphrasia and Aiden that is within our scope of influence?
- Think: Educating our local groups and Influencing at the National Council and Provincial level.
- How can we better advocate for the care of our common home by utilising the existing materials we have (First Friday intention and Declaration) and developing additional opportunities?
- How can we celebrate our successes?

The following list is a record of the commitments made by each country.

Indonesia

- Educate.
- Organising and processing waste.
- Reduce, reuse, recycle, replace.
- Ongoing awareness campaign for trash and scrap.
- Proper waste segregation into biodegradable and non-biodegradable.
- Bokashi, organic fertilisers, plant, eco bricks and bags recycle, reuse.

Brazil

- Develop a consciousness about energy consumption at home, at work and in our groups.
- Develop a consciousness about recycling garbage.

Mexico

- Do not use plastic.

Australia

- Live simply.
- Use water more efficiently.
- Drive consciously.
- Use green technologies.

Senegal

- Reuse plastic bags.
- Reuse plastic bottles for decorations.



Environmental Commitments Made by Member Countries at the Assembly

Guatemala

- Stop using non- recyclable products.
- Sort trash into non-recyclable and recyclable categories in our homes and groups.

Vietnam

- Raise the awareness of the need to protect the environment through video clips.
- Decrease the use of plastic bags.
- Grow more plants in our homes to clean the air.

Papua New Guinea

- Minimise the use of plastics within our homes and communities.
- Distribution and planting of seeds and cuttings.
- Awareness of the Assembly theme in ‘caring for our common home.’

Wallis and Futuna

- Work for the union of the Chevalier Family.
- Create activities to help people in difficulty.
- Educate people to sort plastic, metal, aluminium and glass.

Fiji

- Avoid buying and using plastics.
- Clean up the environment campaigns.
- Proper consultation with the people.
- Reuse, recycle, reduce, replant, reforestation.

USA

- Work towards educating laity on becoming more environmentally conscious through videos, discussions, websites, etc.
- Encourage the use of reusable shopping bags and shop locally.

Kiribati

- Spiritual development of our family, neighbour, and community.
- Recycle plastics – start in our homes and the community of the Chevalier Family.
- Use ecological bricks in the home and at the OLSH compound and government compound.
- Plant mangroves, grow local food.
- Four times a year have a clean-up campaign.

Philippines (Group 2)

- Educate.
- Planting trees, cacao, vegetables, backyard gardening.
- Planting mangroves.
- Advocate an awareness of our responsibility in taking care of mother nature.
- Eco-bricks.
- Celebrate harvest-time.
- Reduction of soil erosion and flood prevention.



Environmental Commitments Made by Member Countries at the Assembly

Korea (Group 1)

- Reduce use of synthetic detergents
- Use eco bags.

Korea (Group 2)

Use water wisely by:

- Cutting the shower time in half.
- Recycling shower water.
- Using half the usual amount of detergent.

Change consumption patterns by:

- Cooking smaller amounts of food. No leftovers.
- Buying clothes - less than 1 new garment every 6 months.
- Trying the second-hand market, sharing items with others.
- Adjusting the temperature of heating and cooling.
- Wearing warmer clothes in winter.

Reduce plastic use by:

- Reducing the number of plastics by 10%
- Reconsider when purchasing.
- Recycling and separating the trash thoroughly.

India

- Will educate as many as possible on reduce, reuse, recycle.
- Say no to plastics and segregate waste.
- Will compost, plant trees, mulch, conserve water, use less paper and tissue paper.
- Buy less and buy pre-loved.
- Will be aware of fuel-efficient driving, carrying our own plates and cutlery for garbage free events.

Spain

- Contaminants leave a trace.
- Commitment – generate less garbage and prevent it from contaminating the environment.

Commitments Without Country Names

Country_1

- At the 9 March celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Jules Chevalier – people will bring their own cutlery and we will have a pop-up stand about the integrity of creation.

Country_2

- A reforestation project.
- Create a parish garden.
- Join a community gardening project
- Connect with nature through walking as a group.
- Educate parishioners in careful use of water.



Environmental Commitments Made by Member Countries at the Assembly

Country 3

- Educate new groups to be aware of the ecological consequences of our way of life and encourage change.
- Help children to see the beauty of nature and the importance of treating nature with respect.
- Celebrate the circle of the four seasons when outdoors.

Country 4

- Use eco-bricks with confirmation candidates.
- Plant a tree in the community.
- Use enzymes from oranges for cleaning purposes.

Country 5

- Wash dishes at parties to avoid using disposable products.
- Raise awareness.

Country 6

- Educate to create an environmental conscience.
- A shift in consciousness to less consuming.
- Training courses in the impact of the destruction of nature.
- Education in Laudato Si' and Fratelli Tutti.



Interpretation of the Logo of the International Lay Movement

Remember how central Care for Creation is to our lay spirituality, as symbolised in our logo.



The logo of the Chevalier Family was designed in Brazil for use at the Third International Assembly of Laity of the Chevalier Family. In many ways, this Assembly marked the formal birth of the international, national, and regional structures of the movement, and it was where the Guiding Principles and Statutes were adopted. The logo depicts the spirit and essence of the emerging movement of laity at that Assembly and has since been adopted by the International Council and many National Councils as their own.

