

# **BASIC DOCUMENT OF SAF**



# CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Foundation.....	5
3. Definition of Saint Anne Family .....	6
4. Traits of identity.....	6
5. Criteria of Belonging.....	7
6. Ways of participation.....	8
7. Ways of commitment.....	10
8. Organization.....	11
8.1. Structure.....	11
8.2. Distribution de responsabilites.....	12
8.3. Criteria of functioning.....	13
8.4. Channels of relation and communication.....	14
9. Glossary.....	15
10. Abbreviations.....	18
11. Bibliography.....	19

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Responding to God's call, Fr. John Bonal and Mother María Ràfols, with a group of women and men, left their land<sup>1</sup> and arrived at Zaragoza on December 28, 1804. They prayed to Our Lady of Pilar and asked for her protection in order to carry out with love and dedication, the mission for which they came to the Hospital of Our Lady of Grace. (Ref. Const. 2) This is the origin of the Congregation of Sisters of Charity of Saint Anne and the seed that has made possible the birth of our Saint Anne Family (SAF).

In this Hospital and along the time, the Sisters and the Laity have shared tasks and, from the continued and close cooperation among all of us, it has been emerging as an affective and effective bond that has moved us to form a *charismatic family*.

We have walked a long way of over 200 years –different in diverse continents- to reach to what we are today: people from different walks of life, called to live in communion as a family the Charism of Universal Charity made Hospitality. This involves sharing of gifts and mutual enrichment for both the Sisters and Laity.

From the esteem and respect for the specific vocation of each one -different but complementary-, we want to build the Kingdom of God.

The Congregation of Sisters of Charity of Saint Anne, responding to the signs of the times, for the first time, welcomes the participation of Lay people in the XXVI General Chapter of 2007 and opens a new shared path in order to form the SAF expressing, in its final document: "We want the Charism of Maria Rafols and John Bonal to be shared by Laity and Sisters, being the big Saint Anne's Family".

In the XXVII Extraordinary General Chapter of 2010 the SAF is formalized in the Constitutions stating: "We recognize that the charismatic gift we have received from the Spirit, has also been

---

<sup>1</sup> Cataluña (Spain)

granted to other persons who, in diverse ways, are in communion with the Congregation, forming with it the Saint Anne's Family ". (Const. 9)

We note with joy that the Spirit leads us to present and offer to people who come into relationship with the Congregation, a channel to identify and live their vocation in this Charismatic Family and to enable a commitment with the style of our Founders.

## 2. FOUNDATION

*"Each one of you has received a special grace, so like good stewards responsible for all these different graces of God, put yourself at the service of others". (1 Pet 4:10)*

Following Jesus and moved by the Spirit, our Founders were good news especially for the poorest and neediest of their time. Like them, we want to show the merciful face of God in the different situations which we live. We are all responsible for keeping alive the Charism updating it according to the signs of the times.

Hospitality, the core of our Charism, is a reflection of God's Hospitality, who loved us first and manifested his love to us by sending his only Son into the world. Jesus, being one with the Father carried out his plan of salvation expressing the Love and Mercy of God. (Ref. Const. 5)

What is essential is the love received from God that must be translated into love for neighbour. Our Founders and First Sisters were, as Fraternity, expression of the Father's love and they wanted to bring everyone into a family where no one would be excluded. (Ref. Const. 62)

The SAF is the family of the children of God that, like Jesus, and living the Charism of Universal Charity made Hospitality, through its service, wants to transform reality by making it more human.

Consecrated life has discovered a new structure under which all those who are graced with the same charismatic gift integrate and

enter into communion. This structure is the "charismatic family" (Ref. NWH 122). Many Institutes have come to the conclusion that their Charism can be shared with the laity. "A new chapter, rich in hope, has begun in the history of relations between the consecrated persons and the laity (VC 54). Communion is a gift of the Spirit that we are called to live with gratitude, commitment and responsibility from our range of complementary functions and charisms (Ref. ChL 2, EN 114).

### 3. DEFINITION OF SAINT ANNE FAMILY

The Saint Anne Family is all people who share the Charism of Universal Charity made Hospitality, each one from their specific vocation and reality, witnessing the love of God, according to the spirit of our Founders Mother María Rafols Bruna and Father John Bonal Cortada.

This is an expanded family, consisting of people of different age, sex, religion (even people with certain religious indifference, or unbelievers who are open to search), walks of life, language, ethnicity, caste or social status, etc. who make a **personal choice of belonging**. The members share, in communion with the Congregation and in diverse ways, these four pillars: Prayer, Fraternity, Formation and Commitment.

