

Second International Assembly of the ACI Family



“ACI Family, Gift of the Spirit... Family for the World”

From February 24 to March 2, 2014, in Madrid, in the Santa Rafaela María House of Spirituality, Martínez Campos, we held the Second International Assembly of the ACI Family, with the theme *"ACI Family, Gift of the Spirit ... Family for the World "*.

This Assembly is the outcome of one of the agreements contained in the Final Document of the First Assembly, which reads: *"International Assemblies will be held every five years and shall be convened by the Superior General in dialogue with the International Commission"*.

Participating in this Second Assembly were 25 lay representatives from 19 countries, 6 Handmaids, the General Team of the Institute consisting of the Superior General --Sister Inmaculada Fukasawa-- and her Assistants, and the International Commission of the ACI Family.

We spent the first three days of the Assembly becoming aware of the current state of the ACI Family and reflecting in depth on the call of the Church to the New Evangelization, a priority for the Family.

In Madrid we visited the places that were most significant in the beginning of the Institute, including the house in Martínez Campos in which the Foundresses and the first Handmaids lived.

During the fourth and fifth days we reviewed the Final Document of the First Assembly, in order to update it and make it more relevant to the reality of the ACI Family, recognizing the contributions that emerged from the preliminary work for the Assembly, which had been done by the groups of the ACI Family.

During the last two days we visited Pedro Abad, the birthplace of Saint Raphaela Mary and her sister Dolores, and the city of Cordoba, which they had frequented as girls and young women, and where they experienced events that influenced their entire lives.

We have noted the importance of further work on:

- our formation, taking into account the evangelizing mission,
- finding ways of funding to give us economic independence,
- improving communication, making use of technology.

We participated in daily prayer, the Eucharist and Adoration, prepared by the participants. These have been moments of communion and opportunities to experience union with the Institute of the Handmaids and with all the members and groups of the ACI Family.

We enjoyed "intercultural nights" featuring presentations of the different countries. It was a time to enjoy our universality in an atmosphere of celebration and brotherhood.

Everything that we have lived and shared during these days has been an experience that has profoundly touched each of the participants. The opportunity to visit the places where the Foundresses and the first Handmaids lived has helped us to know, to become closer and to deepen our love for Saint Raphaela Mary and the Institute. As members of the ACI Family we feel confirmed in our lay vocation.

This Second International Assembly has taken place, like the first, in a lively and fraternal environment, in which we have worked, reflected and prayed.

We have found that there is a path followed since 2009, when the First Assembly was held. Participants have shown a strong identification with and sense of belonging to the ACI Family, a great love for it, and a sincere desire to promote it and strengthen it in order to continue walking and growing together with the Institute.

After the work of this Assembly, undertaken with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we present the Final Document of the Second International Assembly of the ACI Family.

IDENTITY OF THE ACI FAMILY



We are a Family of lay persons, a Family that has a universal character. It is based in Vía Parre 16, 00188 Rome, Italy. The Family is made up of groups and persons who share the charism of Saint Raphaela Mary. We are pained by the brokenness of the world and want to reconstruct it; that is why:

- ✘ We want to deepen our knowledge of Saint Raphaela Mary and her spirituality. We receive her Eucharistic-Reparative charism as a Gift of the Spirit.
- ✘ We are discovering the love of God for us. We want to live Reparation as a response to this Love.
- ✘ We seek to discover the Eucharist in its dimensions of celebration, adoration, life and commitment.
- ✘ We want to live the following of Jesus in the Church:
 - Taking care of and dedicating time to personal prayer.
 - Seeking God in everyday life, in an attitude of discernment.
 - Being attentive to the signs of the times that emerge in each situation, in order to give a response.
 - Being committed to the mission of Evangelization, in each of our realities.
- ✘ We live dedicated to Jesus, collaborating with Him in reconciling a broken world, seeking “the most universal good” with hope and joy, as the Foundresses wished.
- ✘ We want to be affected by all forms of poverty and, for that reason; we take part in acts of solidarity.
- ✘ We walk together with the Sisters, Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who accompany us in our process of growth in our identity according to the Charism and in the discernment of our commitments to the world around us.
- ✘ We want to be a Family that is simple and humble, welcoming and open, one that lives unity in diversity.

INCORPORATION AND BELONGING IN TO THE ACI FAMILY

Incorporation into the ACI Family responds to the need to be part of a universal body that expands our existential horizon and gives responses, according to the spirituality of Saint Raphaela Mary, to profound questions about identity, the meaning of existence, commitment to humanity, commitment to God.

