

SPINOLA LAY

Project of life and
Plan of formation

PROJECT OF LIFE

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PRESENTATION

Dear Friends,

With great joy, I write this letter to introduce to you the “Life Project of the Spínola Lay”. The document answers the concern of the 19th General Chapter (July 2010), which is to “continue to push forward and channel the faith process of laymen who feel more identified with our spirituality and mission as Spínola lay” and it has been developed with your contributions who feel part of the Spínola charism.

Over the past years, the church has been reflecting with a special intensity on how the charisms that give life to the various religious institutes are not only "gifts" to the religious life to be lived out and be explicit in her, but also to be shared with those outside religious life.

The “shared charism” configures the church in a peculiar way and creates what we call “charismatic families”.

The consecrated life crosses beyond its borders with a new structure under which all men and women (religious or lay), who feel endowed with the same charismatic gift, integrate and come into communion.

The Congregation of the Handmaids of the Divine Heart is not far-off this reflection and process.

There are people outside the Congregation who feel deep emotional, spiritual and apostolic affinities with our founders and our charismatic project. We are convinced that this is because the same Spirit animates us.

Our experience over the past years has been marked by the progressive incorporation of laity to our spirituality and mission. With the encouragement of the General Chapters, the presence of the laity in the life and mission of the Congregation has been evident. The experience of communion and of shared mission, in an even much varied expressions and latitudes, has been developed and strengthened.

Along with your participation in the mission, the experience of sharing the same charism has also been growing in some of you; and from there, the desire for a certain connection or bonding with the Congregation. The 19th General Chapter urged us to study and realize it.

This Project is written with the goal of an “encounter”. We, lay and religious, know and experience the diversity and complementarity in living our Christian life as intended and prompted by the Spirit and the need of an encounter or fellowship in that same Spirit with a vision to the common life and mission of proclaiming the personal Love of Jesus Christ.

The desire of the Congregation is we walk together - *handmaids and lay*, under the guidance of Bld. Marcelo Spínola and Mo. Celia Mendez, growing in mutual understanding; seeking God’s will in our life; and announcing His love, from the conviction that the living out of the charism according to one’s vocation enriches us mutually.

The path has been initiated and we move to the commitment of promoting experiences and processes of reflection and formation altogether that may lead us to deepen our Spínola identity, and develop a greater co-responsibility among religious and lay in the existing apostolic works and a new presence... Together, we move forward, *sisters and lay*, moving on resolutely and unequivocally, by the commitment in the transformation of society according to God's plan and the immediacy (closeness) to the poorest and most excluded through new ways of education, evangelization and solidarity.

I wish that day by day the Spínola Charism be incarnated in more lay people and together we continue experiencing and announcing the personal Love of Jesus Christ.

Un abrazo,

Rosario Fernández Martos, adc

Superiora General

Madrid, 19 de enero de 2015. Fiesta del Beato Marcelo Spínola

I. INTRODUCTION

“It pertains to the lay, by the virtue of their own vocation, to build the Kingdom of God by managing temporal business, and orient them to God. [...] They move and operate within the ordinary conditions of family and social life in which their existence is interwoven. Therefore they are called by God so that, practicing their respective professions - and guided by the spirit of the Gospel – they may contribute to the sanctification of the world within the world itself, as leaven in the mass. This way they will announce Christ to others, especially by the example of their own lives” (Lumen Gentium IV, 31)

Within the Spínola Family there has been always a growing number of persons who - feeling called by the Lord to live our Spínola vocation as Lay persons in the Church- identify themselves with the Spínola Charism; and they feel as their own the mission of announcing the personal Love of Jesus Christ.

The Congregation of the Handmaids of the Divine Heart, sensitive to this reality, decided in the General Chapter of 2010 *“to keep on fostering and channelling - from the General Government - the faith process of the lay who feel themselves attuned with our spirituality and mission, as lay persons.*

Therefore this document is born out of this reality and desire. It aims at being a project to make possible a greater **affiliation** to the Spínola Family of those lay adults that would like to live their faith within the Spínola “surname”.

In this document we reflect on the identity of the Spínola Lay which is concretized in a style of life they would like to make their own. In the document there is a detailed explanation of what the process of affiliation would be for those persons who wish to commit themselves to live

this identity and the organization of the Lay Movement. Towards the end, there is a chapter that deals with the Spínola Lay Communities.

To elaborate this project we have taken into consideration all the contributions of the different groups of the countries where the Congregation is present.

We are grateful to the Congregation for this new opportunity which will help us to grow in the affiliation with the Charism and to make ours the dream of Blessed Marcelo Spínola and Mo. Celia of announcing the personal Love of Jesus Christ in which we are immersed as lay people.

Coordinating Group of the Project

II. OUR IDENTITY

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its taste, how can it be made salty again? [...] You are the light of the world. A city built in a hill cannot be hidden. Now, no one lights a lamp and covers it; instead he puts it on a lampstand where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine before others so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven. (Mt 5, 13a. 14-16)

1. IDENTITY OF THE SPÍNOLA LAY

We, the lay who are part of the Spínola Family founded by Blessed Marcelo Spínola and Mo. Celia Mendez, are sharing with the rest of its members the same charism; namely, **the experience of the personal Love of Jesus Christ, which brings us to the mission of announcing said Love.**

The experience of feeling ourselves personally loved by God is the foundation of our faith. We know that He is the One who loved us first in a very personal way. He loves each one of us and knows us by name. *“Jesus Christ belongs to our family; He is our companion on the road; and He does not leave us alone”.* (Marcelo Spínola). Jesus is the one initiating the encounter; He has the loving desire of being part of our life; He wants to count on each one of us in order to build the Kingdom of God, which is his dream - a dream we, too, want to make our own.

As lay persons we aim at doing in our lives, in our family, in our work, and in our place in the midst of society, the Will of the One who loves us, as we become thus the salt and the light in the midst of the world. Who will be the one who, feeling him or herself loved in such a way, will not feel the need of living with **availability** this call? *God did not search for you because you merited, neither because He needed you. He searched for you for only one reason: because of the love He had for you; and in or-*

der to make with you a covenant that will never be broken” (Marcelo Spínola)

From this grounding experience we are called to live with **simplicity**, and in truth, *“Have always the spirit of simplicity and sincerity”*. (Mo.Celia). **Humility** is to acknowledge that God is the One acting, *“I can do all things in Him”*, trusting Him totally. *“A humble person puts to good use all he/ she has received from God; but he/she admits that Sshe is a mere administrator”*. (Marcelo Spínola)

We would like our human relationships to bear a style which we desire to make our own; namely, the warm and **personal inter-relationships** that seek in others the best of themselves; and that recognize in them a brother or a sister to be accompanied in their journey, while listening and looking at them from the heart and to the heart.

Feeling ourselves love personally by God leads us to another experience; that is, **to search for the concrete way to relate with Him**; this relationship is nurtured in a special way in prayer and in the Eucharist.