### 4. TRAITS OF IDENTITY

The SAF members discover and live our identity progressively. We are people:

- a. Attracted by Jesus of Nazareth and/or his teaching, that desire to build a more human and fraternal world.
- b. Enriched with the Charism of Universal Charity, chiefly to the poorest and the neediest through the practice of Hospitality to the point of heroism.
- c. Nourished by the Word of God and/or prayer.

- d. Welcoming, simple, humble, available, cheerful and responsive to the needs of others.
- e. Who live their dedication/who surrender "with the greatest care, with full detail, with love." (Cont. 19)
- f. Responsible, and merciful, with an attitude of service.
- g. Committed with the neediest and involved in improving their situation, from the recognition of their dignity.
- h. With a spirit of teamwork and unity.
- i. With a sense of family, fraternity and communion.
- j. Willing to receive formation in this fields: human, spiritual and as a charismatic family.
- k. Who live the spirituality of our charismatic family according to each one's vocation.

## **5. CRITERIA OF BELONGING**

The Lay members of SAF have, as criteria of belonging:

- a. Personal option without seeking our own interest.
  - Membership in the FSA is not presupposed just by working/volunteering in a Centre of the Congregation, belong to a group or association linked to it, participate in activities organized by SAF or collaborate with sponsorships programs or projects of John Bonal Foundation (JBF).
  - All children who participate in activities organized by the SAF are considered members in the process of integration into it, until they have the ability to freely choose to obtain full membership.
- b. Commitment of fraternity with the other members who belong to it all over the world, sharing the spirit and mission through the Charism that has been given to us.

- c. Participation in any of the communities, groups, presences, activities, etc. of Saint Anne Family.
- d. Affective and effective bonding to Saint Anne Family.
- e. To assume –gradually- as our own the “traits of identity” of SAF members.

## 6. WAYS OF PARTICIPATION

The SAF members participate in activities connected with the four pillars already mentioned: Prayer-Formation-Fraternity-Commitment. For example:

Prayer:

- Deepening in the Word of God.
- Retreats and Recollection days.
- Celebrations of the Eucharist, Holy Hours, Liturgy of the Hours.
- Meetings in special liturgical season: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost.
- Ecumenical or interreligious prayer.

Formation:

- Meetings (and/or work in groups on topics) of human, biblical, spiritual, pastoral, congregational, ecumenical, intercultural ... formation.
- Elaboration of formation materials.
- Coordination of the formation process.

Fraternity:

- Meetings at local, national, provincial and international level (Either members or representatives)
- Congregational Celebrations / Events / Feasts.
- Participation in activities and/or religious ceremonies (or other events) of other faith members, respecting their traditions or rituals.



- Ecumenical or interreligious meetings.
- Workshops
- Summer Work Camps.
- Youth Camps.
- Activities to educate in values outside the school or work timetable.
- Recreational Activities.
- Outings to favour mutual knowledge and relationship.
- Meetings with ex-pupils.
- Promotion of signs of identification: T-shirts, sweatshirts, bags, key holder, logo, crest, anthem ...

#### Commitment:

- Missionary Camps.
- Summer Camps.
- Volunteering activities.
- Saint Anne Missionary Volunteering.
- Collaboration with John Bonal Foundation.
- Solidarity Events.
- Shelter Homes.
- Pastoral Care in the Ministry of Health, Education, Prisons, Parishes and Vocational Pastoral Apostolate.
- Social programs.
- Coordination with other entities which work in favour of the needy.
- Promotion / empowerment of women.
- Medical Camp/ Mission.
- Home visits and visits to people in difficult circumstances, especially those who belong to SAF and to those who don't have anyone to look after them.
- Ecological activities.

The main way of participation is to live the Charism in our work and/or in our daily lives, although, due to personal circumstances, we may not participate in some of these activities.

According to the stages of human development, the members participate grouped into different levels: children, youth and adults. One may join at any age, without going through the previous levels.

## 7. WAYS OF COMMITMENT

There are different ways in which SAF members can live their involvement and charismatic commitment:

- SAF LAY: secular person committed with the Charism of Universal Charity made Hospitality, who has chosen to live and participate in SAF activities.
- SAF GROUP: group of people identified with the Charism of Hospitality, who meet regularly with common interests and/or goals, to share prayer, formation, fraternity and commitment.
- SAINT ANNE LAITY COMMUNITIES: group of people identified with the Charism, who, by personal choice, decide to enter in a process of **sharing a life project** which they review together periodically (there is no need to live together or share material goods).

Members of these communities may have:

- Charismatic links.
- Charismatic and legal links<sup>2</sup>.
- SCSA CONGREGATION: formed by Sisters, with their own structure.

