

Constitutions of the Nuns of the Order of Preachers

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DECREE OF THE CONGREGATION FOR RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR INSTITUTES

Prot. n. R 75-1/83

The Master General of the Order of Preachers has petitioned the Apostolic See for the due approval of the Constitutions which have been revised according to the mind of the Second Vatican Council and the Code of Canon Law.

The Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes in plenary session has carefully weighed the attendant explanations and whatever else was pertinent to the matter.

With due regard to the other requirements of the law, it approves and confirms by the present Decree the said Constitutions as they appear in the revised Latin text, a copy of which is reserved in its archives.

Following in the footsteps of Saint Dominic, may the nuns lead the contemplative life according to their unique charism; devoting themselves to prayer and withdrawal from the world, may they tend more generously every day to the fulfillment of their way of life.

Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at Rome, November 7, 1986.

Br. Jerome card. Hamer, O.P.
Prefect

V. Fagiolo
Secretary

**Letter of Br. Anicetus Fernandez, Master
of the Order (1971)**

**To Our Dear Sisters in The Son of God
We
Br. Anicetus Fernandez
Professor of Sacred Theology
and Humble Master and Servant
of the Whole Order of Friars Preachers
Send Greetings and Observance of Your Laws**

It is with great joy, beloved Sisters, that we present to you the complete new Constitutions together with some Ordinations.

Before the end of the Second Vatican Council, a Commission of Fathers had already been set up with a view to the revision of the Constitutions and the preparation of a new text. The function of these Fathers was to begin the work and indicate the lines for its future progress. From the beginning, the active collaboration of all the monasteries was also sought. For several years all the nuns had every opportunity to propose their own views and observations, and they deserve the highest praise for their response. The vast number of observations, for the most part helpful, which were sent to the Commission, showed that the nuns attributed the greatest importance to the work of renewal.

No less praise is due to the Commission itself which, giving full consideration to all the observations received, carefully and wisely fulfilled the first and most difficult part of the work of revision.

Afterwards, the nuns themselves wished to examine the new Constitutions of the brethren and as far as possible adapt their own to them.

Finally in April, 1970, a new Commission composed of Fathers and nuns was set up. This Commission came together in the convent of the motherhouse of the sisters of the Congregation of St. Catherine of Siena at Monte Mario, Rome. They labored intensely, having before them the work already done, the observations of the nuns and the new Constitutions of the brethren; and so they completed the new Constitutions so eagerly desired.

The General Council examined and approved the text and then submitted it to the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes. After a careful examination, the Congregation communicated to us certain observations on which they asked for the views of the Master of the Order and the members of the Commission. We submitted these views, and after considering them, the Sacred Congregation approved for three years the Book of Constitutions which we now present to you.

I thought it well to let you have this brief account of the work that went into the preparation of the Constitutions, so that you may realize that no labor or study was spared to ensure that the revision should be in conformity with the contemplative life of the Dominican nuns, and be as perfect as possible, conserving, purifying and perfecting all the essential elements of this life, and omitting whatever might be out of date or harmful or inopportune, while adopting new elements that are more appropriate and more in harmony with the mentality, conditions and needs of our age.

Our holy Father Dominic instituted the Dominican nuns as an essential part of the Order and an efficacious help to the life and apostolate of the brethren. This contemplative life, “the best part” of the Christian life, has always held a most important place in the Church and the Order, but perhaps

today is more necessary than ever before to the Church, to the Order and to society.

For various reasons the contemplative life has become more difficult today. The great ease in communication through numberless and marvelous inventions results in our living in a state of perpetual external agitation, taken up with discussions, meetings, journeys, business anxieties and a thousand other things which draw us away from the interior life. Newspapers, radio and television penetrate everywhere, and so transform the conditions of private and family life, that it is difficult to find time and place for solitude, silence and contemplation. Comforts, opportunities for pleasure and the ever-growing multiplicity of material goods attract men and women so strongly as to make them slaves rather than masters of these things.

The result of all this is that it is almost impossible to cultivate an interior and contemplative life. Prayer, meditation, pondering, reflection and contemplation have become extremely difficult. There is neither time nor place for them and the very disposition of mind and heart which would be concerned with these activities is missing. The consequence is that they are easily treated as of little value. And so the life of prayer, meditation, contemplation and union with God is lost sight of, becomes weaker and gradually fades away.

So it follows that this multiplication of material goods which was to render people more perfect and more happy, had they been used according to God's purpose, in fact renders them more degraded and more unhappy.

It is obvious to the eyes of Christian faith that the contemplative life whereby one completely dedicates oneself to God, leaving aside, as far as human frailty allows, the business and the cares of this world, is an outstanding gift of grace. For faith teaches the singular excellence of that form of life in which one can devote oneself without hindrance to praising God, to begging unceasingly for the graces necessary for the salvation of the world, to acquiring true purity of

conscience, to raising the hearts of all to heavenly things, to imitating Christ more perfectly and sharing his life more abundantly, to conversing with the Blessed Trinity dwelling in the sanctuary of the soul, cleaving to the Divine Persons by faith, hope and charity, and finally, to the embracing of everyone in the heart of Christ.

It is therefore most necessary to discern and foster the contemplative vocation of the faithful, who, in a spirit of deep humility and complete self-denial, in silence, solitude and peace, will devote themselves to hearing and contemplating the Word of God as the Blessed Virgin Mary did and will be docile to the impulses and inspirations of the Holy Spirit. In so doing they enrich the Church and society with those heavenly graces which are supremely conducive to the true progress, peace and happiness of the whole world, especially that future happiness to which we look forward. At the same time, they nourish that charity which will make the whole human family a true fraternity.

It is not surprising that the Vatican Council should declare that:

- 1) the contemplative life belongs to the fullness of the Church (*Ad Gentes*, n. 18);
- 2) the Church is essentially contemplative (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 2);
- 3) all activity in the Church is ordained to contemplation and subordinate to it (*ibid.*);
- 4) the contemplative attitude which is eminently present in the Blessed Virgin Mary (Lk. 2:19, 51) pertains to the whole Church which through it penetrates ever more deeply into the riches of the Word of God (*Dei Verbum*, n. 8).

The specific mission of the contemplative vocation, then, is to undertake, cherish and promote what is most deep in the life of the Church. Hence, Dominican nuns should have a clear realization that in virtue of their profession they are completely consecrated to the Church and called to bring about the extension of the kingdom of God in the world, by

means which are hidden indeed but nevertheless possess a wonderful efficacy.

The Dominican family has a certain global unity analogous to that of the universal Church. The integral purpose of the Order, that is, to give to others the fruits of contemplation, cannot be attained in that fullness proper to it except through the cooperation of all the members of the family. In this the particular role of the Dominican nuns plays the highest part, and is therefore of the greatest importance.

Hence, the contemplative life of the nuns is of the greatest benefit to the apostolate of the Order, not only because, like other contemplatives, they offer their prayers and their life to God on behalf of the apostolic needs of the Church, but also because their contemplation and their life, inasmuch as they are truly and properly Dominican, are from the beginning and by their very nature ordered to the apostolate which the Dominican family exercises as a whole, and in which alone the fullness of the Dominican vocation is to be found.

Consequently, it is of the greatest concern to the entire Dominican family that this its noblest part, constituted by the nuns, should be preserved, should increase and flourish.

Beloved Sisters, I urge you to ponder over and appreciate the dignity, nobility and beauty, the importance and excellence of your Dominican vocation. Not only evil and indifference, but mediocrity as well should be completely excluded from so lofty a calling. Seriously consider also how great is your responsibility, not only because of the many and wonderful gifts you have received from God for your own sanctification and salvation, but also because of your duty to bring forth all these for the benefit of the Church and the spread of God's kingdom in the world, thereby cooperating with the brethren in the way that is proper to you.

This responsibility should not inspire fear but rather be a source of joy; it should reinforce your courage and add a new stimulus to more perfect fidelity in the following of your

contemplative vocation. So you will be able to demonstrate in a concrete way that we must “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness” (Mt. 6:33) and that to those who leave all things for the love of God, all things are added (*ibid.*); and finally, that the supreme good of all is to know God the Father and Jesus Christ whom he has sent (Jn. 17:3), to be totally consecrated to him and serve him alone.

It is clear then that your life, although free from involvement in worldly affairs, is far from useless. On the contrary, it is of such value to the Church and to society at large as to be indispensable and therefore should be held in the greatest esteem and promoted by all the brethren.

The sure way of following your vocation and the best means of achieving its sublime purpose consists in joyfully and lovingly accepting these new Constitutions and putting them into practice.

You see, then, how diligent you ought to be in getting to know these Constitutions, in meditating on them and loving them and fulfilling them in a spirit of faith, hope and charity. May the blessing of our holy father Saint Dominic descend upon you all in abundance.

Given at Tallaght, during the General Chapter of the Brothers of the Order of Preachers, the 22nd day of the month of July, feast of St. Mary Magdalene, in the Year of the Lord 1971.

Br. Anicetus Fernandez, O. P.
Master General

Prot. num. 710722/P I
Br. Patricius Pilastro, O. P.
Secretary General

Letter of Br. Damian Byrne, Master of the Order (1987)

**We
Br. Damian Byrne, O.P.
Professor of Sacred Theology
Humble Master and Servant
of the Whole Order of Preachers
To the Nuns of the Order**

Beloved in the Lord and Dominic:

With great joy I send you the new and definitive text of the Constitutions of the Nuns of the Order of Preachers, which has been revised according to the mind of Vatican Council II and at the same time according to the centuries-old traditions of our Order. It has recently been approved by the Apostolic See in a decree of the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes given at Rome on November 7, 1986. To it are annexed our Ordinations.

The impulse for the Book of Constitutions of the Nuns of the Order of Preachers evolved from the words which we read at the beginning of the Book of Customs promulgated for the sisters in the monasteries founded by the holy father Dominic himself:

“Since, by the precept of the Rule, our sisters are commanded to have one heart and one mind in the Lord, it is right that they who live under the same rule and under the same profession of vows should be found uniform in the observances of canonical religion.

“For uniformity observed outwardly in their manners fosters and brings to mind that unity which ought to be preserved inwardly in their hearts. And indeed this can be

more adequately and fully accomplished if those things that are to be observed are stated in writing; if the manner of life be made plain to all through the written witness (APP XVII, 1947, p.67).

And since the Constitutions are steeped in Gospel texts, it is essential that the sisters earnestly contemplate the Word of the Lord.

Thus our sisters live the charism of our holy father Dominic: “following Christ more closely under the action of the Holy Spirit, [they] are totally dedicated to God who is supremely loved,” and are consecrated “to his honor, the building up of the Church and the salvation of the world” (CIC 573).

May the most blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles, bless and protect you all.

Given at Rome at the General Curia, January 14, 1987.

Br. Damian Byrne, O.P
Master of the Order

Prot. 70/86/894
Br. J. Martin, O.P., Secretary

THE RULE OF SAINT AUGUSTINE

translated by

Robert P. Russell, O.S.A.

Based on the critical text of Luc Verheijen, O.S.A.

Chapter One *Purpose and Basis of Common Life*

1. Before all else, dear Sisters, love God and then your neighbor, because these are the chief commandments given to us.

2. The following are the precepts we order you living in the monastery to observe.

3. The main purpose for your having come together is to live harmoniously in your house, intent upon God in oneness of mind and heart.

4. Call nothing your own, but let everything be yours in common. Food and clothing shall be distributed to each of you by your superior, not equally to all, for all do not enjoy equal health, but rather according to each one's need. For so you read in the Acts of the Apostles that "they had all things in common and distribution was made to each one according to each one's need" (4:32, 35).

5. Those who owned something in the world should be cheerful in wanting to share it in common once they have entered the monastery.

6. But they who owned nothing should not look for those things in the monastery that they were unable to have in the world. Nevertheless, they are to be given all that their health requires even if, during their time in the world, poverty made it impossible for them to find the very necessities of life. And these should not consider themselves fortunate because they have found the kind of food and clothing which they were unable to find in the world.

7. And let them not hold their heads high because they associate with people whom they did not dare to approach in the world, but let them rather lift up their hearts and not seek after what is vain and earthly. Otherwise, monasteries will come to serve a useful purpose for the rich and not the poor, if the rich are made humble there and the poor are puffed up with pride.

8. The rich, for their part, who seemed important in the world, must not look down upon their sisters who have come into this holy sisterhood from a condition of poverty. They should seek to glory in the fellowship of poor sisters rather than in the reputation of rich relatives. They should neither be elated if they have contributed a part of their wealth to the common life, nor take more pride in sharing their riches with the monastery than if they were to enjoy them in the world. Indeed, every other kind of sin has to do with the commission of evil deeds, whereas pride lurks even in good works in order to destroy them. And what good is it to scatter one's wealth abroad by giving to the poor, even to become poor oneself, when the unhappy soul is thereby more given to pride in despising riches than it had been in possessing them?

9. Let all of you then live together in oneness of mind and heart, mutually honoring God in yourselves, whose temples you have become.

Chapter Two

Prayer

10. "Be assiduous in prayer" (Col. 4:2), at the hours and times appointed.

11. In the oratory no one should do anything other than that for which it was intended and from which it also takes its name. Consequently, if there are some who might wish to pray there during their free time, even outside the hours appointed, they should not be hindered by those who think something else must be done there.

12. When you pray to God in psalms and hymns, think over in your hearts the words that come from your lips.

13. Chant only what is prescribed for chant; moreover, let nothing be chanted unless it is so prescribed.

Chapter Three ***Moderation and Self-Denial***

14. Subdue the flesh, so far as your health permits, by fasting and abstinence from food and drink. However, when someone is unable to fast, she should still take no food outside mealtime unless she is ill.

15. When you come to table, listen until you leave to what it is the custom to read, without disturbance or strife. Let not your mouths alone take nourishment but let your hearts too hunger for the word of God.

16. If those in more delicate health from their former way of life are treated differently in the matter of food, this should not be a source of annoyance to the others or appear unjust in the eyes of those who owe their stronger health to different habits of life. Nor should the healthier sisters deem them more fortunate for having food which they do not have, but rather consider themselves fortunate for having the good health which the others do not enjoy.

17. And if something in the way of food, clothing and bedding is given to those coming to the monastery from a more genteel way of life, which is not given to those who are stronger, and therefore happier, then these latter ought to consider how far these others have come in passing from their life in the world down to this life of ours, though they have been unable to reach the level of frugality common to the stronger sisters. Nor should all want to receive what they see given in larger measure to the few, not as a token of honor, but as a help to support them in their weakness. This would give rise to a deplorable disorder — that in the monastery, where the rich are coming to bear as much hardship as they can, the poor are turning to a more genteel way of life.

18. And just as the sick must take less food to avoid discomfort, so too, after their illness, they are to receive the kind of treatment that will quickly restore their strength, even

though they came from a life of extreme poverty. Their more recent illness has, as it were, afforded them what accrued to the rich as part of their former way of life. But when they have recovered their former strength, they should go back to their happier way of life which, because their needs are fewer, is all the more in keeping with God's servants. Once in good health, they must not become slaves to the enjoyment of food which was necessary to sustain them in their illness. For it is better to suffer a little want than to have too much.

Chapter Four

Safeguarding Chastity and Fraternal Correction

19. There should be nothing about your clothing to attract attention. Besides, you should not seek to please by your apparel, but by a good life.

20. Whenever you go out, walk together, and when you reach your destination, stay together.

21. In your walk, comportment, and in all actions, let nothing occur to give offense to anyone who sees you, but only what becomes your holy state of life.

22. Although your eyes may chance to rest upon some man or other, you must not fix your gaze upon any man. Seeing men when you go out is not forbidden, but it is sinful to desire them or to wish them to desire you, for it is not by touch or passionate feeling alone but by one's gaze also that lustful desires mutually arise. And do not say that your hearts are pure if there is immodesty of the eye, because the unchaste eye carries the message of an impure heart, And when such hearts disclose their unchaste desires in a mutual gaze, even without saying a word, then it is that chastity itself suddenly goes out of their life, even though their bodies remain unsullied by unchaste acts.

