

Chapter 7: Government and the Placement of the 1st and 2nd Degree Members within the Canonical Structure of Regnum Christi

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1. Why and how to address the topic of this chapter?

The topic

The reflection we have been doing in this stage of the review of the Regnum Christi Statutes is centered on the way in which the 1st and 2nd degree members live out the gift they have received from God through the charism of Regnum Christi. Though this reflection is predominantly of a spiritual nature, it also has a juridical dimension that we must deal with in response to the Holy See’s instruction to present for their approval an updated version of the statutes of the Movement.

As a Movement must find the juridical model that best fits our reality, best contributes to helping the Movement maintain its unity, carry out its evangelizing mission, and helps the members reach the plenitude of their vocation and equip the governing bodies with the necessary tools to govern properly.

To take the next step in this search we need to answer the following questions:

- What should the juridical bond with Regnum Christi be for the 1st and 2nd degree members?
- How should 1st and 2nd degree members be governed?
- What should be the role, presence and responsibility of the 1st and 2nd degree members in the governance of what is common to the entire Regnum Christi Movement?

Until now, ordinarily, the 1st and 2nd degree members of Regnum Christi have been incorporated into the Movement by a formal act, a letter in which they solicit admission and being accepted by an authorized director. Frequently this is followed by a rite of incorporation.

In Regnum Christi the lay members have truly participated in team life, their local sections and the apostolates, performing different functions and striving to achieve the ideal of holiness that the Movement proposes. Some members have received a specific formation preparing them to be team and group leaders, coordinators of the different sectors (AFIRE) within the section, directors of apostolates and assistants to the section directors. At the same time, especially in these past few years, 1st and 2nd degree members have assumed the office of section director or local Regnum Christi director, frequently with positive results.

On the other hand, how Movement members participate in the rights and responsibilities that come with their incorporation has not yet been laid out. Thus, the 1st and 2nd degree members have not had elected representatives with full powers in the local, territorial and general governments nor has the juridical possibility even been properly addressed. The many members who have served the Movement in some of the above mentioned offices have done so on appointment of the authorized directors, not because they were elected by the members themselves.

As part of this process of reflection we face the question of the degree of participation in the governance of the Movement that the 1st and 2nd degree members should have. As established in the document "The Framework of Collaboration", we now have 1st and 2nd degree members in the territorial and general committees of Regnum Christi. According to the prescriptions of the "Framework", they have been appointed and ratified by the respective territorial and general directors.

In the rough draft of the numbers of the Statutes proposed here, the 1st and 2nd degree members can participate in the government of the sections and localities, without excluding the possibility of them being named apostolic directors of consecrated members of both branches, taking into account what is best in each case.

It is up to the 1st and 2nd degree members to express what kind of responsibility they believe that God is asking them to undertake in the governance of the Movement:

regarding the life in the 1st and 2nd degree, and regarding the life of the Regnum Christi Movement as a whole.

While seeking the juridical-canonical framework for the entire Movement and for each of its branches, we must base ourselves in the concepts that already exist in the Code of Canon Law (CCL) to describe the forms of participation of the individuals within a group approved by the Church. For this reason, in this chapter we will employ the conceptual distinction between “associates” and “affiliates” further explained below.

Within the Process of Renewal of the Statutes

We are still within the context of the first stage of the review of the Statutes which seeks to offer the 1st and 2nd degree members sufficient knowledge and adequate forums to discern their identity and mission.

This chapter presents the members with a few questions that when answered will assist the members of the central commission to prepare several juridical alternatives to present to the international convention for their consideration and which will be adapted to the life of the 1st and 2nd degree members and the canonical configuration of the entire Movement.

With the proposals of the international convention the second stage will begin. In it, the central commission for the review of the Statutes will elaborate a proposal of the canonical model for the entire Movement. In the third stage, the proposal of the central commission will be submitted to the different branches of the Movement seeking their ratification, according to a process yet to be established. Finally, as a fourth stage of the process, the necessary adjustments will be made in order to present the Statutes to the Holy See for review and eventual approval.