The logo is quite distinctive in its features and is different from the explicitly Christian images of the MSC, FDNSC, and the MSC Sisters. While the key symbols of Spirituality of the Heart are present in the recognisable but softly drawn **Sacred Heart** and **Cross** of Jesus, the logo also contains strong images of the human interconnection and interrelationship that are identifying features of our shared charism, yet at the same time point to the distinctiveness of our lay charism, where we live in families, we earn our living in our communities and we

Interpretation of the Logo of the International Lay Movement

commit ourselves in a way that is different from professed members. When the images are considered through the eyes of our Charism, they point us to foundational scriptures: *since it is in him (LOVE) that we live and move and exist (Acts 17:28), and this LOVE of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us (Romans 5:5) and whoever fails to LOVE does not know God, because God is LOVE (1 Jn 4: 8).*

The centrality but openness of the **heart**: the universal symbol for love, human, and divine, draws us to the transformation of our own hearts that comes through our offering of our lives to the Heart of Christ. This offering leads us to encounter for ourselves the love of God. It is from this transforming encounter that our interconnection and relationality flows. The configuration of the **figures** reflects this understanding. Their shape and posture are gently intertwined but loosely held; the different forms are reflective of gender, culture, and worldview, but most importantly, all flow from the Heart of Christ. We are diverse yet animated by the same source. Our interconnection leads us deeply into the pain and suffering of the world, which could overwhelm us, but for the Hope of Christ, which poured into our hearts to be a source of hope for others. It is from the flame of the charism that this transforming hope flows out of the heart, encircling the people.

The **flame** of charism connects the interior symbols to the outer circle. The use of green, signifying hope, encircles the central image and symbolically reflects **Creation** in which we live and from which we are sustained. Spirituality of the Heart recognises that creation powerfully reflects a God of life and relationship and reminds us, as laity, of our sacred task to commit to the preservation and protection of the Creation from which all life comes. This understanding is enhanced through the depiction of our name within the circle of creation and by the flame of our charism pointing directly to our name. This clearly identifies the place of the laity within the Chevalier Family as a group that is distinct yet completely connected to the common vision.

The logo is dancing; its gentle strength is reflective of the central place of Mary, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, in our charism and draws us into the love between Jesus and Mary that flows from them to us and all creation, enabling us to participate in the joyful dance of love.

The logo calls us, as members of the Laity of the Chevalier Family, to our responsibility to participate in the creation of hope, meaning and purpose, which is the birthright of all human beings.



Heart of Love



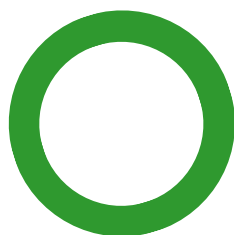
Dancing Figures



Family Name



Flame of Charism



Circle of Creation



Cross of Jesus



Sacred Heart of Jesus

Brief Update from the Regions on the Work Undertaken so far to Meet the Assembly Commitments

Guatemala

One of our commitments to Guatemala was to continue promoting the use of non-disposable items in lay meetings in our country.

At this meeting in Guatemala with the laity of El Salvador, the locals were asked to bring our reusable cups.



Indonesia

The Laity of the Indonesian Chevalier Family, have long carried out routine activities of planting trees and cleaning up rubbish, especially in Eastern Indonesia. Meanwhile, in cities, we sort inorganic waste for recycling and reuse.



Brief Update from the Regions on the Work Undertaken so far to Meet the Assembly Commitments

Belgium

- In preparation for the Belgium and European elections, meeting and reflecting on how to vote with a focus on people on the margins at home and abroad and on the environment.
- Planning our participation in the Season of Creation by celebrating the goodness of creation and paying attention to the cry of the earth.
- The MSC committee "Justice, Peace and Wholeness of Creation" will organize their annual day of HOPE and this time the members of the MSC intercultural community in Antwerp will be the host.



India

We have taken small steps, such as ensuring we generate zero garbage during our meetings or any events in Church. We are not using disposable plates and glasses. We are requesting that no leaves or garbage is burnt on the campus. We are planting the seeds of fruit trees like guava, lemon, and papaya, and handing them over to one of the Brothers who has green fingers to plant them and take good care of them. These are the plants.



Brief Update from the Regions on the Work Undertaken so far to Meet the Assembly Commitments

Australia

- Alison has been making hand knitted dish cloths made from left over cotton and the bees wax wraps from the bee hives in my garden.
- Aidan and Clare have been regenerating natural vegetation at their home.
- Every day through lent, we publish a reminder of the Carbon Fast for lent.



CARBON FAST FOR LENT



Remember to carry your own reusable shopping and produce bags. Using plastic bags is a huge environmental issue because they never fully break down or decompose.

DAY 2
Laudato Si'

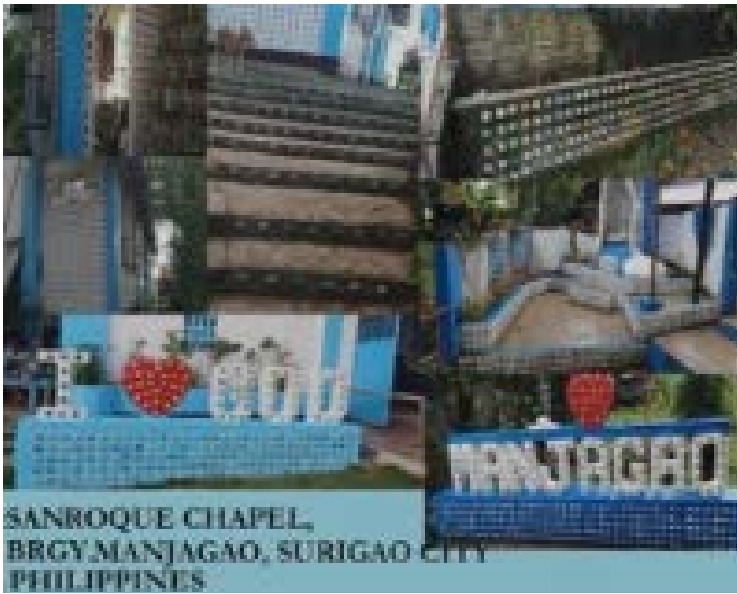




Brief Update from the Regions on the Work Undertaken so far to Meet the Assembly Commitments

Philippines

Here are the ecobricks.





