

A multi-colored rainbow arc with bands of blue, green, yellow, orange, and red, curving from the top left towards the bottom right.

Signum  Fidei

Style of Life

La  Salle



STYLE OF LIFE

ROME 2013

Year of Faith

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PRESENTATION OF THE NEW EDITION

Dear members of the Signum Fidei Fraternity,

I was delighted to accept the invitation to introduce this new text of the Style of Life, unanimously approved by the Second International Assembly held this year 2013. This new version comes into existence almost forty years after the first one. During that time the Signum Fidei Fraternity has been a fundamental point of reference in the history of lay association and the Lasallian mission.

The Signum Fidei Fraternity has been a pioneer and a major player in rediscovering the strength of the phrase “Together and by Association” which came from the first formula of consecration professed by Saint John Baptist de La Salle and the first Brother teachers. By your decision to associate yourselves by means of consecration for the Lasallian mission, you give witness to the fact that lay Lasallians today are also the *“heart, memory, and guarantors”* of the Lasallian charism and mission. Together we must build this “common house” which is the Lasallian Family.

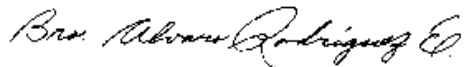
We are all called by God to keep alive the dream of Saint John Baptist de La Salle. He continues to inspire our lives and he invites us to offer the best human and Christian education possible to the young people of our world. We are heirs of a great history of salvation and others can also live it out thanks to the seeds we sow today. Our witness of faith, zeal and fraternity will be the most valuable example that we can offer so that other Lasallians who wish to make a commitment can take a step forward.

Pope Francis has invited us to not be afraid of kindness and tenderness, to touch the face of Christ in the poor, to not live trapped inside an individualistic spirituality but to go out to the existential peripheries of life, to believe in a merciful God who always pardons us. I believe that we can all sense Lasallian echoes in these invitations.

Most especially, I invite you to know, live, pray and celebrate this new text of the Style of Life, born from a long discernment of years and from reflection on the part of many Lasallians of different races, tongues and cultures. May it be for each of you a Gospel journey and a Rule of Life that may help you to be, as expressed in the motto of the Second Assembly, true Signs of Faith, forgers of fraternity and ambassadors of God's love for the men and women of our world, especially those most in need.

Live, Jesus, in our hearts!

Forever!



Brother Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría

INTRODUCTION

OUR ORIGINS

Saint John Baptist de La Salle felt moved to found a community of persons who were associated together as Brothers to live out their vocation and to respond to the needs of youth who were poor and far from salvation.

The concept of Association for Mission has existed since the origins of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools but today it is carried out in an unprecedented way, giving rise to new Institutes, Fraternities, Associations and groups. “Together and by Association,” we are a part of the Lasallian Family in the broadest sense of the term, we accept living “unity in diversity” and we carry out the Lasallian Mission through new forms of community life”¹.

In the 1970s, some Lay Lasallians made an official request to live and share the spirit, the charism and the Lasallian mission. The Institute saw in this desire a sign of the times and offered the possibility of initiating an experience of Lasallian life in harmony with one's own lay identity. Thus, in gratitude to the commitment of those Lay Lasallians, to Brothers Paulus Adams, Manuel Olivé and other Brothers, this **LASALLIAN FRATERNITY** – which from its origins has been called “**SIGNUM FIDEI**” – was born.

In 1975 the first circular was published and in 1976 the first consecration of Lay Lasallians took place in the city of

¹ Cf. *Associated for the Lasallian Mission... an act of hope*. Circular 461, 6.9; Rome September 2010.

Rome. Since that time, the Association has continued to grow under the action of the Holy Spirit and today it exists in many places throughout the world.

The 42nd General Chapter stated that “*the Signum Fraternity constitutes a way of spirituality that is very much adapted to the laity – especially to teachers – who find inspiration for their lives in Saint John Baptist de La Salle*”².

The 43rd General Chapter recognized the organic relationship of the Fraternity with the Institute. Its members are officially “associated” with the Lasallian Mission³. In 2006 the first International Assembly of Signum Fidei took place.

