

**MISSIONARY SISTERS OF ST. PETER CLAVER**

**CALLED TO BRING THE HOPE OF SALVATION  
IN TODAY'S WORLD**



**DOCUMENT OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER**

**Rome, 30 September 2025**



## INTRODUCTION

Dear Sisters,

We, the Capitulars gathered in Rome for the XVIII General Chapter, have spent these days in prayer and in attentive listening to the voices of all our sisters who responded to the questionnaire. Constantly invoking the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the intercession of our Blessed Foundress, we have sought the most fitting ways to respond to the realities we face today.

We trust that this document will find an echo in your hearts and that, together, we will strive to put into practice the proposals and concrete suggestions it contains, bringing hope to the world for the greater glory of God and for our own salvation, as well as that of so many brothers and sisters who do not yet know Christ.

Rooted in Christ and in the tradition of our Congregation, we are called to remain open to the challenges of the present and the future, facing them with courage and a deep sense of responsibility. In this spirit, ongoing and integral formation enables us to grow in mutual openness within our communities, creating spaces of trust and fostering genuine and meaningful communication.

## **1. Religious Consecration**

Today, consecrated life shines as a light in the midst of the complexity and noise of modern society. It reminds the world that dedication, love, and spirituality remain not only possible but necessary, both for the Church and for humanity as a whole. It stands as a tangible witness to faith and enduring values in a culture often marked by individualism and superficiality. Yet, while remaining a prophetic sign, religious life also carries with it the challenge of living the vows fully and faithfully.

The reflections of the Capitulars, drawn from the proposals sent to the Chapter, highlight several key points to help us face these challenges with confidence and to live our vows more deeply:

- The religious vows are not an end in themselves, but a means of leading us into deeper communion with God. In times of trial and difficulty, whether personal or communal, we are called to guard and nurture with vigilance our intimacy with Christ, who is the model of chastity, poverty, and obedience. To Him we have freely offered our lives in our “yes”. With fidelity and fervour, we are invited to return continually to our first love.
- To live the religious life with joy and fruitfulness, and to overcome the temptations of weariness and self-seeking comfort, we need ongoing formation in inner freedom. Along this journey, self-knowledge becomes essential if we wish to remain faithful to our consecration.

- Within our communities, it is vital to foster genuine and fraternal relationships. Each Sister is called to support the others in fidelity to the vows, exercising a discerning and responsible charity, and encouraging one another to remain true to the call received.
- Among the vows, obedience stands out as one to be lived with particular depth. When welcomed and embraced sincerely, it nurtures trust in God and in one's superiors, frees the heart, strengthens unity, bears fruit, and renders our witness authentic.

## **2. Impact of Change in Religious Life**

Faithfulness to Christ, who loves us with an everlasting love, remains a steady and secure point of reference in a world marked by de-Christianisation, religious indifference, and profound cultural and social transformation. Despite external changes, consecrated life retains its true essence: total dedication to God and fraternal life in community. What has evolved is rather the way consecrated persons bear witness to and embody their vocation in today's context. Every change, if embraced with discernment, can become an opportunity for growth and spiritual renewal; if met with superficiality or resistance, it can easily turn into an obstacle.

Today we feel the need to remain firmly rooted in the heart of the charism entrusted to us by Maria Teresa Ledóchowska, while keeping an open and welcoming outlook towards the new challenges of our time.

### **3. Fraternal Communion and Apostolate**

Missionary animation begins within our personal relationships in community: what we experience among ourselves can either strengthen or weaken our apostolate. When it is lived in communion, it reflects the Trinitarian mystery and becomes a form of evangelisation. For this reason, we invoke the Holy Spirit each day, asking for wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, so that we may value each sister's gifts and discern our common decisions together.

Our Blessed Mother Foundress reminds us that "in unity there is strength." Living together renews our energy and missionary zeal, reminding us that we are not alone. Mutual esteem becomes a source of new vitality for our shared journey. Returning to the deeper meaning of our vocation within the Congregation and expressing it through concrete gestures, helps us face today's challenges with confidence.

