

METHODOLOGICAL GUIDE FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE XXVII GENERAL CHAPTER



**One Mission, One in Mission:
*Mystical and Prophetic Missionaries
on a Synodal Journey***

Claretian Missionaries - General Government

“One Mission, One in Mission: Mystical and Prophetic
Missionaries on a Synodal Journey”

*Methodological Guide for the preparation of the XXVII General
Chapter*

Rome, 2026

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	6
I. OBJECTIVES OF THE PREPARATORY PROCESS	9
1. General Objective	9
2. Specific Objectives	9
II. FUNDAMENTAL APPROACHES	10
1. Synodal Approach: Walking Together in Shared Responsibility	10
2. Spiritual–Discernment Approach: Listening to the Voice of the Spirit	11
3. Narrative–Experiential Approach: Discerning Through Lived Reality	11
4. Appreciative–Transformative Approach: From Seeds of Life to Renewal	12
III. CORE METHODOLOGY: CONVERSATION IN THE SPIRIT ...	14
1. Nature of the Method	14
2. Fundamental Attitudes	15
3. Basic Flow of the Process	18
Step 1: Personal Preparation	18
Step 2: First Round (Sharing)	19
Step 3: Silence	19
Step 4: Second Round (Resonances)	19
Step 5: Discernment	20
Step 6: Synthesis	20
IV. PHASES OF THE PREPARATORY PROCESS	22
PHASE 1: PREPARATION AND FORMATION (April–July 2026)	22

PHASE 2: LISTENING AND DISCERNMENT IN COMMUNITIES (August–November 2026)	23
Phase 2.1 – Listening to Discern	23
Phase 2.2 – Listening to the Cry of Reality	25
Phase 2.3 – Listening to the Congregational Reality	26
PHASE 3: ORGANISM-LEVEL DISCERNMENT (December 2026 – January 2027)	28
PHASE 4: CONFERENCE-LEVEL SYNTHESIS (February–March 2027)	30
FINAL PHASE: GENERAL SYNTHESIS (April–May 2027)	33
V. FACILITATION GUIDELINES FOR ANIMATORS	36
1. Role of the Animator: Guardian of the Process	36
2. Practical Guidelines for Facilitation	37
3. Common Pitfalls to Avoid	38
VI. GUIDELINES FOR SYNTHESIS TEAMS	40
1. Nature of the Synthesis: A Spiritual Discernment	40
2. What to Capture: Listening for the Movements of the Spirit ...	41
3. Criteria for Discernment: Ensuring Fidelity and Depth	42
4. What to Avoid: Safeguarding the Integrity of the Process	43
VII. PRACTICAL TOOLS	44
1. Structure of a Session: A Rhythm of Prayer, Listening, and Discernment	44
2. Recording Contributions: Capturing the Voice of the Process	45
3. Timeline Overview: A Journey of Progressive Discernment	46

VIII. FINAL SPIRITUAL ORIENTATION	48
CONCLUSION	50
APPENDIX.....	52
WORKBOOK FOR RECORDING THE FRUITS OF CONVERSATION IN THE SPIRIT	52

ELECTION OF CHAPTER DELEGATES

The electoral period of the delegates to the Chapter shall be coordinated by the Secretary General with the Major Superiors. We have scheduled this to take place from 1 September 2026 – 8 December 2026.

INTRODUCTION

The preparation for the XXVII General Chapter is a living ecclesial and congregational experience, already filled with grace, participation, and shared discernment that shape the Chapter from within. It unfolds as a privileged moment in which the entire Congregation is invited to listen deeply, discern attentively, and journey together under the gentle guidance of the Spirit. More than a preparation for a future event, it becomes a shared spiritual path that renews our identity, strengthens our communion, and revitalizes our missionary calling.

This guide is offered as a structured yet flexible pathway to animate our journey together towards the celebration of the Chapter. It builds on the experience of the XXVI General Chapter while responding to the present call to live more deeply the Synodal path. It seeks to ensure coherence and participation across the Congregation, while respecting the diversity of contexts in which this process unfolds. Above all, it presents discernment as a deeply communal journey in search of God's will, grounded in prayer, attentively engaged with reality, and dynamically oriented toward mission.

The inspiration for this guide emerges from the broader journey of the Church, particularly the Synod on Synodality, which calls us to walk together in communion, participation, and mission. It is also shaped by the orientations of the Sri Lanka Meeting of Major Superiors

with the General Government (2026), which emphasized deeper listening, shared responsibility, and authentic discernment. At the same time, it remains grounded in the concrete life of the Congregation, where the Spirit continues to speak through its challenges, hopes, and diverse realities.

Within this horizon, the preparatory process unfolds as a rich spiritual experience rather than a mere functional task. It invites each person and every community to deepen in attentive listening, grow in interior freedom, and remain open to the movements of the Spirit. Participation, in this light, becomes a meaningful and shared commitment, an active collaboration in discerning together what God is asking of us today.

For this reason, the process becomes a shared responsibility rather than a delegated task. While specific teams coordinate and facilitate, all members of the Congregation are called to be active participants. Each voice matters, not simply as an individual contribution, but as part of a communal listening where the Spirit reveals convergences, challenges, and new paths.

Ultimately, this journey is intended to be transformative. It goes beyond gathering information or preparing documents, aiming instead at the renewal of persons, communities, and mission. When lived authentically, the preparation itself becomes a space of

conversion and growth. In this way, the XXVII General Chapter will receive the fruits of a process that has arisen from our Congregation already renewed by having listened, discerned, and walked together in the Spirit.

I. OBJECTIVES OF THE PREPARATORY PROCESS

1. General Objective

To facilitate a global process of communal discernment that enables the Congregation to recognize the voice of the Spirit in its life, mission, and context, and to prepare the XXVII General Chapter with clarity, depth, and missionary relevance.

