

# Chapter I

## Our Way of Life

### 1. The Nature of Our Institute

*As Regular Franciscan  
Tertiary Sisters,*

**1.1** The Institute of the Regular Franciscan Tertiary Sisters, called “All Saints”(1711), raised by the Spirit as a gift to the Church, is of pontifical right (1948)\* and an aggregate of the Order of Friars Minor (1953).\*

\*c 589  
\*CC1906, 89; 1929, 2;  
1939,10; 1972,2; 1986,1

*in the footsteps of  
St. Francis,*

**1.2** <sup>1</sup>The identity of our Institute is implied in its name: “Franciscan Tertiaries”.

<sup>2</sup>Originating as “Sisters of Penance” in the Third Order we draw our charism from St. Francis of Assisi.\*

<sup>3</sup>Our programme of life is the Gospel radically lived by our Seraphic Father. He himself stated: “This is what I wish, this is what I seek, this is what I long to do with all my heart.”\*

\* CC 1929,75; 939,314;  
1972,1,23; 1986,2,54

All of us strive to achieve a progressive, ongoing conversion, indispensable for entrance into the Kingdom of God.\* We dedicate ourselves to the various forms of the “works of mercy”. We recall that St. Francis “embarked on a life of penance”, showing “mercy” to lepers and “from that moment, what had previously seemed bitter became a source of spiritual and physical consolation to him”.\*

\* IC IX,22

<sup>4</sup>Both in life-style and the performance of these works, we are committed to follow and bear witness to Christ;\* in the footsteps of St. Francis,\* living the principal elements of Franciscan spirituality: “minority”, fraternity, simplicity and joy, virtues which have always characterized this institute.

\* Mk 1: 15; Mt 4: 17;  
RV 6

\* 2Test 3

\* RV 1; 14  
\* RV 1

*following the  
Evangelical Counsels,*

**1.3** The goal of the Institute is the glory of God in building the Church through the sanctification of its members, in a public profession of the vows of the Evangelical Counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience,\* lived according to the spirit of the “Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis” (1982)\* and these Constitutions.

\* c 573 § 1

*in service to the Church,*

**1.4** Aware that our apostolate consists primarily in a witness of life,\* in addition to the duty of setting a good example recommended so much by St. Francis,\* we realize our mission in the Church in the following ways: the moral, intellectual and religious education of infants, children and youth; pastoral work in parishes; assistance to the sick and the elderly, whom we serve, when possible, even in their homes;\* and other charitable works of social assistance, in keeping with the Franciscan spirit of the Institute and its concrete possibilities and with the needs of the society in which we live.

\* CC 1939, 2; 1986, 3

\* c 673; ET 69

\* 2C 172; LM 9, 4

\* DI XII; 1939, 4, 493;  
1986, 4

## 2. The Particular Law for Our Institute

*we observe common law,* **2.1** In addition to the norms of the Church's common law, we observe the norms of particular law, namely the laws proper to the Institute, which are contained in the Rule of the Third Order (TOR), the Constitutions, the Directory, the Particular Statutes and the Capitular Decrees.\*

\* c 587 § 4

*the Constitutions,* **2.2** <sup>1</sup>The Constitutions, approved by the Church,\* are endowed with an enduring character. The General Chapter, however, can propose to the Holy See possible changes, after their having received a two-thirds majority of the valid votes cast. It is up to the Holy See not only to approve the Constitutions but also to interpret them authentically.

\* c 587 §§ 1-2

<sup>2</sup>In cases of doubt, the General Chapter is to provide a practical interpretation of the Rule and Constitutions and to issue the necessary decrees for a more faithful observance of them both.

<sup>3</sup>The same faculty is attributed to Major Superiors, with the consent of their Councils, during the period in which they govern.

<sup>4</sup>The Constitutions, when not treating norms relating to the laws of God or the Church or regarding the Evangelical Counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience, are not binding under pain of sin. A Sister, however, is not without fault, who, out of disrespect, transgresses the Constitutions through scandal to her fellow sisters or improper motives.

*the Directory,* **2.3** The Directory,\* containing norms for the practical application of certain points in the Constitutions, is approved by the General Chapter on the basis of the material gathered by a Commission which is specifically established for this purpose, before the General Chapter, by the Superior General, with the advice of her Council.

\* c 587 § 4

*and the Statutes and Decrees,* **2.4** Decrees and whatever decisions reached at Chapters are to be approved by the Superior General, with the consent of her Council.

*barring any dispensations.* **2.5** <sup>1</sup>Convinced of the impossibility of reaching evangelical perfection proper to our vocation without faithfully observing our laws, we commit ourselves, in virtue of our religious Profession, to observe them as the code conduct in our covenant with Christ.

<sup>2</sup>For just reason and in special cases, the Superior General can temporarily dispense all Sisters of the Institute from certain disciplinary norms of proper Law. The same is the case for other Superiors in their own place.

### 3. The Divisions of the Institute

*We work locally*

**3.1** <sup>1</sup> Our apostolic consecrated life, requiring also a spiritual aspect which gives it force and vitality, has structures of a normative nature for fraternal living, apostolic activity, formation and administration.

<sup>2</sup> The Institute is articulated in Provinces, Vice-Provinces, Delegations and local fraternities, each of which, individually speaking, is a true fraternity.

<sup>3</sup> The Superior General, with the consent of her Council, has the responsibility to erect, suppress, divide or modify the Provinces, the Vice-Provinces and the Delegations. \*

\*cc 581; 585

*in a Province,*

**3.2** <sup>1</sup> A Province is made up of many fraternities, which form an immediate part of the Institute. It has its own territory and is administered by the Provincial Superior.\*

\* c 621

<sup>2</sup> In considering the local situation, the erection of a Province requires: that the new structure benefit the apostolic witness and life of the Institute; that there be an ample number of Sisters, suitable formation structures and a guarantee of new vocations; and that the Province be economically self-sufficient and, where possible, have a geographic unity.

*in a Vice-Province,*

**3.3** A Vice-Province, a part of the Institute in a determined area, is entrusted to a Province or is directly dependent on the Superior General. It is administered by a Vice-Provincial Superior in her capacity as Vicar of the Provincial or the General Superior.

*in a Delegation,*

**3.4** A Delegation, made up of a group of fraternities at a certain distance from other houses of the Institute, is dependent on a Province or Vice-Province or directly on the Superior General. It is administered by a Delegate, appointed by the Major Superior.

*and in individual fraternities,*

**3.5** <sup>1</sup> The erection of a house within the Institute is the competency of the Superior General, with the consent of her Council.

<sup>2</sup> The erection of a house requires the written consent of the diocesan Bishop;\* in the suppression of a house consultation with him is sufficient.\*

\* c 616 § 1  
\*c 609 § 1

<sup>3</sup> The consent of the Bishop is also needed in changing the designation of a house for an apostolic activity different from which it was erected. \*

\*c 612

<sup>4</sup> In establishing a new fraternity, the following should be borne in mind: the good of the Church and the Institute; the

possibility for the Sisters to live the contemplative and apostolic aspects of their life's vocation, in keeping with the end and spirit proper to the Institute; and provisions to adequately meet the needs of its members.\*

\*c 610 §§ 1-2

<sup>5</sup> It is the responsibility of the Superior of each Circumscription to form local Fraternities, after having heard the opinion of her Council.

<sup>6</sup> Each local Fraternity is to be composed of at least three Sisters, who reside, dependent on the local Superior, in a canonically erected house, in which there can also be an oratory for the celebration and reservation of the Sacred Eucharist.\*

c 608

<sup>7</sup> Because of the charism of our Institute, preference in apostolic activity is to be given to those places where our service can be joyously done “among people little noted and esteemed, the poor and the vulnerable, the infirm, the leprous and beggars along the way”.\*

*willing to work  
anywhere.*

**3.6** <sup>1</sup> Each Sister to be incorporated in the Institute through Profession, is aggregated to a Province, a Vice-Province or a Delegation through which the Major Superior admits her to Profession.

\* Rnb IX, 2; RV 21

<sup>2</sup> The day of temporary profession determines seniority in the Institute.

<sup>3</sup> Having considered the good of the Institute and the needs of the Circumscription or the individual Sisters, the Superior General, with the advice of her Council, can temporarily transfer Sisters from one Circumscription to another. Their definitive aggregation requires the consent of her Council. For their part, the Major Superiors, in a spirit of fraternal communion, can send Sisters to another Circumscription.

## Chapter II

### Our Consecration to God

#### 4. Consecration

*Consecrated*

**4.1** <sup>1</sup> In our response to God's call to follow Him more closely by tracing Christ's footsteps,\* we consecrate ourselves to Him through a public profession of the Evangelical Counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience.

\* 1 Pt 2: 21

<sup>2</sup> Our consecration visibly demonstrates the wonders which God works through the frail human nature of those who are called.\* Moreover, it expresses our total gift of self to God and our "love which grows evermore genuine and strong in the Trinitarian dimension: love for Christ, which leads to closeness with him; love for the Holy Spirit, who opens our hearts to his inspiration; [and] love for the Father, the first origin and supreme goal of the consecrated life".\* It has its roots in the consecration of Baptism and transforms our entire life in service to and worship of God, who is loved above all things,\* so we can say with St. Francis: "My God and My All"\*

\* VC 20

\* VC 21

\* c 573 § 1  
\* Lod AI 5

<sup>3</sup> Our Profession, freely made, obliges us to seek evangelical perfection and makes us a *sign and a prophetic statement* for the community of the brethren and for the world.\* Mary is the sublime example of perfect consecration.\*

\*VC 15  
\* VC 28

*and incorporated in the  
Institute,*

**4.2** <sup>1</sup> Through Religious Profession, we are incorporated into the Institute with specific rights and duties defined by communal and proper law. Our incorporation takes place definitively with the profession of perpetual vows.\*

<sup>2</sup> As a sign of our consecration and as a witness of poverty and Franciscan penitence, we wear the habit proper to the Institute, as described in the Directory.\*

\* c 654

#### 5. Chastity

\* c 669; DI XV; CC  
1906, 28; 1939, 328;  
1972, 35; 1986, 15

*we follow Christ in his  
virginity,*

**5.1** The Rule of our living a chaste life is the virginity of Christ. In this manner, he totally consecrated himself to the praise of the Father and was filled with a love for humanity, which He transformed into the Family of God, bound together in faith, hope and charity.

*with an undivided heart,*

**5.2** <sup>1</sup> The Evangelical Counsel of chastity, assumed for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven, is the sign of a future life and the source of greater fruitfulness for the undivided heart.\* It expresses "that wonderful mystery of the union between the Church and Christ, her divine Spouse".\*

\* 1Cor 7: 33-34; c 599;

<sup>2</sup> It implies the obligation of perfect continence in celibacy\* and, therefore, the free and voluntary renunciation of matrimony and of whatever acts are contrary to chastity. In this context, solitude, an innate part of our vocational choice, can joyously overflow by our living with Christ and our showing genuine love for the brethren.---

RV 15

\* Eph 5: 23-26; RV 16

\* c 599

*safeguarded by every means,*

**5.3** <sup>1</sup> Safeguarding consecrated chastity and fully living it requires the nurturing of an intense spiritual life, which includes, above all, prayer and a tender devotion to the Virgin Mary,\* the Virgin maiden,\* who through her “yes” became the Mother of God.\*

<sup>2</sup> In addition, we must do all in our power to not overestimate our own strength, because “too much confidence makes one guard too little against the enemy”\* and to practice mortification and the custody of the senses, following the example of St. Francis, who guarded chastity “with rigid self-discipline and the greatest care”\* and exerted control, above all, over the eyes\* and scourged himself to conquer temptations.\*

\* c 663 § 4; RV 17

\*Lk 1: 27

\* Lk 1: 38

\* 2C 113

\* LM 5,4; Lm 3, II

\* Rnb XII,1

\* 2C 116,129; LM 5,4

<sup>3</sup> A genuine, fraternal love, lived in community, assists us in safeguarding the virtue of chastity. \*

<sup>4</sup> Nor do we neglect the natural means that promote health of mind and body, which are indispensable to live adequately a life of chastity.

