



Order of Augustinian Recollects

**Commission
on the process of
revitalization
and restructuring
of the Order**

Document 8

**Rome
March 2013**

«Your Spirit inflames us»

«Your Spirit inflames us and leads us upwards:
We stir and move forward.
We ascend the steps of the heart, as we sing a new song.»
(SAINT AUGUSTINE, *Confessions*, 13, 10)

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«Your Spirit inflames us»

1. PRESENTATION

«Your Spirit inflames us and leads us upwards:
We stir and move forward. We ascend the steps of the heart,
as we sing a new song.» (SAINT AUGUSTINE, *Confessions*, 13, 10)

TO ALL RELIGIOUS OF THE ORDER

Beloved Brothers:

The Order responds, in accordance with its very charismatic identity, to the call of the Church to the new evangelization through the process of revitalization and restructuring. To realize this process, we need to reaffirm the sense of belongingness and to assume the purpose and mission of the Order. We ought to be clear in our common objective as specified by the *Constitutions* and in the direction we ought to pursue. If this direction is ambiguous, poorly defined and is not passed on, each unit of the Order will pursue, consciously or unconsciously, its own concrete objective and vision. We invite you to have the conviction of “being an Order,” to value the common charism that we have received as Augustinian Recollects; we encourage you to live it out and to evangelize as a community renewed in hope.

The Chapter General stressed the importance of communion. Communion is essential to our charism. It revitalizes and helps us to be meaningful. It will be difficult to draw up plans, programs or objectives common for all the provinces, if each province or community implements only what it considers to be its priorities and goals, if we allow ourselves to be carried away by personalism or by a group or nation’s interest, if we seek for complacency, if we favor accommodation and isolation, while undermining the demand of the common charism and the missionary dimension. With these attitudes, which draw us away from communion, we will be promoting the dispersion of strength and disruption of community life, formation and apostolate.

The current situation and the actual moment we live are a providential opportunity to renew our mission, to revive generously our personal response to the call of the Lord, to foster communion, and to grow in our conviction of being an Order. We are called to be Augustinian Recollects and, as such, we have a mission in the Church today. The provinces, vicariates and delegations, with diverse cultures and ministries, ought to have the same orientation and to be united in one common purpose.

«Since the very start of the process, we have been echoing a pressing call to co-responsibility, and we insist once again on the revitalization of the Order, which is a

process of personal, communitarian and pastoral conversion that affects us all. We shall have to reaffirm likewise our common purpose to feel that we are involved in the common mission of the Order in the Church today.»¹

We, the Commission on the process of revitalization and restructuring, offer you a new document for reflection, discernment and participation in this path of faith and hope, proposed by the 54th General Chapter. The document focuses on four points: synthesis of the analysis, criteria of discernment, a questionnaire and a proposed plan of life and mission.

The synthesis of the analysis of the status of the Order was based on the responses and contributions of the religious and of the provincial councils. Likewise, we used the strategic analysis and the “resultant synthesis or analysis” of our procedure realized by a team of professionals. The synthesis furnishes us a general vision of the reality that we live. It helps us to take into consideration our strengths and weaknesses, and it will be useful for drawing up the plan of life and mission that we need.

Having analyzed the status of the Order and taking into account the opportunities indicated in that same analysis, we then propose some criteria, by which we can evaluate the quality of our religious life and of our ministries, or of those other presences and services demanded from us today. Likewise, it would have to include the structures, so that we only maintain those that render our life more credible and meaningful and that facilitate our mission as Augustinian Recollects. This evaluation or discernment will help us revitalize and better reorganize ourselves.

Furthermore, the 54th General Chapter asked the commission to consult the religious. Thus, we have prepared a questionnaire, and the responses of the religious will help us to draw up the proposals for the process of revitalization and restructuring of the Order, which is the final goal of the commission.

From data furnished by the synthesis and analysis, each province, vicariate or delegation will have to elaborate its plan of life and mission, a program of objectives and activities that are realistic and feasible, and that stir up hope. We must trust in Providence and prepare the ways of the Lord. This endeavor requires listening, humility, constancy, fraternal dialogue and a spirit of sacrifice. It deals with looking into how we live and what we do, with asking ourselves how the Lord wants us to live our life and to serve the people of God according to our charismatic identity.

We persistently exhort all of you brothers to take into consideration this document, and in a special way, we ask you to respond to the questions (Section 4). It is important to reflect and respond. This is a way of showing our responsibility in this process of revitalization and restructuring.

