

A FORMATION ITINERARY
FOR A PROPHETIC RELIGIOUS LIFE

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JPIC COMMISSION
for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation
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and the International Union of Superiors General
USG/UISG

Religious Promoters of JPIC

A FORMATION ITINERARY FOR A PROPHETIC RELIGIOUS LIFE

Guide us in your justice

(Cf. Ps 5,9)



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CONTENTS

PROLOGUE	Pag.	9
FOREWORD	»	11
INTRODUCTION	»	15
The Challenge for formation in Religious Life	»	15
A favorable context for the Social Teaching of the Church (STC)	»	16
Continuing with the Seminar <i>The Social Doctrine of the Church and Consecrated Life. Formation programmes</i>	»	17
Two priorities: The spirituality and formation	»	19
The present document	»	20

PART ONE

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION	»	23
The Plan of God	»	23
The mission of the Church	»	24
Evangelization and JPIC	»	25
Evangelization and the STC	»	26
Religious Life and the STC	»	27

PART TWO

FORMATIVE PROGRAMMES	»	33
I. General Orientations	»	33
Presuppositions	»	34
Dimensions	»	36
Priority Options	»	38
Criteria	»	42

II. Stages of Formation	Pag. 45
A. Ongoing Formation	» 46
<i>Specific Objectives</i>	» 46
<i>Contents</i>	» 47
<i>Experiences</i>	» 48
 B. Initial Formation	 » 48
Postulancy	» 49
<i>Specific Objectives</i>	» 49
<i>Contents</i>	» 49
<i>Experiences</i>	» 50
Novitiate	» 51
<i>Specific Objectives</i>	» 51
<i>Contents</i>	» 52
<i>Experiences</i>	» 52
The juniorate and student years	» 53
<i>Specific Objectives</i>	» 53
<i>Contents</i>	» 54
<i>Experiences</i>	» 54
 APPENDIX. Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation. Organisation of the Union Superiors General and the International Union of Superiors General USG/UISG	 » 57

ABBREVIATIONS

Ap. Exhort.	Apostolic Eshortation
Ap. Lett.	Apostolic Letter
CL	Consecrated Life
CIV	Encyclical Letter <i>Caritas in Veritate</i> of SP Benedict XVI
CICLSAL	Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life
CSDC	Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church
Enc. Lett.	Encyclical Letter
GS	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i>
Ibid.	Ibidem
Id.	Idem
JPIC	Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation
n.	number
nn.	numbers
ONGs	Non-Governmental Organizations
p.	page
pp.	pages
RL	Religious Life
SDC	Social Doctrine of the Church
STC	Social Teaching of the Church
UISG	International Union of Superiors General
USG	Union of Superiors General

PROLOGUE

I am delighted to be able to make a contribution to this publication *A Formation Itinerary for a Prophetic Religious Life* developed by the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission of the Union of Superiors General (USG) and the International Union of Superiors General (UISG), and the Religious Promoters of JPIC. In fact, this Itinerary began to be developed in October 2006 as a result of an initiative with the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

That experience helped focus on two issues by which religious women and men can make their particular contribution to a new evangelization. One of these issues is formation and in particular formation in Catholic Social Doctrine. I have no doubt that this useful tool will help encourage and motivate religious women and men, already dedicated to their sisters and brothers, to be both evangelizers of social realities and educators in the faith. As encouragement, comforted in the knowledge that their particular charism is a prophetic sign of the same Catholic Social Doctrine¹ and, as a stimulus so that the teachings gathered in this *Itinerary* will be shared with others.

Another emerging issue from the 2006 meeting is spirituality, referred to in the *Itinerary* as an essential element of a social apostolate and for the transformation of the world (Cf. n.10). Additionally, the social encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* by Benedict XVI emphasizes, in several passages, the importance and fruitfulness of communion with Jesus Christ and his Spirit. Love that is truthful, *Caritas in Veritate*, from which authentic development emerges, is not ours, but is gifted (Cf. *CIV*, n. 79). In synthesis, the Pope believes that social problems connected with globalization and the development of peoples are better dealt with and resolved if, before *taking action*, a *receptive disposition* is present. Who more so than religious are conscious of the truth of the need to centre oneself and one's existence in God and of opening to a life of love which comes from Him?

¹ PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Città del Vaticano, Libreria Editrice Vaticana 2004, n. 540.

To all religious women and men who embark on this formation journey I wish you well. You will be supported by the indestructible love of Our Lord Jesus Christ as you undertake this tiring yet fulfilling commitment to justice, peace and the development of peoples. [«God gives us the strength to fight and to suffer for love of the common good, because he is our All, our greatest hope» (*CIV*, n. 78)].

PETER KODWO APPIAH CARD. TURKSON
President
Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace

FOREWORD

It is with lively hope that we present this booklet entitled *A Formation Itinerary for a Prophetic Religious Life*. We are convinced that opening a way and tracing a path already reflects the desire to begin a journey and reach a goal. The elaboration of this booklet is the fruit of a reflection provoked by several historical events which in the end could be seen as promptings of the Spirit:

- the growing awareness of the JPIC promoters of religious congregations of the importance of responding to the challenges of the world by cultivating an incarnated spirituality which is attentive to the signs of the times, rooted in contemplation, and guided by hope;

- the strong impulse given by the theme of the International Congress on Consecrated Life, «Passion for Christ, Passion for humanity», to the rediscovery of the prophetic identity of Consecrated Life, and the consequent commitment of religious to a process of conversion toward a *Samaritan Consecrated Life*, which also includes a commitment to dealing with the causes of injustice;

- the progressive reception of the rich teaching of the Church on Consecrated Life from Vatican II to the most recent documents in the third millennium;

- the publication of the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (CSDC) which strengthened the awareness of mission as active hope for and collaboration in the building up of the Kingdom of God, here and now;

- and, in particular, the seminar organized jointly by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL), and the JPIC promoters of the religious congregations on the relation between the Social Doctrine of the Church and Consecrated Life.

Toward the end of 2006, a group was formed composed of some members of different religious congregations for the purpose of reflecting on and elaborating the guidelines which we are now presenting. These guidelines were earlier reviewed and analyzed by some theologians and religious working in the different continents.

The primary objective of the itinerary is to offer a way of integrating the *Social Doctrine of the Church* into all the stages of the formation process of the religious life, beginning with ongoing formation. This reflects the awareness of religious today of being called to continue Christ's mission of announcing and witnessing to the Gospel of the Kingdom by a way of life which is mystic-prophetic and in solidarity with the poor of this world.

It entails a commitment which requires a gradual and systematic assimilation of the Social Doctrine of the Church (SDC) in order to discern God's call in the challenges of the social reality and in the responses which need to be given thereby promoting the values of justice, peace and integrity of creation (Cf. *General Objective*, n. 49)

The Social Doctrine of the Church offers «the principles for reflection, the criteria for judgment and the directives for action which are the starting point for the promotion of an integral and solidary humanism» (CSDC, n. 7). The Social Doctrine of the Church, therefore, constitutes an instrument for moral and pastoral discernment, a way of inspiring, individually and collectively, the behaviors and options which allow one to look at the future with confidence and hope, an aid for the teaching of social morality, an indispensable instrument of evangelization in all contexts (Cf. CSDC, n. 10, n. 2).

The itinerary is articulated in two parts which are related with each other. The first contains the theological foundation of the itinerary. The second presents two sections: (a) first, some general orientations of a methodological character which give the itinerary its originality; and (b) secondly, a description of each of the stages in terms of their specific objectives, contents and experiences. These three aspects are also inseparable since they allow for the generation of processes and the development of attitudes, making the study not only intellectual.

The stages reveal the graduality which accompanies the phases of formation throughout one's life as a religious, as well as the openness to eventual integration and modification according to the charism of each institute.

Finally, it is to be noted that if one integrates seriously and competently the Social Doctrine of the Church into the formation process of the religious life, it will be possible to acquire the elements of a spirituality of JPIC with all of its features: biblical and prophetic, characterized by mercy and compassion, marked by non-violence and reconciliation.

It will eventually lead to making discernment an attitude of life which then becomes the basis for a faith-reading of reality, and consequently for assuming, in the context of one's own situation, an alternative life-style like that of Jesus of Nazareth.