Prayer - which is talking to Christ from heart to Heart - is the venue where we allow ourselves to be embraced by his personal Love. *“We have to approach God with simplicity, with trust and intimately.”* (M.Spínola). In this way, we allow ourselves to be guided along the path He wants us to take; a path that inspires our life and commist us to live it in Him.

In the **Eucharist** we find also his Love which give itself up totally, *“Jesus Christ could not have given us more because He has given us his very Self”*. (Marcelo Spínola). From the Eucharist, He invites us to follow his example; He illumines our life; he accompanies us always with his *Presence*; and He teaches us to live in *Communion* with others, while we feel as a family around a shared table; a family that shares the experience of feeling loved.

We, the Spínola Lay, take up the Mission of the Congregation as our own; a mission given to the entire Spínola Family, which is **To announce the personal Love of Jesus Christ**; we have to tell Jesus’ story to others ...; to announce to them Jesus’ personal Love with our words and with our lives. We know that this is the only way of transforming the reality; that is,

from our very hearts which is the only place of real of transformation. *“The Love of Christ urges us to go everywhere preaching and teaching who Jesus Christ is and how much He loves us. We have do it according to our own personal style ”.* (M. Spínola)

We want to live especially attentive to those brothers and sisters of ours who live in realities of poverty of any kind. We seek to be sensitive to the needs of the world, with a compassionate gaze towards the weakest. *“Saintly persons have their hearts always open to other hearts; namely, the heart of the needy. They believe in them; they love them; they work with them in order to make our world, a world with a big heart”.* (M. Spínola).

As lay, we take up the mission to be salt and light in the midst of the world, being **open to the signs of the times**; and using the better means we might have at hand, bringing into play the best of ourselves in order to reach the hearts of others. *“We must strive to be extraordinary in the ordinary things we do”.* (Mo. Celia Mendez)

The Blessed Virgin Mary is for us the model in the following of Jesus Christ. She lived in depth and with radicality all the traits that configure our spirituality: *“Mary Immaculate appears before us as the synthesis of sanctity. And we are in awe and enticed contemplating her under the aspect of her Most Pure Conception”.* (M. Spínola)

The Blessed Virgin Mary teaches us to ask ourselves, in every circumstance of our lives, what the will of God is; and to put into play trustfully our own freedom so as to make possible the Kingdom of God among us. If we will be able to understand Mary’s availability - as a model of our **Slavery** - we will understand the deep meaning of “availability” as an attitude which is a trait of the disciples of Jesus, such as our Founders experienced it: *“The Blessed Virgin Mary show her sanctity and her love for God by confessing that the only thing she liked was to fulfil God’s will: “I am the Handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to your word”.* (M.Spínola)

We understand that we cannot live individually the traits of the Spínola Lay spirituality. We need to live and to celebrate our faith in community and within the Church, feeling ourselves a family; and walking as

brothers and sisters in order to discover, day to day, the footprints of the Lord in our lives; and to hear his call to keep on growing in following Him. The community is for us the place to share life, prayer and journey.

2. HOW TO LIVE IT

2.1 Spiritual dimension

- **Prayer Life**

“It is necessary to go up to the fountain, which is Christ. But this fountain cannot be found in the midst of the bustle of life, but in solitude and recollection. It is necessary to approach the fountain for hours and for days, persevering in prayer. In short, it is necessary to drink of this water (Christ) and – by means of constant meditation - to assimilate the spirit that exudes from his person, especially from his Heart “. (M. Spínola)

The personal Love of Jesus Christ awakens in us the desire of having a relationship from heart to Heart with Him. The **personal daily prayer** is a privileged way to nurture this relationship with the Lord. It is a relationship that requires time and space... because it sets up our life in faith. The Word of God must have a primordial place in our personal prayer.

This kind of relationship with the Lord brings us to consider having **longer times of prayer**, at least once a year: Eight-day-retreat, the Paschal Triduum, recollections, etc. These are avenues for peaceful encounters with God, with a different rhythm; that is, with God’s own rhythm, without hurry; they are avenues where we can confront our life with the Lord, with a different calmness than the one of our daily rhythm.

- **Sacramental life:**

We want to live the celebrations and the sacraments, specially the Eucharist and Reconciliation, as venues of encounter with the Lord and with our brothers and sisters.

- **Eucharist:** *“The Eucharist is Jesus among us at all times; always with us; always consoling us, always recreating us; and being always our life and our blessedness. (M. Spínola)*

The Lord in the Eucharist makes Himself an offering - bread broken and shared. He accompanies us with his silent Presence; He illumines our life with his Word; and He invites us to live in communion as brothers and sisters.

The Celebration of the Eucharist is the privileged moment for our encounter with the Lord. In this encounter, we restore our strength so as to live with deep faith a meaningful life.

The Sunday Eucharist convokes us weekly to celebrate our faith in community. In this way, we cultivate the sense of family and belonging to the Church, as the early communities did when they came together to celebrate the Supper of the Lord. *“Those who have been baptized were faithful to the teachings of the apostles, the common life of sharing, the breaking of the bread and the prayers”.* (Act 2, 42)

- **Reconciliation:** It is impossible to love without forgiving. And it is impossible to forgive without having experienced being forgiven. The experience of feeling ourselves loved by the Lord, presupposes also the feeling of having been forgiven by Him. His Love redeems and saves us always, and teaches us to look at others with compassion.

2.2 Ecclesial and community dimension

We are called to live our faith in community. This demands:

- To be part of a **group** which demands us to be present, to be responsible and to be committed as a community of faith. We share our life and walk together as we gradually come near to the person of Jesus Christ.

- To cultivate the relationship and the mutual collaboration with the rest of the **Spínola Family**, with whom we are sharing the charism.
- To nurture the sense of belonging to the **Church**. For that, it would be good to make ourselves present in our dioceses, parishes and ecclesial movements.

2.3 Apostolic dimension

- **Apostolic zeal:**

“No one ever conceived a wonderful idea which he would not strive to make it known”. (M. Spínola)

We, Spínola Lay, share with the Congregation the mission of announcing the personal Love of the Lord, as we feel called to bring this good news wherever we live or move in our daily work. *“Who among those who love Jesus Christ would see with indifference whether He is loved, or He is hated? (M. Spínola)*

This urgency to announce Jesus Christ’s personal Love, makes us witnesses of the joy of the Gospel in the midst of the world; that is, in the temporal realities in which we live and move (family, work, social commitments, etc.) *“And how we wish that the actual world - which is searching sometimes in anguish, and other times with hope, may be able to receive the Good News; but not through sad, discouraged, impatience or anxious evangelizers, but through Ministers of the Gospel whose life radiate fervour proper of the ones who have received in themselves the joy of Christ”.(Evangelii Gaudium)*

- **Service-Commitment of gratuity:**

“Let each one of us serve according to our different gifts we have received. He, who speaks in the name of God, let him do it, inspired by his faith. Let all those who serve do it with love and dedication; let the teacher teach; the one who helps do it with generosity. You must likewise give

with open hands [...] and be cheerful in the works of charity you do. (Rm 12, 6-9)

The living out of the Eucharist should bring us to devote ourselves to a concrete service; a service in which we place our gifts and goods at the feet of others, as a style of life that commits ourselves to the building of the Kingdom of God. It is impossible to live ignoring the reality around. We, Christians, have the moral obligation of being attentive to the needs of others. Only in this way it is possible to live as brothers and sisters. This attitude goes beyond mere solidarity.

