



CONGREGATIO
PRO INSTITUTIS VITAE CONSECRATAE
ET SOCIETATIBUS VITAE APOSTOLICAE

Prot. n. Sp.R. 2452/20

Vatican City, 31 May 2021

To the Moderators and supreme Moderators,

In light of the prolongation of the Covid 19 pandemic and the subsequent deadlines for the convocation of collegial bodies (can. 631§1-2) or similar bodies (can. 632) - already the object of the *Circular Letter* of last 1 July - and due to the restrictions enacted by national governments a request has been submitted to the Dicastery to be able to use computerized and telematic means as an alternative to *personal presence* in the above-mentioned bodies.

Having carefully assessed this request and taking note of the consequences of the above-mentioned restrictions, the Dicastery has deemed it appropriate to authorize - *on an exceptional basis*, for a specific period and for individual cases - the use of telematic means for the remote connection of members of collegiate or similar bodies. The period runs from the date of this circular *until the end of the year 2022*, within which the above-mentioned assemblies must be held.

Therefore, for ICL-SAL who request it, the provisions issued in the Circular Letter of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life dated 1 July 2020 in §§ 5-7 are suspended.

I. CHAPTER ASSEMBLY USING TELEMATICS

1. The *Moderator* or *Supreme Moderator*, with the consent of her or his Council, proposes to the *ex-officio* and elected members the use of telematic systems for remote connection for the above-mentioned assemblies.
2. Prior to the opening of the chapter and in the manner deemed most appropriate (registered mail, expedited postal services) the *ex-officio* and elected members, *uti singuli*, must approve with a *2/3 majority by secret ballot*, the procedures and telematic protocols.
3. The Dicastery will grant permission for the Chapter celebration - via telematics - to the *individual ICL-SAL* who submit a request, attaching documentation regarding the telematic procedures and protocols previously approved by the *ex-officio* and elected members.

4. In the pre-chapter or preparatory phase, *ex-officio* and elected members are adequately informed and trained in the proper use of the telematic tools that will be adopted, and members are possibly accompanied - throughout the chapter - by computer experts.
5. *All chapter members* are guaranteed the same conditions of access and connection to the remote network, using a dedicated connection made through a *personal computer*.
6. Telematic systems must *guarantee security and confidentiality*, resorting, if deemed appropriate, to specific advice also offered by coordinating bodies of the ICL-SAL.
7. These indications can also guide the remote connections for provincial chapters: it is the responsibility of the Superior General, with the consent of her or his council, to authorize the adoption of telematic instruments in such cases.
8. The Assemblies of *Secular Institutes*, as collegial bodies, make use of the same guidelines. And, *servatis servandis*, the *Conferences of Major Superiors*.
9. A *summary evaluation of the telematic experience* will be sent, in a timely manner, to the Dicastery.

II. THE ELECTION OF THE SUPREME MODERATOR AND RESPECTIVE COUNCIL

The election of the Supreme Moderator and the respective Council during the Chapter - as an exception to can. 167§1 and to proper law - is to be done using a *mailed letter ballot*. The following provisions are to be observed.

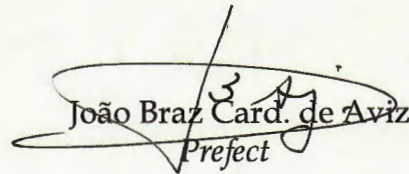
1. Two paper ballots, endorsed and authenticated with a seal, according to the number of those to be elected (General moderator, councillors, and other officials according to proper law) are to be prepared in a timely manner, together with their respective envelopes bearing the heading of the current assembly (** General Chapter of the ICL and/or SAL). The two ballots are to be marked: one, *first phase*, and the other, *second phase* of the election. The materials are to be sent, by special postal service, to the individual chapter members before the beginning of the general chapter.
2. Those entitled to vote will vote on a paper ballot, which will then be inserted in an unmarked, then sealed envelope, bearing the title of the current chapter, and then mailed to the chapter secretary's address.
3. The date is to be established by which the first ballot is to be sent (by special postal services). This date is to be after the opening of the General Chapter. In the same way, the deadline for sending the ballot to the Chapter Secretariat must be clearly stated.
4. The counting of ballots shall take place at a chapter meeting broadcast electronically following the procedures set forth in the Chapter Rules.
5. The announcement of the election - after its acceptance - is communicated to the capitulars by electronic means.

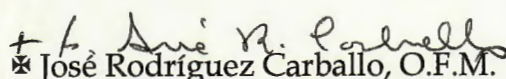
6. The person who receives a *two-thirds majority* of the votes cast by eligible voters on the first ballot is elected.
7. If the first round of voting is inconclusive, a second vote is taken by absolute majority. In this case, the above procedure is repeated, establishing the date by which the second ballot must be sent in. If the *quorum* is not reached in the second ballot, the one who received the majority of votes is elected; in the event of a tie, the provisions of canon 119 are to be followed.
8. The same procedure is to be used - according to separate elective ballots - for each individual member of the council and for the other officers provided for by proper law.
9. The elective assemblies of secular institutes are to observe the dispositions set forth here.
10. If considered opportune, either because of the continuation of the pandemic or because of the regional configuration of the provincial circumscription or similar, the Major Superior, with the consent of her or his Council and the consent of the Supreme Moderator, may adopt the procedure of an elective vote by letter also in the above mentioned circumscription.

Information technology may provide an opportunity to overcome the restrictions and inconveniences of the pandemic emergency, but be aware of the inevitable limitations as well as the vulnerability of information systems. The period of exceptional authorization obliges the ICL-SAL to carefully evaluate the outcomes and, if necessary, to take timely action to protect the proper exercise of chapter collegiality.

We hope that the use of telematic means will take place with a sense of responsibility and above all will protect and promote communion in the ICL-SAL.

With cordial greetings in the Lord,


João Braz Card. de Aviz
Prefect


* José Rodríguez Carballo, O.F.M.
Archbishop Secretary

