



## VERNIAN LAY ASSOCIATION



### **TO BE AND TO OPERATE**

### **In the footsteps of Mother Antonia!**

Number 13

Dear Vernian Family,

As established in the first post-assembly Council of Sept. 17, 2023 (that is, “to have four Councils a year”), here we are at our third General Council of the new quadrennial. This was held by Zoom online with all of the councilors. Also present were the new Secretary General and the Treasurer General.

Those who connected online, on Saturday, **May 25, 2024** at 3:00 pm were: Mother General, Sr. Raffaella Giudici; President, Anna Maria de Rosa; the four Councilors: Mario Trombetta, Pablo Suarez, Vincenzo Fornace, and Najat Tayeh; Secretary General, Pilar Cuevas; and Treasurer, Anna Bratti.

Aside from the President General, as was decided in the previous Council of Nov. 11, 2023, the Regional Presidents of Argentina, Kenya, and Tanzania were also invited to attend online.

### **1. Introduction**

The opening prayer, which commences each one of our Council, was assigned to Mrs. Pilar Cuevas, who proposes the “Prayer to the Immaculate Mary” by Pope Francis. It is so beautiful and heartfelt, that counter to the spirit of synthesis which should animate this work...I will cite some passages:

“...Awaken in all of us, a renewed desire for holiness:

May the splendor of truth shine forth in our words,

the song of charity resound in our works...

Help us never forget the meaning of our earthly journey:

May the gentle light of faith illumine our days,  
The comforting power of hope guide our steps,  
The contagious warmth of love stir our hearts...”

After having approved the minutes of the preceding Council, the first topic was point 3 of the ODG which was of great importance to the Association.

## **2. Reference Sisters or Associative Structure**

The president informs that the Council of the Italian Province of the Congregation, through the request of the Mother General, has assigned Sr. Elena Tosi to identify and coordinate with other Sisters who would be able to follow the individual Italian Vernian regions or also be available as the “reference nun” for single, local groups.

A large group of Sisters emerged who started connecting online on specific dates with the President, herself.

**With great joy, Anna Maria reports, the system seems to work** and the local groups will definitely benefit from it.

The Association will also benefit from this exchange of information: in fact, for example, it is possible to have feedback on the progress of the formation in the Italian groups/regions almost live (in real time).

Even overseas, the reference nuns are also present at the regional level.

Vincenzo Fornace has contacted the Italian regions and has obtained positive feedback from all. We can therefore mention a draft outline, still in progress:

## REFERENCE SISTERS

Coordinator for the Italian Province: Sr. Elena Tosi

<b>ITALIAN VERNIAN REGION</b>	<b>REFERENCE SISTER</b>	<b>COMMUNITY IT BELONGS</b>
<b>PIEDMONT</b>	Sr. Roberta Neri	Rivarolo
<b>LOMBARDY/EMILIA</b>		
Copreno Group	Sr. Elena Tosi	Naples – Province
Crevalcore Group	Sr. Dina Ratti	Crevalcore
<b>CAMPANIA</b>	Sr. Elena Tosi	Naples – Province
<b>PUGLIA</b>		
Bari Group	Sr. Vita Ria	Bari
Cursi Group	Sr. Grazia Pellegrino	Cursi
Collepasso Symp.	Sr. Angela de Marco	Collepasso
Acquaviva Symp.	Sr. Luigina Manganiello	Acquaviva
<b>CALABRIA</b>		
Capo Rizzuto Island Grp.	Sr. Maria Concepcion	Capo Rizzuto Island
San Giovanni in Fiore Grp.	Sr. Rosaria Petrassi	San Giovanni in Fiore
Fuscaldo Symp.	Sr. Candida Macri	Fuscaldo

<b>VERNIAN REGIONS OVERSEAS</b>	<b>REFERENCE SISTER</b>	<b>COMMUNITY IT BELONGS</b>
<b>ARGENTINA</b>	Sr. Adriana Bock	Provincia
<b>LEBANON</b>	Sr. Grazia Maggese	Ghebaleh
<b>UNITED STATES</b>	Sr. Letizia Tribuzio	Mount Pleasant
<b>KENYA</b>	Sr. Leocadia Joseph	Nairobi
<b>TANZANIA</b>	Sr. Immacolata Pancras	
<b>MEXICO</b>	Sr. Liziana Rodriguez	Sabinas Hidalgo

This situation is temporary because in Campania, Sr. Elena perhaps could be supported by the Bari and Acerra Groups, and also because the reference nun of Kenya will terminate her assignments on December 2024.

