DIRECTIVES OF THE 27TH GENERAL CHAPTER
Grounded in our understanding of the Xaverian Charism, the 27th General Chapter affirms the following practices and directives pertaining to Community & Spirituality...

Each of us is responsible for reflecting regularly on this present understanding of our charism and for examining his personal and communal life in light of the statement.

Each of us is responsible for discerning the traditional spiritual exercises that will help us grow in the love of God, of neighbor, and of self.

Each community is, likewise, responsible for the same discernment of those traditional spiritual exercises that will help it to be a vibrant community.

Each brother is encouraged to find the practices that nurture the dispositions of the heart and mind that lead us to greater intimacy with self, others, especially our brothers, and God.

**Brother Edward Driscoll**

In the course of the Chapter, we came to realize that our Founder’s charism is a gift to the Church and world. Today perhaps more than any other time in our history our charism is needed. Grateful for the gift we have received, we also share a great responsibility to be faithful stewards of the charism. We call each other, then, to deepen our personal and communal spirituality.
Some ways “to integrate prayer and contemplation with growth in friendship within the community” include:

- introduce or continue faith-sharing with our Brothers and others who are so disposed to trust one another at this level of sharing;

- allow time in our day for spiritual reading and find ways to share the fruit of this reading with our Brothers, Associates, and Collaborators;

- find time in our daily schedule to sit in solitude, contemplating the love God has for us, for our Brothers, and for the world;

Thus, as Brothers in community, we are encouraged:

- to gather regularly to plan community activities and to share our lives, our aspirations, and our faith;

- to be attentive to how we pray, how we celebrate, how we offer hospitality, how we use our resources, and how we relate to our families; and,

- to grow in accountability to one another including an examination by all Brothers and communities of their local financial practices in light of our charism statement, including how we live out our shared responsibility and accountability in areas such as budgeting, banking and financial reporting.

We commit ourselves to provide specific formation programs and accompaniment for all our Brothers, but especially for our temporary professed and senior Brothers. In the initial formation program of the Xaverian Brothers care shall be taken to imbue young Xaverians with the importance of service to the poor and the marginalized. Care shall be taken to ensure an active ongoing formation to support Brothers in their spiritual, theological, and professional development while engaged in ministry.

Brother Cornelius Hubbuch
These recommendations flow from the committee members’ belief that we need to and want to deepen our spiritual lives and the quality of our lives together. We believe that the three practices listed here are practical ways of helping us do that.

Brother Paul Feeney
The delegates at the General Chapter strongly stressed the necessity of a personally revitalized spiritual life, a reinvigorated community life, and a fruitful, ongoing program of religious formation. There is no time when a Xaverian Brother can say that his formation has been completed or that his spiritual and community life have reached their summit. The Chapter, therefore, has summoned each Brother to rededicate his efforts to actively embrace these essential elements of Xaverian spirituality.
Grounded in our understanding of the Xaverian Charism, the 27th General Chapter affirms the following practices and directives pertaining to Ministry...

Since it is through our life of Gospel witness lived in community that we respond to the Spirit’s summons “to manifest God’s care and compassionate love to the people of the world in these times” a Brother involved in ministry must normally be a member of a religious Brothers’ community, in observance of the call and spirit of the Statutes in relation to the choice of living situation and ministry.

Since the Brother does not retire from mission and ministry, each of us needs to respond continuously to the needs of the world and the Church in these days and discern how he can best respond to them given our ages, health and talents.

Brother Brian Davis

In our discussion at the General Chapter and in some of the pre-Chapter reports there was mention of both our ministries and our life as a religious community and the connection between the two. Who we are as religious Brothers is primary, and what we do flows from who we are. Our life as a community is at the core of how we give Christian witness to the world.