2. Specific Objectives

1. To cultivate a culture of listening and discernment at all levels of the Congregation.
2. To engage all members and relevant collaborators in a synodal process of reflection and dialogue.
3. To listen to three interconnected realities:
 - the interior life of the Congregation
 - the cries of humanity and creation
 - the movement of the Spirit in history
4. To generate meaningful syntheses that reflect not only opinions but discerned convergences.
5. To prepare the Chapter with grounded, Spirit-led insights that guide decisions and orientations.

II. FUNDAMENTAL APPROACHES

The preparatory journey toward the XXVII General Chapter is based on a set of foundational approaches that shape the spirit, method, and depth of the entire process. These approaches are complementary and interrelated, forming a coherent way of proceeding that enables authentic communal discernment. They ensure that the process remains ecclesial in nature, spiritually grounded, attentive to lived reality, and open to transformation.

1. Synodal Approach: Walking Together in Shared Responsibility

The synodal approach constitutes the fundamental horizon of the entire process. To walk synodally is to recognize that the Congregation is a body journeying together, where all are called to participate actively in its life and mission. This implies that every member is a subject of discernment, not merely a recipient of decisions. Synodality calls for co-responsibility, mutual listening, and openness to the contribution of others. It fosters a culture in which dialogue replaces individual opinion, communion overcomes fragmentation, and decisions emerge from a shared search for God's will. In this way, the process becomes a space where the Spirit speaks through the entire body, and where unity is built through attentive and respectful listening.

2. Spiritual–Discernment Approach: Listening to the Voice of the Spirit

At the heart of the process is a spiritual–discernment approach that fosters a deep, prayerful journey, guiding us all beyond a mere exchange of ideas toward a shared listening to God’s voice. Discernment is fundamentally a spiritual act, rooted in prayer, silence, and openness to God. It invites participants to move beyond surface-level reactions and to become attentive to the deeper movements of the Spirit within themselves and within the community. This requires interior freedom, humility, and a readiness to be transformed. In this context, listening becomes a profound spiritual attentiveness that embraces both the voice of others and the inner movements of one’s own heart. Through this deeper awareness, the process matures into an authentic discernment of God’s will, opening a space where the Spirit can guide the community beyond simple dialogue into shared clarity and mission.

3. Narrative–Experiential Approach: Discerning Through Lived Reality

The narrative–experiential approach situates discernment within the concrete reality of lived life. Rather than starting from abstract ideas, it invites us to attend to our experiences as privileged spaces where God is revealed. Personal stories, communal life, and missionary encounters become meaningful sources of insight. As

these experiences are shared and received in attentive listening, the community is able to perceive recurring patterns, recognize the movements of the Spirit, and uncover deeper significance. This approach also recognizes the diversity of contexts within the Congregation, allowing varied realities to enrich the common discernment. In this way, the process remains anchored in life and avoids becoming merely theoretical or disconnected from reality.

4. Appreciative–Transformative Approach: From Seeds of Life to Renewal

The appreciative–transformative approach orients the process toward growth and renewal by first recognizing the seeds of life already present within the Congregation, those beautiful signs of grace, vitality, and fidelity that manifest the action of the Spirit. Beginning from this positive horizon nurtures hope, gratitude, and a renewed energy for the journey. At the same time, this approach does not overlook challenges or difficulties; rather, it situates them within a wider perspective of transformation. Weaknesses and tensions are received as invitations to conversion and deeper growth. By maintaining a clear grasp of reality while being open to grace, the community does recognize what needs to change and also sees how the Spirit is already working to guide that transformation.

These four approaches form an integrated and coherent framework that sustains this entire preparatory process. They allow the journey toward the XXVII General Chapter to unfold as a communal and participatory experience, deeply spiritual, rooted in lived reality, and oriented toward authentic transformation.

III. CORE METHODOLOGY: CONVERSATION IN THE SPIRIT

1. Nature of the Method

“Conversation in the Spirit” stands at the heart of the preparatory process as a living path of communal discernment. It is a deeply spiritual and ecclesial practice through which the community learns to listen together to what the Spirit is revealing. More than an exchange of ideas, it is a disciplined form of dialogue oriented toward seeking God’s will through attentive listening—to God, to one another, and to the inner movements that arise along the way. Although, after the last General Chapter, many Claretians initially expressed resistance to this kind of conversation, because of concerns such as lack of free time, the feeling of “losing time,” or doubts about its practical fruits, many later acknowledged that their personal experience of the process gradually transformed their perception, helping them discover its richness, depth, and transformative value.

This approach invites a deeper quality of awareness that goes beyond spoken words. It encourages participants to notice and welcome the spiritual movements present within the process—such as consolations, resistances, and emerging insights. In this way, the conversation gradually becomes a sacred space where the presence and action of the Holy Spirit are recognized and embraced.

It can be understood as a threefold movement: **a spiritual process of listening, a communal search for God’s will, and a space of transformation.** It invites us to move beyond superficial exchange into a deeper encounter where each person speaks from lived experience and listens with reverence, openness, and a spirit of welcome toward the other. The fundamental question that underlies the process is not simply “What do I think?” but rather “What is happening within me and within the other, and how is the Lord at work here?”.

As an indispensable path for the entire preparatory journey, this method calls for careful fidelity even as it is adapted to diverse cultural and contextual realities within the Congregation. **Its essential elements, such as prayerful grounding, attentiveness to interior movements, respect for each voice, and openness to the transforming action of the Spirit, are not optional but vital for the integrity of the process.** When these are consciously preserved, the conversations become a true space of grace, sustaining their contemplative depth and enabling authentic communal discernment.

2. Fundamental Attitudes

By its very nature, “Conversation in the Spirit” calls for the cultivation of certain fundamental attitudes. It is precisely through these interior dispositions that the conversations become fruitful, as they create the spiritual

climate in which authentic discernment and shared listening can truly take place.

Participants are first invited to cultivate active and **deep listening**. This listening becomes an active and attentive presence, seeking to encounter the other in truth and depth, welcoming not only the spoken words, but also the meaning, tone, and the deeper experience they carry. It requires a heart that is open, receptive, and willing to be influenced by the other, recognizing that the Spirit can speak through each person.