The answers to the questionnaire will be presented individually or in group, duly identified and signed by each of the religious-respondent. The answers, which include the name and signature of the religious, can be sent through the Internet. They must be submitted to the member of the commission of each province before June 30, 2013. All the gathered data will then be forwarded to the president of the commission before July 31. From these data, the commission will prepare concrete proposals for the

¹ *Prot. N. 1-6/13.*

process of revitalization and restructuring, which will be submitted to the General Council.²

The Prior Provincial, in coordination with the member of the commission of each province, will establish the manner of disseminating this document, either in assemblies of religious, in communities or individually.

We thank you for your collaboration and we ask you to remember this process of revitalization and restructuring in your prayers, so that it may truly be the Holy Spirit who would set to flame the hearts of all religious of the Order, and who would lead them to the height of spiritual life, fraternal communion and apostolic mission.

May the Lord let you experience his love and bless you with his peace.

*Commission on the process of revitalization
and restructuring of the Order*

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² *Ordinances of the 54th General Chapter, 8*

2. SYNTHESIS OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE STATUS OF THE ORDER

2.1. Charism and Augustinian Life

- *Identity and sense of belongingness:*

In general, there is the sense of belongingness to the Order and adherence to the Augustinian Recollect charism among the religious.

Nevertheless, the analysis shows imbalance and incoherence between the ideal life according to the Constitutions, the ordinances of the chapters and official documents, and the real life of the religious and of the communities. Communication fails and egoism, lack of availability and the low number of religious in communities infringe upon this sense of belongingness.

- *Praying Community and Spiritual Life:*

The religious show that prayer continues to be the axis of religious life: In general, the communities pray.

But this prayer is threatened by monotony, routine, and activism. There is a lack of harmony between life and prayer, between prayer and pastoral work.

- *Fraternal Life and Community:*

Fraternal life in community constitutes a fundamental dimension, and thus, the religious manifest such.

Nevertheless, this community life is threatened by individualism, lack of leadership, personal isolation, and by lack of dialogue and communication among the members of the community. Communitarian activities and review of life are scarcely done, and neither pastoral activities are planned and evaluated in common.

- *Consecrated Chastity:*

In general, chastity is lived with joy, and there are neither scandals nor obstacles in this aspect.

But it is worth noting that the means of communication, as well as the affective immaturity of the religious are perceived to be a threat; there is a lack of a more solid formation as regards affectivity.

- *Consecrated Poverty:*

A good number of religious live in simplicity and austerity, and they care responsibly for the common things.

Despite this positive affirmation, it is noticeable that many religious live quite extravagantly, they allow themselves to be carried by dissatisfaction and materialism, and they are not a prophetic sign of poverty; there are cases of religious and communities that neither remit what they receive, nor contribute to the common fund. Having a secured life, others do not see anymore the need to work.

• ***Consecrated Obedience:***

In general, the religious live out obedience with a certain degree of availability: they fulfill and accept the decisions of their superiors. This obedience is oftentimes the result of an open dialogue.

Nonetheless, the analysis indicates also that the religious are obedient but less co-responsible; that there is much resistance in return, and that a good number of religious are very much “attached” to their communities. The high average age of the religious is a great limitation of their availability, which is required from us today more than ever. On the other hand, there are deficiencies in the exercise of authority, before because of authoritarianism, now because the superiors do not dare to command.

2.2. Formation

• ***Vocational Ministry***

The preoccupation and awareness for vocations are gradually increasing. There is an increase of vocations in Asia and in some Latin American countries. In all communities, prayers for vocations are being recited and there is a desire to work in common on the part of the provinces.

Despite this, there are still perceived serious deficiencies: there is a lack of unity in the various vocational ministries of each province; absence of common plans, even at the local level; the vocational ministries are continuously delegated to some few religious (vocation directors) and there is not collaboration from the rest of the friars. Likewise, the negative impact of the social and religious context of some countries on the growth of vocations is underscored.

• ***Initial Formation***

The efforts to consolidate formation teams, the unity of criteria and the structures that facilitate the process of initial formation are highlighted.

A greater teamwork and a personalized accompaniment of religious in-charge of formation are deficient. Having affirmed the importance of the initial formation, yet there is no specific formation for those in-charge of formation, and there is discontinuity of formation from one stage to the other. On the other hand, the candidates generally come with a deficient academic, cultural, religious, social and personal preparation, which affects the quality of the formation process. Some provinces have taken important steps to correct them. The defection of a good number of young religious is worrisome.

• ***Permanent Formation***

The importance of continuous formation and the concern of many religious for it are underscored.

The provinces have scarcely concrete plans of continuous formation, and it would seem that continuous formation remains to be a sole responsibility of the individual religious. The friars, who are absorbed in their pastoral activity, generally end up in neglecting their formation. Where there are programs of continuous formation, these initiatives are reduced to days of formation which remain to be in the intellectual or theoretical level, and do not get realized in the life of the religious. It lacks a continuous formation plan.