Process of the review of the Statutes of the Regnum Christi Movement			
1st Stage	2nd Stage	3rd Stage	4th Stage
Reflection on the vocation and mission of the 1st and 2nd degree members. Concludes with the proposal to the central commission	Draft of a proposal of the general Statutes done by the central commission.	Ratification of the canonical configuration by each of the branches of the Movement.	Adjustments and submission to the Holy See for approval. ¹

The majority of the movements and new ecclesial realities that the Holy Spirit is raising up in our time have already undergone or are presently engaged in similar processes of finding an appropriate canonical structure.

¹ THIS TABLE WILL BE SUBSTITUTED BY THE “TIME LINE” THAT IS IN THE WORKING DRAFT ALREADY PUBLISHED.

A “technical” topic by nature but with important consequences

It isn't easy to tackle topics of a juridical nature because they can become grueling and apparently of little relevance to our daily life in the Movement, even though, in truth, they might be very important for life in the Movement and for the protection and furthering of the charism.

A difference of opinions that might even cause some frictions is inevitable. It can also be uncomfortable to be faced with an important decision, weighing the advantages and disadvantages of the different options, doubting about which is the most appropriate.

However, if this challenge is faced with responsibility and in a context of faith, it can become an opportunity for growth in our trust in the Lord of life and history, who accompanies and guides us, leading all things to the good of those who love him. It can also bring us to a more mature understanding of God's plan over the Movement at this present moment and for years to come. If we reflect, dialogue, seek counsel, pray and choose with purity of intention, humbly seeking to live out our vocation to Regnum Christi in the new circumstances that Divine Providence has allowed, the Lord will not cease to enlighten those who participate in this journey, especially those who have the grave responsibility in making the final decisions.

Furthermore, a legitimate objection could arise; that of breaching this topic with all of the members of the Movement, given its technical nature. One could think that it would be more appropriately analyzed by a handful of experts together with the general director, and ultimately the Holy See. However, because it is a topic that concerns everyone, everyone should be given the opportunity to participate in the discernment so that later the competent authorities can make a more prudent decision.

It is also important to ensure that the resolutions adopted answer the real needs and the life of the Regnum Christi members and not just abstract principles. For this reason, the central commission, presided by the general director and accompanied by the pontifical advisor, decided to make the effort to reach out to all of those members of Regnum Christi who so desire, so that they can participate in the grave discernment about what might be the best form of organization for all of us.

As in any spiritual discernment done in the Church, it isn't simply a question of choosing the most practical solution, nor the most common, nor the easiest to understand; it is rather to try to understand, by means of study, reflection, discussion and prayer, the implications that the different proposals have for the 1st and 2nd degree and for the entire Movement so that we can later give our opinion on what is best for the identity and mission of Regnum Christi in the present circumstances.

2. A Brief History of the associative life of Regnum Christi from the Foundation to Present Day

As explained in theme 5 of the group study stage, the Regnum Christi Movement was born on January 3, 1968 as a movement of lay people, supported and led by the Legionaries of Christ, to form themselves as authentic Christians; to respond to the invitation made by Jesus to be apostles in our milieu and to bring the Gospel to everyone; to engage, in an organized fashion, in the evangelization of the different sectors of society until Christ is known, loved and until everyone finds their fullness in Him. From the beginning, Fr. Marcial Maciel, as he said on different occasions, always thought of Regnum Christi and the Legion of Christ as two, complimentary realities (a lay movement and a clerical, religious congregation), united by the same spirit, mission and leadership and whose members should consider themselves as equals regarding their belonging to this charismatic body.

As founder and general director, during a course held in July 1971 in Monticchio, Italy, Fr. Maciel verbally declared that from that moment on, all of the Legionaries of Christ became members of the 3rd degree of the Regnum Christi Movement. He explained that he had made that decision because it seemed to him to be a good way, though perhaps not the ideal way, to avoid divisions between the Legion and Regnum Christi. In consonance with this decision of the founder, the statutes and handbooks of Regnum Christi presented the Movement as consisting of members of the 1st degree (laity and eventually diocesan priests), of the 2nd degree (laity and eventually diocesan priests) and of the 3rd degree (lay consecrated men and women and Legionaries of Christ). This is the way it is described in the Statutes of 1979 and 1988 and in the handbooks of 1971 and 1990. This is the way it was taught and lived. In the Constitutions of the Legion of Christ of 1983, however, no mention was made of the Legionaries belonging to the Regnum Christi Movement; likewise in the amended version of 1994 and published in 1998. Nevertheless, these Constitutions presented the appointments of the section directors and the local Regnum Christi leaders and other posts that could only be understood in relation to the unity of life and action with the entire Regnum Christi.