23. And whoever fixes her gaze upon a man and likes to have his fixed upon her, must not suppose that others do not see what she is doing. She is very much seen, even by those she thinks do not see her. But suppose all this escapes human

notice — what will she do about God who sees from on high and from whom nothing is hidden? Or are we to imagine that he does not see because he sees with a patience as great as his wisdom? Let the religious woman then have such fear of God that she will not want to be an occasion of sinful pleasure to a man. Ever mindful that God sees all things, let her not desire to look at a man lustfully. For it is on this point that fear of the Lord is recommended, where it is written: “An abomination to the Lord is he who fixes his gaze” (Proverbs 27:20).

24. So when you are together in church and anywhere else where men are present, exercise a mutual care over purity of life. Thus, by mutual vigilance over one another will God, who dwells in you, grant you his protection.

25. If you notice in someone of your sisters this wantonness of the eye, of which I am speaking, admonish her at once so that the beginning of evil will not grow more serious but will be promptly corrected.

26. But if you see her doing the same thing again on some other day, even after your admonition, then whoever had occasion to discover this must report her as she would a wounded person in need of treatment. But let the offense first be pointed out to two or three so that she can be proven guilty on the testimony of these two or three and be punished with due severity. And do not charge yourselves with ill-will when you bring this offense to light. Indeed yours is the greater blame if you allow your sisters to be lost through your silence when you are able to bring about their correction by your disclosure. If your sister, for example, were suffering a bodily wound that she wanted to hide for fear of undergoing treatment, would it not be cruel of you to remain silent and a mercy on your part to make this known? How much greater then is your obligation to make her condition known lest she continue to suffer a more deadly wound of the soul.

27. But if she fails to correct the fault despite this admonition, she should first ‘be brought to the attention of the superior before the offense is made known to the others who will have to prove her guilt, in the event she denies the charge. Thus, corrected in private, her fault can perhaps be kept from the others. But should she feign ignorance, the others are to be summoned so that in the presence of all she can be proven

guilty, rather than stand accused on the word of one alone. Once proven guilty, she must undergo salutary punishment according to the judgment of the superior or priest having the proper authority. If she refuses to submit to punishment, she shall be expelled from your sisterhood even if she does not withdraw of her own accord. For this too is not done out of cruelty but from a sense of compassion so that many others may not be lost through her bad example.

28. And let everything I have said about not fixing one's gaze be also observed carefully and faithfully with regard to other offenses: to find them out, to ward them off, to make them known, to prove and punish them – all out of love for the sister and a hatred of sin.

29. But if anyone should go so far in wrongdoing as to receive letters in secret from any man, or small gifts of any kind, you ought to show mercy and pray for her if she confesses this of her own accord. But if the offense is detected and she is found guilty, she must be more severely chastised according to the judgment of the priest or superior.

Chapter Five ***The Care of Community Goods*** ***and Treatment of the Sick***

30. Keep your clothing in one place in charge of one or two, or of as many as are needed to care for them and to prevent damage from moths. And just as you have your food from the one pantry, so too, you are to receive your clothing from a single wardrobe. If possible, do not be concerned about what you are given to wear at the change of seasons, whether each-of you gets back what she had put away or something different, provided no one is denied what she needs. If, however, disputes and murmuring arise on this account because someone complains that she received poorer clothing than she had before, and thinks it is beneath her to wear the kind of clothing worn by another, you may judge from this how lacking you are in that holy and inner garment of the heart when you quarrel over garments for the body. But if

allowance is made for your weakness and you do receive the same clothing you had put away, you must still keep it in one place under the common charge.

31. In this way, no one shall perform any task for her own benefit but all your work shall be done for the common good, with greater zeal and more dispatch than if each one of you were to work for yourself alone. For charity, as it is written, “is not self-seeking,” meaning that it places the common good before its own, not its own before the common good. So whenever you show greater concern for the common good than for your own, you may know that you are growing in charity. Thus, let the abiding virtue of charity prevail in all things that minister to the fleeting necessities of life.

32. It follows, therefore, that if anyone brings something for their daughters or other relatives living in the monastery, whether a garment or anything else they think is needed, this must not be accepted secretly as one’s own but must be placed at the disposal of the superior so that, as common property, it can be given to whoever needs it. But if someone secretly keeps something given to her, she shall be judged guilty of theft.

33. Your clothing should be cleaned either by yourselves, or by those who perform this service, as the superior shall determine, so that too great a desire for clean clothing may not be the source of interior stains on the soul.

34. As for bodily cleanliness too, a sister must never deny herself use of the bath when her health requires it. But this should be done on medical advice, without complaining, so that even though unwilling, she shall do what has to be done for her health when the superior orders it. However, if the sister wishes it, when it might not be good for her, you must not comply with her desire, for sometimes we think something is beneficial for the pleasure it gives, even though it may prove harmful.

35. Finally, if the cause of a sister’s bodily pain is not apparent, you must take the word of God’s servant when she indicates what is giving her pain. But if it remains uncertain whether the remedy she likes is good for her, a doctor should be consulted.

36. When there is need to frequent the public baths or any other place, no fewer than two or three should go together, and whoever has to go somewhere, must not go with those of her own choice but with those designated by the superior.

37. The care of the sick, whether those in convalescence or others suffering from some indisposition, even though free of fever, shall be assigned to a sister who can personally obtain from the pantry whatever she sees is necessary for each one.

38. Those in charge of the pantry, or of clothing and books, should render cheerful service to their sisters.

39. Books are to be requested at a fixed hour each day, and anyone coming outside that hour is not to receive them.

40. But as for clothing and shoes, those in charge shall not delay the giving of them whenever they are required by those in need of them.

Chapter Six

Asking Pardon and Forgiving Offenses

41. You should either avoid quarrels altogether or else put an end to them as quickly as possible; otherwise, anger may grow into hatred, making a plank out of a splinter, and turn the soul into a murderer. For so you read: “Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer” (1 Jn. 3:5).

42. Whoever has injured another by open insult, or by abusive or even incriminating language, must remember to repair the injury as quickly as possible by an apology, and she who suffered the injury must also forgive, without further wrangling. But if they have offended one another they must forgive one another’s trespasses for the sake of your prayers which should be recited with greater sincerity each time you repeat them. Although a sister is often tempted to anger, yet prompt to ask pardon from one she admits to having offended, such a one is better than another who, though less given to anger, finds it too hard to ask forgiveness. But a sister who is never willing to ask pardon, or does not do so from her heart, has no reason to be in a monastery, even if she is not expelled.

You must then avoid being too harsh in your words, and should they escape your lips, let those same lips not be ashamed to heal the wounds they have caused.

43. But whenever the good of discipline compels you to speak harshly in correcting your subjects, then, even if you think you have been unduly harsh in your language, you are not required to ask forgiveness lest, by practicing too great humility towards those who should be your subjects, the authority to rule is undermined. But you should still ask forgiveness from the Lord of all who knows with what deep affection you love even those whom you might happen to correct with undue severity. Besides, you are to love one another with a spiritual rather than an earthly love.

Chapter Seven *Governance and Obedience*

44. The superior should be obeyed as a mother with the respect due her so as not to offend God in her person, and even more so, the priest who bears responsibility for all of you.

45. But it shall pertain chiefly to the superior to see that these precepts are all observed and, if any point has been neglected, to take care that the transgression is not carelessly overlooked but is punished and corrected. In doing so, she must refer whatever exceeds the limit and power of her office to the priest who enjoys greater authority among you.

46. The superior, for her part, must not think herself fortunate in her exercise of authority but in her role as one serving you in love. In your eyes she shall hold the first place among you by the dignity of her office, but in fear before God she shall be as the least among you. She must show herself an example of good works towards all. Let her “admonish the unruly, cheer the fainthearted, support the weak, and be patient towards all” (1 Thess. 5:14). Let her uphold discipline while instilling fear. And though both are necessary, she should strive to be loved by you rather than feared, ever mindful that she must give an account of you to God.

47. It is by being more obedient, therefore, that you show mercy not only towards yourselves but also towards the superior whose higher rank' among you exposes her all the more to greater peril.

Chapter Eight *Observance of the Rule*

48. The Lord grant that you may observe all these precepts in a spirit of charity as lovers of spiritual beauty, giving forth the good odor of Christ in the holiness of your lives; not as slaves living under the law but as women living in freedom under grace.

49. And that you may see yourselves in this little book, as in a mirror, have it read to you once a week so as to neglect no point through forgetfulness. When you find that you are doing all that has been written, give thanks to the Lord, the Giver of every good. But when one of you finds that she has failed on any point, let her be sorry for the past, be on her guard for the future, praying that she will be forgiven her fault and not be led into temptation.

The present English translation of THE BOOK OF
CONSTITUTIONS OF THE NUNS OF THE ORDER OF
PREACHERS has been approved by the Master of the Order.
The Latin original, however, remains the official text.

FUNDAMENTAL CONSTITUTION OF THE ORDER

I. The purpose of the Order was expressed by Pope Honorius III writing to St. Dominic and his brothers in these words: “He who ever makes His Church fruitful with new offspring¹, wanting to make these modern times measure up to former times, and to propagate the Catholic faith, inspired you with a holy desire by which, having embraced poverty and made profession of regular life, you have given yourselves to the proclamation of the Word of God, preaching the name of our Lord Jesus Christ throughout the world”².

II. For the Order of Friars Preachers founded by St. Dominic “is known from the beginning to have been instituted especially for preaching and the salvation of souls”³. Our brethren, therefore, according to the command of the founder “must conduct themselves honorably and religiously as men who want to obtain their salvation and the salvation of others, following in the footsteps of the Savior as evangelical men speaking among themselves or their neighbors either with God or about God”⁴.

III. In order that we may be perfected in the love of God and neighbor through this following of Christ, we are incorporated into our Order by profession and consecrated totally to God, and in particular we are dedicated in a new way to the universal Church, “being appointed entirely for the complete evangelization of the Word of God”⁵.

¹ From the Good Friday prayer for catechumens.

² Honorius III: Letter to St. Dominic and his companions, 18 January 1221 (MOPH XXV, p. 144).

³ Prologue of the *Primitive Constitutions*.

⁴ *Primitive Constitutions* Dist. II, c. 31.

⁵ Honorius III: Letter to all Prelates of the Church, 4 February 1221 (MOPH XXV, p. 145).

IV. We also undertake as sharers of the apostolic mission the life of the Apostles in the form conceived by St. Dominic, living with one mind the common life, faithful in the profession of the evangelical counsels, fervent in the common celebration of the liturgy, especially of the Eucharist and the Divine Office as well as other prayer, assiduous in study, and persevering in regular observance. All these practices contribute not only to the glory of God and our sanctification, but serve directly the salvation of mankind, since they prepare harmoniously for preaching, furnish its incentive, form its character, and in turn are influenced by it, These elements are closely interconnected and carefully balanced, mutually enriching one another, so that in their synthesis the proper life of the Order is established: a life in the fullest sense apostolic, in which preaching and teaching must proceed from an abundance of contemplation.

V. Made cooperators of the episcopal order by priestly ordination, we have as our special function the prophetic office by which the Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed everywhere both by word and example, with due consideration for the conditions of persons, times, and places so that faith is awakened or penetrates more deeply all life in the building up of the body of Christ, which is perfected by the sacraments of faith.

VI. The structure of the Order as a religious society arises from its mission and fraternal communion. Since the ministry of the word and of the sacraments of faith is a priestly office, ours is a clerical Order, whose mission the cooperator brothers, exercising in a special way the common priesthood, also share in many ways. Moreover, the total commission of the Preachers to the proclamation of the Gospel by word and work is revealed in the fact that by solemn profession they are entirely and perpetually united with the life and mission of Christ.

Since our Order in union with the entire Church has been sent to all nations, it has a universal character. In order that its mission may be fulfilled more suitably, it enjoys exemption, and is strengthened by a sound unity in its head,

the Master of the Order, to whom all the brethren are bound immediately by profession since study and evangelization require mobility of everyone.

From that same mission of the Order the personal responsibility and gifts of the brethren are affirmed and promoted in a special way. On the completion of his formation every brother is regarded as a mature adult, since he can instruct others and undertake various works in the Order. For this reason the Order maintains that its own laws do not bind under sin, so that the brethren may wisely embrace them “not like slaves under the law, but like freemen established under grace”⁶.

Finally, by reason of the purpose of the Order, a superior has the faculty of dispensation “when it seems to him to be expedient, especially in those matters which seem to impede study, preaching, or the good of souls”⁷.

VII. The communion and universality of our religious life shape its government as well. Its government is noted for an organic and balanced participation of all its members for pursuing the special end of the Order. For the Order is not restricted to a conventual fraternity even though this is its fundamental unit, but extends to the communion of convents which constitutes a province, and to the communion of provinces which constitutes it as a whole. For this reason its authority which is universal in Its head, namely a general chapter and the Master of the Order, is shared proportionately and with corresponding autonomy by the provinces and convents. Consequently our government is communitarian in a special way, for superiors ordinarily take office through election by the brethren and confirmation by a higher superior. Furthermore, through chapter and council, communities in many ways have a role in exercising their own government and in settling important matters.

This communitarian form of government is particularly suitable for the Order’s development and frequent renewal. Superiors and the brethren through their delegates with equal

⁶ *Rule of St. Augustine*, final paragraph.

⁷ *Primitive Constitutions*, Prologue.

right and freedom in general chapters of provincials and of diffinitors, provide in common so that the Order's mission may be advanced and the Order itself be suitably renewed. This continual revision of the Order is necessary, not only on account of a spirit of perennial christian conversion, but also on account of the special vocation of the Order which impels it to accommodate its presence in the world for each generation.

VIII. The fundamental purpose of the Order and the form of life flowing from it retain their value in every age of the Church. Nevertheless in times of greater change and evolution, as we are taught by our tradition, understanding and evaluation of these matters become particularly urgent. In these circumstances, it is characteristic of the Order to renew itself courageously and to adjust itself to these circumstances by discerning and testing what is good and useful in mankind's aspirations and by introducing the results into the unchangeable harmony of the fundamental elements of its life. These elements, indeed, cannot be changed substantially among us, and they must continue to inspire forms of living and of preaching suited to the needs of the Church and of mankind.

IX. The Dominican family is composed of clerical and cooperator brothers, nuns, sisters, members of secular institutes, and fraternities of priests and laity. The Constitutions and Ordinations which follow concern only the brethren, unless it is expressly stated otherwise; by these regulations the necessary unity of the Order is protected without excluding a necessary diversity according to those same laws.

FUNDAMENTAL CONSTITUTION OF THE NUNS

1. I. The nuns of the Order of Preachers came into being when our holy Father Dominic gathered women converts to the Catholic faith in the monastery of Blessed Mary of Prouille. These women, free for God alone, he associated with his “holy preaching” by their prayer and penance. Our holy Father drew up a rule to be followed and constantly showed a father’s love and care for these nuns and for others established later in the same way of life. In fact, “they had no other master to instruct them about the Order.”¹ Finally, he entrusted them as part of the same Order to the fraternal concern of his sons.

II. By their way of life both the friars and the nuns press onward to that perfect love of God and neighbor which is effective in caring for and obtaining the salvation of all people. As the Lord Jesus, the Savior of all, offered himself completely for our salvation, they consider themselves to be truly his members primarily when they are spending themselves totally for souls.² There is indeed a diversity of *gifts*, but one and the same Spirit, one charity, one mercy. The friars, sisters and laity of the Order are “to preach the name of our Lord Jesus Christ throughout the world;”³ the nuns are to seek, ponder and call upon him in solitude so that the word proceeding from the mouth of God may not return to him empty, but may accomplish those things for which it was sent (cf. Is. 55:10).

III. Called by God, like Mary, to sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to his words (cf. Lk. 10:39) they are

¹ Blessed Cecilia, *Miracula S. Dominici*, n. 7.

² Cf. Jordan of Saxony, *Libellus de initiis Ordinis*, n. 13.

³ Honorius III, 18 January 1221.

converted to the Lord, withdrawing from the empty preoccupations and illusions of the world. Forgetting what lies behind and reaching out for what lies ahead (cf. Phil. 3:13), they are consecrated to God by public vows through profession of the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience. In purity and humility of heart, in living and assiduous contemplation, they love Christ, who is close to the Father's heart.

IV. The nuns offer a sacrifice of praise to God especially through the celebration of the liturgy in imitation of the Church in Jerusalem which was drawn together by the teaching of the Apostles and united in daily prayer (cf. Acts 2:42). Persevering in prayer with Mary the Mother of Jesus, they ardently long for the fullness of the Holy Spirit, so that with unveiled face they may reflect the glory of the Lord and be transformed into his image from splendor to splendor by the Spirit of the Lord (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18).

