

GUIDELINES FOR THE CREATION OF A CHARIS NATIONAL SERVICE OF COMMUNION IN A COUNTRY

*Document of CHARIS with definitions on the terms.
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« Today one thing ends and another begins. A new stage of this journey is beginning. A stage marked by communion between all the members of the charismatic family, in which the mighty presence of the Holy Spirit is manifested for the good of the entire Church. A presence that makes each one equal, since each has been born of the same Spirit: great and small, old and young, engaged on the worldwide or local levels, all form a whole that is always greater than the part. » (Pope Francis, 8-6-2019)

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CHARIS

Catholic Charismatic Renewal International Service

At the request of Pope Francis, the Holy See, through the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life, erects CHARIS, the new and the only international service for the entire Catholic Charismatic Renewal, with a public juridical personality (cf. Statutes art. 2 §2).

Its objective is to serve and create communion between the different realities existing in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal for the proclamation of the Gospel in the world.

GLOSSARY

To be clear, we have to agree on the terms we use. For this reason, we begin these orientations with a glossary.

CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal began in the Catholic Church in Pittsburgh in 1967 when a group of Catholic university students received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, experienced in the protestant churches since 1901. This experience of conversion renewed their faith and all their life and opened them to the gifts and the charisms of the Holy Spirit.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit quickly spread to millions of people around the world, helped by the spirit of openness initiated by the recent Vatican II Council.

CURRENT OF GRACE

The Holy Father Francis has defined the Charismatic Renewal, following the indication of Cardinal Leo J. Suenens, as "a current of grace", composed of

a diversity of realities or expressions (prayer groups, communities, ministries, associations, religious institutes, etc.). “It is called to warm up the whole Church so that all the baptized are renewed in the Holy Spirit. Why is the Charismatic Renewal such a current? This is due to its very identity. What characterizes the Charismatic Renewal is the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit. This experience can be received by any baptized person because it simply reflects baptism itself. [...] If the Holy Father has repeatedly asked the members of the Renewal – and especially CHARIS – to spread baptism in the Holy Spirit throughout the Church, it is precisely because he is convinced that baptism in the Holy Spirit is a grace that every baptized person can and should live. It is an experience of a personal Pentecost, an irruption of the Holy Spirit into the life of the baptized person, accompanied by an experience of conversion and an encounter with the living Jesus. All this should be part of the normal life of every baptized person called to holiness. The Charismatic Renewal as a current of grace offers baptism in the Holy Spirit to the whole Church¹.”

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

“Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a life-transforming experience of the love of God the Father poured into one’s heart by the Holy Spirit, received through a surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ. It brings alive sacramental baptism and confirmation, deepens communion with God and with fellow Christians, enkindles evangelistic fervor and equips a person with charisms for service and mission”².

REALITIES OR EXPRESSIONS

Realities or expressions are an indication of the diverse ways in which the Holy Spirit calls people and groups to gather to this current of grace. The most common forms of gathering together are Prayer Groups, Communities, Ministries, Schools of evangelization, and Religious Institutes.

PRAYER GROUP

Prayer Groups are groups of people who meet periodically (in general, weekly) to pray together listening to the Holy Spirit and welcoming his charisms. Some prayer groups may have more than one meeting a week; they may develop ministries or apostolates.

¹ Cardinal Farrell, January 18th, 2020, Address to the Brazilian bishops, Recife.

² *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, Jubilee Anniversary Edition, Doctrinal Commission of ICCRS, part I p.15.

These groups generally form an extensive network that coincides with the organization of the Church through diocesan and national coordinations. The membership of these groups is spontaneous and there is usually no formal record of them.

Prayer Groups are the most widespread expression of the CCR worldwide. They can be considered the basic and common cell of all forms of expression in the CCR. In addition to praying together, these groups take on a variety of missions.

NATIONAL NETWORKS OF PRAYER GROUPS

In many countries, the prayer groups are organized in a national coordination, sometimes called Charismatic Renewal coordination or National Team for the CCR. In this document, these structures are called “National Network of prayer groups” in order to avoid a confusion between the prayer groups structure and the whole CCR as a current of grace.