In accordance with the statutes and handbooks, the people who incorporated into Regnum Christi since 1971 joined a movement that gathered laity of the three degrees and the Legionaries of Christ indistinctly. Thus, people of different states and conditions of life (laity, diocesan priests, consecrated men and women, religious priests and religious brothers) were gathered into one movement.

At the same time, the religious priests and brothers, the Legionaries of Christ, formed a religious congregation. In this way the Regnum Christi Movement was an ensemble of all while the Legion of Christ was a religious congregation consisting only of legionary fathers and brothers. The major directors of the Movement and of the Legion were the same people and they governed according to the norms described in the Statutes of Regnum Christi and at the same time governed the congregation according to the stipulations contained in the Constitutions of the Legion of Christ.

The Statutes of Regnum Christi approved by the Holy See in November of 2004 did not include the Legionaries of Christ among the Regnum Christi members. Furthermore, in the decree of pontifical approval, the Movement is presented as “the specific instrument of apostolate of the Legion of Christ, to which it is inseparably united”.

On June 9, 2010, Archbishop Velasio de Paolis, (on November 20 of the same year he was elevated to Cardinal) as Papal Delegate appointed by Benedict XVI, began accompanying the Movement in the renewal process which culminated in the celebration of the Extraordinary General Chapter of 2014. During his exercise of pontifical authority, Cardinal De Paolis gave the consecrated men and women of the 3rd degree their own respective governments (2012), he led them to the celebration of their respective general assemblies and provisionally approved the statutes that came from these assemblies (2013). With these measures the Papal Delegate sought to give the lay consecrated life of Regnum Christi the ability of having their members assume the responsibility for their consecrated life without being directed by the superiors of the Legionaries of Christ in those matters that were proper to them alone (the living of their vows, community life, the formation of their members, etc.). In this way the consecrated women of Regnum Christi and the lay consecrated men of Regnum Christi have acquired their own organization in which the members are associated with each other to live their specific vocation within the family of the Regnum Christi Movement and at the service of the Movement’s mission. The respective general assemblies have clearly declared that they consider themselves part of Regnum Christi.

The Extraordinary General Chapter of the Legion of Christ of 2014 has declared that the congregation understands itself as part of the Regnum Christi Movement, though it still has to determine the exact juridical form of this “belonging”.

The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life pointed out the need of defining the juridical nature of Regnum Christi and of each of its parts. In the meantime, the numbers of the constitution of the Legion of Christ that declare that the congregation forms part of Regnum Christi are suspended. This issue must be resolved for the Holy See to be able to definitively approve the associations of lay consecrated men and consecrated women.

Since March of 2014, in accordance with the provisional “Framework of Collaboration”, the common apostolic work of the Movement is led by the general directive committee of Regnum Christi, with its see in Rome, and by the territorial directive committees in each territory. These committees are comprised of the superiors of the Legion of Christ, of the consecrated women and the consecrated men and several 1st and 2nd degree members appointed by the committee.

3. Description of the current canonical situation according to the 2004 Statutes and the need to rewrite this statute

The association that currently defines the 1st and 2nd degree members juridically is that of a private, international association of laity and diocesan priests, without juridic personality, under the direction of the Legion of Christ. It is considered an apostolate of the Legion of Christ (see Decree of Approval of the Statutes, November 26, 2004). It thus falls under the jurisdiction of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, which is the same ecclesiastical authority that supervises the Legion of Christ and the branches of consecrated men and women.

Why is it necessary to rewrite this statute? Why can't we just leave things as they are right now? There are two basic reasons which are related: The current statute is outdated and it is incomplete.