The characteristic of the Spínola Family is its special sensibility to education understood as the transformation of the heart -*“To educate is to form the heart”* (M. Spínola). Feeling ourselves heirs of this experience, we, the Spínola Lay, want to live each dimension of our lives (work, family relations, etc.) with an the attitude of warm and thoughtful approach to people; accompanying them so that they may further develop all their potentials as they are the image of God and as agents of transformation of society.

2.4 Style of life

“I am totally surrendered to whatever God has in store for me; and I constantly repeat that I do not have any other desire than to do what God wants, or does not want”. (Mo. Celia Mendez)

We, the Spínola Lay, want to live in constant discernment, confronting ourselves with the Word of God, searching always for what God wants from us in every moment. From this attitude, a new style of life will be born; and it will be concretized in the way we are in the world, in our relationships, in the way we act, etc.

- **In our relationships with people:** we should be noted for being warm, joyful, always available and attentive to the needs of others; and in the way we relate with people “from heart to heart”.

- **Our relationship with things:** We have to relate with things with simplicity, austerity and in a detached manner. We have to be attentive the way we use the temporal goods of which we are mere administrators.
- **Our relationship with time:** It is important that we should learn to use time wisely giving to persons and things the place they deserve (family, friends, work, formation, commitments, leisure, etc.)
- **Personal Project:** It is a fundamental tool to live in truth; to progress in spiritual and professional life without becoming stagnant. It is important that we should elaborate a Personal Project based on our reality with concrete means (tenets of formation, readings, seminars, etc). This will allow us to grow in fidelity to the Lord. The Project should be revised periodically.
- **Personal accompaniment:** We believe that personal accompaniment is a privileged mean to grow and to mature in our following of Jesus. It will help us to live in freedom and to own what happens in our heart, as well as to find out what brings us peace and joy.

Sometimes our life differs with the ideal we have in our minds; that is, with our dream in the following of the Lord. The Personal Accompaniment helps us to position ourselves in the truth, and it offers us hints to walk steadily along the path that God wants for us.

- **On-going formation**

“The saints were formed in the Heart of Christ. The Heart of Jesus is the divine mold where all the hearts are poured in order to take up the supernatural shape of sanctity. (Marcelo Spínola)

The aim of the on-going formation is to help us respond - within our Christian identity - to the challenges of the world, trying to be witnesses of God’s love; and to strive to be signs of communion and Gospel commitment to the most needy.

The best on-going formation we can receive is the one of the day-to-day living. For this to operate, we need to pay “attention” - throughout the day – of all the elements of our being and our doing, in order to put them into good use for our human and spiritual growth (family, work, difficulties, setbacks, recollections, relationships, friendships, etc.). Our reality, lived in an attitude of discernment, is the privileged place for our on-going formation.

The ongoing formation demands from us also special moments of up-dating ourselves professionally, theologically, charismatically etc.

- **The celebration of the feast-days common to the Spínola Family,** will help us to strengthen our lay vocation, our sense of belonging, and the communion with all those with whom we share the Congregation’s charism. The feast are the following:

January 19: Blessed Marcelo Spínola

March 25: Annunciation

May 31: Coronation of Blessed Virgin Mary

June 2: Mo. Celia’s death anniversary

June: Feast of the Sacred Heart (movable feast)

July 26: Congregation’s Foundation Day.

December 8: Feast of the Immaculate Conception

III. PROCESS OF AFFILIATION WITH THE CONGREGATION

This process is intended for all the members of the Spínola Family who feel themselves called to live their Christian lay vocation within the Spínola Charism and spirituality; and who want to make a formal and public commitment with the Congregation. It has two main stages: one is of discernment, and the other one is the temporal affiliation, which will gradually lead to a definite commitment.

1. DISCERNMENT STAGE

During this stage, the persons interested in joining the Spínola Lay will gradually discover and get to know the style of life proper of the Spínola Lay, and be able to know this kind of vocation and to discern the call.

The candidates will express their desire to start this process to the Local Coordinator who, together with a person/s who knows them well (spiritual director, the responsible of the group of faith, a committed parishioner, etc.) and the Sister who accompanies the Spínola Lay in their respective communities, will discuss if they see the person prepared to initiate this stage of discernment. They have to take into account the following aspects in the candidate:

- To have a basic experience of God, the desire to follow Jesus Christ and to deepen the relationship with Him.
- To have a living faith, in its dimension of announcement, communion, service and celebration.
- To know the Founders, the Congregation and the Spínola Family.
- In the places where this is possible, the candidate must be, or has been, a member of a faith group.
- To have a sincere disposition to be able to face self-knowledge and personal accompaniment.

The beginning of this stage will take place within a simple liturgical celebration; and within the date and context that each place would deem convenient. During the rite, they will receive the *Prayer of the Spínola Lay*.

Throughout this stage the human, Christian and charismatic dimensions of the person will be worked out, according to the formation plan. The candidates will be accompanied in their process by a Spínola Lay, or by a Spínola Sister who, sometimes is the same one who is actually accompanying them.

Among the formation means that appear in the **Project of Life** of the Spínola Lay, the most important means during this initial process is to belong to a faith group (if it were possible within the Spínola Family) and to have personal accompaniment.

Both the candidate and the person accompanying him or her would evaluate regularly the discernment process which will be from 1 to 3 years duration.

At the end of this stage, the candidate will solicit from the local Coordinator to take her temporary affiliation as a Spínola Lay. The Coordinator, in dialogue with the person accompanying him or her, the facilitator of the faith group and the Sister who accompanies the Lays of that place, will evaluate if the person is prepared to take that step.

2. STAGE OF TEMPORAL AFFILIATION

The persons who have taken the Temporary Affiliation, resolve to live according the way of life expressed in the Project of Life of the Spínola Lay; and to collaborate in the Mission of the Church within their lay condition, according to the spirit of M. Spínola and Mo. Celia Mendez. The Congregation, on her part, commits herself to support them spiritually and materially in the development of their Christian life.

This affiliation allows the Spínola Lay to be recognized and accepted at institutional level, while a deeper sense of belonging to the universal Spínola Family is established between them and the Congregation.

The formalization of the commitment will take place in a religious celebration in which the document of the *Spínola Lay Project of Life* will be given to them.

This temporary commitment will remain as far as the person does not freely decide to leave, or it would not be annulled because of serious reasons. The period of time between the temporal and definitive affiliation will not be longer than five years, but not lesser than three.