In this spirit:

- Trust in God, mutual prayer, sincere dialogue, and attentive listening foster forgiveness and reconciliation. Let us allow ourselves to be transformed by Christ so that we may share Him with others, starting with the sisters beside us, avoiding jealousy, indifference, and destructive criticism.
- Let us share not only our difficulties but also, with joy, our moments of success and happiness.
- Attentive care for those who carry the weight of the cross is a tangible sign of fraternal charity: let us bring

their sufferings to Christ and accompany them with small acts of love.

- When necessary, with prudence and discernment it can be helpful to seek the advice of competent persons.
- Conflicts should not be shared outside the community. Like a family, we face them among ourselves with charity and discretion. Unity, even amid differences, is an essential part of our witness. The way we resolve difficulties should reflect the Gospel: with humility, fraternal correction, forgiveness, and mutual respect, always seeking the good of the person, the community, and the mission.
- Situations involving sisters with serious psychological difficulties are a painful trial for the Congregation. The General Council will evaluate each case carefully, mindful also of the need to safeguard the human and spiritual balance of the communities.
- Simple words such as *thank you*, *please*, and *sorry* have the power to transform everyday relationships, helping to create an atmosphere of gratitude, openness, and forgiveness, where respect and kindness foster connection among people.

Fostering communal discernment, lived in a spirit of shared responsibility and following a synodal approach, enables each sister to feel heard and valued, so that decisions may emerge from genuine communion. Appreciating each sister for who she is, and being generous in offering encouragement while

avoiding harsh words or judgements (cf. Mt 12:36), strengthens our sense of belonging and keeps fraternal communion alive.

In this light:

- Create opportunities where each sister can nurture and share the gifts God has entrusted to her, enriching community life and the apostolate.
- Work together in a spirit of unity to put into practice the decisions made in common.
- Share responsibilities and take turns in different roles, so that everyone may learn, grow, and recognise her own gifts.
- Be humble enough to ask for and to receive help when needed.

#### **4. The Life of Prayer**

Prayer is the foundation and lifeblood of our religious life: it unites us with God and with one another, giving depth, perseverance, and communion. It is not simply one activity among many, but the very heart that gives meaning, direction, and fruitfulness to all our apostolic and community commitments.

To become women of prayer means to live in constant union with God. This requires a personal life plan firmly oriented towards holiness, one that helps us discern what is essential



from what is secondary, so that we may keep a healthy balance between work and prayer, even in times of dryness.

Safeguarding the primacy of prayer calls for mutual care: supporting one another in daily tasks so that everyone can find time to pray. In community planning, it is also important to include moments and spaces dedicated to prayer. The Superior has a special role in this regard: she is called to set an example and to encourage faithfulness and joy in daily prayer.

In this spirit:

- Take seriously the *Lectio Divina*, as well as the reading and meditation on the Rules, Norms and the writings of Maria Teresa Ledóchowska, so that they may become a source of encouragement and strength throughout the various stages of life.
- Rediscover and deepen the traditional means of spiritual life (*moments of silence, the recitation of the Angelus, and short ejaculatory prayers, among other practices*), not as rigid obligations but as helps to foster an intimate and continual union with Christ, our Spouse.
- Adapt common prayers to the forms used in the local Church, even if this means some differences between communities of the same language. The prayers proper to the Congregation remain those indicated in the *Vademecum*. The text for the novena to our Foundress should be chosen together within the community.

## **5. Vocation Promotion**

A religious vocation is a call to live out God's plan for each person, a journey marked by challenges, yet illuminated by hope. Despite the difficulties, hope remains alive and urges us to look ahead with trust. Convinced that vocations are a gift from God to the Church and to our Congregation, we welcome and accompany them with gratitude and love within our communities. It is the genuine and joyful witness of belonging to Christ that attracts young people to us.