Vincenzo and Anna Maria will briefly review the various Italian groups, highlighting their level of formation.

Anna Maria will also face the theme of “associative structure,” point 4 of the ODG. From the attached B, which has arrived from everywhere in our world, resulted in about 440 laity, both those who have made their promises and the sympathizers. The numbers may still increase because data has not yet been received from Capo Rizzuto Island and the names of the sympathizers of some groups from Puglia.

### **3. Vernian Laity Website and the Intervention of the Regional Presidents**

From the beginning of our Assembly, there was a search for a solution for our website, which not only is obsolete as a technical language, but it is no longer even managed due to a series of events independent of the will of those who managed it. After having had dizzying estimates for the meager finances of our treasury, we accepted the invitation of the Congregation, which reserved a space for the Vernian Laity and the Missionaries of Charity on the new website, which is also being tested. Because the Congregation’s website is still in its experimental phase, this point will be postponed for discussion at the next Council at the end of September.

Ernest Oyoo, **regional president of Tanzania**, tries to participate but it is hard to hear him because of the poor connection. There is also a second difficulty: the Secretary General, being a professor of languages, should translate in real time but had difficulty in translation: other than the poor connection, English was not her first language.

Ernest then promised to send his document on the Tanzanian Vernian Family by email. This will be translated into Italian and attached to the current meeting minutes.

Anna Maria informs us that in Tanzania, there are six groups; the last to form is the new Namanga Group, about 20-strong, of whom 15 have said their promises.

Even the **President of the Kenyan Vernian Region** was not able to connect.

Mario Trombetta has observed that Anna Maria, during her visit to Africa which will occur between August and September of this year, will understand these two realities better and will personally report her experience during the next Council.

On the other hand, the connection with the **President of the Argentinian Vernian Region** was excellent. Mrs. Liliana Santoro provides ample and detailed information that has been collected in a report; it will be attached in full to this summary.

There are 46 Vernian Lay Argentinians; on June 12, six more will pronounce their promises. Therefore, that Vernian Region will then constitute 52 laity and 17 sympathizers. One lay person has initiated the formation to become a Missionary of Charity.

In March 2024, there was a big meeting among the Argentinian Laity in which all the heads of the local groups, the Regional President and her council, the General Council, Pablo Suarez, and the Provincial Superior, Sr. Adriana Bock, either appeared in person or virtually. Therefore, all the members of the Argentinian Vernian Family were represented.

As in past years, training sessions and the regional Vernian activities have been scheduled. From a formative point of view, we will work on and deepen the understanding of the Beatitudes (Mathew 5, 1-12).

The method: every community will prepare an aspect of the Beatitudes and will share it with all others.

The same procedure will be followed also with the prayer which is said on the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month, dedicated to our Blessed (Mother Antonia). In the folder which concerns Formation, there are 3 other points that are considered indispensable: the Church Magisterium, the works of Mother Antonia, and the final, fundamental documents of the General Assemblies of 2015, 2019, and 2023.

Regarding the life of the groups, Liliana found that there is one difficult situation to note at General Alvear, Mendoza. The group had elected a new leader who left after Easter.

It was decided not to follow what has been done in the past in similar cases. Normally, the Regional Council traveled often, if not monthly, to the site to follow the group first-hand.

This system is no longer tenable given the high cost of travel. One of the regional councilors belongs to this community and will take care of it until the new election. The Regional President will nevertheless visit the group and will verify that the conditions exist to hold a new election.

Liliana ends her speech saying she is worried about the “faithfulness to the Charism” of the Argentinian Vernians. Nor do we see a “renewal of forces.” In certain cases, we don’t even see the willingness to assume some responsibility within the Association.