2.3. Apostolic Community and New Evangelization

• *Ministerial Apostolate*

Most of the religious are dedicated to this apostolate. Thus, it is a strong and important ministry. In general, the religious show interest in evangelization and not only in the administration of the sacraments. They work in solidarity with the diocese, take a leading role and allow laypersons to participate. The bishops and the faithful say that they are satisfied with our ministerial apostolate.

Nonetheless, it can be observed quite often that parish priests work very independently. At times, they run the parishes as something personal, barely involving the community and lay groups. Many ministries are carried out without any communitarian program. There is a tension between the parish life and that of the community. The Augustinian Recollect dimension is less noticeable, and as such we are perceived more to be good diocesan priests than Augustinian Recollect religious. Not few parishes lack a pastoral plan that would give continuity after the change of assignments of parish priests.

• *Missionary Apostolate*

The missions “refresh” the communities and help in maintaining live the missionary character of the Order. The few religious in the missions work with joy and their dedication is appreciated in the Order. The availability of the religious for this apostolate is greater among the young religious. The provinces have a commitment to help and economically sustain the mission.

The missions, nevertheless, are “a separate world.” Some religious are neither aware nor interested of it. There is a lack of common plan and specific formation in Missionology. The advanced age of the missionaries and the lack of replacement from the younger generation of religious are considered to be an obstacle.

• *Educational Apostolate*

The schools of the Order are recognized to be institutions, which offer quality education, and they constitute a “privileged platform” for the transmission of Gospel and Augustinian values, and for vocational promotion. In some parts of the Order, the schools are avenues, in which the shared mission with the laypersons is seen more clearly, as they are being adequately formed.

There is no common, clear and joint institutional plan, in academic terms, among all the schools of the Order. On the other hand, there is also the need of qualified religious and of a plan of formation of the Augustinian identity for the faculty. There is a lack of investment in formation of replacements and in the preparation of laypersons.

• *Social Apostolate*

Practically, all the provinces have social programs that are of great impact, which vary from one country to another, according to the necessities of each one.

The Order does not have any common project and thus some initiatives are perceived to be less professional and are reduced more to social work or assistance, realized by individual persons. Some provinces are seen to be totally independent from the NGO Haren Alde.

- ***Youth Ministry***

The promotion of the Augustinian Recollect Youth movement, proposed by Augustinian Recollect youth ministry, is in progress. It lacks the implementation of the joint and common plan of the Order, and the specific formation in youth leadership. In countries where there is an enormous influx of young people to the Churches, many of our ministries only offer catechesis on the sacraments and they have a minimal impact on the world of the youngsters. The advanced age and the unwillingness of many religious are considered to be an obstacle.

- ***Other Apostolates***

Some religious publish books and undertake apostolate that promotes culture, the means of social communication, new technology and ecology.

Even though the Constitutions put forward various initiatives, there is no common plan either in the provinces or in the Order that specifies in what social circumstances these initiatives must be realized. Thus, each province or religious carries out these initiatives according to their personal condition and to their present circumstances.

2.4. Government of the Order

- ***The structure and organization***

The cultural diversity of the Order shows the universality of the Church, especially in a globalized society. The internationality and multiculturalism of the Order are considered to be an asset. As regards the structure and organization, in general, the religious in the provinces recognize that the process of revitalization and restructuring has imbued the Order with a motivating spirit.

Some obstacles are cited: the present structure of the Order, which is less functional; the secretariats of provinces centered around one religious with other obligations; and the geographical dispersion that isolates and grants great autonomy to provinces or to their territories.

- ***Communion and Communication***

Communication and communitarian activities have improved and progressed at the level of the Order due to new technology. We are trying to go with the pace of the time. Thus, the websites of the Order and of the provinces have been enhanced, as well as meetings and gatherings.

The idea of sharing our life and mission, and of offering it as service and testimony of communion has not yet entered the consciousness of the religious. The lack of communication is an obstacle in our communities and in the Order. Communication among the various sectors of the Order is still limited, even within the various territories of one same province.

V. Economy

• *Economy and Communion of Goods*

Our finances are well reorganized and adequately administered. There is care for the common patrimony. The work of the religious in almost all the ministries is the principal source of income.

Nevertheless, since the province provides the religious for everything, some religious do not show concern for the administration of goods and they do not lead an austere life. They also personalize some goods and occasionally neglect the common patrimony of the community.

3. CRITERIA OF DISCERNMENT

The voice of the Spirit has called us to follow Christ as Augustinian Recollects, and as such, we are sent and the Church needs us today. To respond to this call according to our own charismatic identity entails giving priority to a more evangelic life, which searches for the quality of prayer, communitarian life and apostolic service.