Section Four:

Formation Material

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Formation Material

The following articles are included in this edition of Encounter of Hearts for use by National Councils and local groups to deepen our understanding of our structures and our Spirit as the Laity of the Chevalier Family.

- The Keynote Address at the Assembly of Laity presented by Fr Richie Gomez MSC. Fr Richie is the community leader at the MSC Centre for the Poor located in Butuan.
 - The Keynote Address at the Assembly of Laity on the Organisational Structure of the Laity of the Chevalier Family presented by Alison McKenzie.
 - The link to the movie prepared by the German laity on the Role of the Spiritual Companion and three reflections on the role by Sr Stephani Orlowski MSC, Alfred Jansenberger, and Elisabeth Hartmann.
 - A link to Fr Hans' Online Course.
-

Alison McKenzie

General Secretary

on behalf of the International Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family



One in Heart in Caring for Our Common Home

Fr Ritchie Gomez MSC

Greetings!

Let me start my talk with three beautiful parable stories of Jesus in the Gospel.

Mt 20:1-16

The parable of the workers in the vineyard.

Are you questioning my generosity?

It's very clear to Jesus that humanity will have a great problem with "SELFISHNESS".

Mt 25:14-30

The parable of the talents.

You knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I scattered no seed?

It's very clear to Jesus that humanity will have a great problem with "GREEDINESS".

Lk 10:25-3

The parable of the Good Samaritan.

And who is my neighbour?

In a capitalistic, consumeristic, commercialistic, materialistic, profit-driven society, what obligation do we have to people next to us whose names we do not even know? How much more to illegal migrants arriving every day at our frontiers fleeing from poverty and sometimes from political oppression – are they our neighbours? It is so ironic to imagine asking, "Who is our neighbour"? While St. Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our lives and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us... Brother Sun, Sister Moon, Mother Earth. [1]

In relation to the story of the Good Samaritan, Fr Jules Chevalier spoke about "EGOISM AND INDIFFERENCE. [2] These two wounds are corrupting our unfortunate world: indifference and selfishness. An effective remedy is needed that can be applied to these two evils. This remedy is found in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who is simply love. [3]

(Before I continue my talk and go to the main topic, I invite you for a moment of silence).



[1] Pope Francis, *Encyclical Letter Laudato Si'*. (24 May 2015), 01.

[2] Lay MSC of Southern California, *Fr. Jules Chevalier's Charisma and the Identity of the Chevalier Family*. (Last Edited 16 May 2021). [Link](#).

[3] Jules Chevalier, *1856 MSC Constitutions and Statutes: Rome General House, 2005 Chapter*, pg 96.

Assembly Keynote - Fr Ritchie Gomez

One in Heart in Caring for our Common Home

From simple awareness, we want to intensify it, and this leads us to radical involvement. From a personal level, we want to make it more compelling, so this invites us to participate in communal efforts. From simply devotion, though we feel a deeper call, this challenges us to live out the spirituality. I think this is the process that everyone must understand so that we can be, as much as possible, more integral IN ECOLOGY, ONE HEART, in our desire to care for our common home. To be 'One Heart in Caring for our Common Home', I presumed this is no longer difficult, for we are already a "One Chevalier Family" - My question is, are we ONE in SPIRIT?

What is really happening to our Common Home?

What is really happening to us? We are in an Ego System where people dominate and manipulate everything. Anthropocentric attitude: we (humans) consider ourselves separate from nature and even superior to and above nature. We value nature only in terms of its usefulness to humans. This arrogant attitude is the root cause of the present ecological crisis. And NOW! We are in a climate emergency – as we are witnessing the destruction of rainforests, the pollution of oceans with the enormous amount of plastic, the diminishing of biodiversity, soil erosion, and depletion from which all life derives its food, all at an accelerating pace. [4] In 2018,



Pope Francis declared that we are in a climate emergency, and he gave us a 12-year countdown to reach the tipping point by 2030 with global temperature increases of 1.5°C. [5] We are not only facing the climate tipping point but also the nuclear tipping point caused by wars between Ukraine and Russia, Israel and Palestine, and tensions in the South China Sea. These tipping points are points of no return. Even if we do not reach this point of no return, it is certain that the consequences would be disastrous and precipitous measures would have to be taken. [6] This has been seconded by the United Nations Declaration that the window is closing fast, and our actions in the next ten years will largely determine the fate of humanity. [7] It is really fast because we do not have to wait any longer for 2030. June 2023 (7 months ago), we breached the 1.5°C global temperature level for the first time, breaking the hottest days recorded since 1850 in human history. [8] The urgent call of Pope Francis: *"Time is running out for mankind to save the planet from the potentially devastating effects of global warming."* If we will not act now, when, if I and you will not act, who?