Closely linked to this is the attitude of **welcoming without judgment**. Each person is received in his uniqueness, without prejudice or premature evaluation. Such listening is an act of humility and hospitality, rooted in the conviction that every person carries a truth of experience that contributes to the whole. It also demands the discipline of not preparing one's response while another is speaking, but remaining fully present to the other.

Within this horizon, **respect for diversity** becomes an essential disposition. The variety of cultures, experiences, sensitivities, and perspectives present in the group is not an obstacle to unity but a privileged place where the Spirit manifests richness and breadth. True discernment does not seek uniformity but communion; it welcomes differences as gifts to be received and integrated. When diversity is approached with humility

and trust, it deepens the process and prevents it from becoming narrow, self-referential, or dominated by a single perspective.

Equally essential is **speaking from the heart**. Participants are called to express sincerely their lived experience, their thoughts, and their inner movements, taking responsibility for what they share without imposing it on others. This kind of speaking is not argumentative or defensive, but reflective and offering; it is a gift placed at the service of communal discernment.

Interior freedom remains a foundational disposition. Participants enter the process without attachment to personal agendas, without the need to defend positions or control outcomes. This freedom allows the conversation to remain open to the surprising action of the Spirit.

Openness to conversion is equally necessary. Participants are invited not only to share but to be transformed, allowing what they hear to challenge, purify, and deepen their understanding. In this way, the process becomes not only communicative but formative.

Finally, **interior silence** remains indispensable and must be sustained through dedicated personal time throughout the entire process. It is in these moments of personal prayer and reflection that what has been heard is gradually interiorized and discerned. The more we commit ourselves to cultivating this personal space of silence, the

more deeply the fundamental attitudes required for “Conversation in the Spirit” take root, strengthening the quality and fruitfulness of the entire journey toward the Chapter. In this silence, participants become more aware of their inner movements, recognize the action of the Spirit, and respond with depth and freedom rather than immediacy. Such silence is nourished by a consistent life of prayer, especially through the regular practice of personal examen, which forms the capacity to listen, discern, and speak authentically from within.

3. Basic Flow of the Process

The process of “Conversation in the Spirit” unfolds in a structured yet flexible sequence that integrates personal prayer, communal sharing, attentive silence, and collective discernment. Each step contributes to a gradual deepening from individual experience to shared recognition of the Spirit’s movement.

Step 1: Personal Preparation

The process begins with a time of personal prayer and reflection. Participants place themselves consciously in the presence of God, engaging the theme in a spirit of discernment. This stage involves becoming aware of one’s inner movements, such as thoughts, emotions, attractions, resistances, and discerning their significance. Participants are encouraged to gather the fruits of this prayer so that what is later shared arises from a place of interior depth rather than spontaneity.

Step 2: First Round (Sharing)

Each participant is given the space to share the fruits of personal prayer and lived experience. The sharing is reflective and experiential rather than analytical or argumentative. All are given equal time, and the group listens attentively without interruption or discussion. The focus is not on reacting but on receiving, remaining attentive to how the Spirit may be speaking through each person's contribution.

Step 3: Silence

A period of silence follows, allowing participants to interiorize what they have heard. This silence is a moment of discernment in which each person reflects on how he has been moved, noting particularly moments of resonance, consolation, or tension. It marks the transition from hearing words to perceiving their spiritual significance.

Step 4: Second Round (Resonances)

Participants then share what has touched them in the first round. The emphasis shifts from one's own experience to the recognition of the Spirit's action through the words of others. This is not a time for discussion or correction, but for expressing how one has been affected, what has resonated, and what new insights have emerged. Through this sharing, common threads begin to surface, and the group starts to perceive what unites them.

Step 5: Discernment

After a brief period of silence, the group moves into a deeper phase of communal discernment, seeking to identify patterns that have emerged: convergences, tensions, repeated intuitions, and significant absences. Participants attend to questions such as where harmony is felt, what has been particularly life-giving, and what may indicate the movement of the Spirit. At this stage, the conversation becomes explicitly a shared act of listening to God together.

Step 6: Synthesis

Finally, the group articulates a synthesis of what has been discerned. This synthesis does not aim to collect all individual opinions, but to express the shared spiritual insight that has emerged. It names the perceived movements of the Spirit with clarity and fidelity, offering a communal response rather than a negotiated compromise. A brief review of the process and a prayer of thanksgiving may conclude the encounter, reinforcing its ecclesial and spiritual character.

When lived with fidelity, “Conversation in the Spirit” becomes more than a method; it becomes a formative and transformative experience. It shapes participants in the art of listening, purifies the way they speak, and deepens their capacity for communal discernment. It fosters a climate of trust, respect, and

spiritual attentiveness in which the Congregation can recognize more clearly the voice of the Spirit. In this way, the preparatory process itself becomes a privileged space of renewal, opening the community to be guided, unified, and transformed as it journeys toward the XXVII General Chapter.

IV. PHASES OF THE PREPARATORY PROCESS

The preparation for the XXVII General Chapter unfolds through a clear and progressive process. Each phase builds upon the previous one, moving from personal and community listening to wider levels of discernment, and finally to a global synthesis. The objective is to foster and ensure that the entire Congregation engages in a meaningful, prayerful, and well-structured journey of listening to the Spirit.

PHASE 1: PREPARATION AND FORMATION **(April–July 2026)**

This first phase establishes the foundations for the entire process. Its purpose is to ensure clarity of vision, unity of method, and readiness of all those who will animate the journey.

Each Major Organism constitutes a **Preparation Team** responsible for coordinating the process locally, while **Conference Synthesis Teams** are also established in view of later stages. The Coordinating Commission prepares the necessary materials and organizes formation sessions for animators, offering them a formative and enriching experience. Through these sessions, animators deepen their understanding of the method of “Conversation in the Spirit” and grow in the spiritual attitudes needed to guide it with clarity and care.

