

BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Circular 454

**CONVOCATION
OF THE
44th GENERAL CHAPTER**

(2007)

GENERAL COUNCIL

Via Aurelia, 476

Rome, Italy

Rome, April 30th, 2006
355th Anniversary of the birth of
St John-Baptist de La Salle

Brothers:

We are sending you the Circular of Convocation for the 44th General Chapter which we mentioned last year in Circular #453 announcing the Chapter.

We here specify the date of the 44th General Chapter: Sunday 29 April 2007, will mark the arrival date with the Chapter itself beginning the next day, Monday, 30th April (this date slightly modifies what had been published in Circular # 453). The capitulants are invited on that day, 30 April, at 9:30 AM to participate in the opening ceremony of the 44th General Chapter which will take place in the vestibule of the entrance to the Casa Generalicia (Via Aurelia, 476, Rome). The closing date is programmed to be Saturday, 2 June 2007, leaving, however, to the discretion of the members of the General Chapter the final decision according to the development of their tasks.

1. Proposal of the Preparatory Commission for the 44th General Chapter

The Preparatory Commission for the 44th General

Chapter has taken into account for its work:

- a. Recommendation 38 of the 43rd General Chapter: “That the Brother Superior and his Council invite the Preparatory Commission to look for and apply an alternative model that would promote discussion and stimulate the reflection of the Capitulants on the future of the Institute”;
- b. The guidelines established by the Circular announcing the 44th General Chapter (Circular 453, p.15) direct the Commission’s “attention to the numerous documents that the Districts and Regions have already sent or will send to Rome as available resources: reports from District Chapters, Mission Assemblies and annual reports;
- c. The suggestions for the organization of the 44th General Chapter indicated by that same Circular 453 (pp. 19-20) outline in particular “a process by which discussion and exchange during the Chapter might lead to general policies and general orientations--rather than an exhaustive list of propositions and recommendations--which would form the basis of action plans that: would be devised by Brother Superior and General Council on the Institute level; and, would be devised by Regions or by Districts, Sub-Districts, and Delegations on a local level.

Based on these recommendations, guidelines and suggestions, the Preparatory Commission has designed the following proposed plan for the General Chapter.

The program for the 44th General Chapter is designed to achieve several goals:

- To foster culturally sensitive interaction, to build communion and to celebrate fraternity among the delegates;
- To engage in deep reflection on the realities of the world, the Church, Consecrated Life and the Lasallian Family, and how these impact on our own Institute;
- To discern, in the spirit of our Founder, what God is requiring of the Institute with regard to its life and mission; and
- To determine how to go about accomplishing what God requires of us.

Proposed Stages in the Development of the Chapter

The days of the Chapter are distinguished by four distinct but integrated “moments” or periods: building community; looking at reality; seeing with the eyes of faith; and acting in faith. Using a biblical motif, the capitulants will be invited through prayer and small-group sharing to consider how the present realities mentioned above have an impact on the Institute and its mission.

The process intends to promote the active participation of all the delegates. Toward this end we will utilize sharing and consensus building rather than debate and vot-

ing. On the other hand, by infusing the process with prayerful reflection the program of the General Chapter is intended to keep the delegates open to the Spirit.

During the first moment (29 Sunday April through Tuesday 1 May) the delegates will be welcomed and made to feel at home. The delegates will be engaged in activities to help them get to know one another and to build trust. From the start, the process attempts to establish that the General Chapter is “holy ground,” that the Chapter is taking place in the awareness of God’s presence and an openness to God’s will.

The second moment of the General Chapter (Wednesday 2 May through Tuesday 8 May) is designed for listening to, reflecting on, and sharing about what is happening in the world, the Church, Consecrated Life, the Lasallian Family and the Institute. This is the moment during which we will make use of the documents entitled “*Towards the 44th General Chapter*” that were proposed to the whole Institute as a way of sharing and preparing for the General Chapter: the DVD video entitled “*Together and by Association in the Service of the Poor*”; the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Rule; “*Being Brothers Today*”; the Report of the International Assembly of 2006; and, the Report of Brother Superior and General Council. Through presentations by keynote speakers and Institute leadership, and through the use of group work, the delegates will concentrate on developing a clear understanding of how

the present realities affect the Institute and its mission. These activities will lay the foundation for the third moment.