Mutual cooperation and charismatic relationship in the SAF may arise new forms of charismatic commitment which will need to be discerned and approved by the competent authority of the Congregation.

---

<sup>2</sup> Charismatic Links are common to all SAF members; legal links would be defined in another document.

## 8. ORGANIZATION:

### 8.1. Structure

#### a. Local Level:

- For groups or laity communities with 6 or more members:
  - Coordinators: a Lay and a Sister (when possible).
  - Secretary.
  - Treasurer.
- For less than 6 members, the coordination will be carried on by one person in charge of SAF.

If there is not a Sister to **accompany** in any of the cases, at Provincial Level, a responsible person formed in our Charism should be appointed for this task.

#### b. Provincial/Delegation Level

- Sister Provincial/ Delegate.
- SAF Councillor.
- Mixed Provincial Team (Sisters and Laity): Coordinator, Secretary and Treasurer.

In each Province/Delegation, the number of persons who integrate the team depends on the reality of the Province, (in general level, it will be formed by representatives of zone, states, provinces, countries, islands...)

#### c. Continental Level

- General Councillor responsible of SAF.
- SAF Councillor of each Province/Delegation.
- Lay Coordinators of each Province/Delegation.

#### d. General Level

- General Superior.
- General Councillor responsible of SAF.

- Provincial/Delegation Councillors responsible of SAF.
- Lay Coordinators at provincial Level (to work in one's own continent and among different continents).

## 8.2. Distribution of responsibilities

The distribution of responsibilities in the groups of reference will be the following:

- **The Coordinator:** (with a team and in the different levels general/ provincial/ local)
  - To promote the annual planning which includes the activities related to the four pillars (prayer-formation-commitment-fraternity).
  - To assume the responsibility of good functioning of the Group / Laity Community.
  - To evaluate the planning and the functioning of the group.
  - To prepare the meetings.
  - To search for fund raising, in coordination with the treasurer.
  - To meet with the other coordinator to represent the group.
  - To represent his/her group in different important events.
  - To ensure the proper use of WhatsApp Groups, blogs and social networking profiles linked to the SAF.
  - At local and provincial level, maintain communication with the General Councillor of SAF.
- **The Secretary:**
  - To write the minutes and have them updated.
  - To be responsible of the communications at internal as well as external levels with other groups of the SAF.
  - To maintain a register of the group members and their contact details.

- To assure the elaboration of the chronicle of different events mentioning at least the name of the activity, date, theme and number of participants.

▪ **The Treasurer:**

- To manage the material goods (in collaboration with the Coordinator) and to render account to the group, at least once a year, of the economic situation.
- To Collaborate with the Coordinator in the search for fund raising.
- To collect the voluntary contribution of the members as well as the funds coming from different activities which are carried out for the fund raising.

At Provincial/Delegation level it should be determined the quantity apart from which will be deposited in a bank account, and should be jointly operated.

The persons who carry out these services are elected by the members of the Group for a period of 3 years with the possibility of re-election. (Take into account the special situations which will be not included in this indication)

For specific works, commissions will be created –at different levels- in which the members may not be necessarily the coordinators of the groups, but elected members in the Group for that particular task.

**8.3. Criteria of Functioning**

The SAF members, according to their specific vocation, will:

- Try to integrate in groups or communities.
- Need to follow a process of discernment before they incorporate to a Lay community.
- Participate in meetings, celebrations, formation, assemblies, encounters, prayers, etc.

- Involve with responsibility in the preparation and development of SAF activities and they'll assume specific responsibilities in different events.
- Participate in certain General and Provincial Chapters according to what is said in OL 119 and 140 (Laity). For Lay members, the procedure of election must be defined in a separated document.
- Coordinate with other groups, communities of a given territory.
- Be open to the needs and new poverties and they will commit themselves to look for answers.
- Try to adopt an eco-friendly life style, being responsible in the use of resources and respecting and caring for the Mother Earth.

#### **8.4.Channels of relation and communication**

We communicate through any of the following channels:

- Personal meetings.
- Group Meetings.
- Encounters at Provincial and General Levels (either by being present or by on line connexion).
- Circular letters.
- Blogs of groups in different Provinces/Delegations.
- Using authorized profiles in social net Works.
- Section of Congregational web page (Activities, Agenda & Resources).
- E-mails.
- Phone calls, SMS and WhatsApp.

## 9. GLOSSARY

**CHARITY:** Gratuitous love. Participation of God's Love. For the SCSA, it is the origin of the Congregation, the reason for its existence, its specific character, its apostolic mission and the end towards which it is directed. (Ref. Const. 4)

**CHARISM:** extraordinary gift granted by God, in order to work for the extension of His Kingdom.

**COMMITMENT:** Voluntarily acquired obligation searching for the good of others.

**COMMUNITY:** Stable group of SAF members who, in response to their vocation, share an identity and a common Project of life.