\* PC 12

*to be the Lord’s spouses, mothers and sisters.*

**5.4** We recall the exhortation of St. Clare: “The Lord Jesus Christ will keep your virginity always immaculate and intact. Loving him, you will be chaste; in contact with him, you will become purer, allowing yourself to be possessed by Him, you are virgins. You are the Lord’s spouses, mothers and sisters; carry high the standard of an inviolable virginity”\*

## 6. Obedience

\* 1LAg 8-12; 2Lf X,51

*We follow Christ who was obedient,*

**6.1** <sup>1</sup> The Rule of our living obedience is Christ, who “he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross”\* and “learned obedience through what he suffered”.\*

<sup>2</sup> In the Evangelical Counsel of obedience, following the example of Christ, whose food was to do the will of his Father,\* we make a total renunciation of our will to God as a sacrifice of ourselves and we unite ourselves in a firm and secure manner to his will.\* In the presence of His Mother, Christ assured us that whoever does the Father’s will is to him brother, sister and mother. \*

\* Phil 2:8

\* Heb 5: 8

\* Jn 4: 34

\* PC 14

*in submission to our  
Superiors and*

**6.2** <sup>1</sup> In virtue of the Evangelical Counsel of obedience, we are bound to submit our will, in a spirit of faith, to our legitimate Superiors, as God's representatives, when they command us in conformity with our Constitutions.\*

\* Mt 12:46-50

<sup>2</sup> This is also the teaching of St. Francis, who stated that he wanted "in this way to be a slave in the hands of the guardian, by being unable to either go about or do anything apart from obedience and the guardian's will.\* Furthermore, he exhorted his brothers to obey "at once, without waiting for the command to be repeated".\* He portrayed "the perfect and supreme obedience" of a corpse, which remains without protest wherever it is placed.\*

\* PC 14; RV 26; c 601; DI XXIII

\* 2Test 27-28

\* 2C 51

<sup>3</sup> In the execution of orders and the fulfillment of offices, we apply every force of mind and heart and the gifts of grace and nature at our disposal, conscious of collaborating in this way in building the Body of Christ, according to God's plan.\*

\* 2C 152; LM VI, 4; Spec 48

<sup>4</sup> We commit ourselves to remain in fraternal communion with the Superior, even in difficult times, exercising a "charitable obedience".\*

\* PC 14

*the Pope and Bishops.*

**6.3** <sup>1</sup> In the spirit of St. Francis, who exhorted his brethren to be "utterly subject and submissive to the Church",\* we look with filial love to the Supreme Pontiff as our Supreme Superior,\* whom we are bound to obey, also by reason of the sacred bond of obedience.

\* Am III,6 ; CC 1972,16; 1986,35

\* Rb XII,4; 1Test 5; RV 32

<sup>2</sup> We are also subject to the authority of the Bishops, whom we owe devoted respect and reverence in those matters which regard the public exercise of divine worship and other works in the apostolate.\*

\* c 590 § 2; RV 3

## **7. Poverty**

\* c 678 § 1

*We follow Christ who  
was poor,*

**7.1** <sup>1</sup> The Rule of our living in poverty is Christ who was poor. He was rich and became poor to enrich us with his poverty.\*

<sup>2</sup> St. Francis "wished to follow the life and poverty of Our Lord, Jesus Christ and his most holy Mother",\* whom he called "the poor Virgin",\* when he chose Lady Poverty as his spouse\* and maintained that God is humanity's only real treasure.\* In fact, as the "sole lover of a heavenly reality, he never wanted to possess anything for himself, so as to be able to fully and more joyously possess the Highest Good".\*

\* 2 Cor 8:9

\* Fvit 1 ; CC 1939,63

\* 2C 200; LM 7,1

\* 2C 55 ; CC 1929,70

\* VC 21

*imitating the apostolic  
community,*

**7.2** <sup>1</sup> In observing the counsel of poverty, we commit ourselves not only "to use goods in a way subject to the Superiors' will, but, following the example of Christ, we are called to practice interior and exterior poverty",\* both at the

\* 1C 119

personal and communal level, content to live sparingly in effect and avoiding anything superfluous. The following exhortation is found in our first Directory: “Remember that you are poor and must therefore be content with everything”.<sup>\*</sup> In this way, we avoid being numbered among those who live a false type of poverty. Such people love to consider themselves poor so long as they are never in want.

\* PC 13; c 600

\* DI IV

<sup>2</sup> As the followers of St. Francis have always done,<sup>\*</sup> we place all things in common, whatever is given to us<sup>\*</sup> under any title, including pay, pensions, insurance, support and gifts, since everything belongs to the Institute. In this way, we realize the life-style of the first Christian community, in which “no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common”.<sup>\*</sup>

\* 2C 161

\* c 668 § 3

**7.3** <sup>1</sup> We conserve the right to family goods and the ability of acquiring additional goods. However, before temporary profession, we must pass their administration, use and usufruct to someone apart from the Institute, whom we consider best. Later, at the profession of perpetual vows, we freely dispose of our present and future goods through a will drawn up in a form prescribed by civil law.

\* Acts 4:32; 2:44

<sup>2</sup> Any change, for a just cause, to the above-mentioned dispositions requires the permission of one’s Major Superior.<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>3</sup> To respond more perfectly to Christ’s invitation to be freed from possessions and give to the poor,<sup>\*</sup> as did St. Francis, who became “very rich through his poverty”,<sup>\*</sup> we can renounce, five years after perpetual profession, the family goods acquired and those able to be acquired, after having made a written request to one’s proper Major Superior, who has the power to grant authorization, with the consent of her Council.

\* c 668 §§ 1-2

\* Mt 19:21; 1C 8; LM II,1

\* LM 15,1

<sup>4</sup> The total renunciation of goods ought to be formulated in such a way as to be valid, as far as possible, even in civil law.<sup>\*</sup>

**7.4** <sup>1</sup> While we renounce the possession, the free use and the disposal of money, we thank the Lord for the goods which are offered us through the fraternity, which we ought to serve with a sense of Franciscan responsibility.

\* c 668 § 4

<sup>2</sup> Freed from the slavery of material goods, we share with the poor, within the possible limits of what we possess, the fruits of our work and the gifts which we receive, in solidarity with those who suffer situations of misery and injustice, so as to sustain their hopes and dedicate ourselves to advancing them in every way. In fact, the option for the poor is innate to the dynamic workings of love in keeping with Christ’s example.<sup>\*</sup>

*unburdened by material goods,*

*close to the poor,*



*working*

**7.5** In the spirit of St. Francis, we consider work as a “grace of the Lord”<sup>\*</sup> and the ordinary means of sustenance for the community, the support of our apostolic works and assistance to the poor.

<sup>\*</sup> VC 82

<sup>\*</sup> Rb V,1; RV 18-19

*without greed,*

**7.6** <sup>1</sup> When funds from work and other sources are not sufficient, we can have recourse to benefactors, in a manner considered most opportune, according to place and circumstances.<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>\*</sup> DIXVII

<sup>2</sup> In seeking compensation for services rendered, “as befits God’s servants and the followers of most holy poverty”,<sup>\*</sup> we keep every form of avarice in check and, above all, never put the seeking of any kind of gain before our apostolic work.

<sup>\*</sup> Rb V,4

<sup>3</sup> The Institute provides that the Sisters, through their dependence on third parties, enjoy the assurances of law, support and social assistance.

*in union with God.*

**7.7** As for the manner of work, the first Directory exhorts us: “In working, see to it that you never lose your interior recollection, nor your temper nor be disturbed for whatever reason. Flee from hurry and anxiety. This keeps us from being recollected in God and makes us susceptible to get angry at every little obstacle which is encountered in our work”.<sup>\*</sup>

## **8. The Administration of Goods**

<sup>\*</sup> DIXI

*We administer temporal goods,*

**8.1** <sup>1</sup> All goods of the Institute are the Church’s goods and, as such, must to be in service to the Kingdom.

<sup>2</sup> In virtue of these Constitutions, only the Institute is capable by law to acquire, possess, administer and alienate temporal goods and property,<sup>\*</sup> unless the Superior General, with the consent of her Council, decides otherwise, so as to meet particular needs in some countries.

<sup>\*</sup> c 634 § 1

<sup>3</sup> The Superior General is the prime person responsible for the goods of the Institute. However, all of us ought to show a sense of responsibility for the goods the fraternity and collaborate in their sound management.

<sup>4</sup> To alienate temporal goods and property and to incur expenses which exceed the sum established by the Holy See for individual regions, the Superior General must receive authorization from the Holy See. Such authorization is necessary even for things given to the Church by vow or things of artistic or historical value.<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>5</sup> To perform civil acts, the Institute, in General or in the various Circumscriptions, expresses its will through a Legal Representative, appointed by the Superior General with

<sup>\*</sup> c 638 § 3

the consent of her Council, barring local conditions in some countries. The performance of any juridical act requires the authorization of the Major Superior.

*bearing witness to a  
collective poverty,*

**8.2** <sup>1</sup> Taking into account local conditions, we strive to give a typically Franciscan witness—collective to a certain extent—of poverty. According to our ability, we will contribute something of our own goods for the Church’s needs and the support of the poor.\* Fraternal love makes us share what we have among ourselves so as to achieve certain equality from house to house.