In ecclesial terms we recall that, also in recent decades, the universal Church has considered and esteemed highly the *nature, dignity, spirituality, mission and responsibility of the lay faithful*⁴. Institutes of Religious Life have recognized that their charism can be shared with the laity: a new chapter, rich in hope, in which we are all participants, has begun in the history between consecrated persons and the laity.⁵

Today we can say that the SIGNUM FIDEI ASSOCIATION was born as a result of a new ecclesiological vision

² 42nd General Chapter 5.8 – p. 48, Circular 435; Rome 1993.

³ 43rd General Chapter *Associated for the Educational Service for the Poor*, Circular 477, p. 5. Roma 1 October 2000.

⁴ Cf. Apostolic Exhortation on the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay in the Church and in the World, *Christifideles Laici*, 2; John Paul II. Rome 1988.

⁵ Cf. Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata*, 54; John Paul II. Rome 1996.

and the vitality of the Lasallian charism. In this sense it has been and continues to be a paradigm for those who wish to live Lasallian Association.⁶

⁶ *Note: Each local community adds its own story to this information.*

CHAPTER 1

OUR IDENTITY

1. The Signum Fidei Association has its origins in the heart of the Catholic Church and it expresses this trait of its identity by being open to those who wish to live the spirituality, charism and the educational and evangelizing mission of Saint John Baptist de La Salle.
2. The Signum Fidei Association is a gift from God, received and welcomed by each member; a gift for the Church, for one's personal family, for the Lasallian Mission and especially for the children and young people of our world. On the international level it is made up of all the communities officially recognized in the Districts.
3. Persons who desire to belong to the Association recognize themselves as disciples of Jesus of Nazareth and they see in Saint John Baptist de La Salle a spiritual master and a model for life. Following in his footsteps, Signum Fidei members become Signs of Faith, Hope, and Love for all.
4. All Signum Fidei members recognize the basic characteristics of Lasallian Association:
 - a) It is a vocation inspired by the charism of Saint John Baptist de La Salle and his values;
 - b) It involves a life of faith which discovers God in everyday life understood in the light of the Scriptures and, for persons of other religions, in the light of their own sacred texts;

- c) It involves a community experience of some form or other suited to the identity of its members;
 - d) It involves a mission of some duration which associates persons with the educational service of the poor;
 - e) It involves an openness of mind which makes it possible to see beyond the individual and his immediate environment.⁷
5. The “**Signum Fidei Style of Life**” offers a path of faith that is open to all persons who wish to live the values of the Gospel in the context of Lasallian Association.
 6. The Signum Fidei community is a privileged space for growth in human relationships of love and reciprocity as well as for maturing and commitment in one’s own faith. Belonging to a community involves a purposeful desire to do so and to observe this Style of Life.

⁷ 43rd General Chapter *Associated for the Educational Service for the Poor*, Circular 477, 1.3, p. 4. Roma 1 October 2000.

CHAPTER 2

THE SPIRIT OF THE SIGNUM FIDEI

7. The spirit of our association is the same one that Saint John Baptist de La Salle bequeathed to the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools: *Faith and Zeal lived in Community*.⁸ Signum Fidei members live this out according to their own lay identity in the heart of the world, making their own the wish of Saint Paul: “*That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith*”.⁹
8. *The Spirit of Faith* moves Signum Fidei members to read the events of everyday life with the eyes of faith, to do all things in view of God, to attribute all to God and to recognize the face of Jesus in each person they meet.
9. *With ardent zeal* Signum Fidei members live the Love of God the Father in Jesus Christ, to welcome the strength and grace of the Holy Spirit and to recreate the life that arises in all human reality.
10. *Faith is lived in community* and expressed in zeal, dedication, gratuitousness and the joy in which the apostolate is carried out, whether that apostolate has to do with education or not, recalling that the love of God is inseparable from the love of neighbor¹⁰ as Faith is from Zeal.

⁸ Cf. Common Rules 1718, *The Spirit of this Institute*, Chapter 2.

⁹ Cf. Ephesians 3:17.

¹⁰ Cf. 1John 4:20.

