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**For a new Missionary Venture with the Laity
Let's put out into the deep! (Luke 5, 4)**

Rome, 2nd March 2024

To All MSOLA and M. Afr

Dear brothers and sisters,

One of the gifts of Lord to our Missionary Family during its last two Chapter Assemblies is the call to open our doors to lay people who wish to share our charism by making a formal commitment.

A legacy of Cardinal Lavigerie

Sharing our charism with lay people is something that we owe first and foremost to our founder. If we look in his life, we see successful examples of confidence in the laity and collaboration for the cause of the Mission. In Algiers, he established the *Association Sainte-Monique*, an association for prayer and charity, which published every two months a bulletin for the promotion of the works of Lavigerie. Its members were also involved in various activities such as adopting orphans, sponsoring missionaries and making voluntary offerings for the propagation of the faith.

We can also cite the Auxiliaries of the Mission, a group of lay people set up by Lavigerie to defend the caravans and to protect the missions. Although they were never integrated into the Society as members, the Auxiliaries made a solemn commitment to Our Lady of Africa to work at the service of the Mission for a specific period of time. They had their own statutes and internal regulations. This group, although short-lived, was a wonderful experience of the collaboration of the Laity in the Mission, according to their own context and secular reality. Over the years, lay people, attracted by our charism, have contributed to evangelisation and to the coming of the Kingdom of God as dreamt of by our founder.

Inviting lay people to participate in Mission today

Motivated by the recommendations of our two General Chapters, today we want to encourage, wherever we are, the participation of lay people in the Mission, and more

particularly in the apostolate. We are undertaking this venture together, in a family spirit. For this reason, we ask that the possibility be given to lay people who so desire, after discernment and journeying with us, to make a formal commitment to embrace our charism in one way or another.

Cultivating new attitudes

Although we have a long tradition of collaboration and working with the laity, the new journey we are now embarking on requires of each of us, M. Afr. and MSOLA, a conversion in our relationships with each other and in our way of looking at the laity. This journey calls for mutual respect and esteem, for dialogue, for freedom from any attitude of superiority or inferiority, and for walking together in mutual accompaniment.

A growing family

The Lavigerie family is a reality for the Mission that finds its origin in God, in the Church and, through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in our founder. Today, for those lay people who want to take their commitment further, we offer the possibility of starting a process that will lead them to be recognised in a "third order association". An official recognition by the Holy See will be the culmination of a process that will confirm an experience that will have already been lived. We are giving ourselves time to gain experience before evaluating the possibility of submitting a request to the Holy See for public recognition at the level of the universal Church.

For the time being, let us make sure that the groups that already exist are well organised, with an official status and recognition by a Major Superior - the provincial or the Entity leadership. Sister Leticia Garduño and Father Anselme Tarpaga are the General Assistants in charge of coordinating and accompanying this project. They will help the two General Councils and our Lavigerian family to move forward on the path of collaboration and of better sharing our charism with the laity.

May Mary, Our Lady of Africa, always accompany us on this journey.



P. Stanley Lubungo
Superior General



Sr Angela Kapitingana
Superior General