On the other hand, our communities ought to offer in accordance with the charism their generous collaboration with the local Church, giving testimony to fraternal life and contributing our spirituality.³ The *Constitutions* gather the teachings of the Church and ask us to cooperate “*in pastoral activities under the direction of the diocesan bishop, in fraternal collaboration with priests, religious, and other pastoral agents, according to the charism of the Order.*”⁴ We are to assume as well “*the general guidelines – laid down by the Prior General with his council – that reflect the Augustinian Recollect dimension in the apostolic activity.*”⁵

From the analysis of the reality, especially of the opportunities, which had been identified, we propose the following criteria of discernment.⁶ These are not the only criteria, and are not of equal importance. From these criteria, with the purpose of promoting the revitalization of the life and mission of the Order, we have to analyze and discern the viability of our communities and ministries, the viability and efficacy of the structure of our vicariates or provinces. This discernment will help us value what presences are more meaningful today and to decide what communities and ministries we ought to maintain and care, what to close and to administer in a different way, what new ministries we must assume.

It does not deal with maintaining at all cost what we have or to continuously do what we have been doing. If, upon assuming a ministry and directing our apostolate, we allow ourselves to show preference for persons or communities at a determined period, without a vision of the future and of the conviction being an Order, dispersion of efforts and ambiguity of our life and mission are created. These attitudes slow down the process that we have undertaken.

In order to avoid repetition, we first present the criteria that refer to the viability of each Augustinian Recollect community and then followed, in the various sections, by the specific criteria according to the field of apostolate or ministry.

³ Cf. *Vita consecrata*, 49; cf. *Mutuae relationes*, 22; *CIC c. 578; c. 586, 1 and 2; Aparecida*, 216-220; Synod New Evangelization, *Proposition 50*.

⁴ *Constitutions*, 283

⁵ Cf. *Constitutions*, 284

⁶ The criterion is a requisite that must be respected in order to attain a certain objective or to satisfy a need. It must be clear, global, consistent, verifiable and feasible.

Criteria for the revitalization and restructuring

3.1. *For each community*

1. Communities formed by at least 3 religious, where it is possible to harmonize prayer, common life and the apostolate (*Const.* 303; *Add. Cod.* 434-435).
2. To carry out the apostolate as a community: communion and testimony of fraternal life, a common project and teamwork.
3. To live and to offer the Augustinian Recollect spirituality to laypersons: Augustinian interiority, community, missionary spirit and tradition, charity, solidarity, option for the poor.
4. Promotion of the Augustinian Recollect lay groups: secular fraternities and Augustinian Recollect Youth groups
5. Plan for continuous formation and availability to participate in formative activities and theological and pastoral up dating organized by the Order, by the province and by other institutions.
6. Ecclesial communion, according to one's fidelity to the charism
7. Shared mission with the laypersons.
8. A stable and continuous plan for youth and vocational ministry.
9. Pastoral and social programs assumed as a community.
10. Need of the presence of the Order in that place or country, and needs of the local Church.

3.1. *For schools*

1. To be enlivened by an *idearium* or by a character, which is properly Augustinian, receiving from it, one's conviction to evangelize and charismatic identity.
2. To search for the quality of teaching: to offer an integral pedagogy, which includes all human dimensions like culture, solidarity, and ecology.
3. To be guided by an academic program.
4. To take part in ecclesial communion, being in tune with the diocese and with the Catholic schools there.
5. To provide a systematic formation program of the faculty.
6. Communion and communication with the Augustinian Recollect schools, with which the academic institutional program is to be drawn up and to be implemented.
7. To dedicate a special attention to school organizations: parents, students and alumni.

3.3. For parishes

1. To carry out the apostolate as a community, to have a common pastoral program and to follow the pastoral principles as Augustinian Recollects
2. To assume, according to our charismatic identity, the pastoral plans of the diocese.
3. To consider the necessity of our presence in the place and its vocational prospects
4. To form finance council and pastoral council.
5. To provide a plan of formation for lay pastoral agents.
6. To promote the social ministry and the missionary dimension, and to foster volunteerism.
7. To consider the economic viability according to the pastoral service, solidarity and contribution to the common fund.

3.4. For the missions

1. A common program of the apostolate, which takes into account *the Statutes of the OAR Missions*.
2. To assume according to our Augustinian Recollect identity the pastoral plans of the mission, in communion with the local Church.
3. To take into consideration the needs of the local church and the vocational prospects of the place.
4. To provide a plan of formation for lay pastoral agents.
5. To promote inculturation, to foster social ministry and to organize volunteerism
6. The social projects must be assumed as a community and with the knowledge of the major superior.
7. To promote, insofar as possible, the Augustinian Recollect spirituality in the catechesis and in the pastoral ministry of the mission.

