

THE ROLE OF THE I.C.F. CHAPLAIN

The canonical definition of the "Chaplain" is given in Canon 564 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law:

A Chaplain is a Priest to whom is entrusted in a stable manner the pastoral care, at least in part, of some of the community or a particular group of the Christian faithful, to be exercised in accord with universal and particular law.

However, the Priest commonly designated by the various pious groups as "Chaplain" is not a genuine Chaplain in the canonical sense. He serves the group as a Spiritual Director and celebrates liturgy with them. However, the stable pastoral care of the members of that group is not entrusted to him. Membership in the Italian Catholic Federation is not a substitute for membership in a Parish. Everyone accepts that the members of their Federation belong to and participate in the residential Parish. As parishioners they are entrusted to the stable pastoral care of their proper Pastor and his Parochial Vicars (Associate Pastors).

*What the United States practice designates as "Chaplain" is perhaps better designated by some other term, perhaps "Spiritual Director." For example, the Knights of Columbus use the term "Faithful Friar." Since this person is responsible for a brief pious message for a meeting, or one who leads the prayer at a meeting or arranges liturgies, any Priest, Deacon, or Professed Religious could be appointed. There is no requirement that the person appointed be a Priest since the appointment is not as a "Canonical Chaplain."**

With the I.C.F., the term "Chaplain" has been used to designate the Priest who was appointed to serve the local Branch, District or Diocese. At the 1984 Annual Convention, the By-Laws of the Federation were amended to read that in the absence of a Priest who will be active in the Federation, a Deacon or any Professed Religious could be appointed to serve.

The Chaplain is a co-worker with the Officers of the Branch or District. The Chaplain is one who provides spiritual leadership and guidance but does not actually take charge of the Branch or District.

*From the notes of the Most Reverend P.J. McGrath, Bishop of San Jose

The Officers of the Federation Branch or District are the ones charged with the responsibility of conducting business.

The Statutes of the Central Council of the I.C.F. - Chapter III, Article 4 - set forth the basis and description of the duties of the Spiritual Director. This Article is hereby incorporated into this manual by reference.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR, (Formerly called "Grand Chaplain"), appointed by the Archbishop of San Francisco in consultation with the (Grand) Officers.

- (1) Retains non-voting membership in the Central Council and Executive Committee as an Advisor and attends as many meetings as possible.
- (2) Serves as the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee and as an Advisor on the Apostolate/Charity and Convention Director's Committees.
- (3) Provides religious leadership and spiritual guidance throughout the Federation.
- (4) Sees that all matters of the Federation are done in accordance with the spiritual and moral welfare of the organization.
- (5) Says Masses for the intentions of donors to the Sir Luigi and Lady Augusta Providenza Seminary Scholarship Fund.
- (6) Should write a monthly column for the *Bollettino*.
- (7) Communicates to the Diocesan Chaplains any important items which are brought before the Central Council or the Executive Committee.
- (8) Is available for consultation in the planning process for Bishops' Days.
- (9) Coordinates the Chaplains' Workshop at the Annual Convention, is available to advise Chaplains on matters pertaining to their Dioceses, Districts or Branches, sees that any material requested by a Chaplain is sent to him via the I.C.F. Office and assists with the appointments of Diocesan and District Chaplains.
- (10) Serves as the overall coordinator of all Liturgies at the Annual Convention.

DIOCESAN CHAPLAIN, appointed by the Local Bishop in consultation with the Local Leaders.

- (1) Provides spiritual leadership for the members within the Federation in his Diocese.
- (2) Appoints District Chaplains.
- (3) Is responsible for setting up a process of appointing Branch Chaplains.
- (4) Is to be part of the planning process for the Diocese's Bishop's Day.
- (5) Attends the Annual Convention and participates in the Chaplains' Workshop if possible.
- (6) Communicates to the I.C.F. Office any changes of Chaplains in his Diocese.

DISTRICT CHAPLAIN, appointed by the Diocesan Chaplain in consultation with the District Officers.

- (1) Attends as many District meetings as possible.
- (2) Is responsible for communicating concerns, problems and ideas to the Diocesan Chaplain.
- (3) With the Diocesan Chaplain is responsible for making certain that all I.C.F. Branches have Branch Chaplains.
- (4) With the Diocesan Chaplain is responsible for providing some background/training for new Branch Chaplains.
- (5) Should keep the District members advised on spiritual events in the Diocese.

BRANCH CHAPLAIN, appointed by the Diocesan Chaplain in consultation with the District Chaplain, Local Pastors and Branch Officers.

- (1) Should attend at least a portion of every Branch meeting to provide some spiritual guidance and to speak to the good of the order.
- (2) Should be informed by the Branch President or the Vice President of any significant item (s) to be discussed at the Officers' Meeting.
- (3) Should reside if possible in the Parish where the Branch is located.
- (4) Should keep the members of the Branch informed as to events in the Parish or Diocese which might be of special interest.
- (5) Should be supportive of the Apostolate/Charity programs of his Branch.