[4] Satish Kumar. Editor Emeritus of Resurgence and Ecologist magazine and author of Soil, Soul, Society.

[5] Vatican News, *Pope on climate crisis: Times running out, decisive action needed*. (June 2019). [Link](#).

[6] Pope Francis, *Apostolic Exhortation Laudate Deum*. (2023). 56.

[7] Inquirer. *'Window closing' on climate mitigation efforts – report*. (31 October 2022). [Link](#).

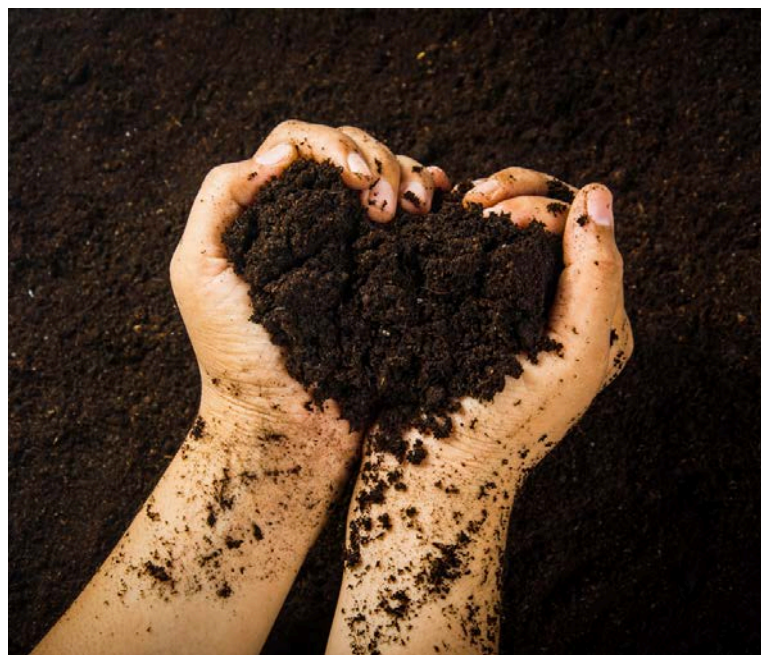
[8] Interesting Engineering. *Climate change is 'out of control' says UN, as hottest days recorded since 1850*. (7 July 2023). [Link](#).

Assembly Keynote - Fr Ritchie Gomez

Continuing our modern lifestyle with all the “isms” of our time (capitalism, consumerism, materialism, individualism...) and ‘business as usual,’ we’ll shortly approach a point where it will be too late to shift our apocalyptic trajectory - worldwide ecosystem collapse will be inevitable.

This Chevalier Family gathering could be our springboard with our theme, “One Heart in Caring Our Common Home”. Let us go back to the story of creation. What is our role, what is our purpose, and what is the primordial call of every human being on this earth: our common home? Remember, man or woman might have been created by God as the summit of creation; this is not to lord it over creation but to be its steward. This is what we call the “Spirituality of Creation”. God gently created every creature according to their own designs, uniqueness, and purpose, with love and tenderness. This is what we call the “Spirituality of the Heart”.

For many years of my involvement in this environmental advocacy, one time, I contemplated the scientific understanding of different species and of different lifeforms in biodiversity. This basic knowledge of science depicted to us the interrelatedness and interconnectedness of everything with one another. To my surprise, men are not included in the scientific cycle of biodiversity for the world's sustainability. For what reason are people so special (in the book of Genesis), but at the same time, they do not have any value at all in biodiversity? What is really our purpose in this world? Why are we here? Are we really intended to be here on this earth?



For the sake of this special Chevalier Family International gathering, I will not leave you with any questions unanswered. To answer these questions, let me bring you back to the story of the garden. When God created Adam and Eve, God put them in the middle of the garden. Not in the middle of nowhere? Adam and Eve, as the representation of the first human beings, were in the garden, primarily to be gardeners of this earth. The problem now is that no one wants to be a gardener; rather, all of us want to be managers of the garden. I am proud to say to you right here in front of you that I am a Gardener MSC Priest.

Fr Jules Chevalier’s most favourite words in the Bible are from 1 J. 4:16. “We have come to know and believe in the love God has for us.” (cognovimus et credidimus caritati...). As One Family of Fr Jules, this is our claim; this is our identity; this is who we are; we are Missionaries of HIS Sacred Heart, and we just want to love as Jesus loved. We just want to bring and share this love of the heart of Jesus, especially in places and times where this love is not effectively found.

When we secure food for our family, that is SUSTAINABILITY, but when we secure food also for others, this is already SPIRITUALITY.



Assembly Keynote - Fr Ritchie Gomez

MSC Centre For The Poor

The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) long ago desired to establish a centre that would completely express our concrete concerns, especially for the poor and the little ones or marginalized in society, so the MSC Center for the Poor was born. It is a grassroots, non-profit organization dedicated to taking care of the environment and the well-being of the people and providing services to the community in terms of spiritual, pastoral and socio-economic needs.

A place where we can promote our commitment to the total development of a human being whose fruit is a conversion of the heart and ultimately experiencing the transformative effort in building a new heart and a new world. We established the pilot area in Butuan City in 2018. Eventually, it gave birth to an agriculture cooperative movement among farmers in 2020 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we called it the MSC Centre For The Poor Agriculture Cooperative (MSC-CEPAGCO). A Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) registered, now a 'Medium Level' Co-Op Category, Department of Agriculture (DA) Learning Site, and a Technical Education Skills and Development Authority (TESDA) Farm School. It was awarded as the most outstanding Civil Society Organization (CSO) in the country in 2022. With P40 million in net worth and assets and 300+ members, it has been operating for two and a half years already.