Along this stage, the Spínola Lay will continue their process following the *Formation Plan* so as to deepen their vocation as a Lay within the Spínola Charism, envisioning their definitive affiliation according to the **Project of Life** of the Spínola Lay.

Once this stage is over, the Lay can request from the Local Coordinator to be accepted to the definitive affiliation. The Coordinator, together with the person accompanying them, with the facilitator of the Faith Group, and the Delegate of the Superior General, will evaluate whether they are ready for the step they are going to take. The Delegate will communicate to them whether they have been admitted or not to the definitive affiliation which means to say “yes” to the following of Jesus for ever within their Lay condition, and according to the Charism and Spínola Spirituality.

The definitive affiliation has to be preceded by a preparation. It will take place in the context of a religious celebration where they will receive the *cross of the Spínola Lay*.

3. DEFINITIVE AFFILIATION

The way of the following of Jesus is a life-time endeavor. It commits the whole person, heart, mind and strength to make him/her in the likeness of Christ who surrendered Himself to the Father for the entire humankind. The path of following Christ is gradually built through the daily options the persons make, through their readiness to live the demands of this following; and through the dedication they show in the mission they have received.

It is fundamental to be convinced that no one can learn exclusively by oneself; and that there is no age in which the maturity of the person can be taken as accomplished.

The Lay will renew yearly their commitment in a simple celebration in the date and place most convenient.

4. REVOCATION OF THE COMMITMENT

The Commitment can be terminated either on the part of the Spínola Lay or on the part of the Congregation.

On the part of the Lay: If a Lay desires to terminate his/her commitment, after a serious reflection, and in a deep dialogue with the person accompanying him/her, he/she will write a petition letter addressed to the Local Coordinator and to the Delegate of the Superior General. In said petition he/she will explain the reasons that led him/her to terminate his/her commitment.

On the part of the Congregation: After having tried to overcome the difficulties through understanding and dialogue, the Delegate of the Superior General will confer with the Local Coordinator the issue; thereafter, she can decide the annulment of the commitment between the Congregation and the Lay because of the serious motivation, especially when the style of life of the Lay is in open contrast with the commitment taken.

IV . SPÍNOLA LAY COMMUNITY

The Spínola family is plural, as human reality is. Within this Family, there are different ways of living our spirituality with different kinds of commitment, of collaboration in the Mission, and of charismatic involvement.

There are faith groups of adult persons in which, both Spínola Lay, and other persons who would like to become so, are praying and sharing together. There are other Lay groups that, after journeying together for a time, they decide to live the charism in community -with autonomy and capacity of decision - and which are affiliated to the Congregation with a life commitment that will help them to keep on growing in faith.

This is the way how the Spínola Lay Communities are born; that is, there are groups of Spínola Lay who feel the call to follow Jesus of Nazareth and to share in community a concrete Charism; in their case, the Spínola charism which they feel their own.

If there is any person, who without being yet a committed Lay, would like to become so and live in community, he or she may live in that community.

1. ITINERARY

Whenever a group of Lay feel the call and the desire to become a Lay Community, they can start a common process of discernment and formation. After said process, the group –through the local Coordinator - will solicit from the Delegate of the Superior General to be accepted as a Lay Spínola Community.

Whenever a Lay would like to be part of a Spínola Lay Community, she/he has to pledge to follow the Community Project of said Community.

2. STYLE OF LIFE

The Community will elaborate a Project in which they will make clear the concrete means that will facilitate the living together the Spínola Spirituality as a Community. As much as possible they will make the Project in a context of prayer and a get-together.

The following aspects have to be clear in the Project :

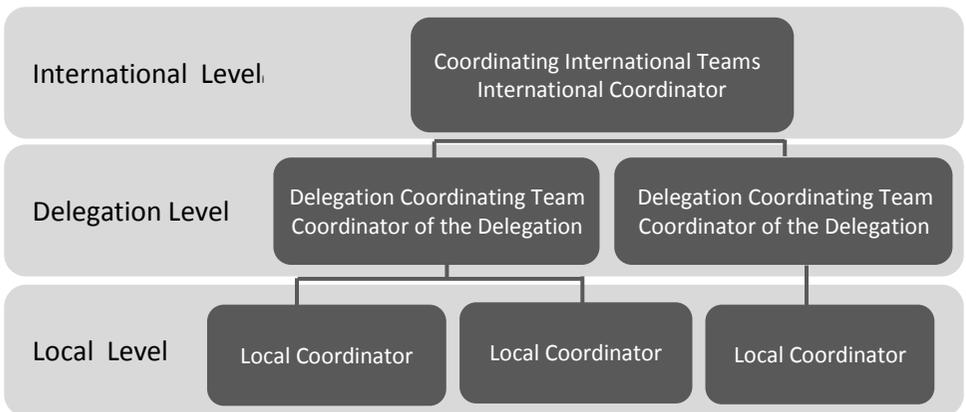
- **Yearly Objective of the Community.**
- **Community Organization:** time for meetings, yearly calendar, those in-charge of the different community services (Community Coordinator, Secretary, Treasurer, etc.)
- **Prayer:** Daily prayer time; deeper moments of prayer (Eight-day-retreat, recollections, Easter Triduum, etc.)
- **Eucharist:** occasions in which it will be celebrated in Community.
- **Communication of life:** shared prayer, deep shared meetings, etc.
- **Relationships within the Community:** means that can help the relationships in the Community
- **Relationships with the Spínola family and the Universal Church**
- **Service:** Community house chores
- **Financial commitments** that each member will contribute.
- **Formation:** Themes to be studied throughout the year
- **Evaluation:** When and how to evaluate the Project

The community will be accompanied by a Spínola Sister who will be a “companion on the journey”. She is the charismatic reference even if she is not present in the meetings. She will be at the service of the unity and communion among the members of the Group, as well as with the rest of the Spínola Family.

V. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE¹

The Spínola Laiko is a Movement - inspired by the Holy Spirit -which feels the need of certain institutionalization in order to ensure its continuity and being attuned with the Spínola Charism and to live the Mission of the Congregation.

1. COORDINATION



1.1 At Local Level:

Local Coordinator: He or she is in-charge of coordinating the Spínola Lay group that might exist in a given place or nearby places.

Functions:

- To be the reference Lay within his or her competence
- To foster the relationships between the Spínola Lays and the Communities of Spínola Sisters in each place
- To present proposals and initiatives to the national Coordinator

¹In these initial steps of the Lay Movement, the structure can be simpler than the one that follows. What we are aiming at with this Coordination chart is to have it in mind when the Lay Movement would expand and might need it.

- To be part of the national Coordinating Team
- To coordinate the process of affiliation of the candidates since the beginning stage until they made the definitive commitment.
- To coordinate the process of formation of the new Lay Communities that may arise in the place.
- To keep the membership files of the Spínola Lay as well as the Lay Communities, if there are.
- To convoke the Local Assembly, whenever it would be necessary.
- To take the responsibility of the financial operations concerning the activities of the Spínola Lay and/or Lay Communities.

