

CONSTITUTIONS

1817 - 2017

**Congregation of the Sacred Hearts
of Jesus and Mary**

Brothers

General House
Rome
2017

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Constitutions 2017

Presentation

Javier Álvarez-Ossorio ssc

Jesus invites. "**Come to Me**", (Mt 11:28). We want to go to him. But by which roads? There are so many different ways to live the Gospel ...

The Gospel is so great that no one can embrace it exhaustively. We can only follow Jesus by adopting a concrete way and with a definitive group of companions. Therefore, the Spirit stirs many different charisms, so that all can find their way and their home. We need a way that adapts itself to the size of our heart and to the limits that make us human.

The Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary is one of those roads leading to Jesus, a concrete way to savor God in the way of life, a spiritual home where you can experience the power of the Gospel.

Is it correct to say what was just said? Not too pretentious? No, it is not. The Church confirms the validity of the charism received and "recognizes us as a religious body," in the words of the Good Father. In the letter of April 14, 1817, he communicated to the Congregation the approbation of the Constitutions by the Holy See. The official recognition by the Church has a decisive value; it assigns us a place in the Body of Christ and in the passage of the People of God.

The Constitutions is the text that describes our particular access road to the Gospel, which makes our community also a

"school of the service of the Lord," as St. Benedict said in his ancient rule (Prologue, 45), that inspired many other rules as also ours. "These Constitutions and Statutes," says Article 153, "are **a way of life for us**, Religious of the Sacred Hearts," which allows us to "proclaim the love of the Sacred Hearts through our lives and our ministry."

Now, it's 200 years since this path was approved. On January 10, 1817, Pope Pius VII confirmed the place of our Congregation in the Church through the approval of the Constitutions. The Good Father, overjoyed, interpreted this as a renewed call of the Lord: "The Divine Master seems to open up his heart to us and say, come all of you to me." It is as if the Church, in approving us, told us: "we are counting on you, be useful to the mission of God in the world, you have something valuable that you cannot keep locked up."

Two centuries have passed and the Constitutions remain indispensable to recognize who we are and to understand our place in the Church today. At every step of the way, in each provincial or general chapter, our community seeks to discern what God is urging upon us and seeks concrete ways to love and serve. This exercise of renewal never starts from scratch, it is rather based on what is said in the Constitutions. It is said in words, but always there is much to say through action. There are known but forgotten things; learned but yet to be rediscovered.

This **bicentennial of the approval of the Congregation** seems to us an excellent opportunity to publish the special edition of the Constitutions which you have in your hands. Thanks to the work of a group of brothers for whose valuable service I thank them on behalf of all, we have gathered in a single volume, published in eight languages, the current text of the Constitutions, letters of the Good Father announcing

the approval by the Holy See, a historical study that traces the evolution of the Constitutions throughout the history of the Congregation, and the articles of the Rule of St. Benedict which the Good Father recommended for the brothers' reading and meditation.

By putting together these documents, the historical solidarity that unites the different generations of the Congregation since its origins is evidenced in a distinct way. The question arises spontaneously: **who are you today, Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary?** This special publication can help us answer that question. Seeing where we came from and paying attention to the formulation of who we are, we can nurture the desire to be what we are called to be now and into the future.

Is it just to repeat what we already know? To a large extent, yes. That's because most of the guidelines and decisions of the Congregation in recent decades are really being insistent on things that are already in the Constitutions. But on the other hand, if a brother goes a long time without consulting them, he may find, in rereading them, some pleasant surprises.

In any case, do not have qualms about repeating the essentials again and again. God does the same with us, brings us again and again over the same terrains, places us repeatedly before the same Gospel; but he does it in such a way that it never looks the same. Because we are not acting in a circle closed in on itself, but as a spiral, penetrating as it turns, to an ever greater depth. Always the same Gospel, but never to an already known depth. The same Gospel, ever old, ever new.

Faced with possible signs of fatigue that we can see among us, as individuals or community; faced with the temptation to limit ourselves to repeat already worn out stereotypes; faced with the uncertainty of our times that often leads us to not

knowing how to act ... the rereading of our Constitutions presents us with **the challenge of a refreshed youthfulness**, the challenge of daring to begin anew.

I invite you, brothers, to read this book and to meditate on it personally and in community. May the Lord help us to come to Him, to savor him on the way of life, to enter the school of his service, and to proclaim his love wherever we are.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Javier', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Javier Álvarez-Ossorio ssc
Superior General
Rome, August 20, 2016

Constitutions of the SSCC

Eduardo Pérez-Cotapos ssc

Through its history, the male branch of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts has had seven redactions of the Constitutions. The first constitutional text was approved by the Holy See on January 10, 1817. The present Constitutions were approved by the Holy See on July 9, 1990. In this history, it is possible to distinguish two great moments:

- **The Constitutions of the foundational period:** beginning with a fairly incomplete text, almost only a sketch of constitutions, approved in 1817, its completions approved in 1826 and later complete and mature re-working in 1840. This text was revised in 1909 and 1928 but without any substantial changes.
- **The search for new Constitutions:** begun with a decision of the General Chapter of 1953 *to redo the Rule* which culminated in the text of 1966; fruit of intense work, however dead on arrival because of the new matters brought along by the Council. Then a long time of experimentation and renovation opened up, with the legislation very much in flux, which culminated in the Constitutions of 1990, the mature fruit of this process.

The Constitutions are a fundamental normative text for the life of a Congregation. All our Constitutions have been approved by a General Chapter and then approved by the Holy See, which usually proposed some type of correction to the text as presented; this approbation confers juridical value and carries

with it a formal recognition of the juridical existence of the Congregation. The promulgation of the Constitutions has always been the task of the Superior General.

From the beginnings, the final text was divided into two major units: *Constitutions and Statutes*; the major orientations and the more practical and concrete norms. In the first five, there was also talk of the *Rules*, without it being possible to delineate clearly a block of texts named such. The Constitutions of the 19th century included also a very clearly elaborated *Ceremonial*. Up to the time of Vatican Council II, it was the custom to call the combined documentation “Our Rule” or “Our Holy Rule.”

A brief synthesis of the seven main stages:

1. The first Constitutions were approved in **1817** by Pope Pius VII. Approved in Latin, there was also a translation into French, which the Good Father supervised. They were never printed in his time. They were published for the first time in 1961 in the periodical *Annales Congregationis Sacrorum Cordium*. Recently they have been translated into Spanish and English.

2. The second Constitutions were approved by Pope Leo XII in **1825** and published the following year: *The Ceremonial, Rules, Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and of Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar*.¹

¹ *Cérémonial, Règles, Constitutions et Statuts de la Congrégation des Sacrés-Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie, et de l'Adoration Perpétuelle du Très-Saint Sacrement de l'Autel*. Troyes, De l'Imprimerie de V^e. André, Imprimeur-Libraire de l'Évêché 1826. 60 PP.

3. The third Constitutions were approved by Pope Gregory XVI in 1840 and were published promptly both in Latin² (*Constitutions, Statutes and Rules of the Brothers of the Most Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and of Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar*) and French³ versions (*Constitutions, Statutes, Rules and Ceremonial of the Brothers of the Most Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and of Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar*). Both versions were regularly printed as one volume. There was one reprint of this text in 1875 to which the acts of the General Chapter of 1874 duly approved by the Holy See, were added as an appendix.

4. The fourth Constitutions were approved in 1909 by Pope Pius X and published immediately in a volume with a Latin title⁴ *Constitutions, Statutes and Rules of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and of Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar* and containing diverse documents both in Latin and French with independent pagination and printed with diverse fonts.

5. The fifth version of the Constitutions were approved in 1928 by Pope Pius XI and they assume the orientations of the new Code of Canon Law published in 1917. They were published the same year (1928), only in French: ⁵ *Constitutions, Statutes and*

² *Constitutiones, Statuta et Regulae Fratrum Congregationis Sacratissimorum Cordium Jesu et Mariae, necnon et Adorationis Perpetuae Sanctissimi Sacramenti Altaris*. Paris 1840. 174 pp.

³ *Constitutions, Statuts, Règles et Cérémonial de la Congrégation des Sacrés Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie et de l'Adoration Perpétuelle du Très-Saint Sacrement de l'Autel*. Paris 1840. XVI + 236 pp.

⁴ *Constitutiones, Statuta et Regulae Fratrum Congregationis SS. Cordium Jesu et Mariae necnon et Adorationis Perpetuae Sanctissimi Sacramenti Altaris*. Domus Principalis, Braniae-Comitis in Belgio 1909, 522 pp.

⁵ *Constitutions, Statuts et Règles des Frères de la Congrégation des Sacrés Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie et de l'Adoration Perpétuelle du Très-Saint Sacrement de l'Autel*. Maison-Mère, Braine-le-Comte (Belgique) 1928. XXXIX + 208 pp.

*Rules of the Brothers of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and of Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, and the Ceremonial for the Use of the Brothers of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of the Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.*⁶ A Spanish translation was done in 1941.

6. The sixth constitutional text was the result of a large process of fundamentally reworking of our Constitutions (called «*Refonte de la Règle*», “*Reworking of the Rule*”). They were approved by Paul VI in 1966 *ad experimentum* and published immediately in the Latin text: *Congregation of the Sacred Hearts Constitutions with Statutes and Capitular Decisions Adjoined.*⁷ Only the Latin was officially published, and translations were the responsibility of each Province.

7. The seventh Constitutions, what we have at present, were approved in 1990 by Pope John Paul II and published in the Spanish original text and in French, English and Dutch official translations: *Constitutions and Statutes. Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and of the Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.*⁸ They were translated by some Provinces into other languages: Portuguese, Indonesian, German, Polish etc.

Let us go back over the seven constitutional documents in a more detailed fashion, highlighting some of the principle aspects.

⁶ *Cérémonial à l'usage des Frères de la Congrégation des Sacrés Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie et de l'Adoration Perpétuelle du Très Saint Sacrement de l'Autel.* 60 pp.

⁷ *Congregatio Sacrorum Cordium Constitutiones cum adnexis Statutis et Decisionibus Capitularibus.* Romae: Domus Principalis 1966. 140 pp.

⁸ *Constituciones y Estatutos. Congregación de los Sagrados Corazones de Jesús y de María y de la Adoración Perpetua del Santísimo Sacramento del Altar.* Roma: Casa General 1990. 158 pp.

1. First Constitutions - 1817

Our first Constitutions were approved on December 20, 1816, in the Plenary Assembly of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, and confirmed by Pope Pius VII, through an *Apostolic Decree* of January 10, 1817.⁹ This can be considered the official date of the approbation of our first *Constitutions*.¹⁰ The new Constitutions were presented to the Congregation by the Good Father by means of a *Circular Letter* of April 14, 1817.

The *Bulla Pastor Aeternus* dated November 17, 1817¹¹ added nothing new to the text of the Constitutions already approved by the *Decree*; it only gave to the text the character of solemn approbation necessary at that time for the recognition of the Congregation on the part of the French bishops and of the civil authorities.

These new Constitutions were approved for the whole Congregation, brothers and sisters. They were put together from the point of view of the brothers and the same norms are “adapted” for the sisters. The document interweaves texts referring to both branches.

To properly read these texts, it is helpful to remember that the Congregation at that time was very small, especially the male branch. In 1815, there were 22 brothers: 16 priests, and 6 lay brothers. The sisters were 180, including lay and choir sisters.

⁹ The text of the *Decree* of approbation is in the bi-lingual edition Latin/French in the *Annales Congregationis Sacrorum Cordium* 1956, pp. 2-7. News of the Decree arrived in Picpus March 24, 1817.

¹⁰ The text of the *Constitutions* was not printed at the time, it was circulated only in manuscript. The first printed edition was that of the *Annales Congregationis Sacrorum Cordium* in 1961, pp.161-232.

¹¹ The text of the *Bulla Pastor Aeternus* is found in *Annales Congregationis Sacrorum Cordium* 1957, pp. 97-109.

The *Decree of January 10, 1817*, reproduced completely in this volume, synthesizes well the major spiritual accents of the new community, which was being officially approved. To do so, it builds on the framework of the “four ages” of Jesus: “*The purpose of this Congregation is to remember the four ages of our Divine Savior: his infancy, by teaching freely poor children of both sexes and forming young students for the functions of sacred ministry; his hidden life by repairing by perpetual adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, the injuries done to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. This is the reason why the Blessed Sacrament is honored day and night without interruption above all in the houses of the sisters who are more numerous. His apostolic life is remembered by giving themselves to the preaching of the Gospel and to the sacred missions; finally his crucified life practicing mortification of the flesh and of the spirit to the extent that human frailty permits.*”

In the same decree, there is a juridical affirmation, which is very important: This Congregation ... “*adopts the rule of St. Benedict with particular Constitutions which are proper to it.*” The “adoption of the Rule of St. Benedict” as the spiritual way for the Congregation puts it in coherence with the norm coming from the Fourth Lateran Council (1215).¹² The Good Father

¹² The Fourth Lateran Council (1215), in Chapter 13, establishes that all new religious communities ought to attach themselves to one of the Rules previously approved: “*Prohibition of new religious orders: Lest too great a variety of religious orders leads to grave confusion in God's church, we strictly forbid anyone henceforth to found a new religious order. Whoever wants to become a religious should enter one of the already approved orders. Likewise, whoever wishes to found a new religious house should take the rule and institutes from already approved religious orders. [qui voluerit religiosam domum fundare de novo regulam et institutionem accipiat de religionibus approbatis]*” The principal rules to which new religious orders must refer are those of St. Basil, St. Augustine and St. Benedict.

The Second Council of Lyons (1274) Chapter 24, referring to the Fourth Lateran, insisted anew on this interdiction: *We therefore renew the constitution, and severely prohibit that anyone found henceforth a new order or form of religious*

knew the Rule of St. Benedict as it was understood and lived in the Monastery of Valsainte in Friburg, Switzerland. The great spiritual figure, which upheld this experience, was Dom Augustin de Lestrange (1754-1827), a Benedictine monk of the Abbey of La Trappe who in 1791 emigrated to Switzerland with a group of monks, who were setting themselves up at the Monastery of Valsainte. They were a group who maintained quality of religious life and gave continuity to monastic life throughout the conflicts of the Revolution. The very practical and very demanding commentary on the Benedictine rule was of great interest to the Founder.¹³ It was to these practices therein proposed that reference was being made when in June 17, 1800 the request of the Vicars of Poitiers states that *“Our principle exterior practices are taken from the Rule of St. Benedict.”*

When presenting the Constitutions in the *Circular Letter of April 14, 1817*, also reproduced in full in this volume, the Good Father details more amply the spiritual accents of this new Institute: *“One of our principle duties is to retrace the four ages of the*

life, or assume its habit. We perpetually forbid absolutely all the forms of religious life and the mendicant orders founded after the said council which have not merited confirmation of the apostolic see, and we suppress them in so far as they have spread. Then the four recently founded mendicant orders are explicitly dispensed from this rule: Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites and Augustinians. The 22 other orders which appeared after 1215 and which had not respected the restriction were suppressed by the Holy See.

¹³ I refer to two huge volumes, some 1100 pages *in toto*, published in Friburg in 1794 by Dom de Lestrange as abbot of Valsainte. They carry a long programmatic title: *Regulations of Maison Dieu of Our Lady of La Trappe by the Abbot de Rance, its worthy Reformer, put in a new order and increased by individual Usages of Maison Dieu of Val-Sainte Notre Dame de la Trappe in the Canton of Fribourg in Switzerland, selected and picked out by the first monks of the monastery of all that is most **clear** in the Rule of St. Benedict, of the **most pure** of our Usages and the constitutions of Cîteaux, of the most **venerable** in the Ritual of the Order, and finally of the **more reflected** upon in our own deliberations, as following a plan to renew themselves in the spirit of their state and follow the footsteps of St. Bernard as closely as they might be able* (The emphasis in the second part is in the original).

God man, his infancy, his hidden life, his apostolic life, his sacrificial life. Let's not lose sight that our Lord wants us to enter in a particular way the interior crucifixion of his heart. We therefore like Madalene ought to betake ourselves to his feet and like St. John accompany him to the cross." And he adds: "The first virtue that we recommend to you to imitate our Saviour is simplicity because it was the first virtue that this divine Saviour himself practiced. Without simplicity, one never gets to perfection.Humility is the faithful companion of simplicity. The two virtues have a limitless rapport. There's no true humility without simplicity and humility is specially recommended to us by our blessed Father St. Benedict."

Going on, the Founder presents the great spiritual figures who ought to accompany the religious of the Sacred Hearts in the way of fidelity to Jesus. In the first place, he presents Mary: *"Remember also dearly beloved brothers and sisters, after adoring the heart of Jesus we need to honour particularly the sweetest heart of Mary. ... The Blessed Virgin never knew the evil of sin nor the hatred of which the human heart is capable. She only knew the pain it causes God. This is why she is so wonderfully merciful. Let us console ourselves in our pains, considering that Mary is and always will be our protector, our stay, and that we will always share her heart's affections. It is necessary to go to her when God withdraws, in our pains and desolations, in our infidelities. She will pray for us if we call her to the place of our desolation."*

After speaking of Mary, he speaks of St. Joseph, Saints Joachim and Ann, parents of Mary, as our companions on the road of religious life. Then he offers a word on each of the saints whom the Founder proposes as spiritual references for the newly born Congregation: Benedict, Pachomius, Augustine, Dominic, Bernard, and John Francis Regis. In this way the Good Father has a spiritual plan which is more narrative than speculative: he does not offer a synthesis of spiritual theology, rather he

selects concrete persons whose life example might orientate the new religious.

The text of the first *Constitutions*, an integral part of the Bull *sub plumbo* of November 17, 1817, is relatively brief and is destined to orient the life as much of the brothers as of the sisters. It begins with a “Preliminary Chapter” of six numbers, which presents the purpose of the Congregation building itself on the framework of the four ages. This text has diverse twists and amplifications over the course of history, to the point that in each one of the editions of the Constitutions, the redaction has been different.¹⁴ We conserve it as a preamble to our current Constitutions.¹⁵

The text of the *Constitutions* properly so called, add up to 58 articles with a juridical tone. In fact, these articles are Constitutions “*On the Governance of the Congregation*”, structured into four chapters:

1. *The Superior General of the Congregation and of the Superioress of the Sisters and their Council*; arts. 1-18. The Congregation is organized on the basis of local communities, giving a strong emphasis on the figure of the Superior General, elected by a General Chapter composed fundamentally of the superiors of the local communities (designated by the Superior General) and the members of the General Council.

¹⁴ There is a good analysis in Antoine Hulselmans, *Exposé historique sur le Chapitre Préliminaire de la Règle de la Congrégation des Sacrés-Cœurs*. Braine-le-Comte: Maison-Mère 1948 (Études Picpuciennes 1).

¹⁵ The text currently given as preamble to our Constitutions corresponds fundamentally to the text of the second constitutions approved in 1825. The text of 1817 has six paragraphs whereas that of 1825 has eight. In the latter, the redaction is different and there are new themes involved such as the protectors of the Congregation, the *Rule* of St. Benedict as foundation of our rule and the affirmation that the brothers and sisters form one Congregation.

2. *The General Chapter of all the Congregation*; arts. 19-36. The composition of the norms for the functioning of the General Chapter. This treats of a General Chapter in which the figure of the Superior General is central: *“If the Superior General of the Congregation is opposed to a decision proposed by the General Chapter, a four fifths majority of the votes is required in order that that decision can be accepted.”* (art. 29)

3. *Mutual Relations between the two Congregations of Brothers and Sisters*; arts. 37-48. The relations conferring a great authority to the Superior General and to the brothers visitors of the communities of the sisters. However, *“It is an invariable rule that the Superior General of the Congregation may not make any determination in what concerns the sisters without asking beforehand the consent of the Superioress General of the Sisters.”* (art. 48)

4. *Local superiors of Brothers and Sisters*; arts. 49-58 are operating principles for the organization of local communities, ruled by superiors chosen for periods of three years. As the practical experience is greatly limited, it is set up that *“The General Chapter of 1819 or the one later in 1824 will decide all that concerns houses of the brothers and sisters which will be established in heretical or pagan lands and above all in the missions outside of Europe.”* (art. 58)

Finally, there are the *Statutes*, with 49 articles which take on questions other than those treated in the Constitutions. They are organized into five chapters:

1. *The different persons who compose the Congregation*; arts. 1-7. The first article establishes the title of the Congregation and the five categories of members who make up the male branch: *“The Congregation established under the title of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and of perpetual Adoration of the most holy Sacrament is*

composed in the houses of the men, of missionary brothers, professor brothers, choir brothers, lay brothers and of donnés."

2. *About perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, of the public Office and of other practices of piety; arts. 8-19.*

3. *Vows and Novitiate; arts. 20-37.* A simple theology of the religious vows is given, some concrete practices of the vows are regulated and norms for the functioning of the Novitiate are given. All the religious houses can admit novices but not all can admit to profession. Before six months of novitiate have passed, the young are to be sent to a house that can admit to profession.

4. *Questions left for the General Chapter; arts. 38-45.* This treats themes left pending the General Chapters of 1819 and 1824: the determination of a uniform dress, eating habits, provision for the sick, corrections and norms for the cloister of the sisters.

5. *The Exterior Society; arts. 46-49.* To regulate it that "*the Superiors of all the houses of the Congregation are able to admit to a special communion of prayer all, who living in the midst of the world, desire to live a more Christian life.*" (art. 47) The determination of particular issues can be left off until the General Chapter of 1819.

2. The Second Constitutions - 1825

The General Chapters of 1819 and 1824 completed the text of 1817, which had been left incomplete and imprecise. In some way one could say that it was but one process of elaborating the Constitutions which began in 1817 and culminated in 1825. This final text was known as the *Rule of the Founders*.

The Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars approved the new dispositions August 19, 1825 and Pope Leo XII confirmed them on August 26, 1825. Some speak of this date as the second approbation of the Constitutions. The *Ceremonial*, the

first in the Congregation, was approved on September 27, 1825. The approved texts reached the hands of the Good Father only on December 26, 1825.

The community who received these new Constitutions had increased and diversified. In 1825, the male branch counted 122 members: 74 priests, 8 choir brothers and 40 lay brothers. The sisters were a greater number: around 520.

The Founder presented the new documents to the whole Congregation through a *Circular Letter of February 11, 1826*, reproduced in this volume. Besides showing the joy of having received the approbation, he treats two important themes:

1. He informs the community that the *Propaganda Fidei* had asked for priests of the Congregation “to carry the flame of faith to the inhabitants of the Sandwich Islands, located in the Oceanic Sea,” and that one brother has been named Prefect Apostolic with all the faculties to exercise the mission recently confided. “And so eternal mercy is giving us the means to imitate more perfectly the evangelical life of our divine savior and to begin the important work of the foreign missions, one of the main purposes of our institute, one which has been especially commended to us by the successor of Saint Peter.”

