
In their fifth decree, the delegates of the 31st General Congregation addressed what historian John Padberg describes as “one of the most serious and one of the most lengthily treated questions in the Congregation” (see the congregation’s historical preface in Jesuit Life & Mission Today (2009), pg. 16–17). The topic of conversation was grades within the Society of Jesus, or the distinctions between professed and spiritual coadjutors. Due to the contentiousness of the topic, the delegates voted by secret ballot to not suppress the grade of spiritual coadjutors but rather to establish a commission to investigate the future of the position within the Society of Jesus. More on the spiritual coadjutor is found in an essay in the Autumn 2015 issue of Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits: “Unfinished Business: The Spiritual Coadjutor in the Society of Jesus Today,” by Mark Lewis.

1. The General Congregation decrees that, immediately after the close of the 31st General Congregation, a commission should be set up which will study the whole matter of suppressing the grade of spiritual coadjutor, either in law or in practice, and which will report on it to the next congregation, either of provincials or of procurators, in order that it may decide whether a general congregation should be summoned to deal with this matter.

2. The General Congregation recommends that the commission which is to study the entire problem of the distinction of grades should extend its study to include the advantages and disadvantages involved in granting solemn profession also to the temporal coadjutors.

Original Source (English translation):