May this booklet help in the effort of integrating justice, peace and the integrity of creation into the different stages of the formation process of those called to follow Jesus Christ closely through the Consecrated Life.

Rome, April 2010

The Co-presidents of JPIC Commission, USG/UISG:

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INTRODUCTION

The Challenge for formation in Religious Life

1. Among the challenges that consecrated life encounters today due to the major changes occurring in the world, *formation* has become a priority. This is true not only for this new generation but also for those who have been living their vocation for some time. In fact, the vitality of the religious institutes depends upon their members' capacity to discern the signs of the times and to discover in them the invitations of the Lord of History.

Formation:
A priority challenge

2. The latest ecclesial documents dealing with this theme, especially the Apostolic Exhortation «*Vita Consecrata*» (*Consecrated Life* or *CL*), affirm this. In CL formation is presented as a «dynamic process by means of which individuals are converted to the Word of God in the depths of their being and, at the same time, learn how to discover the signs of God in earthly realities. At a time when religious values are increasingly being ignored by society, this plan of formation is doubly important. As a result of it, consecrated persons will not only continue to see God with the eyes of faith in a world which ignores his presence, but will also be effective in making their presence felt in some perceptible way through the witness of their charism».¹

Formation:
A vital process
of conversion

3. Besides the essential elements characterizing the radical following of Christ, consecrated persons today need a preparation that allows them to situate themselves within a socio-cultural context with a meaningful,

**A flexible
and dynamic identity**

¹ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata*, n. 68. Cf. also nn. 81, 37, 73.

alternative, and prophetic identity. This vocational and charismatic identity must be dynamic and ready to deal with essential challenges by searching and questioning those aspects of religious life that need to be changed or eliminated so as to be credible signs of a God who is always near. This identity must be contemporary and capable of developing efficiently in religious their own mission within the Church and in society.

A favorable context for the Social Teaching of the Church (STC)

A new awakening in the people of God

4. After Vatican II there has been a growing consciousness in the People of God that a passion for justice, a desire for peace and not violence, and an interest in conserving the integrity of creation, are essential for living according to the Gospel. There is a consistent conviction that action in favour of justice, peace and the integrity of creation together with participation in the transformation of the world are constitutive dimensions of preaching the Gospel and of serving the mission of the Church.²

John Paul II has given a new impulse to Catholic Social Teaching

5. It is known that John Paul II has given an impulse to the social teaching of the Church, not because he has published three social encyclicals³ but rather because he has repeatedly insisted on the importance of the social teaching of the church for evangelization.⁴ During his pontificate the *Orientations for the study and teaching of the social teaching of the church in the formation of priests*⁵ was

² At the Synod of Bishops in 1971 it was said: «The mission of the church implies the defense and promotion of the dignity and the fundamental rights of the human person» (*Justice in the world* (n. 5, II,1).

³ Cf. *Laborem exercens* (1981), *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (1987) y *Centesimus annus* (1991).

⁴ Cf. *Centesimus annus*, n. 54.

⁵ CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, *Orientations for the*

published. He also entrusted the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace with the writing of the compendium on the social teaching of the church which was published in 2004.⁶

6. Religious women and men, because they participate in an evangelical vision of the human person, of the world, and of the events of history, carry out their mission today in the middle of particularly troubled situations. This demand criteria for reflection, for investigation, and for action that, besides keeping religious in communion with the Church and with one another, renders their evangelical commitment more incisive in favor of the human person. It is a fact that the current normative documents of many religious families have assumed the call to Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) as a new paradigm and as an integral dimension of their consecration and service to the Kingdom.

JPIC: new paradigm and as an integral dimension of their consecration and service to the Kingdom

Continuing with the Seminar *The Social Doctrine of the Church and Consecrated Life. Formation programmes*

7. The challenge to the formation of many committed religious men and women in the contemporary context of the church indicates the importance of, and the need to include, a profound learning of the social teaching of the church in the formation programmes of religious life. This conviction and the proposal to continue with the seminar, *The social doctrine of the church*

In continuity with the Seminar Catholic Social Teaching and Consecrated Life. Formation Itinerary

study and teaching of Catholic Social Teaching in the formation of priests, Rome, December 30, 1988.

⁶ The political, social and economic issues have also been very relevant in the Pontificate of John Paul II in Papal discussions at the world congresses and in the Council for Human Rights of the ONU making the voice of the church heard in the highest levels today.

*and consecrated life, formation programmes*⁷ has motivated the need to outline some general guidelines for the integration of the social teaching of the church in initial and ongoing formation in religious institutes.

The seminar, organized shortly after the publication of the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (CSDC),⁸ gave a renewed impulse to the commitment to promote in today's world an integral humanism rooted in solidarity. According to God's plan, this is a challenge not only entrusted to the laity but to the entire Christian community with the variety of charisms and vocational complementarity that characterize it, and to all people of good will regardless of their religious convictions. In a particular way, the seminar became a privileged space to identify the profound relationship between CL and the SDC.

**Commitment
to promote the JPIC
in the light of the CST**

8. Today, more than ever, religious women and men, faithful to the charisms of their founders/foundresses, are committed to promote justice, peace, and integrity of creation. They want to collaborate actively in building a civilization of love. Aware that this task demands an evangelical discernment of the social reality, the identification of systems and structures of injustices, and a determination of the root causes of each one of the problems affecting the world, consecrated persons personally and communally experience the necessity of

⁷ The Seminar promoted jointly by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and International Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Promoter's (JPIC), took place in Rome, October 12/13, 2006. The content of the event was published in a three language edition (Italian, Spanish and English): AA.VV., *Vita Consacrata e Dottrina Sociale della Chiesa. Percorsi di formazione*, EMI, Bologna 2007 (VC-DSI).

⁸ Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Città del Vaticano, Libreria Editrice Vaticana 2004.

assimilating the social teachings of the Church. They sense the urgency that this new *Compendium* moves them to go deeper into the theological, philosophical, moral, cultural and pastoral aspects of the teaching of the Church most relevant to social reality. This new *Compendium* helps to identify the fruitful confrontation between the Gospel and the problems that human persons meet throughout their journey in history.⁹

Further more, one can perceive that religious men and women are becoming increasingly aware that the transmission of the SDC can be a real pastoral priority; in fact, it is only by assimilating the principles, the criteria to judge, and the guidelines for action motivating the evangelizing mission of the Church¹⁰ that one can interpret the reality of today and find appropriate options for action.

Two priorities: The spirituality and formation

9. From this perspective, the Seminar identified in its *Conclusions* two priorities for the future of the new evangelization entrusted to CL: *spirituality* and *formation*.

10. In the first place, the most important and urgent social apostolate religious men and women need to implement in fidelity to their charism is to be totally of God, the God of Life and Peace. In this way they will be able to testify that the relationship with God is a sign God's favor toward the fullness of humanity. They give witness that «the human person cannot and should not be instrumentalized by social, economic and political structures, so that each person can enjoy the freedom to pursue his ultimate goal [...] and that his transforming activity in the universe can be always seen as a relative

⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, n. 8.

¹⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, n. 7.

and provisional reality since “the realities of this world will pass away” (1 *Cor* 7,31)».¹¹

Formation 11. In the second place is the aim to overcome the void that we perceive now in the formative itineraries of CL precisely by providing an adequate formation in the light of the SDC as presented recently in the *Compendium*. N. 540 is particularly significant in this respect: «The total gift of self made by men and women religious is offered to the contemplation of everyone as an eloquent and prophetic sign of the Church’s social doctrine. Placing themselves totally at the service of the mystery of Christ’s love for mankind and the world, religious anticipate and show by their very lives some of the traits of the new humanity that this social doctrine seeks to encourage».

The present document

Why this document? 12. Following these suggestions, widely accepted as bearers of a renewed dynamism, this present document wants to offer general guidelines for the institutes that promote the integration of the SDC in the formation programs, at all levels.