The third moment is a time of communal discernment (Wednesday 9 May through Sunday 13 May). In the spirit of the Founder, the delegates go into retreat. During this time the delegates will pray privately and together, they will reflect on the realities discussed earlier in light of the Scriptures and the Lasallian tradition; and they will share their reflections in order to discern together what God is requiring of the Institute today and for the next seven years. The “horizons” that are identified at this time will be examined and turned into proposed lines of action during the fourth moment of the General Chapter.

During this fourth and longest moment until the end of the Chapter, several very important matters will be treated. First, the delegates will work towards coming to consensus in identifying the main issues based on the “horizons” which emerged during the discernment period. These will be the significant issues to be addressed by the Institute in the next seven years. Secondly, the delegates will discern the type of leadership needed by the Institute today and will select the leaders who are best suited for that type of leadership. Thirdly, the delegates will define the lines of action for each of the main issues related to the horizons identified earlier. Finally there will be a dialogue between the

new leadership and the delegates about how to work cooperatively in bringing the Institute to where God is calling it at this time in history.

2. The members of the 44th General Chapter

As the Rule stipulates, “the members of the General Chapter are as follows: those by right; those who may possibly be appointed by the Brother Superior and his Council; those, comprising the greater number, who are the delegates of all the Brothers of the Institute” (Rule 106).

2.1 The members by right

In accord with the Rule (art. 106,) the following are members by right:

- the Superior General (1)
- the former Superiors General (1)
- the General Councillors (7)
- the Secretary General of the Institute (1)

so, the members by right are ten (10).

2.2 The capitulants elected by the Districts

Article 106a establishes that the number of delegates to be elected is determined following the norms of statistical rank starting from the date of the Circular of Convocation. Further on, Article 106a-1° of the Rule sets the number of delegates in the following way: “The

number of delegates is a function of the number of Brothers in the District. It is fixed at one more than the whole quotient of the number of those Brothers by the number N fixed by Brother Superior and his Council.”

In article 106a-3° the Rule states that “Brother Superior and his Council fix the number (N) in such a way that the total number of elected delegates be not fewer than one percent and not greater than one and a half percent of the number of Brothers in the Institute.” In accord with the statistics on the date of the Circular of Convocation (30 April 2006), the number of Brothers in the Institute is 5,394. This gives us the right to elect a maximum of 81 delegates (which represents 1.5% of the total number of Brothers) and corresponds to a number N equal to 104. “The number of delegates is a function of the number of Brothers in the District. It is fixed at one more than the whole quotient resulting from the division of the number of Brothers (of each District) by the number N (Rule art. 106a-1°), which in the present case is equal to 104. On this is calculated the number of delegates each District may elect. They are the following:

2.2.1 The District of France, with 763 Brothers, will elect eight (8) delegates.

2.2.2. The Districts of Italy and Bilbao with 234 and 209 Brothers respectively will elect three (3) delegates each one, in total, six (6) delegates.

2.2.3. The Districts with 104 Brothers or more, but

less than 208, will elect two (2) Brothers each one:

Australia-N.Zealand-PNG	Midwest
Baltimore	New York
Bogotá	North Mexico
Catalunya	Porto Alegre
French Speaking Canada	San Francisco
Ireland	South Mexico
Madrid	Valladolid

These 14 Districts will elect 28 delegates.

2.2.4. The Districts with fewer than 104 Brothers will elect one (1) delegate each

Andalucia	Long Island-N. England
Antananarivo	Lwanga
Argentina-Paraguay	Medellin
Bolivia	Near East
Central America	Netherlands
Central Europe	New Orleans-Santa Fe
Central Spain	North Belgium
Chile	Penang
Colombo	Peru
Congo-Kinshasa	Philippines
Douala	Poland
Ecuador	Sao Paulo
Great Britain	South Belgium

Valencia-Palma
Venezuela

Vietnam
West Africa

These Districts will elect 30 delegates.

2.3 Capitulants elected by the Sub-districts and Delegations.

“Each Sub-District or Delegation officially constituted elects one delegate” (Rule 106a-2°).

This is the case of the following Sub-Districts and Delegations:

Antilles

Pakistan

Gulf of Benin

Rwanda

India

Thailand

Japan

Toronto

Myanmar

These Sub-Districts and Delegations will elect 9 delegates.

The Districts, Sub-Districts or Delegations which are at present in the process of changing structures, will elect their delegates according to the juridical status which they have at the time of publication of the present Circular (30 April 2006). Should some restructuring take place later, the delegates elected prior to the restructuring will represent the restructured entity to which they belong along with the other legally elected delegates.