- Every community and every sister shares the duty and responsibility of fostering vocations, not only the Superior or the Formator.
- Communities should provide spaces for discernment, marked by a spirit of fraternity and prayer.
- It is important to organise initiatives such as 'open days', retreats, and other activities involving young people. Some communities are already doing this, but such initiatives should be strengthened, especially where conditions are favourable.
- The work of vocational discernment calls for balance, prudence, and openness to the Holy Spirit. In the case of late vocations, it is essential to examine carefully the motivations, the candidate's willingness to adapt to our way of life, and her capacity to renounce a certain independence. Physical and psychological health should also be evaluated. Formation must be personalised and suited to each age, requiring a long and careful process of discernment. To assist

candidates along the way, it is helpful to introduce them gradually to our spirituality and apostolate.

- In the process of evaluation, the opinion of all the sisters in the community should be taken into account.
- The upper age limit of 35 should be maintained as a general rule, while remaining open to possible exceptions.
- Candidates who have left or been dismissed from another congregation after perpetual profession, and who now wish to join us, should not be accepted.
- They may, however, be offered the opportunity to collaborate as external members or volunteers in our apostolate.

## **6. Initial Formation**

The religious community plays a vital role in the formative journey of young sisters. It is called to be a living and welcoming environment where each one can find trust, freedom, and support in prayer, an essential foundation at this stage of the journey.

The following are some useful guidelines for initial formation:

- It would be appropriate to update the *Ratio Institutionis* for formation so that it may respond to the current needs of religious life.
- The task of the Formator goes far beyond instruction: she is called to accompany with prayer, patience, and

deep respect for the freedom of the person. She should be a woman of prayer and discernment, able to create a space where the young sister feels safe to listen to the Lord and to reflect on her life. The Formator helps her to discover for herself, through inner freedom and prayer, God's plan for her life, without making decisions on her behalf.

- Since our sisters come from different cultures and nationalities, it is important to offer empathetic listening that fosters openness and trust. Knowledge of each sister's cultural background is a valuable aid for the Formator, whose role is to introduce the young women to the spiritual life and accompany them in their personal and faith development. It is also important to communicate clearly the charism and life of Blessed Maria Teresa Ledóchowska. Study forms an integral part of formation, helping the young sisters to mature personally and to face difficulties and challenges with resilience.
- Difficulties and uncertainty are part of discernment. It is essential to identify the causes of any crises and, when appropriate, to seek the help of competent professionals. When decisions are made in prayer and freedom, they are always the right ones for the young woman's life.
- If the Formator observes any concern, she should communicate it with discretion to the sister who will later accompany the young woman. For any

information shared during personal conversations, the explicit written consent of the young sister is required.

- For those unfamiliar with digital tools, it is recommended to learn basic computer skills (Word, PowerPoint, Excel). Initial guidance may be offered by a competent sister, after which the young woman should practise independently. There is no need to attend paid courses.
- In countries where it is possible, candidates may be asked to contribute financially towards their formation; this should be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

## **7. The Juniorate**

The formation of Junior sisters represents a crucial stage in preparing women who are spiritually grounded, intellectually competent, and ready for apostolic service. Its aim is to help them fully assimilate the charism of the Institute and to live it authentically, both within their local communities and in the wider international context of the Congregation.

The international experience in Rome remains an important part of this journey, offering a period dedicated to spiritual formation, growth in religious life, and a deeper knowledge of the Foundress and of the cultural diversity that enriches the Congregation. Short experiences in other communities also provide valuable opportunities to broaden understanding of the apostolate. At the same time, it is advisable that sisters pursue their professional formation in the countries where

they will later serve, learning the language, culture, and mentality of the people among whom they will carry out their mission.