Watch YouTube video on MSC-CEPAGCO. [Link](#).



This is how we define the Centre for the Poor now: it is an expression of the Spirituality of the Heart that permeates us and finds expression in missionary activities. IT IS SPIRITUALITY ITSELF. It is much beyond structures and enumerated activities but an identity of being a missionary community, collaborative in nature, participative in process, and greater owning of the MSC that we are sent to the world. Let me quote from our MSC Constitution and Statutes #20: ... "Like him, we are sent into the world to proclaim the Good News that God is a Father who shows his concern for the poor and suffering, and who gives meaning to life by giving us his love."



Assembly Keynote - Fr Ritchie Gomez

Now, let me proceed to the last and most challenging part of this talk.

Our time needs new leaders and lay people who can look far into the future. Who can make the decisions needed from an integrated ecological perspective? An informed and transformed person who can hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

Our time challenges us with the most radical choices humans have ever had to make. We can no longer leave the solutions to others. What is needed is not the willingness to change the whole world but the readiness for a personal transformation. From this new consciousness, we will then work on the changes that society needs everywhere.

Hene, a Maori Elder, said we need a new type of leadership: *"We cannot depend on governments to heal our wounds; we have to help each other"*.

Thomas Berry said: *"The integral ecologist is the spokesperson for the planet and will speak and act from the numinous aspects and wisdom of a universe emergent from the beginning. (s) He can deepen awareness of the processes related to an emergent ecological worldview in the individual person and in groups, organizations, or cultures"*.

To co-create the future: *"We cannot solve the problems of our present world with the same consciousness that created the problems."* (Albert Einstein)

Jonas Salk said: *"We are more than social agents to improve the existing situation"*.

We are called to something more. We have a sense of the future, which motivates us to look beyond the current limits of humanity.

It is a new time with different possibilities and demands.

We need to let go of our detachment from our glorious past. Our great ideals will not serve us

anymore as we search for a new way into the future. We live now in a different evolutionary time.

To release is a great gift in transformation.

The best are not always the champions, but the first are the ones. So, be the first "to love". This world needs pioneers who dare to find the way to the source for ourselves and the community to which we belong. Every one of us here is called to be the FIRST. Coming from different countries all over the world, it is our Mother Earth who calls us together for support in her ways to survive. When we go home, may she radiate her vitality, health, and power in us.

Before I end my talk, I invite you for a moment of silence.

Thank you very much!

Presented by:
Rev Fr Richie Gomez MSC
Missionaries of the Sacred Heart
Center for the Poor – Philippines
(richforever55@gmail.com)



Assembly Keynote - Alison McKenzie

One in Heart ... Together

Alison McKenzie

Today is when we spend time on our structures and responsibilities. In the days leading up to today, we have focused on our vision – on who we are called to be and on the Spirit in which we are called to live our lives. This *‘One in Heart – Together’* keynote will focus on the organisational matters that will help us more effectively be heart-bonded. We will explore the idea of our organisational structures, which are outlined in the new ‘Guiding Principles and Organisational Directions’ document. Later in the day, we will vote on accepting these Principles and Directions as our foundational document.

We are not about to engage in a day of criticism or measurement of how closely we are aligned to the ideal of our vision or of comparison of one country to another or region to another. Instead, we hope to spotlight where we are heading, each in our own way and our own time, interpreted through our own lens of culture and custom. The invitation of this day is for each individual and each member country to open their minds and hearts to the possibility of what we can become and how we can support and encourage each other along the way.

It might be helpful to begin by drawing from the recent Synod in Rome. In his opening address, Pope Francis defined synodality as *‘a process of journeying together as the People of God.’* *‘It indicates’*, he says, *‘a way of listening to each individual person as a member of the Church, so as to understand how God might be speaking to all of us through each individual voice.’* And is that not what has been happening over these past few days? We are a synodal people where religious and lay share the mission together, respecting each of our vocations and the different calls we have from our different states of life.

Pope Francis goes on to say that the characteristics of synodality are **communion**, **participation**, and **mission**.

Communion and mission are theological terms.

Communion points to the interior experience of the Christ. We have been invited all week to journey inward and encounter the risen Christ heart to heart. For Francis and for we who are guided by a Spirituality of Heart, communion (or the heart encounter with our God) is the centre of our Spirit and is something we deeply understand and live with as a daily reality.

Mission is the journey back out into the world in which we live with the good news of a God who loves. This aspect of synodality is also very familiar to the Chevalier Family. The call to Mission is at the centre of our Spirit, and exploring different aspects of mission has also been a key feature of this Assembly program. Remember the PowerPoint presentations of the work in each continent and the beautiful examples of mission we have seen. Mission is also something we deeply understand and live as a daily reality.



Assembly Keynote - Alison McKenzie

When we speak of formation, we refer to our immersion in our call to communion and mission.

Participation is a much more practical word that points to the how of communion and mission. As we have said several times – it would have been unthinkable for Father Chevalier to imagine the mission without the active and equal participation of the religious and the laity. For him, the two were inseparable. And so, as we explore our Guiding Principles and Organisational Structures, we explore how we can participate together to enable communion and mission to deepen and flourish most effectively.