V. The nuns seek God by observing the norms of the purely contemplative life, by maintaining their withdrawal from the world by enclosure and silence, by working diligently, studying the truth eagerly, searching the Scriptures with ardent heart, praying intently, willingly practicing penance, pursuing communion through their manner of government, in purity of conscience and the joy of sisterly concord, "in freedom of spirit."⁴ It is God who now makes them dwell together in unity and on the last day will gather into the Holy City a people acquired as his own. In the midst of the Church their growth in charity is mysteriously fruitful for the growth of the people of God. By their hidden life they proclaim prophetically that in Christ alone is true happiness to be found, here by grace and afterwards in glory.

⁴ Innocent IV, 11 May 1252.

VI. The nuns profess obedience according to these same Constitutions, “not like slaves under the law, but like free women under grace;” they will ponder them wisely, finding in them a mirror in which to test their own fidelity to their call from God. So their life will be “conducive to salvation for themselves, an example to others, a joy to the angels, and pleasing to God.”⁵

DISTINCTION I ***THE LIFE OF THE SISTERS***

SECTION I **THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST**

Chapter I **Religious Consecration**

Article I: Common Life

2. I. As the Rule reminds us, the first reason for which we are gathered together in community is to live in harmony, having one mind and heart in God. This unity transcends the limits of the monastery and attains its fullness in communion with the Order and with the whole Church of Christ.

II. The unanimity of our life, rooted in the love of God, should furnish a living example of that reconciliation of all things in Christ which our brethren proclaim in their preaching of the word.
3. I. Like the Church of the Apostles, our communion is founded, built up and made firm in the one Spirit. It is in the Spirit that we receive the Word from God the

⁵ Jordan of Saxony, *Libellus* n. 27; cf. Humbert of Romans, *Legenda S. Dominici*, n. 19.

Father with one faith, contemplate him with one heart, and praise him with one voice. In him we are made one body, share in the one bread, and finally hold all things in common.

II. The nuns first build in their own monasteries the Church of God which they help to spread throughout the world by' the offering of themselves. They accomplish this by being of one mind through obedience, bound together by love of things that are above (cf. Col. 3:1) through the discipline of chastity, and more closely dependent upon one another through poverty.

4. I. In order that each monastery be a center of true communion, let all accept and cherish one another as members of the same body, differing in native qualities and functions but equal in the common bond of charity and profession.

II. Conscious of their individual responsibility for the common good, the nuns should willingly undertake and readily relinquish community assignments. They should gladly assist others, particularly those whom they see to be overburdened with work.

5. Fraternal correction should always be a work of mercy, carried out by the nuns with prudence and in humility of heart. Our holy Father Dominic encourages the brethren and the nuns "never to judge anyone inwardly, but even if they see another doing what appears to be wrong, they should assume it to be good, or done with a good intention; for human judgment is often mistaken."⁶

6. I. Mutual understanding and sisterly communion are fostered by various forms of recreation. At such gatherings the nuns should simply and cheerfully try to

⁶ *Constitutiones fimaevae frazrum*, dist. 1, cap. XIII; *Constitutiones primaevae sororam*, cap. XIV.

make themselves all things to all (*cf.* I Cor. 10:33), mindful of the words of the Lord Jesus who said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35) and the example of our Father Dominic of whom it was said: “No one was ever more community minded, no one more joyous.”⁷

II. Provision should be made for conversations on doctrinal or spiritual matters, which would nourish *community* life. These may be held at determined times either in groups or between two nuns.

7. In order that their contemplative life and sisterly communion may be more abundantly fruitful, participation of all in the ordering of the life of the monastery is of great importance: “A good which meets with general approval is quickly and easily achieved.”⁸

8. I. Like St. Dominic, who was outstanding as “father and consoler of the sick brethren and those who were undergoing trials,”⁹ the prioress should be attentive to the sick and grant them suitable dispensations even without their being sought. She and all the nuns should visit them in charity.

II. While the infirm nuns recognize that they are suffering in union with Christ, obedience and the spirit of poverty should nonetheless impel them to cooperate in their restoration to good health.

9. An infirmarian should be appointed. The prioress should insure that one or more nuns be trained to fulfill this office competently.

⁷ Jordan of Saxony, *Libellus* n. 104.

⁸ Humbert of Romans, *Expositio Regulae*, XVI; *Opera de Vita Regsdari*, I, 72.

⁹ *Processus canonizationis*, MOPH, XVI, p. 178, n. 3.

10. In the monastery there should be properly equipped cells where the care of the sick meets the requirements of up-to-date medical practice. This space should be arranged to provide as much community life as possible to the elderly and infirm nuns who need extra care.

11. Priestly ministry and the opportunity to receive the sacraments should be readily available to the infirm in accordance with the laws of the Church.

12. An infirm nun should be supported until the end by the consolation and prayers of her sisters. When death is imminent, the whole community should assemble to sing for her the antiphon *Salve Regina*, according to the custom of the Order.

13. I. Parents, relatives and friends of the nuns are to be treated with due respect and graciousness.

II. Let the nuns share gratefully the riches of their prayers and merits with the benefactors who share with them their own spiritual and temporal resources.

14. In the various dealings of the monastery with neighbors, guests and others, the nuns should manifest a charity which, despite their hidden life, will form a bond of unity with them. This applies particularly to the prioress and other nuns whose positions require more frequent contact with persons outside the monastery. But the whole community, united as it is in the love of the Lord, should become a radiant center of charity to all.

15. Our communion embraces with special concern nuns who are undergoing difficulties. Equity and evangelical charity should be shown towards those who return to secular life (cf. can. 702 :2).

16. The nuns must faithfully remember those of the family of St. Dominic who have gone before them and have left them an “example by their way of life, fellowship in their communion

and aid by their intercession.”¹⁰ Their works and teachings are to be studied. Moreover suffrages for the dead, according to the Ordinations of the Master of the Order and the prescriptions of the directories must be observed.

Article II: Obedience

17. I. In the first days of the Order St. Dominic asked the brethren to pledge fellowship and obedience to him.¹¹ He subjected himself humbly¹² to the decisions, especially the laws which the general chapter of the brethren made after mature deliberation.¹³ But in governing the Order outside the general chapter, he kindly,¹⁴ reasonably but firmly¹⁵ required voluntary obedience¹⁶ from all in whatever he himself enjoined after due consideration.¹⁷ Indeed, for a community to remain faithful to its spirit and mission it needs the principle of unity which obedience supplies.

II. Therefore in our profession we promise obedience to the Master of the Order according to our Constitutions, and thus preserve the unity of the Order and of our profession which are dependent on our common obligation of obedience to one head.

18. I. By this profession, we imitate Christ in a special way, for he always submitted to his Father’s will for the life of the world (cf. Jn. 4:34; 14:31; Phil, 2:8; Heb. 10:7). In this way we are more closely united to the

¹⁰ Const. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 51

¹¹ *Constitutiones primaevae*, Dist. I, cap. XIV.

¹² *Processus* canonizationis, MOPH XVI, p. 151, n. 33; cf. p. 124, n.2.

¹³ Jordan of Saxony, *Libellus* n. 41, MOPH XVI, p. 46.

¹⁴ *Processus* canonizationis, MOPH XVI, p. 127, n. 6; p. 150, n. 32; p. 163, n. 43; p. 142, n. 24; p. 143, n. 25; p. 166, n. 48.

¹⁵ Jordan of Saxony, *Libellus* n. 103, MOPH XVI, p. 74

¹⁶ *Constitutiones primaevae*, Dist. I, cap. XIII.

¹⁷ Jordan of Saxony, *Libellus* n. 103, MOPH XVI, p. 74

Church. Together with our brothers and sisters, and under the leadership of superiors who represent God in their human ministry, we are dedicated to working for the growth and common good of the Church and of the Order.

II. The nuns are obliged to obey their superiors in all that pertains to the Rule and our laws. But they are not obliged to obey, indeed they may not do so, in anything which is contrary to the precepts of God and the Church or the laws of the Order, or which exceeds the superior's power of dispensation. In doubtful cases, however, they are bound to obey.

19. I. The vow of obedience is preeminent among the evangelical counsels, because by virtue of this vow, a person consecrates herself wholly to God; its acts approach more closely the goal of our profession, which is perfect love. By this vow, the nuns in their own way cooperate in the work of redemption, following the example of the Handmaid of the Lord who "through her obedience became a cause of salvation both to herself and to the whole human race."¹⁸

II. Furthermore, since obedience binds us to Christ and the Church, the labor and renunciation which it entails continue Christ's self-offering and take on the character of sacrifice both for ourselves and for the Church, in whose fulfillment the whole work of creation is being accomplished.

III. Obedience, by which we "conquer the deepest part of ourselves,"¹⁹ aids greatly in attaining that interior

¹⁸ Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, III, 22, 4.

¹⁹ St. Gregory, *Moral*, XXXV, PL 76, c. 765, in St. Thomas Aquinas *Summa theologica*, 11-11, Q. 104.

liberty which belongs to the children of God and disposes us to the free gift of ourselves in love.

20. I. The common good, which obedience preserves, also requires that the prioress willingly listen to the nuns. Especially in matters of greater importance, she should seek their views without prejudice however to her authority to make the final decision. In this way the whole community can more readily work together as one body to achieve the common goal of charity.

II. The Holy Spirit also directs the Church through special abilities and charisms. Therefore the prioress, in the exercise of her authority, should carefully discern the particular gifts of the nuns, and evaluate and coordinate them according to the requirements of the common good and the aptitudes of each. In this way the nuns are to be allowed their due share of responsibility.

III. The prioress, seeking the will of God and the good of the community, “should not take pleasure in ruling, but rather in serving with all charity,” and thus inspire in others willing service rather than servile subjection.

IV. In a spirit of faith and love for the will of God and an attitude of sisterly cooperation with their superiors, the nuns should honestly seek to understand the intent and wholeheartedly carry out the injunctions of their superiors. In fulfilling their responsibilities they should strive for an obedience that is prompt and cheerful without delay, and simple without pointless questioning.

21. The nuns should not lightly appeal from a lower authority to a higher one in order to evade a given command. If a nun has reasonable recourse to a higher authority to obtain a permission or favor refused by a lower one, she must not fail to mention this refusal.

22. Like all religious, the nuns of the Order are subject to the Roman Pontiff as to their highest superior, and are bound to obey him by virtue of the vow of obedience itself (can. 590:2).

Article III: Chastity

23 In promising chastity “for the sake of the kingdom of heaven,” the nuns walk in the footsteps of St. Dominic: out of love for God he kept his virginity unsullied throughout his life, and was so on fire with love and zeal for souls that “everyone was swept into the embrace of his charity. In loving all, he was beloved by all, spending himself in caring for his neighbor and in showing compassion to the wretched.”²⁰

24. I. We ought to value our profession of perfect chastity as an exceptional gift of grace. By it, we adhere more readily, with undivided heart, to God who first loved us, and we are more intimately consecrated to him. Renouncing earthly marriage but loving what is prefigured in it, we follow the Lamb who redeemed us in his blood, so that by our self-offering we may cooperate in the work of human regeneration.

II. In practicing chastity we gradually and more effectively attain purity of heart, freedom of spirit and depth of love. Consequently we achieve a greater control of mind and body, and a fuller development of our whole personality, by which we are enabled to give ourselves up to God with greater energy, serenity and fruitfulness.

III. The life of chastity which the nuns profess constitutes an effective service and outstanding witness to the kingdom of God already present, and at the same time appears as a special sign of the future heavenly

²⁰ Jordan of Saxony, *Libellus* n. 107, MOPH XVI, p. 76.

kingdom in which Christ will present the Church to himself in splendor, adorned as his bride.

25. I. Those who seek to make profession of chastity in the Order should have a proper appreciation of the dignity of marriage, which is a sign of the love between Christ and the Church. They must understand that by God's free gift they are called to a higher manifestation of that same love.

II. Since the practice of perfect continence involves the deepest human instincts, the nuns need to acquire psychological and moral maturity. For this purpose they should receive positive instruction and appropriate natural and supernatural helps.

26. I. In their efforts to persevere faithfully and courageously in continence, the nuns will cultivate close communion with God through intimate friendship with Christ in all the circumstances of life. They should nourish this with the Sacred Scriptures and the Eucharist, and strengthen it by loving devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God.

II. More and more impelled by the love of Christ, that all-embracing divine friendship, they should become all things to all. In the common life of the religious family to which they are united in a closer bond through chastity, they should cultivate sisterly affection and serene friendship.

III. Conscious of their frailty, the nuns should not presume on their own strength but practice self-denial and control of the senses and passions, without fear or scrupulosity. While cordial toward all, they should reject with spiritual sensitivity anything that might jeopardize their chastity.

IV. The nuns should not overlook the value of work for preserving mental and physical health. They should

make appropriate use of any other natural means necessary or suitable for the same purpose.

Article IV: Poverty

27. In Imitation of the apostles who without gold, silver or money proclaimed the kingdom of God, St. Dominic and his brethren proposed to preach the gospel while begging their daily bread. Although they themselves renounced property and income, they wished the nuns to have these, and strove to procure them on their behalf. Nevertheless “they exhorted the nuns to practice voluntary poverty.” The same spirit should animate us today, in forms adapted to different times and places.²¹

28. I. We heed the words of the Lord, “Go sell what you have and give to the poor and come, follow me” (Mt. 19:2 1), and are determined to be poor in fact and in spirit. While in our own way we cooperate in the ministry of our brethren who strive to draw people from the tyranny of riches and turn them to higher things, we must conquer greed in ourselves by conformity with Christ, “who for our sake became poor so that by his poverty we might become rich” (2 Cor. 8:9).

II. This spirit of poverty impels us, with lively confidence in the Lord, to place our treasure in the kingdom of God and his righteousness. It means freedom from enslavement to worldly affairs and even from anxiety about them so that we may bind ourselves more fully to God and devote ourselves more readily to him. In our own regard, it means frugality, which associates us more closely with the poor to whom the gospel is to be preached; in regard to our brethren and neighbors it also means liberality when for the sake of

²¹ “*Paupertos voluntaria*” cf. Jordan of Saxony, Epist. XVII, MOPH XXIII, 20

the kingdom of God we freely spend what we have “so that in all the needs of this life, which pass away, that charity which abides forever may prevail.”

29. I. In our profession, therefore, we promise God to have no personal possessions but to hold all things in common and to use them under the direction of our superiors for the common good of the monastery, the Order and the Church.

II. Consequently no nun, not even a superior, can retain goods or money or income from any source whatever as her own; she must hand over everything to the community as soon as possible.

III. Neither should the community itself accumulate common goods which do not serve its proper end, since this would be contrary to the poverty which all have professed, both individually and as members of the community.

30. The nuns on their own initiative are not to ask for offerings or small gifts from relatives and benefactors.

31. Since poverty imposes on so many people the necessity of working hard for only a meager livelihood, the nuns should give an effective corporate witness to the world by working diligently, living frugally and gladly sharing their often modest means with the poor.

32. Common life is to be strictly observed in all respects and the nuns should willingly accommodate themselves to the customs of the monastery. The prioress and bursar should so care for the true and reasonable needs of the nuns out of the common resources that a private life remains completely excluded.

33. Since “everyone ought to be concerned to some extent about the needs of daily life,”²² religious poverty demands that all the nuns be aware of their responsibility for the economic state of the monastery (cf. nn. 203, 264).

34. Our monasteries are to be simple, functional and devoid of luxury and ostentation. They should also be in keeping with the standards of place and time so that they give offense to no one.

Article V: Regular Observance

35. I. Regular observance, adopted by St. Dominic from tradition or newly created by him, fosters the way of life of the nuns by helping them in their determination to follow Christ more closely and enabling them to live more effectively their contemplative life in the Order of Preachers.

Mindful of the first nuns whom the blessed Dominic established in the monastery of Prouille at the heart of the “Holy Preaching,” the nuns, while living together in harmony, follow Jesus as he withdraws into solitude to pray. In this way they are a sign of that blessed city Jerusalem which the brethren build up by their preaching. In the cloister the nuns devote themselves totally to God and perpetuate that singular gift which the blessed Father had of bearing sinners, the down-trodden and the afflicted in the inmost sanctuary of his compassion.²³

II. To regular observance belong all the elements that constitute our Dominican life and order it through a common discipline. Outstanding among these elements are common life, the celebration of the liturgy and private prayer, the observance of the vows and the

²² *Constitutiones primaevae*, Dist. II, cap. XXXI.