The 2004 Statute sees the consecrated women and the consecrated men as individual members of the private association of faithful called "Regnum Christi". Today they belong to two new associations: "The Consecrated Women of Regnum Christi" and the "Lay Consecrated Men of Regnum Christi". Upon approval of the Holy See, both groups are waiting to be able to specify, in coordination with the other groups of members of Regnum Christi, the juridical form by which each group "belongs" or "fits into" the broader reality of Regnum Christi. In their general assemblies they reaffirmed their awareness of belonging to Regnum Christi. The Legionaries also, in their extraordinary general chapter, have affirmed their "belonging" to Regnum Christi, which was not expressed in the Statutes of 2004. They also need to find the correct juridical way to express their membership. For these reasons, the 2004 Statute is insufficient as a common juridical document for all of the vocations that comprise the Movement.

The current Statute is also incomplete because it doesn't foresee the representative bodies by which the members formally participate in the governance of their association. Thus, according to the 2004 Statute, the authority over the association is held personally by the general director of the Legion of Christ, and by the territorial directors in their respective territories, without moderation or advice from a council and without being subject to an assembly. This is not the common practice in the Church for associations of faithful, which should have their own governments made up of their own members.

Furthermore, the associations that fall under the higher direction of religious institutes (see canons 303-304 of CCL) have governing bodies made up of members of the association and they have directors who are members of the association. The higher direction can be exercised in different ways but that doesn't mean that the governing bodies of the congregation are the same as the governing bodies of the association. Every association should have its own proper governing bodies.

4. Two juridical models of membership of the 1st and 2nd degree members of Regnum Christi

The Regnum Christi Movement today contains members called to different states of life: the laity and some diocesan priests to the 1st and 2nd degree² and the members belonging to the three branches of consecrated life: the consecrated women, the lay consecrated men and the Legionaries of Christ. The ways that the members of the Association of the Consecrated Women of Regnum Christi, the Association of Lay Consecrated Men of Regnum Christi and the Legionaries of Christ are bound to each group are clearly established in their statutes and constitutions. We need to reflect on the type of membership of the 1st and 2nd degree members because their way of belonging to the Movement necessarily conditions the way this is juridically expressed in the whole of Regnum Christi.

Association or Affiliation?

Here we can consider fundamentally two juridical models of membership to an ecclesial group: association and affiliation.

To belong to a group by 'association' means that the laity of the 1st and 2nd degree see themselves as an essential part of the Movement and thus acquire a full responsibility for the safeguarding of the charism and the life of the Movement, juridically assuming the rights and responsibilities proper to a full-fledged member as established in their statutes³.

As far as the governance of the Movement is concerned, the most relevant juridical consequences of membership as associates are:

- The bond by which a person is associated with the Movement unites them with the other members in a stable way of equality of basic rights and responsibilities.
- The associates can participate in the election processes defined in the statutes.
- The associates can exercise positions of authority in the association.
- The associates assume the responsibility of electing representatives that constitute the different governing bodies defined in the statutes.
- The representatives of the associates assume the responsibility of having a deliberative vote in those matters that define the statute of the Movement.

To participate as 'affiliates' means that the laity of the 1st and 2nd degree regard their membership to the Regnum Christi Movement as a personal commitment to live according to the charism and collaborate in the apostolate but without considering

² The diocesan priests incorporated to Regnum Christi are also members of the 1st and 2nd degree and as such can participate in this review process.

³ In this draft document, each time reference is made to the statutes, we are referring to a document that still needs to be drawn up. So that the central commission can prepare a draft of the statutes, we must determine the model of membership of the 1st and 2nd degree members.

themselves directly responsible for conserving the charism nor for the leadership of the Movement. Thus, an affiliate, while belonging to the Movement in as far as one maintains a relationship to it in a stable manner, juridically assumes no rights or responsibilities proper to an associated member.

As far as the leadership of the Movement is concerned, the most relevant juridical consequences of membership as affiliates are:

- The commitment an affiliate assumes is simply a personal intention to live according to the life-style as far as possible, without assuming the rights and responsibilities of the associate members.
- An affiliate does not participate in the election process within the Movement, neither as a voter nor as a candidate, though their opinion could be consulted.
- The definition of a possible *Statute of affiliation*, that lays out in detail the commitments that an affiliate assumes and the means that the Movement offers them, would be drawn up by the authorities of the Movement and not by the affiliates, though they could be consulted beforehand.
- The *Statute of affiliation* could permit the affiliate members to have representatives in the governing bodies of the Movement. These representatives would only have a consultative or advisory vote.