It is good that those who approach the ACI Family grow in **knowledge of the legacy and commitment of St. Raphaela Mary**, the persons and groups that make up the Family, their activities, their universal dimension, their commitments ... Little by little they will participate in their meetings, celebrations, activities of solidarity... that will help them to deepen in the meaning of Family.

The groups that already belong to the ACI Family, along with those who will be incorporated, will maintain their way of life and autonomy.

We belong to the Catholic Church, and taking into account the diverse realities of persons, cultures, religions, countries..., the ACI Family is open to all those who feel moved to live the charism of reparation through action in solidarity, mutual help, sharing the values of Raphaela Mary...

Steps in the process of incorporation of a group

- ✘ After a process of approaching, of discovering, of walking along with others, of discernment and commitment, each group, in the light of its situation, will request incorporation into the ACI Family.
- ✘ Although this incorporation usually is done in a group, this should not lessen the strength of the personal act and commitment of each member of the group.
- ✘ It is important for the group to be **accompanied by a Sister or a member of the ACI Family**.
- ✘ If the group discovers in the ACI Family its way of living the following of Jesus in the Church, it will **ask for incorporation** by means of a letter addressed to the Superior General, which highlights the sense of the universality of the Family. A letter of introduction of the group, written by the person accompanying the group, must be attached.
- ✘ The Superior General and the International Commission of the ACI Family will welcome the new group.

Steps in the process of incorporation of a person

- ✘ After a process of approaching a group of the ACI Family, of discovering and walking along with others, of discernment and commitment, if the person finds in the group his/her way of living the following of Jesus in the Church, **he/she will request incorporation into the group** by means of a letter addressed to the Coordinator or to the person that accompanies the group.
- ✘ It is important for the person to be **accompanied by a Sister or a member of the ACI Family.**
- ✘ The group will welcome the new member.
- ✘ Although it is important and necessary to live the faith in community, if there is no possibility of joining a group, the person can ask his/her incorporation into the ACI Family by means of a letter addressed to the Superior General. The one who accompanies this person will attach a letter of introduction explaining the process followed and how he/she will maintain his/her union with the ACI Family.

