

CFC-FFL

The Chapter and District in CFC-FFL

The basic subdivision of the one CFC-FFL is the district and the chapter. The one CFC-FFL is made up of districts (or mission areas), and the district is made up of chapters.

The district

Districts conform to the territorial boundaries of dioceses. Often these diocesan boundaries are the same as the political subdivisions of a country. At other times they are not. For example, in the Philippines, Manila has 7 dioceses while the province of Pangasinan has 3. On the other hand, the diocese of Maasin encompasses one whole province and part of another.

All areas (i.e., province, state, etc.) start out as mission areas. Then a territorial or mission area becomes a district when it is officially recognized as such by Manila and a District Head has been appointed.

Prior to the appointment of a District Head, whoever is the top leader in the area (whether Household Head, Unit Head, Chapter Head or Cluster Coordinator) is considered the Area Head. He is overseen by the Area Coordinator (someone from outside the area).

The chapter

A chapter is a grouping of units, which in turn is a grouping of households. A chapter is led by a Chapter Head.

As the district conforms to the diocese, in turn the chapter conforms to the parish. Our chapters are parish-based.

However, our parish presence may be less than a chapter, or more than one chapter. We then refer to such presence in the parish as the “CFC-FFL group” in the parish.

As there should be only one person who represents CFC-FFL in the parish, that person is our highest leader in the parish (the Household Head if we just have one household, the Unit Head if we have two or more households, and the Chapter Head if it is already a chapter). If there is more than one chapter, the District Head designates one of the Chapter Heads as the senior Chapter Head,¹ who then becomes the overall head of CFC-FFL in the parish.

Liaisons

Aside from the overall head for CFC-FFL in a parish, we also have Church liaisons. As we are a servant to the Church, we want to actively collaborate and coordinate with our

¹ Seniority is not in terms of length of service as Chapter Head. Rather, it generally depends more on the maturity or stature of the Chapter Head, as determined by the District Head.

clergy. This is done through Church liaisons, on the levels of the parish, the vicariate (deanery) and the diocese. Thus, as appropriate, we appoint a Parish Liaison, a Vicariate Liaison, and a Diocesan Liaison.² These are all appointed by the District Head. They may, or may not be, the Chapter Head, Cluster Coordinator or District Head themselves.

If the Church liaison and the overall head are different persons, the Church liaison works under the authority of the overall head of CFC-FFL in the parish, vicariate or diocese. There should be close collaboration between the overall head and the Church liaison, to allow the latter to discuss matters authoritatively with the clergy,³ while being in line with the life and mission of CFC-FFL as determined by the overall head.

Pastoral and service support

Pastoral and service support is through households. All leaders belong to upper households. Such households follow the pyramidal structure of households, units, chapters, clusters and district. Thus, the overall head in a parish, vicariate or district would belong to an upper household whose head and members may be outside of the parish, vicariate or district.

On the other hand, service support in relation to being parish-based, vicariate-based and diocesan-based would follow the pyramidal structure of parish, vicariate and district. Thus, in relation to Church matters including Church activities, the overall head in a parish reports to the vicariate head, who in turn reports to the diocesan head.

There can be an exception to upper households following the pyramidal structure of households, units and chapters. Upper households may follow instead the pyramidal structure of parish, vicariate and diocese. For example, if CFC-FFL is just household size in a parish, the upper household of the overall head (the Household Head) would normally be the unit household, which might be headed by a Unit Head based in the adjoining parish. An alternative would be to put that Household Head, being the overall head in the parish, in the household of the Cluster Coordinator who is the head for the vicariate. In such a case, it is important to determine that there is a pastoral fit, that is, that the said Household Head would be comfortable being in a cluster household possibly with more mature seniors.

To sum up, when it comes to handling lower households, a leader reports to and has a service meeting with the one over him according to the household-unit-chapter-cluster-district structure. On the other hand, when it comes to Church matters, a leader reports to and has a service meeting with the one over him according to the parish-vicariate-diocese structure.

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² At times we may have to consider the preference of the parish priest (or vicar or bishop), or who would have his confidence.

³ The parish priest (or vicar or bishop) may want to liaise with one who has decision-making authority. The overall head should be sensitive to this.