When discussing the topic of ministry, our needs vary from the United States and Belgium with so many older members to Congo and Kenya with our younger members. Our older Brothers are sources of edification to us by their desire to minister as they continue to seek ways to reach out to others in their retirement years, and we want to encourage Brothers nearing retirement to think of how they may best be of service when the time comes.
We propose that a Xaverian Brothers Education Association be formed in Africa to advance the quality of instruction as well as ensure that the Xaverian charism permeates the local Congolese, Kenyan or Sudanese Xaverian staffed school. No matter in what area of the congregation, new ministries should be life-giving to the community and be considerate of the needs of the poor and marginalized. We do, however, need to be honest with ourselves as a congregation regarding our limitations of available personnel and finances when new ministries arise.

Every Xaverian Brothers sponsored, operated or staffed school or social facility in Africa, Latin or South America shall engage in a periodic self-evaluation in the light of the Xaverian charism, emphasizing religious education and youth ministry. The ministry of education continues to remain the call of many of our Brothers. Those of us involved in administration of schools in the United States as well as our lay colleagues recognize the need to examine the direction of Corporate Members and XBSS models as we look to the future. The vibrant presence of our Kenyan and Congolese Brothers at the Chapter and their dedication to the growing ministry of education in their countries was energizing, and they would like to see a variant of XBSS in their areas, and as more Brothers complete their education would like to ensure that there are corporate ministries imbued by the Xaverian Charism in which they may serve.

Before initiating a new work or project of the Congregation care should be taken to ensure:

- sustainability of the Xaverian community’s prayer life and life form;
- that the new work or project is in accord with the call of the Congregation to have a preferential option for the poor and marginalized and the evangelization of the people;
- that the community and work/project be assured sufficient financial resources, personnel and support to make the work/project self-sustaining.

Brothers in all areas of the congregation are grateful for the presence of our collaborators in mission and edified by their example, and hope that their involvement and dedication can be further enhanced by new programs by which their connection with each other may continue to grow.

We propose an inclusive examination and assessment of both the Corporate Member and XBSS models with respect to effectiveness and sustainability for the future.
Grounded in our understanding of the Xaverian Charism, the 27th General Chapter affirms the following practices and directives pertaining to Finance...

The congregational Finance Committee and General Treasurer will:

- continue to refine, update and modify a long-range financial plan for Xaverian life and mission as the context for annual budgets;

- allocate proceeds from planned real estate sales in the US and England for building the value of the congregation’s invested funds, rather than for annual operating needs;

- continue annual financial reporting to the membership, including an update on the long-range financial plan and forecast.

Brothers Dan Skala & Art Caliman

The Chapter considered the long-range financial challenges for the congregation in the context of our charism statement that call us to “live ordinary lives...in a place of humility and simplicity...without privilege or entitlement.” This will require a careful shift of focus from balanced annual budgets to a longer-term plan that needs to be understood and embraced by the members.
The XBSS Office in the US will adjust the fee structure for its services and programs, as necessary, so that its operations continue to be supported by sponsorship fees and its share of annual investment income from the Van Gerwen Trust.

The general administration will:

- engage professional consulting services for examining potential changes in operations, management and occupancy at both Ryken House and Xaverian House, as well as future alternatives for members in the US and Belgium when current options are no longer viable;

- explore future options for collaborative administrative services that may reduce the operating costs of the Generalate office;

- maximize the value of residential real estate in Belgium to help support future needs there and in other parts of the congregation;

- establish a future annual limit of $1 million in budgeted congregational subsidy for Xaverian life and mission in Africa and Haiti;

- in collaboration with regional leadership, develop resources to assist in identifying and building relationships with external funders for financing ministerial initiatives (e.g., NGO’s, foundations, church solidarity organizations, etc.) and expectations for financing new initiatives (e.g., fees for services, intra-country assistance, intra-country fund-raising, international assistance, etc.).

The Chapter recognized that the XBSS operations in the US are now funded entirely by fees from the schools themselves and interest from the Van Gerwin Trust, rather than any subsidy from the congregation’s unrestricted funds and that this form of self-support needs to continue.