2.4 Capitulants who may be designated by the Brother Superior General and his Council.

The Rule indicates in article 106 that “With the consent of his Council, the Brother Superior may name up to ten supplementary delegates so as to ensure a better representation of the diversity of the Institute”.

Recommendation 39 of the 43rd Chapter (Circular 447), states that “Brother Superior and his Council (should) ensure the presence of young Brothers in the next General Chapter”.

The above-named criteria will be observed and the selection of those delegates will take place at the end of September of 2006 once the results of the elections of the delegates of the Districts, Sub-Districts and Delegations have been received.

The total that will participate is:

- 10 Delegates by Right
- 81 Delegates elected by the Districts, Sub-Districts and Delegations.
- 10 Delegates named by Brother Superior.

The total is 101 Delegates for the 44th General Chapter.

Fully aware of the important role that the young Brothers are called to play in the present and in the future of the Institute and of the significant contribution with which they can collaborate with the General Chapter, the Brother Superior and his Council will in-

vite young Brothers as Consultants to the General Chapter. Each Region of the Institute is invited to suggest to Br. Superior General and the General Council the names of three Brothers of 35 years or less, preferably with perpetual vows, as candidates who may be named either as designated capitulants or as consultants to the General Chapter. The names of these Brothers will be sent to the Secretary General before Friday, the 15 September 2006.

3. Election of the Brothers delegates to the General Chapter

The Rule stipulates that,

“Every Brother with vows in the Institute on the date of publication of the Circular of Convocation is an elector. Every Brother perpetually professed in the Institute on the date of publication of the Circular of Convocation can be elected”(Rule, 107)

The rules of procedure to elect the delegates and the substitutes to the General Chapter are left by Rule (R 107a) to the initiative of the Chapters of each District, Sub-District and Delegation or, failing this, to the initiative of the respective Councils. These rules must be in agreement with the following norms:

“In order to be elected, a delegate must obtain an absolute majority of the votes validly cast. However, if a third ballot is necessary, a relative majority will suffice. Substitutes, in the same number as the delegates, are

elected by a separate vote” (Rule 107a). The substitutes are elected in the same way as the delegates.

The Brothers can vote only once. This is particularly important for Brothers living outside their District of origin who have not officially changed Districts. Since in some cases their decision may have a bearing on the number of delegates assigned to their District of origin, the Secretary General has asked the Visitors concerned where these Brothers have chosen to vote. The official number of delegates of each District indicated in this Circular takes into account this clarification made to the Secretary General.

The possible number of vote counts may cause considerable delay in completing the voting process. Each sector should take this into account as it prepares its calendar of elections. It must be completed in such a way that the official report of all the vote counts and their results, signed and dated, reach Brother Secretary General by the 15 September 2006, at the very latest. They may be sent to him by electronic mail at lgkipper@lasalle.org or by FAX (+39 06663882). If regular mail is employed, a possible delay should be taken into account.

4. Participation of the members of the Lasallian family

Representatives of the Institute of the De La Salle Guadalupana Sisters, of the Institute of the Lasalle Sisters of Viet Nam-Thailand and of the “Union of Cate-

chists of Jesus Crucified” Lay Institute are invited to participate in the International Assembly of 2006: “Associated for the Lasallian Mission of Education”. This is the new structure of participation for the diverse members of the Lasallian Family.

During the second phase of the 44th General Chapter representatives of the International Assembly 2006: “Associated for the Lasallian Mission of Education” will be invited to present their Report to the General Chapter (Recommendation 36 of the 43rd General Chapter). The General Chapter will receive the Acts of the Assembly and will decide how to integrate the orientations and lines of action found therein into its own work.

5. Preparatory documents “Toward the 44th General Chapter” and notes

The 43rd General Chapter insisted on the importance of achieving “an interactive process” (Recommendation 37) in the preparation for the following Chapter. In support of this process the five documents “*Toward the 44th General Chapter*” have been prepared.

Document 1 is the DVD entitled “*Together and by Association for the Educational Service to the Poor,*” which has contributed and continues to assist in individual reflection and in group study.

Document 2: “*Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Rule: Changes in the Church and in the Institute since 1987*”, published on the 31 October 2005, offers a

frame of reference anterior to both the International Assembly of 2006 and to the 44th General Chapter.

