

**Message of the 2018 Regnum Christi Extraordinary General Assembly to Regnum Christi members at the end of the first session**

1. The first session of the Regnum Christi Extraordinary General Assembly of Regnum Christi was held from April 9 to 18, 2018, under the motto taken from Saint Paul: “Fan into flame the gift of God in you!” (2 Timothy 1:6) At the end of the session, the delegates of the three branches and the lay members want to share with their fellow Movement members, as well as the countless relatives and friends who have accompanied us with their prayers, something of the path we have traveled, the agreements and preliminary insights we came to, and the tasks we will deal with in the second session of the assembly, scheduled for November 2018.
2. These days have been full of prayer and fruitful spiritual reflection. We experienced again through an abundance of graces the mercy the Lord has on his people as they journey forward. From this life-giving contemplation spring forth today the desire for conversion and holiness and a special feeling of gratitude for those first brothers and sisters of ours from the different vocations who gave life to the Movement, as well as a special remembrance in prayer for those who already enjoy the presence of God.

*Preparation of the First Extraordinary General Assembly*

3. This Assembly is part of the final stretch of a long journey during which we have felt the maternal guidance of the Church. We remember with particular affection Pope Benedict XVI as well as Cardinal Velasio De Paolis. We feel united in a special way to Pope Francis, who has invited us to walk “the path of an authentic and profound renewal.”<sup>1</sup> We are grateful to Father Gianfranco Ghirlanda, SJ, the pontifical assistant, for his help, presence, and nearness to us, as well as his prudent and wise guidance during every part of the process. We also thank Father Eduardo Robles Gil, LC, general director of Regnum Christi and the members of the Regnum Christi General Committee for their direction, accompaniment, and dedication to this very challenging task. They have been a sign and witness to the fact that the renewal of our spiritual family is already underway.
4. One of the most important challenges is still that of finding a canonical configuration for an extremely rich and varied charismatic reality with a strong sense of communion. The Regnum Christi Movement is made up of a clerical religious congregation of pontifical right, two consecrated lay branches, and a large group of lay people as well as some diocesan priests.

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<sup>1</sup> Letter of Pope Francis to Cardinal Velasio De Paolis, June 18, 2013

5. The Extraordinary General Assembly of the Consecrated Lay Men of Regnum Christi (held from December 26, 2017, to January 3, 2018), the Extraordinary General Assembly of the Consecrated Women of Regnum Christi (held from March 26 to April 7, 2018) and the Extraordinary General Chapter of the Legion of Christ (also held from March 26 to April 7, 2018) proved to be a special grace. It gave the chance for each of the three consecrated branches and the lay members to reflect, with the light of faith and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, on the charism of Regnum Christi and their awareness of the responsibility they each have for the protection and furtherance of the charism as a whole, as well as the aspects specific to their own branch.

6. In their respective assemblies, the Consecrated Women and Consecrated Lay Men welcomed the figure of the society of apostolic life, which makes it possible to establish the Regnum Christi Federation together with the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ, under the authority of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL). Both assemblies expressed their support for the federation structure proposed in the *Draft Statutes*.

7. The Legion's 2018 General Chapter ratified what was expressed at the 2014 General Chapter, reaffirming its awareness that the Legion can only understand itself as part of Regnum Christi (see the [\*Communiqué of the 2018 Extraordinary General Chapter of the Legion of Christ\*](#), 12).<sup>2</sup> It accepted the figure of the federation (see cGC 2018, 24) as a canonical vehicle to unite the three branches and to which lay people could be associated individually. However, the majority of the delegates focused on a federation that is “mainly dedicated to coordinating efforts” (cGC 2018, 29) and having collegial presiding bodies (see cGC 2018, 31). Works would ordinarily be entrusted to the government of one of the consecrated branches (see cGC 2018, 30). The General Chapter therefore presented the assembly with a working document to reflect on the characteristics of a federation together with the other branches.