2. He explains the importance of the Rule of St. Benedict for the Congregation: “Beloved brothers and very dear sisters you know that the Rule of Saint Benedict is the foundation of ours. We exhort you to read and to meditate often on the Rule of that great Father of western cenobites. We especially recommend the reading of chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 19, 20, 33, 34, 54, 68, 71 and 72 of the Rule of Saint Benedict.” Then the Good Father had a commentary on the themes in the Benedictine Rule he considers central: obedience, humility, fervor in prayer, poverty of spirit, submission of mind and heart, founded on confidence in God, interior silence and burning

zeal, which leads us away from vice and leads us toward God and life eternal. He concludes his commentary on what is to be expected of the good religious citing St. Benedict: *“May they love their superior with humble and sincere affection and may they prefer nothing to Jesus Christ.”*

The text of the *“Rules, Constitutions and Statutes”* approved in 1825 is an entirely new redaction which brings out two new major dimensions. The first is that the text does not distinguish between rules, constitutions and statutes but it is one unified text of 258 articles; to this text there is added an entirely new element: the ceremonial. The second new dimension is that now there are two constitutional texts, one for the brothers and one for the sisters. They are symmetrically balanced (each one has 258 articles) but they face better the specificity of each of the branches of the Congregation. This text was largely the work of the General Chapters of 1819 and 1824 and was presented personally by the Good Father in Rome; the Holy See approved it without major modifications. In this case, the Holy See approved the decisions of the General Chapters already noted and not a new constitutional text. That is, one needs to understand that this text is dealing with *“a revised and augmented edition”* of the Constitutions of 1817.

The text of the Constitutions, beginning with a *“Preliminary Chapter”*, valid for all the Congregation, entitled *“The goal of our Institute”*, with 8 articles, is a deep reworking of the earlier text of 1817 as we indicated. A *“First part”* follows, with 16 chapters for the brothers and then a *“Second part”* with as many chapters for the sisters. The chapters designed for the brothers are entitled:

1. *The Superior General*, 20 articles.
2. *The General Chapter of all the Congregation*, 36 articles.

3. *Mutual Relationships between the two Congregations of Brothers and Sisters*, 2 articles.
4. *The different persons who compose the Congregation*, 11 articles.
5. *Novices and Novitiate*, 42 articles.
6. *Local superiors*, 23 articles.
7. *The Vows and their Fulfillment*, 20 articles.
8. *The Rule and its Permissions*, 13 articles.
9. *Exercises of Piety, Fasting and Mortifications*, 22 articles.
10. *Confession and Communion*, 5 articles.
11. *The Chapter of Faults and Corrections*, 5 articles.
12. *Prayers for the living and for the dead*, 15 articles.
13. *Bed, clothing and nurturance of the Brothers*, 11 articles.
14. *The Infirmary*, 10 articles.
15. *Houses to be established in heretical or infidel countries and of the missions*, 4 articles.
16. *Exterior Association*, 4 articles.

This simple outline of the text is adequate to show the advance in respect to 1817. Here there are not only governance structures but also the bid to live religious life. Certainly, it is normative within the spirit of that age; however, it is consistently forceful to flesh out its great values in concrete spiritual practices common to all the Congregation.

3. The Third Constitutions - 1840

Despite the great output of the General Chapter of 1824 revising, correcting, and completing the original rule to give the Constitutions a more logical ordering, the third General Chapter

that was celebrated between September 1 and October 12, 1838, elaborated a new edition of the Constitutions.

By that moment, the Congregation had been changing a lot. The founders died; the Good Mother in 1834 and the Good Father in 1837. The second Superior General Bishop Bonamie was governing the Congregation. The brothers had grown in number: in 1840, there were 253 members: 117 priests, 10 choir brothers and 126 lay brothers. The sisters had grown to well over 1000. The Constitutions of 1825 had shown its weaknesses. There were things which were not clear, assumptions which did not pan out and new missionary realities which had not been considered before (presence in Hawaii in 1827, Chile in 1834 and Belgium in 1840).¹⁶ But there was a crucial point in 1838 that needed a profound reformation: the power of the Superior General who is no longer the founder, and the composition of the General Chapter which elects the Superior General. On both points, the old practices sustained by the Constitutions of 1825 could not stand up. Articles 12 through 131 of the new Constitutions, which treat these themes, assume the new realities of the Congregation in a more democratic way. And Articles 388 through 427 on the presence in missionary places establish the figure of a “Provincial of the missions” and the establishment of criteria for the initial formation in missionary countries.

In the first article, the new Constitutions indicate that in the Congregation there are three categories of persons: priests (suppressing the previous distinction between missionaries and teachers), choir brothers and lay brothers. The *donnés* continue to

¹⁶ A clear example of the new problematics is the extended note in article 213 which contained a rule of 5 points about the house in Valparaíso, Chile elaborated for the General Chapter of 1838. In this article, one distinguishes between the Provincial of the Missions in Oceania and the superior of Valparaíso.

exist (Arts 428-430) but not having made religious profession cannot be considered as members of the Congregation.

Following the capitular approbation, Bishop Bonamie presented the text to the Holy See in December 1838. In May 1839, he went to Rome to reinforce the petition of approbation of the new text, which received a substantial number of modifications on the part of the Roman curia. Finally it was approved by Pope Gregory XVI in a *Brief* of March 24, 1840.

The new Constitutions carried the title *The Rule of the Brothers of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and of Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar*.¹⁷ This edition has 443 articles. It maintains the preliminary chapter with 9 articles and only minor changes and then offers the text divided into two major sections.

First Part of the Rule of the Brothers. Constitutions, articles 1-173.

1. *The different persons who compose the Congregation, articles 1-11.*
2. *The Superior General of all the Congregation, articles 12-69.*
3. *The General Chapter, articles 70-131.*
4. *Local Superiors, articles 132-162.*
5. *Rev. Father Visitors, articles 163-173.*

Second Part of the Rule of the Brothers, Rules and Statutes, articles 174-434.

1. *Novices and the Novitiate, articles 174-237.*
2. *Vows and their Fulfillment, articles 238-257.*
3. *The Rule and Permissions, articles 258-276.*

¹⁷ *Règle des Frères de la Congrégation des Sacrés Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie, et de l'adoration perpétuelle du Très-Saint Sacrement de l'autel.*

4. *Chapter of Faults and Correction*, articles 277-302.
5. *Exercises of Piety, Fasting and Mortifications*, articles 303-334.
6. *Bed, clothing and nurturance of the Brothers*, articles 335-346.
7. *The Infirmary and the care of the sick*, articles 347-367.
8. *Prayers for the living and for the dead*, articles 368-387.
9. *Houses to be established in heretical or infidel countries and of the missions*, articles 388-427.
10. *Donnés*, articles 428-430.
11. *Exterior Association*, articles 431-434.

In this amplified document, topics that were treated with much disorder and were little developed in the earlier Constitutions were handled in an ordered and complete way. It did not set out to propose new teaching but to systematize in a better way the fundamental intuitions of the period of the founding. Possibly the only really new item was the set of articles 396-415, which establish the position of a "Provincial of the missions": "...among the missionaries a priest will be designated who under the title of Provincial will be superior of all the members of the Congregation employed in this mission and to whom all will have resource for what concerns their duties as religious." (art. 396)

The processes after the approbation. This constitutional text remained in full strength until 1909 with some complementary elements worked out in the General Chapter of 1874. In that chapter, there were 35 articles, which were approved by Pius IX on October 3, 1874, and in some way adjoined like Statutes to the Constitutions. These referred to: 1. *The sections of the Congregation*, 2. *Hierarchical relationships between different authorities*, 3. *Exercises of piety*, 4. *Habit*, 5. *The meals*, 6. *Poverty*, 7. *Missions*,

8. *Sundry items.* To get out a new chapter text, a new edition of the Constitutions was made in 1875, written both in Latin and in French, with the text of 1840 and the material approved by the Chapter of 1874. There was also included a series of other documents: the letter of the Good Father of 1826, the ceremonial, and various decrees of approbation.

Another important document from the end of the 19th century is the *General Directory of the Religious of the Sacred Hearts, decreed by the General Chapter 1893 and published by the authority of the General Chapter of 1898.*¹⁸ In the letter of December 8, 1898, presenting this text, Father Marcellin Bousquet noted: “For a long time in our religious family there has been a desire expressed: to have a directory and a Book of customs which in directing as the words say, our interior acts and our exterior life would aid us to come to the perfection of our vocation and would give us the unity which makes our religious Institute beautiful.” The text regulates the whole of the life of the religious down to minor details such as the exact hour for each one of the daily chores.¹⁹

The Congregation had changed a lot since 1840. It had increased numerically, the brothers were around 400 and it had clericalized. The establishment of *Apostolic Schools* starting in 1878 had increased the number of novices, with therefore a profound change in how to gather vocations. As a result, the profile of those who entered was different. The missions had been strengthened and underscored a major part of the Congregation’s activity. All this was lived out in the ecclesial spirit of the end of the 19th century, which tended to see a

¹⁸ *Directoire général des religieux des Sacrés-Cœurs, décrété par le Chapitre général de 1893 et publié par l'autorité de celui de 1898.*

¹⁹ This work of practical organization was accompanied by an effort to systematize and codify our spirituality which resulted in the publication of the work of Marie-Bernard Garric ssc, *Les Religieux des Sacrés-Cœurs*, Paris 1898.

uniformity among religious as a highly esteemed religious value. This also puts a great emphasis on the practices of the *regular life* accomplished together by all. For this same reason, there arises the need to organize the concrete details of life even beyond what is stipulated in the Constitutions.

4. Fourth Constitutions - 1909

The General Chapter of 1908 made significant modifications of the Constitutions, which the Superior General submitted October 17, 1908, for the approbation of the recently created Sacred Congregation of Religious. The approbation was conceded on April 5, 1909, by Pope Pius X. The approbation decree noted that it dealt with *“certain modifications which experience itself suggested be introduced and which apostolic Decrees, recently published, had demanded be wisely done.”* The letter to present the Constitutions by Father Marcellin Bousquet dated May 20, 1909 indicated clearly that the Constitutions of 1840 had been rendered insufficient by the transformations experienced by the Congregation and also by the new ecclesial norms.

The new Constitutions have 449 articles and follow very closely the outline and the language of 1840. Within this outline, new themes are introduced which had justified this reworking. The principal novelties were:

- The interior of the Congregation going forward will have only two classes of membership: presbyters and lay brothers (art. 1). That's to say the category of choir brothers was suppressed and no more new professions in this category would be accepted.

- The division of the Congregation into provinces is set up.²⁰ This division had already been introduced by the General Chapter of 1898 and sanctioned *ad experimentum* for 10 years by an *Apostolic Decree* of March 21, 1899. The experience had been positive. Then there was the necessity to introduce this structure into the Constitutions. Two types of Provinces were set up –“regular provinces” and “mission province” (arts. 136-155).
- The new norms of the *Propaganda Fidei*, dated November 30, 1906 on how to administer the mission territories, obligated giving new faculties to a Procurator General in Rome (arts. 61 and 62) and a Secretary General (arts. 63-64).²¹
- The petition formulated formally by the Sacred Congregation of Religious on February 17, 1909 by which the first profession would be made in a temporary form (and not perpetual as it had been up to this moment) for a period of three years (arts. 236-258). This demand was made by the Holy See as an indispensable requirement for the approval of the new Constitutions though not proposed when the text was already presented for approbation. It was reverently accepted by the Superior General.²²

²⁰ The division into provinces had been asked of the Holy See November 28 1866. But at that moment the only concrete step taken was to set up the “Province of America” separating it from the houses of Oceania. “*The houses of America are erected in a Province distinct from the Missions. This province ought to be assimilated to those that could later be erected in Europe according to the thought suggested by the Holy See and not to the Missions with which it is not to be confused.*” (General Chapter 1868, art. 2)

²¹ In line with these decisions in 1903, work on the establishment of a house in Rome for the residence of the Procurator General was already begun.

²² The first group of novices who professed temporary vows did so on August 15, 1909.

- There was a new and a more refined treatment of all that has to do with administration of temporal affairs (arts. 72-81). For these matters, it is important to recall that a papal commission was working since 1904 on the elaboration of a new, or first, Code of Canon Law which was published in 1917 and took in strong modifications on these administrative questions.

5. Fifth Constitutions - 1928

The text approved in 1909 integrated important elements adapting the Constitutions on fundamental questions. But it left important gaps which the General Chapter of 1913 would put into relief.²³ This Chapter prepared a series of corrections, which it presented to the Holy See for approval but were rejected. Then in 1917, there was the publication of the new *Code of Canon Law*, which showed more discord between the Constitutions and the canons, which went into effect in 1918. General Chapters of 1919 and 1923 worked on the revision of the Constitutions. Finally, Father Flavien Prat presented the new text for approbation, which was conceded by Pius XI, on February 14, 1928.

The new text was presented to the Congregation by Father Flavien Prat by means of a *Circular Letter* dated July 16, 1928. The Superior General begins by taking note of the long years of work: *"The Rules which made up the life of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts up to this day were not given by heaven from the beginning, in a perfect and definitive text. Divine Providence has willed to leave to men the duty of freely elaborating and slowly perfecting the Rules under its action.... They do not cease to carry in themselves something of human imperfection. Therefore, one ought*

²³ For example, the position of Provincial Treasurer is not created.

not be shocked at the retouches, additions, secondary modifications, it is true, that they have undergone." Then he notes that one of the fundamental elements for the revision of the text was the new canonical norms.

The new Constitutions contain 464 articles and conserve the same outline of the 1909 text, which is that of 1840. There are minor adaptations, which do nothing more than make precise some questions or adapt them to the new canon law. The circular letter of the Superior General indicated themes more profoundly changed as:

- making more precise the conditions necessary to accept someone into the novitiate and to religious profession and for the validity of the novitiate. (arts. 199-263)
- the theme of the election of the administrator of patrimonial goods, as much for the novices as for the professed. (art. 270)
- undertaking the expulsion of an unfaithful religious or delinquent as much for temporary professed as for perpetually professed. (arts. 330-339)

6. Sixth Constitutions - 1966

Twenty-five years later, a decision was made to rework the Constitutions completely because of the discomfort with their inconsistencies, and to renew the fundamental structure given to the 1840 text and conserved up to that moment. The Congregation had increased very much numerically, brothers were more than 1500 and in constant growth passed the 2000 mark during the reworking of these new Constitutions. The majority (almost 90%) was presbyters. There had been a process of expansion and internationalization. In this context, General Chapter of 1953 took the decision to establish two commissions

with residence in Rome and dependent on the Superior General: one for the remaking of the Constitutions and the other to go deeper into the knowledge of our spirituality. Both commissions brought to an end their good work of more than ten years, the fruits of which are reflected in the periodical *Annales Congregationis Sacrorum Cordium*.

Father Henry Systemans summed up the journey taken: “the General Chapter of 1953 decided on a **reworking of the Rule** leaving to the Superior General the duty of naming a commission for this goal and to establish a Spirituality Commission to study our spiritual tradition. Since the General Chapter of 1958 which took positions with respect to some questions of principle and thanks to the increasing collaboration of the Provinces, these three consecutive projects were redacted in 1960, 1962 and 1963. The final one of these three projects was submitted once more to the study of the Provinces before being the basis of the General Chapter which took place in Rome August 22 to October 24 1964.” (Decree of Promulgation, May 26, 1966). The new Constitutions were approved by the *Congregation of Religious* on May 14, 1966, however the approbation was given *ad experimentum* for seven years, given that the Vatican Council II then in full swing would demand modifications.

Among the novelties of the new Constitutions was the strengthening of the Provinces and the establishment of chapters. A short time later, the faculty to write Provincial Statutes was delegated to them and thereby to decide on the form of election of the Provincial (art. 165 and art.168.2 for the designation of two Provincial Councilors). Previously the Superior General directly appointed a Provincial. In the following years, the General Government delegated many other faculties to the Provincials; among those was the faculty to admit to perpetual vows and to presbyteral ordination which the Constitutions had reserved to the Superior General (art. 23.3).

The new Constitutions were the results of nearly 15 years of intense work and they were proposing an entirely new ordering of the constitutional text. However, the work was not open enough to the new ecclesial aspirations, which were expressed in the Council. In 1966, they were born *ad experimentum* with full consciousness that they would have to be revised and by the same token they would have a limited influence in the daily life of the brothers. Father Systemans said as much in the Decree of promulgation. *"The council has opened new horizon during this time. Faithful to its spirit we understand that the reworking decided upon thirteen years ago ought to become an adapted renovation."* However, by the time of the celebration of the last General Chapter, the Council had not finished its deliberations. *"We had then to content ourselves with following general orientations without knowing for sure the concrete aspects of the religious life that would be renewed and adapted according to the conciliar texts. The next General Chapter will give us the occasion to make changes or supplementary modifications."* (Decree of Promulgation, May 26, 1966) The instability of the text of the Constitutions was in some way compensated for by the publication in 1970 of the *"Rule of Life."*²⁴ Let it be recognized that this had an unequal influence in the diverse geographical sectors of the Congregation. The *Rule of Life* is a novel text, fruit of the Spirituality Commission established in 1953, which in some way came to replace, in an entirely new spirit, the text of the *General Directory of the Religious of the Sacred Hearts*²⁵ and of *The Religious of the Sacred Hearts*,²⁶ both from 1898.

²⁴ General Chapter 1970: "1. *The General Chapter recommends the rule of Life to persons and communities. In such a way that they ought to refer to them to judge their life.* 2. *The General Chapter contends that the project of the Rule of Life contains fundamental values which ought to animate our religious life and to serve it as a guide.*"

²⁵ *Directoire général des religieux des Sacrés-Cœurs.*

²⁶ *Le Religieux des Sacrés-Cœurs.*

7. The process that led to the Constitutions of 1990

We proceed to pull together this complex time behind the approbation of the new Constitutions.²⁷ Vatican II profoundly changed the vision of the church and of its relationship with civil society and with that the understanding of religious life. Shortly after our Constitutions were promulgated, August 6, 1966, Paul VI published the *Motu Proprio "Ecclesiae Sanctae"* with *Norms for the adequate renovation of religious life*. This document asks religious congregations to celebrate a special General Chapter, which ought to be followed by a time of experimentation.²⁸ *The Sacred Congregation of Religious and of Secular Institutes* permitted us to postpone our special chapter until 1970 given that our Constitutions had just been approved in 1966. In fact, everything passed rapidly. A strong decentralization force manifested itself in those years. The recently inaugurated Provincial chapters begun to regulate the life of the Provinces. Yet, there existed a strong consciousness of belonging to an international community to share the same charism, and to have a common mission. Therein was rooted a great challenge: to maintain a healthy balance between the

²⁷ Here I follow closely Patrick Bradley, *Our SSCC Vocation and Mission in the light of our new Constitutions*, Rome 1992: Chapter 1 Historical Note.

²⁸ *Ecclesiae Sanctae* II, 3-8: "A special general chapter, ordinary or extraordinary, should be convened within two or at most three years to promote the adaptation and renewal in each institute. This chapter can be divided into two distinct periods, separated generally by not more than a year, The general commission in preparing this chapter should suitably provide for full and free consultation of the members and arrange the results of this consultation in time so that the work of the chapter may be helped and directed. This general chapter has the right to alter certain norms of the Constitutions, Experiments contrary to the common law, provided they are to be undertaken prudently, will be willingly permitted by the Holy See as the occasions call for them. These experiments can be prolonged until the next Ordinary general chapter, which will have the faculty to continue them further but not beyond the chapter immediately following. The general council has the same faculty during the time that intervenes between chapters of this kind, The definitive approval of the constitutions is reserved to the competent authority."

demands of an international community with its own identity and the commitment of our provincial communities with the local churches and the cultures. The General Chapter of 1970 took account of this problematic; it exhorted all the members of the Congregation to live according to the general orientations of the Constitutions of 1966 and judged it necessary to prolong the time of experimentation until the following Chapter. The General Chapter of 1976 in its turn manifested the desire to prolong the time of experimentation until the chapter of 1982. In the Assembly of the Major Superiors in 1981, the following question was asked: Ought we to opt for an entirely new Constitutions or simple for the revision of the Constitutions of 1966? The Assembly inclined towards the revision. However, when the revised text with the incorporation of all the changes in the legislation since 1964 was examined in the Chapter of 1982, an excessively juridical, cold, lifeless recopying was discovered. Consequently, the Chapter of 1982 ordered the totally new reworking of the Constitutions.²⁹

The General Government asked the authorization of the Vatican to postpone the presentation of a definitive text until the chapter of 1988 in such a way so that the content of the new Constitutions *"would be not only studied but also tried out in the life of the brothers and of the communities."* It was hoped that the process and work of elaborating of the Constitutions would be a light projected onto the mission and a good occasion that all would rethink their vocation in light of the priorities of the General Chapter of 1982. The community was face to face with a

²⁹ General Chapter 1982: *"1. The Constitutions of the Congregation will be completely redone. 2. The new "Rule" will be divided into two parts: Constitutions and Statutes. 3. The General Chapter charges the General Government to name a Commission at the general level of the Congregation for the Constitutions. 4. The Commission of the Constitutions will gather all the decisions and suggestions raised in the Chapter with regard to the Constitutions. It will also take into account the work of our sisters."*

challenge “to take up again, to rethink, to renew and reformulate our vocation.” The commission on the Constitutions did an excellent job of organization, documentation, synthesis of the reflections coming from the brothers, taking into consideration as much the observations made by individual persons as by Continental conferences and the Assembly of Major Superiors in 1986. The whole Congregation took the opportunity without precedent to express itself, coming to the Chapter of 1988 with a draft text accepted as a good working document. Despite the more than three weeks of deliberations and dialogue, in which the chapter members made amendments and changes which they judged to be useful, they named a Commission of Redaction who prepared the final text and sent it to the General Government. Revised one more time, the General Government on May 29 1989 presented its definitive redaction to the Holy See. In a letter of May 3, 1990, we received the *observations* of the Holy See. The General Government studied them and after a dialogue with the Congregation of Religious, we received the *Decree of Approbation* of our new Constitutions on the Feast of Our Lady Queen of Peace, July 9, 1990.