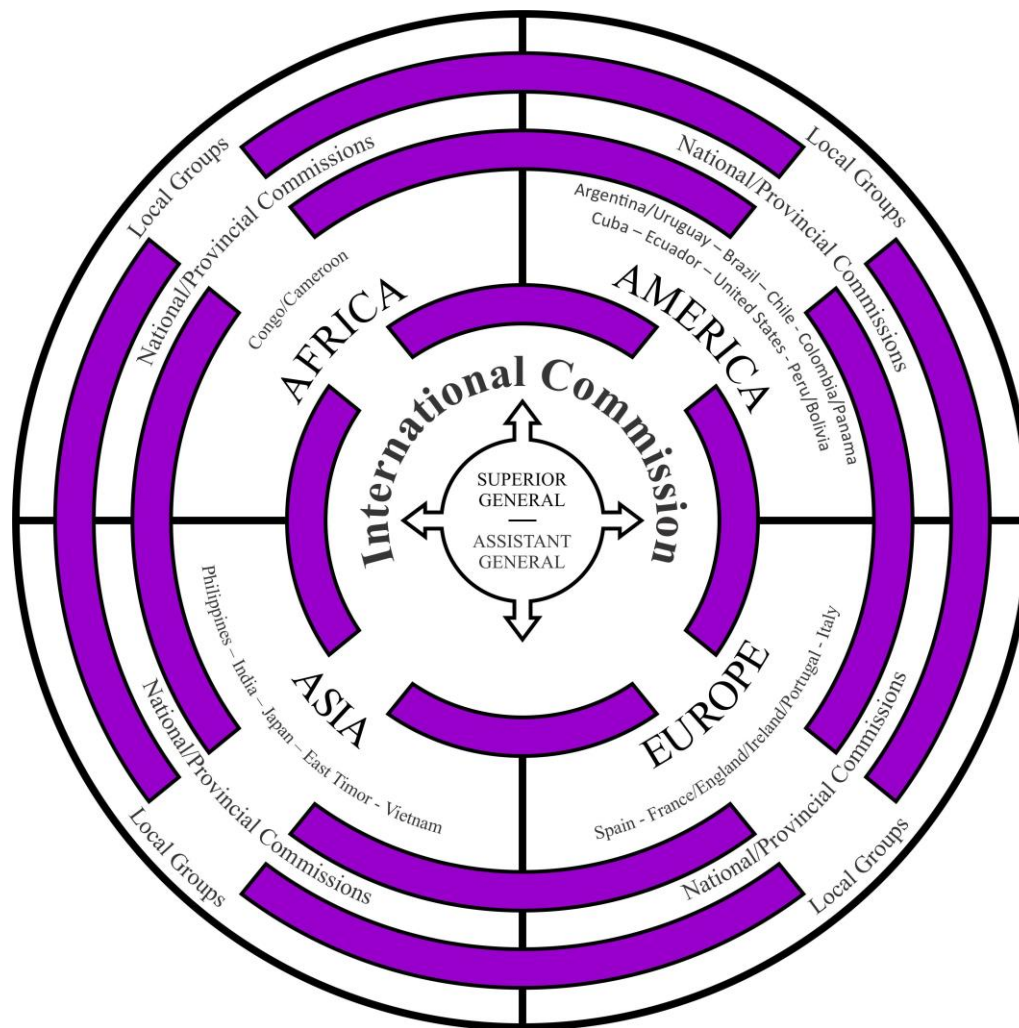
Day of the ACI Family

At the universal level we will celebrate March 2nd, the anniversary of Saint Raphaela Mary's baptism, as the Day of the ACI Family. It will be a moment of bonding with the Family and of gratitude for the richness that universal communion in diversity brings.

This day will be a good occasion for the members of each group to renew their commitment of membership in the ACI Family. It will be also an occasion for new members to make their commitment and to be welcomed into the Family.

ORGANIZATION OF THE ACI FAMILY

The ACI Family has an organizational structure that consolidates it as a Family, strengthens communion and facilitates communication.



The circular shape of this organizational chart illustrates the desire to express the reciprocity of the Handmaids-Laity relationship at all levels. It is inspired by the contemplation of the lace made by Saint Raphaela Mary in which the design begins in the center and grows outward forming a circle. In this way, this image suggests a way to visualize the organizational chart.

The Superior General, link of union between the ACI Family and the Congregation of Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in dialog with the International Commission, will make important decisions regarding the life and mission of the Family. She will also appoint the Assistant General who will have the mission of accompanying the Family.

The International Commission comprised of five lay persons and two Sisters will be appointed by the Superior General, taking care, as far as possible, that the distinct zones and regions are represented.

Commission members will elect among themselves a coordinator, and responsibilities will be distributed according to the areas of work (formation, communication, fundraising ...).

The functions of this Commission will be:

- ✘ to encourage the life of the Family, promoting union among all the groups,
- ✘ to work so that the proposals and spirit of the International Assemblies may be carried out,
- ✘ to accompany the Family in the steps that it takes in regard to its organization,
- ✘ to maintain communication through the established channels,
- ✘ to propose a formation plan and seek ways to develop it,
- ✘ to keep updated the data of the groups and members of the ACI Family, through the National / Provincial Commissions,
- ✘ to take steps to achieve the economic autonomy of the Family,
- ✘ to encourage the commitment of the ACI Family to PROACIS,
- ✘ to prepare the next International Assembly.

It seems necessary that in the different countries and provinces work be done through commissions. These National or Provincial Commissions, appointed by the Provincial Superior, will be in contact with the International Commission and will encourage the life of the Family in their area.

The Provincial Superior of each place will be the link between the Family and the communities. She and the National or Provincial Commission will seek suitable means to encourage and develop the ACI Family.

The International Assemblies will be held every five years and will be convoked by the Superior General in dialog with the International Commission.

It is good to organize meetings at the level of regions and/or continents.

Fundraising

We are aware of the need for ways to achieve our economic autonomy, at local, national/provincial and international levels.

For this it is necessary:

- ✘ To know the needs of the Family.
- ✘ To make budgets in the short and medium terms.
- ✘ To find methods of fundraising.
- ✘ To keep the expenses within the budget.
- ✘ To make an annual report of financial activity.

The commitment of each member, of each group of the ACI Family, from the different realities, is very important. All of us can cooperate with our service, our financial contribution ...

FORMATION IN THE ACI FAMILY

Drawing up a formation plan for the ACI Family is a response to the desire and the need to have guidelines and themes for in-depth reflection that are common to all of us, that help us to go deeper into the charism of the Foundresses and thus come to know Jesus more so as to love and follow Him more.