CHAPTER 3

THE SIGNUM FIDEI VOCATION

11. The Signum Fidei Vocation is a gift from God. It comes from the universal call to holiness for all baptized persons¹¹ and it is nourished by Lasallian spirituality.
12. All Signum Fidei members accept the three fundamental evangelical actions for all formation processes and Christian vocational experience:
 - a) *The Call*: The call of Jesus to follow Him.
 - b) *Formation*: Over the course of time the apostles lived with the Master in an itinerant community.
 - c) *Commissioning*: The goal of all vocations is the Mission. To be a disciple of Jesus means to be sent/commissioned in order to give one's own contribution in building up the Kingdom of God.¹²
13. A Signum Fidei member is a person who identifies with Lasallian spirituality and charism and feels called by God to live fully their baptismal consecration. They strive to be a visible sign of his presence in their families, professions, schools, socio-political and Church realms and thereby they participate in the Mission of the Church.¹³

¹¹ Cf. Dogmatic constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* 39. Paul VI. Roma 1964.

¹² Cf. *Associated for the Lasallian Mission... an act of hope*. Circular 461, 2.4 – Rome; September 2010.

¹³ Cf. *Christifideles Laici*, 2. Apostolic Exhortation on the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay in the Church and in the World. Rome 30 December 1988.

14. Signum Fidei members find inspiration in the Gospel journey of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, integrating those elements that give unity to their lives: following Jesus, belonging to a community, committing themselves to the mission: *Faith, Community and Service*.
15. The personal and community witness and being attentive to the needy constitute the first invitation so that new members feel attracted to the Signum Fidei Community. All members feel a responsibility to invite others to join the Association as a way of living out their vocation.
16. Signum Fidei members manifest a special zeal for the pastoral ministry of vocations, keeping in mind the diversity and complementarity of vocations:
 - a) They promote a culture of life which is understood as a vocation.¹⁴
 - b) They pray the “*Master of the harvest*” prayer¹⁵ in order to awaken new religious and lay vocations for the Church and for the Lasallian Family;
 - c) They open their communities
 - d) And they offer formation and commitments adapted to those who wish to join them.

¹⁴ *New evangelization for the transmission of the Christian faith* - Instrumentum laboris, 160.

¹⁵ Cf. Luke 10: 2.

CHAPTER 4

MISSION

17. The Signum Fidei Association, faithful to the Lasallian charism that inspires and energizes it, has as its primary mission to make the Good News of Jesus present in the world of education for the purpose of touching hearts and leading those whom God has entrusted to us to welcome his saving message.¹⁶ At all times the members of the community show preferential attention to the poor, deprived, oppressed and alienated.
18. Signum Fidei members consider themselves as *ministers and ambassadors* of God for others.¹⁷ They carry out their preferred but not exclusive mission of education and they live it out in shared Mission with the Brothers, other Associates and partners in Lasallian educational institutions, in works proper to the community or in other institutions.
19. Signum Fidei members consider their daily tasks and their profession, whatever it may be and even if it is not in direct contact with a Lasallian institution, to be a way of living out their vocation and as a means of achieving sanctification. In their professional or pastoral activities, Signum Fidei members participate as those who are commissioned by their community and along with it they share and evaluate their activities and their mission.

¹⁶ Cf. De La Salle, JB. *Meditations*, N° 139.3 & 201.1.

¹⁷ Cf. De La Salle, JB. *Meditations* 195.2.

20. Aware that faith without works is dead¹⁸ they know that their personal witness is their primary apostolate and that their work is always a place of encounter with God and an opportunity to build a society that is in solidarity with others, just, inclusive, democratic and multi-cultural and which defends the life and dignity of the person.
21. Signum Fidei members gladly make themselves available, according to their own circumstances, to respond to the services and ministries to which they may be called, whether by their community or by the school to which they are linked or by other institutions. They voluntarily collaborate with those who work for peace, justice, human rights, care for the environment and the integrity of creation.
22. The Signum Fidei finds inspiration in the gratuitousness of the charism of John Baptist de La Salle and does not seek any rights or privileges.
23. Members of this Association gladly welcome and collaborate in areas of formation or mission with those Lasallians from other Christian creeds and those from other religious traditions.

¹⁸ James 2: 17.