PHASE 2: LISTENING AND DISCERNMENT IN COMMUNITIES (August–November 2026)

This is the central phase of the entire process. It is at the level of local communities that the widest participation takes place and where the primary listening to the Spirit unfolds. Each community is invited to engage in three movements of listening, each supported by personal preparation, a retreat, and a “Conversation in the Spirit.”

Phase 2.1 – Listening to Discern

Biblical Icon: Acts 15:1-35 (The Council of Jerusalem, an example of communal discernment in the light of the Spirit)

Objective: To approach the Chapter with a listening and discerning heart, deepening the quality of our listening and fostering a true culture of discernment.

This first movement invites communities to reflect on their capacity to listen to God, to one another, and to reality, through a process that includes personal time of prayer and reflection, a community retreat, and a shared experience of “Conversation in the Spirit.” For this process to bear fruit, it is essential that participants become familiar with the method itself, internalize the required attitudes, and faithfully follow the basic flow that guides it. Such preparation ensures that the experience does not

remain at the level of discussion, but becomes a true space of spiritual discernment. It is thus a call to both personal and communal conversion, recognizing that authentic discernment begins with a renewed and transformed way of listening, one that is prayerful, attentive, and open to the action of the Spirit within the individual and the community.

Questions for Community Conversation

- 1.** Have you ever felt truly listened to? What attitudes in the listener made you feel that way? (At the end of the sharing, the group, guided by the facilitator, discerns and selects one or two key experiences to present in the final report.)
- 2.** How do you see your own ability to listen? What are your strengths? In which areas do you need to grow?
- 3.** How do you respond to differences within the community (opinions, cultures, sensitivities, theological views, etc.)? Do these differences help build fraternal communion? How do you experience this?
- 4.** How does your community discern God's call to pastoral conversion? Is listening to reality part of this process? What still needs to be strengthened?

The fruits of this conversation are compiled and submitted through Google Form by **September 30**. These contributions will help the Congregation recognize the current **culture of listening** that characterizes its life. (Refer to the appendix for a model for compiling the fruits of the conversation).

Phase 2.2 – Listening to the Cry of Reality

Biblical Icon: Exodus 3:1–12 (God hears the cry of His people and responds)

Objective: To listen to the cries of humanity and creation with a compassionate, God-like heart, so as to respond with a prophetic spirit.

This second movement broadens the horizon of discernment. Inspired by the biblical image of God who hears the cry of His people (Ex 3:1–12), communities are invited to listen to the realities of the world with a compassionate and missionary heart.

After personal preparation and a second retreat, the community engages in a conversation centred on the signs of the Kingdom present in reality and the challenges that call for a prophetic response. Communities are encouraged to include **laypeople, religious, and others**, especially those whose voices are often less heard, in order to deepen their listening.

Questions for community conversation

1. Where in today's reality do you sense the Holy Spirit at work, fostering the growth of the Kingdom of God?
2. What forces or situations seem to resist or hinder the coming of the Kingdom?
3. What cries or needs of the world might God be inviting us to listen to more attentively?
4. In what ways are we being called to collaborate with God in transforming the world as missionaries?

Each community submits its responses through Google form (maximum five per question) by **November 10, 2026**.

A locally appointed team by the Major Organism prepares a common synthesis of the material by **December 5, 2026** while the animation team ensures that the process is carried out with care and fidelity.

Phase 2.3 – Listening to the Congregational Reality

Biblical Icon: 1 John 1:1–4 (Proclamation, communion, and joy)

Objective: To discern what the Spirit is saying to us through the diverse realities of Claretian life across the world.

The third movement turns attention to the life of the Congregation itself. Inspired by the biblical vision of communion and proclamation (1 Jn 1:1–4), communities are invited to discern what God is saying through their lived missionary experience.

After a third retreat, communities reflect on their fidelity to the charism, the realization of the “Dream” of the previous General Chapter, and the challenges they face. This reflection is carried out in the light of key themes of Synod on Synodality such as communion, participation, and mission.

Questions for community conversation

1. What stories or experiences from your community or Organism show that the Congregation’s Dream is becoming a reality? (You may include two or three examples in the report.)
2. What challenges or difficulties seem to hinder the realization of this Dream in your community, Organism, or in the Congregation as a whole?
3. In what ways might we collaborate more closely with the Spirit to help this Dream grow and take shape in our community, Organism, and the entire Congregation?

Communities are invited to hold together a **critical and hopeful perspective**, recognizing both what needs transformation and the many seeds of life already present.

The fruits of this phase are submitted through Google form by **November 30**. These contributions will

form the basis for a **Synthesis Document on Congregational Reality**, which will integrate inputs from all levels and be prepared for the Chapter.

PHASE 3: ORGANISM-LEVEL DISCERNMENT (December 2026 – January 2027)

This phase marks a significant transition in the preparatory process, moving from the level of individual communities to the broader level of the Major Organism. It is a moment of integration, where the insights, experiences, and discernment emerging from the community phase are brought together, deepened, and interpreted in a wider perspective.

At this stage, the leadership of each Organism organizes at least one **Organism-level conversation**, which may take different forms depending on the context—assembly, extended council, sectoral gathering, or another suitable format. What is essential is not the form but the quality of the process: it should remain faithful to the spirit of prayer, listening, and discernment that characterizes “Conversation in the Spirit.”

For this dialogue to be fruitful, it is important that participants come prepared, having engaged with the **synthesis of Phase Two** from their communities. This prior reflection allows the Organism not simply to repeat what has already been shared, but to enter into a deeper level of discernment, recognizing patterns, identifying common movements, and seeking a more unified understanding of its reality and mission.

The reflection at this stage is guided by a central call of the XXVI General Chapter: to live more deeply **rooted in Christ and Claretian spirituality**, and to be audacious **in mission**. This dual focus—rootedness and boldness—serves as a lens through which the Organism reads its life and discerns its path forward.