**First part:
Fundamental
principles** 13. In the first part, we present the principles that support this proposal. Jesus gave His Church the mission to collaborate so that the Kingdom of God is established in the world. This commitment implies social evangelization, so that God’s project becomes a reality in the life of all persons and all cultures. The SDC offers the keys for reading reality from a faith perspective and builds an indispensable instrument for evangelization. In this sense CL, being called to face the new frontiers of evangelization, has the absolute necessity

¹¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, n. 48.

to assimilate and bring to life the ever new teachings of the social magisterium of the Church.

14. The second part offers, most of all, some pre-suppositions, dimensions, options, and criteria for the writing up of concrete programmes which will allow formation in the social teaching of the church to be put into action in the light of a spirituality of incarnation, inculturation, ecology and prophecy.

**Second part:
General guidelines
and proposed
itineraries**

From this point of reference, it presents the objectives, content and experiences of the various stages of a formative journey in the SDC that can be accepted, adapted and re-worked for the religious institutes, keeping their own charism in mind.

**Toward a formation
that promotes
processes**

15. The main intention of this proposal is to bring about a change from a formation based on activities to a formation that promotes and accompanies generating processes of attitudes.

Part One

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION¹

The Plan of God

16. The Social teaching of the church and JPIC have their origin and are developed in close relationship to the Plan of God. The plan or dream of God revealed throughout the history of salvation is a new and distinct, humanity that is fraternal and supportive, where each person has life in its fullness. It is a plan that recognizes the dignity of each person as created in the image and likeness of God; where all share in the communion of life with God, with other people and with the whole of creation; where there are no barriers of nationality, culture, or religion; and where all are recognized as sons and daughters of the same Father and as brothers and sisters to each other.

The origin and development of CSD and JPIC is in close relation with God's plan

To carry out his Plan, God sent His own Son. Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God and the beginning of this new humanity, called this plan of God the Kingdom of God. The Spirit of God anointed Jesus and sent him to announce the Good News to the poor, to proclaim the liberty of captives to give the blind new sight, to give liberty to the oppressed, and to proclaim a year of grace (*Luke 4,16-18; Cf. Is 61,1-2*) Jesus, with his liberating praxis and with his word, fulfilled the promises of God to Israel and inaugurated the Reign of God.

Jesus fulfilled the promise of God and inaugurated His plan which is called the Kingdom of God

¹ For this theological foundation we must take into consideration the first chapter of the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church. Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Città del Vaticano, Libreria Editrice Vaticana 2005, pp.13-31.

He revealed to us that benevolence and mercy are what inspires God to act; that God is a Father who is anxious especially for the people who suffer most; that God is an opponent to all the laws, norms, traditions, and structures (political, economic, and social) that exclude or do not respect the dignity of each person as a son or daughter of God. Jesus denounced and opposed all that was contrary to the Plan of God, even giving His life for the Kingdom. He taught us that the poor, the docile, the merciful, the clean of heart, the ones that work for justice and peace are the Kingdom of God. Love, justice, respect for each person, concern for the weak and excluded, equality, liberty, sharing, solidarity, forgiveness, reconciliation and peace are values of the Kingdom.

The mission of the Church

It is the mission of the Church to collaborate with God in order to bring about His Reign

17. From the beginning, as revealed in salvation history (Creation, Exodus, Alliance, Prophets, Jesus of Nazareth), God is committed to advance His Plan in order that the world will have life in abundance.² This is God's mission in the first place and it must also be the mission of the Church.

It is certain that this Plan of God will only reach its fulfillment in the «Future City»,³ but as stated in *GS*, 43: «Christians who neglect the temporality of day to day life, believing that we have here no permanent city and so look to the future are mistaken». «The hope of a new earth must not dampen or deaden our spirits, but rather lead us and encourage us to make this earth more perfect».⁴

² Cf. *Jn* 10,10.

³ Cf. *Heb* 13,14; *GS*, n. 39.

⁴ *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 39.

It is the mission of the Church and of all believers to collaborate with God in bringing about the Reign of God.⁵ «The intimate nature of the Church is expressed in three areas: announce the Word of God (*kerygma-martyria*), celebrate the Sacraments (*liturgia*) and do charitable works (*diakonia*). These three aspects cannot be separated but work together mutually. For the Church, ‘works of charity’ does not mean social assistance which can be left to others, but rather works of charity belong to the nature of the Church and are an essential element of its expression».⁶

18. Its mission is one of restoration: that the Plan of God, broken by personal and structural sin (violence, injustices, wars, hunger, fractures, violations of human rights, exclusion, ecological crises...) becomes a reality in our world. Personal and social conversion is necessary for this work to be accomplished.⁷ We take into account that «there is no true interior conversion which does not better the situation on a social level».⁸

Personal and social conversion

Evangelization and JPIC

19. One can understand then what has been affirmed above from the Synod of Bishops in 1971:⁹ working for justice and participating in the transformation of the world are essential elements of the Gospel message. It is not possible to accept «that the work of evangelization could or should forget such extremely serious questions, so agitating today, which concern

JPIC: a constitutive element in announcing the Gospel message; essential for the mission of the Church

⁵ Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 36.

⁶ BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, n. 25.

⁷ Cf. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, n. 35.

⁸ COLOM E., *Consecrated Life and the Social teaching of the Church: The theological and spiritual significance of a relationship*, in AA.VV., *Consecrated Life and the Social teaching of the Church. Formation course*, EMI, Bologna 2007, p. 182.

⁹ Cf. *Justice in the world*, n. 5.

justice, freedom and the development of peace in our world. If this should happen it would mean ignoring the doctrine of the Gospel about love for our neighbor and people in need».¹⁰

It is indisputable today that «strong links exist between evangelization and human promotion (development, liberation). These are anthropological links, because the human person is not something abstract, but a person subject to social and economic problems. Since we cannot separate the plan of creation from the plan of redemption, there must also be theological links reaching out to concrete situations of injustice that must be confronted for justice to be restored. These links must be eminently evangelical and based on charity. In effect, how can we proclaim the new commandment without promoting through justice and peace the true authentic growth of the human person?».¹¹ The divorce between religious practice and professional and social involvement must be considered as one of the greatest errors of our time.¹²

Evangelization and the STC

The Social teaching of the Church is indispensable in the formation of Christians and specifically in pastoral and social formation

20. It is necessary to strengthen charitable works in their social dimension in the Church and in Religious Life. There is a need to promote pastoral social work as

¹⁰ PAUL VI, The opening discourse at the general assembly of the Synod of Bishops 27th of September 1974. The text translated from Italian reads: «That is, it (is) does not mean that evangelization can or should ignore the importance of today's problems, so much in discussion, regarding justice, liberation, development and peace in the World. It would be to forget (the) gospel lessons regarding love for the suffering and needy neighbour (*Matt.* 25,31-46), mentioned in (the) apostolic teachings (cf. *1 Jn.* 4,14-28)» and can be seen in:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/speeches/1974/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19740927_allocazione-iniziale_it.html

¹¹ *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n. 32.

¹² Cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 43.

the task of evangelization. To enable this to happen, the contribution of the social teaching of the Church in the formation of Christians is indispensable and unavoidable.¹³ This is true also in the specific formation for pastoral social work. The pastoral social work cannot be accomplished without the help of the social teaching of the Church as its privileged source along with Scripture, the tradition of the Church, theology and human sciences. «Today the social teaching of the Church is called upon more and more to support the process of evangelization, the dialogue with the world, the Christian interpretation of today's reality and the pastoral orientations, to enlighten the different initiatives with right principles».¹⁴

«A pastoral social initiative without the contribution of the Social Teaching of the Church is a Church response exposed to improvisation, superficiality, and missionary commitment out of focus. It could be said, moreover, that the social teaching is for pastoral social work an integral and essential part in order to achieve its end».¹⁵ Therefore, «The Social teaching is an integral part of the ministry of evangelization in the Church».¹⁶

Religious Life and the STC

21. The witness and experience of the men and women in Religious Life who are committed to respond to the challenges of our present day world,¹⁷ make a

Witness, activities and works of the Religious Life: important for human promotion

¹³ Cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 528.

¹⁴ CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, *Orientations for the study and teaching of the Social teaching of the Church in the formation of priests*, n. 1.

¹⁵ TOSO M., *Social doctrine today. Evangelization, catechetical and pastoral work in the most recent Magisterial of the Church*, SEI, Torino 1996, p. 112.