The election of the Local Coordinator will be done by the Local Assembly and/or by the Lay Communities by secret balloting. The term of office is one year that can be renewed for another two years, until the completion of a three-year term. On finishing this term, he or she can be appointed for another three-year term. As much as it would be possible, the Local Coordinator will be a Spínola Lay with definitive affiliation.

1.2 At Delegation level:

Delegation Coordinating Team. It is a team composed of the Local Coordinator of the Delegation.

Functions of the Team:

- To elect the Delegation Lay Coordinator.
- To respond to the needs of the Lay in the Delegation.
- To organized encounters, activities, etc. in function to what it might be considered necessary.
- To collaborate with the Congregation and other institutions of the Spínola Family by helping in the animation of activities that might be convoked in different places.
- To take the responsibility of the financial operation concerning the activities of the Lay and Lay Communities, at national level.

Coordinator of the Delegation: He or she is in-charge of facilitating the dynamics of the Coordinating Team of the Delegation; he or she is as well the representative of the Delegation at international level. The election of the Coordinator of the Delegation will be made by secret balloting of the Local Coordinators. The term of office is one year, renewable for another year, and can be lengthened up to a maximum of three years.

1.3 At International Level:

The Coordinating International Team: is a team composed by the Coordinators of the different Delegations.

Functions:

- To facilitate the mutual acquaintance and the communication among the different persons and groups in the world.
- To take the responsibility of the financial operations concerning the activities of the Lay and the Lay Communities, at international level.

International Coordinator: He or she is in-charge of facilitating the dynamics of the International Coordinating Team. The Coordination of this Team will be by rotation of the different Delegations. The term of office is two years.

2. ENCOUNTERS

Local Assembly: This one is composed of the Lay of the place or zone. It gathers at least once a year in order to evaluate the projects and/or the activities at hand; to agree upon new ones if there are; to present new initiatives, and to evaluate the service of the Coordinator, and/or to elect a new one.

National encounter and / or Delegation encounter: In cases that this will be possible, according to the reality of each country, it would good to have encounters of Spínola Lay at national level in order to grow in mutual acquaintance and communion.

3. COMMITMENT WITH THE CONGREGATION

The Congregation accompanies and supports the Lay in their spiritual and apostolic journey.

She will collaborate in their formation, in the organization of activities and in all those things that the Congregation will be needed and it is within her possibilities. She can propose task that will respond to a concrete need of the Spínola Family.

The Congregation's rapport with the Spínola Lay.

- At local level: There will be a Sister appointed by the Congregation as the spokesperson for the Lay.
- At Delegation level: the Delegate will be the spokesperson between the Congregation and the Spínola Lay.
- At International level: A Sister will be responsible of supporting and animating the Lay in the different countries and she will be the spokesperson between the Lay and the Congregation.

4. COMMUNICATION

The relationship of the Spínola Lay with the rest of the Spínola Family is that of mutual collaboration, since we share the same spirituality and mission .

The communication should be warm so as to nurture the sense of family and to join strengths in the common mission we carry.

Those in-charge of the coordination of the Lay - at all levels - commit themselves to inform the Congregation periodically about the new affiliations, letters, publications and - above all – events and decisions that could affect the Spínola Lay.

FORMATION PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

“The freedom of men and women is questioned by God’s call to grow, to mature and to bear fruit. They cannot but to respond to said call and to take up personal responsibility” (Christi Fideles Laici 57)

The need of an integral and on-going formation of the Lay is situated within the dialogue between God and the person who is questioned about his or her responsibility.

“Christian formation is a continuous process of personal maturation in faith and in the configuration with Christ, according to the will of the Father under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Its fundamental objective is the gradual discovery, with increasing clarity, of one’s own vocation and the ever increasing availability to live the fulfilment of one’s mission. (Christi Fideles Laici, 57)

God calls and sends us to live as workers in his vineyard. He calls us to work in the building of his Kingdom in this world. These vocation and mission define our dignity and responsibility; it constitutes the leaning point of formation which has as its aim the grateful acknowledgment of the call, as a Gift from God; and the faithful and generous commitment to build his Kingdom. *“If God is the One doing the work, our part is only to place ourselves in his hands so that He may give us the shape He best pleases” (M. Spínola)*

This Formation Plan aims at offering a basic orientation for the elaboration of the formation programs of the Spínola Lay in the different Delegations. These programs must reflect, in a concrete way, the itinerary that can help the integral formation of those who are discovering God’s project for their lives in their vocation as a Spínola Lay.

The first part of the booklet presents, in a systematic way, the general aspects of the formation. The second part defines the formation stages, taken from the Project of Life of the Spínola Lay. Here we are pre-

senting the contents to be worked out in each stage considering each dimension of the person.

The bases of this document are taken fundamentally from the “*Project of Life of the Spínola Lay*”; and from the Apostolic Exhortation “*Christi Fideles Laicie*”, chapter V: “SO THAT YOU MAY BEAR MORE FRUIT”, which deals with the formation of the faithful Laity.

I GENERAL ASPECTS

Formation is not the privilege of the few, but rather a right and a duty of all.

We start with two convictions; namely, we cannot impart true and efficient formation if each person does not take the responsibility of said formation; in fact, the formation is essentially configured as self-formation in which each one of us is the end and, at the same time, the beginning of the formation. We start from the principle that the more we become well formed, the more we become able to accompany others.

It is of utmost importance that we become aware that the formation, which uses the methods of human sciences, becomes more efficient in the measure that we allow God to work in the person: only the branches that are not afraid to be pruned by the vine grower will be able to bear much fruit for themselves and for others².

1. OBJECTIVE OF THE FORMATION

1.1 A formation in order to live an integrated (unified) life

Through formation, we seek to live that unity and integration that define the followers of Jesus.

We cannot have two parallel existences in our lives: one part our “spiritual” life, with its values and demands; and the other part our “secular” life; that is, our family life, our working life, our social relationships and the political and cultural commitments. The branches that are rooted in the vine, which is Christ, bear fruit in each area of their activities and existence.

In fact, all the areas of our lives are “the historical place” where God reveals his plans for us and where we live out God’s plans.

² ChL 63

Vatican Council II encourages the Christians to strive living each dimension of their lives guided always by the spirit of the Gospel. Our own faith is the reason that “compels” us to the most perfect fulfilment of our temporal tasks according to each ones’ vocation.

“A faith that does not become a culture is a faith that has not been totally welcomed, not totally contemplated and not faithfully lived”³. “We must strive to be extraordinary in the ordinary things we do”. (Celia Mendez). ‘There are two ways to do things; on is just to have things done; that is, just to fulfill a duty. The other way is to please the person we are serving or we love. In the first case, we are satisfied not to be at fault, not minding at all receiving any praise for the work we have done; the only thing we want is not to be reprimanded. In the second case, we want to see our Lord and friend contented.” (Marcelo Spínola).