**CONSTITUTIONS:** Supreme Rules of a Religious Institute, which express its Charism and the form of life in the following of Christ.

**FORMATION:** Activity oriented to acquire knowledge, experiences and attitudes, which help the person to grow in all the dimensions of life.

**FOUNDATION:** Base on which something is supported and developed.

**GENERAL CHAPTER:** Gathering of Sisters representatives of the whole Congregation which is the highest organ of Government for it. Its decisions are taken collegially. It can be either ordinary (held every 6 years to deal with elections and business matters) or extraordinary (to deal with matters of general interest to the Congregation that cannot be delayed). In certain cases the Lay members of SAF can attend some of its sessions. (Ref. Const. 116-117 and OL 119)

**HEROISM:** Effort to do the greatest and best possible good in our daily life.

**HOSPITALITY:** Is a gift of God which implies an attitude of welcome, availability and service with “the greatest care, with full detail, with all love” (Ref. Const. 16, 19 and 20)

**IDENTITY:** Group of own traits that define an individual or a Group.

**JOHN BONAL FOUNDATION:** NGO linked to the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Anne.

**LAY PERSON:** Any person who is not a priest, nor a religious with vows. In the Catholic Church, their vocation is to “contribute to the sanctification of the world, as from within like leaven, by fulfilling their own particular duties”. (LG 31)

**MEDICAL CAMP / MISSION:** health services rendered voluntarily by a group of medical experts to the community.

**MISSION:** For SAF members it means to be witnesses of the love of God through our presence and tasks we carry out, from the Charism which have been gifted to us.

**MISSION CAMP:** Specific activities of evangelization in small villages far from towns, which are conducted by a group of members of SAF in special liturgical seasons.

**NEW POVERTIES:** New emerging needs, the hardships and struggles which people experience due to the technological development, globalization, social inequalities, political and cultural conflicts, religious fundamentalism and other related issues.

**PASTORAL APOSTOLATE:** Christian service framed in the triple ministry of the Church (liturgical, prophetic and of service).

**POOR:** Everyone who is deprived in some way: economic, intellectual, social, health, skills, affection ...

**PROVINCE/DELEGATION:** Geographical division of the Congregation. A Province differs from a Delegation for its greater number of members and communities.

**PROVINCIAL/DELEGATION CHAPTER:** Gathering of Sisters representatives of a Province/Delegation of the Congregation which



takes decisions collegially. It can be for the election of Provincial/Delegation Government, or to deal with business matters; in these last they study the themes to deal in the General Chapter. In certain cases the Lay members of SAF can attend some of its sessions. (Ref. Const. 138, 139, 140 and OL 140)

**SHARED MISSION:** The mission lived by both Sisters and Lay persons, each one from her/his identity.

**SPIRITUALITY:** Principles and attitudes which shape the spiritual or interior life of a person or a group.

**TASK:** Each of the actions, activities, works or services that concretises our mission.

**VOCATION:** Is a call from God to a certain state of life.

## **10. ABBREVIATIONS**

1Pet: First Letter of St. Peter

Const.: Constitutions

ChL: Christifideles Laici (The Lay Faithful)

EN: Evangelii Nuntiandi

JBF: John Bonal Foundation

LC: Lay Communities

LG: Lumen Gentium

NWH: New Ways of Hospitality

OL: Organization and Life (of the Sisters)

Ref.: Please, refer to.

SAF: Saint Anne's Family

SAMV: Saint Anne Missionary Volunteers

SCSA: Sisters of Charity of Saint Anne

VC: Vita Consecrata (Consecrated Life)

## 11. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- The Holy Bible.
- Lumen Gentium. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, promulgated By His Holiness, Pope Paul VI on November, 1964.
- Christifideles Laici. Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation of His Holiness John Paul II on the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay faithful in the Church and in the world. December, 1988.
- Vita Consecrata. Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father John Paul II to the Bishops and Clergy, Religious Orders and Congregations, Societies of Apostolic Life, Secular Institutes and all the Faithful, on the Consecrated Life and its mission in the Church and in the world. March, 1996.
- New ways of Hospitality, preparatory document for the General Chapter of 2007.
- Final Document of XXVI General Chapter, 2007.
- Constitutions and Organization and Life of SCSA. 2011.
- Summary of Minutes of the XXVIII the General Chapter, 2013.
- Conclusions of the XXVIII General Chapter, 2013.