\* c 640

<sup>2</sup> Our Franciscan vocation keeps us from accumulating goods and being overly concerned about tomorrow.\* We abandon ourselves completely into the hands of a Divine Providence which St. Francis oftentimes concretely experienced in his life.\*

\* Mt 6:25-34

*and checking  
expenditures.*

**8.3** <sup>1</sup> For the administration of goods, both in General and in the individual Circumscriptions, and, possibly on the local level, a Procurator is to be appointed—with the possibility of re-confirmation—by the respective Superior, with the consent of her Council, for the interval between one Chapter and another. The candidate is to be a perpetually-professed religious for at least five years, have a specific competence and the moral virtues which make her suitable to perform this task, and not be a Superior.\*

\* LM 10,10; 2C 44; CAss  
68

<sup>2</sup> The Procurator, dependent solely on her Superior, manages all goods of the Circumscription under the Superior’s direction\* and the watchful care of her Council, and renders an account to her Council and Chapter.\*

\* DI XVIII

<sup>3</sup> The Superior General and the Provincial Superior, respectively, appoint for their area of jurisdiction, the Finance Commission, whose make-up and competence are established by the Statute for the administration of goods.\*

\* c 636 § 1

\* c 636 § 2

\* c 635 § 2

## Chapter III Our Life with God

*We render praise to God*

### 9. Liturgical and Personal Prayer

**9.1** Created to praise God and already destined to be a priestly people through Baptism, we, in making our religious profession, further become the exclusive property of God. Consequently, divine worship is our first and foremost activity. In this way, we more intimately enter into the hymn of praise which creation raises to the Father in his Son Jesus.\*

*in the Eucharist,*

**9.2** <sup>1</sup> The Eucharistic sacrifice, which perpetuates through the centuries the sacrifice of the cross, is the source and summit of all worship\* and the irreplaceable centre of our life of communion with God and our brethren. Through it, we have access to the Father, enter into communion with the Most Holy Trinity and are built into the Lord's holy Church.\*

\* LG 36; SC 10

\* LG 11

\* EM 8

\* CC 1939, 251

\* c 663 § 2; RV 12

\* LOrd 12; CC 1939, 236

<sup>2</sup> As a spouse of Jesus Christ,\* we participate in common each day in the Eucharistic Celebration, banquet and sacrifice, the “memorial of the Lord's Passover”. We receive his Sacred Body\* with the greatest possible devotion and honour\* and, offering the Eucharistic sacrifice to the Father in union with the priest, we renew the offering of ourselves, so that, through Jesus Christ, our Mediator, all might grow to perfect unity with God and one another in the community;\*

\* SC 48; c 897

*adoring the Body and  
Blood of Christ,*

**9.3** Following the example of our Seraphic Father, St. Francis, who “burned with love that came from his whole being for the Sacrament of the Body of Christ”,\* we prolong the close communion with Christ realized during the Eucharistic Celebration, by setting apart intervals of time during the day for adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament,\* so that we might continue our act of thanksgiving, draw the means for increasing our faith, hope and charity and make intercession for all humanity. In the celebration and adoration of the Eucharist we find “the strength radically to follow Christ, who was obedient, poor and chaste”.\*

\* 2C 201; CC 1939,234;  
1986,40

\* c 663 § 2

\* SCa 91

*and we sanctify the hours  
of the day,*

**9.4** Through the Liturgy of the Hours,\* celebrated as stipulated in the Directory, we extend to the various hours of the day\* our praise and our thanksgiving, raised to God in the Eucharistic celebration, and we unite ourselves to the official prayer of the Church, which adores, praises and pleads to God in the name of every human being, and intercedes for them.

\* DI II

\* 2Test 29; c 663 § 3; RV 9

*above all Sunday,*

**9.5** On the Lord's Day, when the whole Church community celebrates the Easter Event, we make our praise and thanksgiving to God more intense as we dedicate ourselves in a particular way to listening to Sacred Scripture, adoring the Eucharistic Christ and rendering pastoral and charitable service.

*with meditation,*

**9.6** <sup>1</sup> To nourish our spiritual life we devote at least one hour each day to mental prayer,\* at established times, meditating above all on the "humility of the Incarnation and the charity of the Passion" which St. Francis "had impressed so deeply in his memory, that he found difficulty thinking of anything else".\*

\* c 663 § 3; DI III

<sup>2</sup> We contemplate also the mystery of Mary, for whom he "was filled with an inexpressible love, because it was she who made the Lord of Majesty our brother... and through her we obtained mercy. He made her his protectress and that of the Order".\* We particularly venerate her under her title of the Immaculate Conception as patroness of the Franciscan Order.

\* 1C 84; CC 1939,281

\* 2C 198; LM IX,3

*with listening to the Word,*

**9.7** <sup>1</sup> Each day we communally share in moments of listening to the Word of God.\* In fact, these times are a primary source and nourishment for our relationship with the living God.\* We commit ourselves to embracing and guarding these occasions in our heart, following the example of St. Francis, "who was never an idle listener of the Gospel, but entrusting all that he heard to his laudable memory, he diligently sought to practise it to the letter".\*

\* c 765; RV 11

\* VC 94

<sup>2</sup> We also foster the communal and personal reading\* of the Constitution,\* the documents of the Church's magisterium and also the writings of Franciscan spirituality.

\* 1C 22

\* DI IX

\* DI XXVI; CC 1939,792; 1972,3; 1986,12

*with the Way of the Cross and the Rosary,*

**9.8** We particularly hold dear the Way of the Cross\* and the daily recitation of the Most Holy Rosary\* or the Franciscan Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary;\* we also practice other acts of piety as stipulated in the Directory.

\* DI IV

\* c 663 § 4

\* DI V

*in constant communion with God*

**9.9** <sup>1</sup> So that "all our life might be permeated with the apostolic spirit and all our actions in the apostolate animated by a religious spirit",\* we are attentive that our activity be ordered in such a way as to not stifle in us "the spirit of holy prayer and devotion, which should be served by all temporal things".\*

\* PC 8

\* Rb 2; DI XI

<sup>2</sup> Following the example of St. Francis, who was "not so much a man who prayed as much as a man who was a living prayer"\* and made of himself "an abiding dwelling place for God",\* we dedicate a sufficiently long period of time to personal prayer, so as to express our love to God and

\* 2C 95

\* Rnb XXII,27; RV 8; DI III

feel ourselves loved by him.

*in silence,*

**9.10** Recalling that our Seraphic Father, “sought out a place of solitude and silence where he would be able to hear God’s secret revelations”,\* we foster silence as an effective means of intimate, prolonged contact with the Lord. Silence is also a demand of fraternal charity and a source of mortification.

\* LM 2,5; 9,2; DI VII; CC 1906,99; 1929,100; 1939, 388; 1972,24; 1986,60.

*which we renew and intensify at special times.*

**9.11** <sup>1</sup> In a world marked by energetic social change, we see a particular need to observe “special times”, like the monthly retreat, the yearly spiritual exercises\* and other periods dictated by particular circumstances, as a means for a deeper intimacy with God and renewal in life.

\* c 663 § 5

<sup>2</sup> Preaching to women religious in their Churches or oratories requires the permission of the Major Superior or the local Superior, as stated in the cases foreseen in the Directory.\*

\* c 765

## 10. The Life of Penance

*Persevering in penance,*

**10.1** The spiritual journey of conversion demanded by the Gospel\* is initiated in Baptism and intensified in religious profession to the penitential life of the Third Order of St. Francis,\* leading us to an evermore, intimate configuration to Christ, who died and rose. He calls upon us to deny ourselves, take up our cross each day\* and “persevere in the faith and penance”.\*

\* Mt 4:17; Lk 13:2-5

\* DI VI

\* Mk 8:34; Lk 9:23; CC 1939,314; 1972,23  
\* Rnb XXIII,7

*which is part of life and undertaken voluntarily,*

**10.2** <sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding its preeminently interior character, Gospel penance also requires external mortification. First of all, we ought to exercise “the virtue of penance in perseverance and faithfulness to the duties of our state in life, in accepting difficulties coming from our work and life together and in patiently enduring the trials associated with our earthly life and its ever-changing character.\*

\* PÆ 10; LG 36; CC 1939,318

<sup>2</sup> We are exhorted also to undertake voluntary acts of self-mortification, without hurting our health, prayer-life and work.\*

\* CAss 1652

<sup>3</sup> Following the example of Our Lord\* and St. Francis, who fasted for long periods of time\* we practise fasting and mortification, above all on all Fridays of the year.\* In Advent and Lent, we adhere in this matter to the dispositions of the local Church and the Directory.

\* Mt 4:2; Lk 4:2  
\* 1C 84; 2C 197; LM 9,2-3; Fior VII  
\* cc 1249,1250,1252,1253; DI V; CC 1906,102; 1929,77; 1939,306; 1972,78; 1986,56

*we participate in the sufferings of Christ,*

**10.3** All religions see acts of penance as a means of self-control and discipline in conquering temptation, overcoming selfishness and opening the heart to God’s love and one’s neighbour. In Christianity, however, the primary reason for

undertaking a life of penance is participation in the sufferings of Christ: “in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church”.\*  
Thus, through penance we ought to be so crucified with Christ that we can say with St. Paul “it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me”.\*

\* Col 1:24

\* Gal 2:20

**10.4** <sup>1</sup> We make a daily examination of conscience and frequently approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation,\* so as to unite ourselves more intimately to the Mystical Body of Christ and to more worthily receive the Sacred Eucharist.

\* c 664; RV 13

*and are reconciled to  
God.*

Every Sister enjoys full freedom\* with regards to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the direction of conscience.

\* c 630 § 1

<sup>2</sup> In sizeable houses of formation and large communities, an ordinary confessor, approved by the Ordinary, might be appointed, after consultation with the Sisters.\*

\* c 630 § 2

## Chapter IV Our Fraternal Life

### 11. The Communion of Life

*In the name of the Trinity*

**11.1** Our fraternal life is not simply a result of human effort, but, taken as a whole, is a participation and manifestation of the life of communion in the Most Blessed Trinity.\* Trinitarian communion is the fullest expression of the Church's life and a sign and message to everyone in the human family to become a member of the Family of God.\*

\* VF 8; VC 17-21; 42

\* LG 9

*we form one family,*

**11.2** Forming a unique fraternity, we conserve "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace",\* notwithstanding our differences based on origin, geography, age, character and culture. Therefore, in the spirit of St. Francis, we embrace every Sister as a "gift of God",\* who ought to be loved in the same manner as God loved each of us, so that all will know that we are authentic disciples of Christ.\* We are also to express our love for others as both the proof and measure of our love for Him.\*

\* Eph 4:3; CC 1972,25,30

\* 2Test 14; CC 1986, 62

\* Jn 13:34-35; 15:12-13;

DI XXII

\* 1Jn 4,19-21; Jas 2:14-18

*exercising virtue,*

**11.3** <sup>1</sup> Our fraternal relationships are marked primarily with the theological and cardinal virtues, which presuppose the human virtues, such as trust, simplicity, togetherness, generosity, joy, self-control.\*

\* VF 27

<sup>2</sup> Sometimes, accepting Sisters requires sacrifice and "the common life can become 'the greatest penance'".\*

\* VF 38; RV 24

<sup>3</sup> In possible situations of tension, we willingly offer the gift of pardon,\* even when not asked, as Jesus taught us.\*

\* Mt 6: 12-15; 18: 21-34

\* Mt 5: 23-24

<sup>4</sup> If a Sister fails in her religious duties, we offer her fraternal correction\* with due humility, diligence, kindness, charity,\* patience,\* hoping that it be accepted humbly and patiently,\* so as not to be held accountable in some manner for her actions.\* If unwilling to change her ways, we withhold all judgment and intensify our prayers, so that the Lord might dispose her heart to conversion.\*

\* DI VII; CC 1906,121; 1929,155; 1939,195; 1986,160

\* Rnb V,5; Rb X,1

\* 2Lf VIII,44

\* Am XXII,1

\* Mt 18:15-17; Lk 17:3;

Joel 6:1; Ez 33: 8-9

\* RsC IX,7-9; XII,40

<sup>5</sup> Only in this familial atmosphere can we live our vocation and bring our mission to fulfillment.

*helping each other,*

**11.4** <sup>1</sup> May the variety of work, the importance of an office or financial compensation not be a source of making differences among the Sisters. Whatever the task assigned to us, we serve each other and collaborate in accomplishing even the most humble of house services.\*

\* DI XVI

<sup>2</sup> We share the joys and weariness of work, the same tenor of life, "bearing each others' burdens" and enjoying the good

\* Gal 6:2; 5:13

which the Lord works through each of us. We constantly bear in mind the exhortation of St. Francis to his brothers: “Each one serves and obeys the other”.\*

\* Rnb V,13; RV 25;  
CC 1972, 47

*assisting our elderly and  
infirm Sisters,*

**11.5** <sup>1</sup> We exercise special affection and care for our Sisters who are elderly or infirm\*. In taking care of them, we render “Gospel credibility” to our Institute.\* Undoubtedly, they have much to offer in wisdom and experience. Above all, they can teach us to prepare ourselves for old-age and an extended “active time” in prayer and for a peaceful acceptance of decreasing self-sufficiency.\* In standing beside them, we too learn to approach, in a Franciscan manner, “Sister Death”.\*

\* RV 23; 2C 175; CAss 9;  
DI XXI; CC 1929,80;  
1939,416; 1972,28;  
1986,66  
\* VF 68

<sup>2</sup> Our nearness to them will assist them in uniting themselves more closely to the suffering Christ and continuing in themselves his salvific action for the sake of the Church.\* We seek to provide everything possible for their spiritual comfort which enables them to bear their infirmity in a spirit of cheerfulness and patience.