These new Constitutions were presented to the Congregation by way of an expanded commentary of the Superior General, Patrick Bradley: *Our SSCC Vocation and Mission in the light of our new Constitutions*, Rome, 1992. This commentary stresses the manner in how the new Constitutions, in a difference from earlier ones, indicate the theological spiritual foundations to illuminate the meaning of the juridical dispositions. Themes such as: consecration to the Sacred Hearts as foundation of our lives; reparation in the light of the dynamism of the saving love of Jesus; vows in the perspective of following Jesus, as a way of life and liberty; the mission of the SSCC lived in the heart of an apostolic community, fraternal, praying, and international; a community of brothers and sisters, united by the one vocation

and mission; sharing our spirituality and mission with SSCC laity; etc. Likewise, there is a good analysis of the processes of incorporation into the community and growth therein.

The General Chapters of 1994, 2000, 2006, 2012, seeking to respond to new challenges of our congregational life, made some modifications, additions, or suppressions to the text approved in 1990 and which has been integrated into this edition.

These changes are along the following lines:

- To lighten up the general services by eliminating the Secretariat of the Missions (suppress *Statutes* 25, 26, 27).
- To make more precise the requirements for Vicar Provincials and Vice provincials (add *Statute* 53B).
- To modify the process of the election of the Superior General (modify *Statute* 82:1) and the elections in general (modify *Constitutions* 123:3b).
- Create a new structure in the Congregation, Delegations (add *Constitution* 89:3 and modify *Constitution* 144, add *Statutes* 66B and 67:3).
- Formalize in a better way the idea of internationality in the Congregation through contracts which explain, the position, active and passive voice of the brothers and the implicated communities (suppress *Statutes* 23, 24, 28, add *Statutes* 22B and 22C; and modify *Statute* 85).
- Introduce into the liturgical calendar the memorial of Blessed Eustáquio and of St. Damien (modify *Statute* 18).

Apostolic Decree¹

January 10, 1817

Most Holy Father

The brothers and Sisters of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and of Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar humbly present to your Holiness the objective and purpose of their institution. This Congregation includes priests and faithful of both sexes, began in Poitiers when France was victim to a cruel persecution brought on by the National Convention. The Congregation received various favors from the Sovereign Pontiff Pius VI of happy and glorious memory, the predecessor of Your Holiness. Then it spread to many cities of France and now is found in seven, namely Paris, Mende, Cahors, Laval, Mans and in Séez. And there is a justified hope that it will spread more given that various cities have petitioned establishments. Recently it has obtained from Your Holiness certain indulgences for thirty years under the title The Confraternity of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary as evidenced by the indult of September 4, 1814.

This Congregation consecrated to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary has St. Joseph as its Patron, adopts the rule of St. Benedict with particular Constitutions which are proper to it. It

¹ The double text in French and Latin were published in parallel. The translation of the official text is in French.

honors particularly the venerable St. Pachomius, St. Augustine, St. Bernard and St. Dominic. The purpose of this Congregation is to retrace the four ages of our Divine Savior: his *infancy*, teaching freely poor children of both sexes and forming young students for the functions of sacred ministry; his *hidden life*, repairing by perpetual adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, the injuries done to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. This is the reason why the Blessed Sacrament is honored day and night without interruption above all in the houses of the sisters who are more numerous. His *apostolic life*, giving themselves to the preaching of the Gospel and finally to his *crucified life*, practicing mortification of the flesh and of the spirit to the extent that human frailty permits. Brothers and sisters make final vows, although simple, of chastity, poverty and obedience to their respective ordinaries, to the Superior General of all the Congregation, the Superior General of the sisters, to the superiors of the each particular local house chosen according to the manner fixed by the Constitutions and the Statutes which are attached.

In these disgraceful times, in which your Holiness was exposed to a cruel persecution, the petitioners never cease to direct prayers to God to obtain the liberation of the supreme head of the Church. In some houses of the Congregation, during a period of three years, the community recited the seven penitential psalms at all the hours of day and night till the moment in which God, strong and merciful, cast from the height of his throne an eye of pity on the unspeakable state of the church. Deigning to hear with benevolence the desires of the faithful, God brought back the successor of Peter to the Church of Rome, a happy and propitious event for which the supplicants give thanks to the author of every good.

Now, respectfully prostrate at the feet of Your Holiness, they ask in humility that the apostolic authority deign to approve and confirm their Institute submitting to your judgment the Constitutions and Statutes which follow. Furthermore they implore your paternal and apostolic blessing for themselves, their parents and families and for the children of both sexes whom they educate in their houses.

[Constitutions are inserted here]

The Sacred Congregation of their Eminences and Most Reverend Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church charged with the affairs of Bishops and Regulars on the report of the Most Eminent Scotti, Advocate, have received the report of the Capitular Vicar of Paris. They have seen what needed to be seen and, considering what needed to be considered, have maturely examined the matter. The Congregation approves and confirms the Constitutions and Statutes, (inserted into the present document), of the Congregation established under the title of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and of Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament. There is the condition however that all decrees and statutes to be made in the future by the General Chapters of said Institute will be submitted for the judgment of the Sacred Congregation to obtain the necessary approbation and confirmation. The Congregation charges the secretary to inform His Holiness about this approval and confirmation.

Rome December 20, 1816.

And the undersigned having given a report of all that had preceded, His Holiness, in the audience of January 10 1817, following the desire expressed by the Sacred Congregation, has deigned to consent to all.

Rome.

A. Cardinal MATTHEJUS

f. Archbishop of Béryte,
Secretary

The SSCC General Secretariat

Circular Letter of Father Coudrin

April 14, 1817

V.S.C.J.

Paris, April 14, 1817

Brother Marie Joseph Superior General of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts and of Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar to his beloved brothers and sisters, Good Health and Blessing in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Down through the centuries, dear brothers and sisters, the church has regarded religious institutions as its best adorned ornaments. Holy cenobites full of zeal and fervor came from the monasteries to reanimate the faith in the mission which was close to extinction. The vows, the supplications the penitential practices of various congregations were calling down on other believers divine mercies and despite what one might say about religious it was 2 or 3 religious who, in the majority of the villages, appeased by their holiness and prayers the anger of heaven and appeased the wrath of God. The demon had deployed all his resources to destroy all the monastic institutions but he did not have much success. In the midst of the horrors of the Revolution, the polluted wind of anti-religion dispersed the pious people of the cloisters and chased the timid virgins from their homes. But in the silence of their contemplation they disarmed the vengeance of the Lord.

God's goodness would not permit that the sacred practices of religious life be abandoned forever. New congregations took form in the very midst of the Revolution.

You know our beloved sons and much cherished daughters, our institute in particular began at the time when the blood of the servants of God flowed from the scaffolds and already we have been 23 years in existence. The marvels of the Good God were needed to sustain us in the midst of the storm.

The Lord has not ceased to bestow on us the miracles of his Providential care. He has led us by the hand. Each day we have known the proof of his all-powerful protection. We have been preserved during the Reign of Terror. The persecution of the Directory could not reach us as during these 14 years of an oppressive government we, aided by heavenly grace, have been able to shield knowledge of our Institute and especially the infrastructures of our diverse establishments from a clever and treacherous police policy.

To these blessings already so big and so numerous the Lord added another, no less precious to us. We have finally, beloved brothers and sisters, the consolation of announcing to you that we have obtained what has been for many years the object of our most ardent desire. The Apostolic See has consented to approve and to confirm our Institute, January 16, of this year (1819). The August Pontiff who is no less illustrious because of his unshakeable courage has willed, by the sublime dignity of his See, to recognize us as a religious body and to give also his paternal and apostolic blessing to our parents and to the children raised in our homes.

We would wish in announcing this good news to you to send you at the same time a copy of the Decree which approves and confirms us and which at the same time approves and confirms the Constitutions which we had submitted to the Holy See as we announced in our circular letter of November 12, 1816. But we would have to wait too long to have copies and we do not want to hold back from saying to you as the Holy

Angel said to the shepherds "I announce to you a matter of great joy": *Gaudium magnum annuntio vobis*.

Our beloved brothers and sisters, with so many favors of the God of all mercy, let's be on guard lest we forget the grandeur of our vocation.

We are destined to adore the Heart of Jesus, to repair the outrages which he receives every day. We need to enter into the interior sorrow of this Sacred Heart.

One of our principle duties is to retrace the four ages of the God man, his infancy, his hidden life, his apostolic life, his sacrificial life. Let's not lose sight that our Lord wants us to enter in a particular way the interior crucifixion of his heart. We therefore like Magdalene ought to bring ourselves to his feet and like St. John accompany him to the cross.

The first virtue that we recommend to you to imitate our Savior is simplicity because it was the first virtue that the Divine Savior himself practiced. Without simplicity one never reaches perfection.

The first proof that our Lord loved simplicity was that although at his birth he had the reasoning of a mature man he chose to hold on to the simplicity of a child. Out of love for us and also to make us feel that we can and ought to imitate him in all things, Jesus willed to conserve the appearance of the weakness of infancy. He genuinely had the simplicity of childhood. He put that together with a tender gaiety, a sweet naiveté and a perpetual inclination to the good that made him the most beautiful and the most lovable of all humanity's children.

The second reason is that the shepherds were the first to be called and that was in respect to their great simplicity. The heart of the Holy Child is expanded when they come to adore him and the Magi were received with a reverential tenderness...

The third reason is that one does not cease to be simple even when one comes to recognize what's bad.

The fourth reason is that a converted sinner becomes a person of simplicity when our Lord lifts the blight that sin leaves in his soul.

The fifth is the scruple that comes when one is not simple. That's because the scrupulous person is never satisfied with a level of perfection. Finally, without a great simplicity there are no reassuring communications with God.¹

Humility is the faithful companion of simplicity. The two virtues have a limitless rapport. There's no true humility without simplicity and humility is specially recommended to us by our blessed Father St. Benedict.

Remember also dearly beloved brothers and sisters, after adoring the heart of Jesus we need to honor particularly the most sweet heart of Mary. The blessed Virgin was conceived without sin. She was born with all the virtues. She never had temptations. She was predestined to be Mother of God from all time. But she merited this widely hailed favor first by her entire fidelity to the favors of God and then by the three virtues which she eminently practiced from the moment when the angel came to announce this great news. The first is her love for virginity. The second is her humility. The third, the complement of those

¹ The thoughts here follow literally the letter of the Good Mother to Father Coudrin (#41, Correspondence, 1801). This is true also of the sequence of his thoughts on the spirituality of the Congregation.

mentioned, is her perfect abandonment to the Will of God out of pure love for God. When our Savior was conceived in her womb, she had the feeling, that is to say the awareness, of life, of suffering, and of the death of her divine Son. She received into her heart the same injury that our Savior was to receive in his person, that is, that the blessed Virgin had experienced a sorrow which she was to have until the moment when the angels lifted her up to heaven.

Mary's love for Jesus was developing up to the moment of her glorious Assumption. For this emotional development there is no stopping point. If it doesn't grow it diminishes. The Blessed Virgin never knew the evil of sin nor the hatred of which the human heart is capable. She only knew the pain it causes God. This is why she is so wonderfully merciful.

Let us console ourselves in our pains, considering that Mary is and always will be our protector, our stay, and that we will always share her heart's affections. It is necessary to go to her when God withdraws, in our pains and desolations, in our infidelities. She will pray for us if we call her to the place of our desolation.

To the cult of Mary you ought, dear brothers and sisters, join a tender devotion to St. Joseph, the patron of our Institute, Father nurturer of Jesus, guardian of the virginity of Mary. If he has not like Mary all the infused virtues, he has been elevated to a high degree of contemplation. He was on fire with love of Jesus. He has great credit with the Son and the Mother. You will not therefore fail to invoke him every day.

Take also as your guardians Saints Joachim and Anne. May the priests of SSCC preach their devotion, the use of which devotion is in very short supply but by means of which one

would obtain many graces. We hope that one day we will make their feast a special day in our houses.

Forget not to call on the intercession of our blessed Father St. Benedict, patriarch of Western cenobites.

You know dear brothers and sisters that we ought to count in a special way among our protectors: Saints Pachomius, Augustine, Dominic and Bernard. We honor St. Pachomius because we ought according to the example of his disciples, lead a life of penance, imitate his silence, his prayer and educate children who then although leading a different life, will have the same spirit. We ought, as did St. Dominic, preach faith among the people. This saint is one of the cherished children of the Blessed Virgin whose privilege he defended against the heretics of his time. He is for preaching, education of the young, and the promotion of science. St. Augustine teaches us to receive sinners, to aid them, and that we convert them by an easy accessibility. But it is St. Bernard whom we ought to imitate in his love of solitude, in the ardor of his zeal. We ought to expect that we will be persecuted and criticized like him. Let us suffer with resignation to unite ourselves more to the suffering heart of Jesus.

We recommend likewise a great devotion to St. John Francis Regis, Apostle of Vivarais whom we have placed as Patron of our Exterior Society of the faithful in a communion of prayer with us.

Our numbers go up every day. Our Divine Master seems to open his heart to us and say: *"come all of you to me"* or better *"you are all mine."* Let's be with him without reserve if we wish to receive the recompense.

May I not pass on some advice to you dearly beloved brothers who have already been invested with the august character of the priesthood, or those destined to receive it? You ought to retrace the apostolic life of the God-man. Remember that the more you have been lifted up to a sublime dignity the more you ought to try and resemble Jesus Christ. Recall also that there is no action of a priest done by reason of his office that does not get a grace for him or for whom it was intended. Priests can never be too attentive to the benediction which they give before confession. Many sinners come with bad dispositions, they are converted by the benediction of the priest and forced, not all, to acknowledge their faults. God is as if constraint to give a more than ordinary grace if the priest who blesses asks that grace of God.

When one confesses only venial sins, not only does the blessing absolve them but it gives the power not to fall into that sin so often.

Giving thanks for support received is a duty which a person happily fulfills. You ought, therefore dearly beloved brothers and sisters, pray for our Holy Father Pius VII not only because he is head of the church, the common Father of all the faithful, the Successor of St. Peter, but also because he consented to approve and confirm our Congregation.

Address your prayers likewise to heaven for his Eminence Cardinal Scotti who willingly pursued our approbation and for the Eminences and Bishops of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. Pray also for the other persons who showed interest and especially for Father Vidal who was responsible for all our concerns in Rome.

For these reasons we give the following orders:

1. All the priest of our Congregation shall offer one Mass and all the brothers and sisters will make one Holy Communion in thanksgiving for the approbation.
2. Each evening for one month, after the *Salve Regina*, we will pray once the Our Father and Hail Mary for all our benefactors and especially for his Holiness.

That the grace, peace and blessing of our Savior Jesus Christ be with you our beloved brothers and sisters.

This letter will be read in chapter in all the communities of the brothers and sisters of the Congregation.

Given in the Mother House in Paris April 14, 1817.

Br. M.J. COUDRIN,
*Superior General and
Apostolic Proto notary*

By Order of
Br. Raphael BONAMIE,
Secretary

Circular Letter of Father Coudrin

February 11, 1826

Brother Marie-Joseph, Superior General of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and of Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, to all the beloved brothers and very dear sisters, greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

For over thirty years, our beloved brothers and dear sisters, the God of all mercy, has ceaselessly poured forth his blessings on our institute. But it is principally in the last year, that our Congregation has received even more proofs of the divine goodness. You have already received the offices proper to our institute, which have been approved by the Apostolic See. We are sending you today the rules drawn up by our General Chapters and confirmed by the Holy Roman church, by that principal Church, the center of Catholic unity and source of all spiritual jurisdiction. We are sending with it the Ceremonial of our Congregation, which the Holy Father was also so good as to approve.

You should also know that the Propaganda has asked us for priests of our Congregation to carry the flame of faith to the inhabitants of the Sandwich Islands, located in the Oceanic Sea. Already on December 3 of last year His Eminence Cardinal Della Somaglia, pro-prefect of the Propaganda, sent us the decree of the Holy See appointing one of the brothers of our Congregation Prefect Apostolic of the Sandwich Islands and two other brothers, apostolic Missionaries, with the broadest

possible powers. On January 15 of the year, the head of the Church had an authentic copy of the Bull of the Jubilee sent to the Prefect Apostolic, already considering him invested with the powers of the Holy See and possessing full authority. And so eternal mercy is giving us the means to imitate more perfectly the evangelical life of our divine savior and to begin the important work of the foreign missions, one of the main purposes of our institute, one which has been especially commended to us by the successor of Saint Peter.

Now we have only one wish to express, beloved brothers and dear sisters: that God's graces have not been poured forth on us in vain, that you be faithful in the observation of our holy Rules. That fidelity will be your consolation on earth and assure your eternal happiness. Our brothers and sisters, who have gone before us to a better life, were convinced of that great truth. Many of them edified you by their virtue, their regularity, their obedience, their spirit of detachment and sacrifice, and we have the sweet assurance that their death was precious in the eyes of the Lord. Try to imitate them; the same crown awaits you. May our holy Rules continually be material for your reading and reflection so that you can conform your conduct to them. Beloved brothers and very dear sisters you know that the *Rule of Saint Benedict* is the foundation of ours. We exhort you to read and to meditate often on the Rule of that great Father of western cenobites. We especially recommend the reading of chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 19, 20, 33, 34, 54, 68, 71 and 72 of the *Rule of Saint Benedict*.¹ There you will learn to value and to practice that holy virtue of obedience, *which must be such that "as it were at the same moment the master's command is given and the disciple's work is completed..."*; that humility *"which is content with the poorest and worst of everything;"* so that in the *"depth of one's heart, we consider ourselves the last of all"* (humility) which leads us to *"to reveal our*

¹ See Appendix following this Circular Letter.

*thoughts and our most secret faults to our superior” because we see ourselves as incapable of directing ourselves; that fervor in prayer, which inspires a profound recollection “in the presence of God and his holy angels”; that poverty of spirit, which does not let us have anything of our own, “since we do not even have the free disposition of our will”; that submission of mind and heart, founded on confidence in God, which makes the religious, “relying on the divine assistance, obey out of charity” ...he finds nothing impossible in obedience; ... he never looks at the one who commands but God alone, to whom one draws near by the path of submission; that interior silence which causes us, as the Prophet said, to restrain our mouth so as not to sin with the tongue; and finally that burning zeal, which leads us away from vice and leads us toward God and life eternal... Saint Benedict, from whom we are pleased to borrow these ideas, goes on to say: “The Religious must exercise that zeal by a very ardent charity. They must anticipate one another by marks of honor and respect. They must patiently put up with the weaknesses of their neighbor. No one must ever seek what he thinks is useful to himself, but rather what is good for the brothers/sisters. They must fulfill the duties of charity to one another out of pure love for God. May they fear the Lord. May they love their superior with humble and sincere affection and *may they prefer nothing to Jesus Christ.*”*

As for ourselves, our beloved brothers and dear sisters, we remind you of what we have said many times: you are always in our heart and in our thoughts, and our constant wish is that you never cease being true children of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

May the grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be always with you all.

This letter will be read two times a year in all the houses of the Congregation.

Given at Troyes, signed by us and countersigned by the Secretary of our Congregation, the eleventh of February of the year of grace eighteen twenty-six.

Br. M-J COUDRIN,
Superior General

By order
Br. J. Hilarion LUCAS,
Secretary

Appendix

THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT

Appendix

THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT ⁽¹⁾

Chapter IV.

THE INSTRUMENTS OF GOOD WORKS

¹First of all, “to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength” (Mk 12, 30). ²Then, “to love thy neighbor as thyself” (Mk 12, 31). ³Not to kill ⁴Not to commit adultery. ⁵Not to steal. ⁶Not to covet. ⁷Not to bear false witness. ⁸To honor all men. ⁹Not to do to another what one would not have done to oneself.

¹⁰To deny oneself in order to follow Christ. ¹¹To chastise the body. ¹²Not to seek after luxuries. ¹³To love fasting. ¹⁴To refresh the poor. ¹⁵To clothe the naked. ¹⁶To visit the sick. ¹⁷To bury the dead. ¹⁸To help in affliction. ¹⁹To console the sorrowing.

²⁰To keep aloof from worldly actions. ²¹To prefer nothing to the love of Christ. ²²Not to follow the promptings of anger. ²³Not to seek an occasion of revenge.

²⁴Not to foster deceit in one's heart. ²⁵Not to make a feigned peace. ²⁶Not to forsake charity. ²⁷Not to swear, lest perhaps one perjure oneself. ²⁸To utter the truth with heart and lips.

²⁹Not to render evil for evil. ³⁰To do no wrong to anyone, but to bear patiently any wrong done to oneself.

³¹To love one's enemies. ³²Not to speak ill of those who speak ill of us, but rather to speak well of them. ³³To suffer persecution for justice' sake. ³⁴Not to be proud. ³⁵Not to be given

⁽¹⁾ *Rule of Saint Benedict*: <https://www.ewtn.com/library/PRIESTS/BENRULE.HTM>

to wine. ³⁶Not to be a glutton. ³⁷Not to be given to sleep. ³⁸Not to be slothful. ³⁹Not to be a murmurer. ⁴⁰Not to be a detractor.

⁴¹To put one's trust in God. ⁴²To attribute any good one sees in oneself to God and not to oneself. ⁴³But always to acknowledge that the evil is one's own, and to attribute it to oneself. ⁴⁴To fear the days of judgment. ⁴⁵To be in dread of hell. ⁴⁶To desire everlasting life with all spiritual longing. ⁴⁷To keep death daily before one's eyes.

⁴⁸To keep guard at all times over the actions of one's life. ⁴⁹To know for certain that God sees one in every place. ⁵⁰To dash upon Christ one's evil thoughts the instant they come to one's heart, and to manifest them to one's spiritual father (Ps 136,9). ⁵¹To keep one's mouth from speech that is wicked or full of guile. ⁵²Not to love much speaking. ⁵³Not to speak words that are vain or such as provoke laughter. ⁵⁴Not to love much or noisy laughter.

⁵⁵To listen willingly to holy reading. ⁵⁶To apply oneself frequently to prayer. ⁵⁷Daily with tears and sighs to confess one's sins to God in prayer, ⁵⁸and to amend these evils for the future.

⁵⁹Not to fulfill the desires of the flesh. ⁶⁰To hate one's own will. ⁶¹To obey in all things the commands of the Abbot, even though he himself (which God forbid) should act otherwise, being mindful of that precept of the Lord: "What they say, do ye; but what they do, do ye not." (Mt 23, 3)

⁶²Not to wish to be called holy before one is so, but first to be holy that one may be truly so called. ⁶³To fulfill the commandments of God daily by one's deeds. ⁶⁴To love chastity. ⁶⁵To hate no man. ⁶⁶To have no jealousy. ⁶⁷Not to entertain envy. ⁶⁸Not to love strife. ⁶⁹To fly from vainglory. ⁷⁰To reverence one's seniors. ⁷¹To love one's juniors. ⁷²To pray for one's enemies in

the love of Christ. ⁷³To make peace with those with whom one is at variance before the setting of the sun.