¹⁶ Cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 66; cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, nn. 29-31; *Centesimus annus*, n. 54.

¹⁷ Cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n. 16.

positive contribution in finding solutions which respond to the evangelical criteria and pastoral guidelines of the Church.¹⁸ The pluriform activities and works which, according to the variety of charisms, characterize the mission of Religious, constitute in effect one of the most important means of fulfilling the mission of evangelization and human promotion which the Church carries out in the world.¹⁹

Throughout its history
Religious Life has
served the poor
and the development
of the people

22. «Following in the footsteps of the Son of God who said “I have not come to be served but to serve” (*Mt* 20,28), religious, at least in the better periods of their history have been characterized by “washing the feet”, that is to say, for their service, especially to the poor and needy. (...) Fixing their gaze on the face of Christ, their commitment to persons has not diminished; rather it has been strengthened, enabling religious to become more inserted in history, freeing religious life from all that disfigures it».²⁰

«With the dynamism of charity, forgiveness and reconciliation, religious strive to construct a just world that offers better possibilities for life and for the development of the person».²¹

Four areas of fidelity
at the centre
of everything

23. There are four areas of great fidelity which motivate and guide the commitment to JPIC for religious men and women:²²

- fidelity to the human person and to our times;
- fidelity to Christ and the Gospel;
- fidelity to the Church and its mission in the world;

¹⁸ Cf. *Religious and human promotion*, n. 6; *Starting afresh from Christ*, n. 35; *Mutual relations*, nn. 22-23.

¹⁹ Cf. *Religious and human promotion*, n. 5; *Perfectae Caritatis*, n. 1; *Lumen Gentium*, n. 46.

²⁰ *Consecrated Life*, n. 75.

²¹ *Starting afresh from Christ*, n. 35.

²² Cf. *Religious and human promotion*, n. 13.

– fidelity to religious life and the charism of the Institute.

24. To fulfill adequately their prophetic mission of remembering to serve the plan of God for persons, «consecrated people must have a deep experience of God and be aware of the challenges of the times, understanding them with a deep theological sense by means of discernment done with the help of the Holy Spirit». In reality, through the events of history the call of God to work according to His plan in an active and fruitful insertion in the events of our time is often hidden.

The way: experience of God, discernment, active and fruitful insertion

The discernment of the signs of the times, as the Council says, must be done in the light of the Gospel. It is necessary to be open to hear the interior voice of the Spirit which invites us to accept in the deepest sense the designs of Providence. «He/She is called to religious life in order that he/she will bring new answers to the new problems in the world of today».²³

25. «This means that each Institute, according to its specific charism, is to adopt a humble, austere lifestyle at personal and community levels. Consecrated people, rooted in this witness to life and remaining free of all political ideologies, are in a situation to denounce, in the most adequate manner appropriate with their option, the injustices committed against so many of the sons and daughters of God; and to commit themselves to the promotion of justice in the social environment where they work».²⁴

Conditions for announcing and denouncing

26. It is a matter of being of service in the new circumstances of evangelization: of being close to the poor, the aged, drug addicts, people with AIDS, immi-

New Frontiers

²³ *Vita Consecrata*, n. 73; cf. n. 81; *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n. 15.

²⁴ *Vita Consecrata*, n. 82.

grants, and political prisoners; to those discriminated against by reason of gender, age, sexual orientation, race, culture, or religion; and to people who endure all types of sufferings caused by their own private situation in life.

Besides the new types of poverty, the documents, *Consecrated Life* and *Starting afresh from Christ*, speak of other signs of the times which challenge the Church and religious life and exact discernment and a human response dialogue between faith and culture,²⁵ ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue,²⁶ service of life from conception to its natural end,²⁷ ecological balance, and human rights.²⁸

Need for sensitivity and competence with the Social Teaching as a starting point

27. It is evident that discernment in these fields, responses to these challenges, and the presence of a prophetic dimension demand from Religious who are immersed in the complexities of the present world a notable formation in the social teaching of the Church, in the principles for reflection, in criteria to judge, and in guidelines for action.²⁹

The service of the Social Teaching in the formation of Religious, men and women.

28. The service which the social teaching of the Church can offer to the process of formation for religious men and women can be summarized in seven points:³⁰

- Service of understanding men and women today.
- Service of dialogue in today's world.
- Service of discernment.

²⁵ Cf. *Starting afresh from Christ*, n. 39.

²⁶ Cf. *Consecrated Life*, 100-102; *Starting afresh from Christ*, n. 40.

²⁷ Cf. *Starting afresh from Christ*, n. 38.

²⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, n. 45.

²⁹ Cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n. 7.

³⁰ Cf. RODRÍGUEZ TRIVES F., *The formation and teaching of the Social teaching of the Church in the seminaries: CORINTIOS XIII 87* (1998) 149-153.

- Insertion in the life and culture of the people.
- Service of social and pastoral action.
- Service of evangelization.
- Service of commitment to justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.

It is not possible to promote this teaching without at the same time being questioned by same, both at a personal and institutional level. Social behavior is an integral part of being a follower of Christ.³¹ The cultivation of moral and social virtues and the spreading of them in society will enrich religious men and women in their identity and mission as new persons, creators of a new humanity.³²

³¹ Cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n. 29.

³² Cf. *Vita Consecrata*, n. 85; *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 30.

Part Two

FORMATIVE PROGRAMMES

I. GENERAL ORIENTATIONS

29. The ecclesiastic documents on consecrated life, with notable reference to those prior to Vatican Council II and, even more, in the successive years, have expressed a constant concern for the integral formation of religious men and women. The documents affirm that the renewal of communities and their prophetic mission in the world depend of this formation.¹

Itineraries:
why?

According to the principles presented in the first part of this document, the pastoral action of consecrated people and their commitment to the values of justice, peace and integrity of creation require, as indispensable instruments for evangelization, a progressive assimilation and a lived experience of the social teaching of the Church.² The development of programmes to integrate the social doctrine of the church with the formation process for consecrated life, using a more systematic and vital preparation approach in these areas is of great importance in today's world.³ These programmes form part of the formation approach for each Institute and are directed to all Institute members.

¹ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR INSTITUTES OF CONSECRATED LIFE AND SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE (CIVCSVA), *Orientations on formation in religious institutes*, Vatican City 1990, nn.1-3; cf. likewise: *Consecrated Life*, nn. 65-71.

² Cf. *Compendium of Catholic Social Doctrine*, 2, nn. 66-67.

³ Cf. *Ibid.*, nn. 528-533; cf. also: AMIGO V. Carlos, *Consecrated Life and the Compendium of Catholic Social Doctrine*, in *VC-DSI*, pp.236-237.

The programmes follow the stages and phases of life in which the members find themselves.⁴

Presuppositions

The horizon:
ongoing formation

30. Presuppositions are the foundations that are at the basis of the programmes. These ensure that the process combines the necessary conditions in order that those who assume them may reach the goal. The suppositions in this case are: to focus the whole process from the time of ongoing formation, to be faithful to the charism of one's Institute, to depend on community in taking up this programme.

31. *Beginning with ongoing formation.* Formation, like a programme for life, is a dynamic and progressive journey towards configuration with Christ; it is a discernment in the Spirit, of the continuous calls from God through time and various contexts in which mission is lived.⁵

However, formation is not limited to the initial phase of a project.⁶ It is not only a *pedagogical* moment of preparation for vows, but presents a *theological* way of rethinking the same consecrated life. This life in itself never ends, for it is «participation in the Father's action that, through the Spirit, penetrates the heart (...) with the sentiments of the Son».⁷

So it is very important to focus the whole programme as ongoing formation. This implies a personal and community disposition to allow oneself to be chal-

⁴ Cf. *Starting Afresh from Christ*, n. 18; ALFORD Helen, *Justice and Peace in religious formation*, in VC-DSI, pp. 220-225.

⁵ Cf. SACRED CONGREGATION FOR RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR INSTITUTES, *Essential Elements of Catholic Social Doctrine on religious life directed to Institutes dedicated to Apostolic Works*, Vatican City 1983, n. 44.

⁶ Cf. *Vita Consecrata*, n. 69.