The Councilors open an animated discussion on these points and agree that similar signs unfortunately do not only manifest in Argentina but also in other Vernian regions.

**They also agree on the unequivocal fact that charism is a great gift which should not be lost, and that it is the duty of every single Vernian to defend it and live it to the fullest with a lifestyle that can serve as an example to all.**

#### **4. Brief consideration on the recent and important document of the Dicastery of the Faith “Dignitas Infinita” of the General Councilor Vincenzo Fornace.**

Given the importance of this topic and the brief time remaining for the connection, it was decided to defer this point for the next Council in September.

## 5. Miscellaneous

### Membership Fund

Anna Bratti communicates that the cash balance at the current date is 833 Euro. Still to be done is the annual solicitation from all the Vernian groups (which usually happens in the month of May) for the 2024 membership dues.

Even this year, as in innumerable years, the dues are fixed by the Council to 10 Euros a year for each Vernian who has said their promises in December of the preceding year. **Two African regional Vernian groups** are exempted because they are penalized by the difference in the euro exchange rate of their currency.

They collect money (with rules set by them) in Kenyan and Tanzanian Shillings to help their delegates who will participate in the next General Assembly.

**Argentina** declares, through its Regional and the Councilor Pablo Suarez, that they cannot meet their contribution for the current year (equivalent to 520 Euro) because of the drastic economic situation of the country.

As always, after a brief discussion, Anna Bratti reminds us that:

- a) the contribution is free and voluntary;
- b) the figure is purely indicative and those who have more economic resources can also contribute more;
- c) the amount raised is used SOLELY to fund the necessary expenses for the next Assembly and to maintain the website..
- d) in the past, whenever there was a surplus, this was directed towards a charitable work that was suggested by the Congregation.

Anna reminds that even to make the last Assembly happen, there were not enough funds and the members of the General Council, the Treasurer and some lay members of goodwill, had to “self-tax” to reach the necessary amount to organize the event.

### Methodological Considerations

Councilor Pablo Suarez notes that oftentimes the information is not always adequate for the large volume of events. For example, not enough importance was given to the visit of the President to Piedmont and Emilia, or to the start of two

new groups: one from Fuscaldo in the region of Calabria, and another in Namanga, Tanzania, or even the planned African visit of our President.

If nothing else, it concludes “to be able to rejoice in these great news, as is the custom in a big family, which we are.”

Anna Maria responded in being surprised in that she thought she told at least the heads of the Vernian Family with messages and photos on WhatsApp. With regard to her desire to visit as many regions as possible, with Africa first and foremost, she mentioned this in her policy speech immediately after her election.

The Vice President intervenes, saying that for 20 years there has always been an effort to spread the main news to the entire Vernian family, which is, moreover, widely dispersed throughout the world. He considered this, as he himself often emphasized, a top priority.

We will endeavor in any case, to increase information, not only to the Council but to a wide audience of Vernian laity also supported by the new association website.

### **Important message from the Mother**

Mother Raffaella provides some briefings on the next General Chapter meeting of the Congregation, the 37<sup>th</sup>, which will occur this year in Rome, in the *House of Saints Rufina and Seconda*, during the month of July.

The theme shall be, “Charismatic Identity and Prophetic Mission,” as embodied in the biblical icon of Luke 1, 39-56: “Mary got up and went in haste...”

At this point, she ends by asking the Vernian Lay Family for prayers for this event that will mark the next six years.

She also adds that the Missionaries of Charity held their annual formation meeting on May 9-12, partly in person and partly online, with the theme, “Pilgrims of Hope.”

Mother Raffaella thanked each of those present for their journey together over the six years, for their “free” commitment (“a gratis” as our Foundress loved to say) and urges us to walk together to obtain good results, even during such difficult times.

Mother Antonia was able to accept the challenges of her times.

Therefore, we make our own motto, which for all of us is a mantra now: “Mother Antonia never stops, and never gets discouraged.”

Milan, August 29, 2024

For the President

And the Council

Mario V. Trombetta