The Formation plan will cover the aspects of content, celebration and commitment to the mission. It has to have wide objectives that can apply to all the groups of the ACI Family, that respect diversity, and that strengthen the bonds of union and the universal character that identifies us.

In this path of formation it is important to approach the broken world, poverty, suffering ... and to grow in love, in humility, in joy, in generosity, in self-gift, in sacrifice ... convinced that all this is possible in our day to day life, since Raphaela Mary taught us this: that she let God be God and found in the Eucharist the strength to live in this way.

Formation process

In the formation process we will start from and will respect the current situation of each person and group, going out to meet them where they are. In this Family they come as they are, and from their group go on to become brother/sister to many others.

We want to keep in mind formation in the following areas:

- × human,
- × Christian,
- × Scriptural,
- × Ecclesial,
- × ACI Charism,
- × political and social,
- × ecological, etc.

We want to deepen in:

- ✘ Self-knowledge.
- ✘ Interpersonal relationships.
- ✘ Our vocation to a full humanness that lives in solidarity.
- ✘ Our lay vocation and our baptismal commitment.
- ✘ The Word of God.
- ✘ Our humble belonging to and collaboration in the local Church.
- ✘ Knowledge of Church documents.
- ✘ The legacy of Raphaela Mary, as known from her story and her writings:
 - How she discovered the following of the poor and humble Jesus.
 - How she wanted to respond to the Love of God through Reparation.
 - How Christ in the Eucharist became the center of her life.
- ✘ The vital place that the Eucharist celebrated, adored and lived can have in our busy daily life.
- ✘ The richness that Ignatian spirituality possesses as a way that is always valid for finding God in all things and working for the “good that is more divine the more universal it is”.
- ✘ The mission and concrete works of the Institute of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in its “wholehearted” search to extend the charism of Saint Raphaela Mary to where the “need is most urgent”.
- ✘ The universal dimension of the ACI Family.
- ✘ The social doctrine of the Church.
- ✘ The commitment to the poor.
- ✘ Become aware of our responsibility for the care of Creation.

We want to be constant in:

- ✘ Coming together periodically at the local level.
- ✘ Living communion, joy, self-giving love, peace... Reparation in our daily life: family, work, profession...
- ✘ Taking care of our personal relationship with Jesus Christ in prayer.
- ✘ Participating in the Eucharist and inviting others to do the same.
- ✘ Adoring Jesus in the Eucharist because there we learn to adore Him in our brother who is broken.
- ✘ Organizing and participating in days of gathering, prayer, retreats, Spiritual Exercises.
- ✘ Our comprehensive formation.
- ✘ Having projects with the mission of solidarity at the local and universal level that unite us in the struggle for and reconstruction of a better world.

- ✘ Collaborating actively in projects for justice and peace.
- ✘ Collaborating by fundraising and as volunteers in PROACIS (Project ACI in Solidarity), the NGO for development.
- ✘ Communicating among ourselves and encouraging one another in the work projects of each group in different parts of the world, and at certain times organizing national/provincial assemblies.

COMMUNICATION IN THE ACI FAMILY

The universal character of the Family makes it necessary to establish good channels of communication.

Communication at the international level will be possible to the degree that local communication is promoted and improved. In this regard, the National or Provincial Commissions, the accompanying Sisters and the coordinators of each group must assume their key role in communication.

There are already some means. We wish to use them and keep them active.

- ✘ E-mail: c.internacionalfaci@hotmail.com
- ✘ Website: www.familiaaci.com
- ✘ Facebook: Familia Aci Internacional
- ✘ Handmaids Today: Be committed to send informative articles and make this magazine available to each group in the Family.
- ✘ Take advantage of the letters from the Superior General and the Provincials as a means of communication.
- ✘ Share material that has already been produced.

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The content of this Document will be evaluated in the next International Assembly of the ACI Family.

We closed this Assembly on March 2, Day of the ACI Family, anniversary of the baptism of Saint Raphaela Mary.

We desire that the Virgin Mary, Mother of the living Gospel and woman of faith, may be our model. *“She let herself be guided by the Holy Spirit on a journey of faith towards a destiny of service and fruitfulness. Today we look to her and ask her to help us proclaim the message of salvation to all and to enable new disciples to become evangelizers in turn.”* (cfr. *Evangelii Gaudium* N 287).