1.2 A formation according to the Spínola Lay Spirituality

Our formation as Spínola Lay aims at having a constant deepening in the personal Love of Christ who is the origin and the moving force in our lives. The experience of God’s fidelity, his forgiveness and of his unconditional love, centers our lives and gives it meaning and unity. *“The experience of feeling ourselves love personally by God is the foundation of our faith. (...) As Lay we seek to make in our lives, in our families and in the midst of society ...the Will of the One who loves us, as we become the salt and the light in the midst of the world.”⁴*

The living out of our Charism in depth leads to a unified life that is reflected in a concrete style of living, in the manner of how we position ourselves in the world, in the way we relate to others and the way we act⁵.

³Council Vatican II, Pastoral Constitution about the Church in the actual World, “Gaudium et Spes”, 43. Cf. Also about the missionary activity in the Church, “Ad gentes”, 21; Paul VI, Exh. Ap. “Evangelii nuntiandi”, 20: AAS 68 (1976) 19.

⁴ Cf. Spínola Lay Project, pág. 6

⁵ Cf. Spínola Lay Project of Life. pgs. 12 y ss

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FORMATION

2.1. Personalized

Human person are called by God to follow a unique and personal path of growth. Therefore, they must be respected, valued, attended to in their personal uniqueness.

On their part, they have to become gradually aware of their reality in order to develop their human and spiritual possibilities, according to God's plans for them.

Therefore, they have to be helped to discover themselves, to accept themselves as a gift from God, to internalize the values that will allow them to grow according to their own vocation; therefore, to respond with a mature freedom to God's call; and to take responsibility of the development of their vocation.

2. 2 Integral Formation

Throughout the formation process, persons gradually discover their ideal of life in the Spínola Lay vocation, and commit all they are to a path of life that leads to the configuration of their personality according to said ideal.

The formation embraces the totality of the human person in his or her unity and personal complexity: heart, mind and will.

The integration, which is the task and the fruit of personal maturity, is above all, the work of the Holy Spirit, and it is gradually achieved in the measure that the personal Love of Christ unifies the person.

2.3. Progressive formation

It is God Himself, as we discover in the Bible, who uses a pedagogy adapted to the different stages of human maturation. The formation is inspired in the way that God acted with his Chosen People, and in the formation style Jesus used with his disciples.

It is necessary to pay attention to the different stages of growth of each person and his/her the personal rhythm. This demands to distinguish between the ideal one aspires to, and the concrete steps one have to gradually take in the formation.

We have to bear in mind that human growth is not uniform; it is achieved through crisis and difficulties, not always foreseen, which call for an adapted and flexible pedagogy.

2.4 Inculturated

In the formation, we must pay especial attention to the local culture, according to the explicit invitation of the Synod Fathers: *“The formation of Christians must have into consideration the human culture of the place; this can contribute to the formation itself leading to discern both the values of the traditional culture, as well as values proposed by modern culture”*⁶. Likewise it is important to pay attention to the different cultures that might co-exist in one same nation.

3. DIMENSIONS

3.1 Within the context of integral and unifying formation of the Lay, it is very significant - because its missionary and apostolic action - the personal growth in **human values**; namely, self-knowledge, human maturity, authenticity, responsibility, etc. Without a good human base, it is difficult to build the rest. Precisely, in this concern, the Vatican Council II has written:

*“Have in mind also the following: professional competence, sense of family, the civic sense, and the virtues concerning social relationships, such as: honesty, sense of justice, sincerity, social graces, courage; without them, there cannot be a real Christian life”*⁷.

⁶ ChL 63

⁷ Idem

3.2. The spiritual formation must have a privilege place in the life of each person , since they are called to grow - without ceasing - in intimacy with Jesus Christ, in doing the will of God, and the self-giving to their brothers and sisters.

3.3 A systematic theological formation is necessary; not only because of the natural dynamism of deepening in faith, but also because of the demands of “giving the reason of one’s own faith”. This will greatly contribute to the Christian promotion of the culture, as a response to the eternal questions that disturb men and women and the society today.

3.4 Charismatic formation. To deepen in the Spínola Charism - which is special gift of the Spirit to the Church – it is the key to grow in our own identity, and to become nearer to what we are called to be according to God’s dream for us. To live our Charism is the way to enrich the Church and to collaborate in the transformation of the world. The Holy Spirit is the One guiding - as Spirit of unity and fullness - and sustaining us in our process to a mature synthesis of our lives.

4. AGENTS AND MEANS

Who are the agents and the means of the Christian formation of the Lay? Who are the persons and the communities called to take up the task of an integral and unifying formation for them?

4.1 Agents

Human educative action is intimately connected with paternity and maternity, likewise Christian formation has its roots and strength in God, the Father, who loves and educates his children. Yes, God is the first educator of his People, as the magnificent biblical passage of Moses chants: *“God encounters his People in the wasteland of the howling desert ; He shields them and cares for them, guarding them as the apple of his eyes. As an eagle incites its nestlings forth by hovering over its brood, so he spreads*

his wings to receive them and bear them upon his pinions. Only Yahweh guided them to their destination. There was not any alien God with Him” (Dt 32, 10-12)

God’s educating work is revealed and fulfilled in Jesus, the TEACHER and Master. He touches the heart of each person from within, thanks to the dynamic presence of the Holy Spirit.

The Church is called to take part in God’s educating task. Our life is nurtured and deepened through the active participation in the liturgical and sacramental life, especially in the Eucharist.

Marcelo Spínola and Mo. Celia transmitted to us a great love for the Church and fidelity to her Teachings.⁸

The **Christian family**, since it is the “domestic Church” constitutes the first and fundamental school for the formation of faith. As the children gradually learn to utter the first words, they also learn to praise God whom they feel near as a loving and provident Father. Learning from their parents the first gestures of love, children learn also to open up to others, grasping in their dedication the meaning of life.

The **Schools and Catholic Learning Centers** are also important places of spiritual renewal, that now a day they are gradually spreading.

The spirituality of the Spínola Lay can hardly be lived in an individual way. **The Group and the Lay Community** is the privileged place to journey as brothers/sisters. In the Community we live and we discover in the day to day the Lord’s footprints and his call for us to keep on growing in his following.

We walk together with **other members on the Spínola Family**, such as the Congregation of the Handmaids of the Divine Heart (Spínola Sisters), Spínola Solidarity Foundation, etc. From different parts of the world, the Spínola Lay will promote and collaborate in spreading the knowledge of the life of Marcelo Spínola and Mo. Celia Mendez; this is essential to strengthen our common vocation.

⁸ cf RF 1 c 72

The reality. The world is the place where God's saving action takes place. It is necessary to impart a formation oriented to a critical and discerning attitude so as to recognize God's presence who talks to us in the signs of the times and in the daily happenings; thus, calling us to respond with creative fidelity. *"The Handmaid, called to educate and do other charitable works, has to be by all means in contact with the world of which she cannot disengage at all."*(Marcelo Spínola)

Lastly, as we have said earlier, the **Lay themselves** are the ones who have the first responsibility of saying "yes" to the call they have received and to take up the consequences of their response. They are the first responsible of their formation; therefore, they have to use the necessary means at their disposal, and to cultivate the attitudes that will lead them to the progressive configuration with Christ according to the vocation they have received.