3.5. For formation houses

1. A testimony of fraternal life in community.
2. Formation team formed by at least three formators: the master, who is exclusively dedicated to formation; the other two formators involved in formation, although they may have other pastoral duties.
3. To guarantee a personal accompaniment of the candidates, an accompaniment that will help them in the process of an integral formation and in their spiritual life.
4. To facilitate the formation of formators
5. Itinerary and proper program of the Augustinian Recollect formation
6. Demand and ambiance of prayer, study and work
7. Quality of academic courses
8. Sufficient number of candidates, especially in the last stage.

3.6. *For centers of spirituality*

1. To have an organized plan (to avoid improvisation).
2. To have a team of religious and layperson, who are prepared and can give witness to their own life and offer a quality service.
3. To draw up and disseminate their program of activities.⁷

3.7. *For the administration*

These criteria will help us to discern the viability of the provinces, vicariates and delegations.

1. Sufficient number of religious and houses in the provinces, vicariates and delegations. (*Const.* 372, 420)
2. To have a team of religious dedicated to administration.
3. Direction and coordination of the initial and continuous formation plan
4. To provide teams and houses for the initial formation.
5. To have a juridical organization.
6. Collaboration, co-responsibility and service in the administration and in the activities of the Order
7. Financial autonomy
8. Care and preservation of patrimony

⁷ Retreats, continuous formation, experience of interiority, monthly recollection, *lectio divina*, care for the fraternities, schools for the laypersons, formation of the faculty of our schools, to collaborate in the formation of the pastoral agents, days of prayer, supplementary materials.

4. QUESTIONNAIRE

We present a questionnaire with twenty-five questions. The first section contains ten questions, which focus on the revitalization of the Order, and the second section has the other fifteen questions, which refer to the restructuring.

These are direct questions, which require concrete answers. We need, therefore, discernment and serenity as we answer the questions. It is not a moment of giving broad explanations, but of making possible and realistic proposals. Trusting in the Divine Providence, we have to ask ourselves what the Lord asks of us today as Augustinian Recollects, and how we can realize it. We appeal to the sense of responsibility of the brothers in the process of revitalization and restructuring of the Order. Let us bear in mind that if we expect extraordinary objectives, we need to take means, which are demanding and extraordinary.

4.1. Questions for the revitalization

I. The Order of Augustinian Recollects: identity and sense of belongingness

In the analysis of the reality of the Order, there appears to be a lack of coherence between our life and mission and the Augustinian Recollect identity. There is a weak sense of belongingness to the Order.

1. How can we strengthen our identity as Augustinian Recollects and our belongingness to the Order? From this point, how can we promote personal, communitarian and pastoral conversion?

II. Praying Community and Spiritual Life

The analysis reveals our inconsistency, routine and monotony in prayer and spiritual life.

2. What can we do to revitalize our prayer and our interior life, to promote an Augustinian *lectio divina*, so that these means may lead us to live an authentic encounter with Christ with an attitude of continuous conversion, and to become teachers of prayer?

III. Fraternal Life and Community

The analysis shows individualism, lack of communication and other deficiencies in our communitarian life.

3. What do you propose in order to strengthen and attain a fraternal life of communion, which truly leads us to share faith and life and to realize our pastoral work as a community?

IV. Vocation and Formation

Vocational Ministry

The analysis shows that the vocational ministry has been entrusted to some few religious (vocation directors).

4. How can we attain that vocational ministry becomes a priority in communities and that all religious are involved by stirring up, welcoming and accompanying vocations where they exercise their pastoral work?

Initial Formation

The analysis expresses the necessity to reinforce our identity and the demand in the initial formation

5. In what way can we reinforce the Augustinian Recollect identity and to more demanding in the initial formation?

Continuous Formation

The lack of joint plans of continuous formation is a weak point in the analysis.

6. How must we organize the continuous formation so that it may be more realistic and attractive, and so that it may reinforce our communitarian life and our mission to evangelize?

V. Apostolic Community and New Evangelization

Ministerial Apostolate

According to the analysis, our pastoral work shows the absence of a common plan and teamwork, individualism, and scarce presence of the Augustinian Recollect charism in our ministries.

7. How must an Augustinian Recollect community, which tries to offer our charism to the Diocesan Church, run a parish?

Missionary Apostolate

The analysis shows that the missionary conviction in many religious is becoming weak.

8. What can we do to revitalize the missionary spirit in the formation and in the life of the religious?

Educational Apostolate

The analysis stresses the absence of a common academic plan and of an adequate formation.