\* VC 68  
\* Cant 25; 1Cel 109; CAss  
7; Spec 123 ; CC 1972,29

<sup>3</sup> On their part, may the infirm Sisters accept sickness with Franciscan joy and wholeheartedly thank the Lord for it,\* for “when I am weak, then I am strong”.\* May they always keep in mind that death is the passage from an earthly life to eternal glory and constitutes the ultimate offering in which religious profession is perfected.\*

\* 2Cor 12:10

\* 2Cel 175; CAss 45; RV  
23  
\* 2Cor 12:10

\* DI XXV

*in remembrance of our  
deceased Sisters,*

**11.6** Sustained by faith in the Communion of Saints, we believe that our fellowship lasts beyond the grave. We remain in communion with the Sisters who have preceded us and have had their definitive encounter with the Lord. We express our gratitude to them in prayer and supplication, as prescribed in the Directory, for what they have given us and continue to give us through their intercession.\*

\* DI XXII; CC 1906, 94;  
1929,108-112; 1939,433-  
448; 1972, 29; 1986, 67

*with thanks to our  
families of origin,*

**11.7** Since consecration to God enriches and ennobles the natural bonds of affection, we reserve a particular gratitude for our parents and relatives, seeing them as the first benefactors of the Institute. We are sensitive to their needs and sufferings.\* When necessary, we work together with them to find solutions to their problems, using obedience as a guide.

\* CC 1939,351; 1972,38;  
1986,79

*our benefactors and  
collaborators,*

**11.8** <sup>1</sup> With regards to benefactors, our gratitude is expressed above all in prayer.

<sup>2</sup> Towards those who collaborate in our various activities we show our gratitude in charity and justice, respecting local civil laws and proposing our spirituality.\*

\* CC 1972,40; 1986,80;  
VC 54; VF 70

**11.9** We foster not only dialogue within our Institute and with Franciscan Families\* and other religious institutes, but

\* CC 1972,27; 1986,78



*in dialogue with  
everyone*

also ecumenical and interreligious dialogue and an openness to all who are in search of God.\*

\* VC 100-103

*and all creation.*

**11.10** Following the example of St. Francis, our fraternity is to have a more universal breath and scope as to involve all creation and thus take on the attitude which St. Francis had for all created things.\* In fact, the Seraphic Father “considering that everything had a common origin, was overcome with emotion and called even the smallest things of creation ‘brother’ or ‘sister’, because he knew full-well that all created things, like him, came from God.\* Love made him a brother of all creation.\*

\* Cant 5

\* LM 8,6; 1C 81; Lm III,VI; RV 10  
\* 2C 172; LM 9,4

## **12. Fraternal Life in Common**

*We live a life in  
common,*

**12.1** <sup>1</sup> The fraternal life,\* regulated by a schedule which is conducive to the demands of prayer, the apostolate, sleep and sound relaxation, requires living together in a canonically erected house,\* from which we cannot absent ourselves without the permission of the local Superior. If a prolonged absence is required, the Major Superior, with the consent of her Council and for a just cause, can concede to the Sister permission to live outside the house of the Institute, but not for more than one year, unless it be for reasons of health, study or an apostolic activity to be exercised in the name of the Institute.\*

\* cc 607 § 2; 665, §1; DI XX

\* c 609, § 1

\* c 665, § 1

<sup>2</sup> To foster recollection, fellowship and a better living of the duties of consecration, some cloistered areas\* in each house are to be set apart exclusively for us.

\* c 667; DI VIII

*sharing a common table*

**12.2** A meaningful moment in our life as a family is sharing meals in a spirit of fellowship.\* An initial prayer expresses our thankfulness for the gifts which Providence offers us, a brief spiritual reading provides food for mind and heart and a final prayer puts in communion with the Sisters and benefactors who have passed from this life into eternity.

\* DI XIV

*and living in joy.*

**12.3** Moments of personal and communal relaxation ought to be appropriately set aside to lighten the weariness associated with the obligations of work, which sometimes pose difficulties for our mental and spiritual well-being and obstacles in our enjoying the presence of our fellow Sisters.\* The joy expressed in “celebrating together”\* is a particularly striking witness to the Gospel lived in the footsteps of the Saint of Perfect Joy.\*

\* DI X, XIII

\* VC 28

\* Plet; Fior VIII

## CHAPTER V

### Our Mission in the Church

#### 13. Participation in the Church's Mission

*Invited by the Church  
and guided by Mary,*

**13.1** <sup>1</sup> Sharing in the Father's mandate to the Son, we are invited by the Church, whose nature is missionary,\* to bring to people everywhere the proclamation of salvation attained in Redemption.\*

\* AG 2,35

<sup>2</sup> We exercise all apostolic activity in the name of the Church and in response to her mandate,\* while actively participating in community life and faithfully living in obedience.\* We are fully aware that the responsibility of proclaiming Christ is not so much that of the individual religious as of the whole community.

\* AA 2

\* c 675 § 3

<sup>3</sup> We take an active part in spreading the Gospel, proclaiming penitence to everyone, "without which no one can be saved",\* so as to lead everyone to accept the divine gift of peace.\*

\* c 678 § 2

<sup>4</sup> We entrust ourselves to Mary, the "Star of Evangelization"\* and the "Star of Hope",\* to guide our steps on a path which leads to human hearts. She is our model in the apostolate. She bore her Son in her womb, announced salvation to Elizabeth,\* presented Jesus to the lowly shepherds,\* the Magi\* and the Jews in the Temple.\* She will know how to transform the tasteless and colourless water of our spiritual poverty into a savoury wine.\*

\* Rnb XXIII,7; 1C 23

\* Rnb III,13

\* EN 82

\* SS 49

\* Lk 1:44

\* Lk 2: 15-16

\* Mt 2:2

\* Lk 2:22-38

*as contemplatives and  
active agents,*

**13.2** In one sense, our whole life ought to be permeated with the apostolic spirit and, conversely, our apostolic activity ought to be animated by the spirit of a religious. Our apostolate ought to originate in and be continuously strengthened by a constant union with God.\* We ought to be contemplatives in our activities and active in our contemplation.

\* Jn 2:1-10

\* PC 8; c 675 §§ 1-2

*we witness to Christ with  
our lives,*

**13.3** <sup>1</sup> Our consecrated life is the privileged means of an effective evangelization. In fact, those who are consecrated to God "in the most intimate part of their being, find themselves caught up in the dynamism of the Church, satiated by God alone and called to holiness. Consecrated persons bear witness to this holiness. They incarnate the Church insofar as they wish to surrender themselves to the radical nature of the Beatitudes. Their lives are a sign of being totally at the disposal of God, the Church and their brethren".\*

\* EN 69

<sup>2</sup> To accomplish this task, they know it is not so much a question of "preaching" as "practising" the Gospel. Our

primary apostolate is witnessing to our consecrated life, which we nourish through prayer and penance.\* In particular, “traversing the world as pilgrims and strangers”,\* we introduce ourselves with the greeting: “God give you peace”.\* We want to bear silent witness\* to our fellowship, “minority”, simplicity, poverty and spiritual joy, which St. Francis expressed even externally through being at the service of God and his brethren.\* In this way, our consecration will be an epiphany of God’s love.\*

\* c 673 ; RV 29  
 \* Rnb VI,1; 2Test 24; ; RV 22  
 \* Rnb XIV,1; 2Test 23 ; Rb III,13; Lrp 1; LfL 1; ; RV 30  
 \* Rb III,10; RV 20  
 \* 2C 127; Anper 25; Spec 93  
 \* VC 3

*and announce Him with boldness, creativity and femininity*

**13.4** <sup>1</sup> Our apostolate ought to be characterized by a prophetic character, boldness, creativity\* and the “feminine genius”\* and be incarnated in the ever-changing social and ecclesial situations.

\* EN 69  
 \* MD 30-31

<sup>2</sup> To accomplish this, we engage ourselves in prudently updating our presence, structures, approaches, priorities, means and life-style, while taking into account the signs of the times. Through prayer, we draw the necessary strength to accept the challenges of the present moment and of the place where we do our work.\*

\* c. 677 § 1; CC 1972,3; 1986,96

## 14. The Places of Our Apostolate

*in our communities,*

**14.1** <sup>1</sup> The primary place of our apostolate is our own community, where each of us ought to have a maternal love for others, mindful of the exhortation of St. Francis: “Let each of you love and nourish your brother as a mother loves and nourishes her child”.\*

\* Rnb IX,10  
 \* Heb 10:24  
 \* Col 3:16  
 \* 1Thess 5:11,14  
 \* 2Cor 1:4

<sup>2</sup> Following the example of the first Christians, we seek to “encourage each other in charity and good works”,\* “teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom”,\* correcting each other as sisters, “edifying one another”\* and “consoling each other with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God”.\*

*in schools,*

**14.2** With love, devotion and a sense of responsibility, we dedicate ourselves to the work of education,\* giving attention to “permeating the whole of human culture with the message of salvation, so that the knowledge of the world, life and humanity, progressively acquired by the students, might be totally enlightened by the faith”.\*

\* DI XII;  
 CC 1906,158;1929,58; 1939,462; 1972,48; 1986,85  
 \* GE 8

*in parishes,*

**14.3** In a spirit of humility, we offer our collaboration to parish priests, especially in the area of the catechesis of children and young people and other initiatives of human promotion and solidarity.\*

\* VF 61; CC 1939,485;1972,41; 1986,86

*in places of suffering,*

**14.4** Aware of the great suffering and many forms of misery present in our world, we, as workers of peace and messengers of perfect joy, offer assistance to those who are suffering,\* to the poor and to those on the periphery of society, sharing in their pain, as Mary did with her Son on Calvary.\* We also see in them the person of Jesus, who assures us: “As long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me”.\*

\* CC 1906,188; 1939,485; 1972,59; 1986,87

\* Jn 19: 25

\* Mt 25:40,45; DC 30

*with professionalism and  
“heartfelt care”,*

**14.5** <sup>1</sup> In the places where we work each day, we create a familial atmosphere,\* the indispensable basis for respecting human dignity and generating in those who receive our assistance a desire for supernatural values, because of our witness of life.

\* CC 1986, 88

<sup>2</sup> From this perspective, we are aware that professional competence, even if it be a fundamental necessity, is not enough, because each person who receives our assistance requires more than proper technical care. They need “heartfelt care”, because “Jesus’ approach was one of the heart, which recognizes where love is needed and acts accordingly”.\* St. Francis, the “perfect imitator of Christ”,\* understood him fully. In fact, “in relieving misery, he was seen to have in him a mother’s heart”.\*

\* DC 31; CC 1972, 59

\* Spec 73

\* Lm III,VII

*compelled to go to the  
ends of the earth,*

**14.6** <sup>1</sup> Mindful of the exhortation of Jesus to preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth,\* our missionary spirit urges us to proclaim Christ where he is not yet known,\* and also among peoples who have lost the vital meaning of their faith, resulting in a life far from Christ and his Gospel.\*

\* Mk 16: 15; Acts 1:8

\* VC 77; 78

\* RMI 33

<sup>2</sup> We bear in mind the apostolic efforts of St. Francis, “who did not consider himself a friend of Christ, unless he loved the very souls whom Christ loved”.\* For this reason, he went before the Sultan,\* giving no importance to many physical ills, and “filled the earth with Christ’s Gospel, edifying his hearers no less in word than in example. Thus, he himself could say: ‘My whole being has become like a tongue to proclaim the Lord’”.\*

\* 2C 172; LM IX,4

\* Lm III,IX; CC 1939, 278; 1972, 64; 1986, 91.