CHAPTER 5

COMMUNITY

24. Signum Fidei members associate themselves with other members of the community and the Lasallian Family. They make possible a lifestyle with a significant community reference that responds to the *“together and by association”* work ethic of the Lasallian charism.
25. All Signum Fidei members live out the gift of their vocation linked to the Church community and to other Signum Fidei members, normally in a non-residential setting. Community life strengthens their sense of belonging, how they live out their faith, their sense of solidarity, the joyful sharing of their gifts and their commitment to the mission.
26. When, after becoming familiar with the Style of Life document, at least three persons wish to constitute a Signum Fidei community, they must make this request in writing to the Brother Visitor or his delegate, and await his decision.
27. The Signum Fidei Association is an open and welcoming community that integrates one’s personal reality with that of the family, work situation, social setting and the Church. It organizes times and activities that are open to the entire educational community and to one’s own family, providing opportunities for joyful and meaningful encounters.
28. Each Signum Fidei member draws up his own Personal Annual Program. Each community, or group of

communities from the same area, draws up and evaluates periodically their Community Annual Program and submits this to Brother Visitor or his Delegate. This program expresses everything that the community wishes to experience in terms of Faith, Communion and Service. Whenever possible, this program is shared with the local Brothers' community.

- 29.** Community meetings are held regularly, preferably twice monthly, in accordance with what has been set up in the Community Annual Program. The agenda, which is sent to all before the meeting, includes the following: Scripture reading, reflection, prayer, formation, Lasallian documents, socializing, fraternal dialogue and planning for and evaluating the mission.
- 30.** The community always ensures the means for relating and communicating with the absent members, who may be absent for reasons of health, age, family situation or for other circumstances. When a member cannot have close ties with a Signum Fidei community, then in dialogue with the Brother Visitor, a way of being in communion with the closest community of Brothers is arranged as a way of living his commitment of association.
- 31.** Signum Fidei members establish ties of communion, friendship and affection with all members of the Lasallian Family: Brothers, Sisters, Union of Catechists, Associates and partners. They feel co-responsible with all of these for the Lasallian Mission. Whenever they can, they share their personal gifts, talents and skills in

the common assemblies, meetings, activities, and retreats in which they participate.

32. Every community is accompanied by a consecrated Lay Animator/Leader, elected by the community, and is advised by a Brother. The Brother Advisor is appointed by the Brother Visitor.
33. In consultation with his Mission Council, and after due consideration of all possible circumstances, Brother Visitor or his Delegate, can close a community or dismiss one of its members when the testimony of life does not correspond to the Style of Life of a Signum Fidei.
34. Each community is autonomous in terms of its finances. The Association studies the way of self-financing, the way it is managed and of finding the necessary financial resources for its activities. As far as possible, a solidarity fund is established and its aim is to support the life of the community, formation, retreats, the presence of its leaders in assemblies and meetings and to help needy persons. The funds of the community come from the personal contributions of its members, from subsidies, donations, and other legitimate means.
35. Communities that operate or direct their own centers, foundations or institutions draw up their own statutes for purposes of effective management, complying with the local and national laws and the advice and approval of the District or Sector.
36. Signum Fidei members or communities that are better off financially may find ways of using part of their resources in favor of the Association and its works.

CHAPTER 6

LIFE OF FAITH

37. The Holy Spirit is the source of Faith that inspires Signum Fidei members *to love God and neighbor*¹⁹ with total dedication and generosity.

38. *The Gospel* is for Signum Fidei members their first rule of life and the best means of personal discernment for living out the spirit of the Beatitudes and *for being the salt of the earth and light for the world*.²⁰

Signum Fidei members assiduously devote a good amount of time for praying the Word of God personally, in the family or with the community. The use of some points of the Method of Interior Prayer from De La Salle or of Lectio Divina can also be appropriate ways.

39. Signum Fidei members love prayer and they make it their first and principal exercise each day.²¹ As disciples of Jesus they never tire of repeating the words “*Lord, teach us to pray*”.²² The frequent recall of the Presence of God that flows from the heart enlightens all the actions they carry out daily. Those who cannot participate in activities due to age, health or for other reasons consider their condition and the apostolate of prayer their best offering to God.

¹⁹ Cf. Matthew 22: 39

²⁰ Cf. Matthew 5: 13

²¹ Cf. Common Rules, 1718; Chapter IV

²² Luke 11: 1.