### *The General Assembly*

8. Convened by Father Eduardo Robles Gil (see Prot. DG-RC 792-2017), this Assembly brings together for the first time in our history delegates from the three consecrated branches and the lay members of the Movement, with the aim of continuing the search for “a suitable canonical configuration for Regnum Christi as a whole” (see CGC 2014, *The Legion in Regnum Christi*, 42.1). We took as a starting point the results of the 2016 International Convention of Lay Members, the contributions of the territorial assemblies, and the decisions and recommendations of the Extraordinary General Chapter of the Legionaries of Christ and of the extraordinary general assemblies of the Consecrated Women of Regnum Christi and the Consecrated Lay Men of Regnum Christi.

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<sup>2</sup> Since this is only an initial communication for the end of the first phase and not the final communiqué of the Extraordinary General Chapter, from now on it will be cited as cGC 2018.

9. The purposes of this first session of the General Assembly were the following: give an opinion on the proposal of the General Committee on the juridical configuration of the federation; express their preferences regarding its general characteristics; review the numbers of the *Draft Statute of the Regnum Christi Federation (DSRCF)* on its mission, spirit, and principles of apostolic action; reflect on the place of the Regnum Christi lay members in the life of the Movement and how they can participate in the governing bodies of whatever canonical structure is agreed upon; and reflect on the first part of the *Draft Statute of the Regnum Christi Federation* (see the *Rules of Procedure of the Regnum Christi General Assembly*, 3).

10. Our Assembly began, providentially, on the Solemnity of the Annunciation. This placed us right away at the core of the mystery of Christ, the center of our spirituality. It also put us within Mary's *yes* to the divine plan, and that served as an invitation to seek, with her and like her, the will of the Father above all.

11. The assembly began with a Eucharistic concelebration in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Rome, presided by Archbishop José Rodríguez Carballo, OFM, secretary of the Congregation of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. In his person, the Church was present once again in our process of renewal. In a fatherly and prophetic way, he offered us some criteria for discernment and invited us to be a sign of the Kingdom of Christ with "creative fidelity" (see *Vita Consecrata*, 37).

12. Father Gianfranco Ghirlanda gave a conference on the steps we have already taken, as well as the various canonical possibilities that are real options for us. His presentation was clear and to the point. He gave us an overview of the various possibilities available and pointed out the spiritual elements necessary for good discernment.

13. Father Eduardo Robles Gil and Father Sylvester Heereman presented the assembly with the results of the Legion's General Chapter. Gloria Rodríguez and Jorge López then presented the results of their respective general assemblies. The participants were able to ask questions if they did not understand certain points, as well as give their own reflections on what they had heard.

14. The methodology involved a mixture of full sessions and small group sessions (organized in different ways: by branch, by territory, and with a cross section of delegates). This allowed for greater participation and dialogue, where each listened carefully to the others to better understand their points of view. Indeed, the effort to come out of oneself in order to meet the other where he or she is at, coupled with our Eucharistic life, created an atmosphere of sincere seeking of the truth in love. We have lived as if in a family setting, sharing truly moving moments, such as Brother Anthony Freeman's funeral.

#### *The lay members of Regnum Christi*

15. The Regnum Christi lay members met at various times among themselves. They renewed their commitment to the Movement, noting that in the past few years they have grown in their sense of what it means to belong to Regnum Christi. They saw that the process of revising the *Draft Statutes* had helped them mature in their own identity and become more aware of their apostolic mission. They strongly feel the call to participate more in the life of Regnum Christi

and are thankful for the type of family relationship they have with the consecrated branches: “We cannot understand ourselves apart from them. We pray that God preserves the true communion of heart,” they stated in their conclusions.

16. Francisco Gámez, a lay member of the Regnum Christi General Committee, presented in a plenary session the revision of the draft of the *Regnum Christi Rule* as the second to last step in a process begun in June 2013. At that time the pontifical delegate, Cardinal Velasio De Paolis, urged the laity to initiate a discernment on their own identity as members of Regnum Christi. In September 2014, the study circles and team meetings began to focus on studying various documents and discerning about their own vocation. There were 10,882 lay members who registered to vote for delegates to continue the reflection in territorial conventions. In those conventions, members of the three consecrated branches accompanied the lay people. From the territorial conventions, 64 delegates were elected to the 2016 International Convention. The International Convention approved a text that was included in the second part of the *Draft General Statutes* and reviewed in the territorial assemblies in the fall of 2017.