⁷ *Starting Afresh from Christ*, n.15.

lenged each day by God through the events of history, to want to learn all through life, at every age and every moment, till the hour of death.⁸

32. *Fidelity to the charism of the institute.* The following of Jesus progresses according to the characteristics of the charismatic experience of the founder or foundress of each Institute.⁹ The formative experience thus requires a constant reference to one's own Rule of Life or Constitutions and the Institute's spiritual patrimony.¹⁰ Then there is the possibility of creative fidelity as a response to the signs of the times that appear in the world of today.¹¹

**Fidelity
to the charism
of one's Institute**

All these elements-identity, mission, context-determine the content and methodology of the programme in its distinct steps toward vital assimilation of the social doctrine of the Church in the light of the Word of God and the specific charism of the Institute.

33. *Community.* An indispensable presupposition is to depend on the community to animate and accompany the process with each member and all in general.¹² This space of personal growth, where life and mission are shared and where constructive relationships are built up allows the experience of communion to become a reality in the convergence of goals and projects at the service of the Kingdom.¹³

The community

Situated in diverse socio-cultural contexts, the communities of consecrated life, in which brothers and sisters of different ages, languages and cultures live

⁸ Cf. *Essential Elements*, n. 44.

⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, n. 46; Cf. CIVCSVA, *Collaboration between Institutes for formation*, Vatican City 1998, n. 7:1-3.

¹⁰ Cf. *Orientations on formation*, n. 16.

¹¹ Cf. *Vita Consecrata*, nn. 36-37.

¹² Cf. *Ibid.*, n. 67.

¹³ Cf. *Essential Elements*, nn. 19, 47.

together, appear as signs of dialogue that is always possible and of communion that is capable of creating harmony in diversity.¹⁴ These communities are places of hope and pardon where love is transformed into the logic of life and a source of mercy and compassion.¹⁵

Dimensions

34. The dimensions constituting the essential aspects of the formative process are: discernment, experience and reciprocal accompaniment.

Discernment 35. *Discernment.* The credible reading of reality¹⁶ demands adopting discernment as an attitude of life. This is, in the first place, a gift of the Spirit, through which there is the certitude that He acts continuously in history and allows himself to be met by those who are sincerely searching. It is to pray the Word, making one's own the sentiments of Jesus and listening to the Word in events, in daily life, in persons. It is also a personal and community process of seeking the Will of God and making options for life and mission.¹⁷

**Experience:
constitutive
elements** 36. *Experience.* Experience is the most effective and directive way a person can have in order to know the reality and let oneself be molded by it. Through experience, values are assimilated, attitudes and life styles are consolidated. Through experience, a person can arrive at unifying knowledge and love, theory and practice.

¹⁴ Cf. *Orientations on formation*, nn. 26-28.

¹⁵ Cf. *Vita Consecrata*, n. 51.

¹⁶ Discerning reality requires three moments: objective analysis of the situation to discover the causes, aided by social sciences; clarification of the fact in the light of the Gospel and the Social Doctrine of the Church and with these elements an opt for concrete actions to collaborate in the transformation of the world according the God's plan. This method follows the steps of "see, judge and act".

¹⁷ Cf. *Vita Consecrata*, nn 69, 66; *Starting Afresh from Christ*, n.14.

Nevertheless, experience by itself is not automatically formative. In order that it may be so, its constitutive elements must be activated from an anthropological perspective:

a. *Existential contact with reality*: live the situation in the first person. No real experience is made only by hearing something or as a result of study or reading.

b. *Intensity and globality*: incorporate all the spheres of the person: intellectual, affective, active.

c. *Reflection and interpretation*: deepen the lived experience so that it may be transformed into a reading of life, an existential orientation.

d. *Expression and objectivity*: translate the lived experience into various forms of language. The expression is not only necessary for communication of the experience to others, but as a necessary mediation to explain and enlighten it.

e. *Accompaniment*: have accompaniment at all levels as it is of particular importance, as specified in the following section.

f. *Transformation*: recognize that to the measure in which the experience is deep and authentic, it is manifested in change in the person, in his/her attitudes.¹⁸

Experiences will mark the various steps of the formative process. It is important that the steps be lived as such, keeping in mind all the constitutive elements, in accordance with determined criteria that direct the action.

37. *Accompaniment*. The formative programme requires the building up of positive interpersonal relationships that stimulate the interest in the objectives of each step. It animates in order to draw up a synthesis

**Reciprocal
accompaniment**

¹⁸ Cf. ALBERICH E., *Catechesi e prassi ecclesiale*, LDC, Leumann (TO) 1982, pp. 77-78.

and to point out new paths for growth. In the reciprocal action each person is made co-responsible for the other, and feels himself/herself constantly challenged to give and to receive, to collaborate so that the goal is nearer, to overcome obstacles and difficulties.¹⁹

This reciprocal accompaniment creates a serene climate in the community. It does not exclude moments of crisis and/or conflict, but contributes to acquiring an open mentality that is sensitive to the problems of the world and is in solidarity with those who suffer discrimination or violence. It is subjected to critical judgments in face of information manipulated by traditional communications media, new theologies and, above all, by the Internet.

In this atmosphere, formators who animate and coordinate the various steps of the process can exercise more effectively their role of mediation in orienting the personal commitment and the assimilation of values that the social doctrine of the Church proposes.²⁰

Priority Options

38. Today consecrated life requires us to make some unavoidable options in drawing up itineraries (programmes): an incarnate spirituality, insertion in the reality of the poorest, dialogue and reconciliation as a way towards peace, and integrity of creation.

**Incarnate
Spirituality**

39. *An Incarnated Spirituality.* To follow Jesus Christ more closely, according to the charism of one's Institute, implies living an incarnated spirituality that considers reality as a place of manifestation and meeting with God. An incarnated spirituality helps to develop

¹⁹ Cf. *Fraternal Life in Community*, n 43; CIVCSVA, *The Service of Authority and Obedience*, Vatican City, nn, 66-67, 69-70.

²⁰ Cf. *Vita Consecrata*, nn. 66-67, 69-70.

a contemplative attitude that is capable of listening to His voice in actual life and of discovering His face in each person, particularly in the more neglected ones.²¹ It is a spirituality that does not allow for dichotomy or reductionism;²² history and daily life are sacred spaces where the Word is revealed, where the Word challenges and transfigures reality.²³

Since the incarnation of the Word, no other genuine Gospel spirituality is possible. Jesus' words, from the beginning of his apostolic ministry affirms this: «*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for He has anointed me to announce the Good News to the poor, He has sent me to proclaim freedom to captives, and sight to the blind, to bring freedom to the oppressed (...)*».²⁴ Life has been enriched by generations of consecrated persons throughout history. According to the specific charism given by God to founders and foundresses, women and men have given their lives for the service of the Kingdom. «Truly, consecrated life is a memorial to Jesus' manner of existing and acting as the Word Incarnate before His Father and before his brothers and sisters. This is a living tradition of life and of the message of the Saviour».²⁵

The formative process, proposing an incarnated spirituality, is an education to look at reality from the perspective of the poor and to develop an effective compassion for them. It leads to taking on the pain of the great sufferings of the planet, to being committed to promote justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

40. *Insertion in the reality of the poor.* Inculturation in the reality of the less fortunate and the marginalized in his- **Insertion in the reality of the poorest**

²¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, n 74.

²² Cf. *Orientations for formation*, n. 17.

²³ Cf. *Starting Afresh from Christ*, n.20.

²⁴ *Lc* 4,16-21.

²⁵ *Vita Consecrata*, nn. 22, 82.

tory shows the scandalous contrasts between the wealth of some and the misery of others.²⁶ This has all the more reason today, when new forms of poverty have been added to the old forms: despair of not belonging, drug addiction, and abandonment of the elderly or the sick, migrants, trafficking of women and children, social discrimination, and all other kinds of violation of human rights.