40. *Jesus* is for Signum Fidei members the *Way*, the *Truth* and the *Life* and they follow Him as the disciples followed their master.²³ They see revealed in Jesus that maternal/paternal face of an incarnated God who loves humankind with passion.
41. *The Eucharist* is for Signum Fidei members the *fount and apex of the whole Christian Life*²⁴ and they participate in it every day, when possible. On special days, they find ways of celebrating it as a community or with the Brothers' community. They renew their communion with Jesus as the sacrament in Eucharistic adoration.
42. *Mary*, woman of faith, is the model disciple who listens to and accepts the will of God. Signum Fidei members find inspiration in Mary's total "YES" to God. With her, they are open to the Spirit and they proclaim the greatness of God in his works. As Lasallians they come to her under the title of *Our Lady of the Star* and with the invocation: *Queen and Mother of the Christian Schools*.
43. *Saint John Baptist de La Salle*, universal patron of teachers, is considered to be the Founder of the Signum Fidei Association. From him members learn to live a unified life, making no distinction between times devoted to the spiritual life and daily tasks²⁵ The

²³ Cf. John 14: 6.

²⁴ Cf. Dogmatic constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 11. Paul VI, Rome 1964.

²⁵ Cf. Common Rule, 1718, Chapter 2.

example of his life and his writings show members a way of being faithful to God up to the point of being able to say: *“I adore in all things the will of God in my regard.”*

44. Signum Fidei members frequently examine their actions, they humbly recognize their limitations and they seek reconciliation with their brothers and sisters by means of fraternal correction and with God, through the sacrament of Reconciliation.
45. Signum Fidei members strengthen their Christian life through appropriate human and spiritual accompaniment, prayer, participation in the sacraments, attending recollection and retreats, at least once per year, and in community meetings.
46. The invitation *“Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. And let us adore him”* and the invocation *“Live, Jesus, in our Hearts! Forever!”* constitute the community greeting and the way to begin and conclude prayers and meetings respectively.
For the purpose of strengthening spiritual communion among all members, they say daily the common Signum Fidei prayer.

47. Signum Fidei members are aware of Lasallian Saints and Martyrs, they celebrate their memory, trust in their intercession and are inspired by their example. They recall family members and members of the Lasallian Family who are deceased, thank God for their lives and pray for their eternal repose.

48. Based on our common understanding of the Lasallian charism today, together with many believers and non-believers, Signum Fidei members discover new aspects of their Christian identity. They promote ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue for the purpose of building a universal fraternity.²⁶

²⁶ Cf. 44th General Chapter, *Being Brothers Today: Open eyes, burning hearts*, Circular 455, Chapter 3 – 2.2.2. Rome, 15 September 2007 & Declaration of Human Rights, Article 1.

CHAPTER 7

CONSECRATION

49. Signum Fidei Consecration is a reaffirmation of baptismal promises which commits people to live radically the demands of the Gospel. Carried out before the community, it is a point of departure for a life dedicated to God's service for the building up of the Church according to the charism of Saint John Baptist de La Salle. Signum Fidei members do not make religious vows.
50. Signum Fidei members live out their consecration to the Trinity in the context of the "People of God," along with many others who participate in the Lasallian charism and who also feel impelled to associate themselves for the same mission, but from different vocations and states of life.²⁷
51. When the community and the aspirant believe that the process of initial formation is satisfactory, the aspirant, by agreement with the Leader and Advisor, may request the Brother Visitor or his delegate for the authorization to make first consecration. The celebration of that event would ideally take place during the offertory part of a Eucharistic liturgy. By consecration the aspirant joins the community fully.

²⁷ Cf. 44th General Chapter, *Being Brothers Today: Open eyes, burning hearts*, Circular 455, Chapter 3 – Introduction. Rome 15th September 2007.

Other forms of expression of personal commitment may be considered for Christians of other denominations.

- 52. Normally, the consecration is for a period of one year, renewed annually. After mature reflection and after a period of ten years, those who wish may request the Brother Visitor or his delegate for the authorization to make a consecration for life.
- 53. The consecration is received by the Brother Visitor or his delegate, in the presence of the Leader, the Advisor and the members of the Association. The applicant and the Brother Visitor or his Delegate signs the “Register.” Special participants at the celebration are the family members, the Brothers, and other members of the Lasallian Family.
- 54. The formula of Consecration reads as follows:

Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, before your presence and moved by your infinite love,

I.....