17. At the Assembly, the lay people reviewed the draft text of the *Regnum Christi Rule*. It is divided into five chapters: identity and lifestyle of Regnum Christi lay people, incorporation and departure of Regnum Christi lay people, specific ways of self-giving of Regnum Christi lay people, structures and functions at the service of the life of Regnum Christi lay people, and the participation of Regnum Christi lay people in the different bodies of the Federation.

18. In their voting the laity expressed a broad consensus in support of the draft of the *Regnum Christi Rule* that had already been worked on and revised in previous meetings, suggesting only slight modifications. They renewed their commitment to the formation of their own lay members and expressed their interest in developing some form of online collaboration that will make it possible to keep in touch in order to continue developing their own identity and vocation. Finally, they had a final vote on the draft of the *Regnum Christi Rule* as a whole, in which it was unanimously approved. This was with a view to the final ratification, which will take place by general vote of the Assembly as a whole during the second session at the end of 2018.

19. The lay delegates see the draft *Regnum Christi Rule* as the first fruit of a prolonged process that involved so many people, and another step that provides a common, broad, and flexible framework. They hope the members will get to know them and adopt them as their own. Above all, though, they hope they will provide a chance to renew apostolic drive and the sense of what it means to belong to Regnum Christi. Some technical aspects of the *Regnum Christi Rule* will still have to be adjusted once the exact configuration of the various bodies of the Federation has been defined. At the end of the day, all this work has to contribute to the mission of the lay people to make the Kingdom of God present in the hearts of people so they can transform society.

20. In a plenary session, a letter from the second degree, third level, members was read. They expressed their complete agreement with the definition of their identity, as well as feeling in tune with how the aspects of their lifestyle were expressed, such as prayer, obedience, poverty, and

the apostolate. They renewed their commitment to the Movement and their availability for the mission.

#### *Review of the Draft Statute of the Regnum Christi Federation*

21. The third chapter of the *Draft Statute of the Regnum Christi Federation*, which describes the purpose and mission of the Federation, the fundamental lines of the spirit of Regnum Christi, the spiritual life of the members, and the spirit of communion, was presented to the assembly to see how they felt about it. In the same way, the assembly also discussed the article that outlines the principles of apostolic action of the Federation. The delegates found there still needs to be some more reflection on these texts and some adjustments made to them so they express the common charism in the best possible way, but they were in favor of keeping them as the basis for discussion in the second session of the chapter and the assemblies in November.

#### *Reports of the general and territorial directors*

22. The general directors of the branches presented a report on how things are going with the *Framework for Collaboration*, highlighting the positive results, as well as the need to solve the difficulties that arise from the overlapping of competencies corresponding to the Regnum Christi General Committee and the Legionary General Council. After this, the Regnum Christi territorial directors presented a summary report on the how the territorial committees are working. The territorial directors of the consecrated women and some other members of the territorial committees also gave their take on this.

23. The results varied from territory to territory, but in general the experience has been positive, since the committees helped to increase co-responsibility in the mission common to all the branches and the lay members. They provided an important opportunity to learn the meaning of communion and how fruitful it can be to work together in the common mission. At the same time, there were difficulties, some inherent in the implementation of a new form of working and others of a structural nature.

#### *Reflections on the characteristics of the future federation*

24. The Legionary General Chapter proposed a version of a federation that had some characteristics that differed from those in the *Draft Statutes*. Given this, the Central Commission of the Regnum Christi General Assembly proposed taking time to talk about and discuss the characteristics of the future federation, taking into account those proposed in the draft, the conclusions of the territorial assemblies, and the communiqués issued by the chapter and the branch general assemblies. The delegates worked in mixed groups dedicated to the following themes: our charismatic identity; the structure of the federation; the role of lay people; and the governance of institutional works. The results were presented in a plenary session.