²³ Cf. Jordan of Saxony, *Libellus* n. 12.

study of sacred truth. To fulfill these faithfully, we are helped by enclosure, silence, the habit, work and penitential practices.

III. In order to remain faithful in their vocation, the nuns should have the highest esteem for regular observance, loving it in their hearts and endeavoring to carry it out in their actions.

Enclosure

36. By withdrawal from the world, in fact and in spirit, the nuns, like prudent virgins waiting for their Lord, are freed from worldly affairs so that they may have leisure to devote themselves wholeheartedly to the kingdom of God. This hidden life should open their minds to the breadth and height and depth of the love of God who sent his Son so that the whole world might be saved through him. Such was the enclosure chosen for the nuns by the most holy Patriarch from the beginning of the Order and faithfully observed until now.

37. The nuns have papal enclosure, that is, its norms are sanctioned by the Holy See, as found in the Apostolic Instruction *Venite Seorsum*, dated August 15, 1969. Monasteries of nuns in which papal enclosure cannot be observed because they are engaged in external works of the apostolate are bound to observe it according to their particular statutes approved by the Holy See (cf. can. 667:3).

38. I. The choir and the church are to be separated at least by a screen which is to be opened during liturgical celebrations.

II. In the parlors the place reserved for the nuns is to be separated from the area for visitors by a simple grille or fixed counter. The directories can provide for other types of effective material separation, safeguarding n. 37.

39. I. In virtue of the law of enclosure, the nuns, novices and postulants are to live within the limits circumscribed by the monastery enclosure. They may not go beyond them except in cases determined by law.
- II. The law of enclosure likewise prohibits entry within the same limits to anyone of whatever position, sex or age except in cases determined by law.
40. I. The prioress is to observe the necessary discretion in having recourse to the bishop of the diocese, as treated in can. 667:4.
- II. Besides the cases foreseen by common law, entrance into the enclosure is always permitted to the Master of the Order. He can be accompanied by others.
41. A nun of the Order legitimately outside her monastery should be willingly received for some days into the enclosure of another monastery of the Order.
42. The times and regulations for going to the parlor are to be determined in the directories.
43. Regulations for sending and receiving letters are to be determined in the directories with regard for both the common good and the good of each nun. Due liberty is to be respected and personal privacy insured, while preserving the right of the prioress to inspect letters for a grave reason.
44. The use of the telephone is to be regulated in the directories, attention being paid to the requirements of regular life, especially silence and poverty, but also to the demands of charity within the community and toward outsiders.
45. In their prayer the nuns bring before God the joys and hopes, the sorrows and anguish of the people of today. Therefore they should be suitably informed of these matters; but the communications media should be used with discretion and moderation so that worldly interests which the nuns have

given up for the sake of God may not be introduced into the cloister.

Silence

46. I. The blessed Dominic “rarely spoke except with God in prayer, or about God, and he exhorted the brethren to do likewise.”²⁴ Pondering this in their hearts, the nuns should make of their house, and especially of their hearts, a place of silence.

II. Silence should be carefully kept by the nuns especially in places and at times appointed for prayer, study and rest. It is the guardian of all observance and a particular aid to peace and contemplation.

47. When sisterly charity, the demands of one’s office or work, or any other reasonable cause requires that something be said, it should be said in a subdued voice and briefly.

48. Silence is to be more strictly observed from the signal at the beginning of the night’s rest until the office of Lauds on the following day. Where it is the custom, the same silence is to be kept during the midday rest.

49. Any other regulations for the times and places of silence should be indicated in the directories.

The Cell

50. The monastic cell is not only a place for rest, but like an enclosure within the enclosure it is a closed room for prayer in secret, a place for *lectio divina*, meditation, study or individual work.

51. The cells are to be supplied with the necessary furnishings which should savor of religious poverty.

²⁴ Processus canonizationis, n. 29, MOPH XVI, p. 146.

52. A nun should willingly return to the solitude of her cell, unless duties, work or obedience require her presence elsewhere.

53. No one is to enter the cell of another, except in case of necessity or with permission of the prioress.

The Table

54. I. The nuns should keep in mind that just as they share together in the Eucharistic Bread, they should also partake of their bodily food as a sign of sisterly communion.

II. Since one “does not live by bread alone,” the nuns, while keeping silence in the refectory, should listen to reading “so that not only their bodies may be refreshed with food, but their minds also may be strengthened with the word of God.”

55. The refectory ceremonies should follow usages accepted in the Order, as determined in the directories.

56. I. At table, the first reading should be from Sacred Scripture; ordinarily some work suitable for spiritual development and Christian culture should then be read.

II. The prioress may not dispense from the silence, except in cases expressly determined in the directories.

57. The nuns’ table, although frugal, should be sufficient for their needs.

58. I. All are to take their meals at the common table unless dispensed by the prioress.

II. Those who wish to take anything between meals should ask permission of the prioress.

The Habit

59. The habit of the nuns, which is a sign of their consecration and a witness to poverty, consists of a white tunic, a belt with a rosary attached, a white scapular and a black veil and cappa.

60. The nuns are to wear the habit of the Order both inside and outside of the monastery unless for a grave reason the prioress judges otherwise. The local directories should provide norms for the use of the cappa and for clothing worn at work.

Works of Penance

61. I. By reason of their religious consecration and the apostolic vocation of the Order, the nuns are urged more than the rest of the faithful to deny themselves, take up their cross, and bear the death of Jesus in body and soul, that they may merit the glory of the resurrection for themselves and for others.

II. In imitation of St. Dominic “who while he lived in the flesh walked in the spirit, not merely refusing to satisfy the desires of the flesh, but extinguishing them,”²⁵ the nuns should exercise the virtue of penance especially by faithfully fulfilling everything that pertains to their life.

62. I. Considering the various circumstances of places and persons, new forms of penance accommodated to the contemporary manner of living are to be determined in the directories, particularly for Advent and Lent.

II. Individual nuns may undertake other works of mortification to satisfy more fully the duty of penance.

²⁵ *Litterae encycl.* Blessed Jordan of Saxony, 1233, AFP XXII (1952), p. 183

63. The performance of private external penances, which might in some way affect regular life or the physical or psychological health of a nun, requires the permission of the prioress, even though the advice of a confessor or spiritual director has already been obtained.

64. While they know that the fasting acceptable to God consists rather in conversion and humility of heart than in the rending of one's garments (cf. Joel 2:13), the nuns should nevertheless hold in high esteem the very ancient tradition of fasting, which the Lord Jesus practiced in the desert and commended to his followers; in addition, they should even rejoice to deprive themselves in order to share their bread with the hungry (cf. Is. 58:6-7).

65. I. In addition to the fast days which oblige all the faithful by ecclesiastical law, the nuns are bound to fast on all Fridays of the year and during the seasons of Advent and Lent, except on days of precept or on solemnities.

II. Other days for fasting in common may be determined in the directories.

III. On Good Friday a solemn fast ought to be observed according to the determination of the monastery chapter.

66. I. The manner and form of fasting is to be determined in the directories.

II. Fasting is to be carried out with discretion and cheerfulness lest the nuns exhaust their strength.

67. Abstinence from meat is to be observed on the days determined by ecclesiastical law and, in addition, on other days stipulated in the directories.

Regular Chapter

68. At the regular chapter the nuns gather as sisters in charity and humility under the leadership of the prioress to give one another mutual assistance in the renewal and development of the regular life.

69. The time for holding regular chapter is to be determined in the directories. It must be held at least once a month.

70. The regular life of the community is to be examined in chapter, either by self-accusation of failures or in some other way according to the custom of each monastery. The one who presides may appropriately give a talk on the spiritual or religious life and make corrections. Prayers for benefactors should also be said.

71. From time to time the nuns should willingly examine themselves on their fidelity to the Gospel. The failures of which they accuse themselves in chapter are to be judged in terms of injury to the common good or regular life and not in terms of any sinfulness which may be involved. Any proclamation of one nun by another is always to be excluded.

72. I. The one who presides at chapter should make corrections if necessary and impose suitable penances.

II. The principal penances are: certain exercises of piety; certain forms of mortification or deprivation; some works useful to the community.

73. Even if the postulants, novices and temporarily professed living in the novitiate are present for part of the community regular chapter, they should nevertheless have their own regular chapter presided over by their mistress.

Chapter II

Prayer

74. I. The nuns should keep before their eyes by day and by night Christ the Lord who, during his life on earth, offered up prayers and supplications to God with loud cries and tears, and now sits at the right hand of the divine majesty, always living to make intercession for us (Heb. 5:7, 1:3, 7:25).

II. They should also remember the exhortations of the Apostle: “Pray without ceasing” (I Thes. 5:17); “Be filled with the Holy Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (Eph. 5:19); “First of all I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be offered for all” (I Tim. 2:1).

III. Imitating blessed Dominic as he imitated Christ (cf. I Cor. 4:16), they should perpetuate his “fervor and spirit of prayer;”²⁶ for “he celebrated the whole Divine Office with great devotion;”²⁷ “was tireless in prayer;”²⁸ “during the night hours, no one was more constant in every way in prayer and vigils;”²⁹ frequently “he prayed to his Father with his door closed.”³⁰ Nor should they forget his cry: “Lord, what will become of sinners?”³¹

IV. Therefore, the whole life of the nuns is harmoniously ordered to preserving the continual remembrance of God. By the celebration of the Eucharist and the Divine Office, by reading and meditating on the Sacred Scriptures, by private prayer, vigils and intercessions they should strive to have the same mind as Christ Jesus. In silence and stillness, let

²⁶ Jordan of Saxony, *Libellus* n. 106, MOPH XVI, p.75.

²⁷ *Processus canonizationis*, n. 3, *ibidem* p. 125.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 25, p. 143.

²⁹ Jordan of Saxony, *Libellus* n. 105, MOPH XVI, p. 75.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 13, p. 32

³¹ *Processus Tolosanus*, n. 18, MOPH XVI, p. 184.

them earnestly seek the face of the Lord and never cease making intercession with the God of our salvation that all men and women might be saved. They should give thanks to God the Father who has called them out of darkness into his wonderful light. Let Christ, who was fastened to the cross for all, be fast-knit to their hearts. In fulfilling all these things, they are truly nuns of the Order of Preachers.

Article I: Liturgy

75. In the liturgy the mystery of salvation is present and at work, especially in the Eucharist, in which Christ is received, the memory of his passion is recalled, the soul is filled with grace and a pledge of future glory is given. Appointed for the work of divine praise, the nuns, in union with Christ, glorify God for the eternal purpose of his will and the marvelous dispensation of grace. They intercede with the Father of mercies for the universal Church as well as for the needs and salvation of the whole world. This joyful celebration joins the pilgrim Church to the Church in glory.³² Hence the solemn celebration of the liturgy is the heart of our whole life and the chief source of its unity.

76. The conventual Mass should be the center of the community liturgy. As a memorial of the death and resurrection of the Lord, it is the bond of fraternal charity and the primary source of apostolic zeal.

77. After the eucharistic celebration the nuns are to be given sufficient time for private thanksgiving and intimate converse with the Lord.

78. Complete freedom is to be allowed to those nuns who, before God, occasionally prefer to abstain from holy communion; nor should anyone presume to judge them in this regard.

³² cf. Humbert of Romans, *Opera*. 1184.

79. The nuns are bound to the daily celebration of the entire Liturgy of the Hours in choir.

80. For a just reason the prioress can dispense the nuns individually either from choir or from the recitation of the Hours, or commute this recitation to other prayers.

81. I. The sequence of the Hours is to be so arranged in each monastery that the various times of the day may be truly sanctified.

II. Lauds as morning prayer and Vespers as evening prayer are the hinges of the daily Office; they are to be regarded as the principal hours and celebrated as such.

III. Remembering the fervor with which the early friars and nuns of the Order hastened to Compline, the nuns, before the silence of the night begins, should sing Compline and in the antiphon *Salve Regina* commend themselves together to the protection of the Blessed Virgin.

IV. The time for Office of Readings should be determined in the directories. In making the determination, care must be taken that this office remain a community celebration and that the majority of nuns be able to participate in it. Nevertheless, the nuns, mindful of the Order's tradition, should strive to imitate Christ spending the night in prayer to God (cf. Lk. 6:12).

82. I. It is fitting that at least some parts of the Liturgy of the Hours be sung more solemnly, especially those parts which by their very nature call for singing.

II. However, the celebrations should be characterized by simplicity and moderation, “lest the sisters lose devotion.”³³

83. Since the liturgy is an action of the whole People of God, participation of the faithful in our celebrations is to be encouraged, while their monastic character, as well as the law of enclosure, should be maintained.

84. I. In order to foster the conversion of their entire life by means of the virtue of penance and mutual charity, the nuns should frequently approach the sacrament of reconciliation. The prioress should strive to promote this frequent practice and should provide for the possibility of sacramental confession for the nuns on alternate weeks or even more often if they so desire.

II. The seasons of Advent and Lent provide a special occasion for communal celebrations of penance and reconciliation, observing the norms established by law.

85. I. Great care is to be taken to safeguard the due freedom of the nuns and regards the sacrament of reconciliation and spiritual direction.

II. As far as possible there should be several habitual confessors for each monastery, always observing the prescriptions of common law. The ordinary confessors are to have no part in the government of the monastery.

86. Whenever, through the sacrament of anointing, the strength and mercy of Christ are to be imparted to an infirm nun, the whole community should be present at this celebration so that the sick nun and all the nuns may share in the same faith and join together in prayer to Christ their Savior and Healer.

³³ *Constitutiones primaevae*, Dist. I, Cap. IV.

87. The liturgical laws of the Order apply to the nuns unless otherwise determined. They should freely make use of the liturgical directory as well as the *Proprium* of the Order.

88. I. The church buildings should manifest a simple beauty and be suitable for the celebration of the liturgy of the monastery. The choir should be so situated that the nuns can easily see the altar.

II. The furnishings and sacred images or other works of genuine artistic value should conform to the requirements and spirit of the liturgy and foster true devotion.

Article II: Private Prayer

89. Tireless in prayer (cf. Lk. 18:1), the nuns should have their hearts centered on the Lord. In addition to liturgical prayer, let them persevere fervently and earnestly in private prayer, so dear to our holy Father Dominic and the first brothers and sisters of the Order.³⁴

90. The nuns should worship Christ in the mystery of the Eucharist so that from this wonderful exchange they may draw an increase of faith, hope and charity.

91. I. As has always been the custom in the Order, the nuns should love and reverence the Blessed Mary, Mother of Mercy, Queen of Apostles and Virgins, and a model of meditation on the words of Christ and docility in their own mission.

II. They should hold the rosary in special honor, since this venerable form of prayer leads to contemplation of the mysteries of salvation in which the Virgin is

³⁴ Cf. Humbert of Romans, *Expositio in regulam* B. Augustini, cap. XXVII.

intimately joined to the work of her Son. At least a third part of the rosary is to be recited in common each day.

92. The nuns should foster genuine devotion and veneration for St. Dominic, the mirror of our life, and for the saints of the Order, so that they may be inspired to imitate them and be strengthened in the spirit of their vocation.

93. The directories are to provide for a sufficient amount of time, that is, about two hours a day, so that at specified times and places the nuns may be free to devote themselves in earnest to private prayer and *lectio divina*.

94. The nuns are to make an annual retreat of eight full days.

95. In addition to the annual retreat, the directories should provide for other days and forms of more profound silence and contemplation such as monthly days of recollection, tridua, etc.

Chapter III

Hearing, Studying and Keeping The Word of God

96. I. The brethren of the Order, “commissioned entirely for spreading abroad the word of God,” fulfill their vocation primarily by preaching. The nuns, while commissioned by God primarily for prayer, are not for that reason excluded from the ministry of the word (cf. *Venite Seorsum*, V). For they listen to the word, celebrate it and keep it in their hearts (cf. Lk. 2:18), and in this way proclaim the Gospel of God by the example of their life.

II. The purpose of all regular observance, especially enclosure and silence, is that the word of God may dwell abundantly in the monastery. Therefore, the

nuns, after the example of the Precursor, should prepare the way of the Lord in the desert by the witness of their prayer and penance.

Article I: Lectio Divina

97. I. *Lectio Divina* is ordained to a real dialogue with God, for “we speak to God when we pray, we hear him when we read the divine sayings” (St. Ambrose).