Document 3: “*Being Brothers Today*”, along with the document of the “Ad Hoc” Committee on the Rule, will be the special object of study during the CIL of May 2006. The Brothers participants of that CIL will be prepared and motivated to take part in the animation of the interactive process of preparation for the General Chapter in their Districts and Regions. Both documents offer a good basis for community reflection and discussion and for the District and Regional meetings that will take place before the Chapter.

Document 4: “*Report of the International Assembly 2006*” will be published in January of 2007 and will be presented, as has been previously stated, to the General Chapter.

Document 5: “*Report of the Brother Superior and the General Council*” will be published in March 2007, and will likewise offer material for reflection and discussions in community, District and Regions.

The publication of these documents in the Webpage of the Institute will facilitate easy access to them.

The delegates who have at their disposal the results of the reflection done by individual Brothers, or groups of brothers, or communities of Brothers will then be able to integrate these into the Chapter process. These reflections can also be sent as Notes to the Secretary General.

Other notes can also be sent, following the guidelines

found on page 21 of Circular 453.

All Notes have to be submitted to Rome no later than 1 September 2006.

6. Associated in order to build the Kingdom

Brothers, reiterating Recommendation 37 of the 43rd General Chapter, we urge you during this year of direct preparation for the 44th General Chapter, to live an “*interactive process*” in the Institute, one in which every one of us takes part. In Circular 453, announcing the General Chapter, we challenged you to live our consecrated life passionately for Christ and for humanity and to celebrate the living bond of association that we share so that together, with the strength, the faith and the vitality of each individual, each community and each District, we may fulfill the mission that God has confided to us.

As we see the ever growing number of lay men and women who are passionate about the spirituality and the educational mission pioneered by St. John Baptist de La Salle, and as we witness the diminishment and the aging of the Brothers in several sectors of the Institute as well as the resurgence of vocations in others parts, we are compelled to rethink so many aspects of our life: the revitalization of our communities, the specific role of the Brothers in this new form of Lasallian association, the formation required for these new times and places, the organizational restructuring at local and

regional levels. All of this invites us to discover, in faith, the new direction toward which the Spirit of God is leading us.

We implore the Lord that the preparation and the realization of our General Chapter be a time of grace and of affirmation of the vitality and meaning of our consecration for mission, in the model of association launched by De La Salle and the first Brothers to have, together and by association, schools for the service of the poor. Associated now with many men and women committed with us in the building up of the Kingdom, we move forward with hope. We can glimpse something new that is arising, something that depends both on grace and on our willingness to open our hearts and our eyes to grasp the mysterious passage of the Lord who goes out to meet us and set our hearts aflame once more. Let us live this year of preparation for the General Chapter with the force of that passion with which Christ impels us, accepting the challenge of the Paschal Exodus so that what holds us back will wither and die, and we may joyfully discover the newness of what the Lord is raising up in our midst.

Fraternally in St. John Baptist de La Salle

Br. Superior General
and the Brothers of the General Council

Timetable for the 44th General Chapter

2006

- 30 April Publication of the Circular of Convocation.
- 7-20 May CIL: Study of Documents 2 and 3 in preparation for the 44th General Chapter.
- 20 May Publication of Document 3: "*Being Brothers Today*"
- 1 June Deadline for the reception of the Reports of the Partial Assemblies.
- 1 Sept. Deadline for sending the Notes to the Secretary General
Publication of the Reports of the Partial Assemblies.
- 15 Sept. Deadline for sending the names of the Capitulants and Substitutes to the Brother Superior
Deadline for sending the names of young Brothers suggested by the Regions for possible inclusion as designated Capitulants or as Consultants..
- 29 Sept. Naming of the designated Capitulants.
- 16 Oct. Publication of the list of Capitulants.
- 23 Oc-4 Nov International Assembly on Association for the Lasallian Mission of Education.
- 6-10 Nov. 3rd Meeting of the Preparatory Commission for the Chapter.
- 5 Dec. Naming of the designated Consultants to the Chapter.
- 15 Dec. Deadline for sending to the Secretary General one photograph and the *curriculum vitae* of each of the Capitulants.

2007

- 26 Jan Publication of the Report of the International Assembly 2006.
- 12-23 Feb. 4th Meeting of the Preparatory Commission for the Chapter.
- 15 March Publication of the Report of the Br. Superior and his Council.
Intercom prepared by the Preparatory Commission: Report on the Capitulants. Methodology for the Chapter.
- 30 Apr-2 Jun The 44th General Chapter.