25. The Central Commission then prepared a summary of the topics presented by each of the groups and conducted a polling vote on them. Everyone is aware that they are themes that still have to be mulled over more. We offer a summary of the points mentioned. Most of which obtained general support and will be used to prepare the second phase of the Chapter and of the assemblies.

26. Regarding identity and mission, we agree that we are all joint stewards of the common charism and each branch, together with the lay members, has an irreplaceable and complementary role in the custody and promotion of the charism. The particular identity of each group enriches Regnum Christi. Each branch and the laity have to be who they are, but they can only be that in relation to others. All branches have to continue to mature in the assimilation, understanding, and experience of their particular identity and in the way in which they live out our common identity. The complementarity of the different vocations makes even more patent the richness of the mystery of Christ that no vocation and no charism can exhaust. Joint apostolic action does not mean that we all do the same thing, nor that we do everything together, nor that we all govern everything together. We share a common mission that leads to an apostolic action in which the members of the different branches act as an apostolic body, have a common field of mission and unite their efforts in the achievement of a common goal, giving testimony of communion and complementarity in the way they evangelize.

27. There was a clear consensus that the Regnum Christi Federation is not and does not exhaust the entirety of Regnum Christi. The federation is a canonical instrument to unite the consecrated branches and to which other faithful may individually associate, in order to safeguard, live out and jointly promote the charismatic patrimony and a common apostolic activity (see *Draft General Statutes of Regnum Christi* 1 §1). We believe that a federation would be an appropriate canonical configuration because it strengthens and preserves the unity of charism, mission, and solidarity among the federated realities without changing their legal configuration and respecting their respective autonomies.

28. Taking into consideration the proposal of the Legion's General Chapter, we have begun to reflect on the characteristics that a federation structured on the governing bodies that currently exist in each of the consecrated branches might have. Such a proposal would try to avoid setting up a government for the Federation that differed from the branch governments, and that would create a new institution affecting important aspects of the life of the branches. Undoubtedly this is one of the most important changes when compared to what is in the *Draft Statutes*, and therefore we have to keep reflecting on what such a model implies. We recognize that no institutional structure is perfect. We know we cannot rule out that we might discover other and better solutions as we move forward.

29. It was proposed that the highest body of the federation be a General Convention, made up of general governments of the branches, a proportional group of delegates from the highest bodies of the three consecrated branches, and elected non-consecrated lay representatives, in line with whatever regulations are drawn up. Likewise, it was proposed that the general and territorial levels be presided over by a collegial body composed of the general or territorial directors of the consecrated branches. These bodies would make the decisions that correspond to them according

to the norms laid out in the *Statute* and the regulations, and would include lay people who would have a consultative vote.

30. It was proposed that the president of the general presiding body would be the general director of the Legion of Christ, *ex officio*. He would preside over the governing bodies and represent the Federation before other institutions. On the other hand, there is still no clear consensus on who should preside over the territorial presiding body and if it would be the territorial director of the Legionaries *ex officio* or if it could be the territorial director of any of the consecrated branches, appointed by the general presiding body.

31. It seems fitting that the Federation have another body, which we have called a “Plenary,” composed of the general or territorial directors of the consecrated branches and their councilors and in which lay people of Regnum Christi participate. It would be a collaborative body that expresses a spirit of communion. It would give its opinion before the general presiding body approves documents for all of Regnum Christi such as evangelization guidelines, strategic plans for the fulfillment of the common mission, and the like. The collegial presiding body of the Federation and the Plenary would not replace the general or territorial councils in their canonical functions and jurisdiction.

32. The presiding body would establish specialized *executive teams* that would be stable over time, composed of members of any branch. They would be responsible for supporting the presiding body in directing the Federation’s activity and serving the life and common apostolic activity of the Movement. The teams would include the people responsible for support areas and departments. These teams would take the place of the current committees as far as work teams go, the difference being that they would not act as councils that moderate personal authority as the current model has it. Yet they would not merely carry out orders, but would participate in the decision-making process.