II. Christ is the Word of God. We hear him in the Sacred Scriptures; everything in them proclaims Christ. We hear him in the voice of the Church, which speaks to us of him in the sacraments of faith, in the teaching of our shepherds, in the example of the saints. We hear him when the world and our brothers and sisters cry out for our love. For there is one Spirit of Christ who intimately attunes our inward ear to inspirations.

98. I. Following the example of St. Dominic, who always carried about with him the gospel of Matthew and the epistles of Paul and almost knew them by heart, the nuns should above all keep the Sacred Scriptures at hand. They should ponder them deeply, so that like our blessed Father, they may pass easily from reading to prayer, from prayer to meditation, and from meditation to contemplation.³⁵

II. In the liturgy we not only hear the word of God, but also celebrate it with thanksgiving. For we sing the praise of God in the very words by which he himself made known his plan of salvation. By shunning the cares and illusions of the world (cf. Mt. 13:22), the nuns allow the seed which is the word of God to grow in their hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit; in so receiving it they are interiorly renewed and more closely conformed to Christ.

³⁵ “*Cl. De moths oraridi saricti Dominici*, ASOP, XV, 1922, 104.

Article II: Study

100. I. The methodical study of sacred truth, according to the capacity of the individual, is a fruitful preparation for *lectio divina* and an aid to human maturity.

II. The blessed Dominic recommended some form of study to the first nuns as an authentic observance of the Order.³⁶ It not only nourishes contemplation, but also removes the impediments which arise through ignorance and informs the practical judgment. In this way it fosters the fulfillment of the evangelical counsels with a more enlightened fidelity and encourages unanimity of mind. By its very constancy and difficulty it constitutes a form of asceticism and aids mental equilibrium.

101. I. The light and source of our study is God, who spoke in the past in many and varied *ways*, and in these last days speaks to us in Christ through whom the mystery of the Father's will is fully revealed in the Church by the sending of the Holy Spirit and all minds are enlightened.

II. The nuns are to be instructed particularly in the Sacred Scriptures, in which they can contemplate the mystery of salvation. Likewise, they should receive such instruction as will enable them to participate more deeply in the liturgy, in which that same mystery is made unceasingly present and actual.

III. They should nourish their faith especially on the mystical teaching of the Fathers, as well as of other theologians and authors, in particular those of the Order. In the study of St. Thomas let them find their

³⁶ Cf. *Inscitutioness Sixti*, XX; *Constitutiones Sororuin Moncas*, XXIII.

best master, whose doctrine the Church always commends and the Order has received as a patrimony.

102. I. The prioress should see to **it** that lectures or conferences are given with appropriate frequency in the monastery, and that discussions among the nuns are provided for.

II. Suitable time for personal study should be provided throughout the week.

III. Care must be taken that the library be kept well supplied with books useful for study and *lectio divina*, and that a sufficient sum of money is allocated for library development each year.

Chapter IV

Work

103. The nuns of St. Sixtus in Rome, whom the blessed Dominic renewed in the cloistered life and associated with the Order, held the following attitude towards work, in accord with the monastic tradition:

1 - "Since idleness is the enemy of the soul and the mother and nurse of all vices, let no sister in the cloister remain idle, but let each be always occupied, as far as possible, at some work; for she is not easily ensnared by temptation who is intent on some worthy employment."

2 - "It is the Lord who has said to man that he must eat his bread in the sweat of his brow (Gen. 3:19); and the Apostle adds that the one who refuses to work should not eat (2 Thes. 3:10); and the prophet before him: You

shall eat from the toil of your hands and that will be good for you (Ps, 127:3).”

3 - “So with the exception of the hours which the sisters ought to consecrate to prayer, to reading, to the preparation of the Divine Office and chant, or to study, they should devote themselves to some manual labor, as shall be judged good by the prioress.”³⁷

104. Rejoicing that they can fulfill the design of the Creator and be associated with the work of the Redeemer, the nuns should readily give themselves to work with all their powers of mind and heart as well as their gifts of nature and grace.³⁸

105. I. Because of the effort it demands, work is one of the more common forms of asceticism. In addition, the perseverance and skill which it requires and the benefits it brings foster mental equilibrium and the formation and development of personality.

II. Work is demanded by religious poverty and serves the common good by building up charity through cooperation.

III. Moreover, by work the nuns share the common lot of most people, especially the poor. Since in their life work is subordinated to contemplation, this manifests a right ordering of values among earthly activities, according to the spirit of the Beatitudes.³⁹

106. I. The work schedule of the nuns must always give priority to the Divine Office and prayer, as well as to the necessity for *lectio divina* and doctrinal study.

³⁷ *Institutiones Sancti Sixti*, cap. XX.

³⁸ Cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 67

³⁹ Cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 72.

II. The term “work” refers to any human activity, manual or intellectual, in which the nuns engage.

III. Work that is excessively strenuous or conducive to undue tension of spirit is not to be imposed on the nuns. The nuns should be free from work for some time each day and for a number of days during the year.

IV. Excessive activism which would disrupt the contemplative life is to be carefully avoided.

107. I. According to the economic situation of the region, a type of work should be chosen which supplies the necessities of life for the monastery as far as possible.

II. In order to insure the quality and perfection of the work of the nuns, they should receive adequate training as needed.

108. Those who direct the work and the nuns who carry it out should willingly laborate in the common tasks, with humility and good judgment on both sides.

109. With confident trust in the providence of their heavenly Father, the nuns should not be overly concerned with the return from their work. Nevertheless, the prioress and those who direct the work should secure a just remuneration, after consulting experts and taking relevant social legislation into account.

110. In matters pertaining to work, the monasteries should mutually assist one another and share information.

SECTION II

THE FORMATION OF THE SISTERS

Chapter I

Formation in General

111. I. Since the future of the monastery to a great extent depends upon the adequate formation of the nuns, this must be provided for with great care, so that those who wish to follow Christ according to our manner of living may be led to the fullness of the cloistered life.

II. Although the formation of the nuns lasts for several years and extends through various stages, it ought to be conceived and carried through as a continuous and progressive process integrated by the one end toward which it is directed.

III. The monastic community forms a school of charity whose master is Christ our Lord. In it all the nuns cooperate according to their position and function.

112. I. Formation begins with the postulancy, during which an aspirant makes trial of our way of life, while we evaluate her suitability.

II. This mutual testing continues throughout the novitiate, during which the novice is gradually initiated into our observance.

III. Finally, after first profession the nuns are implanted and rooted in the monastic life so that they may prepare for their total consecration.

113. Formation ought to take place in one's own monastery but, for a just reason and with the permission of the Holy See, it can take place in another monastery. In federations the

norms for common formation can be determined in their own statutes.

114. I. The primary responsibility for her formation lies with the candidate herself, in her free cooperation with the grace of her call from God, and in her willingness to learn from the mistress.

II. Several nuns may be involved in formation but in different ways according to their special functions:

1) The mistress is to be selected by the prioress with the deliberative vote of the council. She must be solemnly professed, at least thirty years of age, outstanding in her life and doctrine, experienced in spiritual matters, and skilled in the discernment of spirits. With the novices she should be loving, kind yet firm, humble and patient.

2) According to the prescriptions of can. 651:2, a sub-mistress can be appointed by the prioress with the consent of the council. Other nuns can also be designated to teach the sisters special subjects or skills.

3) Where it seems suitable a formation team can be formed. It will have no power to make decisions but will help the mistress in carrying out the duties of the whole formation period. The mistress of novices will always be present at a meeting of the formation team. The prioress may appoint other members with the advice of the monastery council. In federations where there is a common novitiate, the norms for the formation council are to be determined in the statutes.

III. The community itself, by its generosity, fervor and harmony, should be a family in which the young are enabled more easily to persevere and make progress in their vocation.

115 The length of the term of office of the novice mistress is to be determined by the directories, but in such a way that the mistress is not changed too easily.

116. The novice mistress alone is responsible for the care of the novices. In matters involving the discipline of the whole monastery, both the mistress and the novices are subject to the prioress.

117. The mistress should be careful not to induce the sisters in any way to make manifestation of conscience to her; however, her attitude should be such that they may be able to open their hearts to her freely and spontaneously.

118. I. It is the duty of the mistress especially to attend to the following:

1) that religious formation develop and integrate those human qualities which bestow greater personal maturity;

2) that the novices be able to fully grasp and accept the true meaning of their call to the contemplative Life; and that by the decisive and generous use of the means assigned by the Church and the Order, particularly the fervent reception of the sacraments, they may strive to fulfill it with ready self-giving and persevering effort.

II. The principal elements for their instruction and practical exercise should be:

- common life united with silence and solitude;
- attentiveness to the presence of God particularly through the gift of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit;
- a relationship of loving union with God, which should be nourished especially by personal prayer and liturgical celebration;
- a genuine and active charity towards the nuns and all others;
- humility and complete renunciation of all that could impede their progress towards the perfection of charity in fulfilling their vows;
- fidelity and care in regular observances

III. Let the mistress instruct the novices to pray and embrace the cross of Christ. Let her teach them poverty of spirit according to the word of the Lord: "Learn of me because I am meek and humble of heart." She should lead them to think with the Church.

119. I. The manner and extent of their studies should always be regulated by the end of the contemplative life, and according to individual capacity.

II. The directories should provide for a suitable course of study to cover the whole period of formation, that is, Sacred Scripture, liturgy, church history, the history of spirituality and of the Order, dogmatic and moral theology.

III. Sisters already professed in another institute, who come to the monastery, should at least be instructed concerning Dominican and contemplative life.

IV. The sisters are also to be taught those crafts and technical skills which are best suited to the needs of life in the monastery.

120. Whatever be the duration of the novitiate or temporary profession, the formation of the sisters is to be continued under the direction of the mistress for at least five years after the postulancy.

121. Taking into account nn. 112, 118, 119, 120, 141,142, 155, 162, 165, 242, the directories should determine the complete course for the process of formation.

Chapter II Admission

122. Since to live the contemplative life in a monastery is a lofty and difficult undertaking, great prudence is needed in order to recognize true vocations and to ensure the timely exclusion of unsuitable aspirants.

123. I. Certain natural qualities are to be required namely physical health, psychological maturity proportionate to their age, good judgment, open-mindedness and suitability for community life.

II. Persons with serious hereditary defects should never be admitted, nor those who suffer from psychological imbalance or nervous disorders.

III. Those who would be considered unfit for secular affairs should also be refused admission. Aspirants without sufficient culture should not be accepted unless there is reasonable hope that they may be suitably educated in the monastery.

124. Diligent inquiry should be made first of all as to whether the aspirant is truly seeking God. The motive which draws her to live a form of community life and particularly to the choice of our Order should be examined.

125. I. Information regarding the requisite qualities is to be gathered carefully and discreetly, especially with reference to the aspirant's birth, parents, character, past and present manner of life, health of body and soundness of mind. Where it is considered opportune a certificate of good physical and mental health should be required from a doctor appointed by the monastery itself, of serving the directions of can. 220.

II. Information should be sought with special caution regarding those who have left another religious institute, or even a monastery of the Order, whether before or after profession, either of their own accord or because they were legitimately dismissed.

126 When **it** seems advisable in the judgment of the prioress with the deliberative vote of the monastery council an aspirant can enter the enclosure for a certain length of time before the postulancy, but not for more than three months.

127. I. The information referred to above in n 125 together with the documents required by law, are to be presented to the council of the monastery before the aspirant is admitted to the postulancy.

II. All those who receive the above mentioned information are strictly bound to secrecy with regard to it and those who gave it.

128. Great care is to be taken in the matter of the impediments to validity set down in common law. If a dispensation is necessary it must be sought from the competent authority.

129. I. For an aspirant to be admitted to the postulancy the consent of the majority of the chapter is required following the deliberative vote of the council.

II. For the entrance of the postulant into the enclosure the permission of the prioress suffices.

Chapter III **Probation**

Article I: The Postulancy

130. The postulancy is to last for six full months. The prioress with the deliberative vote of the council can prolong the prescribed time, but not beyond another six months unless otherwise determined in the directories.

131. During the time of postulancy the aspirant gradually comes to experience the goal and the means of our contemplative life, through suitable catechesis and personal dialogue concerning both the life of union with God and monastic observance.

132. The postulant participates to some extent in the common life of the monastery and novitiate, under the direction of the mistress. She should not be given an office, properly so called, nor have strict obligations imposed on her.

133. The postulancy must be made within the enclosure.

134. The novice mistress shall record the name of the postulant as well as the day, month and year of her entrance, in a book kept for this purpose. It should also contain a list of all she brought with her, and be signed by the postulant, the mistress and two other nuns.

135 Directories will determine conditions regarding contributions to be made by the aspirant towards the expenses of the postulancy.

136. During the postulancy the prioress, with the deliberative vote of the council, has the power to send away a postulant whom she judges to be unsuitable to the way of life of our Order. A postulant is always free to leave the monastery.

137. I. At least two months before the end of the postulancy, the postulant is to be examined by the council.
- II. The information and documents for admission to the postulancy already gathered are to be examined again and if necessary completed (cf. nn. 125, 127).
- III. The postulant is to be questioned about her purpose and any other matters not yet fully known from the information already obtained. This questioning is carried out not only by the prioress but also by the councillors.
138. I. The admission of a postulant to the novitiate is subject to the deliberative vote, first of the council, and then of the monastery chapter, if the council vote was favorable. Before the voting the prioress is to give a discreet report of the postulant's examination, and ask the vocals if they have any particular information regarding her.
- II. The consent of the majority of both council and chapter is required for validity.
- III. If the vote of either is negative the postulant is by that very fact rejected.
- IV. Even if the postulant is not admitted to the novitiate this vote is to be recorded in the book of admissions.

Article II: The Novitiate

139. The novitiate is a time of probation and is ordered to this: that the novice should come to know more intimately her call from God, and also her Dominican vocation; that she experience the way of life of our Order, and be formed in mind and heart in the Dominican spirit; and that her motivation and suitability become evident to the nuns.

140. I. The novitiate begins with the announcement made by the prioress. A record of this announcement is to be made in the book of admissions and signed by the novice and two witnesses.

II. The habit can be received either at the beginning of the novitiate or during it, or even on the day of first profession, as determined in the directories.

141. I. In order to be valid the novitiate must last a full and continuous twelve months within the enclosure of the monastery. A group of novices may spend a determined time in another monastery of the Order with the consent of each of the prioresses involved.

II. The novitiate is interrupted, and must begin again, if the novice spends more than three months outside the monastery, whether continuously or intermittently, saving the prescriptions of I.

III. If the absence from the novitiate exceeds fifteen days, the time must be made up, safeguarding I.

IV. If the probation of a novice requires it, or the novice herself requests it, the prioress with the deliberative vote of the council can prolong the novitiate by as much as six months.

142. The directories can extend the duration of the novitiate to two years, safeguarding what is said in n. 141:I concerning validity. The faculty is not then given to extend the novitiate further in individual cases. At the end of the second year the novice must either be admitted to profession or return to secular life.

143. The prioress with the deliberative vote of the council, and for a just reason, has the power to dismiss a novice during the novitiate. The novice herself may always freely leave the monastery.

144. Departure or dismissal must be noted in the book of admissions.

145. I. The novices should generally form a distinct group and live in a separate place within the monastery.

II. No nun except the prioress may have access to the novitiate without the permission of the mistress.

146. It is for the directories to indicate when and in what manner the novices may associate with the other nuns or converse with them.

147. I. At least twice during the novitiate the mistress is to report to the council regarding the stability and progress of each novice. When they are presented to the council and chapter for profession the mistress must report on each novice with due discretion

II. When the novitiate is made in another monastery, the same reports are to be sent to the council and chapter of her own monastery.

148. During the period of novitiate the monastery may not accept any of the novices' goods, even if offered spontaneously, except an allowance for food and clothing.

Article III: Admission to First Profession

149. I. At least two months before the end of the novitiate, the novice is to be examined by the council.

II. The procedure is the same as described above in n. 137 for the examination of the postulant. The novice is to be questioned especially regarding the obligations of our profession, and the human and spiritual

characteristics which draw her to consecrate herself to God by profession in our Order.

150. A novice, having been examined by the council, must be warned that her profession will be void if she has fraudulently concealed any serious defect in health which would entail her rejection. A record of this warning should be made and signed by the novice and two witnesses.

