Identity and Membership of Chapter
The chapter is the local assembly of the Brothers of the Holy Cross in their common search for God [Rule, 3] and the advancement of the Kingdom of God [1.1].

The chapter is the heart, nucleus and unifying force of the local community and the requirement for and evidence of vital community [8.1].

A normative chapter has at least eight solemnly professed confreres [GS26.3] and includes the other professed confreres assigned to the community [27.1]. In the collegial community of life that we desire, all the members have the same rights and duties, except where otherwise determined in law [9.2]. Together they exercise responsibility for all dimensions of community life [14.3].

Fraternal Collaboration in Chapter
The collaboration of the members of the chapter is characterized by the desire to be led by the Spirit of God and by openness to hearing the voice of the Lord in the words of the brothers [9.1].

The members of the chapter pursue oneness of heart and mind [14.5]. As they listen to one another [14.5], they make every effort to understand and respect one another for the unique person each is [15.1] and to be transparent in their dealings with one another [14.5]. Their dialogue occurs in a spirit of candor and mutual trust, rooted in authentic faith [9.1].

Each chapter member contributes personally in idea and initiative to the well being of the community [14.3], renouncing individual preferences toward the realization of the common good [14.5].

The Prior in Chapter
The Prior (or superior’s) interaction with the chapter [9.3] is characterized by his listening to and bringing about a general climate of listening among the confreres. He devotes himself to discovering the true human and Christian desires of his brothers in order that the chapter's decisions be truly communal. He stimulates and coordinates responsible initiative and brotherly collaboration.

The Prior consults the chapter for all serious decisions and presents reports about his financial administration for consideration and discussion [27.2]. When the chapter cannot reach real agreement, the Prior reserves final judgment and makes temporary decisions to be reviewed later [9.4].

In the exercise of the authority proper to him, the Prior does not impose his personal interests, thwart the legitimate desires of the community or lightly reject the consensus of a large majority [9.4].
Responsibility of Chapter

One of the most important tasks of the community chapter is to ensure the continual realization of our particular Crosier religious fellowship [8.2]. Its special responsibility is to actualize the charism ever anew [8.2] in the concrete circumstances and culture of the local community [18.2].

To accomplish its task, the chapter meets regularly [27.2] to regulate the community’s day-to-day way of life [8.2], in collaboration with the Prior and his Council [27.2] and in communion with the rest of the Order and the Church [18.2].

The chapter continuously engages in reflection, study [19.7] and evaluation about the common life, prayer and work of the community [8.2]. In all its considerations, it critically judges everything [5.2] in the light of the Gospels, the ideals of Part One of the Constitutions [27.2] and contemporary social developments [19.7].

Other important chapter agenda includes the exercise of common stewardship of the community of goods [27.1]. The chapter also provides for the ongoing education and formation [24.1] necessary to promote truly effective human and Christian life [15.1]. It holds itself especially accountable for the quality of its religious life if initial formation programs occur in the community [23.2]

The chapter elects the Prior, the council of the Prior and the delegates to the Provincial Chapter and directs and empowers other community leadership [26.2]. It creates policies that govern the community in accord with the Constitutions, provincial statutes and other proper law [27.2].

The chapter makes its decisions by a majority agreement defined in its own [9.4] or other proper law [27.2]. All its deliberations are marked by the principles of collegiality [7.4] and subsidiarity [7.3].
GUIDELINES IN IMPLEMENTATION

Background
As a major focus, the general chapter of 2009 worked carefully to clarify the component elements of normative community in the Crosier Charism.

The general chapter included in defining our understanding of normative community the central importance of fraternal life, liturgical life, priory chapter, and apostolic presence.

The norms adopted as statutes for focusing our work to develop normative community in the coming years are stated as follows.

Statute 26.2
In order to bring to life ever-more the Crosier charism of fraternal living in service to the Church and world and to support the well-being of individual confreres in living their vocation as Crosiers, normative community life in the Crosier Order includes the following constitutive components:

- A genuine commitment to fraternal life by being brothers to one another, actually living together in the love of Christ.
- A daily and dynamic conventual liturgical life, open to the public.
- A functioning chapter which deliberates and makes decisions, assures ongoing formation of members, elects the prior, exercises responsibility for finances.
- A communal witness of fraternal charity is our most immediate Crosier apostolic service to the Church and society. Other works of the apostolate which the Gospel requires of us receive their energy from Crosier life.