COMMUNITIES, COVENANT OR COMMITMENT COMMUNITIES

A Community is a group of persons having a fraternal life, residential or not, around a charism, with a characteristic emphasis or mission. To belong, members make a formal commitment sometimes called "covenant". Membership is not limited to the development of the specific charism but also the incorporation into community life. The commitment or the Covenant can vary in length, duration and level of commitment. Often, they gather different states of life: lay people, single for the Lord, priests and deacons. Some charismatic communities are born from prayer groups. Many communities are canonically recognized as associations of the faithful by bishops, episcopal conferences or the Holy See.

MINISTRIES

A ministry is a service in relation with a charism exercised for the good of the Church either by a particular person (P. Emiliano Tardif had a preaching and healing ministry) either by a group of people who share the same charism.

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GUIDELINES FOR THE CREATION OF A CHARIS NATIONAL SERVICE OF COMMUNION (CNSC) IN A COUNTRY

With the inauguration of CHARIS, the constitution of CNSC stipulated by the Statutes is a priority.

With the encouragement of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, the CISC (CHARIS International Service of Communion) has prepared these guidelines to help to build the CNSC in each country. This document offers general orientations that can help the creation and the work of the CNSC. These orientations may be adapted with flexibility to the particular situation of each country. These guidelines have been prepared and approved by the CISC.

The CHARIS statutes establish basic principles for their formation in each country.

Art. 15. Functions

The goal of National Services of Communion is to build and strengthen the wide and diverse family of Catholic Charismatic Renewal. They should therefore be as inclusive as possible and open to new and emerging realities. The model focuses on communion rather than government or structure.

Art. 16. Composition

National Services of Communion should consist of representatives from realities in the current of grace who identify themselves as a part of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, and who are seeking to build communion within the wide and diverse family of Catholic Charismatic Renewal. This may include prayer groups, communities, networks, schools of evangelisation, religious institutes, publishing houses, particular ministries, ecumenical initiatives, youth etc.

For practical and statutory reasons, it is proposed to form a single CNSC per country (or per National Episcopal Conference), even in countries where different regions, languages or cultures coexist. This does not prevent them from forming sectoral services (for example by language or for a singular charismatic expression), Regional Services or Diocesan Services. But in any case, there should be only one CNSC per country.

On this basis it is useful to build a minimum structure necessary to be effective in the communion and service to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and in announcing Jesus Christ.

1. GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE CNSC

The CNSC will:

- Be attentive to the pastoral needs of the different expressions, as well as to the new realities arisen by the Spirit; it will invite all of them to communion;
- Identify the different expressions or realities of the current of grace present in the country;
- Organize National (or regional) gatherings of the responsible persons of all the charismatic realities (See point 7 below);
- Offer training courses if required;
- Be in contact with international instances: CCSC³, CISC and CHARIS office;
- Identify needs and provide information;
- Be a link between the country's current of grace and the Episcopal Conference;
- Help the formation of eventual regional or diocesan communion services;
- Organize the election of the next CNSC.

The CNSC is also in charge to put in practice the general objectives defined by the CHARIS Statutes (cf. art. 3 – in bold the three points that the Pope has strongly underlined⁴):

- a) To help deepen and promote the grace of baptism in the Holy Spirit throughout the Church;***
- b) To promote the exercise of charisms not only in Catholic Charismatic renewal but also in the whole Church;*
- c) To encourage the spiritual deepening and holiness of people who live the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit;*
- d) To encourage commitment to evangelization, particularly through the new evangelization and the evangelisation of culture, while respecting religious freedom;*
- e) To encourage cooperation between communities born from Catholic Charismatic Renewal, with a view making the experience of particular communities available for the good of all;*
- f) To promote the ecumenical dimension of Catholic Charismatic Renewal and foster the commitment to serving the unity of all Christians;***

³ CHARIS Continental Service of Communion.

⁴ See, for example, the Pope message for the launching of CHARIS: Saturday June 8, 2019.