Concretely opting for the poorest, consecrated persons are changed into witnesses of the Father's love, of his compassion and mercy.²⁷ In order that this option be effective, it is very important to plan and realize within the formative process, experiences of insertion in the world of the poor and marginalized. This coming closer to the poor not only shows their needs, but also helps one learn from them, allowing oneself to be evangelized by this wisdom that Jesus himself exalted in His prayer of praise to the Father.²⁸

Through dialogue and reconciliation leading to peace

41. *A Spirituality of dialogue and reconciliation as a way to peace.* The multi-cultural, pluro-religious reality that characterizes all contexts today constitutes the horizon in which consecrated life lives the passion for the Kingdom.²⁹ Openness and fidelity to Gods' plan means cultivating, at every step of the formative process, a spirituality of dialogue and reconciliation, with its characteristic attitudes: listening, respect, appreciating diversity, benevolence, confidence.³⁰

With the same dynamism of charity, pardon, patience, and active hope, consecrated persons can be builders of peace, collaborating in this way, so that

²⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, nn. 82, 84, 89-90.

²⁷ Cf. *Orientations on formation*, n. 14; *Starting Afresh from Christ*, nn. 34-35.

²⁸ Cf. *Mt* 11,25.

²⁹ Cf. *Fraternal life in community*, n. 27.

³⁰ Cf. *Vita Consecrata*, nn. 100-102.

the world may offer new and better possibilities to life and the integral development of persons, according to God's plan of love for humanity.³¹

42. *Safeguard (Integrity) of creation.* The awareness of the growing environmental crisis that faces the planet reaffirms the need for a formation with a marked ecological dimension. Creation is both the object of contemplation and of commitment. The Spirit of God, as the creative force that calls each thing into existence, is constantly at work in the cosmos. This Spirit is the dynamic principle, the light, the perennial source of life. **Integrity of Creation**

From this vision, consecrated persons are challenged to cultivate an attitude of responsibility and co-responsibility with regard to living in the common house that God has given humanity. This vision calls consecrated persons to gratitude to the Creator of heaven and earth; to discovering the footprints of its Lord; to the place where the creative, provident and redeeming power is revealed.³²

A simple life style that is authentic and in solidarity, as much on the personal as on the community level, can witness to this faith in the Creator and be an urge towards an ecological ethics, an alternative to consumerism and the destruction of nature.³³

Integrity of creation, beginning with concrete actions of everyday life, must be a distinctive mark of the following of Christ that is assumed from the very first steps of the formative process.³⁴

³¹ Cf. *Starting Afresh from Christ*, n. 35.

³² Cf. *Compendium of Catholic Social Doctrine*, nn. 451-465.

³³ Cf. *Vita Consecrata*, nn. 90-102.

³⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, n. 45; *Compendium CST*, nn. 461-487.

Criteria

Need to underline criteria 43. To translate the suppositions into practice, dimensions and options, it is necessary to emphasize some criteria or lines of action that accompany the formative process and condition it positively. These are: the analysis of the situation of those who enter into the programme, the gradual steps to follow, the active participation of one and all, and the continual updating of formators.

Previous analysis of the situation 44. *Analysis of the situation.* The point of departure for the drawing up of the programme must be the analysis of the situation in which those who are growing find themselves: question themselves on the life style that brings about witness of gospel living that is projected; on the readiness to accept the demands of personal and institutional change that formation presupposes.³⁵

This having been done, it is a question of facing the challenges that JPIC spirituality initiates.³⁶ Among them are: passing from an academic, theoretical formation to an experiential formation; changing from a stereotyped formation to an inculturated formation of living and experiencing; moving from principles and judgments to lived experiences; assimilating attitudes into one's life that promote changes in relation to God, one's brothers and sisters, and creation; living the experience of sonship, fraternity, solidarity, and commitment.³⁷

Gradual process 45. *Gradual Process.* The steps of the formative path do not take place in a linear way, but present gradual levels of maturation.

This gradual approach is a criterion that implies a *process* of personalization through which each one is

³⁵ Cf. *The Service of Authority*, n. 29: e.

³⁶ Cf. *Compendium CSD*, nn. 160-163.

³⁷ Cf. *Collaboration between Institutes for formation*, n. 27.

motivated to assume the proposals³⁸ with conviction and freedom. It promotes dynamism of interiorizing oriented towards the deepening and appropriation of a style, a way of being, that is expressed in attitudes and in commitment.³⁹

In the logic of the process, it is not so much the results as the readiness to journey all the time, and the value of seeing the negative aspects that delay growth and demand interior freedom.

46. *Participation.* The active participation of persons is another criterion of great importance so that the process is directed positively and builds up a climate of internal cohesion around values. It projects persons toward the exterior through a solidarity of presence in the context in which one lives.⁴⁰ **Participation**

The daily path of fraternal life in community requires a participation that implies the exercise of dialogue and discernment.⁴¹ Each member and the whole community can thus compare their own lives with the project that has been drawn up. They can draw out the aspects that can help to reach better self-formation, greater deepening of the Social Doctrine of the Church and living this commitment that they have assumed.

Co-responsibility and collaboration are indispensable to a search for the common good and the exercise of an active Gospel citizenship in the transformation of society, beginning from one's own ambience of life.⁴² In the same way, dialogue and participation cultivate the capacity to judge and promote a vigilant attitude in

³⁸ Cf. *Orientations on formation*, n. 29.

³⁹ Cf. *Starting Afresh from Christ*, n. 15.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Orientations on formation*, n. 29; *Starting Afresh from Christ*, n. 46.

⁴¹ Cf. *The Service of Authority*, n. 20: b. c.

⁴² Cf. *Starting Afresh from Christ*, n. 14.

the critical sense, especially when, in the face of certain problems in the world, it is the moment to try out new analyses and new syntheses with regard to greater incidence in the social sphere.

**Formation of
formators**

47. *The formation of the Formators.* The preparation and constant actualization of formators is a criterion that must accompany the whole programme.⁴³ These must be ‘expert persons on the paths that lead to God, to be able to accompany others in this journey’.⁴⁴ Above all, they must be noted for the suitability for this service that they offer, with a great respect for the values of justice, peace and integrity of creation and with an adequate preparation in the STC. Their life witness and their concrete commitment encourage their brothers/sisters in the community, especially the younger ones. The atmosphere created in community exercises a role of priority in acquiring attitudes. All those who receive the ministry of formation are responsible for this.⁴⁵

⁴³ Cf. *Collaboration between Institutes for formation*, n. 23.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Orientations on formation*, nn. 30-32.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Vita Consecrata*, n. 66.

II. STAGES OF FORMATION

48. In setting up the guidelines on the Social Teaching of the Church (hereafter STC) for each one of the stages of formation, the different reflections presented in the earlier parts of this document come together.

The *theological justification* supports the relationship between consecrated life and the social doctrine of the Church - the values of justice, peace and integrity of creation.

The *general guidelines* constitute the basic methodology which guarantees the continuity and convergence of the proposals for formation.

This attempt to offer some models for each stage of the process is merely a suggestion. Each institute, according to its charism, can elaborate and adapt the elements according to its own needs.

The guidelines do not claim to take in all aspects of formation, but are strictly confined to *the area of the STC*. They are within the general context of the formative proposal which is demanded at each stage of the process.

In each stage, the following will be presented: *specific aims*, some *content* necessary to achieve these aims, and *experiences* which mark the various steps in the process. All of these elements are intrinsically related. The assimilation of the theoretical aspects influences the quality of living out of the experiences. Final achievement of the aims and objectives depends on the authenticity of these experiences.

49. *A general objective.*⁴⁶

Conscious of the reality of the world to which we belong and in which we are trying to live radically the following of Jesus, we religious, in a mystical and prophetic way and in solidarity, wish to announce and give testimony to the Gospel of the Kingdom, continuing in this way the mission of Jesus Christ.

We propose therefore, to promote a gradual and systematic process of integral formation in the area of the STC, which will enable us to

⁴⁶ The general objective indicates the purpose that orients all the itinerary. It is formulated in the first person to indicate that they who propose it are convinced of its validity and they desire to share it.

recognise the calls we receive from God through the situations in which we are living and the responses we must make in order to uphold the values of justice, peace and integrity of Creation in the different socio-cultural contexts.

A. Ongoing Formation

50. Ongoing formation, as a dimension of life and a continuing process, «is an inherent demand of religious consecration».⁴⁷

Specific Objectives

51. Some specific objectives:

1. Cultivate a strong spirituality that, in light of the Word and of the social teaching of the church, leads to listening to God in the reality of each day, in the situation of the poorest, in Creation.