4.2 Means

The Word of God

The Word of God is a *"Word of Love"* (Marcelo Spínola). It is the first source of spiritual Life that nurtures our personal relationship with God and it shows us his will. It has to become our supreme rule of life.

It is necessary to root the entire formation in the Holy Scriptures which we have to meditate regularly because in them, we find the supreme science of Jesus Christ. *"Not to know the Scriptures is not to know Christ"*⁹.

Prayer Life

Personal prayer begins with the need we have of cultivating a relationship with the One who, we know, loves us. Prayer is the first channel of first Christian formation.

⁹ DV 25

The Teacher of prayer is God Himself, who brings us to the discovery of our true identity and to experience what we are in essence. This, He does by helping us discover our inner deceits and by healing our wounds. It is in the encounter with God where we place ourselves in the truth; where we discover the vocation we have been called to; where we gradually assimilate the attitudes of Jesus Christ; and learn to read the reality around us with eyes of faith. *“My plan with you and, in general, with all the persons thirsting for perfection, has been always to place them near the well-spring. That is, to place them in contact with God so that they will talk to Him; because he is the only Teacher”.* (Marcelo Spínola)

The Project of Life states the need of a daily prayer rhythm, as well as a longer space for prayer (several days) once a year; this may greatly help us to cultivate a loving relationship with the Lord, to integrate our life of faith and to confront our own life with Him.

Sacramental Life

The Sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation, are the schools of God’s Love.

In the celebration of the Eucharist, which is an encounter of self-giving and communion, Jesus Christ invites us to follow his example. He illumines our lives with his Word; and He accompanies us with his presence, inviting us to live as brothers and sisters. *“If we relate often with Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, we will end up falling in love with Him; because it is certain that love is contagious; and Jesus Christ’s love surely will contaminate us”* (Marcelo Spínola)

The sacrament of reconciliation is the spiritual space of God’s compassion. The liberating experience of God’s pardon and his unconditional welcome is the best school of compassion, of becoming sensitive to the needs or suffering of others, and of true charity.

Personal Accompaniment

This is a privileged mean to grow and to mature in the following of Jesus. It helps us to live in freedom; to own what is happening inside us; to know ourselves and accept ourselves; and to perceive more objectively

God's action in our lives; thus, to be able to decide in freedom is to respond to God in a responsible way.

Personal Project

This is a fundamental tool which helps us to prepare ourselves to listen to God's Will for us, in the concrete moment of our lives at personal, community and historical level we might be living.

In placing ourselves in a climate of self-knowledge and discernment in the Spirit, it is a means that helps us to take our lives in our hands while it makes us ready to live with awareness and responsibility our own vocation; as well as to progress in the following of Jesus.

The work at hand is to respond to the different invitations that the Lord might extend to us; and to collaborate with his will over us, it is important for us to make our Personal Project after an intense spiritual experience; for example, eight-day-retreat, a spiritual fellowship, etc.). In said project, we have to come up with the means that can help us best to grow in fidelity to the Lord.

The Personal Project is the matter for the personal accompaniment. It has to be evaluated periodically.

Studies, readings, reflection

In order to be able to achieve a harmonious synthesis between faith and culture, it is necessary to be serious in our studies and reflections through the means each place has: Spirituality and/or Theological Schools, faith groups, etc. A serious formation opens up our intelligence, it helps us to deepen our faith and the experience of God. At the same time, it enables us to be accompanied in the fundamental questions in life, to give reasons for our faith (why we believe), to dialogue with other groups and faiths, within an attitude of openness and in search of the truth.

Experiences of service

The experiences of gratuitous services becomes the school where, at the same time that we announce the personal love of Jesus Christ, we place our gifts at the service of others, as a response to the call to build

the Kingdom of God. In the process we gradually learn to purify our motivations; we become familiar with the ways the Lord is present in us; and we gradually learn also how to situate ourselves as mediators - but not the main character in the drama – between God and others. And lastly, we are practicing to become like Jesus Christ, while we gradually become confirmed in our own faith. *“...on our part we have to work; yes, to work without ceasing; the zeal for the glory of God devours, guides and inspires us. Then, wherever there is a tear to wipe, there we will run to; wherever there is an afflicted heart, there we will rush to give him/her a helping hand. We have to be ready to go everywhere so that the glory of God may spread”.* (Marcelo Spínola)

II FORMATION STAGES

1 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STAGES

1.1 Discernment stage

The objective of this stage is the initiation in the way of life proper to the Spínola Lay vocation and in deepening in the human and charismatic aspects that may help the candidates to a greater knowledge of their vocation and the clarification of their call.

This is a time of “experiencing”, and “tasting” which will facilitate a process of personal, human, Christian and charismatic growth.

This initial period can be lived by integrating the candidates in any existing Lay Community, or in a faith group that desires to become a Lay Community; this group must be accompanied by a Spínola Sister or by a full-fledged Spínola Lay. The candidates can also be integrated in a Faith Group of the Parish, or the School. This experience will help them in the gradual human and spiritual growth, and eventually to arrive at the commitment.

In dialogue with the person who is accompanying them, it is preferable that they should make the discernment after having had a retreat in which the candidates have placed themselves in search for God’s will. They will elaborate their Personal Project in which they will define the concrete way of life they want to commit themselves to as Spínola Lay.

The Personal Project has to be evaluated yearly, as well as their inner process so as to discern the authenticity of their vocation.

Criteria for evaluation: The candidates have to experience gradually that this is the kind of life that is making them more authentic and better persons. They have to express also the will to follow the Lord and to have capacity to respond to the call. This can be reflected in the following:

- They show a level of maturity proper of their age.

- They are committed to the process of personal growth allowing themselves to be accompanied, to deepen in self-knowledge and in her personal history. They are simple, sociable and friendly.
- They search for God, desiring to know Jesus better; they pray and are motivated by Gospel values; they received the Sacraments.
- They are attuned with the Spínola Spirituality.
- They participate actively in a faith group, or the like.
- They are responsible in their tasks (study or work).
- They are austere and sensitive to the less privileged. They have capacity to give themselves joyfully to others.

1.2 Temporal Affiliation

The committed Lay obliges themselves to live according to the way of life expressed in the *Project of Life of the Spínola Lay*.

The objective of this stage is to make an experience of the Spínola Lay vocation envisioning a definitive affiliation. If in the previous stage we talked about a progressive initiation to the life style of the Spinoa Lay vocation, now we are talking about living said vocation in depth.