Questions for the Major Organism Conversation

The XXVI General Chapter invites us to grow in deeper rootedness in Christ and Claretian spirituality, and in greater boldness in mission.

1. What experiences within your Organism reflect this lived reality of being rooted and bold? (You may include two or three examples in the report.)
2. What challenges or obstacles make it difficult to live this call more fully?
3. How might your Organism collaborate more closely with the Spirit to deepen this rootedness and strengthen its missionary boldness?

These questions are not meant to generate quick answers but to foster a sincere and attentive discernment. The aim is to recognize where the Spirit is already at work, where resistance or limitation is present, and what new paths may be opening.

This phase also offers the opportunity for **broader participation**, if the Organism so desires. Additional conversations may be organized, by apostolic sectors, age

groups, or ministries, to enrich the discernment with diverse perspectives. Such initiatives can deepen the process and ensure that the voice of the Organism is both representative and spiritually grounded.

The fruits of this discernment are then carefully gathered and articulated. Each Organism is asked to submit the conclusions of its conversations through a **Google form by January 31, 2027**. These contributions become an essential part of the next phase, as they feed into the Conference-level synthesis.

Ultimately, Phase 3 is not merely a stage of consolidation but a genuine moment of communal discernment at a higher level of integration. It allows each Organism to listen more deeply to what the Spirit is saying through its shared experience, and to articulate its contribution to the wider Congregation with clarity, depth, and fidelity.

PHASE 4: CONFERENCE-LEVEL SYNTHESIS (February–March 2027)

This phase represents a decisive moment of integration and discernment at the level of the Conference. Having received and reflected on the contributions from the different Organisms, the Conference now becomes a privileged space where the diverse voices of the Congregation within a region are brought into dialogue, prayerfully interpreted, and discerned together.

The participants in this phase are the **Conference capitulars**, whether already elected or appointed. Their responsibility is not simply to review the material received, but to enter into a genuine process of communal discernment. Drawing from the social, ecclesial, and Claretian realities expressed in the previous phases, they seek to recognize the deeper movements of the Spirit that are emerging within their Conference.

This dialogue is carried out in a spirit of synodality, using the method of **Conversation in the Spirit**, so that the process remains rooted in prayer, attentive listening, and openness to transformation. The aim is not to produce a technical summary, but to arrive at a **discerned synthesis** that expresses the shared experience, challenges, and hopes of the Conference.

Questions for the Conference Discussion

1. What stories or experiences within the Conference reveal vitality, collaboration, and a sense of shared mission? (Participants may include two or three significant examples in the report.)
2. Looking back over the past six years, how can we understand the journey of the Conference? What progress has been made, and what difficulties have been encountered?
3. In what areas of our missionary life are we being called to grow in collaboration? What needs to be strengthened so that the Conference can offer more effective service to the Congregation and to the mission?

These questions invite the Conference to read its own history with honesty and hope, recognizing both the signs of life and the areas that require renewal. The focus is not only on evaluation but on discerning future possibilities in the light of the Spirit.

An important dimension of this phase is the capacity to identify **emerging themes or issues that may require deeper study**. If the Conference discerns that certain matters need further reflection before the Chapter, it may propose these to the General Government, clearly indicating the reasons and the relevance of such study. This ensures that the Chapter is better prepared to address key concerns with clarity and depth.

The conclusions of the Conference discussions are then carefully articulated and submitted through the designated **Google forms by March 20, 2027**. These contributions represent the voice of the Conference and play a crucial role in shaping the global synthesis.

If appropriate, the Conference also communicates by the same date any proposals for topics that should be studied in advance of the Chapter. This step strengthens the preparatory process by allowing for focused reflection on significant issues.

Ultimately, Phase 4 is not merely an administrative stage of consolidation but a genuine moment of ecclesial discernment at a higher level of communion. It allows the

Conference to listen together to what the Spirit is saying through its shared experience and to contribute, in a unified and meaningful way, to the preparation of the XXVII General Chapter.

FINAL PHASE: GENERAL SYNTHESIS (April–May 2027)

The final phase of the preparatory process brings together the entire journey of listening and discernment into a unified expression. At this stage, a commission appointed by the General Government is entrusted with preparing a **global synthesis document** that integrates the contributions from communities, Major Organisms, and Conferences.

The members of this commission are designated by the General Government during its meetings in **December 2026**, ensuring that the work of synthesis is prepared in advance and carried out with clarity of mandate and responsibility. Their task is not simply technical but deeply spiritual and ecclesial. They are called to engage the material with prayerful attentiveness, seeking to recognize the deeper movements of the Spirit that have emerged throughout the process.

Using all the materials received, especially the contributions from the third phase at the community level, the discernment at the Organism level, and the syntheses from the Conferences, the commission undertakes a

careful work of reading, prayer, and discernment. Particular attention is given to the **third phase of community reflection on Congregational reality**, as it offers a direct insight into how the life and mission of the Congregation are being experienced and interpreted across different contexts.

The goal of this synthesis is not to compile all responses or produce an exhaustive report, but to **identify convergences, highlight key themes, and articulate the principal calls of the Spirit**. It seeks to bring into focus what is emerging as common across diverse realities, while also acknowledging tensions, questions, and areas that require further discernment. In doing so, the commission strives to remain faithful to the voice of the Congregation, avoiding reductionism and allowing the richness of the shared experience to be preserved.

The resulting document is then prepared for translation and must be sent to the translators by **May 30, 2027**, so that it can be made available in time for the General Chapter. Once translated and distributed, it becomes a **privileged working instrument** for the capitulars.

More than a summary, this synthesis serves as a **spiritual and pastoral map** of the Congregation at this moment in its history. It reflects a journey lived together, marked by listening, dialogue, and discernment, and

provides the foundation upon which the XXVII General Chapter can carry forward its mission of reflection, decision-making, and renewal.