⁷⁴And never to despair of God's mercy.

⁷⁵Behold, these are the instruments of the spiritual art, ⁷⁶which, if they be constantly employed by day and by night, and delivered up on the day of judgment, will gain for us from the Lord that reward which He Himself has promised: ⁷⁷"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love Him." (1 Co 2, 9) ⁷⁸And the workshop in which we are to labor diligently at all these things is the enclosure of the monastery and stability in the community.

Chapter V. OF OBEDIENCE

¹The first degree of humility is obedience without delay. ²This obedience is characteristic of those who prefer nothing to Christ; ³who, on account of the holy service to which they have obliged themselves, or on account of the fear of hell, or for the glory of eternal life, ⁴as soon as anything has been commanded by their superior, as though it were commanded by God Himself, cannot suffer a moment's delay in fulfilling this command. ⁵It is of these that the Lord said: "At the hearing of the ear they have obeyed Me." (Ps 17, 45) ⁶And again to teachers He says: "He that hears you hears Me." (Lk 10, 16)

⁷Therefore, such as these, immediately putting aside their private occupation and forsaking their own will, ⁸with their hands quickly disengaged and leaving unfinished what they were about, with the instant step of obedience, fulfill by their deeds the word of him who commands; ⁹and so, as it were at the same instant, the command of the master and its perfect fulfillment by the disciple are, in the swiftness of the fear of

God, speedily carried out together ¹⁰by those upon whom presses the desire of attaining eternal life. ¹¹These, therefore, seize upon that narrow way of which the Lord says: "Close is the way that leads to life" (Mt 7, 14); ¹²inasmuch as they, not living according to their own will, neither obeying their own desires and pleasures, but walking according to the judgment and command of another, live in community and desire to have an Abbot over them. ¹³Such as these, without doubt, fulfill that saying of the Lord: I came "not to do My own will, but the will of Him Who sent Me." (John 6, 38)

¹⁴But this very obedience will then only be acceptable to God and pleasing to men if what is commanded be done without hesitancy, tardiness, lukewarmness, murmuring, or a manifestation of unwillingness; ¹⁵because the obedience which is given to superiors is given to God; for He Himself has said: "He who hears you hears Me." (Lk 10, 16) ¹⁶And this obedience ought to be given by the disciple with a ready will, because "God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Co 9, 7) ¹⁷For if the disciple obeys with ill will, and murmur not only with his lips but also in his heart, even though he fulfills the command, ¹⁸nevertheless he will not be acceptable to God, who regards the heart of the murmurer; ¹⁹for such a deed he receives no reward; nay, he rather incurs the punishment of murmurers, unless he amends, and makes satisfaction.

Chapter VI. OF SILENCE

¹Let us act in conformity with that saying of the Prophet: "I said I will guard my ways lest I sin with my tongue; I have put a bridle on my mouth; I was dumb and was humbled and kept silence from good things." (Ps 38, 2-3) ²Here the prophet shows that if we ought at times for the sake of silence to refrain even from good words, much more ought we to abstain from evil

words on account of the punishment due to sin. ³Therefore, on account of the importance of silence, let permission to speak be rarely given even to the perfect disciples, even though their words be good and holy and conducive to edification, ⁴because it is written: "In the multitude of words there shall not want sin." (Pr 10, 19) ⁵And elsewhere: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." (Pr 18, 21) ⁶For to speak and to teach are the province of the master; whereas that of the disciple is to be silent and to listen.

⁷Therefore, if anything is to be asked of the superior, let it be done with all humility and subjection of reverence, lest one seem to speak more than is expedient. ⁸Buffoonery, however, or idle words or such as move to laughter we utterly condemn in every place, and forbid the disciple to open his mouth to any such discourse.

Chapter VII. OF HUMILITY

¹The Sacred Scripture cries out to us, brethren, saying, "Everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled and he who humbles himself shall be exalted." (Lk 14, 11) ²In saying this it teaches us that all exaltation is of the nature of pride, ³which vice the Prophet shows that he took care to avoid, saying: "Lord, my heart is not proud, nor are my eyes haughty, nor have I walked in great matters, nor in wonderful things above me." ⁴And why? "For if I were not humbly minded, but had exalted my soul, as a child that is weaned from its mother, so would my soul likewise be rewarded." (Ps 130, 1-2)

⁵Wherefore, brethren, if we wish to gain the summit of humility and speedily to attain to that heavenly exaltation to which we can ascend only by the humility of this present life, ⁶we must, by actions which will constantly elevate us, erect that ladder which Jacob beheld in his dream and on which Angels

appeared descending and ascending (Gn 28, 12). ⁷This descent and ascent we must understand without doubt as being nothing other than that we descend by exaltation and ascend by humility. ⁸The ladder itself thus erected is our life in this world, which the Lord, having respect to our humility of heart, lifts up even to heaven. ⁹The sides of this ladder we declare to be our body and soul, in which our divine vocation has placed divers rounds of humility and discipline which we must ascend.

¹⁰The first degree of humility, then, is that a person, always keeping the fear of God before his eyes, should avoid with the utmost care all forgetfulness, ¹¹and be ever mindful of all that God has commanded. Let him ever reflect in his heart upon the fire of hell, which shall consume for their sins those who contemn God, as well as upon the everlasting life which has been prepared for those who fear Him. ¹²And keeping himself at all times not only from sins and vices-whether of the thoughts, the tongue, the eyes, the hands, the feet, or his own self-will-but also from carnal desires, ¹³let him always consider that at all times he is being watched from heaven by God, and that his actions are everywhere seen by the eye of the Divine Majesty, and are every moment reported to Him by His Angels.

¹⁴Of this the Prophet informs us when he shows how God is ever present to our thoughts, saying: "The searcher of hearts and reins is God" (Ps 7, 10). ¹⁵And again: "The Lord knows the thoughts of men, that they are vain" (Ps 93, 11). ¹⁶And he also says: "Thou hast understood my thoughts afar off" (Ps 138, 3). ¹⁷And: "The thought of man shall confess to thee" (Ps 75, 11). ¹⁸In order, therefore, that he may be on his guard against evil thoughts, let the humble brother say ever in his heart: "Then shall I be blameless before Him, if I shall have kept myself from guilt."

¹⁹We are indeed forbidden to do our own will by the Scripture when it says to us: "Turn away from thy own will"

(Sir 18, 30). ²⁰And so, too, we beg of God in prayer that His will may be done in us (Mt 6, 10). ²¹Rightly, therefore, are we taught not to do our own will when we hearken to that which the Scripture says: "There are ways which seem to men right, but the ends thereof lead to the depths of hell" (Pr 16, 25). ²²Or again, when we pay heed to what is said of the careless: "They are corrupt and have become abominable in their pleasures."

²³As to the desires of the flesh, let us hold as certain that God is always present to us, as the prophet says to the Lord: "Lord, before Thee is all my desire." ²⁴We must be on our guard, then, against evil desires, for death is close to the entrance of delight; ²⁵whence the Scripture commands us, saying: "Go not after thy lusts." (Sir 18, 30)

²⁶Wherefore, since the eyes of the Lord behold the good and the evil (Pr 15, 3), and ²⁷"the Lord is ever looking down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there is one who understands and who seeks God" (Ps 13, 2); ²⁸and since the works of our hands are reported to Him, our Creator, day and night by the Angels appointed to watch over us, ²⁹we must be always on the watch, brethren, lest, as the Prophet says in the Psalm, God should see us at any time declining to evil and become unprofitable (Ps 13, 3); ³⁰and lest He, though sparing us at the present time because He is merciful and awaits our conversion, should say to us hereafter: "These things hast thou done and I was silent"(Ps 49, 21).

³¹The second degree of humility is, that a person, loving not his own will, delight not in gratifying his desires, ³²but carry out in his deeds that saying of the Lord: I came "not to do My own will, but the will of Him Who sent Me." (Jn 6, 39) ³³And again the Scripture says: "Self-will merits punishment, but self-constraint wins a crown."

³⁴The third degree of humility is, that a person for the love of God submit himself to his superior in all obedience, imitating

thereby the Lord, of Whom the Apostle says: He became "obedient to death." (Phil 2, 8)

³⁵The fourth degree of humility is, that if, in this very obedience, hard and contrary things, nay even injuries, are done to a person, he should take hold silently on patience, and, bearing up bravely, ³⁶grow not weary nor depart, according to that saying of the Scripture: "He who has persevered to the end shall be saved" (Mt 24, 13). ³⁷And again: "Let thy heart be strengthened and wait thou for the Lord" (Ps 26, 14) ³⁸And, showing how the faithful man ought to bear all things, however contrary, for the Lord, it says in the person of those who suffer: "For Thee we suffer death all the day long; we are regarded as sheep for the slaughter" (Ps 43, 22) ³⁹And, confident in the hope of divine reward, they go on with joy, saying: "But in all these things we overcome because of Him Who has loved us" (Rm 8,37). ⁴⁰Similarly in another place the Scripture says: "Thou hast proved us, O Lord; Thou hast tried us as silver is tried by fire; Thou hast led us into the snare, and hast laid a heavy burden on our backs" (Ps 65, 10-11); ⁴¹And to show that we ought to be under a superior, it goes on to say: "Thou hast placed men over our heads" (Ps 65, 12). ⁴²Moreover, these, fulfilling the precept of the Lord by patience in adversities and injuries, when struck on one cheek offer the other; to him who takes away their coat they leave also their cloak; forced to walk a mile, they go other two (Mt 5, 39-41); ⁴³with Paul the Apostle they bear with false brethren (2 Co 11, 26) and with persecution; and bless those that curse them (1 Co 4, 12).

⁴⁴The fifth degree of humility is not to conceal from one's Abbot the evil thoughts that beset one's heart, nor the sins committed in secret, but to manifest them in humble confession. ⁴⁵To this the Scripture exhorts us, saying: "Make known thy way unto the Lord, and hope in Him" (Ps 36, 5). ⁴⁶And again: "Confess to the Lord, for He is good, and His mercy endures

forever" (Ps 105, 1). ⁴⁷So also the Prophet says: "I have made known to Thee my sin, and my fault I have not hidden.⁴⁸I said, 'I will confess against myself my iniquities to the Lord'; and Thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my heart" (Ps 31, 5).

⁴⁹The sixth degree of humility is, that a monk be content with all that is mean and poor, and, in all that is enjoined him, esteem himself a sinful and unworthy laborer, ⁵⁰saying with the Prophet: "I have been brought to nothing and I knew it not; I am become as a beast before Thee, and (yet) I am always with Thee" (Ps 72, 22-23)

⁵¹The seventh degree of humility is, that a person not only call himself with his own tongue lower and viler than all men, but also consider himself thus with inmost convictions, ⁵²humbling himself and saying with the Prophet: "I am a worm and not a man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people" (Ps 21, 7). ⁵³"I have been exalted and cast down and confounded" (Ps 87, 16). ⁵⁴And again: "It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me, that I may learn Thy commandments."

⁵⁵The eighth degree of humility is, that a monk does nothing except what the common rule of the monastery or the example of the seniors direct.

⁵⁶The ninth degree of humility is, that a monk restrains his tongue from speaking and, maintaining silence, speak not until questioned, ⁵⁷for the Scripture teaches: "In the multitude of words there shall not want sin" (Pr 10, 19) ⁵⁸and: "The man full of tongue shall not endure on the earth" (Ps 139, 12)

⁵⁹The tenth degree of humility is, that one be not easily moved or quick to laughter, because it is written: "The fool lifteth up his voice in laughter" (Sir 21, 23)

⁶⁰The eleventh degree of humility is, that, when a monk speaks, he do so gently and without laughter, humbly, gravely, and with few and reasonable words, and that he be not

boisterous in his speech, ⁶¹as it is written: A wise man is known by the fewness of his words.

⁶²The twelfth degree of humility is, that a monk, not only in his heart, but also in his very outward appearance, always show his humility to all who see him; ⁶³that is, in his work, in the oratory, in the monastery, in the garden, when traveling, in the field, or wherever he may be, whether sitting, walking, or standing, he should always keep his head bent down, his gaze fixed on the ground. ⁶⁴Ever mindful of the guilt of his sins, let him consider himself already present before the fearful judgment seat of God, ⁶⁵always repeating in his heart what the publican in the gospel said with his eyes fixed on the earth: "Lord, I, a sinner, am not worthy to raise my eyes to heaven" (Lk 18, 13). ⁶⁶And again with the Prophet: "I am bowed down and humbled in every way" (Ps 37, 7.9).

⁶⁷Having, therefore, ascended all these degrees of humility, the monk will presently arrive at that love of God which, when perfect, casts out fear (1 Jn 4, 18). ⁶⁸In this love he shall begin to observe without any labor, and as it were naturally and by habit, all those precepts which previously he had observed not without fear. ⁶⁹This he shall do no longer now through fear of hell, but for the love of Christ and out of holy custom and delight in virtue. ⁷⁰All this the Lord, through the Holy Ghost, will deign to manifest in His laborer, now cleansed from vice and sin.

Chapter XIX.

HOW WE SHOULD SAY THE DIVINE OFFICE

¹We believe that the Divine Presence is everywhere, and that "the eyes of the Lord behold the good and the evil in every place" (Pr 15, 3). ²Especially, however, do we without any doubt believe this to be true when we are assisting at the Work of God. ³Therefore let us always be mindful of what the Prophet

says. "Serve the Lord with fear" (Ps 2, 11); ⁴and again: "Sing wisely"(Ps 46, 8) ⁵and: "In the sight of the angels I will sing praise to Thee" (Ps 137, 1) ⁶Therefore let us consider how we ought to conduct ourselves in the presence of God and His angels,⁷and so assist at the Divine Office that our mind may be in harmony with our voice.

Chapter XX.

OF REVERENCE AT PRAYER

¹If, when we wish to bring anything to the notice of men in high station, we do not presume to do so except with humility and reverence, ²how much more ought we with all humility and purity of devotion to offer our supplication to the Lord God of all things? ³And let us remember that we shall be heard not because of much speaking, but for our purity of heart and tears of compunction. ⁴Therefore prayer ought to be short and pure, unless perchance it be prolonged by the inspiration of Divine Grace. ⁵In community, however, let prayer always be short, and at the signal given by the superior let all rise together.

Chapter XXXIII.

WHETHER THE MONKS ARE TO HAVE ANYTHING OF THEIR OWN

¹Above all, let this vice be rooted out of the monastery: namely, ²that one presumes to give or to receive anything without leave of the Abbot, ³or to keep anything as his own, absolutely anything at all: either a book or a writing tablet or a pen or anything whatsoever; ⁴since they are to have not even their bodies or their wills in their own keeping. ⁵They may however, expect to receive from the father of the monastery all that is necessary; but they may not keep what the Abbot has not

given or permitted. ⁶Let all things be common to all (Acts 4, 32), as it is written, but let no one call anything his own or claim it as such.

⁷Should, however, anyone be found addicted to this most wicked vice, let him be twice admonished; if he does not amend, let him be subjected to punishment.

Chapter XXXIV. WHETHER ALL WITHOUT DISTINCTION ARE TO RECEIVE THAT WHICH IS NECESSARY

¹As it is written, "Distribution was made to each one according as he had need" (Acts 4, 35). ²By this we do not mean that there should be respect of persons (which God forbid); however, let consideration be had of infirmities. ³Accordingly, when one requires less, let him give thanks to God and be not distressed; when, however, one requires more, let him be humbled at his infirmity, and not grow arrogant because of the charity shown him. ⁴Thus all members shall be in peace. Above all things let not the evil of murmuring be manifest for any cause whatsoever, by any word or sign at all. ⁷If anyone is found guilty in this, let him be subjected to very severe punishment.

Chapter LIV. WHETHER A MONK IS TO RECEIVE LETTERS OR PRESENTS

¹On no account shall it be lawful for a monk either to give or to receive, without the permission of his Abbot, letters, presents, or any little gifts whatsoever, whether from his parents or anyone else, or from his brethren. ²And if anything is sent to him even by his parents, let him not presume to receive it unless it shall have first been shown to the Abbot. If the Abbot orders it to be received, it shall be in his power to

command to whom it shall be given; ³and let not the brother to whom it has been sent be grieved, lest occasion be given to the devil. ⁴Should anyone, however, presume to act otherwise, let him be subjected to the regular punishment.

Chapter LXVIII.

IF A BROTHER BE COMMANDED TO DO WHAT IS IMPOSSIBLE

¹If a brother is commanded to do things that are perhaps hard or impossible, let him receive the command of his superior with all meekness and obedience. ²But if he sees that the burden altogether exceeds his strength, let him represent to his superior the reasons for his inability, submissively and at an opportune time, ³without showing pride or resistance or stubbornness. ⁴If, however, after these representations, the superior insists on his command, let the subject be persuaded that it will be to his benefit, and ⁵let him obey out of love, trusting in the help of God.

Chapter LXXI.

THAT THE BRETHREN ARE TO OBEY ONE ANOTHER

¹The good service of obedience is to be rendered by all not only to the Abbot, but let the brethren likewise obey one another ²knowing that by this path of obedience they shall go to God. ³Giving precedence, therefore, to the commands of the Abbot or of the superiors appointed by him (to which we allow no private commands to be preferred), ⁴for the rest, let all the younger brethren obey their seniors with all charity and solicitude. ⁵But if anyone is found to be contentious, let him be rebuked.

⁶If anyone is rebuked in any way by the Abbot or by any other superior for any reason, however small; ⁷or if he perceives that any superior is angered or disturbed by him, however little, ⁸let him immediately and without delay cast himself on

the ground at his feet and there continue in that posture of penance until the superior is appeased and gives his blessing. ⁹But if anyone should disdain to do this, or remain obstinate, let him be expelled from the monastery.

Chapter LXXII.

OF THE GOOD ZEAL WHICH MONKS OUGHT TO HAVE

¹As there is an evil zeal of bitterness which separates from God and leads to hell, ²so there is a good zeal which separates from vices and leads to God and life everlasting. ³Let monks, therefore, practice this latter zeal with most fervent love: ⁴that is, let them in honor anticipate one another; ⁵let them bear most patiently one another's infirmities, whether of body or of character; ⁶let them endeavor to surpass one another in the practice of mutual obedience; ⁷let no one seek that which he accounts useful for himself, but rather what is profitable to another; ⁸let them practice fraternal charity with a chaste love; ⁹let them fear God; ¹⁰let them love their Abbot with a sincere and humble affection; ¹¹let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ; ¹²and may He bring us all alike to life everlasting. Amen.

CONSTITUTIONS

AND

STATUTES

Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and of
Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar

(Brothers)

General House
Rome
2017

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Abbreviations

- Art. Articles of the Constitutions.
- A. SS.CC. *Annales Congregationis Sacrorum Cordium.*
- c./cc. One or several canons of the Code of Canon Law.
- CS 10 *Cahiers de Spiritualité* N° 10, 1970: Some Features of the Spiritual Profile of the Good Father and of the Primitive Community.
- GS “*Gaudium et Spes*,” Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Vatican Council II).
- LEBP *Lettres et Écrits du Bon Père* (5 typed volumes; the numbers are those of the text and not those of the page).
- LEBM *Lettres et Écrits de la Bonne Mère* (4 typed volumes; the numbers are those of the text and not of the page).
- LG “*Lumen Gentium*,” Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Vatican Council II).
- PC “*Perfectae Caritatis*,” Decree on the Renewal of Religious Life (Vatican Council II).
- RD “*Redemptionis Donum*”, Apostolic Exhortation of His Holiness Pope John Paul II.
- Note** The asterisk (*) refers to the references found on pages 171-174.

Decree of approbation
July 9, 1990

Letter of the Superior General
July 14, 1990

**Approval of the modification
of the General Chapter 1994**

**Approval of the modifications
of the General Chapter 2012**

Preliminary Chapter 1825 (1817)



CONGREGATIO
PRO INSTITUTIS VITAE CONSECRATAE
ET SOCIETATIBUS VITAE APOSTOLICAE

Prot. n. P. 61 - 1/89

DECREE

The Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and of Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, whose Generalate is in Rome, received from its Founders the mission to contemplate, live and announce to the world the Saving Love of God made flesh in Jesus. This consecration to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary moves the brothers to live a life centered in the Eucharist, and enables them to enter into the sentiments of Christ, making their own His work of reparation; “religious profession places the love of the Father in the heart of each one: that Love which is in the Heart of Jesus Christ, Redeemer of the world” (cf. *RD*, No. 9); devotion to the Heart of Christ and of Mary invites them to proclaim God as a God of grace, a God of mercy, and a God with a heart for everyone, with a predilection for those who suffer, for the poor and for the unevangelized.

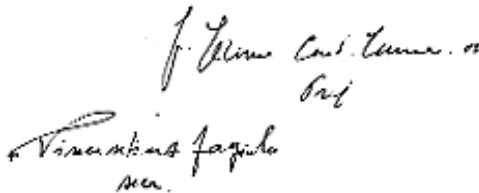
In accord with the norms of the Second Vatican Council and the various directives of the Church, the Institute has renewed the text of its Constitutions, and the Superior General presented it to the Apostolic See for approbation.

This Congregation for Institutes of the Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life, after careful examination of the text, taking into consideration the favorable vote of the Congress on July 5th 1990, by virtue of this present Decree approves and confirms the said text with the modifications made by the Congress, as redacted in the Spanish language, a copy of which is on file in the Archives of this Congregation, having observed all the norms prescribed by law.

May the brothers of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and of Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, faithful to its particular spirit, together with the sisters of the same Congregation (whose identical vocation and mission is expressed in the common first chapter of the Constitutions), continue to preserve and develop the riches of their spiritual heritage. May the living out of these Constitutions help them to be true witnesses in the Church of the Saving Love of God and of a community inspired by this Love, and to continue His "Work" on earth. May Our Lady, Queen of Peace, Patroness of the missions of the Congregation from the beginning, be a constant source of inspiration and strength to all, in carrying out the mission entrusted to them by the Lord.

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary.

Given at Rome on the 9th day of July 1990, on the Feast of Mary, Queen of Peace, Patroness of the missions of the Congregation.



The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The top signature is for J. Jérôme Card. Hamer, with the text "J. Jérôme Card. Hamer" and "Pref." written below it. The bottom signature is for Vincentius Fagiolo, with the text "Vincentius Fagiolo" and "secr." written below it.

+ J. Jérôme Card. Hamer
Pref.

+ Vincentius Fagiolo
secr

CONGREGATION OF THE SACRED HEARTS

GENERAL HOUSE

Rome, July 14, 1990

Dear brothers,

On May 22, 1989 our new Constitutions were promulgated, thus constituting the proper law of the Congregation. The promulgation was, of course, subject to future modification by the Holy See. On May 29, 1989, we submitted the text to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CIVCSVA).