Criteria for evaluation: The persons see clearly that this is the vocation they feel called to because they have discovered in the spirituality and style of the Spínola Lay their own identity. This is manifested in:

- They are faithful to the commitments according to the Project of Life.
- They have a discerning attitude in life, and they are open to God's will. It is perceived that Jesus Christ is the one moving and motivating them. This is shown in zeal they display in transmitting his Love.
- They have a healthy tension in living the Gospel values: forgiveness, sensitivity to the most vulnerable, gratefulness, joy, simplicity, transparency, service. They react to difficulties with a Gospel attitudes.

- They are mature in the way they have integrated faith in the different aspects of their secular condition, living with integrity and honesty. They have progressively matured in a spirituality that liberates them from mere activism, as well as from spiritualism without commitment.
- They are active and responsible members in the building of communion wherever they are.

1.3 Definitive Affiliation

The very nature of the Christian vocation carries with it an updated response to God's call, since "to cloth oneself with Christ" (Cf. Rom 13,14; Gál 3, 27; Ef 4, 24) is a task that never ends.

The formation of the former stages was intended to find the will of God through discernment and docility to the Holy Spirit which are the bases of the on-going formation.

The on-going formation leads to the actualization of the Charism which is a spiritual and dynamic reality. It makes possible their opening to new situations in the Church and in the world; it helps them to change their mentality and to adapt themselves to the actual demands of Christian life.

2 CONTENTS TO BE DEVELOPED

The following are the contents that have to be worked throughout the on-going formation.

Each place has to concretize yearly a program having in mind the following:

- There must be contents of each one of the blocks: human, Christian, lay identity and charismatic formation.
- Some themes can be studied together with other Spínola Lay groups that there might be in the district or in the zone.

- There are themes that never end, which have to be touched often such as self-knowledge, theological formation, deepening in spirituality, analysis, with eyes of faith, of the reality around, etc.
- It is good and convenient that they should join some activities (courses, seminars, etc)- that other Institutions might organized and that may be of help for their the integral formation.

2.1 Human formation

- Personal identity: tools for self-knowledge, self-acceptance, management of limitations and possibilities.
- Relationship with the family: working out the family history and adjustment to the different members of one's family.
- Relationship with companions and friends: friendship, affectivity, sexuality, self-assertion, tools for relationships and conflict management.
- Relationships with the world: knowledge of the reality, analysis of the culture, current events.
- To workout values: gratefulness, joy, responsibility, simplicity, authenticity/transparency, service/availability, forgiveness, etc.

Even if these points can be workout in a in a group, the contents are the object of personal accompaniment.

2.2. Christian formation

- Vocation in the Bible
- Introduction to the reading of the Holy Scriptures
- The person of Jesus and his message
- The Holy Spirit
- Deepening in Christian Prayer and its methods.
- Blessed Virgin Mary
- The Church

- Liturgy
 - Meaning of the liturgy
 - The liturgical year
 - The Sacraments
 - The liturgy of the hours
- Fundamental moral (of the person and social moral)
- Reading the reality with eyes of faith. Christian reflection about current themes: ecumenism, inter-religious dialogue, ecology, immigration, the role of women, just commerce, evangelization in times of no faith, etc.
- Christian commitment
- Initiation to discernment: Examination of consciousness. Personal project.

In cases in which it is possible and/or needed, it would be good for the Lay to take up Theology or Religious Sciences.

2.3 Formation on identity of the Lay¹⁰

- Charisms in the Church and ministries
- Identity of the Lay
- Spirituality of the Lay
 - To transform the world being in the world. Personal options
 - Political commitments
 - The Family /Work
 - Call to live their faith in Community.
- The Gospel and the actual culture
- The mission of the Lay in the Church and the world.
- History of the lay state.
- Documents of the Church about the Laity

¹⁰ Many of these themes have been included and developed in the *“Working Document: Bases to elaborate the framework of the Identity of the Lay and the linking of the Spínola Lay to the Congregation”*.

2.4 Charismatic Formation

Discernment Stage

- Knowledge about the life of our Founders
- History of the Congregation
- The Spínola Family in the world
- Spiritual traits of Marcelo Spínola and Mo. Celia Méndez
- Feasts of the Spínola Family

Commitment Stage

- Deepening in each one of the traits of the Spínola Lay' Identity , comparing the way our Founders lived and how we are applying it in our own life.
- Charism: The experience of the personal Love of Christ
- The person of Jesus Christ in the Founders
- The search for God's will /availability
- Prayer
- Eucharist
- Blessed Virgin Mary
- Apostolic zeal
- Option for the weakest
- Life style
 - In relation with people :Simplicity, humility, authenticity
 - In relation with things: austerity, generosity
 - In relation with time: austerity, responsibility
- The Congregation now a day. Capitular options.

There is abundant bibliography - to work out each dimension - in the different languages of the countries where the Spínola family is present.

In the Annex you will see the resources we have to deepen in the charismatic dimension.

Available Resources for the charismatic formation

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE FOUNDERS

The items in italics preceded by three (*) are available in English.

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- Consuelo Ojeda, **Madre Belén**.

II CORRESPONDENCIA

- **RETORNO A LAS FUENTES.** *Correspondencia entre Marcelo Spínola y Celia Méndez. (Only Volumme I is translated but not edited and printed)*
- **ITINERARIO DE UNA AMISTAD.** Correspondencia entre Rosario Spínola y Celia Méndez.

III ESCRITOS DE MARCELO SPÍNOLA

- *****LIBRO DEL ESPÍRITU O LIBRO DE INSTRUCCIONES:** *Desde el principio de la Fundación circularon entre las Esclavas unos cuadernillos manuscritos conteniendo **las Instrucciones**, que iban siendo escritas a medida que el primer grupo fundacional necesitaba saber cómo conducirse, ya que aún no estaban escritas las Constituciones.*
- **MEDITACIONES:** Se estableció que todos los domingos primeros de mes harían las religiosas un día de Retiro. El Retiro se practicó desde el primer momento de la Fundación y nuestro Padre se lo daba personalmente, o les enviaba manuscritos los puntos desarrollados de las meditaciones.
- **EL DEVOCIONARIO:** Está compuesto por una serie de oraciones y devociones, unas patrimonio común de la Iglesia (Rosario, Letanía, Salmo 50, etc.) otras la mayoría originales de nuestro Padre Fundador.
- Obras del Exmmo. y Rvmo. Sr. Don Marcelo Spínola y Maestre **Pastorales de Adviento.**
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- ******Marcelo Spínola, su espiritualidad a través de sus escritos.** *Se presenta recopilados algunos de sus textos. A través de ellos penetramos en lo que fue su espiritualidad y riqueza interior, de donde brota su acción. (Translated but not edited and printed)*

- **La Eucaristía, memorial del amor.** Selección de textos C. Montoto. Sevilla 1993. Estos textos se publican con ocasión del XLV Congreso Eucarístico Internacional. D. Marcelo nos comunica algo de su gran amor a la Eucaristía.

IV REVISTAS

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V OTRAS PUBLICACIONES

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- *****Pistas sobre el Carisma Spínola en clave pedagógica.** Departamento de Educación y Pastoral Madrid 1998. 2 tomos.
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Handmaids of the Divine Heart