Statute 26.3
The priory chapter should have at least eight solemnly professed members, with at least six of them actually living together. Other forms of community life also need to serve our fraternal charism in the world. Major superiors assure a sufficient number of confreres to accomplish this goal.

Concerned that the development of functioning chapters be a concrete and planned aim for our Crosier communities in the coming years, the general chapter worked out concrete directives on the liturgical life and the formation that are to be deliberated and implemented in community chapters.

Thus, to work at and achieve those communal goals, the general chapter drafted a specific decision to strengthen and solidify the local chapter as the accountable body of Crosiers that corporately takes collegial responsibility for realizing the Crosier Charism in each local community.

Local Chapter Development
Community chapters assure that all members share in the opportunities and responsibilities of Crosier life. In their deliberations, they also assist the superior in
realizing the vitality of the charism. There seems to be a growing sense of the importance of chapters within the Order as fundamental to fraternity and religious living.

The general chapter directs all provinces and proprovinces to develop a six-year pastoral plan of action to establish and / or solidify and strengthen community chapters. This plan includes the following actions:

- Coming to a shared understanding of the constituent elements of a community chapter.
- Assessing strengths and weaknesses in actual community chapters, and addressing the deficiencies.
- Continued monitoring and evaluation.

To help provinces and proprovinces in implementing this specific directive of the general chapter on developing local chapter, the general chapter added the following concrete suggestion for the master general:

The general chapter advises the master general and his council to consider the benefit of an international ad hoc committee to articulate a vision of Crosier local community chapter.

An appointed ad hoc committee has accomplished its work in time for review and acceptance by the Master General and his Council (October 2010). The document is ready for publication before the beginning of 2011 so that it can be used by provinces and proprovinces in developing their six-year pastoral plan of action to either establish or solidify and strengthen community chapter.

**Planned Use**

This working document, *Constituent Elements of the Local Community Chapter*, compiles sound and beneficial ideas from our Constitutions that can help members achieve a shared understanding of the constituent elements of a community chapter.

Each local community is to work through this document and to come to a shared understanding of Local Community Chapter in the Crosier tradition.

Secondly, using that shared understanding as a standard and criterion for what local chapter is to be like in normative Crosier Religious Life, both local community chapters and province leadership are to assess what the strengths and weakness of each chapter in the province is at present (2011).

This second step of assessment or evaluation prepares for the pastoral plan to be designed thereafter for each local community as its follow-up action: addressing the deficiencies in the local chapter and strengthening the qualities already assessed to be soundly in place.

To strengthen each local place of light, the first authentic responsibility is placed squarely on the shoulders of each local community chapter and prior.
The structural plan for developing local chapter is, thus, fundamental to further the development and implementation of the general chapter, because the local chapter is charged with the routine responsibility to realize (that is, to make actual and continually real) our own particular Crosier charism, for these concrete members living together in this place and time.

The year 2011 has been set as the target year for developing implementation plans across the world wide order, including planning for the development and advancement of local community chapters.

In each province’s or province’s plan, each community chapter will have spelled out what its six-year plan of action will be to increase its own capacity and responsibility for realizing the Crosier Charism locally.

The province plan shall have the responsibility to name which community chapters need to be established and what efforts the province leadership will bring to strengthening existing local chapters.

It is clear that a normative local community is a priory with a priory chapter. However, other forms of community life that do not yet attain the stature of a priory also need to serve our fraternal charism in the world.

The province level demand to develop a local community chapter for these other forms of community life needs to be outlined in the province plan. This province plan and demand may entail temporarily grouping small existing communities into a single quasi-chapter structure. Or it may entail a planned incorporation of a small filial community (with no future prospect of priory status) into an existing or planned for priory chapter.

In general, the principle of the Constitutions that says ‘other forms of community need to be in line with the normative structure’ applies. Planning is the opportunity to name more carefully and specifically how the normative structures of a local community chapter apply for these other forms of Crosier community life so that they are, increasingly and by provincial plan, ‘in line with’ the normative structure.

The annual spiritual well being reports of communities and provinces will, thereafter, monitor and evaluate progress made in implementing the concrete plan worked out in provinces and communities in 2011.