

MCR – VIE MONTANTE (French-speaking Switzerland)

- Head: Willy Sallin
- Organizational structure: Cantonal committees overseen by a regional (French-speaking) committee
- Membership: Approximately 1,100 members
- Activities/Initiatives: 60th Anniversary Jubilee in 2025
- Projects: ---
- Priorities: Recruiting new members and leaders
- Website: www.mcr-viemontante.ch
- Newsletter/Publication frequency: Bimonthly journal
- Annual theme: 2025–2026 "En Chemins" (On the Journey) / 2026–2027 "Ensemble" (Together) (not yet finalized)
- Volunteer training: One annual training day, prioritizing group facilitators (the 2026 session will likely focus on voice and speech management when leading groups)
- Visibility within the Church and society: Affiliated with CRAL (French-speaking Community for the Lay Apostolate); website; social media, etc.
- Challenges faced: Renewing the membership and leadership, resulting in a steady decline in numbers

Situation of retirees and the elderly in the country:

The number of retirees is constantly rising, while the active workforce expected to fund their pensions is shrinking; this eventually raises the question of how those pensions will be financed...

The trend is therefore to raise the retirement age. However, finding a job becomes increasingly difficult after the age of 50. How can this equation be solved? Our authorities do not seem particularly attuned to this issue! For the most part, current retirees retired under very favorable conditions; this means they have the financial means to live comfortably and generally wish to "enjoy" life rather than get involved in movements like ours—especially since ours carries a religious connotation that acts as a deterrent.

Role of the Spiritual Advisor

They are there to guide leaders on ethical and religious matters, contributing their experience and, above all, their Christian knowledge. While they do not attend every meeting, their presence is generally highly appreciated when they do. They ensure the religious aspects are upheld whenever these topics are discussed.

Projects since Madrid 2023

At the 2nd International Congress on the Elderly—held in Rome in early October 2025 under the theme "***Your elders shall dream dreams***"—a global pastoral urgency was highlighted.

Discussions have taken place primarily within more "official" institutions, such as the Swiss Federation of Retirees (FSR)—which is currently winding down its operations—and the national umbrella organization for active retirees' associations and mutual aid groups (FARES/VASOS), both of which advocate for the dignity and right to self-determination of the elderly. The Association for the Defense and Leisure of All Retirees and Future Retirees (AVIVO)—an association representing the elderly, the disabled, widows, and orphans—is also highly active and present throughout Switzerland. FARES: <https://vasos.ch/fr/> AVIVO: <https://avivo-ch.ch/fr/>

Pastoral care for the elderly

The Congress aimed to address the increasingly urgent need to develop a pastoral approach to the elderly that is adapted to the challenges of our time.

Some dioceses are attempting to implement this. However, it remains quite difficult for the elderly to make their voices heard, even though they play an active role in parish life. Generally, we remain "confined" to healthcare-related pastoral care!

Consequently, the specific needs of the elderly are not consistently taken into account. The path of synodality desired and hoped for by our dear Pope Francis still has a long way to go... and it is certainly not "smooth sailing"!

World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly

The 2025 Congress built upon the 2020 "The Wealth of Years" gathering, as well as the establishment of the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly and Pope Francis's catecheses.

Such initiatives fall within the purview of local or even cantonal sections. A number of them participate by organizing specific activities on this day or at other times, primarily in connection with the proposed liturgies.

The dreams of the elderly – a vision for the future

This theme, inspired by the prophet Joel, invited participants to reflect on the dreams of the elderly as a source of inspiration for the Church and society:

- The role of the elderly in society and in the Church: A topic addressed primarily within local groups. However, given the relatively advanced age of our members, they feel less and less personally involved in this topic—at least regarding society at large—feeling that "their time has passed"
- Intergenerational transmission
This topic was proposed to our members for the 2024–2025 period under our annual theme, "HERITAGE," and was well received. Our members were open to reflecting on related issues. Furthermore, some groups successfully invited children from catechism classes to participate in certain meetings!
- Protecting our common home through actions based on the encyclical *Laudato Si'* and the apostolic exhortation *Laudate Deum*: No specific actions were taken regarding this theme.

How the movement has attempted to provide solutions and adapt to a changing world

Naturally, it is impossible not to notice these changes! However, understanding where the world is heading is not always easy, as events often defy comprehension. Fortunately, a glimmer of light remains, and hope—our 2022–2023 annual theme—can carry us toward a less bleak future. In terms of concrete action, the challenge is greater. We often feel somewhat ill-equipped to respond to these changes or to find solutions.

Commitment from all in service of the mission

For us, this takes the form of specific, targeted, and local participatory actions tailored to each group. Operating at the level of French-speaking Switzerland is difficult due to the differences between cantons, making it hard to implement broad, joint initiatives.