To strengthen the quality and unity of formation, the following points are proposed:

- *Regular online meetings for Formators*, to share experiences, insights, and challenges. These exchanges foster collaboration and promote a more consistent approach to formation across the Institute.
- *Virtual meetings for Junior sisters*, through platforms such as Zoom, to share their lives, apostolic experiences, and reflections on the charism, nurturing a deeper sense of belonging and international communion.
- *Integration of ecclesiastical and secular studies*, where appropriate, ensuring that formation responds effectively to the needs of today's apostolate.
- *A thirty-day Ignatian retreat* for sisters preparing for perpetual vows.
- *Consultation within the community*: before each renewal of vows, the Superior should seek the opinion of every member of the community.
- *Transparency and responsibility in written reports*: verbal comments are not sufficient. For proper discernment regarding admission to vows, the Council requires clear, factual, and well-documented information.

- *Discernment and moral responsibility in decisions:* Formators must be prepared to make difficult decisions, including withholding recommendation for the renewal of vows when necessary, particularly in cases of psychological imbalance. Even when the community expresses a favourable opinion, the Formator has the moral duty not to recommend renewal if she judges it unwise.

## **8. Ongoing Formation**

A dimension that calls for deeper reflection is the awareness that we continuously shape one another, and that our words hold the power either to build or to wound. Community life, together with a personal commitment to ongoing conversion and self-formation, remain vital paths for our human and spiritual growth.

To sustain this journey, it is proposed to:

- promote formation sessions for Superiors, including through online platforms such as Zoom;
- organise regional encounters dedicated to ongoing formation and apostolic collaboration;
- seek the contribution of competent experts, in order to remain updated on current legislation in the various regions;
- offer formation opportunities adapted to the different stages of life, or take part in courses promoted by Religious Conferences and Bishops' Conferences on these or related topics.

## **9. Mission**

Our Foundress calls us to have hearts ablaze with love for the mission, to live it with deep passion and commitment. It is essential to remember that financial means are the fruit of missionary animation - not its goal.

Our primary task remains to awaken faith, rekindle the missionary spirit, and keep alive the fire of the mission through prayer and authentic witness. Guided by these convictions, we propose several directions to strengthen our missionary engagement:

- Ensure that every new foundation places Claverian missionary animation at its heart.
- Publish an overview of the apostolic activities carried out by the sisters around the world, sharing what is good and meaningful to encourage and inspire - especially those who may not have direct access to such news.
- Appoint a sister within the Mission Secretariat to coordinate sponsorship projects across regions, offering guidance to communities as they plan new initiatives.
- Reinforce the presence of personnel in European communities to respond more effectively to the challenges of our time.



## **10. The Laity**

First of all, we ourselves must be filled with the fire of the mission, so that we can pass it on to the laity - encouraging them to take part in missionary work in harmony with the concrete realities in the countries where we live. Different contexts call for different forms of animation.

- Offer them formation in our charism, accompanied by spiritual and missionary training through retreats, meetings, and similar initiatives.
- Invite lay people to participate in our missionary activities, providing opportunities for sharing and service, and encouraging them to place their gifts at the service of the mission - for example, by helping to prepare and distribute our magazines or by assisting at charity events.
- Recognize and involve the laity as true partners in mission - not merely as helpers.

## **11. Digital Missionary Animation**

Following the example of Blessed Maria Teresa Ledóchowska, we should have the courage to embrace modern means of communication for missionary animation and evangelization, recognizing their vast potential. Technology is not to be feared, but welcomed with maturity, self-discipline, and a deep sense of personal responsibility. However, it must never replace personal relationships, as this could lead to isolation, individualism, and superficiality.

In today's world, digital missionary animation has become an essential part of evangelization. It must spring from our love for Jesus and our desire to serve others.

It is important to invest in the training of sisters who show particular aptitude for this service, to strengthen collaboration at the regional level, and to form a team that can work in synergy. Ideally, someone with specific expertise in the digital field should be identified who, in collaboration with the Mission Secretariat, can create and manage a digital archive (database) of missionary materials, making them accessible to all communities and editors.