So, that is the task of today:

- To consider the synodal vision we have been given;
- To hear from those who have immersed themselves deeply in various aspects of this vision;
- To reflect on the organisational structures in our own countries; and,
- To consider what is next or what more is possible in our own places.

We will do this by listening, sharing, and reflecting. We can learn so much from listening to each other.

In this address, I want to foreshadow two key aspects of our structure as outlined in our 'Guiding Principles and Organisational Directions' document with reference to pages 3 to 6. These pages outline our structure of local groups, National Councils, and the International Council.

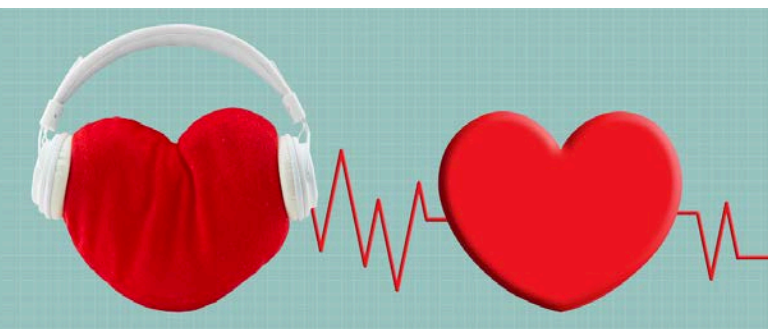


You will notice the language is not directive – it is not an accountability structure where the top dictates to the bottom, and the bottom tier reports to the top. Rather, a better way to describe our organisational structure is that it is a way of organising that enables connections to be made and maintained – rather like a spider's web. In a spider web, every part is loosely connected to every other part around the centre. Even though every individual part of the web is fragile, the whole structure is very strong, and when one part of the web is damaged – the web does not collapse – the spider repairs the damage, so the whole is even stronger.

Our web-like structure connects each of us and enables us to communicate, support, and respond to needs in different places. The role of the International Council is to create the strands of connection, encouragement, and support from which flows communion and mission.

And likewise, for National Councils. They are not primarily governing bodies, but rather, their role is to facilitate communication and connection that enables formation and mission to occur.

The International Council does have some hopes for National Councils.



Assembly Keynote - Alison McKenzie



Firstly, it hopes that they represent all the branches of the Family present in a country. We hope there won't be an MSC Fathers Council and a separate MSC Women or Daughters Council. Still, at the national level, the Council is representative of all branches of the Family present in a country. In some places, this is impossible, but it is the ideal we work towards.

That does not imply that local groups connected to one or other of the professed members must change or amalgamate – not at all. We are not suggesting that the distinctiveness of the charism should be lost at the local group level. Keep your traditions, customs, and distinctive Spirit, but with a caveat – the Spirit of the group exists within a larger Spirit, that of the Laity of the Chevalier Family. And the fundamental purpose is to contribute to the mission.

The second aspect of our national and international structures that we ask you to reflect upon is how we define membership. While we are not explicitly discussing this topic at this Assembly, it is important that we recognise the differing ways in which we view membership of our Family and begin the conversation to work towards some clarity and consistency around our interpretation of what membership means.

The Guiding Principles state:

“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 to live a Spirituality of the Heart, according to the charism as expressed in the above-mentioned Guiding Principles and who will be accepted by a local country group and/or the National Council. Each National Council or local country group determines their criteria for acceptance.”

In some places, including my own country, membership is defined loosely using terms such as Partners-in-Mission for those who, in some way, are attracted to our Spirit and engage formatively. The strengths of this model are that it is inclusive and non-judgmental, and there is a place for everyone who wishes to be associated. The weakness, however, is that it is undemanding, and people can enjoy the Spirit without commitment or obligation. This way tends to suit the secular Western mind but is not without significant weakness.

In other places, membership is restricted with an expectation of explicit formation and a significant personal commitment. In some places, there are strict rules defining membership. The advantages are obvious with a high level of commitment and responsibility. The disadvantages are also obvious: many may not meet the entry requirements and thus be denied membership and ongoing formation.



Assembly Keynote - Alison McKenzie

When I consider the question of membership, I find it helpful to reflect on how Jesus organised his mission. He had a small inner circle of those who had committed to follow him and very high expectations of them. He demanded absolute commitment – *“don’t look back”, “don’t bury your father”,...*

But – his real mission was out in the desert with those who followed him around the countryside, hungry and thirsty, sick and needy. To them, he said: *“Come to me”, “What do you need?”, “Your sins are forgiven”, “come eat and drink”*. He never said to any one of these people – you are not good enough – go away – to go the synagogue. He did say, *“I don’t judge you”* and *“Come be made whole”*. He often turned on the disciples and said: *“don’t send them away”,* and *“you feed them”*.

I find this image very helpful – an inner circle of formation for the sake of the outer mission.