In this sense, the final synthesis is not simply the conclusion of a process, but the bridge between preparation and celebration. It ensures that the Chapter begins already rooted in a shared experience of communion, attentive to the Spirit, and ready to respond with clarity and courage to the calls of God in our time.

V. FACILITATION GUIDELINES FOR ANIMATORS

1. Role of the Animator: Guardian of the Process

In the methodology of “Conversation in the Spirit,” the animator does not function as a facilitator of discussion in the usual sense, nor as a leader who directs content or outcomes. Rather, the animator serves as a **guardian of the process**, ensuring that the space remains faithful to its spiritual purpose and method.

This role requires a delicate balance. On the one hand, the animator must be attentive and active in guiding the flow of the session; on the other hand, he must remain internally free, allowing the Spirit to lead the process. The animator does not impose ideas, interpret contributions, or steer the group toward predetermined conclusions. Instead, he creates and protects a space where **listening**, **discernment**, and **transformation** can take place.

In this sense, the animator ensures three essential dimensions. First, **fidelity to the method**: that each stage of the process: sharing, silence, resonance, and discernment, is respected without being rushed or altered in ways that compromise its integrity. Second, **spiritual depth**: that the conversation remains rooted in prayer, openness, and attentiveness to the Spirit, rather than becoming merely intellectual or procedural. Third,

participation of all: that each voice is welcomed and heard, and that the process reflects a genuine experience of synodality.

The animator's presence, therefore, is less about directing and more about **holding the space**, a space where the Spirit can speak through the community.

2. Practical Guidelines for Facilitation

To carry out this role effectively, the animator must attend carefully to the practical aspects of the process, ensuring that both the structure and the spirit are preserved.

Every session should begin with **prayer and silence**, allowing participants to enter into a reflective and receptive disposition. This initial moment is crucial, as it sets the tone for the entire process and helps participants move from activity to attentiveness.

The animator should **clearly explain the method**, especially when participants are unfamiliar with "Conversation in the Spirit." This includes outlining the stages, the purpose of silence, and the importance of listening without interruption. Clarity at the beginning prevents confusion and helps participants engage more fully.

It is essential to **ensure equal participation**. The animator gently encourages those who are less inclined to speak, while also ensuring that those who speak more frequently do not dominate the space. This balance fosters a sense of inclusion and shared responsibility.

The animator must also **avoid debates or argumentative exchanges**. If the conversation begins to shift toward discussion or disagreement, it is the animator's role to gently bring it back to the intended mode of sharing and listening.

Special care must be taken to **protect moments of silence**. Silence is not a pause between activities but an integral part of the process. The animator ensures that these moments are respected and not shortened, allowing participants to interiorize what has been heard.

Finally, the animator helps the group to **identify convergences**, the points where shared insights and common movements of the Spirit begin to emerge. This is done not by imposing interpretations but by inviting the group to recognize what resonates collectively.

3. Common Pitfalls to Avoid

Despite good intentions, certain tendencies can weaken the process if not carefully avoided. One of the most common pitfalls is **turning the session into a discussion**. When participants begin to respond directly

to one another, defend ideas, or engage in debate, the spiritual depth of the process is diminished. The animator must remain attentive to this shift and gently guide the group back to listening and discernment.

Another risk is the **dominance of a few voices**, which can discourage participation and distort the communal nature of the process. The animator ensures that space is created for all, especially for those who may be less confident in speaking.

There is also the danger of **superficial sharing**, where participants remain at a general or abstract level without engaging their real experience. The animator can help deepen the sharing by encouraging participants to speak from concrete life situations and personal reflection.

Finally, there is the tendency to **rush the process**, especially when time is limited. Skipping stages, shortening silence, or moving too quickly to conclusions can undermine the integrity of the method. The animator must safeguard the rhythm of the process, trusting that authentic discernment requires time, patience, and attentiveness.

When these guidelines are followed with care, the animator becomes an instrument through which the community is able to listen more deeply, discern more clearly, and grow together in openness to the Spirit. In this way, facilitation itself becomes a ministry, one that serves communion, fosters participation, and opens the path to genuine transformation.

VI. GUIDELINES FOR SYNTHESIS TEAMS

1. Nature of the Synthesis: A Spiritual Discernment

The work of the synthesis teams is central to the integrity of the entire preparatory process. Their task is not simply to gather and organize information, but to **discern and articulate the voice of the Spirit** emerging from the shared journey of the Congregation.

For this reason, the synthesis must not be understood as a report in the usual sense. It is not a compilation of responses, nor a summary of opinions. Rather, it is a **spiritual reading of the process**, attentive to what has been deeply experienced, widely shared, and communally recognized. It seeks to identify not only what has been said, but what has been **revealed through the process of listening and discernment**.

In this sense, the synthesis is both an act of listening and an act of interpretation—one that requires prayer, interior freedom, and fidelity to the spirit of the process. It is an attempt to name the **shared movements** that have emerged across different contexts, allowing the deeper meaning of the contributions to come to light.

2. What to Capture: Listening for the Movements of the Spirit

In carrying out their task, synthesis teams are called to attend carefully to specific elements that reveal the presence and action of the Spirit within the process.

First, they identify **convergences**, those insights, experiences, or concerns that appear consistently across different communities and contexts. These are not simply repeated ideas, but expressions of a shared awareness that carries weight and resonance.

Second, they remain attentive to **emerging intuitions**, new perspectives, fresh insights, or unexpected directions that may not yet be fully developed but point toward future possibilities. These often indicate where the Spirit is inviting the Congregation to grow.

Third, they recognize **tensions or unresolved questions**. These are not to be avoided or resolved prematurely. Instead, they are to be named with clarity, as they often reveal areas where deeper discernment is needed.

Finally, they seek to articulate the **calls of the Spirit**, those invitations that emerge clearly from the process, pointing toward conversion, renewal, or new missionary directions. These calls give orientation and purpose to the synthesis.

3. Criteria for Discernment: Ensuring Fidelity and Depth

A valid and meaningful synthesis is guided by certain criteria that ensure its authenticity and usefulness for the General Chapter.