- To ensure the creation of a high-quality website, it should have:
  - a) An intuitive and user-friendly layout.
  - b) Fast loading times for smooth navigation.
  - c) Compatibility with all screen sizes and devices (desktop, tablet, smartphone).
- It is also important to stay informed about missionary news, encouraging direct experiences in mission countries-both to monitor the projects we support and to strengthen missionary animation and editorial work. These experiences should then be shared within the community so that they become part of our common heritage.
- Particular care should be taken with the linguistic quality of the content published on social media, as this too is a form of witness to the Institute.

- Community meetings can help in planning initiatives within specific contexts and in fostering a constructive exchange of experiences.
- Finally, various platforms (Facebook, X, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, etc.) can be used not only for personal contact with family and friends but above all for missionary animation, by sharing religious and community events that allow lay people, wherever they may be, to join us spiritually.

## **12. The Foundress**

To safeguard and pass on the gift our Blessed Mother Foundress left to the Church, it is essential to keep alive the study of her charism and spiritual heritage, so that her witness may continue to inspire our lives and guide our mission.

It is therefore proposed to:

- Deepen our understanding of the Foundress's charism and spirituality by revisiting themes explored in sisters' research papers (for example: *Maria Teresa Ledóchowska and the role of women, her response to the challenges of her time, the biblical foundation of her charism*, etc.), and by forming a team dedicated to this task.
- Organize courses and thematic meetings, both in person and online, to spread knowledge of her life and message.

- Early on in the postulancy begin to introduce the life, inner motivations, and apostolic zeal of our Blessed Mother Foundress.
- Continue the careful translation of her writings into English and progressively publish those already translated.
- Oversee the transcription of her handwritten conferences and correspondence-with missionaries, Church authorities, friends, and benefactors-and promote their translation into various languages.

In this way, the living voice of our Foundress will continue to illuminate our path and renew our missionary spirit.

### **13. General and Local Government**

- Despite the shortage of sisters, it is desirable to ensure a regular rotation of local superiors. The appointment or renewal of a superior should always be preceded by consultation with the community and by careful discernment of the candidate's suitability, sound judgment, prudence, and capacity for unity.
- Superiors are reminded of their duty to submit the bimonthly community reports and the annual chronicle promptly. A new template for the bimonthly reports will be prepared. A printed copy of these documents must be kept in the local community's archive.

- To avoid delays in the work of the Generalate offices (the Bursar's Office, the Mission Secretariat, and the Secretariat works), monthly financial reports must be sent to Rome no later than two months after the close of the month. These accounts must be signed by both the local Bursar and the local Superior. Entries listed under 'miscellaneous' or 'refunds', and expenses recorded as 'miscellaneous' or 'purchases', must always be accompanied by an explanation.
- Budgets must also be submitted in due time so that they can be approved before 31 December each year.
- Personal bank accounts held by sisters due to legal requirements in their respective countries are to be included in the community's financial reports.
- In cases where sisters have personal accounts that do not qualify for government concessions granted to religious, their personal expenses (such as medical care) should be paid from their own account.
- The costs of transfers are to be borne entirely by the Institute.
- The Superior should not also serve as Bursar, except in cases of absolute necessity. The accounts should be transparent and made available to the sisters of the community.
- When handing over a responsibility (such as bookkeeping, editing, etc.), this should be done conscientiously, for the good of the Congregation. None of us remain in the same community forever;

even when a sister is transferred, the mission must continue to bear fruit.

- When a sister is given a responsibility, she should be trusted and allowed the freedom to plan and fulfil her task. In turn, she is called to carry it out with love and a sense of mature accountability.
- Every Religious Institute, in order to provide for the sustenance of its members and to carry out its apostolate effectively, must define and safeguard a stable patrimony that cannot be put at risk. The 2019 Chapter, responding to the Church's requests, entrusted the General Council and the General Bursar with preparing a concrete proposal. This has not yet been completed; it is advisable to consult experts in order to finalise the matter.
- Requests for special permissions from the Superior General should normally be made through the local Superior. Each sister should first approach her local Superior to obtain the desired permission. If necessary, the local Superior will then submit the request to the Superior General. Only if the local Superior denies the request may the sister address the Superior General directly, explaining her reasons and informing her of the refusal; alternatively, the local Superior may communicate the reasons for the refusal.
- Communications from the Superior General or the Territorial Delegate addressed to the communities must be read in community, then kept in printed form

in the local community's archive and made available to the sisters.