151. At least two months before profession a vote is to be taken for admission.

1. - If a novice has made her novitiate in her own monastery everything is to be carried out as prescribed above in n. 138 for admission to the novitiate.

2. - But if the novitiate was made elsewhere, the vote of the chapter and council of the novitiate house as well as of the chapter of her own monastery are only consultative. The deliberative vote pertains to the council of her own monastery. The approved statutes of federations, however, are to be observed.

Chapter IV

Profession

152. I. By our profession we dedicate ourselves to God, following Christ and leading the gospel life in the Order, so that our baptismal consecration may achieve its effect more completely.

II. Through this profession of obedience we intend to bind ourselves to the fulfillment of the evangelical counsels. By this we renounce good things which are undoubtedly of great value, without however any detriment to the growth of the human person. While embracing the self-emptying of Christ, we participate at the same time in his life in the Spirit. In this way, if

we are faithful we become clearer witnesses in the Church to the good things of the heavenly kingdom.

III. Led by filial devotion we also promise in our profession to honor Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, the loving mother of our Order.

IV. When in the same profession we also promise obedience to St. Dominic we intend to be faithful to his spirit and mission.

Article I: Temporary Profession

153. After her novitiate the sister is admitted to a further probation, which begins with the profession of temporary vows.

154. The prioress, for a just cause, can allow the profession to be anticipated, but not by more than fifteen days.

155. I. At the end of three years in temporary vows, the sister can, at her own request or the suggestion of the prioress, renew temporary profession, but not for more than three years, and that year by year. The directories, however, can decide that in all cases temporary profession is to be prolonged for a determined time, but not beyond nine years.

II. Anyone coming to the Order from another religious institute who is bound by perpetual, even solemn, vows, cannot make solemn profession until three years after the completion of her novitiate. Nevertheless the process of voting is required as above in n. 151 so that the novitiate may be recognized as valid. Other conditions can be determined in the directories. This stipulation of our law must be made clear to the superiors of the other institute.

156. For temporary profession it is required, safeguarding the common law, that it be expressed in the formula of our profession, and that it be received by the Master of the Order, or the prioress, or the subprioress *in capite*, or a nun delegated by them.

157. I. The formula of profession is as follows: “I, Sister N.N., make profession and promise obedience to God and to blessed Mary and to blessed Dominic, and to the Master of the Order of Friars Preachers, and to you Sister N.N., prioress of this monastery of N.N., and to your successors, (or: subprioress *in capite* of this monastery of N.N., or: the delegate), according to the Rule of blessed Augustine and the Constitutions of the Nuns of the Order of Preachers, that I will be obedient to you, and to your successors for three years (or: one year).”

II. No change is made in the formula of profession when the Order is without a Master.

158. The ceremonies of profession are to be carried out according to the usage of the Order.

159. All professions are to be recorded in the book of professions and signed by the professed herself, the prioress and two witnesses.

160. I. During the time of temporary vows, a sister retains the ownership of her goods and the power to acquire more. Anything she acquires by her work or in any other way, as in n. 268, or by virtue of her religious state, goes to the monastery.

II. Before making first profession, a novice must for the duration of her temporary vows cede the administration of her goods to whomsoever she wishes, even to the monastery, and freely make arrangements for the disposal of its use and income. She may also make a

will regarding present goods or possible future acquisitions, safeguarding n. 164:11.

III. If the cession or arrangements set out in II above have not been made because there were no goods involved, and these are subsequently acquired, arrangements similar to those in II are to be made or repeated, even though profession has taken place.

IV. A professed sister in temporary vows can change the cession or arrangements, not however by her own decision, but with the permission of the prioress.

161. I. For the renewal of temporary profession the voting preceding it is to take place as indicated above in n. 151.

II. If a grave doubt remains about a sister's vocation or suitability, she is not to be admitted to renewal of vows, but is to return to secular life.

III. A physical or psychological infirmity, even if contracted after profession, which in the judgment of specialists renders a nun unsuited to lead the contemplative life of the monastery, constitutes a reason for not admitting her to a renewal of profession or to perpetual profession, unless the infirmity was contracted through the negligence of the monastery or because of work done there.

IV. A sister who becomes insane during the period of temporary vows cannot be dismissed from the Order, even though she is unable to make a new profession. The monastery must take care of her according to the advice of doctors.

162. Before solemn profession a sister must be integrated into the community of solemnly professed nuns in her own monastery for at least one year, safeguarding nn. 119-120.

163. For admission to solemn profession all that is set out in nn. 137, 138, 149:11, must be carried out.

164. I. Before solemn profession a sister in temporary vows must renounce all that she actually possesses or has a certain prospect of possessing in favor of whomsoever she wishes, making sure as far as possible that this is also valid in civil law and takes effect from the day of profession.

II. Directories will determine what steps are necessary after solemn profession to ensure that the renunciation takes effect in the civil law of the region.

III. This renunciation can later be changed according to the norms of 160:IV.

Article II: Solemn Profession

165. At the expiration of the time of temporary profession, which can never exceed nine years, a nun makes solemn profession or else returns to secular life, either on her own initiative or after being duly sent away.

166. I. By solemn profession a nun is totally consecrated to God in the Order until death.

II. Solemn profession renders acts contrary to the vows not only illicit but also invalid, if they are such as can be nullified.

167. I. For solemn profession it is required, safeguarding the common law, that it be expressed in the formula of our profession and be received by the Master of the Order, or the prioress or subprioress in *capite*, or a nun delegated by them.

II. The formula of solemn profession is the same as that of temporary profession (cf. above, n. 157), changing the words “for three years” or “for one year” to the words “until death.”

168. When solemn profession has been made, notification of it must immediately be sent by the prioress to the parish where the professed nun was baptized.

169. After solemn profession, safeguarding the arrangements previously made in the act of renunciation, any temporal goods acquired by the nuns under whatsoever title belong to the monastery to which they are affiliated.

Chapter V

Departure and Dismissal of the Nuns

170. I. In whatever concerns the transfer, departure, exclaustation and dismissal of nuns, the norms of Canon Law are to be observed. (cf. Appendix III.)

II. Nuns who lawfully leave their monastery or are lawfully dismissed cannot claim anything for work done in it (can. 702:1).

DISTINCTION II ***GOVERNMENT***

SECTION I **GENERAL NORMS**

Chapter I **The Juridical Status of the Monasteries and the Nuns**

171. The Nuns of the Order of Preachers live a purely contemplative life, making profession of solemn vows in autonomous monasteries with papal enclosure.

172. I. The nuns form one family in Christ and all have equal canonical status.

II. Some extern sisters may be included in the monastic family as determined in the directories, taking into account the prescriptions of common law.

173. Community life requires a diversity of functions. These are assigned to individual nuns by the prioress with a view to each one's aptitudes and should be carried out in a spirit of service, with attention to the prescriptions of n. 80 regarding participation in the choral office.

174. I. All the monasteries are under the power of the Master of the Order according to the norms of these Constitutions. They are subject to the diocesan bishop in matters expressly mentioned by common law.

II. In some monasteries the Master of the Order or the Prior Provincial enjoys power determined by these Constitutions (cf. n. 227).

III. In other monasteries, according to the provisions made, certain matters indicated in these Constitutions are entrusted to the special vigilance of the diocesan bishop (cf. n. 228).

175. Several monasteries may be united in a federation in accordance with statutes approved by the Holy See, safeguarding the autonomy of each monastery.

176. I. Each nun is affiliated to the monastery which admitted her to the novitiate and to profession.

II. For a nun to pass to another monastery of the Order by way of definitive transfiguration after the time indicated in the directories, the following are required:

- 1) the consent of the nun herself;
- 2) the consent of the majority of the council and chapter of both monasteries;
- 3) in addition the Master of the Order must be informed of the transfer.

III. The nun in question neither makes a novitiate nor a new profession. From the day of transfiguration she loses all rights and obligations in her former monastery and acquires rights and duties in the new one.

177. Transfigurations are to be noted in the book of professions of both monasteries.

178. I. The temporary transfer of any nun to another monastery of the Order requires

- 1) the consent of the nun herself;
- 2) the consent of the majority of the council and chapter of both monasteries.

II. A nun temporarily transferred to another monastery loses active voice in her original monastery but may

acquire active voice in the monastery where she is living either by reason of office or by the concession of the monastery chapter.

III. For a temporary transfer to another monastery of the same federation special regulations are to be determined in the statutes.

179. A temporary transfer may not extend beyond three years but it may be renewed by the same procedure.

Chapter II **Laws Governing the Monasteries**

Article I: Kinds of Laws

180. In the light of the Gospel and according to the mind of the Rule of St. Augustine and the Fundamental Constitution of the Order, the monasteries are governed by:

- 1) all laws and decrees of the Church: common laws to which nuns are subject, laws issued for nuns, and those made for the nuns of the Order of Preachers;
- 2) statutes, apostolic privileges and indults granted to the Order or to a particular federation or monastery;
- 3) their own Constitutions;
- 4) the ordinations of the Master of the Order made especially for them;
- 5) the ordinations of General Chapters concerning the nuns;
- 6) directories, whether of federations or of monasteries;
- 7) the ordinations of a prioress.

181. According to the mind of our holy Father Dominic it is fitting that the nuns, like the friars, should have an enlightened participation in their own government. This pertains not only to the government of each monastery through elections and the

votes of chapter and council, but also to the compiling or changing of their own Constitutions.

This responsibility in regard to the Constitutions is to be fostered among the nuns by an awareness of their genuine vocation and special role within the Order as well as by a solicitude for Dominican contemplative life promoted according to the conditions of each new age.

182. I. The compiling or changing of the Book of Constitutions is carried out by the authority of the Master of the Order in cooperation with the monasteries, and requires the approval of the Holy See.

II. Individual monasteries as well as federations can present petitions to the Master of the Order for changes to be made in the Book of Constitutions. When the Master of the Order has decided which petitions are to be retained, he presents these for the vote of all the monasteries. After weighing the results, he then submits suitable changes to the Holy See for approval and sees to the inclusion of the approved changes in the Book of Constitutions.

183. Several times a week some part of the Rule or Constitutions should be read or explained in the refectory or chapter.

184. I. The compilation or changing of the local directory pertains to the monastery chapter.

II. The monastery directory must be approved by the Master of the Order, safeguarding n. 37.

185. I. The federal directory should contain norms regarding the relationships between the monasteries of the federation. Regulations about the internal government of the monasteries can be proposed but not imposed.

II. The federal assembly is to draw up or change its general directory, which always requires the approval of the Master of the Order, safeguarding n. 37.

186. I. All laws of the Church referred to inn. 180:1 oblige the nuns in conscience.

II. Our laws, see n. 180:3,6, and the ordinations of a prioress, do not oblige the nuns under sin but only to the penalty, except where a formal precept or contempt is involved.

Article II: Interpretation and Dispensation from Laws

187. I. The interpretation and clarification of the laws of the Order pertain to the Master of the Order.

II. In virtue of the apostolic privilege granted by Pope Julius II the same Master may interpret not only the Constitutions but also privileges, indulges, favors and exemptions granted or to be granted by the Holy See.

188. From the beginning of the Order some power of dispensation has been expressly granted to superiors of both friars and nuns, not to relax regular observance, but rather so that the end of the Order might be better attained.

189. I. The regular superior and also the prioress or the one taking her place has the power to dispense the nuns regarding regular observance in particular circumstances and for a just reason.

II. A prioress can dispense herself in matters in which she can dispense others.

III. A prioress cannot dispense an entire community without a proportionate reason.

IV. Only the Master of the Order can grant an habitual dispensation from the laws of the Order to a monastery or to an individual nun.

Article III: The Formal Precept

190. A formal precept which imposes a grave obligation:

1) must not be given unless the matter involved is, according to our laws, grave in itself or grave because of circumstances. It must be preceded by prudent consideration and sufficient inquiry and given only when really necessary;

2) must always be given in writing, for a fixed time, and must state clearly what is to be done or not done;

3) must be expressed in the prescribed formula, that is, "We command (or forbid) in virtue of obedience."

191. I. The following can give a formal precept:

1) the Master of the Order in all monasteries;

2) the Prior Provincial in monasteries under his power;

3) delegates of the above-named superiors;

4) the prioress in her own monastery.

II. The local ordinary cannot give a formal precept, even in monasteries subject to his jurisdiction.

192. Precepts cease to oblige when the stated time has elapsed or when the authority of the one who gave the precept terminates.

193. A precept is invalid:

1) if it is not given in writing or if the formula prescribed in n. 190:3 is omitted;

2) if the prioress imposes a precept on the entire community without the previous deliberative vote of her council.

SECTION II GOVERNMENT ITSELF

Chapter I The Government of the Monastery

Article I: The Prioress

194. The prioress presides in the monastery and has ordinary power over the nuns according to the norms of common and particular law.

195. The prioress, as the faithful servant of the monastery, should at all times foster the unity of charity, constantly promote the contemplative life of the nuns and diligently care for regular observance.

196. I. The office of prioress is ordinarily conferred through canonical election, announced by the local ordinary (cf. nn. 227, 228) or confirmed by the regular superior, or through appointment by the Master of the Order. She continues in office for three full years. At their completion she may be elected for another three-year term, but not for a third consecutive term in the same monastery.

II. The term of office of the prioress begins on the day of acceptance and is terminated at the end of the same date three years later.

197. I. A prioress can appoint as her vicaress one of the nuns enjoying active voice in the chapter. Her appointment, the duration of her office and the extent of her authority

are left to the judgment of the prioress, safeguarding the rights of the subprioress.

II. The appointment of the vicaress and her removal from office can be written or oral, but in the latter case it should be made in the presence of witnesses or the community.

III. The authority of a vicaress ceases with that of the prioress who appointed her.

198. The commands and ordinations of a prioress cease to bind when her term of office expires.

199. A prioress who is prevented by illness from fulfilling her duties properly shall resign from office if her return to good health within six months is not likely. She tenders her resignation either to the monastery chapter if she was elected, or to the one who appointed her.

200. I. Once a year the prioress is to present a report of her administration to the local ordinary or to the regular superior if the monastery falls under n. 174:11.

II. Within the last month of her term of office the prioress shall present a report of her entire administration to the monastery council and to the local ordinary, or to the regular superior if the monastery falls under n. 174:11.

III. Likewise, toward the end of her term of office the prioress shall give her council a report on the state of the community.

IV. These reports are to be made in writing and kept in the monastery archives with other documents pertaining to the government and history of the community.

Article II: The Monastery Chapter

201. The monastery chapter is the body of nuns enjoying active voice in the monastery (cf. nn. 178:11, 252, 253) which, under the presidency of the prioress (cf. n. 218:11), has the competency to examine and decide matters of major import according to the norms of our law.

202. I. The chapter shall elect a secretary for a fixed term in a single scrutiny. She may also be the same as the secretary for the council.

II. At the discretion of the prioress and with the consent of the chapter, nuns in temporary vows may occasionally be invited and heard without, however, having a vote.

203. I. It is the business of the chapter:

- 1) to elect the prioress according to the norms of nn. 255-257;
- 2) to elect councillors according to the norms of nn. 211-213, 249-251;
- 3) to compile the monastery directory (ci. nn. 184:1, 185, 209);
- 4) to send petitions or questions to the Master of the Order (cf. n. 182) and also to the General Chapter.

II. The deliberative vote of the chapter is required, following the deliberative vote of the council:

- 1) for admission to the postulancy (cf. n. 129:1);
- 2) for admission to the novitiate (cf. n. 138);
- 3) for admission to temporary profession of a sister who has made her probation in her own monastery (cf. n. 15 1:1) and for its renewal (cf. n. 161:1);

- 4) for admission to solemn profession (cf. nn. 163, 138); 99
- 5) for the transfiguration of any nun or for her temporary transfer, safeguarding n. 176: III (cf. n. 176:11,2; 178:1,2);
- 6) for the sending of any nun on a new foundation (cf. n. 231:11);
- 7) for the transfer of a monastery to another site;
- 8) for undertaking a new foundation (cf. n. 229:1);
- 9) for cases indicated in common or particular law.

III. The consultative vote of the chapter is required, before the deliberative vote of the council, for matters of major importance according to n. 278.

IV. The consultative vote of the chapter is required, before the vote of the council, for the admission to temporary profession of a sister from another monastery (cf. n. 15 1:2).