In a letter dated May 3, 1990, we received the "observations" of the Holy See after our text had been studied. The General Government in turn studied these observations, and after a very positive and cordial dialogue with the CIVCSVA, I am happy to say that the text, which has finally been approved, faithfully reflects the charism and spirit of our Congregation today, as expressed in the General Chapter of 1988.

A journey of many years has drawn to a close, as we receive the Decree of Approbation of these New Constitutions. They are the fruit of the widest ever consultation in the life of our Congregation. Our last Constitutions were approved in 1966, and so much has happened in the Church and in Religious life since then. The long delay in arriving at Constitutions, incorporating the spirit of Vatican II has perhaps been a blessing. We were able to experience what the Spirit was doing in the Congregation, and to experience the freshness and the

vitality of the renewal, before we renewed our structures. Now I believe we have Constitutions, which are faithful to the founding vision of our Founders and which incorporate the basic values and “wholesome traditions” (PC 2) of our Congregation. At the same time they are adapted to the changed circumstances of our times, and remain open to the future.

I am convinced that, if our Founders were alive today, they would be the first to respond to the call to renewal. The General Chapter of 1982 in calling for the re-writing of the Constitutions had precisely the same purpose in mind, the renewal of our religious life. Our Constitutions express who we are and who we wish to be in the world of the nineties and beyond. They will help us to understand our charism, the particular grace of the Holy Spirit, to which we are called to respond in our day. They will help us to live the Gospel of Jesus in the spirit of our Founders according to our vocation.

No legislation will, of itself, solve all our problems, but our proper law is meant to protect and promote our life. Let us receive these Constitutions in faith, as part of God’s Providence for all of us, given to us to better understand our vocation. I believe our New Constitutions respect, preserve and enrich our spiritual patrimony, highlighting the fundamental principles on which we wish to base our lives. We thank God for this gift, and for His guidance.

I would like to repeat what I wrote in the letter of promulgation: We will find in these pages the fruit of much prayer, much questioning and many experiences of the living of our charism. We will discover that there is a real continuity with our past to be found in the Constitutions. We will also find significant changes from all former Constitutions. This is normal as we seek to live out the charism of our Founders in

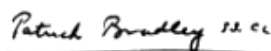
the modern world. There is a fund of richness to be discovered as we pray over the content of many articles, which reflect the challenge of our vocation today.

I would like to acknowledge the generous help of so many who made the New Constitutions possible: the Constitutions Commission, the General Chapter capitulants, the Redaction Commission, the members of the General Government and especially the many brothers who reflected on our vocation and shared their experience of our charism. Nor can we forget the sisters who collaborated so willingly with us to produce the beautiful first chapter common to both branches. To each and everyone I express our deepest gratitude. I have confidence that the Holy Spirit has been present in all this work, for the writing of our text was a real exercise of co-responsibility.

The official text of the Constitutions has been redacted in Spanish. Given their importance, the General Government has also taken responsibility for the publication of the Constitutions in French, English and Dutch. When all our brothers have had an opportunity to read and study the text, I hope we will be able to offer you some further reflections on its rich content.

May the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary continue to show their love for all of us, and may They help us deepen our communion in mission as we become more aware of the beauty of our vocation.

Your brother in the Sacred Hearts,



Patrick Bradley, ss.cc.
Superior General



CONGREGATIO
PRO INSTITUTIS VITAE CONSECRATAE
ET SOCIETATIBUS VITAE APOSTOLICAE

Rome, December 14, 1994

Reverend Father Enrique Losada
Superior General of the Congregation
of the Sacred Hearts
Rome

Reverend Father,

I am happy to communicate to you that we examined your request regarding the approval of the modification introduced in Article 127 of the Constitutions of your Congregation that you presented in the name of the recently celebrated General Chapter.

The Congregation of Institutes for Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life approves the above mentioned modification according to the text in your Archives.

I take this opportunity to express my high esteem in the Lord to you.

Eduardo Cardinal Martínez Somalo
Prefect



CONGREGATIO
PRO INSTITUTIS VITAE CONSECRATAE
ET SOCIETATIBUS VITAE APOSTOLICAE

Vatican, October 30, 2012

To the Superior General:

We received the official notice of the composition of the new General Government elected at the 38th Chapter which the *Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary* concluded recently.


[...]

The Chapter had also made a number of changes relative to a model of delegations which up to this point was not contemplated in the Rule itself.

This, the Congregation of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, having examined the petition, approves the changes introduced in articles 89 and 144 of the Constitutions.

Confident in the light of the Holy Spirit and in the availability of all the brothers of the Congregation, may the work done and the path which they are pursuing in putting into effect the decisions taken by the Chapter, give much fruit with a view to revitalizing the communal mission of the SSCC.

With greetings and affection in the Lord.


João Braz Card. de Aviz
Prefecto

PRELIMINARY CHAPTER

OF THE FIRST CONSTITUTIONS
OF THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS
APPROVED IN 1825 (1817) **

1. *The purpose of our Institute is to retrace the four ages of Our Lord Jesus Christ: his **childhood**, his **hidden** life, his **evangelical** life and his **crucified** life; and to spread devotion to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.*
2. *To retrace the **childhood** of Jesus Christ, we freely bring up poor children of both sexes. We open schools, which are free for all poor children whom we are not able to raise in our houses. We also take in boarders of both sexes. The brothers have a special concern to prepare young students of the sanctuary for the functions of the sacred ministry.*
3. *Through perpetual adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament, we strive to retrace the **hidden** life of Jesus Christ by making reparation for the injuries done to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary by the enormous crimes of sinners.*
4. *The brothers retrace the **evangelical** life of the Savior by the preaching of the Gospel and the Missions.*
5. *Finally, we must recall, as much as we can, the **crucified** life of our Divine Savior by practicing with zeal and prudence the works of Christian mortification, above all by restraining our senses.*

** For an explanation of this document see Eduardo Pérez-Cotapos ssc, *The Constitutions of the SSCC*, note 15, p. 19.

6. *Furthermore, we have for a goal to do all in our power to spread true devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the most gentle Heart of Mary, following that devotion as approved by the Apostolic See.*

7. *We have as a special patron St. Joseph, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and for particular protectors Saints Augustine, Dominic, Bernard and Pachomius.*

8. *The Rule of St. Benedict is the foundation of our Rule. We live a common and regular life under obedience to the Superior General of the entire Congregation, the Superior General of the sisters, the superior or superiors of each individual house, as well as what will be said below. The brothers and sisters make perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.*

CONSTITUTIONS

Chapter I

VOCATION AND MISSION OF THE CONGREGATION

1. In the communion of the Church, the People of God, the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and of Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar is an Apostolic Religious Congregation of pontifical right, founded by Pierre Coudrin and Henriette Aymer de la Chevalerie. Brothers and sisters, united in the same charism and the same mission, form a single Congregation approved as such in 1817 by Pope Pius VII.

2. “The Consecration to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary is the foundation of our Institute” B.P.¹

From this consecration our mission has its origin: to contemplate, live and announce to the world God’s love, which was made flesh in Jesus. Mary has been associated in a singular way with the mystery of God made man and with His saving work: this is what is expressed in the union of the heart of Jesus and the heart of Mary.

Our consecration calls us to live the dynamism of saving love and fills us with zeal for our mission.*

3. “In Jesus we find everything: his birth, his life and his death. This is our Rule.” B.P.²

We make our own the attitudes, options and tasks that led Jesus to the point of having his Heart transpierced on the cross.

In our radical following of Christ, Mary his Mother, model of faith in that love, precedes and accompanies us so that we can enter fully into the mission of her Son.*

¹ Cf. *Mémoire* sent by the Good Father to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars (6.12.1816): LEBP, 519.

² Cf. *Règlement du Bon Père*, LEBP, 2197.

4. Aware of the power of evil that opposes the Father's love and disfigures his design for the world, we wish to identify with the attitude of Jesus and with His reparative work.*

Our reparation is communion with Him, whose food is to do the Father's will and whose work is to reunite by his blood the dispersed children of God.

Our reparation makes us participate in the mission of the Risen Christ, who sends us to announce the Good News of salvation. At the same time, we recognize our sinfulness, and we feel ourselves to be in solidarity with the men and women who are victims of injustice, hatred, and sin in the world.

Finally, our reparative vocation encourages us to collaborate with all those who, led by the Spirit, work to build a world of justice and love, sign of the Kingdom.

5. In the Eucharist, we enter into communion with the thanksgiving of the Risen Jesus, Bread of Life, and Sacrament of Love.

The Eucharistic celebration and contemplative adoration make us participate in the attitudes and sentiments of Jesus before the Father and before the world. They impel us to assume a ministry of intercession and remind us of the urgency to work for the transformation of the world according to the criteria of the Gospel.

Like our Founders, we find in the Eucharist the source and the summit of our apostolic and community life.*

6. Our mission urges us to evangelizing action by which we enter into the interior dynamism of Christ's love for his Father and for the world, especially for the poor, the afflicted, the marginalized and those who have not heard the Good News.

To make the Kingdom of God present, we seek the transformation of the human heart and we endeavor to be agents of communion in the world. In solidarity with the poor, we work for a just and reconciled society.

Availability to the needs and demands of the Church, discerned in the light of the Spirit, and the capacity to adapt to circumstances and events are characteristics inherited from our Founders.*

The missionary spirit frees us and makes us available to exercise our apostolic service where we are sent to bring and receive the Good News.

7. We live our vocation and mission in community. Simplicity and the family spirit are the characteristics of our relationships within our international Congregation, which desires to be open to all people. Our community life gives witness to the Gospel and makes our announcement of redeeming love more convincing.*

8. The brothers and sisters of our religious family constitute one Congregation. Each branch has its own juridical autonomous personality, legislation, structures of government and formation, community life and temporal patrimony.

Since its foundation, our religious family has had but one charism, one mission and one spirituality. Aware that it constitutes a significant value, the brothers and sisters assume together the responsibility to maintain and strengthen their unity.*

The governments of both branches on their distinct levels are especially responsible for promoting this unity.

The General Government of the brothers and sisters are jointly, in the final instance, the guarantors of the unity of the whole Congregation.

9. Since its origin the Congregation has had a secular branch. Its members commit themselves to live the mission and the spirit of the Congregation, and it has its own Statutes approved by the Holy See.*

10. Besides the Constitutions and Statutes the Congregation has a "Rule of Life" which expresses the fundamental values of our spiritual tradition and is an element of communion and an instrument of formation.

N.B. From here on the term "Congregation" refers only to the brothers' branch, except where the context indicates otherwise.

Chapter II

OUR CONSECRATION

11. The Holy Spirit led each of us along diverse paths to enter the Congregation in order to follow Jesus there. We commit ourselves to this following of Jesus, as out of love for Him, we embrace his own “way of life” by means of our religious profession. Thus we are free “to be with Jesus” and we are available “to be sent by Him” in mission for the building of God’s Kingdom.³

12. Our religious profession produces singular effects.

1. It consecrates us to God through the ministry of the Church. Rooted in our baptismal consecration, our public vows involve a total donation of our entire being.

2. It assigns us a place in the visible body of the Church along with other religious.*

3. It incorporates us juridically in the Congregation with the rights and duties defined by the Law, creating bonds of solidarity among us and making us members of one and the same family.*

13. We live the consecration inherent in any religious profession as our “consecration to the Sacred Hearts”. We are called to enter with Jesus, as Mary did, into the plan of the Father for the salvation of the world through love.*

14. The profession of religious vows, as a total form of life, calls us to be in the Church, “a symbol of the Gospel values already present in the world” and a witness of “the new and eternal life won by Christ’s redemption”.⁴

Stat. 1

³ Cf. *PC*, 2a.e; *LG*, 44, 3, cf. *Mk* 3:14.

⁴ Cf. *LG* 44, 3.

15. The vows, through their evangelical content, prophetically denounce the most characteristic manifestations of “the sin of the world”: those, which strike at the fundamental values of human life. Taken in this spirit, our vows contribute to the redemption and promotion of these values and they form a vital part of our reparative mission.*

16. Our vows also make us participate in a radical manner in the cross and resurrection of Christ. We, therefore, embrace them with faith as a way of life and of freedom.

17. The formula with which we make our temporary or perpetual profession is the following:

*“I, ..., in conformity with the Constitutions approved by the Holy Apostolic See, make (for... years, or forever) the vow of chastity, poverty, and obedience, as a brother of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, in whose service I wish to live and to die. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen”.*⁵

When the profession has been made, whoever presides adds:

“I, N. N., Superior General, Provincial or Delegate, accept your religious profession in the name of the Church and of the Congregation”.

Stat. 2

⁵ Cf. *Cérémonial, Règles, Constitutions et Statuts de la Congrégation des Sacrés Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie, et de l'adoration perpétuelle du Très Saint Sacrement de l'Autel*, Troyes, 1826, p. 19.

CHASTITY

18. Jesus lived His love for the Father and for humanity in celibacy. He proposed to His hearers the possibility of embracing this same way of “life for the Kingdom of God;” emphasizing that such an option is impossible without a special and gratuitous grace. This is why we recognize especially in this aspect of our vocation God’s gift to us, more so than our gift to God.⁶

19. In Mary we see clearly how chastity can be something that strengthens our capacity for loving and serving Jesus, the Church, and the world.

20. We commit ourselves by vow to consecrated celibate chastity. We realize that the richness of the affective life is only discovered progressively. We embrace our way of life with its perspectives of growth and maturation, confiding in the fidelity of Him who has called us. We find the necessary help in prayer, in ascesis and in a sense of discretion.

Stat. 3

21. We live our vow of chastity in a community of brothers. This means that we can count on their fraternal help in order to be faithful to our commitment. It also means that we agree to contribute to creating in community life the climate necessary for each person to develop a well-balanced affective life and to learn self-giving love.*

⁶ Cf. Mt 19:10-12.

22. We strive to live our consecrated chastity, aware of its personal and ecclesial value.

1. It is a call to deepen in a more personal way our loving communion with Christ.

2. It liberates us so that we can be more human, more open, more creative, and so that we can be more capable of risk in our apostolic work.

3. It is a prophetic denunciation of that selfishness which vitiates sexuality; it also announces a new kind of relationship between persons.

4. Lived in common and with joy, it is a sign of the future world and an anticipation of the Kingdom. It manifests the possibility of a communion that is not of flesh and blood.*

5. It brings us into a special solidarity with those for whom celibacy means loneliness and a state of life imposed by circumstances.

POVERTY

23. 1. Jesus, “being rich, made Himself poor”, and during His ministry He lived with his disciples, sharing everything in common with them.⁷

2. He denounced as evil the poverty, which the poor of this world suffer, and announced to them the Good News that God would reign in their favor. He also denounced the danger inherent in riches, and condemned the over-eager seeking of this world’s goods.*

⁷ Cf. 2 Cor 8:9.

3. He invited all His hearers to live with free hearts unattached to material things. He asked those who wished to follow Him in His messianic mission, to leave all and embrace the life of poverty He shared with His disciples.*

24. Mary is presented to us as being within the tradition of “the poor of Yahweh”. In the *Magnificat* she sings to the Lord “Who fills hungry with good things and sends the rich away empty-handed”, a Lord who “exalts the humble.”⁸

25. As religious we are called to accept in a radical manner the invitation contained in the words and life of Jesus.

1. The mission of the Congregation leads us to share the life of the poor and to take up their cause, knowing that solidarity with them can bring us face to face with a world marked by injustice.

2. Placing our confidence in the paternal providence of God, and being careful not to allow ourselves to be seduced by riches and the power that comes with them, we wish to live detached from the goods of this world.

3. Following the example of Jesus and the ideal of the first Christians, we share all things in common.*

26. By our vow of poverty we commit ourselves:

1. not to dispose of or use material goods, both patrimonial and communitarian, without the authorization of the legitimate superiors who preside over the religious community, in accordance with the universal and proper law;⁹

⁸ Cf. Lk 1:52-53.

⁹ The expression “in accordance with the law” should be understood as referring to universal and proper law.

2. to place in common all that we earn or receive by whatever title except that of a family inheritance;

3. consequently, all that we receive through our own work or because of the Institute, we acquire for the Institute; this is also true for whatever we might receive as a pension, subsidy or insurance.¹⁰

Stat. 4

27. The brothers do not lose either the ownership of their goods or their capacity to acquire others by way of family inheritance. However, before their temporary profession, they should make a disposition recognized by civil law through which they appoint an administrator of such goods, and by which they indicate who is to have the use or usufruct during the period of their vows. They cannot add the interest to their patrimony beyond what is necessary to keep its original value. In the same way, before their perpetual profession, they should make a will, recognized by civil law, with regard to their goods. To change either of these dispositions, as well as to alienate goods belonging to their patrimony, they need the permission of their Provincial.

28. With the authorization of the Superior General and by means of a juridical act recognized by civil law, the brothers in perpetual vows may renounce ownership of a part or of all of their patrimony.

29. Our life of poverty should affect both our communities and ourselves as such. Consequently, it involves a task that goes much beyond the personal, and requires that our attitudes and decisions be those of a community.*

Stat. 5, 6

¹⁰ Cf. c. 668, 3.

30. There are important values present in our life of poverty, which we wish to embrace:

1. A simple life-style in solidarity with the poor is a decisive factor for the vitality of our entire religious life.

2. It helps us to see those around us with new eyes, and allows us to discover, precisely in the dispossessed and marginalized, wherein the true dignity of all human persons lies and where the authentic quality of life is to be found.

3. It is also a sign for the world, since it denounces the idolatry of profit and of consumerism as well as its devastating effects on rich and poor alike. It points out the values of the Kingdom, indicating the way to liberation and to human fulfillment.

4. Our faith moves us to welcome and to serve Jesus himself, who suffers in the victims of human greed and injustice to the end of time.*

OBEDIENCE

31. 1. Jesus was able to say that His food was to do the will of His Father. Completely consecrated to His mission of making God's Kingdom present, He was always attentive to recognize the will of His Father and to fulfill it. His obedience as Servant was the concrete expression of His love as Son, and that obedience to God led Him to become the Servant of all human beings.*

2. In this way, Jesus taught us with His life that the fullness of human existence is to be found in the unconditional acceptance of the will of the living God and not in the autonomous seeking of self-fulfillment. Likewise, He taught us

that we must transform our instinctive will to power into an attitude of service.

32. With her response “Be it done to me according to Your word”, Mary reminds us how fruitful a life can be when it is unconditionally open to the will of God.¹¹

33. In common with all Christians, we are called to make our own the obedient attitude of Jesus. For us, this call is concretized in the apostolic religious life that our Congregation proposes to us. Identifying ourselves with its mission and its orientations, we find our way of following Jesus. Our obedience as religious derives, then, from our belonging to the Congregation, and in that it finds its meaning.

34. This belonging involves the active and diligent participation of each brother in the life of our Congregation at all its levels. With his own resources and in his own place of service, each member contributes to the fulfillment of our congregational mission.

35. 1. This participation is especially indispensable in the task incumbent on the whole Congregation and on each of its communities: to discern the will of God in order to fulfill it in a concrete manner.*

2. In this process of discernment, the respective superior has his own role within the community: he must promote the process, animate it and guide it. When he judges it to be opportune, he can in an evangelical spirit and in fraternal dialogue, take the decisions, which he believes to be appropriate.

Stat. 7

¹¹ Cf. Lk 1:38.

36. By the vow of obedience we commit ourselves to accept the will of God expressed by our legitimate Superiors when they command in accord with our Constitutions. Likewise we owe obedience to the Pope in virtue of the vow.*

Stat. 8

37. We try to incorporate in our lives the values inherent in religious obedience:

1. Obedience contributes efficaciously to the death within us of what is most characteristic of “the old man”, the will to autonomy and domination.¹²

2. It opens to us possibilities for a new freedom, by stripping us of the servitude and limitations stemming from our selfishness or from the conditioning and prejudices of our environment.

3. It allows us to contribute to the liberation of those who feel alienated as a result of their own sin or because of “the sin of the world”. It helps us to be a prophetic sign of the freedom of the children of God in a world where human beings are oppressed.¹³

¹² Cf. Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9.

¹³ Cf. Jn. 1:29.

Chapter III

OUR COMMUNION IN MISSION

38. Our common mission and consecration through religious profession create among us a bond of communion, which we are called to foster in an intense community life.

1. Interpersonal communion is indispensable if human life is to achieve its proper level.

2. Our communities take their inspiration from the ideal of the first Christians, who had “only one heart and one soul.”¹⁴

3. Our communities seek to be a means for fulfilling our mission, a leaven of communion and reconciliation in our world, and a sign which anticipates the full life of humanity in the Kingdom of God.

39. Our community life normally develops within a local community, living in a religious house which has been erected legitimately. Fraternal charity is the very heart of that life together with a willingness to place in common not only material goods but also our own personal lives in a communion of heart and soul.*

Stat. 9

AN APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY

40. We are religious belonging to an apostolic Congregation. Consequently, our community life and our mission are two poles of the same reality, each one implying the other. We structure our community life so as to serve our mission and, at

¹⁴ Cf. Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-35.

the same time, we consider community life to be a fundamental part and the primary witness of our mission.*

41. From this interdependence of our community life and our mission it follows that:

1. The community values the gifts and charism bestowed by God on each brother, and accepts them as a grace confided to it by Him.

2. Our ministerial activity is the fruit of community discernment and community decisions.

3. In his apostolate, each brother is aware that he has been sent by the community. For this reason no religious should assume tasks or commitments outside of the Congregation without the permission of the legitimate Superior.

4. The experiences and criteria for our apostolic activity – pastoral, missionary, educational or social – are discussed in common. They are evaluated in the light of the Gospel and in accordance with Art. 6 of our Constitutions.

5. The community seeks to estimate how effective it is as a sign of God's love for humanity as manifested in Christ. Consequently, it allows itself to be challenged and questioned by the people it serves and among whom its members live.

42. We try to keep alive in ourselves the love our Founders had for the Church.*

1. This fidelity to our Founders requires that our communities be open to and in communion with the local Church of which we are part, remaining attentive to the needs of the people of God and to the call of their pastors. We recognize the pastoral authority of the bishops in the areas of

apostolate, worship and ministries, in accordance with the universal law.¹⁵

2. Our loyal collaboration with the local Church does not dispense us from the prophetic role that religious are called to exercise in it or from the specific contribution we can offer as members of our Congregation.

3. Our spirit of reparation urges us to see to it that our apostolate has an ecumenical dimension. We recognize the spiritual worth of all peoples and of every person. We wish to work for the unity desired by Christ as a sign of communion and love among all.

