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Introduction

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INTRODUCTION

To foster mission in community, the Bagamoyo General Chapter 2012 asked the General Council to publish a special 'Anima Una' on community life.¹ The present document fulfils this mandate. Its publication coincides with the third phase of the Animation Plan of the General Council which is centred on Spiritan community living.

The aim of this document is to strengthen the sense of belonging to the one Spiritan family. It takes seriously the invitation of the Bagamoyo General Chapter to reflect on the issue of Spiritan culture. "Communities and circumscriptions will reflect on the issue of "Spiritan culture" and will endeavour to translate into day-to-day living the many principles and values we profess."² The core element of "Spiritan culture" is community life which Francis Libermann stated as the first principle of Spiritan life. "To bring the apostolic life—for which Spiritan life is intended—to its perfection, to assure the continuance and the development of the works in which it engages and to foster the holiness of its members, the Congregation has adopted life in community as its founding principle. Its members shall all live in community at all times."³

All of us are asked to take this call to community renewal to heart and pray that the Holy Spirit will renew our communities and make them true places of witness to the Gospel we preach.

¹ Bagamoyo 4.6.

² Bagamoyo 2.10.7.

³ François Libermann, *Rule of 1849*; N.D. X, 454; SRL 27.

This document follows the hermeneutic method of see, judge, act, as a way of reading and responding to the signs of the times. First, it begins with the presentation of the realities of our community living, its strengths and weaknesses (Chapter 1). Then, it relates these realities to resources of the Christian tradition, especially the practice of Jesus, the first Christian communities and recent Church documents (Chapter 2). The document goes further to ground the ideal of community life in the Spiritan tradition flowing from our founders, François Poullart des Places and Francis Libermann (Chapter 3). Finally, it lays out objectives and some examples of best practice for the renewal of our community living (Chapter 4).