

## Individual Contributions to the 2023 Territorial Regnum Christi Convention

*A forum was open to all Regnum Christi members from October 2022 through June 2023 to contribute input as individuals. This input has been made available to delegates of the 2023 RC Territorial Convention. Below are insights from individuals as well as from the Lumen Institute which submitted a letter to the 2023 Territorial RC Convention (see appendix).*

### **Participants:**

- 2 individual Regnum Christi members

### **Insights:**

- Evangelization often happens via relationships. The same with formation as evangelizing Christian disciples. I believe we would get much more participation in our Encounter groups if the following was implemented:
  - That Encounter group leaders would be trained how to model personal sharing on the case examples and openness/trust/vulnerability. Personal sharing builds interest and connection.
  - That a new ethos is promoted for RC members to venture out of their comfort zones to invite their spouses to pray Lectio Divina with them and join a couple's encounter. This would make the home a unified evangelizing cell, increase commitment to ministry, and make a stronger evangelizing impact on associated families and friends. It would also mean that spouses would need to learn to dialogue in depth with each other instead of avoiding issues and living in their own separate worlds.
  - There needs to be far more support for members living in the Diaspora, with more accessible structures for them to take part in, both individually and as a couple. There should be Excel sheets of available meetings, persons in leadership appointed and supported to create online events beyond the Encounter, and also connecting times for fellowship, so Diaspora members can form lasting life-long co-evangelizing supportive relationships.
- I have concern about the weekly Men's Encounter regarding case sharing. It appears that the cases chosen always seem to be the admirable witness of someone extraneous to the one narrating it. It is not open to discussion. The Virginia Legionary Fathers explained cases were to be a personal witness of the person giving it. That way, the current members would spiritually be able to connect and be instructing each other about the ins and outs of circumstantial outreach evangelization to family and contacts. Unfortunately this lacks in my Encounter group.
- Regarding the Sunday Gospel sharing, outside of simplistic analyzing of the incident or teaching given there seems to be little depth in applying the text to personal need. Resolutions are generalized and not given specific personal response the next week -- only to declare that they were fulfilled or not. This does not effectively challenge us to help each other grow and share what the issues are. It also does not follow the new Territorial Directives which just came out.

## Appendix: Letter to the 2023 Territorial Convention from the Lumen Institute

*Thy Kingdom Come!*

March 30, 2023

To the those shaping the agenda for the Territorial Convention of the RC Federation,

We, the undersigned chaplains of the Lumen Institute, are happy to pray for the fruits of this Territorial Convention of the RC Federation.

During our annual training in Houston February 27 to March 1, several topics surfaced we thought could be helpful as you prepare the agenda for the Territorial Convention, where each of us will “share the situation of... respective localities, learn from others and together address key strategic topics impacting our common mission.” We offer these thoughts in a spirit of prayerful and supportive collaboration. These include: (1) Our current conceptualization of the Lumen Institute and its relation to RC, (2) some key strategic questions impacting our common mission, and (3) some concrete proposals we recommend, to be applied flexibly.

### Our Current Conceptualization of the Lumen Institute

As an appendix to this letter, we attach the Q&A on the Identity and Mission of Lumen as articulated through many discussions of members and chaplains, along with the full approval of the Lumen board of directors in 2022.

In the past, Lumen has been referred to as a “program,” or “an apostolate of RC,” or “RC lite” or “JV of RC.” In some moments, Lumen has threatened to become a parallel effort sapping the growth and vitality of Regnum Christi. There is a recurring issue of competition for manpower, since Legionary priests with a talent for working with men are not ubiquitous. In some places, RC section directors have felt Lumen was a competitor or some RC members felt Lumen was elitist and they were relegated to a lower status.

We think the RC renewal provides a unique opportunity for us to ***see Lumen in a fresh light***. The formation of Christian leaders (CLC #4, Statutes #33) is a central part of our charism and mission: We form leaders to become apostles, and apostles to become leaders. In the past, for a man to join RC we emphasized he was taking on specific *commitments*: A series of spiritual practices, a weekly Encounter with Christ, an annual retreat, etc. With the RC renewal, we now emphasize the five elements of *life* within this particular calling to a Christian lifestyle: Spiritual life, apostolate, formation, team life, and accompaniment. This difference of focus – from *tactical commitments* to *strategic life* – is crucial. It allows us to see that Lumen offers those same five elements, not as an alternative or parallel effort to RC, but rather as Lumen members sharing in the family spirit of RC. Lumen is to RC what Conquest is to ECYD. Or to use another example, much like young persons will date and get to know in-laws before marriage, Lumen introduces new men to the RC family. Some will commit to RC and formally associate; others will stay more loosely connected. In either case, we are helping leaders to become apostles.