In each country we will need to examine our use of material resources in light of both our financial realities and our charism’s call to live “on the margins, in solidarity and availability among the people.” The necessary adjustments in our lifestyles and financial practices will challenge us to follow the example of Francis Xavier and “stand ready to leave the familiar and the comfortable,” to live a simple lifestyle letting go all that is unnecessary.
The 27th General Chapter affirms the Xaverian Brothers Associate Program as a means to accompany others in the development of an integrated life of contemplation, service, and communion with the Brothers in the Xaverian Way.

Brother Richard Mazza
We attempted to impart not only an international and supportive imprint on the Associate Program but also official recognition by the Congregation of the Associates as members of our Xaverian Family. We hope such fraternal and remarkable recognition inspire and encourage our Associates to grow closer to all of us through daily prayer, communal contact and service to the poor and marginalized.

The 27th General Chapter embraces the “Description of the Charism as lived by the Associates” as a faithful expression of the Xaverian Way for those who have been called to the single, married, or priestly life.

Brother Bob Green
Studies in preparation for an expression of the charism of the Congregation have occurred in the same timeframe as the formation of a program for Xaverian Brothers Associates. Forty-three Associates reside across several regions of the U.S. These “pioneer” Associates have reflected among themselves, with Brothers, and in private on statements regarding the Xaverian Charism and presented a document of their own which would be an expression of how they describe the Charism as it refers to them and their lives.
The members of the 27th General Chapter recommend that our African regions in Congo and Kenya explore the establishment of Associate programs in conjunction with communication and support from the African Brothers and Congregational leadership. The Founder’s global aspirations may further encourage us to explore a similar expansion of this Association with members of our Xaverian family who reside in Belgium, England, and other missionary regions of the Congregation.

Brother Vincent Misiati

I have two people [in Bungoma]. We have already shared the introductory part of Xaverian associate program. One was taught by Br. Arcadius, and the other is Francis Masicha [who runs the street kids program]. As we discussed at the Chapter, I am doing it slowly. With the two, we have agreed that before December we should have a day of prayer and discussion on the understanding of Xaverian Associates.

Brother Bob Green

Brothers who have been accompanying our Associates have been impressed by the dedication to this relationship and have experienced blessings in their own lives as a result of the vitality of the Associates’ dedication to the Xaverian Charism. In order to share this vitality with other Brothers and to accompany and assist the Associates in living the Xaverian Way, the Brothers recognize our responsibility to provide opportunities for each other to be present to one another and to learn from one another.

Brother Richard Mazza

From the very beginning of the Associates Program, Brothers and Associates have frequently been asking and searching for more spiritual resources which may strengthen and enhance our ongoing relationships and accompaniment with each other. Throughout the duration of the 27th General Chapter, delegates kept on calling for more practices to further the living out of our Xaverian Charism. So, the members of the Associates Committee heard this call and recognized the ongoing need for practices which will create more formative and personal opportunities as well as more spiritual, historical and audio-visual resources for our Associates.
Grounded in our understanding of the Xaverian Charism, the 27th General Chapter affirms the following practices and directives pertaining to Governance...

The General Superior is to facilitate Congregational listening and creative response to God’s direction as it is identified in the needs of the world and the local situation of the Brothers.

The General Superior is to challenge and encourage each Brother towards a more faithful living out of the Charism in his life and toward greater responsibility for the life and mission of the Congregation.

The General Superior is to provide for appropriate pastoral presence to all the Brothers of the Congregation.

The General Superior is to exercise spiritual leadership by animating mutually formative and creative dialogue among the brothers, associates, and collaborators.

To the degree possible, the General Superior’s leadership role should be collaborative and multi-cultural and creative in overcoming language obstacles.

The Vicar is to be capable of fulfilling the role of General Superior when he is absent, ill, or in the event of his death. He should be involved in the leadership of the Congregation in order to be able to assist the General Superior as well as to assume his responsibilities when necessary.