9. How can the religious give testimony to the true sense of the Augustinian Recollect charism in the academic community? What concrete actions we ought to accomplish in order to be more meaningful?

Other Apostolates

The analysis affirms the diversity and the lack of a common plan in these apostolates.

10. How can we promote and support, among the religious, research, study and the spread of the thought of Saint Augustine?

4.2. Questions for the restructuring

• *Formation*

1. How can we have well-prepared formation teams to guarantee an integral formation that inspires the Augustinian Recollect identity and mission?
2. Do you believe that common theology houses under the supervision of the Prior General and his council must be established, in order to guarantee a better human, spiritual, academic and Augustinian Recollect formation? Explain your answer. If in case you have an affirmative response, indicate reasonably how many theology houses and where they must be established.

• *Apostolate*

3. Respond to the option or options that correspond to the community where you live:
 - a) Does your parish respond to the proposed criteria of revitalization? What must be done to implement them?
 - b) Does your mission respond to the proposed criteria of revitalization? What must be done to implement them?
 - c) Does your school respond to the proposed criteria of revitalization? What must be done to implement them?
4. How can the presence and the service of the NGO Haren Alde be improved in all the provinces?
5. What do we have to do in order to introduce the Augustinian Recollect Youth in all our ministries?

• *Administration*

6. How can we foster communion and collaboration among the provinces? Cite three concrete examples, which can be done to attain it?
7. How can we make the organization of the administration and the animation of the province and of the Order more efficient: councils, secretariats, teams, and commissions? What do you suggest?
8. Do you believe that your province has the necessary means to live community life, to realize a quality Augustinian Recollect apostolate, to organize initial and permanent formation and implement a demanding vocational plan?

9. In case you have a negative response to the previous question: What do you think is the most adequate?
 - To maintain the present situation? Why?
 - To change the present situation? Why?
 - How would you do it?
10. What do we do with the provinces that do not have the means to guarantee the fraternal life and the pastoral work of the communities, or can neither implement a vocational plan, nor offer formation needed by its religious?
11. Do you consider it advisable to juridically restructure the delegations, vicariates and provinces for a charismatic and apostolic revitalization? What kind of organization do you propose? What organizational chart do you consider most adequate?
 - To maintain the present situation = 8 provinces. Why?
 - To change the present situation. Why?
 - How would you do it? How many provinces, vicariates and delegations must there be? Why?
12. In view of the restructuring of the Order, what ministries or communities of your delegation, vicariate or province do you consider less meaningful? What must be reinforced? What new initiatives must be taken?
13. Do you see the viability of your delegation, vicariate and province in 10 years? What would be necessary to guarantee its viability?

• ***Economy***

14. How must the economy of the provinces and of the Order be organized?

• ***Other Suggestions***

15. What other important things do you suggest in order to carry out the restructuring of the Order?

<p>The answers are to be submitted before June 30, 2013 to the member of the commission of each province.</p>

5. PLAN OF LIFE AND MISSION

5.1. Principles

5.1.1. Purpose of the Order

“The main purpose for which you have come together is to live harmoniously in the house and to have one soul and one heart intent upon God.”⁸

“The Augustinian charism is summed up in the love of God without condition, which unites hearts and souls in the common life of brotherhood, and is diffused towards all human beings to win them over and unite them in Christ within his Church.”⁹

The Augustinian Recollects, living in community as brothers, “seeks to follow and imitate Christ, poor, obedient, and chaste, as He himself proposed in the Gospel for the observance of his disciples; they search for the truth and are at the service of the Church; they endeavor to achieve perfect charity according to the charism of St. Augustine and in the spirit of our early legislation, most especially our Forma de Vivir.”¹⁰

5.1.2. Priority Objective of the 54th General Chapter

“To revitalize the Order in accordance with our charismatic identity, in order to better accomplish our evangelizing mission, by reorganizing our structures, and by intensifying our fraternal and ecclesial communion.”

5.1.3. Called to a new evangelization

- a) “Consecrated life is called to be a discipleship life, fervent about Jesus-Way to the merciful Father, and hence deeply mystical and communitarian in nature.”¹¹
- b) The Synod of the New Evangelization exhorts all the religious “to live radically and with joy their identity as consecrated persons.” The testimony of a life that expresses the primacy of God and the humanizing force of the Gospel is a powerful proclamation of the Kingdom of God.¹²
- c) Consecrated life, fully evangelical and evangelizing, in profound communion with the pastors of the Church and in co-responsibility with the laity, faithful to the respective charisms, will offer a significant contribution to the New Evangelization. The Synod asks Religious Orders and Congregations to be fully available to go to the geographical, social and cultural frontiers of