- In every country, it is important to be informed about and comply with the civil laws concerning the legal representative of the Institute.
- Transfers should not be made for minor reasons. Neither a long stay in the same community nor a momentary lack of motivation is sufficient cause. When a sister has already learned the language and become integrated into the local apostolate, only serious reasons should justify her transfer to another country. Even when difficulties occur, every effort should be made to face and resolve them with the support of the community.

## 14. Other Provisions

Attentive to current circumstances and to the needs of our common life, several practical aspects have been revised and clarified.

- Following the amendment introduced by Pope Francis to Canon Law concerning *exclaustration*, the maximum duration has been extended from three to five years. Consequently, article 130.1 of our Constitutions will be revised accordingly, pending approval by the Holy See: *The Superior General, with the consent of her Council, may, for serious reasons, grant a perpetually professed sister an indult of exclaustration in accordance with Canon Law (can. 686 §1).*
- Update to Directory 46.4 on the use of Mobile Phones: *The use of mobile phones for communication with family and acquaintances is permitted in moderation, with due respect for times dedicated to prayer, work, and silence. The specific ways in which they are used, especially in the evening, should be discussed and agreed upon within the community.*
- Sisters living in communities near their place of origin, even if across national borders, and for whom travel does not entail significant expense, may spend their annual two-week holiday with their family. This provision applies especially in Europe, but also in the United States, Canada, Uganda, and Rwanda.



- A modest financial contribution may be offered to a sister's family, particularly when her parents are deceased and she is staying with other relatives. The contribution is set at €200 every three years for Europe, while for other continents the General Council will determine the corresponding amount. A dedicated entry will be created in the community accounts for this purpose. If friends or benefactors give money intended for the sister's family and the amount exceeds the set contribution, no further addition will be made by the Institute; if it falls short, the Institute will supplement it up to the established amount.
- For travel, sisters should receive sufficient funds to cover their expenses according to distance. Upon return, they are to present an account of their costs to the Superior and return any unspent amount.
- It has also been decided to grant sisters a small personal allowance on the occasions of Christmas, Easter, and their name day (or birthday). The amount will vary according to region. This measure is introduced *ad experimentum* and will be reviewed at the next General Chapter.
- Finally, regarding the use of community WhatsApp groups, it is recommended that greetings be posted only once for all. Those who wish to send personal messages may do so privately, avoiding multiple posts within the group.

## CONCLUSION

Dear Sisters,

We wish to thank you for your prayers, which have supported us throughout the work of the Chapter. May Mary, Mother of Good Counsel, and Saint Peter Claver guide and sustain us over the next six years, obtaining for us the blessings and graces we need to be, in today's world, bearers of hope and salvation.

As we approach the 50th anniversary of the Beatification of Blessed Maria Teresa Ledóchowska, may her intercession help us to embody in daily life the decisions and recommendations presented in this document.

The Capitulars

Rome, 30 September 2025

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*“Missionary animation is the cornerstone of our commitment to the missions. The word propaganda means to extend, to spread-to pass on to others the fire and love that burn within one’s own heart for the most abandoned souls. Therefore, a good promoter, or zealous propagandist, must first and foremost nurture this burning desire within the soul. If we are indifferent to the missionary cause, how could we ever inspire others? But if we truly love the missions and dedicate ourselves with passion, then the true spirit of missionary animation will fill us-for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.”*

*(Maria Teresa Ledóchowska, Conference in Augsburg, 1910)*

*“In order to  
achieve genuine fervour  
for the salvation  
of souls,  
we must become  
authentic  
consecrated persons”*

*Beata Maria Teresa Ledóchowska*



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