Stat. 10

43. Apostolic ministry and community life enrich each other and at the same time entail some tension.

1. We are aware that this tension forms part of apostolic religious life and that it can never be completely resolved. Our challenge lies in learning to turn this tension into a source of life.

2. To ensure mutual enrichment, two factors are essential:

a) a continual conversion that – through an experience of God in prayer, community life, and apostolic work – brings us to an ever more intense and joyous living out of our consecration to God and of our service to the world;

b) the acceptance of the fact that we are evangelized by the people we serve, and that our apostolic ministry can be a true spiritual experience which nourishes and enriches our community life and our prayer.

¹⁵ Cf. c. 678, 1.

A COMMUNITY OF BROTHERS

44. Our fraternal life involves a network of relations that build up communion. For this reason, it cannot be taken for granted but is, rather, something, which remains always unfinished. Each brother has to play his part in the strengthening of this communion.

45. Constructive dialogue among the brothers is a necessary means for building fraternity.

1. In order for each brother to grow as a person within the community, he must feel that he, his values, and his contribution are appreciated by the others.

2. Fraternal correction, given in the spirit of the Gospel, contributes to the dynamism of the brotherhood.*

3. In order for true communion and evangelical friendship to develop, tensions and conflicts must be confronted with lucidity, courage, and the spirit of pardon.*

4. The plan of community life must include regular meetings of the whole community.

a) These meetings provide occasions for the brothers to share their experiences, to shed light on their lives in the light of the Scriptures read in common, and to pray together.

b) In such meetings, sometimes a sharing takes place that helps the community to discern and evaluate the activity of each member.

Stat. 11

46. 1. Each local community should establish and develop relations with the other communities, in order to exercise in a concrete way its responsibility for building the provincial

community, to acquire a deeper awareness of belonging to the Congregation, and to give real substance to our solidarity.

2. Each Province has to seek means by which all its communities may open themselves to the life of the whole Province.

Stat. 12

47. 1. The community seeks to insert itself in the world in which it lives so as to be a sign of the presence of the Kingdom of God. The relations thereby established permit it to discover Gospel values in all persons and to read in them the action of the Spirit.*

2. At the same time, in order that it might be a sign of the transcendence of God, the community ought to maintain a critical posture vis-à-vis the world, especially as regards the means of social communication.*

3. Each community will reserve a suitable area where the brothers can experience a climate of silence, prayer and rest.

4. We wear the habit of the Congregation, as prescribed in the Statutes.

Stat. 13

48. Living a community life oriented toward the ideal that has been described involves trials, which constitute a death to the individualism, and selfishness that may be present in each member. In this way, the brothers are led to a fuller and more joyful life.

49. Our elderly and our sick brothers will receive our best care and our most solicitous fraternal charity.

Stat. 14

A PRAYING COMMUNITY

50. Our communion in mission is most deeply rooted in our personal encounter with the Risen Lord.

1. It is He who calls us and gives us His Spirit, transforming us into His witnesses.

2. Our community prayer and our personal prayer nourish one another. Both are vital for the life of the community and of its members.

3. Whether it be adoration, praise, or the silence in which we abandon ourselves to the action of God within us, prayer has a value in itself.

Stat. 15

51. Our life of prayer:

1. is centered in the Eucharist as the living expression of our personal and communitarian commitment;

2. is enriched and purified by means of the experience of faith, which our ministries bring us;

3. is nourished by the Word of God and by the Liturgy, as well as by the diverse expressions of authentic Christian spirituality, especially that spirituality which is the heritage of our own Congregation;

4. associates us intimately with Mary, to whose prayer we unite our own.

52. In the Eucharist we express and celebrate the action of God in our lives and in the world. For us, the Eucharist which we celebrate daily, in so far as is possible, is the basis of fraternal communion and of apostolic service.

Stat. 16

53. 1. Eucharistic adoration is an essential part of our Congregational heritage and of its reparative mission in the Church.*

2. In our religious apostolic life, adoration is rooted in the celebration of the Eucharist. It is a time for contemplation with the Risen Jesus, the beloved Son of the Father, who came to serve and to give His life.

3. In adoration:

a) We unite ourselves to His incessant intercession before the Father, to His cry in solidarity with a humanity wounded by sin.

b) We are urged to commit ourselves more fully to the mission, so that “by Him, with Him, and in Him” our lives and the world – liberated from evil and sin – may give glory to the Father.

4. a) Each community will seek concrete and significant ways in which to live the adoration, and to ensure that the Eucharist will be the constant point of reference in its life.

b) As an expression of our permanent attitude of adoration, each brother commits himself to spend a time, to be determined by the Provincial Chapter, before the Blessed Sacrament each day.

Stat. 17

54. 1. We regularly receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which renews and strengthens our fidelity to the Lord.

2. We are careful to see that our sick or elderly brothers receive the Sacrament of the Sick and *Viaticum* at the appropriate time.

55. Throughout the year, the liturgical seasons and the feasts of the Church give spirit and form to our life of faith and of prayer. We also celebrate the feasts in our own calendar, approved by the Holy See for our Congregation.

Stat. 18

56. In our prayer we express the communion that continues to bind us to the deceased brothers and sisters of our Congregation. The Provincial Chapters will determine the corresponding prayers.

57. Community prayer is a key element in the plan of life with which we build our communities. The Liturgy of the Hours, especially Lauds and Vespers, will occupy a privileged place in this communal prayer; other times of shared prayer or of reflection on Sacred Scripture may be included, as well as the traditional prayers of the Church and of our Congregation.

58. In our personal plan of life we need regular time for individual prayer, for study and meditation on Holy Scripture, for reviewing our lives and commitment as religious, in the light of the Gospel, and for an annual retreat.

Stat. 19, 20

59. We have a filial devotion to Mary as our inheritance, a devotion which can be expressed in rich and different ways, both in personal and in communal prayer, especially in the recital of the rosary.

Stat. 21

AN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

60. 1. Our evangelizing mission can be carried out in all cultures, in keeping with the initial intuition of our Founder, who saw us as “a group of missionaries who would spread the Gospel everywhere”.¹⁶

2. This universality of our mission normally includes the implantation of our Congregation in the places where we serve, and openness to accepting local vocations.

61. We regard the evangelizing mission undertaken by our Congregation in any part of the world as a responsibility affecting and enriching every brother. We are ready to leave country, family, and familiar surroundings in order to serve wherever we are needed.

62. When we exercise the mission of the Congregation in countries other than our own, we try to become inculturated in all that concerns our way of being and living, and also in our way of proclaiming the Gospel message.

Stat. 22

63. Each Province has direct responsibility for the mission of the Congregation within its own geographical area, as well as in those other areas, which it has accepted with the consent of the General Government.

¹⁶ CS 10, 286.

64. As regards the exercise of our Congregation's evangelizing mission, the general responsibility of the whole Congregation is expressed through the following means:

1. The animation and coordination of diverse missionary initiatives by the General Government.

2. The circulation throughout the entire Congregation of information about our mission in different places.

3. The recognized right of each brother to volunteer for any mission of the Congregation.

4. The availability of all Provinces to contribute to the financing of missionary projects, and to free some of its members so that they may collaborate personally in the mission of other more needy Provinces.

65. As an international Congregation, we live our mission in communion with the Pope, the universal Pastor.

Chapter IV

INCORPORATION AND GROWTH IN THE COMMUNITY

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

66. When we enter the Congregation we commit ourselves to begin a life-long process of formation, growth and renewal.*

1. This is a process of continual conversion, which involves us as persons and as a community with a view to a radical following of Christ according to our charism, and in order to advance the Congregation's mission and the quality of its internal communion.

2. It is in communion with our brothers that we carry on this process, since we are committed to one and the same vocation.

Stat. 29

67. In addition to the General Plan of Formation, each Province will have its own plan for Initial and Ongoing Formation. It will be based on the norms of the Church's common law, on our Constitutions, General Statutes and Rule of Life, and on the Province's Plan of life and mission, of which it will be an integral part.

Stat. 30, 31

VOCATIONS AND VOCATION MINISTRY

68. The task of awakening vocations is an indispensable aspect of our apostolic ministry. While respecting the call, which God addresses to each person, we concern ourselves with sharing our life and charism, our tradition and history. We see in new vocations an invitation to grow and to renew

ourselves so as to walk together towards an ever greater fulfillment of our call.

69. 1. The evangelical witness of our communities should be the most effective invitation for others, especially the young, to come to us, to learn more about our life, and eventually to choose to make their own our way of following Jesus.*

2. The promotion of vocations is based on our belief in the validity of our charism, and it is the responsibility of every member of the Congregation; this responsibility does not in any way preclude the establishment of special vocational teams for this apostolate.

3. A good vocation ministry is a part of the building up of the Christian community, which has the right to be enriched with the variety of charisms given by the one Spirit in the Church.

INITIAL FORMATION

Basic Elements

70. The Initial Formation Plan will indicate the way in which new members progressively integrate themselves into the community, and will describe clearly the objectives of each stage of the formation process and the principal means to achieve them.

71. The fundamental objectives of Initial Formation are:

1. to see to it that the candidates discern God's call so that they might respond to it in a personal and a constantly renewed way;

2. to integrate them into the living tradition of the Congregation: begun by our Founders, incarnated throughout our history, expressed in our own law and updated by successive General and Provincial Chapters.

72. Under the initiative and interior action of the Holy Spirit, each candidate is the first agent in his own formation, keeping himself open to the formation personnel appointed by the Congregation.*

1. He freely commits himself to a fidelity, which is comprised of three aspects: his personal vocation, the tradition of the Congregation and the demands of the world and of the Church.

2. At every stage of this personal process, the Congregation provides formation personnel to personally accompany the individual candidate in his discernment and growth. The formation personnel should maintain the following principles:

a) Have a deep respect for the person and for the freedom of the candidate.

b) Maintain an open and respectful dialogue with each one, sensitive to the variety of social and cultural contexts that may exist.

c) Take care that each person's growth is holistic, well balanced, and in tune with his own rhythm of life.

Stat. 32

73. From the very beginning of the process, community life is the most important factor in the discernment and formation of each candidate.

1. The local formation community is where he can discover our evangelizing mission, the communal meaning of our life, and the simple, family lifestyle of our community.

There he learns to share his faith experience, his human and community situation and his apostolic responsibilities.

2. His identification with the mission and the life of the Congregation is only brought about through his growing participation in the life of his major Community and of the Congregation in its international mission.

Stat. 33, 34

74. Concerning initial formation, the Provincial with the consent of his Council:

1. Appoints formation personnel, especially the Master of Novices and the Provincial Director of Formation following the norms of the law.

2. Admits candidates who have requested entrance into the novitiate and to temporary or perpetual profession, following the norms of the law.¹⁷

3. Authorizes the anticipation of first profession, following the norms of canon 649 §2.

4. Extends the novitiate in individual cases up to six months, in accordance with canon 653, without prejudice to the provisions of Art. 76.

5. Admits to ministries and gives dimissorial letters for diaconate and priesthood to candidates who have so requested.*

Stat. 35

The Novitiate

75. The novitiate is a privileged time for the candidates' initiation into a deep spiritual life, both on the theoretical and practical levels, as well as into religious life and the charism of

¹⁷ Cf. cc. 642-645, 656 and 658.

our Congregation, to which they must gradually conform their hearts and minds.

1. Time, space, and help should be made available to the novices to deepen their relationship with the Lord in personal and communal prayer.

2. Along with learning our history and tradition, our Constitutions and Statutes and Rule of Life, they will have the opportunity of direct contact with the Major or Regional Community as it is in the present day.

3. They will have the possibility of participating in experiences of apostolic ministry. They will be accompanied in the tasks of deepening the faith dimension of their apostolic work and of integrating their life and their prayer.*

Stat. 36, 37

76. In our Congregation the duration of the novitiate is one canonical year. The particular Statutes of a Province can establish that a period of not more than six months be added, with this last period being dedicated to practical apostolic formation which can take place outside the novitiate house. As regards absences from the novitiate the norms of canon 649, §1 are to be observed.

77. In accordance with the norms of canon 647 the canonical year of the novitiate will be made in a house erected for this purpose by a written decree of the Superior General with the consent of his Council.

78. The Master of Novices must be at least thirty years old and must have five years of perpetual profession. Under the authority of the Provincial Superior, he is responsible for the formation of the novices.

Profession and Formation of the Professed

79. Novices duly accepted in accord with Art. 74, 2 make their first vows for three years, renewable ordinarily for another three years. In particular cases, the Provincial Superior, if he judges it opportune, can prolong the time of temporary profession; the total time during which the member is bound by temporary vows may not, however, extend beyond nine years.

80. Profession of temporary and perpetual vows is made into the hands of the Superior General, or, in his name, into the hands of the proper Provincial Superior or his delegate.

81. Temporary profession confers the right to active voice, unless the Provincial Chapters indicate otherwise. Within the limits indicated by the Constitutions, perpetual profession also confers the right to passive voice.

Stat. 22B, 22C

82. Formation during the period of temporary vows seeks to foster the maturing of the religious in all that he acquired during the novitiate.

1. There is particular emphasis on a suitable adapted systematic theological-spiritual formation, essential for a mature faith life and for a fruitful apostolic ministry.

2. As he takes his place in the professed community, a religious must be helped to continue integrating the experience of God, community living, apostolic activity, study and reflection, in the context of our life and mission as religious of the Sacred Hearts.

3. The new religious ought to be open to knowing the world and to be inculturated in it so that he might be able to serve it.

Stat. 38

83. Profession of perpetual vows is to be preceded by a prolonged period of preparation; the Provincial Government must approve its duration and nature.

84. The preparation of the aspirants to the priestly ministry will follow the orientations and programs of the universal and local Church and the General Plan of Formation of the Congregation.

Stat. 39

ONGOING FORMATION

85. 1. God calls us each day and invites a renewed response daily. Thus our formation as religious is never finished.

2. Our Ongoing Formation is a decisive factor if the whole Congregation is to be renewed, and if its mission is to respond effectively to the challenges posed by the Church and by a constantly changing world.

86. 1. For such personal and community renewal each brother must be committed to deepening and updating his formation in the areas of theology, spirituality, religious life, the Congregation, pastoral ministry and our particular professional work.*

2. Through its representatives, the community is responsible for fostering this commitment among the brothers and offering them the means and time to carry it out.

Stat. 40

Chapter V

THE SERVICE OF AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY

IN THE CONGREGATION IN GENERAL

Our Congregation

87. All the temporary and perpetually professed religious belong to the Congregation, with the rights and duties, which are expressed in these Constitutions.

88. Our Congregation is a religious Institute of such a nature that within it, all members with perpetual vows can fill any position of government, unless universal or proper law determines otherwise.¹⁸

89. 1. The Congregation is organized into Provinces, and these into lesser communities. A Province can have one or more Vice-Provinces or Regions, which in turn are made up of various lesser communities.

2. This division corresponds to the specific plans of community and apostolic life integrated within the unity of our mission, and it has both a juridical and an administrative character.

3. Exceptionally, there can be Delegations directly dependent on the Superior General.

Stat. 66B

4. Not only the Congregation but also the Provinces, Vice-Provinces, Regions, Delegations and legitimately erected houses enjoy juridical personality.

¹⁸ Cf. cc. 129; 134, 1; 150; 274, 1; 596, 2.

The Meaning of Authority

90. The living out of communion in mission, treated in Chapter III of the Constitutions, requires a style of authority that fosters participation and co-responsibility.

91. Authority must be discharged in the Congregation in the spirit of service to the brothers, just as Jesus presents it in the Gospel.*

92. The brothers who exercise authority:

1. Are concerned with fostering the development of the personality, talents and well-being of each brother.

2. Seek to animate the community in the task of discerning the will of God in life, of taking care to see that it is put into practice and of fostering our “family spirit”.*

3. Foster the fulfillment of our mission more than the mere observance of rules.*

4. Are called to promote solidarity and unity between the different parts of the Congregation, and to establish the necessary bonds with the different organizations or movements of the Church and society.

The Exercise of Authority

93. The Major Superiors of the Congregation are: the Superior General, the Provincials, the Vice-Provincials, and their respective Vicars when exercising that office.*

94.* 1. The Superiors, together with their respective Councils, form a government team within which, nevertheless, they retain their own personal authority in accordance with the law.

2. The Superiors and their Councils seek the means to create among themselves a true communion of spirit and of co-responsibility, necessary to animate the community which they serve. Each one fulfilling his proper role, they work as a genuine government team at the service of the mission of the Congregation.

3. The brothers must be consulted whenever possible before making decisions that affect them. Thus a wider participation of all in the elaboration and implementation of these decisions will be achieved.

Stat. 41

95. Superiors, and those who participate in the instances of government, must always keep in mind in the exercise of their office:

- respect for persons,
 - the fundamental equality of all in the religious vocation,
 - subsidiarity,
 - the possible gifts of leadership of each brother,
 - the responsibility of all – although it be in different ways
- to further the mission of the Congregation.*

96. Every office holder may, for a just reason, offer his resignation to the Superior who named or confirmed him. The resignation is not effective until the latter accepts it.

1. The Superior General, if he judges in conscience that he should resign, offers his resignation to the Holy See after having heard the opinion of his Council.

2. If the office has been conferred by a Chapter, the resignation is offered to the corresponding Major Superior.

97. 1. An office holder, who has received an office for a definite period of time, can be removed from it before the expiration of the term for a proportionately serious reason or, when the good of the Congregation demands it. Such an initiative has to be taken by the same Superior who would accept his resignation and having received the consent of his Council.

2. If it is a question of the Superior General, the General Council will submit the matter to the Holy See.

LOCAL AUTHORITY

98. 1. The fulfillment of our mission in different countries and the diversity of our apostolic activities demand at the local level a certain pluralism in structure and organization.

2. Juridically constituted communities are formed by a minimum of three religious, one of whom is the local superior.

3. The Provincial Statutes will determine the term of office of the superior as well as the type of consultation preceding his appointment. He must have at least one year of perpetual profession.

4. The Provincial Chapters establish and periodically revise the norms that govern this structure in the service of our communion in mission.*

99. In establishing these norms, the Provincial Chapters must take into account:

1. the necessity that there be in each Province instances of authority different from that of the Major Superior and subordinate to it;

2. the possibility that the local Council be formed by all the professed of the community.

100. 1. The erection of a religious house belongs to the corresponding Provincial with the consent of his Council, presuming the canonical requirements.*

2. The suppression of a house legitimately erected belongs to the Superior General, the diocesan bishop having been consulted:*

a) If the suppression has been asked for by the respective Provincial with the consent of his Council, the Superior General only needs to hear the opinion of his own Council.

b) In the contrary case, he must obtain the consent of his Council, after having heard the opinion of the Government of the Province affected.

c) At all events, it belongs to the Provincial with the consent of his Council to dispose of the temporal goods of the suppressed house, in accordance with canon 616 §1.

THE PROVINCIAL AUTHORITY

The Provinces

101. A Province is a part of the Congregation, constituted by the communion and participation of various communities in a common plan of religious apostolic life, presided over by a Major Superior with his own power under the authority of the Superior General.*

Stat. 42, 43

102. The erection, modification or suppression of a Province belongs to the Superior General with the consent of his Council, after consultation with the persons concerned.

Stat. 44

*The Provincial Chapter**

103. The Provincial Chapter constitutes the highest expression of the internal authority of a Province. It is celebrated with the frequency that the General and Provincial Statutes establish.

Stat. 45, 46

104. These Statutes will likewise indicate the composition of the Chapter, seeking to provide the greatest possible participation according to the circumstances.

If the Chapter is not open to all the members of the Province, it is necessary to take into account that:

1. the elected members be more than the ex-officio members;

2. Vice-Provinceals be included among the ex-officio members, if the Province has Vice-Provinces, which depend on it;

3. all the professed have at least active voice in the election of delegates;

4. the Vice-Provinces and the Regions have their own representative(s) chosen as the particular Statutes stipulate.

Stat. 47, 48

105. The Provincial convokes the Chapter, having heard his Council, according to the timetable established in the Provincial Statutes. It also belongs to him to preside at it.

Stat. 49

106. The Provincial Chapter:

1. promotes and animates the life and mission of the Province in communion with the life and mission of the whole Congregation, to this end it makes the decisions, sets the priorities and proposes the orientations, which it deems necessary;

2. establishes the Statutes of the Province in accord with the law;

3. evaluates the activity of the Provincial Government in all its aspects, including temporal administration, after studying the respective reports;

4. recommends to the Superior General the change from a Region to a Vice-Province or vice-versa, from a Vice-Province to Province, or of the Province itself to a Vice-Province or Region, after the study of all the necessary antecedents.

Stat. 50, 51

107. The Provincial Statutes should establish:

1. the manner of electing the Provincial and the length of his term;

2. the number of Provincial Councilors, their manner of election and the length of their term;

3. the manner of designating the Vicar Provincial;

4. the rules for substitution or replacement of the Provincial, in case of absence, impediment, resignation or death.

108. 1. The Provincial, with the consent of his Council and after consulting the opinion of the Province, can convoke an extraordinary Provincial Chapter when there is need to deal with urgent questions that are matter for a Chapter.

2. He will inform the Superior General immediately of this decision.

109. The decisions of a Provincial Chapter come into effect when they are promulgated by the Provincial, once they have been approved by the Superior General with the consent of his Council.

Stat. 52

The Provincial Government

110. The ordinary authority of a Province is exercised by the Provincial Government, formed by the Provincial Superior assisted by his Council, in accordance with the law.

111. 1. The Provincial must be at least 30 years old and 5 years perpetually professed. *

2. His election must be confirmed by the Superior General.*

3. The Provincial Superior cannot be in office for more than nine years, without an interruption of at least three years.*

Stat. 53, 53B, 54

112. The Provincial Superior seeks the consent of his Council whenever it is required by universal law or by the Constitutions, especially in the following cases:

1. The admission to the novitiate and to temporary and perpetual profession.

2. The presentation of candidates for the diaconate or the priesthood.

3. The appointment of local superiors.

4. The administration of temporal goods, according to the law.

113. The Provincial Government assures the following services:

1. Animation of the communion and the mission of the Province according to the Constitutions, as well as implementation of the orientations and decisions of the General and Provincial Chapters.

2. Fostering participation and co-responsibility on the part of the brothers in the elaboration, implementation and evaluation of the plans of the Province.

3. Determining the specific participation of each one in the life and mission of the Province, after dialoguing with the communities and with the brothers concerned.