33. There was an almost unanimous agreement that the lay members should participate at all levels of federation’s government. In matters that affect Regnum Christi as a whole and are decided upon by the governing bodies of the Federation, the laity would participate with a consultative vote. In decisions that have to do directly with their own way of living out the charism, they would participate with a deliberative vote, together with the representatives of the consecrated branches. In decisions that concern the consecrated branches and the relations between them, decisions would be made between the representatives of the branches.

34. There is agreement that “the *Statute* permit that institutional apostolic activity may be of the Federation or of a branch of the Federation” (DSRCF 43.3). In both cases, it would be an apostolic activity of Regnum Christi. The general and territorial moderators of the branches would ensure “the integration of the apostolic activity of their branch in the common mission” (DSRCF 51.4).

35. However, considering that there was no consensus on whether to assign the current apostolic works to the branches or to the Federation and given that the General Chapter and the assemblies of the consecrated branches had different positions on this, the general governments have been asked to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of the different possible setups, considering

the concrete situation that exists in each territory. This will allow us to see things more clearly in preparation for the second session of the assembly.

36. Based on all these reflections, the third part of the *Draft Statute of the Regnum Christi Federation* (having to do with organization, government, and administration of the Federation) will be adjusted accordingly. The General Chapter and the assemblies of November 2018 will discuss the Federation statute, which has to be ratified by each of the highest governing bodies of the three branches before they can be presented to the Holy See.

### *Conclusion*

37. We make our own the reflections that Father Eduardo made at the end of his report, inviting us to keep in mind and apply to our situation those principles that Pope Francis mentions in *Evangelii gaudium* (see EG 217-237).

a) *Time is greater than space*: We have to face difficult situations and even changes of plan that our concrete situation imposes on us. We have to be open “to suitable processes and concern for the long run.” Let’s flee from the temptation to have everything resolved once and for all.

b) *Unity prevails over conflict*: We are called to “build communion amid disagreement.”

c) *Reality is more important than ideas*: We have to take as our starting point what the Movement is in fact at this moment, and not what could have been or should be.

d) *The whole is greater than the part*: All the branches and members of Regnum Christi are called to safeguard the charism of Regnum Christi. They should not ignore their own particular identity nor that we are part of a multifaceted reality, whose beauty lies in this very configuration.

38. To all Regnum Christi members we offer the convictions we renewed in this Assembly: We share a charism and a common mission that goes beyond a canonical configuration, even if that is a necessary instrument. We still have a ways to go, but are confident in the help of God and happy because we journey together. We encourage you to welcome with openness and, trusting in the Lord of history, meditate on the ways on which he wants to lead us. To do this, we invite you to live out charity, our primary virtue, in a special way, since “holiness is none other than charity fully lived” (Benedict XVI, Catechesis of April 13, 2011).

39. We are aware of the historical and transcendental moment in which we live, and we are fortunate witnesses of the gift of God that is in each one of us (see 2 Timothy 1:6) since Regnum Christi’s foundation. With fondness and filled with gratitude, our thoughts go out to all those who have been our brothers and sisters in the mission in all branches and who are no longer with us. We want to let them know we acknowledge their contribution and merit in all the good that the Movement, as an instrument in the hands of God, has been able to do for people. Today we thank them, apologize to those whom we offended, and open our heart to them. We have prayed for you.



40. To understand the gift of Regnum Christi is to contemplate what God has done with us in our history. During the Assembly, we have been more conscious of the wounds that we have inflicted on one another, both institutionally and personally. We have shared unique moments of openness and reconciliation. We feel called to share this experience with you and work towards reconciliation, just as it is expressed in the *Message to Regnum Christi members concerning communion and reconciliation*.

41. Together with Mary, we go forward with hope, because as Pope Francis reminds us, “the Holy Spirit bestows holiness in abundance among God’s holy and faithful people” (Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate*, 6). As we contemplate the workings of grace in so many men and women in Regnum Christi, as well as the young generations that in our day are continuing to push forward vigorously and join God’s mysterious plan in our sections, apostolates, and branch formation houses, we thank God for having invited us to be an active part of this work and we commit ourselves to continue working, trusting always in him, to make his Kingdom present among all people.

Rome, April 18, 2018

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