\* 1C 97

*which has become a  
“global village”.*

**14.7** <sup>1</sup> In our apostolic activity, we also take every possible advantage of the instruments of social communication,\* since they are gifts of God, intended to promote the development and communion among people.\* Having rendered our planet smaller today, creating as it were a “global village”, they provide us with immediate access to knowing people’s needs and elicit from us a prompt response to sharing in those needs.\*

\* CC 1972,45; 1986,96

\* IM 1

\* DC 30

-- <sup>2</sup> In the use of these means of social communication, we will make every effort to adopt a critical approach and an openness of mind in light of the persuasive force of the various messages proposed by the media. With the necessary discretion, we will avoid whatever is unbecoming to our vocation or endangers our chastity as consecrated persons.\* Furthermore, we must safeguard Franciscan poverty and the discipline of the house.

\* c 666

## Chapter VI Our Formation to the Consecrated Life

*With gratitude to the  
Lord,*

### 15. The Primary Duty of the Institute

**15.1** <sup>1</sup> Our religious family is humbly and forever grateful to the Lord for the gift of our vocation and for new vocations which prolong our charism in time. We are fully aware that formation must be the Institute's primary duty in order to realize its proper personal vocation in the community of Sisters, to ensure the unity of the Institute and to promote its vitality.

<sup>2</sup> The fundamental aspects of our formation are an enduring fidelity to the Institute's spirit of origin, an ongoing examination and implementation of the values of our charism and a renewal of our service in the Church.

*on the path towards  
perfection*

**15.2** <sup>1</sup> Formation has "the primary purpose of immersing women religious in an experience of God and helping them to perfect it gradually in their own lives".\*

\* DC 17; VC 65

<sup>2</sup> Formation in its various stages is an ongoing, unified process which must embrace the totality of the person in every aspect of her life: physical, spiritual, intellectual and moral.\* Furthermore, it must be suited to each person, that is, personalized,\* especially in our day, when the phenomenon of globalization tends to de-value the person and to allow the individual to become lost among the masses.

\* VC 65

\* c 660 § 1

<sup>3</sup> Each stage of the formation programme is indicated in the Statutes on formation.\*

\* cc 650 § 1; 659 § 3  
VC 68

### 16. Those Responsible for Formation

*and guided by the Holy  
Spirit,*

**16.1** <sup>1</sup> The primary person responsible for formation is the Holy Spirit, who "abides in us";\* "places love in our hearts",\* "comes to assist us in our weakness",\* "teaches everything and recalls what Jesus said"\* and "acts in us as a consoler, intercessor and advocate".\* St. Francis, who owed his conversion to the Holy Spirit,\* considered him the true

\* 1Cor 3:6; 2Tim 1:14

\* Rom 5:5 \* Rom 8:26

\* Jn 14: 26

\* DVi 67

\* LM II,1; Anp I,8

Minister General of the Order.\* As the primitive Church “grew and walked in the fear of the Lord, full of the comfort of the Holy Spirit”,\* so it will be for our Institute, if it will have the Holy Spirit for its Master and Guide.\*

\* 2C 193

\* Acts 9:31

\* Gv 16,13

<sup>2</sup> This discreet yet decisive presence of the Spirit of God demands that discernment be done, together with a spiritual guide, so as to recognize the will of God, which is manifested through human means in every aspect of life.\*

\* FI 19

*by Mary*

**16.2** <sup>1</sup> Mary is the model of every virtue, particularly for consecrated persons.\* She was consecrated to God in a most perfect way. In fact, “her spousal love reaches culmination, through the power of the Holy Spirit, in divine maternity. As a Mother, she carried Christ in her arms. At the same time, she realized most perfectly his call: ‘Follow me’. She follows him—she, as Mother—as her teacher in chastity, poverty and obedience”.\*

\* LG 65

<sup>2</sup> We place ourselves under her tutelage, as did Jesus, who “grew in wisdom, age and grace before God and men.\* “The Mother of Christ is presented to the world as the bearer of the Son’s will”.\* To each of us she repeats: “Do whatever he tells you”.\*

\* RD 17; RM 20

\* Lk 2:52

\* RM 20

\* Jn 2:5

*by St. Francis,*

**16.3** We also place ourselves under the tutelage of St. Francis, who for his brothers was “father, and mother, since he begot and brought them to light in Christ. He was a leader, shepherd, master and moral guide, teaching and admonishing them more through example than word.\*

\* Spec 87; CAss 59

*by the Church,*

**16.4** The Church is Mother and Teacher of all humanity, particularly of those who are totally consecrated to God. St. Francis urges us: “We must honour and venerate all theologians and those who administer the most holy Word of God, as those who administer the spirit and life to us.\* Among these, in the first place, we ought to follow the teaching of the Pope, “the Vicar of Christ and Visible Head of the whole Church,” and Bishops, “the successors of the Apostles.\*

\* 2Test 13

\* LG 18

*by the Superiors,*

**16.5** <sup>1</sup> Those primarily responsible for formation are the Superior General for the entire Institute and the Provincial Superiors for their own Provinces, each assisted by their respective Councils.

<sup>2</sup> They must provide for the preparation of the Mistresses of formation by sending them to some competent structure and inviting them to participate in courses of updating, organized for them by various ecclesial bodies.\*

\* VC 66

<sup>3</sup> The local Superior of every community ought to show concern for the growth of her Sisters through spiritedness,

listening, dialogue and the assistance of outside experts in conferences or spiritual retreats and other suitable initiatives.

*by the Mistresses,*

**16.6** <sup>1</sup> Mistresses of formation exercise an entirely special and indispensable role at each stage of formation and any possible assistants.\* The young women candidates depend on them in a unique way.\* Mistresses are to be appointed by the Major Superior, with the consent of her Council, for three years, with the possibility of reconfirmation for a successive three years. They must be members of the Institute, at least 30 years of age and 5 years in perpetual vows.\*

\* c 650 § 2

\* c 651 § 2

\* c 651 § 1

<sup>2</sup> They are: to be faithful to the Church's magisterium and the Directives of the Institute; to be experts primarily in the ways of seeking God and in a position to assist others in this journey;\* to have a deep knowledge of Franciscan spirituality, our charism, a sound doctrinal formation, and an adequate psycho-pedagogical preparation; and to be distinguished in their capacity of communicating and relating to others, particularly in the technical aspects of conversing with others, which is an irreplaceable means of formation.\*

\* VC 66

\* VC 66

<sup>3</sup> To adequately accomplish their task, they must not hold other offices in the Institute.\*

\* c 651 § 3

*by the Sisters,*

**16.7** <sup>1</sup> The privileged place of formation is the community,\* where each Sister is received as a gift of God and where each one must always feel herself to be, at one and the same time, a teacher to her fellow-Sisters and also their disciple.

\* VC 67

<sup>2</sup> In the community, as in one family, a person learns how to live. The acceptance of diversity, the richness of talents and the personal limitations of our fellow-Sisters, whom God places beside us, an attentive and patient dialogue with others and, primarily, the generous sharing of the gifts which each has received from God, constitutes the path leading to human and spiritual growth.\*

\* VC 67

<sup>3</sup> A community is formative to the measure that each Sister is allowed to grow in faithfulness to the Lord, according to our charism. Therefore, during the period of their formation, young women candidates are to live in a community, expressly constituted for this purpose, whose members can provide them with models of living?

*by persons in their  
simplicity and suffering,*

**16.8** In some manner, we ought also to consider as our teachers in formation every person we encounter in the places where we exercise our apostolate. Oftentimes, persons in their simplicity and suffering can teach us faith, through the manner with which they accept their suffering; hope, through the way they face life's uncertainties; and charity, through the generosity they show towards the most needy among them.

*we become our own  
instructors.*

**16.9** Over and above the indispensable help of God and our fellow-Sisters, formation depends in a particular manner on each individual Sister. Each has the primary responsibility of continually renewing her “yes” to the call which she has received and to accept all that is implied in this response, knowing that the call and God’s action, as his love, always comes to us in an absolutely new way, since no historic situation is ever the same.\*

\* FI 29

## **17. The Pastoral Program for Vocations**

*For the growth of the  
Church and the Institute*

**17.1** <sup>1</sup> Aware that each vocation is prompted by the Holy Spirit for the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God, the Institute takes an active part in the Church’s pastoral programme for vocations.

<sup>2</sup> The future of our mission in the Church depends on not only faithfully responding each day to our vocation but also proposing our charism to the young women of our times.

<sup>3</sup> The flowering of vocations is the indisputable sign of the fruitfulness of our religious Institute, because life alone can generate life.

<sup>4</sup> The problem of vocations is a difficult challenge, primarily in some countries which directly look to not only our Institute but the whole Church. Therefore, the best efforts must be generously made in activities, especially in the Church’s youth programmes, to increase vocations.\*

\* VC 64

**17.2** <sup>1</sup> God always uses human instruments in his call. The invitation of Jesus: “Come and see”<sup>\*</sup> remains the “golden rule for the pastoral programme for vocations”.<sup>\*</sup> Therefore, we ought to address the call primarily to the young women we meet in the course of our work, even if we are fully aware that God does the calling in every age and setting.

\* Jn 1:39

\* VC 64

*we proclaim the “Gospel  
Call” through works,*

<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, those responsible for vocations will be able to make an explicit proclamation of the “Gospel of Vocations”, with its associated supporting programmes, at the individual or group level, or through institutional forms and structures.

<sup>3</sup> In addition to the ideal of the Evangelical Counsels, the Sisters are to be imbued with the desire of giving their lives to Christ, after the example of St. Francis, as “Aggregates of the Institute”, according to the form of contemplative life set forth in the proper Statutes.

<sup>4</sup> More than ever, meetings should be organized, possibly in all our communities, for young women in search of a more convincing model of the Christian and religious life. In this way, these women can experience first-hand our way



of life. At the same time, each of our communities will be able to become more directly involved in the pastoral programme for vocations.

*through a witness of life*

**17.3** The most effective and credible vocational proposal is the personal and communal witness of joy in the consecrated life and service to God and the brethren. The witness of joy “constitutes the greatest attraction to the religious life, a font of new vocations and a support in perseverance”.\*

\* VC 28

*and through prayer.*

**17.4** We respond to Jesus’ appeal: “Pray the harvest master to send workers to gather his harvest”,\* by humbly and unceasingly imploring the Father to call many young women to consecrate themselves most intimately to his service and the good of the brethren. Prayer ought also to beg for the gift of perseverance in one’s own vocation and the fruitfulness of one’s apostolic work.

\* Lk 10:2; Mt 9:38

## **18. Postulancy**

*During Postulancy*

**18.1** <sup>1</sup> Postulancy, considered the first stage in formation, is advised by the Church.\* It lasts for one year and normally ought to take place in a fraternity which provides a spiritual and apostolic atmosphere suitable for the growth of a young woman’s proposed vocation and ensures the attainment of the goals of Postulancy.