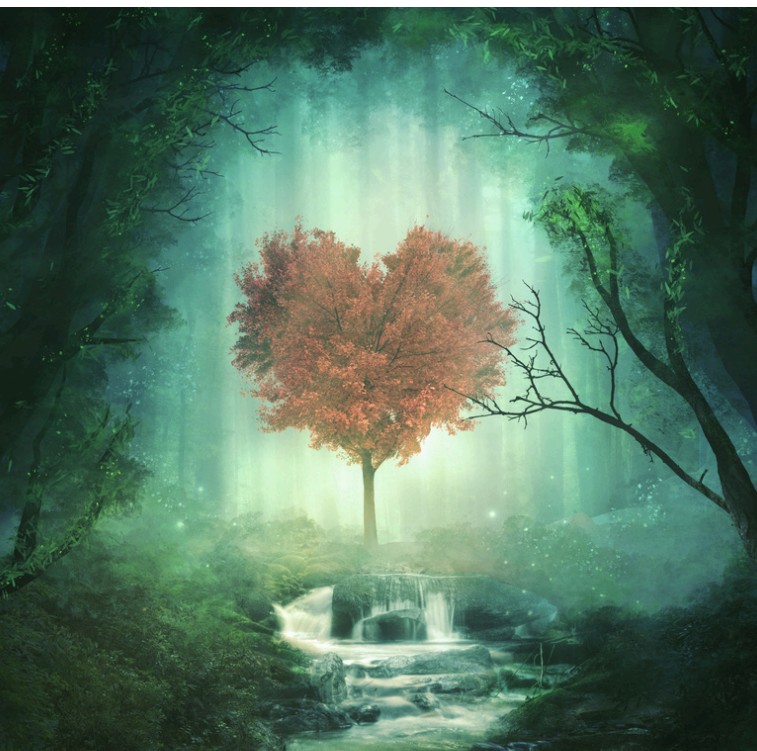
And sometimes, Matthew or Bartimeus asked if they could follow him.

And so – as we consider our membership, it is important to reflect on the purpose of our

groups and to define membership in a way that best enables us to deepen our hearts and to participate in mission.

The second aspect of our structures that we will explore is the role of the Spiritual Companion. You will notice that we do not use the term Spiritual Director, and that is deliberate. Companion denotes a person who accompanies another. A companion is responsive to the needs of the other, and in ideal circumstances, each companions the other, in our case, on the journey to the heart. In true companionship, one does not dominate the other; one is not more important than the other – both share strengths and support weaknesses.

In the early days of the emergence of the lay movement in the 1970s, when the explicit understanding of Spirituality of the Heart was just emerging, groups of lay people formed around the Religious to learn more about the charism. The Religious had the knowledge, and we laity became associated to be formed by them. As the years have gone on, our understanding of our charism has deepened, and for we laity, an understanding of the distinctiveness of our particular charism is emerging. In most places, it is no longer necessary or even appropriate for the laity to be dependent on the Religious for their formation and the organisation of their groups. At the international level, we say that our relationship of laity to the Religious is autonomous but interdependent. That is not to say that we don’t need Religious to accompany us – we absolutely need you, but we need you to be our companions on the spiritual journey, not our directors. In some places, such as my own country, that relationship is well established, and we laity have received such excellent formation from the Sisters and MSC men that we can now operate with autonomy but still with interdependence. In other places, formation is still required to assist the people to become fully immersed in the charism. What we hope, as an International Council, is that as laity are ready and able to mature into companionship, they are encouraged to do so.



Assembly Keynote - Alison McKenzie

However, I believe there is one very important aspect of our spirituality that we need the Religious to teach us, and that is how to pray. By that, I don't mean how to say prayers; we are very good at that. I mean the deep, silent, sustaining prayer of the heart that makes space for God's gentle movement in our lives. Just as your vocations grow out of your prayer, so must ours, and that is one area that we need explicit formation in.

In conclusion, our structures must not be static.

Just as Father Chevalier called on the men and women of his time to create structures that enabled an effective response to the needs of his time, so too for us. The purpose of reflecting on our structures and organisation is to enable us to participate more effectively in our mission.

The mission is always the same – to work towards enabling the “Sacred Heart of Jesus to be known and loved everywhere”, and we do that by responding to the needs of our time and our places. Father Hans has so eloquently reminded us that those needs call us to respond to the disparity of wealth and the inequitable access to resources, to ecological conversion, and to challenge the apathy and individualism that so mark our times. If our structures do not help us respond to these needs and get in the way of our mission, we need to change our structures. Good structures don't impede, they enable.

Thank you, and God bless you.

Alison.



Reflections on the Role of a Spiritual Companion

The German laity and religious have worked together to create a reciprocal relationship where all members companion each other in their journey to the heart and in their commitment to the mission that follows the transformative encounter with our God. The relationships and the outward mission of the German group are rooted in and have grown out of shared contemplative prayer. We share with you a link to the movie they presented at the Assembly on the role of Spiritual Companionship and three reflective papers written by group members.

Here is the link to the movie made by the German laity. [Link](#)

Spiritual Accompaniment of Individuals and Groups

Sr Stephani Orlowski MSC

... is always also life accompaniment. For spirituality does not take place in a vacuum. It is realized in everyday life, or it is an aberration.

Prerequisites:

- Own experiences on the spiritual path.
- The ability to reflect on one's own crises and developments.
- Remaining a learner.
- Empathy, active listening, perception of the other person in their complexity.
- No judgements.
- Basic knowledge of conversation and accompaniment.

Attitudes:

- Pure present tense!
- Being able to endure the ups and downs, the suffering and the search of the companion.
- Do not suggest solutions or recommendations.
- Sideshows take up all topics, knowing they are not the core.
- Staying with it - all the way to the centre.

Interactions:

- Strengthen the pillars of identity:
 - Material
 - Work, profession
 - Spirit, values
 - Body
 - Social network
- Stabilize these contents:
 - Provide support so that there is security.
 - Regulate everyday life even in a crisis.