V. The chapter is to hear the annual report of the bursar and even to approve it if required by the directory.

204. At the discretion of the prioress other matters may be proposed for the examination and consultative vote of the chapter.

205. I. The chapter is to be convoked by the prioress whenever matters for which it is responsible are to be considered.

II. Before the chapter, vocals may propose matters for discussion to the president, who will decide whether they are to be considered. During the chapter no business is to be proposed unless the president shall have given her consent or called for it.

III. Lest anything to be decided in chapter should be

proposed without warning, the entire agenda shall be made known to the vocals at least a day or two before the chapter convenes, provided there is no danger in delay.

206. For validity the required votes mentioned above (n. 203:1, II, III, IV) must always be secret.

207. I. For all matters requiring a deliberative vote, unless otherwise expressly determined by our law, a majority of votes suffices, abstentions not being counted.

II. If after two scrutinies the votes are tied, the president may postpone the decision for a short time before she settles the matter. This does not hold however for admission to the postulancy, the novitiate, profession and transfiguration, in which cases an absolute majority is always required.

208. In regard to matters discussed in chapter, the chapter members must exercise discretion with those who do not belong to the chapter. The president may determine what is to be kept secret.

209. I. The chapter is to review the monastery directory approximately every six years:

- 1) for any addition, suppression or change, a two-thirds vote is required;
- 2) having obtained the vote of the chapter, the prioress shall seek the approval of the Master of the Order.

II. The same procedure is followed for making a change or addition within the six-year period.

Article III: The Monastery Council

210. The monastery council is a group of nuns under the presidency of the prioress (cf. n. 2 18:11), whose consent or advice she is obliged to seek according to our laws.

211. I. The monastery council is composed of the prioress who presides and four councillors, or six if there are more than twenty professed nuns in the monastery.

II. Councillors are members by law or by election:

1) Councillors by law are the subprioress, the mistress of novices and, unless she is included among these, the prioress of the term immediately preceding.

2) Other councillors are to be elected to complete the number determined in I. 212. The councillors are elected (cf. n. 2 11:11,2) from among the nuns enjoying active voice in the monastery (cf. n. 242) in accordance with nn. 247-25 1. They remain in office for three years and may be re-elected.

213. I. Each councillor is elected separately. The election is carried out according to nn. 247-25 1.

II. If for whatever reason the required number of councillors is no longer complete, a new councillor should be elected to complete the number as soon as possible.

III. If the number of councillors is exceeded by the addition of a new councillor by law, the councillor most recently elected ceases to hold this office.

214. The secretary of the council is elected by the council itself for a fixed term in a single scrutiny; if she is not one of its members she has no vote. She shall record in a book

reserved for this purpose the matters discussed by the council and the decisions made.

215. I. It pertains to the prioress to convoke the council.

II. All the councillors must be summoned and, unless prevented from attending by a legitimate reason approved by the president, they are obliged to be present at the deliberations. For an act of the council to be valid, the presence of at least half of the councillors, in addition to the president, is required.

III. The president must supply the councillors with the agenda sufficiently in advance, provided there is no danger in delay.

IV. Officials of the monastery are to be called to the council and heard when business concerning their office is under discussion.

216. I. In addition to those cases determined by common law or particular statutes, the vote of the council is deliberative:

- 1) for the temporary entrance of an aspirant into the enclosure (cf. n. 126);
- 2) for the prolongation of a postulancy or novitiate or for the dismissal of a postulant or novice (cf. nn. 130, 136, 141:IV, 143);
- 3) for the appointment or removal of the subprioress, mistress of novices and her assistants, and also the bursar (cf. n. 219:11);
- 4) for the appointment of a vicaress of a new foundation (cf. n. 233:1,1);
- 5) for the permanent employment or dismissal of any person in the service of the monastery;
- 6) for the imposition by the prioress of a formal precept upon the entire community (cf. n. 193:2);

- 7) for all matters which according to n. 203:II, III, require the deliberative or consultative vote of the chapter;
- 8) whenever a serious matter must be referred to the local ordinary or the regular superior or the Holy See.

II. The consultative vote of the council is required:

- 1) for admission to temporary profession of a sister from another monastery (cf. n. 203:IV);
- 2) for the interpretation or clarification of the local directory.

III. It pertains to the council:

- 1) to consider and determine by deliberative vote questions concerning the economic administration of the monastery, according to n. 276;
- 2) to examine and approve the reports of the bursar and other administrators (cf. nfl. 271:4-6; 273);
- 3) to examine and approve the report given by the prioress on her administration and on the state of the community as she goes out of office (cf. n. 200:11, III);
- 4) to examine and approve the report given by the subprioress *in capite* on her administration at the termination of her office (cf. n. 222).

217. The council is to meet at least once a month and conduct its business according to nn. 204, 207, as given above for the monastery chapter.

Article IV: The Officials of the Monastery

218. I. The subprioress represents the prioress and assists her in the government of the monastery.

- II. When the prioress is absent or impeded, the subprioress may be commissioned by her to convoke and preside over the chapter or council.
- III. When the prioress is present in the monastery the subprioress cannot dispense the nuns unless commissioned by her.
219. I. The subprioress is to be chosen from among the nuns enjoying active voice in the election of the prioress (cf. n. 252).
- II. She is appointed by the prioress with the deliberative vote of the council for a three-year term. She can be immediately appointed for another three years.
220. I. The appointment of the subprioress must be made within a month from the day when the office becomes vacant.
- II. During her term she can be removed from office for a grave reason; this must not be done however within the last two months of the prioral term, except in case of a grave scandal.
221. When the prioress leaves office the subprioress is designated as *in capite*, and by virtue of her office has the same power as a prioress until the new prioress, having accepted her election, is present in the monastery.
222. A subprioress in *capite* cannot make notable changes in the monastery, and is obliged to present a report of her administration before the council of the new prioress.
223. I. The bursar of the monastery administers its temporal goods under the direction of the prioress according to

the norm of common law. She exercises her office according to the norms made for administration.

II. She is appointed by the prioress from among the solemnly professed nuns with the deliberative vote of the council.

224. I. The bursar is appointed for three years. She can be immediately appointed for another three years.

II. Under no circumstances can the prioress exercise the office of bursar.

225. The monastery directory is to determine the conditions, duration, duties and requirements of the other offices.

226. A councillor or official elected or appointed for a fixed time whose office terminates within two months of the expiration of the term of the office of the prioress or during its vacancy, remains in office until a new election or appointment is made within the first month of the new prioral term, safeguarding n. 197:111.

Article V: The Regular Superior and the Local Ordinary

227. In monasteries referred to in n. 174:11:

I. The regular superior is either the Master of the Order, the Prior Provincial, or a friar delegated by them.

II. The regular superior has power according to the norms of common and particular law over all the nuns of the monasteries under his jurisdiction. He can command them by virtue of the vow of obedience.

III. It pertains to the regular superior especially:

- 1) to preside at the election of a prioress and confirm or cassate it;
- 2) to grant permission for the acceptance of the obligations of a legacy or a pious foundation of Masses, with the written consent of the local ordinary;
- 3) to make a canonical visitation at least every two years regarding the internal government of the monastery, and make appropriate ordinations which remain in force until the next visitation. If necessary he can also remove officials or appoint new ones;
- 4) to approve the annual report of the administration of the monastery.

IV. It pertains to the diocesan bishop or to the regular superior to give either habitual or special permissions according to the norms of the law (cf. can. 667: 3-4) for leaving and entering the enclosure.

228. In monasteries referred to in n. 174:111:

I. The local ordinary is not the regular superior, just as he is not in other monasteries (cf. n. 191:11).

II. It pertains to the local ordinary, personally or by delegate:

- 1) to preside over the prioral election and announce the outcome;
- 2) to give habitual or special permissions for leaving and entering the enclosure according to the norms of the law (cf. can. 667: 3-4);
- 3) to give permission for the acceptance of the obligations of a legacy or a pious foundation of Masses;
- 4) to approve the annual report of administration and, if he judges it opportune, to make ordinations in this regard;

5) to make a canonical visitation according to the norm of the law.

III. The Master of the Order, inasmuch as he is the regular superior (cf. n. 238), can always make a visitation either personally or by delegate, regarding the internal government and disciplinary laws of the Order, safeguarding the rights of the local ordinary.

Chapter II

New Foundations

229. In order to begin the foundation of a monastery, before all the other requirements of the law it is necessary:

- 1) to have the deliberative vote of both chapter and council;
- 2) to have the permission of the Master of the Order;
- 3) to have the consent of the diocesan bishop, given in writing;
- 4) to have the permission of the Holy See;
- 5) to observe the norms established according to the statutes of the federation if the monastery is federated.

230. I. No foundation is to be begun unless, after careful investigation, there is reasonable hope that the new monastery can develop regular life by means of vocations and economic resources drawn from its own area.

II. The founding monastery must have a sufficient number of nuns and enough material resources to be able to help the foundation for several years without notable detriment to itself.

231. I. The nuns chosen for a foundation should be endowed with good health, strength of soul and stability in their contemplative vocation. If the foundation is to be made

in another region, they should first receive special formation, most of all in regard to the language, culture, manner of life and existing conditions of that region.

II. The sending of nuns to a different location to found a new monastery requires:

- 1) their own consent;
- 2) the deliberative vote of chapter and council;
- 3) the consent of the diocesan bishop;
- 4) the permission of the Holy See.

III. For the canonical erection of a new monastery, there must be no fewer than nine nuns, at least five of whom are solemnly professed.

232. I. The number of nine nuns should be maintained by the founding monastery for ten years so that, if for whatever reason the number decreases by one and the new community requests it, another nun should be substituted in the manner stated above (cf. n. 23 1:11).

II. As long as necessary, the founding monastery shall give the new monastery economic assistance.

233. I. Before the canonical erection of a new monastery:

- 1) a vicaress is to be appointed by the prioress for a fixed period of time with the deliberative vote of the council, after the nuns of the foundation have been consulted;
- 2) the vicaress shall always act according to the directives of the prioress;
- 3) there shall be a consultative local council designated by the council of the founding monastery.

II. The first prioress is appointed by the Master of the Order after he has consulted the nuns of the new monastery.

234. From the day of the erection of the new monastery all the nuns sent are to be regarded as transfiliated to this monastery if they consent.

Chapter III Federations

235. I. Monasteries of nuns are not only autonomous, but also juridically distinct and independent of one another. However, in order that the bonds of communion uniting them in mutual assistance can be more effective several monasteries may be associated in one federation.

II. The purpose of a federation is to foster economic stability regular observance and the formation of the young nuns, and consequently to promote the contemplative life itself in each member monastery, particularly through mutual communication or the sharing of personnel to perform common duties, safeguarding the autonomy of each monastery.

236. Each federation must be erected by the Holy See, which approves the particular statutes of the federation and appoints a religious assistant.

237. Unless otherwise expressly stated in the statutes of a federation, the federated monasteries remain under the supervision of the diocesan bishop or the power of the Master of the Order or Prior Provincial just as do monasteries which are not federated.

Chapter IV General Government of the Nuns

238. The Master of the Order:

- 1) is the proper and immediate regular superior of all the nuns and monasteries;
- 2) has the faculty of dispensing both individual nuns and the monasteries of the whole Order from disciplinary laws of the Order;
- 3) can by his own authority appoint and remove prioresses and any other officials of monasteries subject to the Order when it seems right to him in the Lord; likewise, he can limit and revoke their duties and authority.

239. It pertains to the Master of the Order to provide for changes in the Book of Constitutions after he has received the votes of the monasteries and the approval of the Holy See (n. 182).

240. I. Monasteries have a right to send petitions or questions to the General Chapter of the Order; likewise the General Chapter can make special ordinations for the nuns.

II. Acts of the General Chapter which do not pertain directly to the nuns can be applied to them as long as they are not contrary to the Book of Constitutions. But these applications are not to be made without the express permission of the Master of the Order.

SECTION III ELECTIONS

Chapter I Elections in General

Article I: Vocals and Those Eligible

241. In every election only those can cast a vote who enjoy active voice and belong to the chapter or elective body.

242. Besides the conditions determined by law, to enjoy active voice it is required only that one be solemnly professed, unless otherwise provided.

243. One who is exclaustated is deprived of active voice for the duration of the indult and for a year from the day of her return.

244. For one to enjoy passive voice, unless expressly provided otherwise, it is required only that she have active voice.

245. The regular superior and the prioress may not propose anyone for election unless there is trite necessity, and then they shall propose at least three; nevertheless the vocals may choose another outside this group.

246. I. Since the right of electing is principally ordered to the common good, all vocals are obliged to obey the summons.

II. Anyone who, without a just cause approved by the one who has the right to confirm or announce the election (cf. n. 260:1, II), abstains from voting in a prioral election, shall remain deprived of active voice in any election whatsoever for a full year, to be counted from the day of the above-named abstention.

Article II: The Manner of Voting

247. In every election a president, a secretary and two tellers shall be present.

248. I. The function of the secretary is to be discharged by the secretary of the chapter.

II. At the beginning of the elective session, tellers are to be chosen from among the vocals simultaneously in a single secret scrutiny, unless otherwise expressly determined.

III. All the acts of the election are to be recorded by the secretary and signed by her together with the president and tellers.

249. I. All voting by proxy being excluded, only the vocals present can cast a vote.

II. Every election is carried out by way of a scrutiny, that is, by secret votes written on ballots by the vocals themselves, since our legislation excludes election by compromise.

250. I. A vote is null unless it is:

1) free: a vote is invalid if a vocal has been forced, directly or indirectly, by grave fear or by deceit, to elect a specific nun;

2) secret: the ballot is to be written secretly and without bearing the name of the vocal and is to be folded and deposited in the ballot box;

3) certain: the name on the ballot should be clearly and legibly written, and if there are different persons with the same name, they are to be clearly distinguished;

4) absolute: no conditions should be added to the vote, and if added, the vote is rendered null;

5) determined: it must be for a specific person and one only.

II. No one can validly vote for herself.

251. I. When the scrutiny has been lawfully completed, she is elected who has obtained an absolute majority, that

is, more than half the votes, not counting those which are null.

II. To obtain this majority there can be more than one scrutiny, but unless it is provided otherwise the election is terminated with the third scrutiny in which a relative majority suffices.

III. In case of a tie vote in the scrutiny which terminates the election, in which a relative majority suffices, she is to be held elected who is senior in the Order; and if both were professed on the same day, the older in age.

Chapter II **The Election of a Prioress**

Article I: Vocals and Those Eligible

252. For one to have active voice in the election of a prioress it is required that she:

- 1) have active voice according to the norm of n. 242;
- 2) have been a member of the community which is voting for at least one year.

253. I. The nun to be elected prioress should:

- 1) be charitable, prudent and conscientious regarding regular observance;
- 2) have sufficient knowledge of the laws and traditions of the Order;
- 3) be able to participate in the community exercises.

II. For the validity of the election it is required that she:

- 1) have active voice according to the norm of n. 252;
- 2) have completed seven years from her solemn profession;
- 3) have completed thirty-five years of age;

4) not have been prioress in the same monastery for two consecutive and immediately preceding three- year terms.

254. I. If a nun is not eligible because of the impediments indicated in n. 253:11,2,3, the vocals can postulate her.
- II. If she is not eligible because of the impediment referred to in n. 253:11,4, she can be postulated only once.
- III. The vocals can postulate any nun from another monastery of the Order.
- IV. The postulation is to be presented within eight days of available time to the one who has the right to confirm or announce the election.

Article II: The Election

255. I. The chapter must elect a new prioress within a month from the day the office of prioress becomes vacant or, for a just cause approved by the regular superior or the local ordinary, within three months.
- II. The subprioress *in capite* is to convoke the elective chapter after consulting with the council.
256. I. In the monasteries referred to in n. 174:111 the local ordinary or a priest delegated by him presides at the election.
- II. In the monasteries referred to in n. 174:II the regular superior or a priest delegated by him presides.
257. I. The election can proceed for four scrutinies. In the first three, for a valid election an absolute majority is

required, that is, more than half the votes cast, invalid or blank votes not being counted. In the fourth scrutiny however, only the two nuns who received the highest number of votes in the third scrutiny have passive but not active voice. In this final scrutiny she is elected who receives a majority of votes, observing n. 25 1:111 in case of a tie vote.

II. If a postulation coincides with an election, and, in the third scrutiny the nun postulated does not receive two-thirds of the votes, postulation ceases and the elective process is begun anew according to the norms of the preceding paragraph, excluding any further postulation.