Brothers John Hamilton & Paul Murray

The recommendations of the Governance Committee regarding the General Superior highlight his roles as the animator of an ongoing Congregation-wide process of discernment and direction setting regarding life and mission, as a pastoral presence to the Brothers, and as a facilitator of dialogue and formative reflection among Brothers, Associates, and Collaborators. While mindful of the requisite administrative aspects of his role, the Chapter reminds the General Superior that the call to Congregational leadership, as described in the Constitutions, is primarily a call to the animation and facilitation of the Congregational mission. The Chapter also calls the General Superior to exercise these roles in a collaborative and culturally aware and sensitive way.

The General Chapter recommends that the Vicar General be involved in the leadership of the Congregation to the degree that he collaborates in the work of the General Superior and is thus prepared to assume the responsibilities of the General Superior when necessary.
The General Council should monitor the process of the implementation of the Chapter practices and directives and hold accountable the general leadership’s fostering of these throughout the entire Congregation.

To the degree possible, the General Council should meet in the various regions of the Congregation and take some time from each meeting to listen to and thus incorporate in its decision-making the experience and insights of the Brothers of the region.

The General Council, as far as possible, should be representative of the various cultures and experiences of the Congregation.

Each region of the Congregation is to have a coordinator or convener whose responsibilities are the following:

- to convene the brothers of the region for prayer, ongoing formation, celebration, and regional and Congregational discernment and direction setting;
- to be a pastoral presence among the Brothers of the region;
- to facilitate communication among the members of the region concerning Congregational matters;
- to represent general level authority in personnel and Congregational matters, while in continuing consultation with the General Superior.

This coordinator is to be appointed by the General Superior after consultation with all the Brothers of the region and is to be adequately free of other ministerial responsibilities to carry out his role of animation and administration within the region. He is to have the assistants and counselors necessary for the fulfilling of his responsibilities as required by the needs of the region. Specific needs for each region will be addressed in accordance with Article 67 of the Constitutions, as it is identified in the needs of the world and the local situation of the Brothers.

The General Chapter calls on the General Council to evaluate the continuing process of implementation of its directives and to hold the General Leadership accountable for this implementation. It also directs the Council to meet in the various areas of the Congregation and to take time in the course of each meeting to listen to the aspirations, concerns, and suggestions of the Brothers of the regions. The Governance Committee also called on the Chapter to elect a Council representative of the diverse cultures and experiences of the Congregation.

Finally, the Governance committee, hearing the appeal of the Brothers of the Congregation to have a greater voice in their own direction and the life and direction of the Congregation as a whole, proposed a structure for regional animation and direction setting, as well as enhanced pastoral presence. The specific role of each coordinator/convener will differ depending on the needs of each region and area.
Preamble to
“A Description of the Xaverian Charism”

We Xaverian Brothers, associates, and collaborators are a true religious family, striving to fulfill the spiritual aspirations that Theodore James Ryken had for his Congregation. Following the path of our Founder, we are called to live ordinary lives that give witness to God’s unconditional love. We believe that the Xaverian calling is a way of being put in our place in the world, a place of humility and simplicity, from which we receive the grace to turn toward God, fall in love with God, and put ourselves in God’s service as followers of Jesus Christ. Within each distinctive life choice, we are further invited to attentiveness, simplicity, flexibility and openness to the common, unspectacular flow of everyday life. We unite ourselves to God through an integrated life of both contemplation and service. Through the Xaverian Way we are awakened by the Spirit of God to our own graced potential and freely offer that giftness in service to the gospel. Through our ministry, in particular among the poor and the marginalized, we work to help others discover their own uniqueness so they, too, may “share the love of God with the world through their own giftness.” In a spirit of hospitality, we try our utmost to be approachable and available, as true brothers and sisters who welcome others and accompany them in the joys and sorrows of their lives.