4. Promoting and guiding vocation ministry, as well as Initial and Ongoing Formation.

5. Taking care that the communities and the brothers are inserted in the local Church.

6. Fostering the inculturation of the communities and brothers in their social and cultural milieus.

7. Promoting communion among the brothers and sisters and fostering international solidarity in the Congregation.

Stat. 55-58

114. In addition to what was specifically attributed to him in the different articles of these Constitutions and their Statutes, it is the personal responsibility of the Provincial Superior to:

1. see that the Provincial Government, over which he presides, carries out its mission in communion and a spirit of co-responsibility;

2. maintain personal contact with the brothers of the Province;

3. make the canonical visit to all the communities and works of the Province with the frequency established by the Provincial Statutes;

4. maintain contact with the General Government;
5. represent the Province before the authorities and the organisms of the local Church and civil society;
6. authenticate juridical acts that require, according to the common law, the intervention of a Major Superior, except those expressly reserved to the Superior General by the Constitutions;
7. grant permission to publish writings that treat of matters of religion and customs.

Stat. 59, 60

The Vice-Provinces and Regions

115. 1. A Vice-Province is a part of a Province, clearly defined, in which ordinary vicarious power is exercised by the Vice-Provincial government, formed by the Vice-Provincial Superior and his Councilors, preserving the personal authority of the Vice-Provincial Superior in accordance with the law.

2. The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, erects a Vice-Province, upon the recommendation of the corresponding Provincial Chapter.

Stat. 61, 62

116. The same conditions are required to be Vice-Provincial as for the Provincial Superior. The Superior General can dispense with the requirements of age or time of profession for serious reasons and with the consent of his Council.

117. 1. The Vice-Provincial Government has within the Vice-Province the same powers and obligations, *mutatis mutandis*, that the Provincial Government has in the Province, according to the norms of our law.

2. It is reserved to the Provincial Superior with the consent of his Council:

a) to admit to perpetual profession;

b) to make decisions that involves the participation of the Province through its personnel or its temporal goods.

118. An agreement should be signed between the Province and the Vice-Province, which will specify at least:

1. the relations between the two Major Communities;

2. the norms for the administration of the goods of the Vice-Province and for the movement of persons from the Province to the Vice-Province, and vice-versa;

3. the norms governing active and passive voice for the members of the Vice-Province in the electoral processes of the Province;

4. the conditions and powers of the Vice-Provincial Chapter, if they consider it opportune to establish it, or else those of the Vice-Provincial Assembly.

119. A Region is a part of the Province that enjoys certain autonomy by reason of particular circumstances. It is governed by a Regional Superior assisted by his Council, with delegated powers that are specified in the particular Statute of the Region.

Stat. 63-66

120. The Provincial Superior, with the consent of his Council, erects a Region within the Province, having first dialogued with the brothers who will form the Region, and having received the authorization of the Superior General with the consent of his Council.

GENERAL AUTHORITY

*The General Chapter**

121. 1. The General Chapter is the highest authority within the Congregation.

2. Its purpose is to support and encourage the Congregation in the realization of its mission, with renewed fidelity to its proper vocation.

3. It belongs to the Chapter to determine general orientations and to establish norms that it considers opportune for the common good of the Congregation, in accordance with common law and our proper legislation.

122. 1. The ordinary General Chapter is celebrated every six years.

2. In case of necessity, the Superior General can convoke an extraordinary General Chapter, having heard the opinion of the Provincial Superiors and with the consent of his Council.

123. The *ex officio* members of the General Chapter are: the Superior General, who presides, the members of the General Council and the Provincial Superiors.

124. The delegates to the General Chapter are always, at least, four more than the *ex officio* members, and they are elected directly by all the professed of each Major Community.

Stat. 67-69

125. The Superior General can call up to three brothers to participate with voice and vote in the General Chapter. If the office of Superior General falls vacant before the Chapter takes place, the right of those called is revoked.

126. 1. The Superior General announces the General Chapter, having heard his Council, at least one year before it will take place.

2. The Superior General, having heard his Council, formally convokes the Chapter sufficiently in advance, once the process of the election of delegates has been completed in the whole Congregation.

Stat. 70-73

127. 1. For the validity of its acts the General Chapter requires the presence of at least two-thirds of its members.*

2. Unless the contrary is said expressly, the decisions and elections of the General Chapter require an absolute majority of votes, based on the number of members present at the moment of the voting.

3. In any election within the General Chapter:

a) Every tie is resolved in favor of the younger in age, and in the case of the same age, in favor of the older by profession. This norm is applied also to the ballots that limit the number of candidates for the following ballot.

b) When for any reason whatever there are only two candidates, they lose active voice.

c) If the maximum number of ballots has been specified, in the final one the candidate who obtains the most votes is elected, still maintaining what has been established in point a).

128. The principal tasks of the General Chapter are:

1. To maintain and give full force to the spiritual patrimony of the Congregation, proposing orientations and

recommendations that can inspire the life of the Congregation and especially the activity of the General Government.

2. To evaluate the life and mission of the Congregation, having examined the report of the General Government and all other information presented to it, since the last General Chapter and in the light of its orientations.

3. To evaluate the economic situation of the Congregation.

4. To review the decisions and orientations of the preceding Chapter.

5. To propose to the Holy See modifications to the text of the Constitutions, if they have obtained a majority of two-thirds.

6. To establish, if they have a two-thirds majority, General Statutes, to modify them, or to repeal them.

7. To make decisions, valid from Chapter to Chapter, by an absolute majority of votes. These decisions are tacitly extended if they are not repealed or modified by another General Chapter.

8. To elect the Superior General and the members of the General Council; and from among them, on the proposal of the Superior General, the Vicar of the Congregation.

Stat. 74-80

129. The election of the Superior General is governed by the general provisions of Article 127, 3 of the Constitutions and by the following special norms:

1. On the first three ballots, for a candidate to be elected, he must obtain a qualified majority of the electors present.

2. On the fourth ballot, only the three brothers with the most votes on the third ballot have passive voice; and for a candidate to be elected, he must obtain an absolute majority of the electors present.

3. On the fifth and final ballot, only the two brothers with the most votes on the fourth ballot have passive voice.*

Stat. 81, 82

130. 1. If the one elected accepts, he takes possession of his office as Superior General at the end of the Chapter.

2. If he does not accept, the election process is repeated from the beginning.

Stat. 83

131. 1. The election of each member of the General Council is carried out separately. In these elections the general provisions of Article 127, 3 are applied together with the special norms that follow:

a) On the first two ballots an absolute majority of the electors present is required.

b) On the third and final ballot, only the two brothers with the most votes on the second ballot have passive voice.

2. The election of the Vicar General requires an absolute majority of votes, obtained, at the latest, on the third ballot. If it is not achieved, the Superior General will propose another of the Councilors.

Stat. 84

132. For the re-election of the Superior General, the Vicar and the General Councilors, the same norms are applied as for their first election.

133. The ordinary authority of the Congregation is exercised by the team of the General Government, formed by the Superior General and the Councilors, preserving the personal authority of the Superior General according to common and particular law.

1. The Superior General has to be at least 35 years old and ten years perpetually professed.*

2. The General Council is composed of at least four Councilors, perpetually professed, including the Vicar of the Congregation, who must meet the same requirements as the Superior General.

3. In virtue of his office, the Vicar General substitutes for the Superior General in case of absence or temporary impediment and succeeds him during the rest of his term in case of death, resignation, or permanent impediment, declared as such by the Holy See on the recommendation of the General Council.

Stat. 85

134. The Superior General and members of the General Council are elected for a period of six years. If the office of a Councilor becomes vacant outside of the Chapter, the Superior General and the remaining Councilors, acting collegially, elect a new Councilor for the rest of the six years.

135. The Superior General and the members of the General Council can only be re-elected once, unless an interruption of at least six years has elapsed.*

136. The General Government guarantees the following services:

1. Animating and challenging the Congregation to be faithful to its mission in the Church and in the world.

2. Promoting the implementation of the Constitutions, and of the orientations and decisions of the General Chapters.

3. Developing communion and co-responsibility among the different communities of the Congregation.

4. Scheduling and carrying out the visitations throughout the whole Congregation.

5. Assuring the smooth running of the Secretariat, of the administration of temporal goods and of the other general services.

6. Stimulating and coordinating initiatives that foster Initial and Ongoing Formation in the whole Congregation.

7. Promoting the unity of the two branches of the Congregation, above all with initiatives that foster a greater apostolic collaboration among brothers and sisters.

Stat. 86

137. Besides the powers specified in various articles of these Constitutions and their Statutes, the Superior General has the personal responsibility to:*

1. see that the General Government, over which he presides, exercises its mission in communion and with a spirit of co-responsibility;

2. call religious of any Province, having heard the respective Major Superior, to participate in a service useful to the whole Congregation;

3. be an instance of appeal in particular given situations, for example, in the transfer of a religious from one Province to another;

4. maintain personal contact with the Holy See and with the other Superior Generals;

5. juridically represent the whole Congregation before authorities and organisms of the Church and civil society; he may delegate this representation according to the law.

138. 1. It belongs to the Secretary General to look after the order and preservation of the official correspondence of the General Government and to act as “minister of faith” (notary) of the Congregation.

2. He is named by the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, for a fixed period that may not exceed the length of the Superior General’s term; he may be reappointed. He must be a religious in perpetual vows.

139. The “Enlarged General Council” is made up of the members of the General Government and the Major Superiors. It meets in accordance with what is indicated in the General Statutes.

Stat. 88-91

140. In case of doubt about the meaning of some text of the Constitutions or Statutes, the Superior General acting collegially with his Council can clarify its meaning until the next General Chapter, always safeguarding the right of authentic interpretation of the Constitutions that belongs to the Holy See, as Article 151, 1 of these Constitutions indicates.

Chapter VI

ADMINISTRATION OF TEMPORAL GOODS

141. The administration of our goods, just as with everything in our life, has to be a sign and witness of the evangelical life.

142. All the temporal goods of the Congregation are at the service of communion, mission, justice and solidarity. The administration of these goods has as its purpose to provide for the needs of the brothers and the communities, to support and develop the mission of the Congregation, and to contribute towards answering the needs of the Church and of the world according to our Constitutions and Statutes and the decisions and orientations of the Chapters.

Stat. 92

143. From the communal character of the ownership of goods in the Congregation is inferred the responsibility of the Community as such and that of each one of the brothers.

144. The Congregation as a whole, the Provinces, the Vice-Provinces, as well as the Regions the Delegations and houses, as juridical persons, have the capacity to acquire, possess, administer and alienate temporal goods in accordance with the law.*

Stat. 93-98

145. 1. There will be an Econome General for the whole Congregation, named by the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, under whose authority he will exercise his office.

2. Each Major Community will likewise have its own Econome, named according to its own Statutes.*

Stat. 99-105

146. In the ordinary and the extraordinary administration of temporal goods, we observe the common laws, ecclesiastical and civil, as well as the directives of our own law.

Stat. 106, 107

147. Each Econome legitimately named acquires the capacity to represent the Congregation with regard to carrying out juridical acts for the ordinary administration of the goods that fall under his competency. In order to carry out acts of extraordinary administration he must have a special mandate from the respective Superior.*

Stat. 108

Chapter VII

SEPARATION

FROM THE CONGREGATION

148. Juridical separation from the Congregation is a process that always requires a climate of respect for persons. This presupposes dialogue in an atmosphere of prayer and discernment.

149. The different forms of separation from the Congregation – exlaustration, change of Institute, dispensation from temporary or perpetual vows, dismissal – are governed by the norms of the universal law.¹⁹

150. When the separation takes effect, all juridical ties between the brother and the Congregation cease.

1. The brother cannot demand anything for the services rendered to the Congregation.

2. The Provincial and the Community ought to take, with equity, generosity and justice, all necessary means, including economic ones, to facilitate the brother's adaptation to his new conditions of life.

3. If the Congregation was administering the patrimonial goods of the brother, it must return them to him in their entirety, just as they are at the time of restitution, but without the interest that the Congregation would have been able to earn legitimately during the time of their administration.

Stat. 109

¹⁹ Cf. cc. 684-704.

EPILOGUE

151. 1. The Constitutions have the force of law in virtue of their approbation by the Holy See, to which their authentic interpretation also belongs.

2. The General Statutes complete the Constitutions and specify the manner of applying them. The General Government is their authentic interpreter until the next General Chapter.

152. The Superior General, the Provincials and the local Superiors, within the area of their respective competencies, have the authority to dispense from the disciplinary provisions of the Constitutions and the General Statutes, for a just cause and while it lasts.

153. 1. These Constitutions and Statutes are a way of life for us, Religious of the Sacred Hearts. By profession we freely commit ourselves to observe them and to meditate on their message. Thus we shall be able to proclaim the love of the Sacred Hearts through our lives and through our ministry.

2. We see ourselves likewise as pilgrims, together with the whole People of God. Our Constitutions and Statutes express the convictions, aspirations and concrete possibilities we have at this moment of our journey. In equality and shared responsibility, we desire to advance toward full communion among ourselves, with our sisters, and with all lay Christians.

References

- Art. 2 “Fills us with zeal...”. Note that the Founders wished the title of the Congregation to be “Zealots of the Love...” This is the sense of the *Mémoire of the Good Father* written on December 6, 1816.
- Art. 3 “Mary his Mother...” cf. *LG*, 58.
- Art. 4 On the “reparation” of Jesus see, among others, Mt 26:28; Mk 10:45; Rom 3:23-25; 5:8-10; 8-3; 2 Cor 5:14-21; Gal 2:20.21; 3:13-14; 4:4-5; Eph 1:7; 5:2; Col 1:20; Heb 10:1-14; 1 Pt 2:14; 1 Jn 1:7; 2:1-2; 4:9-10; Apoc. 1:5. Also cf. Is 52:13 - 53:12.
- Art. 5 In general, cf. *CS* 10, n° 429-457.
Also cf. the Good Mother, *LEBM*, 98.
- Art. 6 In general, cf. *CS* 10, 285-298, 600-606.
“Availability...”, cf. *PC*, 2d; *GS*, 4, 1; 11; *CS* 10, 287, 291, 306, 323.
- Art. 7 In general, cf. *CS* 10, 473-534; cf. *LEBM*, 1425.
- Art. 8 Supplication to the Pope 1800:
A. *SS.CC.* 1963, n° 35, p. 182.
Supplication to the Pope, Oct. 25, 1814:
A. *SS.CC.* 1963, n° 35, p. 189.
First *Mémoire* of Fr. Hilarion Lucas, Dec. 7, 1814:
A. *SS.CC.* 1963, n° 35, p. 193.
Decree of Approbation of January 10, 1817:
A. *SS.CC.* 1956-57, n° 1, p. 2.
Bull “*Pastor Aeternus*”, Nov. 17, 1817:
A. *SS.CC.* 1956-57, n° 3 and 4, p. 97.
Constitutions with the Preliminary Chapter:
A. *SS.CC.* 1961, n° 27, p. 178.

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| Art. 9 | Cf. c. 303. |
| Art. 12.2 | Cf. <i>LG</i> , 43, 2. |
| Art. 12.3 | Cf. <i>LG</i> , 44, 1. |
| Art. 13 | Cf. Article 2. |
| Art. 15 | Cf. Jn 1:29; 1 Jn. 2:16. |
| Art. 21 | Cf. <i>PC</i> , 12, 2, 3. |
| Art. 22.4 | Cf. Mk. 12:25. |
| Art. 23.2 | Cf. e.g. Lk 6:20; 4:18; 7:22; Mt 6:24; 19:23-24; Lk 16:19-31; Mt 6:19-21; Lk 12:15-21. |
| Art. 23.3 | Cf. e.g. Mt 6:25-34; 8:19-20; 10:9-10; 19:16-21. |
| Art. 25.3 | Cf. e.g. Jn 13:29; Acts 2:44-45. |
| Art. 29 | Cf. <i>PC</i> , 13, 5. |
| Art. 30.4 | Cf. Mt. 25:31-45. |
| Art. 31.1 | Cf. e.g. Jn 4:34; Phil 2:7-8; Rom 5:19; Heb 5:8; Mk 10:45; Lk 22:27. |
| Art. 35.1 | Cf. Rom 12:3; Eph 5:10; Phil 1:10. |
| Art. 36 | Cf. c. 601. |
| Art. 39 | Cf. Acts 4:32. |
| Art. 40 | In general, cf. CS 10, n° 285-298. |
| Art. 42 | Cf. CS 10, n° 299-324. |
| Art. 45.2 | Cf. Mt 18:15-17; Gal 6:1; Jas 5:19-20. |

- Art. 45.3 On “friendship” in our communities,
cf. CS 10, n° 207-208, 551-552.
- Art. 47.1; 2 On the consequences of that “insertion”,
cf. e.g. 1 Cor 9:20-23. On the “critical posture vis-à-
vis the world”, cf. Jn 8:23; 15:19; 17:14, 16-19; 1 Jn
2:15-17; 4:4-6.
- Art. 53.1 Cf. CS 10, n° 458-472.
- Art. 66 Cf. *PC*, 2, e.
- Art. 69 Cf. *PC*, 24.
- Art. 72 “Give them much freedom of spirit and of prayer”
is the recommendation of the Founder for the
young religious in formation: CS 10, no. 213.
- Art. 74.5 Cf. cc. 1051-1052
- Art. 75.3 The Founder gave the novices various apostolic
tasks: CS 10, no. 313.
- Art- 86.1 Cf. *PC*, 18, 3.
- Art. 91 Cf. e.g. Mk 10:42-45; Mt 11:29-30; 2 Cor 1:24.
See CS 10, n° 246-256.
- Art. 92.2 Cf. Article 35.1 (and Statute 7).
- Art. 92.3 Cf. Article 7 and see CS 10, n° 252.
- Art. 93 Cf. c. 620.
- Art. 94 Cf. c. 627, §1, §2.
- Art. 95 Cf. c. 618.
- Art. 98.4 Cf. cc. 631-632, and see CS 10, n° 293.

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| Art. 100.1 | Cf. cc. 609-612. |
| Art. 100.2 | Cf. c. 616. |
| Art. 101 | Cf. cc. 581-585. |
| Art. 103-109 | Cf. c. 632. |
| Art. 111.1 | Cf. c. 623. |
| Art. 111.2 | Cf. c. 625 §3. |
| Art. 111.3 | Cf. c. 624 §2. |
| Art. 121-132 | Cf. c. 631 §§1-3. |
| Art. 127.1 | Cf. c. 119. §§1-2. |
| Art. 129.3 | Cf. c. 625 §1. |
| Art. 133.1 | Cf. c. 623. |
| Art. 135 | Cf. c. 624 §2. |
| Art. 137 | Cf. c. 622. |
| Art. 144 | Cf. c. 634. |
| Art. 145.2 | Cf. c. 636. |
| Art. 147 | Cf. c. 638 §2. |

STATUTES

OUR CONSECRATION

1. The task of making the Gospel meaningful in a world subject to change demands that we be attentive to the reality that surrounds us, to its structural dimensions, its values, and its sin. If we do not do this, we run the risk that the concrete forms of our life and ministry would become an incomprehensible or even a contradictory sign.

2. The communitarian renewal of vows takes place at least once a year, on the date, which is most convenient for each Province.

3. Our life of celibate chastity affects very deep areas of our existence. It requires that we live in a new way some values, which are so inherent in our human nature: affectivity and sexuality, as well as the tendency towards complementarity and paternity.

1. Aware of our human frailty, we seek to be prudent and mature in our relations with persons, and in situations in which we find ourselves in contemporary society.

2. Through open and simple dialogue with some person capable of helping us, we try to clarify and overcome the difficulties we may encounter.

3. We accept friendship as a gift of God and we are grateful for the deep friendships we may have in our lives, convinced that our personal equilibrium is linked to a positive development of our affective life.

4. We accept that dimension of solitude which is part of the human condition itself and which is always present in our lives. Our emotional equilibrium depends on our capacity to

take upon ourselves this aspect of life, and to enter profoundly into our community life, pastoral ministry, and prayer.

4. To open a personal bank account, the brothers need the consent of their respective Major Superior. At least one other religious must be authorized to carry out transactions with this account.

5. To live our poverty in common, we need to be guided by the following orientations:

1. The communities adopt a simple and sober life-style, which will serve as an evangelical witness in the areas they live in, keeping their expenses within the framework of a budget drawn up and evaluated in common.

2. In each community and among the different communities, on all levels, goods are shared in a spirit of solidarity and service.

3. All members are concerned about the total good of the community, including its material aspects. They undertake the work and fulfill the duties this requires, and use the goods of the community in a spirit of responsibility.

4. Each community, especially at the Provincial level, is attentive to "the cry of the poor". It shares with them the goods it can dispose of, appropriating to them a significant part of its income.

5. According to their age and state of health, the brothers accept the common law of work. The resources that the community needs for living and to sharing normally come from this work. However, financial profit is in no way the primary criterion for the choice of our activities.

6. Even if we need the interest from capital to cover our living expenses and the cost of services we render, we must

take every possible means to ensure that our investments contribute to social justice, or at least do not go against it.

7. Our contact with people in need and our commitment to them should influence our way of living, keeping us open and sensitive, so as to be evangelized by them.

6. The General Government and all the Major Communities have an annual budget for their general expenses. Both this budget and the balance sheet must be approved by the respective Superior with the consent of his Council. Normally, the information in these financial accounts can be made available to all the brothers.

7. 1. In the process of communitarian discernment of the will of God, we must keep the following criteria in mind:

a) The Gospel criteria.

b) The mission and the orientations of our Congregation.

c) The directives of the Church, both universal and local

d) The needs of the people.

e) The possibilities and aptitudes of the community and its members.

2. This process is followed in an atmosphere of prayer and of availability. It requires the fullest participation of all the brothers in dialogue and normally leads to the taking of a decision.

8. The Superior General and the Major Superiors may impose a command in virtue of the vow of obedience, only with caution and for a proportionate reason. Such a command must be given in writing, or in the presence of two witnesses.

OUR COMMUNION IN MISSION

9. 1. As far as possible, the Provincial authorities will see to it that communities have at least three members. If they judge it opportune, they will group the very small communities into an "Area community".

2. The brothers who, for a legitimate reason, live alone, in accordance with the norms of the universal law (c. 665, §1) will be the object of the special attention of their Provincial to ensure that they will not be deprived of community life. Through appropriate dialogue, he will attach them to a local or area community in whose life they will participate, even if only partially.

10. In exercising our apostolic ministry in relation to the diocesan bishop, we must observe Canons 673-683.

11. 1. Informal meetings enable us progressively to know one another better and to appreciate one another more. Each community will also give importance to meals taken together, and will try to find some time for recreation together.

2. The community will take care to celebrate certain feasts in order to create a more fraternal atmosphere among the brothers.