The greater or lesser responsibility in the juridical realm does not bear with it nor imply a greater or lesser generosity in the living of the charism. It does imply a greater or lesser commitment and participation in the conservation of the charism and in the life of the Movement itself.

There also exists the possibility of the Movement having both affiliate and associate members. Each one would assume the consequences, rights and obligations that derive from their condition as affiliates or associates.

The present Statute (of 2004) is unclear in determining the members as associates or affiliates. On the one hand it states that the members “associate among themselves” (see SRC 6); on the other hand, no governing body is established for the participation of the associate members in the leadership of the Movement, so that in reality their situation is that of an affiliate.

Association among themselves or with the whole of Regnum Christi

If the association option is chosen, do the 1st and 2nd degree members first associate among themselves thus creating a group with its own structures or are they associated as individuals directly with Regnum Christi as a whole body?

In the case that the association model is chosen as the most appropriate explanation of their vocation and mission, there is still the question as to whether the 1st and 2nd degree members first associate among themselves thus creating a group with its own

structures and comprised solely of like members and then this group integrates itself with the other branches of Regnum Christi, or if it is more appropriate to its identity to say that as individuals they are associated directly to the whole of Regnum Christi constituted by its four branches.

The most important consequences that flow from the forming their own group comprised solely of members of the 1st and 2nd degree are as follows:

- They must establish an association of faithful comprised exclusively of members of the 1st and 2nd degree and they have to build up their association, which includes creating and managing their own governing bodies, representation and participation, as well as the election process for the establishment of these bodies.
- They assume full responsibility for the way they live the Regnum Christi charism, for example the definition of their own statute, the commitments, the formation of their members, the admission of new members, the departure of members, etc.
- The leaders of this association are elected by and from among the 1st and 2nd degree members (which means that they cannot be Legionaries of Christ, nor Consecrated Women, nor Consecrated Men).
- The 1st and 2nd degree members are responsible for covering all of the costs for the operation of their own association.
- The Legionaries and consecrated members can help the life of this association to the degree that this is defined in the statute of the association. However, they will not have any responsibility for the association of the 1st and 2nd degree members. This could lead to a lesser involvement of the consecrated branches in the life of the sections of the Movement.
- The representatives of the association of the 1st and 2nd degree members would be responsible for discussing with the representatives of the other three branches to find the proper juridical structure to integrate the four juridical realities into one reality that guarantees the unity of the Movement.

The most important consequences that flow from the members associating themselves as individuals directly with Regnum Christi as a whole, together with the Legionaries of Christ, the consecrated women and the consecrated men are as follows:

- The Legionaries of Christ, the consecrated women, the lay consecrated men and the 1st and 2nd degree members are all equally members of Regnum Christi. Thus, the governing bodies of the whole Movement are comprised in such a way that all of these vocations would be represented.
- The 1st and 2nd degree members would not have their own governing bodies, representation and participation comprised solely of their own members. They would be governed completely by the governing body of the entire Regnum Christi.
- The statute proper to Regnum Christi would have to define how the governing bodies of the Movement are established, who would integrate them and what matters would be decided by each body.

- The 1st and 2nd degree members, the Legionaries of Christ, consecrated women, the lay consecrated men all participate with voice and vote in the governing bodies, with representation and participation as would be established in their own rule.

Glossary of general concepts from the right of association in the Church that are used in this chapter

Juridic Person (see CCL 113-123): It is a group of physical people (corporation) or of goods and things directed by physical people (foundation) directed toward a goal that is congruent with the mission of the Church that transcends the goals of the individuals and endowed with rights and duties conferred to it by the proper ecclesiastical authority. The juridic persons are responsible for their acts since they are able to act on their own behalf and establish relations with one another.

Associations of Christian faithful (see CCL 298-329): It is a group of Christian faithful who freely decide to gather together in a stable organization for the purpose of pursuing together the goals of Christian life such as “to foster a more perfect life, to promote public worship or Christian doctrine, or to exercise other works of apostolate such as initiatives of evangelization, works of piety or charity, and those which animate the temporal order with a Christian spirit” (Canon 298 §1).