2. Reread the charism of your own Institute set against the urgencies and challenges of the times, places, cultures and social subjects so as to receive what is new of the Spirit and to collaborate in the transformation of social reality with Gospel strength.

3. Internalize and diffuse principles of reflection, criteria for judging, and the guidelines for action of the social teaching of the church so as to promote through your own pastoral mission a supportive and integral humanism.

4. Become involved in personal and community discernment of social reality so as to confront developing ideologies and to be a prophetic voice in your own situation.

5. Study and analyse the structural causes of poverty.

6. Assume responsibility for saving the environment collaborating in a creative manner in the resolution of the problems of the planet which destroy life

7. Live love from the perspective of the common good as a sign of hope and as a means of building a culture of peace and universal brother and sisterhood.

⁴⁷ *Vita Consecrata*, n. 69.

Contents

52. The contemplation of the person of Jesus Christ, by means of the knowledge of and deepening of our understanding of the Sacred Scriptures, is a source of inspiration and a force for the work of evangelisation for all religious during their whole lives.

With these, combined with the consciousness of being Church, take on the patrimony of the STC and try continually to keep one's self updated in order to be able to face seriously and competently the challenges which are presented by our socio-cultural environment.

Together with the systematic study of the summary of the STC, the following present various aspects of the present situation which, at the moment, seem to be important and need to be explained more clearly by the Magisterium of the Church:

1. The phenomenon of migrations.
2. Challenges of science and new technologies.
3. The media and technological innovations, especially the Internet, in the service of Life.
4. Ecological crisis and environmental problems.
5. Sustainable development and life-styles.
6. Responsible consumption.
7. An economy of solidarity.
8. Human rights: their biblical foundation.
9. Principle themes of bioethics.
10. Inter-religious pluralism and dialogue.
11. Cultures and inculturation.
12. Christian participation in politics.
13. Social doctrine, Christian practice, and social work.
14. Church organisations and other networks dealing with JPIC.
15. Documents of religious institutes dealing with JPIC.

Experiences

53. Religious, by virtue of their consecration, are called to live individually and as communities in experiences that help them to «wade out into the deep» where the Spirit reveals Himself and his actions in the story of every age, culture and human situation. This profound experience of the Spirit enables them to read the signs of the times and to carry out a fruitful and prophetic apostolic mission.

Among these experiences we would point out:

1. *Lectio Divina* or Bible reflection related to social justice, active non-violence and the defence of life.⁴⁸

2. Encounters with situations of social exclusion: marginalized housing estates, prisons, resettled communities, homes for women who have been ill-treated; and also meetings with people who are working in projects committed to the re-integration of people in society and in movements and organisations that work for peace and the defence of the environment.

3. Involvement in social pastoral work.

4. Opportunities to have work experiences in Developing Countries or in places of extreme poverty (sabbatical year).

5. Participation in inter-congregational networks or other Church organisations.

6. Designing projects dealing with micro-credit and micro-finance for cases of extreme poverty.

7. Participation in meetings, debates, seminars and forums.

8. Workshops on conflict resolution.

B. Initial Formation

54. Initial formation sets out the basis of the life-giving development of the consecrated person's identity which continues to grow and deep-

⁴⁸ Suggested texts: *Gen* 4,1-16; *Gen* 18,1-16; *Gen* 37,2-36; *Ex* 3,7-10; *Deut* 5,12-21; *Amos* 5,21-24; *Mic* 6,6-8; *Is* 5,1-7; *Wis* 11,23-26; 12,11-13; 16,18-19; *Lk* 4,14-30; *Mt* 5,1-12; 5,38-45; 6,24-34; *Lk* 10,25-37, *Mt* 10,34-39; 25,31-46; *1Cor* 12,31-13,13.

en during the whole of one's life. In this sense it is very important to offer, right from the start, the fundamental elements of the STC.

The different stages of initial formation respect the rhythm of growth of each individual. They follow one another with great flexibility and according to the personality of each one.

Postulancy

55. The postulancy is the stage before the novitiate. During this stage the religious deepens the relationship with Jesus Christ and becomes more aware of what the following of Jesus implies. From this arises the decision to commit one's self to a process of vocational discernment in an Institute of Religious Life, and this with a more specific emphasis on a particular charism.

Specific Objectives

56. Among the specific objectives we point out:

1. The deepening of the personal relationship with Jesus Christ by contemplating his attitudes of mercy, compassion, love of life and caring for nature and the ordinary things of everyday life. Assuming attitudes of attention and respect towards everyone, valuing individual and cultural differences as a means of growing in reciprocal relationships.

2. Awaking a consciousness of the ways God calls us through happenings in the world and in the reality in which we live.

3. Valuing Creation as a gift of God which He has confided to the care of each individual.

4. Becoming aware of the need to find the causes of the social phenomena related to injustice, violence, poverty and other violations of human rights.

5. Discerning the social dimension of the faith and the relationship which exists between Christian living and social commitment.

Contents

57. The contents of the postulancy programme can be administered according to the conditions of each group:

1. Knowledge of the person of Jesus Christ by means of a systematic study of the Gospel.

2. Study of the first chapter of the summary of the CST: «God's loving design for humanity», and the anthropology of the social teaching of the church.

3. Approaches to some of the social encyclicals: *Populorum Progressio* and *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*.

4. Reading of the life of the founders from the perspective of their option for the poorest.

5. Some ideas on ecology.

6. Introduction to the method of *see, judge, act*.

Experiences

58. We suggest the following experiences:

1. Introduction to *Lectio Divina* (Scriptural reflection), using preferably Gospel passages which emphasise the «friends» of Jesus Christ: the Father, the poor and those who suffer; and His concerns: the well-being of everyone, fraternity, service, nature and the Kingdom.⁴⁹

2. Contact with situations of poverty in marginalized areas – with migrants, refugees, the displaced.

3. Analysis of world news and of the local and national impact of events on young people; using the see, judge and act method.

4. Contemplation of creation and introduction to the three R's: Reduce, Recycle, Re-use.

5. Organisation of, and/or participation in, groups and campaigns which promote the care of the environment.

⁴⁹ Possible texts: *Mt* 5,1-12; *Mt* 5,38-45; *Mt* 6,24-34; *Mt* 10,34-39; *Mt* 25,31-46; *Mc* 3,1-6; *Lc* 4,14-30; *Lc* 7,11-17; *Lc* 7,18-30; *Lc* 10,25-37; *Jn* 13,1-15.

6. Periods of voluntary work in mission areas.
7. Interviews with people involved in social work.

Novitiate

59. This is a stage of fundamental importance in the formation process. During this time the person experiences in a profound and transforming manner his relationship with Jesus Christ, and this in order to become like him and to take on the cause of the Kingdom according to the charism of the Institute in which he wishes to make his religious profession. The values of justice, peace and integrity of Creation, in the light of the STC, can be made interiorly and exteriorly evident by this experience of following Christ. This is to say that within the person, the energising forces of contemplation-action-contemplation along with the beginning of community life are unified.

Specific Objectives

60. Among possible objectives for the novitiate stage we note:

1. Deepening the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, contemplating Him in His relationship with the apostles and his actions in favour of the most needy.

2. Re-reading one's own story as a place of salvation, from the perspective of the free gift of the love and compassion of God.

3. Practising community dialogue in the spirit of Christ in order to accept diversity as riches, and to integrate the different ways of seeing, thinking, and acting.

4. Exercising personal and communal discernment as a means of becoming one with the will of God both in the important and in the ordinary circumstances of life.

5. Making one's self responsible for the care of the environment in an attitude of thanksgiving for the gift of creation.

6. Getting to know the mission of one's own Institute as a means of collaborating in the building up of a society based on justice, solidarity and peace according to the plan of a loving God.

Contents

61. Some essential elements of the content:

1. A study of Chapters II, III and IV of the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*.

2. A deepening of the prophetic dimension of Religious Life.

3. Living the consecration and the social element of the vows.

4. Understanding the Magnificat of Mary as a Canticle to God, the Liberator of the Poor and the Oppressed.

5. Seeing the relationship between the charism of one's Institute and the STC.

6. Studying the values of justice, peace and integrity of Creation in the documents of one's own Institute.

7. Studying the Pope's message on the World Day of Peace.

8. Getting acquainted with various campaigns related to water, climate change, justice and solidarity in business, treatment of people.