Publicly renew my baptismal consecration and I consecrate myself entirely to you, to procure your glory and do whatever you require of me.

I join with my brothers and sisters in the Signum Fidei Community to live, together and by association, a Style of Life founded in the person of Jesus Christ and I associate myself with them for the Lasallian mission in favor of education for the poor, by participating in the Lasallian spirituality and charism.

My specific apostolic commitment is:

.....

I commit myself to carry out this project, either individually or in community, trusting in the support and prayer of all, and invoking the intercession of Saint John Baptist de La Salle and the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.

I associate myself to the Fraternity for a period of one year.

In faith I have affixed my signature in (place), on (day) (month) (year).

- 55.** Before the renewal of consecration, members examine their own personal situation and they take time to respond to this question: Do I wish to renew my consecration and continue to commit my life as a Sign of Faith?

A dialogue with the Animator and/or the Advisor helps to discern this decision.

CHAPTER 8

THE SIGNUM FIDEI AND THE FAMILY

56. *The first setting in which faith enlightens the human city is the family.*²⁸ Signum Fidei members accept as their specific vocation, God's call to live in a family and they consider that family to be their primary place for the "humanization" of the person and of society.²⁹ Within this family they live out the Trinitarian relationship of God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit, thereby transforming family links into bonds of unity and love.
57. Signum Fidei members look upon life as a gift and they participate in the creative work of God through their children, the fruit of their love. Their model is the Holy Family of Nazareth.
58. Along with their spouse, they face the challenges of their life together and they happily assume the responsibilities of parenthood. The family and the Signum Fidei Community journey together in the spirit of mutual inspiration and growth.
59. Parents educate their children in human and spiritual growth. They remain at their side always with open arms and they are for them an example of Christian

²⁸ Encyclical Letter *Lumen fidei* of the Supreme Pontiff Francis, 52. Rome 2013.

²⁹ Cf. *Christifideles Laici*, 40. Apostolic Exhortation on the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay in the Church and in the World. Rome 30th December 1988.

life, respecting the freedom of each family member.

- 60.** Their work provides a decent life for the families and they put all their trust in the actions of Divine Providence.

CHAPTER 9

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LASALLIAN FAMILY

61. The Signum Fidei Association shares the spirituality and the mission that the Church, through the mystery of communion and participation, has confided to the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and, today, to all members of the Lasallian Family (*Brothers, the Union of Catechists, Guadalupanas Sisters, Lasallian Sisters and other Lasallian Associates and partners*).
62. Signum Fidei communities function within the framework of Districts, and they are officially recognized by Districts in the area of Association and the Lasallian Mission. They desire that the Brother Visitor and his various Councils support their works and projects, respect their autonomy and look for ways in which they can participate more closely in the life of the District.
63. Those in charge of communities submit periodical reports to the Brother Visitor about the life and the projects of the Association.
64. The International Brother Advisor and the Local Brother Advisor are appointed by the Brother Superior General and the Brother Visitor, respectively. Both guarantee links of unity with the District and the Institute.

CHAPTER 10

FORMATION

- 65.** The members of the Signum Fidei Association understand formation as a lifelong process of growing towards human and spiritual maturity.

Authentic formation is based on the lived experience of a community of persons where all are willing to learn³⁰.

- 66.** Lasallian formation is not an end in itself but an instrument and aims to help internalize the constitutive elements of Lasallian identity. It is planned and conducted in accordance with common principles and methodology.

- 67.** Each community offers its members the necessary means and personnel for their formation.

Each stage of formation takes place in response to a program established by each community and adapted to the circumstances of each member.

As far as possible, Signum Fidei members participate in Districts' or Regions' formation programs.

A. Initial Formation

- 68.** A Signum Fidei aspirant is aware of being called to this vocation, shows affective balance, has ability to share and to live in an open community, is sensitive to human

³⁰ Cf. Circular 461, 6.11.

and religious values and is disposed to serve the needy. Aspirants share with the Association their hopes and they discern their formative journey with the Leader of the community and with the Brother Advisor.