- g) To identify and promote specific topics that can help deepen the grace of Pentecost;*
- h) To encourage networking and cooperation between realities within Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the areas of formation, evangelization etc.;*
- i) To promote service of the poor and social action through Catholic Charismatic Renewal;***
- j) To organize training and formation opportunities, according to the needs expressed by the General Assembly;*
- k) To enable clerics and religious to deepen their experience of Catholic Charismatic Renewal and to participate more fully in it;*
- l) To foster communion: among persons involved in various realities within Catholic Charismatic Renewal; with ecclesial movements that do not refer to this current of grace; and with other Christian Churches and Communities, especially those living the experience of Pentecost;*
- m) To organise major events, colloquia, leader's gatherings, in order to share and exchange the various experiences flowing from the Holy Spirit.*

2. All the expressions of the CCR have to be represented in the CNSC. It is advisable to prevent the CNSC from exceeding 15-20 members.

If the Episcopal Conference designates a bishop or a priest to attend the current of grace, he accompanies the CNSC in its meetings and in the meetings it organizes.

3. Communion between the different expressions of the CCR is at the center of the CHARIS Statutes. This communion does not prevent each expression from retaining its independence and its own associative form.

The CNSC is a service for this communion. It is not a government. It is important in the same time to promote the possibility of communion and ensure that the services currently provided can last and even expand. For this reason, all the charismatic expressions represented in the CNSC will continue to provide their services maintaining their specificity.

4. CHARIS Statutes also promote a renewal of leadership. That is why it limits the duration of each mandate to three years (renewable only once) and includes spaces for young people at different levels of representation.

We strongly recommend that these orientations be reflected in the creation of the CNSCs.

5. The continental representatives of the CISC (Statutes art. 9) supervise, accompany and assist in the formation of the CNSC.

6. The CHARIS Statutes speak about the inclusion, as much as possible, of all the realities or expressions of the current of grace present in each country. For this integration, it is important that the creation of the CNSC's be made according to following the objective and transparent criteria:

6.1. Each reality has the same dignity, "*no one member is more important than another neither in virtue of age, intelligence or ability, for all are beloved children of the same Father*" (Pope Francis, June 8th 2019)

6.2. For a practical reason, it is impossible that each single reality have a representant in the CNSC. But, the CNSC must ensure that each form of expression is represented.

6.3. In countries where there are no other national expressions known than the prayer groups, the *national network of prayer groups* provisionally becomes the CNSC and is charged to investigate if there are other charismatic expressions which could participate.

6.4. The criteria for the representation of each different reality depend on each country and must be transparent. It will take into account:

- Nihil Obstat, approval or recognition of the competent ecclesiastical authorities.
- Each reality identifying itself as part of the current of grace through the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- Communion with charismatic expressions.

6.5. A reality should not be represented twice; if a reality is attached to a network or movement already represented in the CNSC, this reality should not have another representative.

6.6. Each CNSC chooses a coordinator from among its members. He or she is not in any way responsible for the current of grace in his or her country, but coordinates the communion.

6.7. All members of the CNSC, including the coordinator, are volunteers.

7. National (or regional) gatherings of the responsible persons of all the charismatic realities

All expressions of the Charismatic Renewal of a country cannot physically participate in the CNSC's meetings but all are invited to participate in the **National (or Regional) Meetings for leaders of the expressions of the Charismatic Renewal** prepared by the CNSC, according to the needs of communion, formation and mission in the country. These meetings are a privileged place to build and live the communion that the Holy Father asks: *“With one heart, returned to the Father, witnessing unity in diversity: diversity of charisms that the Spirit has raised in these fifty-two years. “Lengthen the ropes of the tent” we read in the prophecy of Isaiah (54.2), so that everyone can dwell in it as members of a single family. A family where there is only one God and Father, one Lord Jesus Christ and one Spirit of life”* (Pope Francis, June 8, 2019).

8. A CNSC may be required to write statutes for civil or canonical recognition in the jurisdiction of its country. In this case, these Statutes must be approved by the CISC to assure the coherence with the spirit of the CHARIS statutes.

TRANSITORY ARTICLE

If the establishment of the CNSC is in need of a special adaptation time, it can start with the creation of a transitional CNSC until 2021. This transitional CNSC will be in charge of identifying all the charismatic expressions of the country and organizing national meetings for the leaders of these realities of the Charismatic Renewal, to arrive in 2021 to the constitution of the final CNSC, with a term of three years. This will allow the organization of the elections for the CISC and the CHARIS Moderator in 2022, as provided by the Statutes.

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