\* FI 43

<sup>2</sup> The Major Superior, in agreement with the Mistress of Postulants, has the authority to shorten the time to six months or to prolong the period for no more than two years, depending on the formative needs of the candidates.

<sup>3</sup> It is up to the Major Superior and the Superior of the Delegation, with the prior advice of their Councils, to admit the candidate to the trial period of Postulancy in a formative community designated by them.

<sup>4</sup> Before admission, it must be ascertained if the candidate is healthy enough to undertake the sacrifices required by the religious life; if she possesses a basic human development and a fundamental knowledge of the catechism, the Bible, the sacraments and Christian morality; and if she essentially lives, in a manner proper to her age, the duties associated with Baptism.\*

\* c 642 ; RV 5

*we come to know  
religious life*

**18.2** <sup>1</sup> The Mistress is to help the candidate progressively to acquire the basics for assuming the obligations associated with the three Evangelical Counsels: her willingness to obey,

to live the common life and to collaborate in the apostolic works of the Institute; an emotional balance to enable her calmly to live a chaste life; a commitment to increasingly detach herself from her possession in light of a total sharing of goods and a simple and sober tenor of life.\*

\* FI 43

<sup>2</sup> She is also to be attentive to the young woman candidate's intellectual formation, primarily its theological, biblical and Franciscan aspects.

<sup>3</sup> Postulants should opportunely be provided with an experience of sharing in the Institute's work of service and apostolic activity, so that they can make a choice which is free and deliberate.

<sup>4</sup> Only after having met these goals of instruction, the Postulants can be admitted to the Novitiate by the Major Superior,\* after consultation with the Mistress of Postulants and her Council.

\* c 641

## 19. The Novitiate

**19.1** <sup>1</sup> The Novitiate, the second stage of formation, is "a time of total initiation into the way of life which the Son of God embraced and proposed to us in the Gospel".\*

\* FI 45

<sup>2</sup> The Novitiate is to last 24 months of which 12 consecutive months are to be considered canonical. For validity, the Novitiate is to follow what is prescribed in canons 647, 648 and 649.

**19.2** <sup>1</sup> The Mistress of Novices has the task of discerning and attesting to their vocations and to form them gradually to live the charism of our Institute.\*

\* c 652 § 1

<sup>2</sup> "Novices are to be led to cultivate the human and Christian virtues; that they be introduced through prayer and self-denial on a more committed journey towards perfection; that they be guided to contemplating the mystery of salvation and be prepared to give worship to God in the Sacred Liturgy; that they learn how to live a life consecrated to God and to others in Christ through the Evangelical Counsels; and that they be taught to love the Church and its sacred Pastors".\*

\* c 652 § 2

<sup>3</sup> The Mistress of Novices is to point out to the Novices the specific way to respond to their vocation as Regular Franciscan Tertiaries, that is, by reading and meditating on the Bible and knowing Franciscan spirituality and the charism of our Institute through its history and our Constitutions.\*

\* cc 578; 598

<sup>4</sup> In addition, St. Clare's words are to be remembered: "Before they adopt the habit and embrace the Religious life, they are to be made aware of the difficulties and rigours in approaching God and all that is required in steadfastly

*and in the Novitiate, we  
prepare to live the  
Evangelical Counsels,*

*under the guidance of the  
Mistress*

following the duties of Religious life, so that later they cannot excuse themselves by saying that they did not know them”.\*

\* RsC III, 7; RV 5

<sup>5</sup> The Mistress ought to outline for the Novices the perennial task of living in obedience, poverty and chastity, because “a person does not ‘try out’ giving one’s life to Christ”, even if the Church permits temporary Profession, whose “purpose is to confirm the faithfulness of the professed young woman”.\*

\* FI 55-56

**19.3** <sup>1</sup> In an atmosphere of solitude and silence, the Novices are to learn to allow themselves to be guided and formed by the action of the Spirit through fulfilling the required programme. Thus they enter in a vital relationship with Christ and, in Him, render themselves fully open to the salvific will of the Father.

<sup>2</sup> Coming to an ever fuller knowledge of the radiant figure of Christ, they are to work at staying close to Him, until they come to a firm decision to follow him radically in obedience, poverty and chastity.

<sup>3</sup> Each day, the Novice entrusts herself to Mary, who “kept the words of her Son, pondering them in her heart”,\* so that Mary might become her model and guide in receiving the Word, incarnating it in her life and, with Her, and like Her, offer it to humanity.

\* Lk 2:19,51

<sup>4</sup> To avoid being dissuaded in this programme of life, the Novices are not to be burdened with study or other responsibilities.\*

\* c 652 § 5

<sup>5</sup> For their part, the Novices are to engage themselves in actively collaborating with the Mistress.\*

\* 652 § 3

<sup>6</sup> The community must also collaborate in the formation of the Novices through prayer and example.\*

\* c 653 § 4

**19.4** <sup>1</sup> Observing what is prescribed in canon 653, the Major Superior, after consulting the Mistress and the Novitiate community and with the prior consent of her Council, admits the Novice to Profession.\* The Novice makes her profession for a year before the Superior General or her Delegate, in the presence of the fraternity.

\* RV 7; DI XXIV

<sup>2</sup> In religious Profession, the Novice, through a public vow, assumes the obligation to observe the three Evangelical Counsels. Through the ministry of the Church, she is consecrated to God and incorporated into the Institute with rights and duties defined by law.\*

\* c 654

<sup>3</sup> For the validity of temporary Profession, the prescriptions of canon 656 are to be followed.

*and in collaboration with  
her,*

*we make temporary  
Profession.*

## 20. The Juniorate

*During the Juniorate*

**20.1** <sup>1</sup> Temporary Profession begins the third stage of formation: the Juniorate.

<sup>2</sup> The Church prescribes that “the formation of all the members is to be continued after first profession, so that they lead the proper life of the institute more fully and carry out its mission more suitably”.\*

\* c 659 § 1

<sup>3</sup> The period of temporary Profession lasts 5 years and can be extended for another year. If, however, it appears opportune, the time of temporary vows can be extended for another three years.\* The relative decisions are to be made, case by case, by the Major Superior, with the prior advice of her Council.

\* c 657 § 2

<sup>4</sup> Upon the expiration date of the vows, the Major Superior, with the advice of her Council and without any period of interruption, admits the candidate to a renewal of Profession. For a just cause, however, the Major Superior can permit the anticipation of the renewal of Profession, but not by more than one month.

*we continue our  
formation*

**20.2** <sup>1</sup> During the Juniorate, formation ought to be systematic, spiritual, apostolic, doctrinal and practical in general, leading to the attainment of useful degrees, both ecclesiastical and civil, at university centers or their equivalent, on the basis of the natural qualifications of each Sister and their usefulness for our Institute.\*

\* c 660 § 1

<sup>2</sup> Therefore, during this period of formation, these women religious are not to be entrusted with responsibilities and activities which might create difficulties.\* However, taking into account their attitudes and personal aspirations, these women religious may be gradually introduced into the apostolate of the Institute, guided by the expertise and example of their fellow-Sisters.

\* c 660 § 2

*in Community*

**20.3** <sup>1</sup> The period of the Juniorate is a very sensitive phase, because the young Sisters pass from a rather protected state in Postulancy and the Novitiate to a way of life which is freer and autonomous, as required by the activities which will be assigned to them.

<sup>2</sup> Such a passage can bring some risks and certain disorientation, because the young Sisters must discover a fresh way of remaining faithful to the demands of the spiritual life and the charism of our Institute.\*

\* VC 70

<sup>3</sup> For this reason, the Newly-Professed is to pass at least an initial period, at the discretion of the Major Superior, in a suitable formative fraternity, under the guidance of the

Mistress of the Juniorate and dependency on the local Superior.

<sup>4</sup> For those in the Juniorate, the communal life is the school where they learn, through the witness of their fellow-Sisters, to become secure in our identity; to be actively involved in a family which, united in love, works for the glory of God and the good of souls; and to feel oneself a part of the local Church and the service rendered to the brethren, especially the poor.

*and prepare for  
Perpetual Profession.*

**20.4** <sup>1</sup> The Junior will spiritually ready herself for perpetual Profession in three months of intense preparation, mediating upon the duties of this act through which the religious gives herself to God forever and celebrating the wonders which the Almighty has done in her, as did the Virgin Mary.\*

\* Lk 1:49; RV 31

<sup>2</sup> Observing what is prescribed in canons 657 and 658, the Major Superior, with the consent of her Council and the prior advice of the Superior General, admits the Junior to perpetual Profession. The Junior is to request it freely; show a clear awareness of her vocation-mission in our Institute; demonstrate an adequate human and religious maturity to faithfully live her total belonging to Christ; and have the requisites of common Law.

<sup>3</sup> Perpetual Profession, which is the definitive gift of self to God in the Church and full incorporation in our Institute, is made before the Major Superior or her Delegate, in a solemn rite in the presence of the community of Sisters, and concludes the period of initial formation.

## **21. Ongoing Formation**

*Throughout life, we  
invigorate ourselves*

**21.1** <sup>1</sup> Ongoing formation, the fourth stage of formation, extends throughout a Sister's entire life and necessarily includes spiritual, apostolic, doctrinal and practical aspects.

<sup>2</sup> In fact, the demands of the divine call can only be understood progressively over time. The same is the case for personally assimilating the values of our way of life with the consequent assumption of the duties derived from it.

<sup>3</sup> No one phase of life can be considered so secure as to exclude times for specific reflection to ensure perseverance in one's vocation and to avoid the risk of habits and consequent temptations to delusion and pessimism. At the same time, at no age can the maturing process of a person be considered complete.\*

\* VC 69-70

<sup>4</sup> This gives rise to the necessity of continuously assessing our faithfulness to the Lord and the charism of our Institute in the new situations increasingly created in our society, which is always changing at a more accelerated pace.

*and work to grow*

**21.2** <sup>1</sup> Each Sister then ought to feel herself responsible for her own formation and commit herself to a continuous, integral growth in her vocation. Nevertheless, the Major Superiors and local Superiors, each in their proper areas, ought to provide for the Oblates everything necessary in means and time.\*

\* c 661

<sup>2</sup> Above all, they are to take particular care that the Sisters, during their entire life, “can have at their disposal guides or spiritual counselors versed in the pedagogy already used in initial formation and skilled in the ways adapted to the maturity and circumstances of each Sister”.\*

\* FI 71

<sup>3</sup> The Major Superior, after hearing the advice of her Council, is to set aside special times for ongoing formation, such as spiritual exercises and meetings on particularly important topics for the life of the Church, to better understand and implement our charism and to provide professional improvement for each individual Sister.

*as persons and a  
community,*

**21.3** The goal of ongoing formation ought to be not only the renewal of each individual Sister but also the renewal of the entire community in its fundamental aspects of fraternal communion, proclamation, Gospel witness and its mission in the Church.

## **22. Separation from the Institute**

*persevering to the end.*

<sup>1</sup> Our consecration to God is irrevocable. For this reason, we ought to entreat the Lord for the inestimable gift of perseverance, recalling the words of Jesus: “He who perseveres to the end will be saved”.\* St. Francis cited this passage in his Rule\* and recalled it for his Friars as he lay dying.\*

\* Mt 10:22; 24:13; RV 2

\* Rb X,8

\* 2C 216; LM XIV,5

<sup>2</sup> In cases where a Sister leaves our Institute or a Sister is re-admitted, what is prescribed in canons 684 to 703 is to be scrupulously followed.