It must reflect **spiritual depth**, showing that the process has been lived in prayer and openness to God, rather than remaining at a superficial or purely analytical level.

It must demonstrate **communal resonance**, meaning that what is expressed is not the perspective of a few but something that has been recognized and shared by many across different contexts.

It must have **missionary relevance**, connecting the insights of the process with the concrete life and mission of the Congregation, and pointing toward action and renewal.

Finally, it must show **fidelity to the charism**, remaining rooted in the identity, spirituality, and mission that define the Congregation, and ensuring continuity with its foundational inspiration.

4. What to Avoid: Safeguarding the Integrity of the Process

In order to preserve the true nature of the synthesis, certain approaches must be carefully avoided.

The synthesis should not become a **list of opinions**, where individual contributions are simply recorded without discernment or integration. Such an approach weakens the spiritual dimension of the process.

It must avoid a **majority-voting logic**, where conclusions are based on numbers rather than on discernment. The goal is not to determine what most people think, but to recognize where the Spirit is leading.

Personal interpretations or biases should also be avoided. The synthesis is not the expression of the synthesis team's views, but a faithful reflection of the communal process.

Finally, it should not become an **overly technical or abstract summary**. While clarity and structure are important, the synthesis must remain accessible, meaningful, and rooted in lived experience.

When carried out with fidelity, the work of the synthesis teams becomes a true ministry of discernment. It serves the Congregation by transforming a wide range of contributions into a coherent and Spirit-led vision, helping the General Chapter to recognize more clearly the paths to which God is calling it today.

VII. PRACTICAL TOOLS

1. Structure of a Session: A Rhythm of Prayer, Listening, and Discernment

Every session of “Conversation in the Spirit” follows a simple but deeply meaningful structure. This structure is not merely procedural; it reflects a spiritual rhythm that helps the group move from prayer to listening, from sharing to discernment, and from experience to insight.

- i. **Invocation of the Spirit:** Begin with a moment of prayer, placing the session in God’s presence and opening hearts to the Spirit.
- ii. **Listening to the Word of God:** Proclaim a Scripture passage to guide and inspire the reflection.
- iii. **Personal Reflection:** Allow time for silence so each participant can reflect and become aware of inner movements.
- iv. **Conversation in the Spirit:** Share and listen according to the method, without discussion or interruption.
- v. **Discernment:** Identify common insights, emerging themes, and movements of the Spirit.
- vi. **Recording of Insights:** Note down the key fruits of the conversation clearly and faithfully.

2. Recording Contributions: Capturing the Voice of the Process

Purpose:

- To faithfully capture what the group has discerned together
- To connect local conversations with the wider Congregation

What to Submit (3 Key Elements):

i. Key Insights

- a. Main understandings that emerged from the conversation

ii. Experiences or Stories

- a. Concrete examples that show how the Spirit is at work

iii. Discerned Calls

- a. Directions for growth, conversion, or mission

Important Guidelines:

- Reflect the **shared voice of the group**, not individual opinions
- Use **clear and simple language**
- Stay **faithful to the spirit of the conversation**
- Avoid unnecessary details or technical expressions

This step ensures that the fruits of the process are communicated clearly and meaningfully for the wider discernment.

3. Timeline Overview: A Journey of Progressive Discernment

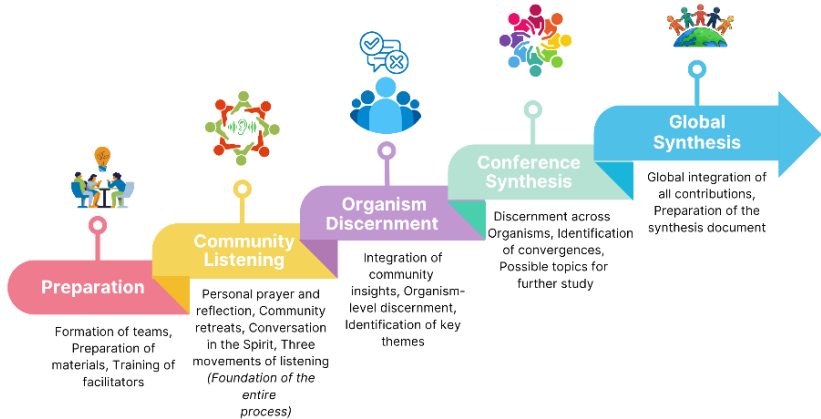
The preparatory process unfolds over a clearly defined timeline, allowing for a gradual deepening of listening and discernment across different levels of the Congregation.

Key Phases and Timeline

Phase	Timeline	Key activities
1. Preparation	Apr. – Jul. 2026	a. Formation of teams b. Preparation of materials c. Training of facilitators
2. Community	Aug. – Nov. 2026	a. Personal prayer and reflection b. Community retreats c. Conversation in the Spirit d. Three movements of listening <i>(Foundation of the entire process)</i>
3. Organism	Dec. 2026 – Jan. 2027	a. Integration of community insights b. Organism-level discernment c. Identification of key themes
4. Conference	Feb. – Mar. 2027	a. Discernment across Organisms b. Identification of convergences c. Possible topics for further study
5. Final Synthesis	April 2027	a. Global integration of all contributions b. Preparation of the synthesis document

Simple Flow: Preparation → Community Listening → Organism Discernment → Conference Synthesis → Global Synthesis

PROCESS TIMELINE FLOWCHART



This timeline ensures a **gradual deepening of discernment** from the local to the global level.

Together, these practical tools ensure that the process remains both structured and alive, guided by a clear method, yet open to the creative and transformative action of the Spirit. They help translate the vision of synodal discernment into concrete practice, enabling every participant to engage meaningfully in the journey toward the XXVII General Chapter.

VIII. FINAL SPIRITUAL ORIENTATION

The preparation for the XXVII General Chapter is not merely an organizational effort or a sequence of activities leading to an event. At its deepest level, it is a **spiritual journey** that touches the identity, relationships, and mission of the Congregation. It invites us to rediscover who we are and how we are called to live in this moment of history under the guidance of the Spirit.