The strategic plan of the Legionaries of Christ states that “we see the Legion inspiring and forming an army of Regnum Christi and ECYD teams—with a special emphasis on men—that are living the Gospel and building Christ’s Kingdom in every sector of society, responding to the needs of the Church.” We see Lumen playing a pivotal role in attaining this vision, in three ways:

1. Lumen is growing, connecting leaders, and bringing them to a deeper relationship with Christ. It now has over 200 prominent men engaged, with an investment of approximately six LC priests (taking into account partial assignments). What other outreach of the Legion or Regnum Christi is currently reaching and impacting the lives of influential business and societal leaders as Lumen?
2. Lumen members have had a disproportionate impact on funding for the Legion and RC. For example, well over half the funding for the Atlanta gala and the majority of funding for renovating the LC community in Washington DC came from Lumen members in 2022.
3. The RC Statutes speak of “networks” (cf. Statutes #49). Lumen is more a network than an apostolate or program of Regnum Christi. It has legal status as an independent 501c3. It reaches men of a specific social strata and draws them closer to Jesus Christ, while as serving as a preparatory step for some who might be called to formal association with Regnum Christi. Some Lumen members are also RC members. Some came into RC through Lumen.

A refreshed awareness of Lumen’s identity and contribution to the overall mission of RC can help us all to value it as a network, a manner of connecting more deeply with the RC family, and a concrete way to fulfill our mission and territorial strategy.

## Strategic Questions

Our reflections led us to consider a few strategic questions we thought could be helpful for the entire convention to consider:

- How do we best frame Lumen? An apostolate or program, a parallel effort, as a network (cf. ERC #49), as a concrete manner of living ERC #33, an independent 501c3, or as a group within the RC section? We think a fresh understanding of Lumen as described above can clear up misunderstandings and realign our unified efforts to reach and evangelize men according to our charism.
- Do RC men feel threatened by Lumen? Why? How does RC see Lumen?
- Among many priorities, how important is it for us to evangelize culture, work with men, forming leaders to be apostles and apostles to be leaders?
- Have we lost the ideal of changing our world by forming leaders? Has disillusionment led to compensating by filling our time with nice things to do? Are we called to challenge and inspire people, or merely accompany? Are we really forming leaders or are we just attending those who come to us? These are crucial questions around our intentionality.
- Have we lost unity of mission through diminished accountability of our members leading to decreased fruits in our apostolate?
- Can we acknowledge institutionally the different approaches to personal attention attuned to women and men? Do men resonate more with language of ‘being challenged’ and women more with ‘being accompanied’?

## Concrete Proposals

1. We recommend that Legionaries prioritize spiritual direction or mentoring with men and boys, while encouraging women to see spiritual guides and Consecrated Women of Regnum Christi.

2. We recommend shifting assignments of Legionaries to align more fully with our territorial LC strategy of working with men, especially with regard to current chaplains or section directors for women.
3. We recommend bilateral assignments of Legionaries working with RC men and Lumen, as appropriate by locality. This means the primary Lumen chaplain would also be assigned as assistant chaplain for the RC men, and the RC men's section director or chaplain is assigned also as assistant chaplain for Lumen. This can foster better local teamwork and reduction of potential for division or jealousy, while also maximizing our limited manpower.
4. For reporting purposes, local RC men's section could include Lumen members as a local network.

In closing, we want to thank you for your dedication to the mission of Regnum Christi in our territory. If it is helpful, three representatives of our group of Lumen chaplains would be happy to meet with your team to discuss the contents of this letter and see how we can contribute to the objectives of the convention.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr Nathaniel Haslam LC Fr Mark Haydu LC Fr Scott Reilly LC

Fr Michael Sliney LC Fr Kenneth LeBlanc LC Fr Jason Huynh LC

Fr Daniel Brandenburg LC Fr Daniel Ray LC