<sup>3</sup> Recalling the close bond which united us for a certain period of time, we are to help the Sisters who depart from the Institute with equity and the charity of the Gospel\* so that they can adjust more easily to their new environment and assist them with our prayers.

c 702

## Chapter VII

### The Administration of the Institute

#### 23. The Service of Authority

*In the name of God, the  
Superiors*

**23.1** <sup>1</sup> Aware that all authority comes from God\* and that all authority is service to God,\* we submit ourselves in a “spirit of faith and love to follow Christ”.\*

\* Rom 13:1  
\* Rom 13:4  
\* 1Pt 2:3; c 601

<sup>2</sup> Superiors, in the exercise of their authority, are to bear in mind the example of Jesus, who “came into this world not to be served but to serve”.\* For this reason, St. Francis desired that Superiors be servants of the brethren.\*

\* Mt 20:28.  
\* Rb X,5; 2Lf VIII,42

<sup>3</sup> Superiors are to give due consideration to the opinion of every Sister, remembering that the Lord can make known even to the least among the Sisters what might be of better service.\*

\* RsC IV,18; XXII,36

<sup>4</sup> In keeping with the exhortation of St. Francis, no Superior is to “consider as her own”\* the office she has received. At a given time, each must relinquish her office willingly\* as she would accept relinquishing the service of “washing the feet” of the Sisters.\*

\* Rnb XVII,4; RV 28  
\* RV 28  
\* Am IV,2; CC 1939, 30;  
CC 1939,30

<sup>5</sup> Because of the different situations in the Institute and the Church’s Directives which advise against a Superior’s holding an office for too long a time,\* provisions foresee a careful rotation of Superiors as well as all offices.

\* c 624 § 2

<sup>6</sup> In determined cases and for the well-being of the Institute, a Superior, while retaining her office, can be transferred to another community. If she is found to be culpable according to canon 696 § 1, she can be removed in conformity with the norms of universal law.\*

\* cc 193; 624 § 3.

**23.2** <sup>1</sup> The priorities in the service of authority are:

*serve the Sisters*

- to foster the spiritual life, ensuring time and quality of prayer for the community;
- to actively maintain a “thinking with the Church”;
- to attentively safeguard the Institute’s charism and to fulfill it in the various social contexts, according to the guidelines provided by the General Chapter;
- to strengthen peace\* and fraternal communion and promote a commitment to the apostolate;
- to instill courage and hope in times of difficulty;\* and
- to generate, through fraternal dialogue and a respect for the human person, a fruitful collaboration of goods, which might be translated into a ready, active and responsible obedience,

\* DI XIX

\* VC 42, 46; SA 13

cognisant that the Superior has the ultimate responsibility in decisions.\*

\* PC 14; c 618; VC 43;  
VF 50; SA 20

<sup>2</sup> Let the Superior heed the exhortation of St. Clare: “Let her endeavour to preside more with virtue and holiness of life than through her office, so that the Sisters, inspired by her example, might obey through love rather than fear”.\*

\* RsC IV,9

<sup>3</sup> Let each Superior cultivate a particular care for Sisters who do not demonstrate a duly docile character. They are to recall the exhortation of St. Francis to a Minister: “If a brother in the world sins, as much as it is possible to sin, let not one of them, after having looked you in the eyes, go away without your pardon, if he asks for it; and if he does not ask for pardon, you ask him, if he wants to be forgiven”.\*

\* Lm 8-9; RV 27

*outside Chapters.*

**23.3.** <sup>1</sup> At every level of the Institute, authority is to be exercised in a collegial and personal manner. The collegial form of authority is exercised provisionally and in an extraordinary way by a legitimately-called Chapter. The personal form of authority is exercised in an ordinary way by the Superior General, the Provincial and Vice-Provincial Superiors, the Delegations and the individual houses, by themselves or assisted by their respective Councils.

<sup>2</sup> Major Superiors are those who administer the entire Institute or one of its Provinces, as well as their respective Vicars.\*

\* c 620

## **24. Chapters**

*In fraternal communion*

**24.1** <sup>1</sup> Chapters are a privileged occasion to live more intensely fraternal communion and a particularly important moment to assess the spiritual progress of the entire Institute and each individual Sister.

<sup>2</sup> To be “one in heart and soul”\*, we invoke the Holy Spirit, so that he might descend on the Chapters, as he came on the day of Pentecost, when the Apostles were gathered together with Mary.\*

\* Acts 4: 32

\* Acts 1:14; 2: 4

<sup>3</sup> At every kind of Chapter, both the community and each Sister, can voice their proper desires and suggestions.\* All ought actively to participate in these Chapters through prayer.

\* c 631 § 3

*we meet in General Chapter,*

**24.2.** <sup>1</sup> Supreme authority in the Institute rests in a legitimately-gathered General Chapter.\*

\* c 596 § 1

<sup>2</sup> It oversees the patrimony of the Institute,\* namely the penitential spirit of the Franciscan Third Order and our abiding traditions.\*

\* c 631, § 1

\* c 578

<sup>3</sup> Treats the affairs of major importance and to issue norms which all are held to observe.\*

\* c 631 § 1



<sup>4</sup> Studies the opportune means for fostering the Institute's spiritual and apostolic vitality and to stimulate renewal, taking into consideration the proposals of the fraternity and the individual Sisters.\*

\* c 631 § 3

<sup>5</sup> Approves the Rule of the Chapter which is prepared beforehand by the Superior General, with the consent of her Council.\*

\* c 631 § 2

<sup>6</sup> Examines the report presented by the Superior General and the report of the Procurator approved beforehand by the Council.

<sup>7</sup> Elects the Superior General\* and the General Councillors;

\* cc 625 § 1; 631 § 1

**24.3.** <sup>1</sup> Provincial and Vice-Provincial Chapters\* assess the spiritual and apostolic life of the Province or Vice-Province.

\* c 596 § 1

<sup>2</sup> They treat its most important matters, bearing in mind the proposals of the fraternities and individual Sisters.

<sup>3</sup> Issue decrees and Statutes for the Province or the Vice-Province, which are to be approved by the Superior General, with the consent of her Council.

<sup>4</sup> Share initiatives and programmes to be realized with other Circumscriptions of the Institute to foster communion and to respond better to the needs of the Church.

<sup>5</sup> Draft proposals and reflections to present to the General Council or General Chapter.

<sup>6</sup> Approve the rule of the Chapter, prepared beforehand by the respective Superiors, with the consent of their Councils.\*

\* c 631 § 2

<sup>7</sup> Examine the report of the Provincial or Vice-Provincial Superior and that of the Procurator, approved beforehand by the Council.

<sup>8</sup> Elect the Provincial or Vice-Provincial Superiors and their Councils, following the same procedure for elections during the General Chapter.

**24.4.** <sup>1</sup> Ordinary General Chapters are held every six years; Provincial or Vice-Provincial Chapters every three years. Should the office of the respective Superiors remain vacant, these Chapters can be held before these times.

<sup>2</sup> The respective General, Provincial or Vice-Provincial Superiors, or, in their absence, their proper Vicars, convoke these Chapters, establishing the time and place, with the consent of their Councils.

<sup>3</sup> The convocation of the Provincial and Vice-Provincial Chapters ought to be authorized by the Superior General, with the consent of her Council.

<sup>4</sup> The Superior General, with the consent of her Council, can, for just cause, anticipate or delay by no more than six months, the celebration of the General, Provincial

*in Provincial and Vice-Provincial Chapters,*

*At regular intervals*

and Vice-Provincial Chapters.

<sup>5</sup> All Chapters are presided over by the Superior General or by her Delegate, who both have active voice.

*and in extraordinary session.*

**24.5** <sup>1</sup> To treat particular problems in the life and activity of the Institute, Province or Vice-Province, Extraordinary Chapters can be convoked by their respective Superiors, with the prior consent of their Councils and that of the Superior General and her Council.

<sup>2</sup> To treat particular problems and intensify the bonds of fellowship,\* recalling the atmosphere which characterized the “Chapter of the Mats” in 1221.\* the Superior General, with the consent of her Council can convoke a General Assembly of the entire Institute. Provincial and Vice-Provincial Superiors can do the same for their proper Circumscription after having received the consent of the Superior General and her Council.

\* c 632  
\* CAss 18; Spec 2;  
Fior XVIII

**24.6** <sup>1</sup> Each Sister exercises the right to vote in one Circumscription of the Institute only, unless, by reason of office, she also has the right in another.

*With the involvement of everyone,*

<sup>2</sup> Sisters, who are sent to another Circumscription to carry out some service, exercise the right to vote in that Circumscription and not in her own. A Sister who finds herself a guest in another Circumscription for various reasons, exercises her right to vote only in her proper Circumscription.

**24.7** <sup>1</sup> At General Chapters, members participate by right and by election.

<sup>2</sup> Members by right are:

*through Delegates,*

- the Superior General, the Vicar and the General Council;
- the Provincial, Vice-Provincial and Delegation Superiors;
- the Procurator, the General Secretary;
- the Mistresses of formation on the international level; and
- the former Superior General for the preceding six years.\*

\* CC 1929,12; 1939,534;  
1972,144

<sup>3</sup> Members by election are: the Delegates from the various Circumscriptions, who are chosen according to the criteria, set down in the Directory. Their number, determined during the previous General Chapter, ought not to be less than that of the members who participate by right.

<sup>4</sup> At Provincial and Vice-Provincial Chapters the following participate by right:

- the Superior General or her Delegate, with active voice;
- respectively, the Provincial and Vice-Provincial Superior;
- their respective Councils;
- the Superior of the Delegation, dependent on the Province;
- the respective Secretaries and Procurators;
- the respective Mistresses of formation; and

- the respective former Provincial and Vice-Provincial Superiors for the preceding three years.

<sup>5</sup> The criteria for elected members at the above Chapters are the same as those for General Chapter.

<sup>6</sup> In choosing Delegates to the various Chapters, all professed Sisters have active voice; Only Sisters in perpetual vows have passive voice. Sisters who temporarily live outside the Institute by indult have neither active nor passive voice.\*

\* c 687

*we participate at the Chapter,*

**24.8** <sup>1</sup> All members by right and the Delegates are obliged to be present, with a due sense of responsibility, at the Chapter for which they have been elected,\* unless their presence is determined impossible by their respective Superiors.

\* c 633 § 1

<sup>2</sup> Those Delegates who have been dispensed are to be substituted by Sisters who have received the next higher number of votes to those elected.

<sup>3</sup> The choice of Superiors and Councillors at Chapters should not be based on human criteria, but rather on the well-being of the Church and the Institute. In addition to prudence, preparation and experience required of Sisters to be elected, consideration for representation in the Council should also be given, as much as possible, to the various areas of activity and age groups.

*assisted by experts,*

**24.9** To contribute to the treatment of certain problems, the Superior General, the Provincial and Vice-Provincial, with the consent of their proper Councils, can allow experts to make presentations at their respective Chapters. These experts, however, do not have the right to vote.

*to make decisions,*

**24.10** <sup>1</sup> For approval, decisions during a Chapter require an absolute majority of votes, unless determined otherwise by the Chapter itself.

<sup>2</sup> The decisions of Provincial and Vice-Provincial Chapters must be confirmed by the Superior General, with the consent of her Council.

<sup>3</sup> Decisions at a Chapter remain in effect until abrogated or modified by a subsequent Chapter.

*to elect Superiors*

**24.11** <sup>1</sup> The Superior General, the Provincial and Vice-Provincial Superiors are to be elected by their respective Chapters by an absolute majority of the votes of those present, in a secret ballot.