69. The period of initial formation normally lasts for two years and it is carried out within the local community. The Leader and the Brother Advisor determine any possible exceptions. Aspirants look upon meetings with leaders for the purpose of accompaniment as an excellent means of formation.
70. The principal themes of formation in this stage include, among other things, the study of the Word of God, the theology of the sacraments, doctrine on the laity, Lasallian history, spirituality and educational practices and the Style of Life. Participation in apostolic, social and educational activities is intrinsic to this period of formation.
71. During formation special attention is also paid to human local culture, which will help the aspirant to acquire the ability for a critical reading of the values and counter-values that make up society today³¹.

B. Ongoing formation

72. Signum Fidei members understand formation as an ongoing process in which one's own life and professional and pastoral activities are considered the primary means of formation.

³¹ Cf. *Christifideles Laici*, 63.

73. Ongoing formation delves into the issues of initial formation and expands them to such themes as: Christology, the Ecclesiology of Communion, the social doctrine of the Church, Mariology, the liturgical year, the Gospel journey and the writings of the Founder and Institute documents on Lasallian Family, Association and Mission.
74. From a Lasallian perspective, formation meets its full meaning when it builds communion and contributes to the formation of communities of persons who associate themselves for the Lasallian mission in favor of education for the poor.

STATUTES

GOVERNMENT AND ANIMATION

75. At the local level:

- a) It consists of the Signum Fidei community as a unit. Each is run by a consecrated Lay Animator and accompanied by a Brother Advisor. The local level government responsibilities can be adapted to fulfill the needs of the local situation.

The community decides on the sharing of responsibilities among the members in the spirit of fraternal service.

- b) The Lay Animator is elected by the members, without any call for candidates, on the basis of the result of a vote involving four names, at most, of consecrated members.
- c) The term is for a period of two years, renewable once. A new term can be given provided that it is preceded by a break of two years.

76. At the District level/Sector:

- a) The District/Sector consists of a group of Signum Fidei Communities.
- b) The District/Sector communities are animated by a Lay Coordinator and accompanied by a Brother Advisor.
- c) The District/Sector Coordinator is elected by the Local Lay Animators of Signum Fidei communities.
- d) The term of office is three years, renewable once. A

new term can be given provided that it is preceded by a break of three years.

- e) The Coordinator convokes District/Sector assemblies, retreats, formation session, common projects and any other activity that shall strengthen the bonds among communities. He/she visits the communities at least once a year.

77. At the Regional level:

- a) The Regional Assemblies are formed by all the District/Sector Coordinators and the Brother Advisors.

78. At the world level: *The International Council*

- a) It is composed by the Regional Coordinators and the International Brother Advisor.
 - b) The International Assembly will elect a President.
 - c) The President is the representative to the International Council for Lasallian Family and Association and/or the International Council for Association and Mission.
 - d) He/she serves for a period of seven years renewable once.
- 79.** The international Assembly is the highest governing body of Signum Fidei. The international President, together with the International Brother Advisor convokes this Assembly at least one year before an Ordinary General Chapter taking into account the International Assembly for Mission.

80. The modification of this Style of Life is the responsi-

bility of the International Assembly and changes to it require a vote of $2/3$ of the participants.

IN TRANSITION MODE:

At Regional Level:

- For the first time the International Advisor appoints the Regional Coordinator in consultation with the General Councilor for the Region.

At the world level:

- Regional Coordinators elect among them a President only for the first time without any call for candidates.
- The International Assembly will elect a President after the transition period.

SIGNUM FIDEI PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
in your loving Providence,
You have chosen us to be Signs of Faith
in the midst of this world so full
of confusion and uncertainty.
Kindle in me and in all Signum Fidei members,
a deep spirit of Faith
and generosity in our apostolic commitment, which,
through the example of St. John Baptist de La Salle,
will inspire us to consecrate our lives
and to bring the Gospel to the educational world.

Bless the work of our brothers and sisters
wherever they may be so that, together and by association,
and inspired by the enthusiasm for your spirit of Love,
we shall become more and more the salt of the earth
and the light of the world, especially among the poor
and among those farthest from the salvation you offer.

Receive into your embrace our brothers and sisters
who have gone before us with the sign of Faith
and who now sleep in your peace.

We ask these through Our Lord Jesus Christ,
Your beloved Son, Amen.