12. 1. The following means may contribute toward promoting the participation of all the brothers in the life of the Province:

a) The meeting together, regularly or occasionally, of two or more communities to pray together and to dialogue on the exercise of their apostolic mission, on the richness that it brings to the life of the communities, or on the way each member tries to be faithful to his religious consecration.

b) The appointment, by the Provincial government, of brothers from different communities to form Provincial commissions to help in some concrete way, for example, in the ministries of vocations, formation, missions, finances etc.

c) The setting up of Provincial groups to study some particular aspect of the mission and its relation to religious life, for example, the ministries of parish, school, youth etc.

d) The meeting in assembly of all the brothers of the Province, who can thus make important contributions to their mutual enrichment and to their awareness of belonging to the same Institute.

2. What is said in the preceding number for the Provincial level also applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the General level of the Congregation as a whole.

13. The traditional habit of our Congregation consists of a white cassock, leather belt, and white scapular with the emblem of the Sacred Hearts embroidered in white. The Provincial Statutes will determine its use.

14. The sick should receive all the ordinary useful help they need for recovery or relief. All necessary means will be taken so that the elderly brothers may enjoy a dignified retirement free from loneliness or the feeling of being useless. The community will find ways to enable these brothers, in their new situation, to contribute to the building up of the Provincial community and of the whole Congregation.

15. In our communities we try to foster among all the brothers a climate that favors a sound life of personal and communitarian prayer.

16. 1. Because of the priestly ministry of its members, it is not always possible for a community to celebrate daily Eucharist together. However, according to its possibilities, each community should try to ensure that the Eucharist is celebrated together with certain regularity.

2. The community celebration of the Eucharist is the culmination of all the different meetings held at one or the other level.

17. The Blessed Sacrament will be reserved in the oratories of our communities.

18. Special feasts of the Congregation include some celebrations of the Church and others, which are proper to the Congregation:

March 19 St. Joseph, Principal Patron of our Congregation. Solemnity.

May 10 St. Damien De Veuster. Memorial.

May 15 St. Pachomius, Abbot, Protector of our Congregation. Memorial Proper Feast.

May 26 Blessed Ladislas Radigue, Polycarpe Tuffier, Marcellin Rochouze and Frézal Tardieu, Martyrs. Memorial.

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| <i>Friday following the Second Sunday after Pentecost</i> | Sacred Heart of Jesus, Titular of our Congregation. Solemnity. |
| <i>Saturday following the feast of the Sacred Heart</i> | Immaculate Heart of Mary, Titular of our Congregation. Solemnity. |
| <i>June 16</i> | St. John Francis Regis, Religious. Patron of the Secular Branch. Memorial. |
| <i>July 9</i> | Our Lady, Queen of Peace, Patroness of our missionaries. Proper Feast. |
| <i>July 11</i> | St. Benedict, Abbot, Secondary Patron of our Congregation and Father of our Rule. Feast. |
| <i>August 8</i> | St. Dominic, Religious, Protector of our Congregation. Memorial. |
| <i>August 20</i> | St. Bernard, Abbot, Protector of our Congregation. Memorial. |
| <i>August 28</i> | St. Augustine, Bishop, Protector of our Congregation. Memorial. |
| <i>August 30</i> | Blessed Eustáquio van Lieshout. Memorial. |
| <i>September 29</i> | St. Michael, Archangel, Patron of our missionaries. Feast. |

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| <i>October 1</i> | St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, Religious, Protectress of our Congregation. Memorial. |
| <i>October 16</i> | St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, Religious, Protectress of our Congregation. Memorial. |
| <i>October 20</i> | St. Caprasius, Bishop and Martyr. Optional Memorial. |
| <i>November 6</i> | Blessed Teófilo Fernández de Legaria, Isidro Íñiguez de Ciriano, Gonzalo Barrón, Eladio López, Mario Ros, Martyrs. Memorial. |

19. Our annual retreat is a privileged time; whenever possible, this spiritual exercise should be made in common.

20. It is also very worthwhile for brothers to meet together for one or more days of recollection on the local, zonal, or provincial level. Likewise it could be beneficial for particular groups of brothers to do this, for example, those involved in similar ministries.

21. The singing of the *Salve Regina* especially at the end of the day is a filial homage to the Most Holy Virgin. This practice has been very dear to us since the time of our Founders.

22. Every brother who leaves his Province of origin for missionary service outside of it should previously be given the time necessary to become sufficiently acquainted with the language, the culture, and the history of the people he is going to serve.

22B. When a brother is sent to participate in the mission of a Major Community or Delegation other than his own, the two Major Superiors involved will establish a contract that defines the situation of the brother in relationship to his Major Community or Delegation of origin and to the one receiving him.

22C. No one can enjoy double active and passive voice. When a religious is sent to a Major Community or Delegation different from his own, the written agreement between the two Major Superiors will determine in which of the two communities the brother will have active and passive voice.

23. [Suppressed by the 2012 General Chapter.]

24. [Suppressed by the 2012 General Chapter.]

25. [Suppressed by the 2006 General Chapter.]

26. [Suppressed by the 2006 General Chapter.]

27. [Suppressed by the 2006 General Chapter.]

28. [Suppressed by the 2012 General Chapter.]

INCORPORATION AND GROWTH IN THE COMMUNITY

29. The process of formation should be integral, that is to say:

1. It embraces the various aspects of the personality: spiritual, intellectual, affective, corporal, relational etc.

2. It includes the different elements that constitute our vocation: the following of Christ in a life which is both communal and apostolic, creative fidelity to the intuition of our Founders, the prophetic mission which is ours in the Church as religious, the capacity to interpret the signs of the times and to give them a suitable response.

3. It includes both doctrinal aspects and experiences of a practical type.

30. The General Government will develop a General Plan of Formation, which will contain the common criteria, which are considered fundamental and necessary for formation, in order to complete those contained in Chapter IV of the Constitutions and their corresponding Statutes.

31. 1. The Provinces will collaborate among themselves in order to develop their plans of Initial and Ongoing Formation and put them into practice. This collaboration should be fostered by the General Government and by the Interprovincial Conferences. They can include initiatives such as the following:

a) International meetings of formators.

- b) Experiences of international community.
- c) Common stages of Initial Formation between members of several Provinces.
- d) Programs of Ongoing Formation at interprovincial level.

2. These same orientations are applicable as regards collaboration with the sisters, whenever possible.

32. 1. Each Province's formation Plan will include the concrete dimensions involved in personally accompanying the brothers as their vocation awakens and develops.

2. The Provinces, the Vice-Provinces, and in so far as it is possible, the Regions should ensure that the brothers called to exercise the function of formator be carefully prepared.

33. When determining where to locate formation communities, it is important to consider, as a criterion, solidarity with the poor, along with what is needed for a particular stage of formation.

34. In the stage of Initial Formation:

1. Those in formation must be shown the internationality of the Congregation's mission in the context of history and the present day.

2. Every effort will be made to give them a significant experience of our evangelizing ministry, especially in the Third and Fourth Worlds.

3. Candidates are normally required to learn a second living language from among those most common in the Congregation.

35. The responsible formation personnel will duly forward to the Provincial and his Council the reports they need in order to properly carry out the provisions of Art. 74.2-5 of the Constitutions.

36. The novitiate is preceded by a period of time during which the candidate and the Community get to know each other and make an initial discernment of his vocation to our Congregation; each Province determines its duration and characteristics. This allows the novitiate to be a solid experience of faith and religious life.

37. Among the elements looked for in the discernment of a vocation are:

1. a positive attitude towards life, open to undertaking a process of formation and apprenticeship;
2. a healthy relationship with God;
3. sufficient psychological balance, generally to be evaluated by a specialist;
4. an intelligence capable of fulfilling the studies called for in the Constitutions (Art. 82 and 84) and the Statute 39;
5. the basic qualities needed for normal interpersonal and community relationships;
6. sufficient motivation to take on a personal commitment to Christ and to the following of Him in the apostolic religious life of our Congregation.

38. Those in temporary vows form part of a particular formation community, unless the Provincial Government decides otherwise for special reasons. In any case, they always

remain under the immediate responsibility of a formation person appointed for this purpose.

39. 1. The professed who prepare for the priestly ministry continue their formation as religious of the Sacred Hearts during the time in which they pursue their ecclesiastical studies.

2. Likewise, the professed who are not destined for priestly ministry should receive an adequate theological and spiritual formation.

40. 1. In the spirit of Statute 31, Provinces will foster the Ongoing Formation of their members by providing retreats, meetings, workshops, assemblies, 'second novitiate' programs, etc.

2. Each Province's Ongoing Formation Plan must also provide its members with extended periods of specialized formation, updating and renewal.

3. Ongoing Formation will especially favor the formation of brothers capable of and available to become formators.

THE SERVICE OF AUTHORITY

41. 1. If common or proper law requires that the Council be consulted, it is sufficient for the validity of the act that the Major Superior asks the opinion of each Councilor separately, even by telephone, when it is an unforeseen and urgent case, and the Council cannot be easily and quickly convoked.

2. In cases in which the consent of the Council is necessary, the common law must be applied. (cf. c. 127).

42. Religious and communities which take up pastoral ministries within the territory of another province, including their Vice-Provinces and Regions, must endeavor to integrate themselves into the religious apostolic plan of that Province, Vice-Province or Region.

43. All collaboration along the lines indicated in the previous Statute presupposes an understanding between the Provincial Governments and the right of the General Government to intervene. Normally a written agreement will record the terms of this mutual understanding.

44. The criteria for the erection of a Province are:

1. the existence of a common plan of religious apostolic life sufficiently elaborated and lived;

2. having in place the structures necessary to ensure Initial and Ongoing Formation;

3. financial autonomy;

4. a sufficient number of religious to guarantee its own development;

5. a commitment that a significant number of religious will be engaged in missionary activity, whether in its international dimension or by means of dedication to the poor and marginalized of their own country.

45. The Provinces will have at least one Provincial Chapter between successive General Chapters.

46. There will be an Assembly in each Province, if possible once a year. It will be open to all the brothers as a vehicle for co-responsibility, participation and communion. The prescriptions for the Assembly will be contained in the Provincial Statutes.

47. Those who have the right to participate in the Chapter as members by whatever title also have the duty to do so. If someone is prevented for a serious reason, he must communicate this in good time to the Provincial.

48. All religious and communities have the right to send letters to the Chapter to present topics, which they consider appropriate. The Chapter must decide when and how to study these letters, which will be made available to all Chapter members.

49. Normally, Chapter elections and decisions are governed by the norms of common law. Nevertheless, to reach agreement in matters of greater importance and for elections of a special nature, the Provincial Statutes can require a two-thirds majority of the members with the right to vote who are present at that moment.

- 50.** The Provincial Statutes must establish:
1. the frequency of the Provincial Chapters;
 2. its composition and election of delegates if it has them;
 3. the manner and time of its convocation;
 4. the procedure of the Chapter;
 5. the frequency of the Provincial's canonical visitation of the Province;
 6. the internal organization of the Province and its parts, in the service of its mission and of its internal communion.
- 51.** The Provincial Government will present a report to the Chapter on its administration and on the state of the Province, in the light of the objectives set by the previous Chapter and in the light of the orientations of the Congregation.
- 52.** Chapter decisions, once approved and confirmed, remain in force if they are not modified or abrogated by another Chapter.
- 53.** The Provincial Superior is elected in the manner determined by the Provincial Statutes. The election process must always allow for some type of personal and explicit intervention of all the professed members of the Province.
- 53B.** The Provincial and Vice Provincial Vicars must fulfill the same conditions as the Provincials and Vice Provincials, that is to say, 30 years of age and 5 years of perpetual profession.
- 54.** If, for serious reasons shared by the Council, the Superior General does not confirm the election carried out by the Province, it is fitting that he reveal those reasons to the one concerned. In such cases a new election will be held within a month.

55. In order to foster communion and collaboration between the Provinces, there are “Interprovincial Conferences” as instruments of co-responsibility in the unity and the animation of the Congregation.

56. A Conference is erected by the General Government, having heard the Major Superiors concerned.

57. If a Major Community wishes to change Conferences, after ascertaining the view of the two Conferences concerned, it will seek the authorization of the General Government.

58. The Interprovincial Conferences:

1. establish criteria for their composition and their operating structure;

2. study ways to carry out their mission more effectively, and concretely, ways for practical collaboration among the communities that form it, especially in regard to Initial and Ongoing Formation, financial solidarity and a better distribution of available personnel.

59. The Provincial Superior can delegate his right to represent the Province. The Provincial Statutes should indicate how this should be done so that it may have the desired effects.

60. It is fitting that the Provincial Superior maintain frequent contact, by letter, with the Superior General to strengthen the communion of the Province with the Congregation as such. The communications ought to contain the necessary information for an updated knowledge of the various aspects of the life of the Major Community.

61. The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, will erect a Vice-Province only when, under the prudent direction of the Province of which it forms a part, it offers the possibility of reaching that maturity which will enable it to become a province.

62. For the erection of a Vice-Province the following criteria have to be taken into account:

1. A plan of religious and apostolic life.
2. A certain autonomy for its realization.
3. Sufficient capacity to organize well-structured communities.
4. A sufficient number of religious (about 20).
5. A formation plan for new candidates and the personnel to implement it

63. The Superior General will only authorize the creation of a Region after an experimental period of at least three years and on condition that its religious apostolic plan be organically integrated into the mission of the local Church and the general development of the Congregation.

64. The Superior General will also require a juridical Statute of the Region in which the areas of autonomy and the mutual obligations of the Province and its Region are clearly spelled out.

65. This juridical Statute will necessarily include the following points:

1. The geographic boundaries.
2. Community and apostolic life.

3. Local and regional government: their competencies and manner of election.

4. A Formation Plan for possible candidates to the Congregation.

5. The economic arrangements.

66. In Regions where brothers of different Provinces work, the Provincial responsible for the Region will communicate regularly with the other Provincials involved in what concerns these brothers and their integration in the plan of the Region.

66B. 1. When a group of brothers does not fulfill the necessary conditions to be a Province, Vice-province or Region and it does not seem possible or appropriate to incorporate them into another Major Community, the Superior General can erect a Delegation.

2. The Superior General with the consent of his Council and after consultation with the brothers involved erects, modifies or suppresses a Delegation.

3. The Superior of a Delegation will have authority delegated by the Superior General, according to a Statute approved in each case by the General Government.

4. The Delegation will have a plan of apostolic religious life (PARL) organically integrated into the mission of the local Church and the entire Congregation.

67. 1. Each Major Community has the right to at least one elected representative.

2. The number of delegates of each Major Community will be determined by the Superior General with the consent of his Council, having previously consulted the Major Superiors

within the two years before the General Chapter and seeking the most equitable representation.

3. The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, will also determine in each case the way of assuring representation in the General Chapter by any Delegations which may exist.

68. In the election of delegates:

1. all the religious in perpetual vows have passive voice;
2. at least 50% of those who have active voice must vote;
3. each Major Community will choose the form for electing its delegates.

69. If an elected delegate is unable to attend the General Chapter for a just reason accepted by the Superior General, he will be replaced by the religious with the next largest number of votes after the elected delegate or delegates, even if he did not obtain an absolute majority.

70. The announcement of the General Chapter makes legitimate the election of the Chapter delegates, which takes place in the Major Communities.

71. The convocation of the Chapter must include a list of the members of the Chapter, the place and the date of its celebration, as well as a proposal of its objectives and of the topics to be treated.

72. Sufficiently in advance of the Chapter, the General Government will send a report to all the Chapter members on its administration and on the state of the Congregation,

especially in the light of the decisions and orientations of the preceding General Chapter.

73. When it is a question of an extraordinary General Chapter, the Superior General can reduce the period for the announcement and for the convocation, having heard the views of the Major Superiors and with the consent of his Council.

74. What is indicated in Statute 48 for the Provincial Chapter regarding the right of the brothers and the communities to send letters and how they are to be studied, is also valid for the General Chapter.

75. It is also the task of the General Chapter:

1. to elect its Secretary;
2. to decide the procedure, the themes and the calendar.

76. All the Chapter members are obliged to assist at the General Chapter and to be present on the day indicated for its opening. If there is an impediment, the Superior General must be informed.

77. The General Chapter begins with the Mass of the Holy Spirit.

78. During the General Chapter there will be a time of retreat.

79. The following norms will be observed with regard to the acts of the Chapter:

1. The Chapter approves the minutes of each Chapter session.

2. It likewise decides the procedure for the presentation and the study of amendments relating to the acts of the daily sessions.

3. The acts of each session, once approved, are signed by the President and the Secretary of the Chapter.

4. The acts of the elections are also signed by the tellers.

5. The complete acts of the Chapter are signed by all the Chapter members.

80. Normally, the youngest Chapter members act as tellers.

81. On the day of the election of the Superior General a Mass of the Holy Spirit will be celebrated beforehand.

82. 1. The election of the Superior General will be preceded by a straw ballot in which each voter will write two names in order of preference.

2. If one or several of those who have obtained votes on this ballot make the decision to withdraw their candidacy, the Chapter will decide if it wishes to have another straw ballot.

83. After the election of the Superior General, thanks is given to God with an appropriate liturgy.

84. In the election of the General Councilors, the Chapter must try to ensure the greatest possible representation of the Congregation.

85. 1. The members of the General Government retain active voice in their Major Community of origin, but not passive.

2. Brothers called by the Superior General to a service in the General House retain active voice in their communities of origin, but they lose passive voice for offices that would be incompatible with the service to which they have been called.

86. The General Government can form the commissions or teams that it finds necessary to carry out the functions that it has to fulfill.

87. [Suppressed by the 2006 General Chapter.]

88. The Enlarged General Council will meet at least once between two General Chapters, to promote communion among the major Communities and their co-responsibility with the General Government.

89. It is convoked by the Superior General with the consent of his Council, having previously consulted all concerned regarding the date and place of the meeting.

90. The General Government establishes the agenda for each Enlarged General Council, having previously consulted the Major Communities.

91. The Enlarged General Council which more immediately precedes the General Chapter prepares an agenda for it and it proposes the method for the election of the General Councilors, which should inspire the General Chapter to produce the kind of representation referred to in Statute 84.

ADMINISTRATION OF TEMPORAL GOODS

92. The criteria of justice, solidarity and charity which should permeate our whole administration should be very clearly present when drawing up contracts with personnel, in the choice of investments and in our compliance with regulations in the areas of labor law and social rights.

93. The administration of the goods of the community will be separate from that of the works, which it serves.

94. Each Major Community will seek to provide for its own needs and to be able to participate in that movement of communion and solidarity of which the Constitutions speak. (cf. Statute 100).

95. The Chapters of the Major Communities will give norms for the administration of their goods, and will ensure that their administration will serve the mission of the Congregation in accord with the plan of each Province, the communion of its members and its communities and solidarity with those in need.

96. 1. It belongs to the General Chapter to establish a system whereby the Major Communities contribute to the financing of the expenses of the General Government.

2. In case of necessity and after consulting the Major Superiors, the General Government may establish an extraordinary fee.

97. The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, having heard the Superiors and Councils concerned, can for a just cause transfer the goods of one juridical person of the Institute to another, always respecting the will of the benefactors and any other rights.

98. What has been indicated on the general level in the preceding Statutes (numbers 96 and 97) is applied *mutatis mutandis* to the Provincial Chapter and Government.

99. The period of the mandate of the Econome General should not exceed the duration of the Superior General. It can be renewed indefinitely.

100. Besides the functions indicated in Articles 145 and 146 of the Constitutions, the Econome General:

1. prepares and presents to the General Government an annual report on the state of the General Treasury and of the other goods confided to him;

2. makes proposals to the General Government at the opportune time for the investment of the funds at the disposal of the General Treasury;

3. in close relation with the General Government fosters communication and communion between the Provincial Economes in order, with the help of all:

- a) to establish and keep an updated a record of the material situation of the Congregation as a whole,

- b) to facilitate the mutual aid among the Provinces,

- c) to coordinate the undertaking by the different Provinces or by the whole Congregation of projects of material aid either within or outside the Congregation;

4. redacts and presents to the General Government the economic reports, which must be prepared for the General Chapter;

5. prepares a budget and submits it for the approval of the General Government.

101. The Econome General will be advised by a commission of at least two experts, who can be either religious or lay.

102. The Econome General will be consulted by the General Government on important decisions with regard to their financial implications.

103. The Provincial Econome has *mutatis mutandis* the same function in relation to the Provincial Government and the local Economes as the Econome General has in relation to the General Government and the Provincial Economes, including what has been said in the preceding Statute.

104. In applying to the Provinces what has been established in Statute 101 the following must be kept in mind:

1. The criteria for the composition and the nomination of the members of this commission on the provincial level will be defined by the Provincial Government.

2. The Provincial Econome will submit for evaluation by the commission both the budget and the annual financial statement, which he must present to the Provincial Government. This also applies to the economic-financial report, which he must present to the Provincial Chapter.

3. He will also periodically review the investment policy with the commission.

105. Each year the Provincial Government will send to the General Government a report on the economic state of the Province, drawn up by the Provincial Econome.

106. 1. Acts of ordinary administration are understood as:

a) those acts which are necessary in order that material goods produce the fruits or services for which they were intended, even when this calls for large expenditures or obligations established by the law;

b) the cost of maintenance and replacement of goods;

c) payments of persons employed;

d) credit, which can be covered in the short term with the ordinary income of the community that requests it.

2. The following are acts of extraordinary administration:

a) The alienation of moveable or immovable goods, which produce the income, which is the basic support of a community or of an independent work.

b) Those actions, which can prejudice the patrimony of a juridical proprietary person.

c) Those actions which exceed the limits or conditions fixed by Chapters, General for the whole Congregation or Provincial for its Major Community.

107. In the acts of extraordinary administration:

1. The Provincial Superior with the consent of his Council can authorize actions up to 70% of the amount that has been established by the Holy See for recourse thereto.

2. The Vice-Provincial Superior and other Superiors of the Province with the consent of their respective Councils can authorize expenditures up to the amount delegated to them by the Provincial Superior with the consent of his Council.

3. When those amounts are exceeded, authorization is needed, according to the case, from the Provincial or the Superior General with the consent of their respective Councils, and, in those cases foreseen by common law, from the Holy See.

108. Besides what is indicated elsewhere in our law, it is the duty of every Econome:

1. to take care of the ordinary administration of the goods for which he is responsible;

2. to give a regular account of his administration to his Superior;

3. to maintain an open dialogue with the community about his management;

4. to maintain an updated inventory of moveable and immovable goods.

SEPARATION FROM THE CONGREGATION

109. For the evaluation of the patrimony that has to be returned to the brother, the dispositions of Article 27 of the Constitutions will be taken into account.