The initiative to create these association can come from anyone (laity or clergy) who make a private agreement among themselves (299 §1) or from the ecclesiastical authority (generally the bishop).

These associations can be private or public according to their origin and goals. All should have some statutes duly reviewed (if they are private) or approved (if they are public) by the proper ecclesiastical authority. The private associations act on their own behalf while the public associations act in the name of the Church. Thus, private associations are usually born of the initiative of the lay faithful to do works of lay apostolate. The associations established by the ecclesiastical authority are public and generally are dedicated to promote pastoral ends that depend on the ecclesiastical authority such as public cult, the teaching of Catholic doctrine in the name of the Church.

At the same time, the private associations could not have a juridical personality. If they have it, they are subject to the rights and obligations of the Church, being able to make juridical actions as a group. If they don't have it, the members of the group have the rights and obligations common to any faithful of the Church, but not as a group, so that they act only in their own name and not in the name of the association.

The associations of Christian faithful are governed by their own members, according to their statute.

Representation: The right to have representatives is proper to the members of an association and consists in the faculty to elect delegates (representatives) for the collective bodies of the association. This is the ordinary way for the members to intervene in the leadership or government of the association. The governing bodies of an association should contain at least a general assembly and a general moderator, with his council.

Individual affiliation: In this text we understand affiliation as the act by which a person puts him or herself under the dependence of an ecclesial organization in order benefit from its spiritual goods and collaborate in its mission, without however attempting to intervene in its internal constitution and leadership.

The ecclesial organization can establish a statute of affiliation that defines the commitments that the affiliate assumes. The statute of affiliation can envisage the possibility for the affiliates to have representatives in the governing bodies; in this case, these representatives would only have a consultative vote, not deliberative.

The affiliate is distinguished from the friends and supporters in the fact that he/she makes a public act that formalizes their membership and their commitment. An affiliate is truly a member, though not possessing “full rights”.

Questions for Group Reflection

The answers to the questions posed in this chapter will shed light on the development of the canonical framework that best serves the purpose of safeguarding and spreading the charism. In light of the responses from the territorial conventions, the central commission will eventually round out the draft of the numbers of the statutes presenting one or several canonical models on which the international convention must pronounce. Nevertheless, the Holy See has the final word on this matter.

a. Question for reflection and discussion

What values should we protect and promote as we discern the place and role of the members in the governance of the Movement?

b. Questions whose answers should be included in the minutes

The questions should be posed to all of the members of the group, regardless of the answer each one gives to the first question. The members can abstain from comment.

1. Membership (Belonging)

- 1.a. Do I see my “belonging” to Regnum Christi as an associate or affiliate? Why?
 - Number of members that are inclined to membership as an “associate”⁴
 - Principal reasons of these members

⁴ These hash marks will not be found in the edited document; only in the format of the minutes.

- Number of members that are inclined to membership as an “affiliate”
 - Principal reasons of these members
 - Number of abstentions
- 1.b. If membership is understood in terms of association, do the 1st and 2nd degree members first associate among themselves or are they associated directly with all of the other members of Regnum Christi?
2. Are there issues of the 1st and 2nd degree that should be discussed and decided solely among the members of the 1st and 2nd degree? What would they be?
- Number of members that think there are some issues
 - Number of members that think there aren’t any issues
 - Number of abstentions
 - List the issues that the members think need to be discussed and decided and the number of votes in favor (those who previously voted “no” can also vote here)
3. Are there decisions in the life of Regnum Christi as a whole in which the 1st and 2nd degree members should participate? What would they be?
- Number of members that think there are decisions in which they should participate
 - Number of members that think there aren’t any decisions in which they should participate
 - Number of abstentions
 - List of the issues in which the members think they should be allowed to participate
4. In what levels of government of the Movement should the 1st and 2nd degree members be able to participate?
- Number of members that think they should be able to participate in the local government
 - Number of members that think they should be able to participate in the territorial government
 - Number of members that think they should be able to participate in the general government
 - Number of abstentions