258. The procedure for the election is as follows:

1) When the vocals have assembled at the appointed time, the president enters the enclosure to preside at the election.

2) After the Holy Spirit has been invoked, two tellers are elected from among the vocals by a secret ballot simultaneously in one scrutiny. The tellers and the secretary take the oath to discharge their duties faithfully and to observe secrecy concerning the proceedings of the assembly even after the election.

3) The notary, that is, the secretary of the chapter, calls the roll of those who should be present by law as vocals; if they are present they are to answer.

4) If there are any objections to the admission or exclusion of any vocal they must be made at this point.

5) The president then reminds the vocals that no one can validly vote for herself.

6) When the ballots have been distributed by the secretary, the vocals write their votes in this way: "I elect or I postulate N ..." This formula is valid for both an election and a postulation, without, however, being necessary for the validity of the vote.

7) If any vocal present in the monastery is confined to her cell by illness the tellers are to go to her together to collect her written ballot; if the sick nun is unable to

write she may entrust the writing of her ballot to the tellers.

8) The subprioress *in capite* and the other vocals, one by one, place their folded ballot in the ballot box.

9) The tellers count the ballots; if their number does not exceed the number of vocals they unfold them. Otherwise they are burned at once and the vocals write new ballots.

10) The tellers and the president together read the ballots privately and record the votes; blank ballots and invalid votes are not counted.

11) The tellers compare their counts among themselves, and after these are found to be in agreement the ballots are burned.

12) If there are any objections to the form of the election they must be made at this point.

13) Then the president reads aloud the names of each of those who received votes.

14) If the required majority has not been obtained a new scrutiny is begun according to the norm of n. 257; but if the required majority was obtained the president declares Sister N. canonically elected or postulated as prioress.

15) If there are any objections to the person elected they must be made at this point.

16) The report of the election is to be drawn up (cf. n. 259), and signed by the president, tellers and secretary.

259. I. The report of the election is to be drawn up as a *processus verbatim*. In it are to be recorded the list of the vocals, the results of the separate scrutinies and also any objections that might have been made against the validity of the election, provided that they were made at the proper time (cf. above, n. 258:4,12, 15).

II. The report of the election is to be kept in the monastery archives. If for any reason the election cannot be confirmed or announced immediately, two copies of the report are to be sent to the one who has the right to confirm or announce it.

*Article III: The Confirmation or Announcement and
the Acceptance of the Election or Postulation*

260. I. In monasteries referred to in n. 174:II the power of confirming or cassating an election pertains to the regular superior. He can also entrust this faculty to a president delegated by him.

II. In monasteries referred to in n. 174:III, it is the diocesan bishop's right to announce the election. He can also entrust this faculty to a president delegated by him.

III. If it is a matter of postulation:

1) The postulation is to be submitted to him who, in case of an election, would have the power to confirm or announce it.

2) He is to seek the necessary dispensations from the Holy See or grant them according to his faculties.

261. I. After confirmation or announcement the nun elected as prioress can accept or refuse the election.

II. In monasteries referred to in n. 174:11 the regular superior can enjoin upon the one elected, even by formal precept, that she accept the burden of the office of prioress; in other monasteries the formal precept for this is reserved to the Master of the Order.

III. A prioress actually in office cannot be forced to accept the office of prioress in another monastery.

262. The announcement of the confirmation and acceptance is to be made before the community.

263. If the election is cassated or not accepted, the subprioress must, within a month, again convoke an elective chapter according to the norm of n. 255.

SECTION IV ***ECONOMIC ADMINISTRATION***

264. Proper management requires that the nuns share to some extent the responsibility for the temporalities of the community even in the way in which things are used. In fact, it involves a close relationship to poverty, of which it can be considered a practical application. Officials must administer economic matters with great diligence as faithful and wise stewards, in the spirit of loving service.

Chapter I **The Administration of** **Temporal Goods**

265. I. Economic administration is concerned primarily with those things which are necessary for the daily life of the nuns, and then extends to the buildings in which the community lives, prays and works, their furnishings and maintenance. Prudent administration also must provide in advance a capital reserve for unforeseen expenses.

II. The nuns procure their livelihood chiefly by diligent work and moderation in their life style and expenditures; and at the same time they accept gratefully the gifts of benefactors.

266. In virtue of ecclesiastical law the monastery possesses its own legal personality and as such may acquire, hold, administer and alienate temporalities. When this is not recognized by the civil government, a civilly recognized legal personality is to be established.

267. I. The temporalities of the society or association which assumes a civilly recognized legal personality on behalf of the monastery are actually the temporalities of the monastery and to be managed as such.

II. Hence the legal representative of the civil personality acting on behalf of the monastery, or any institute belonging to the latter, can perform only those acts which the prioress or authorized administrator can perform according to our laws. He is likewise strictly obliged to act, not as he chooses, but according to the directives of the competent official.

III. The same norm applies to all other administrators and to each of their associates who by vote or in any other way participate in administration. In all instances legal safeguards are to be provided so that no loss may be incurred in the event of a nun's death or for any other reason.

IV. The rights and duties of the legal representative, if a layperson, can be determined in a special contract.

268. To the monastery belong:

1) whatever the nuns receive for their work or industry, or as personal or community gifts, as well as whatever comes to them by way of pensions, bequests or insurance;

2) donations made to the monastery;

3) all goods legitimately acquired in the course of time whether movable, immovable or capital, and the income there from.

269. I. For the suppression of any monastery the permission of the Master of the Order and the approbation of the Holy See are required.

II. The Master of the Order is responsible for the distribution of its goods in favor of needy monasteries of the Order, always safeguarding the intentions of the donors.

Chapter II **The Method of Administration**

Article I: General Regulations

270. The administration of temporal goods is entrusted to the bursar. She is to be regarded as a delegated administrator and should discharge her office according to the laws of the Order.

271. The bursar, fulfilling her office (cf. n. 223) under the direction of the prioress, should be occupied with faithfully and prudently preserving and dispensing the goods of the monastery. In particular she must:

- 1) collect in due time the annual revenues, if any, of the monastery and of the nuns;
- 2) not spend money set aside for paying off debts;
- 3) be diligent in supplying what is needed, especially for the sick;
- 4) give a monthly report to the council of the receipts and expenses, debits and credits of the monastery;
- 5) give an annual report to the chapter and council of receipts and expenses, debits and credits of the

monastery, the transactions completed and the financial condition of the monastery, and insofar as possible submit a proposed budget for the following year;

6) render to the council an exact account of her administration at the end of her term.

272. The prioress can also appoint a particular nun to manage a specific project, within the limits of the norms for administration set down in the local directory.

273. I. Deputy administrators must render an account to the prioress and council.

II. These particular accounts are to be summarized in the annual report referred to in n. 27 1:5.

274. I. If a monastery incurs debts and obligations through the prioress, bursar or other administrators acting within their competency, the monastery itself is to be held responsible for them.

II. If a nun incurs the same without the permission of the prioress, she herself is responsible and not the monastery.

275. Every nun, including the prioress, is bound to give to the bursar all money and other emoluments so that they may be accurately recorded and, safeguarding the rights of any third party, added to the goods of the community.

276. I. After consultation with the chapter the deliberative vote of the council is required:

1) to contract debts and obligations: but these are not to be contracted unless it is certain that from current revenues the interest may be paid

and within not too long a period of time the principle may be amortized;

2) to buy and dispose of immovable goods and precious objects;

3) to accept the obligations of a legacy or a pious foundation of Masses;

4) to make major repairs or additions to the monastery buildings.

II. In these cases ecclesiastical laws are to be observed regarding recourse to the Apostolic See or the local ordinary, and also to the regular superior if the monastery is subject to the jurisdiction of the Order. In petitions for authorization to contract debts or obligations, current debts or obligations of the monastery must be made known; otherwise the permission obtained is invalid.

277. The amount of money which the prioress alone, and the prioress with the council, may spend or permit to be spent, is to be indicated in the local directory. If the need arises to spend a greater amount, then before the deliberative vote of the council, the consultative vote of the chapter is also required.

278. Undertakings of major import not involving expense to the monastery because they are being paid for by outside sources, still require the vote of both chapter and council.

279. No nun, not even the prioress, is to accept for deposit money, negotiable papers, or precious objects belonging to persons outside the monastery, except for a grave and urgent reason and with the deliberative vote of the monastery council.

280. Every year the prioress is to render to the local ordinary, or to the regular superior if the monastery is under the jurisdiction of the Order, an accurate and complete financial report prepared by the bursar.

281. I. Directories are to determine the manner of administration of temporal goods, both movable and immovable, according to the laws and usages of each region and with attention to the prescriptions of ecclesiastical law and that of the Order.

II. Each monastery or federation can avail itself of the assistance of a trustworthy person, expert in business administration.

Article II: Particular Administration

282. I. Account books are to be kept, in which must be recorded accurately all money and capital goods of any kind, and all receipts and expenses. Debts or any financial obligations, assets and loans are also to be clearly recorded.

II. The bursar must keep a careful and well-ordered register. At the end of her term of office she is to turn over all the accounts to her successor.

283. Since no undue accumulation of goods is to be allowed, in any monastery where there are truly superfluous goods the council, after the consultative vote of the chapter, is to dispose of them. These goods may be given either to some poorer monasteries, after consultation with the federation council, or to the poor.

Appendices

APPENDIX I

Ordinations

By virtue of the power granted in n. 180:4 of the Book of Constitutions of the Nuns of the Order of Preachers, I make the following Ordinations for all the monasteries, which Ordinations come into force together with the revised Constitutions.

Given at Rome from our General Curia at Santa Sabina, this 26th day of November in the year of our Lord, 1986.

Br. Damian Byrne, O.P.

Master of the Order

Prot. Num, 70/86/894

Br. EladioNeira, O.P.

Secretary General of the Order

Common Life

1. In each monastery a Mass is to be celebrated for the dead on February 7th for the anniversary of fathers and mothers, on September 5th for the anniversary of relatives, friends and benefactors of the Order, and on November 8th for the anniversary of brothers and sisters.

2. I. Once a week the community participates in the conventual Mass as a suffrage for the deceased, even if the Mass is not offered principally for this intention. Petitions for the dead should be added to the Prayer of General Intercession.

II. Once a week all the nuns are to recite the seven penitential psalms or a third part of the rosary for the dead, unless in place of these some other prayer form is prescribed in the directories.

3. At least once a day the *De Profundis* is to be recited by the nuns in common for the deceased brothers, sisters and benefactors of the Order.

4. I. In a monastery in which a nun, even though not professed, dies, a Mass is to be celebrated for her soul and the whole office of the dead recited by her community.

II. Each nun is to recite privately for a deceased nun of her monastery the seven penitential psalms or the rosary.

III. The same suffrages are to be offered on the death of the Supreme Pontiff, the bishop of the diocese, the Master or ex-Master of the Order and the regular superior.

5. The obsequies of a nun are to be performed in the church of the monastery. The celebrant is the chaplain or his delegate.

6. I. A nun is free to consult privately with a doctor about her infirmities.

II. By reason of her office the infirmarian is bound to secrecy. The prioress also must be reserved in speaking about the sick.

7. Insofar as possible the monastery should have its own cemetery within the enclosure. The monastery cemetery is reserved for those who belong to the community.

Liturgy

8. The nuns may use the vernacular in the office and chant according to the approved usage of their respective regions. Nevertheless they should esteem Gregorian Chant which the Church recognizes as proper to the Roman liturgy.

Hearing, Studying and Keeping the Word of God

9. Recorded conferences may be used. Because of their office or ability, some nuns may be provided with special training when possible, whether by correspondence or by attending some courses, with due permission and without detriment to the law of enclosure (see *Venite Seorsum*, n. 12).

10. I. In all these matters the prioress is strongly recommended to ask the advice of a friar of the Order approved by the Prior Provincial. If one of the nuns is qualified, she can be appointed to assist the prioress in promoting study.

II. Both the prioress and the nun appointed should strive to keep themselves informed of everything in their own area or elsewhere which might help the nuns in study.

Formation

11. The mistress of novices is also the mistress of postulants and of the sisters in temporary vows, unless the directories determine otherwise.

The Novitiate

12. I. In the novitiate there should be at least one common room and, if it seems advisable, an oratory.

II. A library should likewise be available, provided with books appropriate to formation.

The Juridical Status of the Monasteries and the Nuns

13. The nuns take rank among themselves according to the order of profession in such a way, however, that the prioress and subprioress take precedence over the others. The directories can make further provisions particularly in regard to the places and circumstances where this order is to be observed.

14. Every year the prioress is to notify the Master of the Order of the names of the nuns transfiliated from their own to another monastery of our Order and vice versa.

The General Government of the Nuns

15. The business of the nuns with the Holy See can be transacted through the Procurator General of the Order.

The Elections

16. Before the day of election, a discussion about possible candidates may be held, moderated by the subprioress *in capite*. Only the vocals may attend.

17. On the day of the election, or the day preceding, the Mass of the Holy Spirit is to be celebrated according to the rubrics.

Economic Administration

18. In order that the spirit of poverty and industry may be fostered together with corporate responsibility for the community, the chapter of the monastery is to be given information about its economic situation.

Particular Administration

19.
 - I. Money is to be deposited only in reliable banks in the name of the monastery, safeguarding n. 282.
 - II. A bank is selected by the prioress with the consent of the council.
 - III. Money deposited in banks is not to be withdrawn except by checks signed by either the prioress or bursar, or both.
20. When a nun is temporarily transferred to another monastery the respective prioresses with their councils must enter into an agreement concerning her financial maintenance.
21.
 - I. In accordance with the prudent judgment of the council the monastery must carry the necessary insurance, and liability or third party insurance must not be omitted.
 - II. In localities where, for example, health, old age, accident, disability and compensation insurance is obligatory, the nuns must not fail to comply.
22.
 - I. Workers are to be paid a just wage, and civil laws, especially social legislation regarding their insurance, taxes and the like, are to be strictly observed.
 - II. In regions where social legislation such as referred to above is lacking, prioresses must provide for the security of employees according to the principles of social justice.

APPENDIX II

Enclosure

(see n. 37)

Norms from *Venite Seorsum* (VI: 7,8)

7. Besides cases provided for by particular indults from the Holy See, those mentioned in article 5 may leave the enclosure:

- a) in the case of very grave and imminent danger;
- b) with permission of the Superior, and with at least habitual consent of the local Ordinary and of the regular superior, if there is one:

1. to consult physicians or to undergo medical treatment, provided that this is done locally or in the vicinity of the convent;
2. to accompany a sick nun, if real necessity so demands;
3. to perform manual labor or to exercise necessary surveillance in places situated outside the enclosure, yet on the premises of the convent;
4. to exercise one's civil rights;
5. to conduct business transactions which cannot be handled otherwise.

Except for purposes of medical treatment, if absence from the enclosure is to be prolonged for more than one week, the Superior must previously obtain the consent of the local Ordinary and of the regular superior, if there is one.

- c) except in the cases referred to under b), the Superior must seek permission from the local Ordinary, and, if there is one, from the regular superior, by whom such permission may be granted only if there is really a

serious reason, and then for just as brief a period as is necessary;

d) all absences permitted in accordance with clauses a), b) and c) of this article may not be prolonged beyond three months without the authorization of the Holy See.

8 Besides cases provided for by particular indults of the Holy See, the following ate permitted to enter the cloister.

a) Cardinals, who may likewise introduce their retinue; nuncios and apostolic delegates, in the areas of their own jurisdiction;

b) reigning sovereigns or heads of State, together with their wives and retinue;

c) the local Ordinary and the regular superior for a reason able motive;

d) canonical visitors at the time of the visitation but only for inspection, and provided that they be accompanied by a male religious;

e) a priest, together with servers, to administer the sacraments to the sick or to hold funeral services. A priest may likewise be admitted to assist those religious suffering from a chronic or grave illness;

f) a priest, together with servers, to conduct liturgical processions, if such is requested by the Superior;

g) physicians and all others whose work or skill is required to provide for the needs of the convent, with the permission of the Superior and under the surveillance of the local Ordinary and, if there is one, of the regular superior;

h) sisters employed in the external service of the convent, in accordance with the statutes of each Institute.

APPENDIX III

The Departure and Dismissal of Nuns

(see n, 170)

In these cases C I C nfl 684 3 686 2 687 688 2 689, 690 691
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