



The Society of Catholic Priests in the USA and Canada
<http://www.theSCP.org>

Guidelines for the Formation and Inauguration of a Chapter of the Society

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These guidelines are provided by the Treasurer of the Society to clarify the formation of Chapters according to the Society Manual and to provide a path for Members of the Society to form Chapters that may have access to Chapter Funds according to the Budget Guidelines of the Society.

I. Preliminary Gathering

- A. Chapters shall be formed according to the convenience of travel of the clergy of the Society.
 1. As a matter of convenience for record-keeping, Chapters may exist according to diocesan boundaries,
 2. but a member of the Society in any diocese may choose membership in a chapter outside of his or her diocese, according to their convenience.
- B. According to section XI.1 of the Society Manual, “A group of priests interested in forming a chapter (a minimum of six priests) should have met in advance of the inaugural chapter meeting and discussed the constitution of the Society.”
- C. When a clergy person feels confident that she or he has six possible clergy to form the chapter, and a date for the preliminary gathering has been decided upon, the clergy in charge of the preliminary gathering should inform the Secretary and the Communications Director of the Society’s Council.
 1. The Secretary will ensure
 - a. That there is no other chapter for the dioceses involved. If there is, the Secretary shall work with the Officers of the existing Chapter and the clergy desirous of forming a chapter to see if it would be best for there to be two chapters for the diocese or if the clergy desirous of forming a Chapter should seek membership in the existing Chapter.
 - b. That those clergy resident and/or serving in the dioceses of the proposed Chapter are informed of the preliminary gathering and that the clergy in charge of the gathering is given the names of Society members in the diocese (and area dioceses, if appropriate).
 2. The Communications Director will ensure
 - a. That the Council is notified of the preliminary gathering, and,
 - b. That the members of the Society, and those interested in her life, are informed of the preliminary gathering.

- D. At the preliminary gathering, those gathered shall
1. Discuss the Constitution and charism of the Society and how the Society's aims of the support of priestly spirituality and catholic evangelism may benefit their common life and that of the Church in their area.
 2. They may also elect chapter officers according to Appendix B, Section IV of the Society Manual (Chapter Convener, Chapter Secretary, and Chapter Chaplain).
 - a. If officers are elected, they shall decide upon a date for an Inaugural Meeting of the Chapter according to Section II of these guidelines.
 - b. If those gathered decline to elect officers, then that gathering, or a group appointed by that gathering, shall decide upon a date for an Inaugural Meeting of the Chapter according to Section II of these guidelines.
 - c. It is fitting and appropriate, but not required, that the date for the Inaugural Meeting fall upon a major feast of the Church, or some other feast day of the church which may resonate with those gathered.

II. Inaugural Meeting

- A. When a date for the Inaugural Meeting has been decided upon, those responsible for the Inaugural Meeting shall inform the Secretary and Communications Director of the Society's Council.
1. The Secretary shall
 - a. Send to the Society Convener the names and other pertinent information of those forming the proposed Chapter so that the Society Convener may
 - i. Satisfy himself/herself of the *bona fides* of those making the request, according to Section XI.1 of the Society Manual, and may also
 - ii. Inform the proposed Chapter if he or she will Inaugurate the Chapter, or another member of the Council, or another such person as the Convener may designate, according to Section XI.1 of the Society Manual.
 - b. The Secretary shall also record the dates of the Preliminary Gathering and proposed Inaugural Meeting in the Society records, including who will Inaugurate the Chapter, and shall also
 - c. Ensure that those responsible for the Inaugural Meeting have the names of all Society members resident or serving in the diocese(s).
 2. The Communications Director shall ensure
 - a. That the Council is notified of the Inaugural Meeting, including who will Inaugurate the Meeting, and,
 - b. That the members of the Society, and those interested in her life, are informed of the Inaugural Meeting.
- B. Before the Inaugural Meeting takes place, those responsible for the Meeting shall inform the Ordinary of the diocese(s) which shall comprise the Chapter of the Inaugural Meeting.
1. They shall inform the bishop of the membership requirements, rule of life, and charism of the Society and invite the bishop to be their Local Episcopal Visitor, if she or he feels able to support the life of the Society.
 2. If the Bishop chooses to become the Local Episcopal Visitor, she or he shall first do the necessary steps to become a member of the Society (fill out a membership form and pay dues).

3. If the Bishop declines to become the Local Episcopal Visitor, those responsible for the Meeting should ask the Bishop if he or she could nominate another bishop for this role.
4. If the proposed Chapter will span more than one diocese, those responsible for the Meeting shall inform all the diocesan bishops and ask them to choose from among their number who may be the Local Episcopal Visitor. If they all decline, Section II.B.3 of these guidelines shall still be followed.
5. All bishops of the dioceses in which the Chapter will exist shall still be informed of the information in Section II.B.1 of these guidelines and invited to become members of the Chapter.

C. At the Inaugural Meeting

1. The Local Episcopal Visitor, if one exists and is present, may be invited to celebrate mass, within such liturgy
2. The Convener, or the person appointed thereby, shall
 - a. Inaugurate the Chapter and induct new members according the form in Appendix C. The Convener, or the person appointed thereby, shall fill the role of “Local Convener” in that liturgy only for this Inaugural Meeting.
 - b. He or she shall also provide guidance and advice, as needed, to those gathered. If the person appointed to Inaugurate is not a member of the proposed Chapter, he or she shall have voice in the business section of the Inaugural Meeting, but not vote and shall strive to respect the integrity of the local Chapter.
3. In addition to the above liturgy, those gathered shall formally elect Officers (if they have not yet) and shall also adopt Chapter Bylaws, using Appendix B of the Society Manual as a guide.
4. After the Inaugural Meeting, the Chapter Secretary shall
 - a. Inform the Provincial Secretary of the membership rolls of the new Chapter, ensuring that such rolls agree with those of the Society. The Provincial Secretary shall inform the Provincial Treasurer of the membership rolls of the new Chapter and the Provincial Treasurer shall create an account wherein \$25 of each Chapter members’ annual dues shall be made accessible to the Chapter.
 - b. Give a report of the meeting to the Society Communications Director, who shall share information of the Chapter formation with the Council, the members of the Society, and those interested in the Society’s life.