⁸ Rule 1, 2

⁹ Constitutions, 6

¹⁰ Cf. Constitutions, 1-7

¹¹ Aparecida Document, 220

¹² Cf. Synod of the New Evangelization, Propositions 50.

evangelization. The Synod invites religious to move toward the new *aeropaghi* of mission.”¹³

- d) “The mission is the Church’s way of being and, within her, of the consecrated life. It is part of your identity; it spurs you to take the Gospel to everyone without boundaries. The mission sustained by a strong experience of God, by a robust formation and by fraternal life in community, is a key to understanding and revitalizing the consecrated life. Go, then, and in creative fidelity make your own the challenge of the new evangelization.”¹⁴
- e) “The community is apostolic and its primary apostolate is the community itself. Dedicated to prayer and to the practice of the virtues and united in the holy purpose of the common life, it is already an apostolic undertaking. Just as contemplation brings the brothers together in truth and in love, it must also “stir them to the service of preaching the Gospel.” Through this, the community, always alert to the needs of the Church, seeks the place and the means to be of most service to God.”¹⁵

5.2. The Plan of Life and Mission

The process of revitalization and restructuring leads us to define a *plan of life and mission* that reaffirms our identity and reorients, in view of the future, the mission of each province, vicariate, delegation or country where we are present. It is a task that we ought to do, inspired by the reading of the Gospel according to our experience and Augustinian Recollect spiritual tradition, and having, as point of departure, the reality of the Order and the socio-economic, cultural and ecclesial context that surrounds us. This endeavor, fruit and synthesis of a common effort, which was realized in submission to and in generosity to God’s will for us here and now, will render our life and our mission more meaningful.¹⁶

The plan of life and mission is a program of objectives and activities, that allows the communities to live out in their own place or concrete juridical unit, the form of life expressed in the *Constitutions*, and to effectively harmonize it with the apostolic mission that must be carried out. On the other hand, this program makes it possible for the mission to bear our charismatic identity and be realized in communion with the local Church and with the pastoral directions of its bishop.¹⁷ Thus, improvisation and isolation of religious and communities are avoided, since everyone participates in a common plan.

It is useful to progress towards a vision of a common future, to give continuity to the apostolic mission and to carry out activities systematically and conjointly. Moreover, it motivates the charismatic revitalization, allows one to address adequately

¹³ *Synod of the New Evangelization, Proposition*, 50.

¹⁴ BENEDICT XVI, *Speech to the General Superiors* [26.11.2010]

¹⁵ *Constitutions*, 25

¹⁶ Cf. AQUILINO BOCOS, *Caminando hacia la aurora. Reorganización de estructuras en la vida consagrada* (Frontera Hegian, 70), p. 104.

¹⁷ The *Constitutions* in n. 283 underscore that the pastoral action is realized according to the charisms and under the direction of the diocesan bishop. Number 284 indicates that it is the responsibility of the Prior General, with the consent of his council, to lay down the general guidelines that are to reflect what is the Augustinian Recollect dimension in the apostolic activity of the entire Order. Cf. CIC c. 578; c. 586, 1 & 2.

the needs (vocational ministry, initial and continuous formation, specific formation, the old and the sick, administration and economy) and helps one to respond to the challenges of the new evangelization.¹⁸ Therefore, this plan seeks to strengthen the Augustinian Recollect life of our communities and to take into account the demands of the mission of the Order.

The plan of life and mission must:

- be realized in accordance with the criteria of faith,
- start from the reality of the Order and be feasible, stable and continuous,
- integrate the various ministries of the juridical unit,
- combine the orientations of the local Churches and the guidelines of the Order,
- strengthen the sense of belongingness to the province and to the Order,
- promote co-responsibility and specify the responsibilities,
- welcome initiatives and arouse hope,
- have the participation of the religious and laypersons to show the shared mission and communion,
- identify objectives and options,
- It can also be evaluated and revised every year.

5.3. How to make the plan?

It is important to organize well the preparation of the plan. It cannot be improvised and it has to be well directed. A plan of life and mission is a process that requires prayer, personal reflection, dialogue and communitarian discernment.

Each province, vicariate or delegation will draw up its plan of life and mission in reference to the whole Province and to the whole Order. As help, we present this PROPOSAL, which systematically presents the steps to be followed and some aspects that can direct the preparation of the said plan.

5.3.1 The Steps of preparation¹⁹

1. To begin according to the reality of the Order

- a) The point of departure is the analysis of the status of the Order presented by the Commission, and of each of the provinces. Document 7 of the Restructuring: *Presences and Services* can also be used as reference, although none of these documents ought to replace the vision of each juridical unit.²⁰
- b) Socio-cultural and religious situation of the area.
- c) To contrast the reality with the criteria of discernment as proposed by the commission. (Section 3).