<sup>2</sup> The Superior General is elected for a six-year term,\* while the Provincial and the Vice-Provincial Superiors have a term of three years.

\* c 624 § 1

<sup>3</sup> If, on the third vote, no Sister has received the required absolute majority, a fourth and last vote takes place

in which the two Sisters who have received the major number of votes in the third election are to have passive and not active voice. If candidates receive an equal number of votes, the older in Profession is elected, and, if each has an equal number of years in Profession, the older in age is elected.

<sup>4</sup> Should the newly-elected Superior General or Provincial or Vice-Provincial Superior not be present, the Chapter is suspended.

<sup>5</sup> The Superior General and the Provincial and Vice-Provincial Superiors are to be at least 35 years of age and professed in perpetual vows in our Institute for at least 5 years.\*

\* c 623

<sup>6</sup> They are to have a religious spirit, a love for the Institute, a sense of responsibility in administration, a mind for discernment and openness to fraternal dialogue.

*or re-elect them.*

**24.12** <sup>1</sup> The Superior General and the Provincial and Vice-Provincial Superiors can be re-elected to a successive term. For re-election to a third successive term, the candidate must receive, in the first two votings, at least two-thirds of the votes of those present. If she does not receive this majority, the candidate loses passive voice to the office and the election is to begin again.

<sup>2</sup> The election of the Provincial and Vice-Provincial Superiors and their Councillors are to be confirmed in writing by the Superior General.\* In the meantime, they exercise authority as Delegates of the Superior General.

\* c 625 § 3

*Particular cases include:  
resignation*

**24.13** <sup>1</sup> The resignation of Sisters who have been elected in Chapter can only be accepted by the Chapter through a two-thirds majority vote.

<sup>2</sup> The resignation of the Superior General, tendered outside a Chapter, has effect only if confirmed by the Holy See.

<sup>3</sup> The resignation of a Vicar or a General, Provincial or Vice-Provincial Councillor, tendered outside the Chapter, has effect, if accepted by the Superior General, with the consent of her Council.

<sup>4</sup> The resignation of those holding offices conferred by the Superior General, the Provincial or Vice-Provincial Superiors, with the consent of their Councils, has effect, if accepted by the respective Superior, with the prior advice of the Council.

*vacant offices*

**24.14** <sup>1</sup> If the office of Superior General becomes vacant, the Vicar is to convoke a Chapter as soon as possible, so that it can take place within 6 months.

<sup>2</sup> If the Superior General becomes permanently

incapacitated in her office, the Vicar General, with the consent of the Council, brings the matter to the Holy See and awaits its directives.

<sup>3</sup> If the office of Provincial or Vice-Provincial Superior remains vacant for more than 18 months before a Chapter, the Superior General, with the consent of her Council and after having first received the consultative vote of all Sisters of the Province or Vice-Province in perpetual vows,\* is to appoint a new Provincial or Vice-Provincial Superior, who completes the three-year term. During this three-year period, a Chapter is to take place.

\* c 625 § 3

<sup>4</sup> If the Provincial or Vice-Provincial Superior becomes permanently incapacitates or if their office remains vacant, the Vicar is to immediately inform the Superior General and await her directives.

*and new  
Circumscriptions.*

**24.15** <sup>1</sup> The first Provincial or Vice-Provincial Superior of a new Circumscription, with the respective Council members, are appointed by the Superior General, with the consent of her Council and after having received in writing the consultative vote of the Sisters in perpetual vows of the Circumscription concerned.\*

\* c 625 § 3

<sup>2</sup> In particularly serious cases, the above Superiors can be appointed according to the same procedure. Such an appointment, however, is not to be repeated for two consecutive three-year terms.

## **25. The Superiors**

*The spiritual guides are:*

**25.1** <sup>1</sup> The Superior General represents in her person the unity of the Institute and expresses the charity with which God loves each Sister.\*

\* PC 14

<sup>2</sup> Her primary responsibility in administering the spiritual patrimony of the Institute is to fulfill, as far as possible in every time and place, the mission for which the Spirit has brought it about.

<sup>3</sup> The Superior General has authority over all the Circumscriptions, fraternities and each individual Sister of the Institute, according to the norms of common and particular Law.\*

\* cc 622; 596 § 1

<sup>4</sup> The other Superiors have the same authority within the limits of their proper territory.\*

\* c 622

*the Superior General,*

**25.2** <sup>1</sup> In addition to what is foreseen in common law and these Constitutions, the Superior General is the spiritual guide to all the Sisters.

<sup>2</sup> Engenders in the Sisters faithfulness to the charism of the foundation.

<sup>3</sup> Explains the laws which apply to the Sisters and to inspire their observance.

<sup>4</sup> Visits personally, or through her Delegate, all fraternities at least twice in a period of six years and at times deemed necessary.\*

\* c 628 § 1

<sup>5</sup> Maintains close relations with the Superiors of the other Conscriptations so as to coordinate the endeavours of the various fraternities in the attainment of common goals.

<sup>6</sup> Convoques, as considered opportune, the Provincials, Vice-Provincials and Delegates, possibly with their Councils, to study problems of great importance to the Institute; in addition to the fore-mentioned, she can convoke also the local Superiors.

<sup>7</sup> Authorises the Sisters, together with the permission of the local Ordinary, to publish writings dealing with questions of religion or morals.\*

\* cc 831 § 1; 832

<sup>8</sup> Transmits a report to the Holy See on the state and life of the Institute.\*

\* c 592 § 1

<sup>9</sup> Promotes knowledge of the documents of the Holy See to the Institute.\*

\* cc 592 § 2; 704

*the Provincial and Vice-Provincial Superiors,*

**25.3** In addition to what is foreseen in common law and these Constitutions, the tasks of the Provincial and Vice-Provincial Superiors, given due comparison and difference, are the same as those of the Superior General, but limited to their proper territory. However, exceptional cases call for consultation with the Superior General.

*the Delegates*

**25.4** <sup>1</sup> The Superior of a Delegation, who ought to be in perpetual vows, is appointed for a three-year term by her proper Superior, with the consent of her Council and the prior consultation of the Sisters of the Delegation and prior approval of the Superior General.\* She can be reconfirmed for a successive three-year term, and, in exceptional cases, to a successive third term.

\* c 625 § 3

<sup>2</sup> The tasks of the Delegate are established by specific Statute, approved by the Superior General with the consent of her Council.

*the Local Superiors,*

**25.5** <sup>1</sup> The local Superior is to be a Sister in perpetual vows and appointed to a three-year term by the Provincial or Vice-Provincial Superior with the consent of their respective Councils and prior opportune consultation.\* She can be reconfirmed for a successive three-year term and, in exceptional cases, to a successive third term.

\* c 625 § 3

<sup>2</sup> The local Superior, the bond of unity among the Sisters, exercises ordinary and proper authority in administering her fraternity. She vitalizes the values and the

charism of the Institute and is a mother attentive to the needs of each Sister.

<sup>3</sup> The local Superior assists in the local Chapter, comprised of all the Sisters of the fraternity, who have the duty to participate as the sign of living in fellowship and sharing responsibility in spiritual renewal and the concrete work of communion and apostolic activity.

<sup>4</sup> The local Superior, with the prior accord of her Council and the local Chapter, is to convoke and preside each month over the local Chapter which is consultative in nature.

<sup>5</sup> The local Chapter decides on a yearly programme, which it assesses periodically; expresses its opinion on the ordinary and extraordinary administration of the fraternity and studies ways to implement the Church's directives and those of the Institute.

*assisted by Commission*

**25.6** <sup>1</sup> The Superior General and the Provincial and Vice-Provincial Superiors, with the prior advice of their Councils, can appoint for the entire Institute and for their respective Circumscription, the *Commission for formation*, the *Commission for vocations*, the *Commission for the apostolate*, the *financial Commission* and other possible Commissions, whose tasks and membership are determined by their respective Statutes.

<sup>2</sup> The Statutes of the various Commissions ought to be approved by the Superior General with the consent of her Council.

*and a Secretary,*

**25.7** <sup>1</sup> The Superior General and the Provincial and Vice-Provincial Superiors are assisted in the execution of the practical aspects of her office by a Secretary, in perpetual vows, appointed by her respective Superior, on whom she directly depends.

<sup>2</sup> The office of Secretary remains until the successive Chapter at which the term can be renewed.

*residing in their proper houses.*

**25.8** <sup>1</sup> All Superiors are to reside in their proper houses and are not to distance themselves from them, except for just cause.\*

<sup>2</sup> The Superior General, with the consent of her Council, chooses her seat and that of the Superiors of the various Circumscriptions.

<sup>3</sup> The General, Provincial and Vice-Provincial Vicars, if possible, reside in the same houses as their proper Superiors.

## 26. The Vicars and Councillors

*The Vicars and the Councillors assist the Superiors,*

**26.1** <sup>1</sup> To adequately serve the Sisters and coordinate the various activities in the apostolate, each Superior is assisted by a Council.\*

\* c 627

<sup>2</sup> The Council for the Superior General is comprised of five members; the Councils of the Provincial and Vice-Provincial Superiors have four members, one of which is the Vicar.

<sup>3</sup> All Vicars and Councillors must be at least thirty years of age and five years in perpetual vows.\*

\* c 623

<sup>4</sup> General, Provincial and Vice-Provincial Councillors are elected using the same procedure as that for the Superior General, and can be reconfirmed for a successive term, provided that each Council has at least two new Councillors.

<sup>5</sup> The first Councillor elected is automatically the Vicar.

<sup>6</sup> The Directory provides the norms for the Vicar and the Councillors of a Delegation and individual fraternities.

*with the Vicars governing in their absence.*

**26.2** <sup>1</sup> If the Superior General or the Provincial or Vice-Provincial Superiors or the Superior of a Delegation or the local Superior is absent or unable to exercise her authority, the respective Vicar is the administrator.

<sup>2</sup> If the office of Vicar General, the Provincial or Vice-Provincial Vicar becomes vacant outside of the Chapter, the responsibility for the remainder of the term passes to the second member of the Council elected in the Chapter.

<sup>3</sup> If the office of General, Provincial or Vice-Provincial Councillor, for whatever reason, becomes vacant, the Sister who received the next higher number of votes in the election during the last Chapter, succeeds her in office.

<sup>4</sup> The Superiors are to convoke their respective Councils at least every three months or whenever deemed necessary and are to communicate beforehand the agenda of the meeting.

## 27. The Obligation of Faithfulness

*We pray for the gift of perseverance.*

<sup>1</sup> The Constitutions, which, on the day of profession, we have promised the Lord to observe, are for each of us and for the entire Institute a secure path to living the Gospel. Their efficacy and spiritual value come from the Church which, following the promptings of the Holy Spirit has approved them.\*

\* LG 43

<sup>2</sup> The exhortation which St. Francis addressed to his brethren at the moment of his death retains its value for each



of us: “Let us begin, my brothers, to serve the Lord God, because until now we have made little or no progress”.\*

\* 1C 103; LM XIV,1

<sup>3</sup> We make our own his commitment to persevere until the end with the help of God and his Virgin Mother. In this way, we will receive his blessing: *“May whoever observes all this be filled in heaven with the blessing of the Most-High Father, and on earth with that of his beloved Son, together with the Most Holy Spirit, the Comforter, and all the powers of heaven and all the saints. And I, Brother Francis, your poor, worthless servant, add my share internally and externally to that most holy blessing. Amen”*.\*

\* Uvol 1; 2Lf X; 2Lf XII

\* 2Test 40-41; RV 32