This process calls us, first of all, to **become a listening Congregation**. Listening here is not simply a skill but a way of being, an attitude of openness to God, to one another, and to the realities of the world. It requires humility, patience, and the willingness to be challenged and enriched by what we hear. We truly enrich our lives when we take the time to listen to others—whether they're religious, lay people, or believers from various backgrounds and experiences. The Spirit often chooses to communicate with us through their voices. As we grow in this capacity, listening itself becomes transformative, shaping our relationships and deepening our communion.

At the same time, we are invited to **grow as a synodal missionary body**. This means learning to walk together, to discern together, and to respond together. Synodality is not an abstract idea but a lived experience of shared responsibility, where each member contributes to

the common mission. In this journey, the Congregation becomes more united, more participatory, and more responsive to the calls of the Spirit.

Above all, the process calls us to **allow ourselves to be transformed by the Spirit**. True discernment always leads to conversion, personal, communal, and missionary. It invites us to let go of what limits us, to embrace new possibilities, and to align ourselves more deeply with God's will. This transformation is not imposed from outside but emerges from within, as we listen, reflect, and discern together.

When lived authentically, the preparation itself becomes a **moment of renewal**. It renews our faith, our relationships, and our sense of mission. It becomes a **space of conversion**, where we confront our resistances and open ourselves to growth. And it becomes a **path toward missionary transformation**, where the Congregation is gradually shaped into a more faithful, courageous, and prophetic presence in the Church and in the world.

In this way, the journey toward the Chapter is already a participation in its grace. What we live now, in listening, discerning, and walking together, will determine not only the quality of the Chapter, but the future vitality of the Congregation's life and mission.

CONCLUSION

The XXVII General Chapter does not begin when it is formally convened; it begins now, in this shared journey of listening, prayer, and discernment. Each moment of attentive listening, each sincere conversation, and each step taken together in openness to the Spirit already forms part of the Chapter itself. What we live in this preparatory process will shape not only the outcomes of the Chapter, but the depth of our communion and the authenticity of our missionary response.

May this journey lead us to become ever more **attentive to the Spirit**, cultivating hearts that are open, discerning, and ready to recognize God's presence in all things. May it help us grow **more united in mission**, strengthening our bonds as a missionary community called to walk together in faith, hope, and love. And may it make us **more courageous in responding to God's call**, ready to embrace new paths with boldness and trust.

In this journey, we entrust ourselves in a special way to the **Heart of Mary**, the model of listening, openness, and availability to God's will. Her contemplative and missionary heart accompanies us, teaching us to welcome the Word and to respond with generosity.

We also look to **St. Anthony Mary Claret**, our Founder, whose life was marked by a profound attentiveness to the Spirit and an untiring zeal for the

mission. His example continues to inspire us to live with clarity of purpose, inner freedom, and apostolic courage.

Likewise, we remember the witness of the **Claretian Martyrs**, whose fidelity and self-giving unto death remain a powerful testimony of love for Christ and the mission. Their lives remind us that authentic discernment leads to total generosity and unwavering commitment.

Accompanied by Mary, inspired by our Founder, and strengthened by the witness of the martyrs, may we walk this synodal path with faith and hope, allowing the Spirit to guide us toward a renewed and more missionary future.

APPENDIX

WORKBOOK FOR RECORDING THE FRUITS OF CONVERSATION IN THE SPIRIT

A. BASIC INFORMATION

- **Community / Group Name:**

- **Organism / Conference:**

- **Date:**

- **Phase:** (Circle) Phase 2.1 / Phase 2.2 / Phase 2.3 / Phase 3 / Phase 4

- **Facilitator:**

- **Recorder:**

B. PERSONAL PREPARATION (Before the Session)

(To be filled individually, then kept for personal reference or shared if needed)

1. What touched me most during my prayer and reflection?

2. What inner movements did I notice? (peace, resistance, clarity, confusion, etc.)

3. What do I feel called to share?

C. FIRST ROUND: SHARING (Key Points Only)

(Recorder notes briefly; no interpretation)

Participant 1: _____

Participant 2: _____

Participant 3: _____

(Continue as needed)

D. SECOND ROUND: RESONANCES

(What touched us in others' sharing)

- What stayed with us?

- What surprised or moved us?

- What seemed to carry deeper meaning?

E. DISCERNMENT: RECOGNIZING THE MOVEMENTS

1. Convergences (Common Insights)

- _____
- _____
- _____

2. Emerging Intuitions (New Insights / Directions)

- _____
- _____

3. Tensions or Questions (Not Yet Resolved)

- _____
- _____

F. DISCERNED CALLS OF THE SPIRIT

(What do we feel God is inviting us to?)

- Personal level:

- Community level:

- Mission level:

G. EXPERIENCES / STORIES
(Concrete Examples)

(2–3 significant examples only)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

H. FINAL SYNTHESIS (TO BE SUBMITTED)

1. Key Insights (3–5 points)

- _____
- _____
- _____

2. Main Calls (2–3 points)

- _____
- _____

3. Noted Challenges / Questions

- _____
- _____

I. QUALITY CHECK (Before Submission)

✓ Does this reflect **shared discernment**, not individual opinions?

✓ Is the language **clear and simple**?

✓ Are we expressing **what the Spirit is saying**, not just what was discussed?

✓ Are the points **focused and not excessive**?

FACILITATOR QUICK CHECK (Back Page)

Before closing the session:

- Did everyone have a chance to speak?
- Was silence respected?
- Did we avoid discussion/debate?
- Did we identify real convergences?
- Did we name at least one clear call of the Spirit?

FINAL NOTE FOR USERS

This workbook is not meant to capture everything, but to help the group **discern and express what truly matters.**

It is a tool to move from:

- sharing → listening → discerning → **recognizing the voice of the Spirit**