Orientation:

- What was helpful?
- What is the next step?

The challenge for the accompanying person:

- THEY CANNOT MAKE A DIFFERENCE.
- THEY CAN FEEL SORRY.
- THEY CAN ONLY ACCOMPANY.

The "icon of friendship" points to this reality.

Reflections on the Role of a Spiritual Companion

What Companionship Means To Me

Alfred Jansenberger

For me, mentoring means accompanying others on their journey and also going on the journey myself. I don't know the solution for others, but I know methods to support them in their search. It helps me that I have been on the road myself for several years. I always gain new insights for myself when I accompany others.

My spiritual companionship is based on the Christian tradition, especially the Christian mysticism of Meister Eckhart and Johannes Tauler.

I use the tools I have learned in the course of my training, and I am guided by the basic attitudes of Carl Rogers for person-centered work:

- **Authenticity (Congruence):** I do not hide behind empty phrases or pious words; I allow myself to be touched and involved emotionally.
- **Empathy:** I try to understand and accept the other person's experience, feelings, motives, and values to understand and accept them.
- **Appreciation:** I try to accept the other person without judgment or prejudice, even if I do not agree with them in some areas.

In my support, I give preference to "making experiences" over "listening to words".



Reflections on the Role of a Spiritual Companion

Spiritual Companionship for a Group within the Chevalier Family

Elisabeth Hartmann

I am Elisabeth Hartmann, and since 2001, I have been a member of the lay movement within the Chevalier Family. Since 2007, I have been leading and accompanying a group of approximately 20 lay members of the Chevalier Family in Duisburg, Germany. I do this as part of a selected team, of which I am the leader and spokesperson.

In 2001, Sister Stephani Orlowski MSC founded the group, and in 2007, she guided the group towards independence. Since then, there has been a leadership team to which I belong. Sister Stephani has been accompanying the group as a spiritual companion since 2007.

How do I understand my role as the leader of a group and a spiritual companion?

Supporting the formation of a group

- It is important to me that the people who come to us are seeking community and a deepening of their spirituality. Anyone who seeks both is welcome. We approach new interested individuals with openness, and we are not a closed group. The group consists of individuals from different Christian denominations and cultures.
- Each member is unique and is on their own spiritual journey. Each person is allowed to be themselves and is accepted and valued as such. Everyone is encouraged to contribute their gifts and talents to the group, making them spiritual catalysts.
- Personal sharing is an important element of our group meetings. We share what is currently moving us in our lives. Each person is given space to speak from the heart, and we listen without judgment. We share and receive support without evaluation.
- In the midst of our lives, our spiritual lives are revealed. There is no separation. This sharing creates trust and a sense of acceptance and belonging. The feedback from fellow travellers is an opportunity, perhaps a corrective, on our own spiritual journey that we can embrace.
- The trust gained through this process is a good foundation for connecting the group members with each other and makes mutual support a natural part of our interactions.



Reflections on the Role of a Spiritual Companion

Fostering growth in faith and on the spiritual path

- The development of mature spirituality involves continuous growth. We address the topics and desires of the group, providing space for exploration of faith and acquired perceptions of God.
- Our meetings are characterized by an attitude of mindfulness, acceptance, and appreciation.
- Contemplation and seeking moments of silence are familiar practices for many. Through these practices, we grow into the experience that the divine reality works as a loving presence within and through us. We allow ourselves to be transformed by this reality.
- The spirituality of the Bible, encounters with the person of Jesus, and the charism of Jules Chevalier are important sources of inspiration for our spiritual life.

Strengthening community, connection, and engagement

- It is important to be aware of being part of an international community, including encounters with people from other countries and within the worldwide Chevalier family. These experiences expand our hearts.
- We remain responsive to the needs of other people and engage collectively in a children's village project in Haiti, as well as in our volunteer work within our families, neighbourhoods, workplaces, and social services.
- I work with the group to find ways for other seekers to join us, such as offering a spiritual retreat week, biblio-drama, and Bible sharing.

What do I see as my role as a spiritual companion?

I strive to keep each group member in focus and provide them with space. I create and facilitate a framework for spiritual experiences and sharing. I keep the question alive:

- What sustains and supports me in life?
- How do I mature in my faith?
- What is my talent or gift that I want to bring into this world on the path of the heart?

I support the exploration of central questions of faith and advocate for the questions and desires of the group.

I find my role accurately described in the metaphor of a midwife:

Assisting in the birth, bringing forth what is a treasure within each of us, and empowering people to make this treasure fruitful for themselves and others. I encourage others to engage in this role with each other.



Fr Hans Kwakman MSC Online Formation Course

Father Hans Kwakman MSC has spent several years writing an outstanding Online Formation Course on Spirituality of the Heart. The course covers the story of our emergence and our Spirit and is presented as 70 short sessions that can be used sequentially for initial and ongoing formation. When used in conjunction with Eugene Cuskelly's Movements of the Heart, we have both content and process that offers outstanding formation of the heart experiences.

Father Hans' course can be accessed on the Laity of the Chevalier Family website:

<https://misacor.org.au/resources/formation-resources-lcf-int>

As you can see, the course has been translated into [English](#), [French](#), [German](#), [Spanish](#), and [Dutch](#).





Section Five: Assembly Photos

Assembly Photos

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Assembly Photos



Assembly Photos



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Assembly Photos



Assembly Photos



Thank You

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- The outgoing International Council and the Philippines Organising Committee over the past six years.
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