¹⁸ Cf. Prot. N. 1-1/12.8

¹⁹ This process is inline with the *strategic foresight*. This gives much emphasis on the ideal as constant reference.

²⁰ Juridical unit: we use this expression to refer to the province, vicariate, delegation or geographical area, where the communities are present.

2. To know what we want and towards where we are going²¹

It deals with identifying the goal or the objective that we want to attain with this plan. We propose the following:

- a) To use as reference the purpose of the Order and the objective proposed by the General Chapter. Other inspirational texts can help.
- b) To take into account:
 - the pastoral ministries of the juridical unit: schools, parishes, missions, and houses of spirituality, etc.
 - the organizational structures: Order, provinces, vicariates, delegations, communities.
 - the religious and the communities.
 - the laypersons to whom the pastoral work is directed.

3. To identify the specific objectives and the means to attain them

How can we move from our present situation to the life that we aspire to live?

It would deal with identifying the objectives and specific goals for each year of the plan's timetable (2013-2016), together with the strategies or activities to be followed, including the persons responsible for them.

In defining the specific objectives and the corresponding activities, the Guidelines set by the General Council for the six-year term must be taken into account:²²

2013: Revitalization and New Evangelization

2014: Revitalization, community and fraternal life

2015: Revitalization and Augustinian interiority

2016: Revitalization, discernment and restructuring.

5.3.2. Responsible Teams

- To form a responsible team in each juridical unit that would motivate and coordinate the encounters, reunions and assemblies.
- Collaboration with the teams of the province and of the Order.²³
- The team of each juridical unit will promote, coordinate and evaluate the plan in its territory.

²¹ In the strategic planning, it is equivalent to the definition of the mission, vision and values.

²² *Prot.* 1-1 11 14. *Anniversary of the Recollection 2011.*

²³ Cf. *Ordinances of the 54th General Chapter 3.2b*: "The major superiors and local priors: the president of the General Secretariat of Spirituality should coordinate the study of the possibility of creating a type of inter-provincial team of religious and other members of the Augustinian Recollect family, including lay persons. The team would offer to our communities, fraternities, and lay people in our ministries vocational orientation, spiritual fellowship, retreats, experience of interiority and recollection, *lectio divina*, and theological formation." Cf. *Const.* 283.284. Ideario de pastoral OAR.

5.3.3. Dimensions of the Plan

- a. Charism and Augustinian Recollect life
- b. Initial and Continuous formation
- c. Apostolic community and new evangelization
- e. Government of the Order
 - Structures and decision making bodies
 - Structures and administrative bodies
 - Structures and support units (secretariats, commissions)
 - Communications section

5.3.4. Levels and direction of the plan

- The plan has two levels: the internal (communities of religious) and the external (fraternities, ARY, pastoral agents, professors, laypersons).
- It has a double direction: from the general units to the communities, and from the communities to the general units.

5.3.5. Co-responsibility

This plan involves all those who take part in its distinct periods, both in the reflection and in the formulation, decision, and implementation of the plan. They are the following:

- Prior General and priors provincial²⁴.
- General Council and provincial councils
- General team in-charge of revitalization and the team of each juridical unit.
- Secretariats and commissions
- Religious and lay agents.

5.3.6. Timetable

We propose this timetable for the implementation of the plan of life and mission

- 2013-2014: Preparation of a plan of life and mission for each country. Approval of the prior provincial. Each country implements the said plan. Drafting of the provincial plans.
- 2015: Communitarian plans and the *ordo domesticus*. Formation of teams in each country to organize workshops and recollections.
- 2016: Evaluation of the process. Evaluation of process at the level of the Order.
- 2017: Adaption of the plan to the Ordinances of the next General Chapter.

²⁴ *Ordinances of the 54th General Chapter*, 20, 3: “The Prior General with his council should encourage and attend to developing among the provinces a greater knowledge of each of them and a spirit of cooperation, especially when various provinces are present in the same country. They should coordinate encounters and programs of continuing formation, annual retreats, meetings of the vocational apostolate and other shared apostolates, the publication of materials, the Secular Fraternity, Haren Alde, and other helpful programs of common interest.” Cf. *Const.* 283.284.

5.4. Implementation of the Plan

- Prior General, priors provincial, vicars and delegates.
- Functions and responsibilities of the team of each sector
- Clarity of long, medium and short term objectives
- Implementation of the strategy
 - Activities in line with the specific objective
 - Dates of each activity
 - In-charge of implementing each activity
- Evaluation and monitoring of the plan's progress.