Experiences

62. Some important experiences:

1. *Lectio Divina*, or Scripture reflection on the actions of Jesus in favour of the most oppressed, of foreigners and the marginalized.⁵⁰

2. Analysis of the socio-political situation using the see, judge and act method.

3. Discernment about the way we are living poverty in our personal and community lives.

4. Opportunities for mission and apostolic work among the poorest and most needy.

5. Organization of and participation in groups and campaigns that promote the care of the environment.

⁵⁰ Possible texts: *Mt* 5,1-12; *Mt* 5,38-45; *Mt* 6,24 -34; *Mt* 10,34-39; *Mt* 25,31-46; *Mk* 3,1-6; *Lk* 4,14-30; *Lk* 7,11-17; *Lk* 7,18-30, *Lk* 10,25-37; *Jn* 13,1-15.

6. Community evaluation of the way in which we are committing ourselves to assume a sober and ecological life-style.

7. Timetabling the celebration of the most important liturgical times of the year in a spirit of solidarity with the least economically developed people.

8. Workshops celebrating the World Days programmed by the UNO involving the people of the area in which the Novitiate is situated.

9. Prayer sessions on important dates related to peace, justice and the integrity of creation.

10. Meetings with people who practise in their own lives, the mission of Jesus giver of life and prophet among the people.

The juniorate and student years

63. The Juniorate and Student Years cover the time dedicated to the maturing and deepening of the desire to give one's self totally to God and so to one's brothers and sisters.

The experience of feeling one's self so strongly attracted by Christ that He becomes the centre of a life which embraces the cause of the Kingdom in favour of the poorest and most needy, just as he Himself did.

Specific Objectives

64. Among the many objectives to be attained during the Juniorate/ Student Years are the following:

1. Strengthening the conviction of the centrality of Christ in one's own life; trying to live out his feelings and attitudes.

2. Making one's prayer the living consciousness of the presence of God and of the constant action of the Spirit in the world, in the community and in one's own life.

3. Practising dialogue, respect and appreciation of diversity as a means of collaborating in the construction of peace in the world.

4. Living sincerely a simple, authentic life style in solidarity with our commitment to the poor.

5. Becoming critically aware of the sources and content of the media, of new technologies, of the cinema and especially the Internet.

6. Valuing the apostolic experiences that have been shared and discussed and relived as occasions of growth in self-knowledge and also in dedication to the cause of the Kingdom.

7. Committing to care for the environment in daily life.

Contents

65. The fundamental contents of this stage are:

1. A study of the book of the Acts of the Apostles from the perspective of the conversion of the gentiles to Jesus Christ and of the inculturation of the faith.

2. Study of Chapters X, XI and XII of the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*.

3. Reading and sharing commentaries on the latest social encyclicals.

4. Deepening the Spirituality of the Incarnation.

5. Studying the values of justice, peace, and the integrity of creation in the most recent documents of one's own Institute.

6. Becoming knowledgeable of the Declaration of Human Rights and other agreements on present-day problems.

7. Bringing one's self up to date on ecological issues and the responsibility of the international community.

8. Gaining knowledge of the process of inter-religious and ecumenical dialogue.

9. Studying the yearly reports on Human Development published by the United Nations Development Programme (PNUD).

Experiences

66. These and other experiences may be very useful for the time of the Juniorate and Student Years:

1. *Lectio Divina* on passages from the Acts of the Apostles.

2. Personal and community discernment to look for answers to the challenges of the socio-cultural situation.

3. Being involved in organisations of one's own Congregation, of the Church or of society which are working in favour of the marginalised, of human rights, of the environment and of peace.

4. Periods of mission in very difficult situations (social pastoral work on weekends, a month during summer, a year in some developing country, or in situations of great poverty).

5. Organisation of, or participation in, groups and campaigns that promote the care of the environment.

6. Community evaluation on the practice or implementation of our commitment to live a simple, sober and ecological life-style.

7. Participation in meetings, conferences and seminars on aspects related to the objectives and contents of this stage. And in so doing, trying to work out a synthesis of the ideas presented, sharing them and allowing one's self to be questioned by them.

8. Organisation of workshops to deepen some aspects of the STC which are being studied and which involve other religious.

9. Community discernment in times of elections (general, municipal or others) on the different political options in the light of the STC.

10. Discussion of articles that have been read on different aspects of JPIC in the light of the STC, articles which question and demand an answer; and the elaboration of short articles for use in bulletins and magazines.

11. Contact with and possible concrete commitment to organisations that study and make known the STC.



Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

Organisation of the Union of Superiors General
and the International Union of Superiors General
USG/UISG

1. Origin

The Commission for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) has its roots in the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium Spes* (cf. n. 90) and in the Synod of Bishops on *Justice in the world* (1971). It was formalised as a joint working group with USG/UISG in 1982 and assumes its name in Latin *Justitia, Pax et Creationis Integritas*, from which the acronym JPIC is derived and is similar in all languages.

2. Vision

To promote and support the integration of JPIC in the life and mission of Religious Institutes, members of USG and UISG, in coordination with the Superiors General, their leadership teams and the promoters of JPIC at international level.

3. Objectives

a) Information

Constant updating on the world situation in the area of JPIC.

b) Sharing

Exchanging projects, experiences, documents, and aids between religious Institutes.

c) Formation

Creation of opportunities for indepth reflection on aspects regarding JPIC directed to empowerment in this area.

d) Action

To support and/or promote campaigns directed towards the causes of injustice and the violation of Human Rights.

4. Composition

The Commission is formed by:

- Two joint Presidents, one male and one female, Superiors General, nominated by the Executive Council of the USG/UISG
- The General Secretaries of USG and of UISG
- The Director of SEDOS
- The Executive Secretary of the JPIC Commission
- A representative of the Pontifical Council Justice and Peace
- 4 Superiors General, 2 from each Union
- 4 or 6 other religious promoters of JPIC in their own congregations.

5. The Executive Committee

Has a role of reflection and animation, associated with the realisation of the projects or programmes of the Commission.

6. Committees and Working groups

Set up by the Commission to carry through tasks relative to its objectives.

Too deal with particular issues regarding JPIC:

- Trafficking of persons
- Ecology
- Africa

7. Meetings

Normally the Commission meets twice a year. On the request of the Executive Committee of USG/UISG, or of one or some members of the Commission itself.

8. Networking

The Commission networks with organisations and associations that work for JPIC. In particular with: the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Caritas Internationalis, the Service for Documentation and Study (SEDOS), the Africa-Europe-Faith-Justice-Network (AEFJN), the Interfaith Centre for Peace and Justice (CIPAX), NGOs of Catholic inspiration, the UN Commission for the interfaith Decade of Peace.

In a particular way, the Commission networks with two groups of religious JPIC Promoters resident in Rome. These promoters are named by their religious institutes to animate JPIC values at the international level. The collaboration and mutual support are signs of unity and communion at the service of God's Kingdom.

These groups, one of which conducts its work in English and the other in Spanish and Portuguese, meet every month. They have specific formation programmes and joint actions together.

9. Formation Resources

The JPIC Commission USG/UISG provides a series of formation resources in different languages.

These resources are available at:

<http://jpicformation.wikispaces.com>

<http://www.vidimusdominum.info>

10. Executive Secretary

The Executive Secretary, nominated by USG/UIIG, fulfills an active and permanent role of animation and coordination.

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**Acts
of the International
Seminar organized for
the Congregation for the
Institutes of Consecrated
Life and the Societies of
Apostolic Life and the
Pontifical Council
Justice and Peace
and the Religious as
worldwide Promoters of
JPIC**

**Rome, October 12-13,
2006**

The thematic articulation of the volume is presented as a triptych: in the first place, it clarifies the relationship between the Social Doctrine of the Church and Consecrated Life at the sociological level and at the theological level, and how this relationship has been expressed in the history of the modern and contemporary Church; in the second place, it reflects on some ways for the use of the Compendium of the Social Doctrine, n. 540 of the last chapter is dedicated to this theme; lastly, it presents some examples of formative experiences for future work in this field.

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