

CONSTITUTIONS
OF THE FRANCISCAN MISSIONARY SISTERS
OF ASSISI

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OF ASSISI

ASSISI
Casa Generalizia
2014

Constitutions

- -Approved by the General Chapter, Assisi, September 2013.
- Approved and confirmed by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Rome, 15 August 2014.

CONGREGATION
FOR INSTITUTES OF CONSECRATED LIFE
AND SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE

Prot. n. 74-1/2001

DECREE

The XIV General Chapter of the Congregation of the “Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Assisi”, after a thorough study, done in view of greater adherence to the founding Charism, revised the text of the Constitutions approved by the Holy See on 8th December 1989.

The Superior General, with the letter dated 1st November, 2013 submitted a request for approval on the modified text of the Constitutions, voted by the Chapter, celebrated from 26th August to 29th September, 2013.

This Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, after a careful examination of the document, in which some parts were rectified, in virtue of the present Decree, approves the new Constitutions, according to the copy written in the Italian language, and preserved in its archives.

This approval includes the earnest hope that the ob-

servance of the Constitutions will be for the “Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Assisi” a valuable aid in the realization of their missionary commitment, in fidelity to the Franciscan Charism, according to the spirit of the Founders.

Any contrary disposition notwithstanding.

Vatican, 15th July 2014

+ JOSÉ RODRIGUES CARBALLO, O.F.M.
ARCHBISHOP SECRETARY

SR. NICOLETTA V. SPEZZATI, A.S.C.
UNDERSECRETARY

Prot. n. 48/2014

PRESENTATION OF THE CONSTITUTIONS

Dearest Sisters,

We present the updated Constitutions approved and confirmed by the Holy See.

The promulgation of the new text of the Constitutions was done on the occasion of the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a very important feast for the Church and above all, for our Religious family. This day was specifically loved by our Founders and on which, under the protection of our Mother Mary Most Holy, we renew our vows.

The need to update the Constitutions of 1989 was the fruit of the General Chapter of 2007. After its assiduous, demanding and focused work, the appointed Commission presented the draft of the updated Constitutions to the General Chapter which was celebrated in Assisi in September, 2013. The Chapter Assembly took note of the

proposed modifications and after more reflection and re-elaboration, approved the text to be presented to the Holy See for Canonical approval.

On 15th July 2014, in Rome, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life issued the decree of approval.

Every Charism is a gift of the Spirit, aroused for the common good (1Cor 12: 7) and, Holy Mother Church, recognizing it as such, becomes the guardian of the gift received.

The Constitutions are an indispensable aspect of the Charism; and they are an instrument to know that same Charism. They express a charismatic gift, a spiritual intuition, translated into a plan of life: a task for the entire religious family, for every fraternity and for each Franciscan Missionary Sister of Assisi.

The meaning and the goal of every norm and of the Constitutions, is not that of blindly obeying a simple, exterior law; it is about obeying and embracing a Person: Jesus Christ *the Way, the Truth and the Life* (Jn 14: 6). *“It was the Holy Spirit who sparked the Word of God with new light for the founders and foundresses. Every charism and every Rule springs from it and seeks to be an expression of it. In continuity with the founders and foundresses their disciples today are called to take up the Word of God and to cherish it in their hearts*

so that it may be a lamp for their feet and a light for their path (cf. Ps 118, 105). ***The Holy Spirit will then be able to lead them to the fullness of truth*** (cf. Jn 16: 13)". (SAC 24)¹

For St. Francis of Assisi obedience to Christ, to the Gospel and to the Church, is the same obedience. When one accepts the Word of God with love, readiness and commitment, the Word is experienced as a true treasure (Mt 13: 44): a treasure which gives joy and freedom; which heals and cures. In the same manner, the one who desires to discover the richness, the strength and beauty of the Constitutions is called to cultivate an underlying interior attitude before them, done with acceptance in love, with readiness and commitment.

I therefore, recommend to every Franciscan Missionary Sister of Assisi, that she comes to know and assume, with new vigour the new updated, approved and confirmed Constitutions by Holy Mother Church, so as to revive them among us, so we can offer them to the Church and the world.

My hope and wish for each sister is that she receives our form of life with an open and decisive heart, such

1) CONGREGATION FOR INSTITUTES OF CONSECRATED LIFE AND SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE, *Starting Afresh with Christ, Instructions: A renewed commitment of Consecrated Life in the Third Millennium*, 2002.

that, each one may live her vocation with joy, by making a leap forward in quality towards Jesus, His Gospel and his Kingdom, as Pope Francis exhorts us.

Assisi, 8th September 2014

Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Faternally
SISTER JULIANA MALAMA
Superior General

INSTITUTE OF THE FRANCISCAN
MISSIONARY SISTERS OF ASSISI (SFMA)
HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

The Institute of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Assisi (del Giglio) is a Franciscan and missionary Institute that came to birth in Assisi, Italy in 1702. It was founded by a Friar Minor Conventual, Father Joseph Anthony Marcheselli (1676 – 1742), together with a Franciscan Tertiary, Angela Maria del Giglio (1658 – 1736), whose family name the Institute used until the General Chapter of 1977.

Fr. J. A Marcheselli was born in Casalmaggiore (Cremona) on 21st February 1676; he was ordained a priest in 1699, and became a writer, confessor, spiritual director and preacher in the Basilica of St. Francis from 1701 – 1723. He also taught for many years in the Theological Institute of the Stigmata at the Sacro Convento (Sacred Convent). After a short stay in Rome as Custos at the Friary of Santi Apostoli (Holy Apostles), he took up again his ministry in Assisi (1725 – 1742), as well as dedicating himself to preaching in different cities of Italy. He spent

many hours in the confessional; he defended the cause of prisoners and sustained orphans and widows.

Angela Maria del Giglio was born in Vicenza on 7th February 1658. Attracted by the Franciscan ideal of life, she went to live in Assisi in 1689. On 6th October she professed as a tertiary and became a member of the Franciscan Third Order of the Basilica of St Francis.

Fr. J. A. Marcheselli and Angela Maria del Giglio first met during the Advent of 1701. It was an encounter between two persons in love with God, attentive to God's will and to the voice of the Holy Spirit. It was an encounter of two desires: on one hand, that of the Founder, Father J. A. Marcheselli of reviving the Third Order, which had lost its original freshness; on the other hand, that of the Foundress, Angela M. del Giglio, of living the radical Evangelical-Franciscan life, belonging totally to God.

The founder, in his writings, clarifies the *identity* of the institute: ***You have to be a Congregation under the Rule of our Father St. Francis, called the Third Order, confirmed by Nicholas IV, and authenticated by many saints and blessed who attained perfection through it,*** (Writings, p. 36).

The Founder proposed a form of evangelical life ***according to the mind of St. Francis***, inserted in the rich tradition of the Franciscan *Penitents*, according to the Rule of the Third Order of St. Francis: interpreted, explained and compiled by the Founder himself in the *Instructions*.

The Foundress welcomed Fr. Marcheselli's propos-

al of starting a community of Tertiaries who desired to seek **God alone** and to maintain their **hearts as living temples of the Holy Spirit**.

The project of the two Founders was that of returning, not only, to the origins of the Franciscan life, but even to the origins of the primitive Church.

The first community known as the *Piccola Adunanza* (*Small Gathering*) or the *Pious House*, assumed Franciscan-Evangelical values right from the beginning, as a way of moving towards holiness, in **following the poor and crucified Christ** shaped in daily life.

After the death of the Founders, Mother Angela M. Del Giglio on 2nd November 1736 and Fr. J. A. Marcheselli on 16th May 1742, the story of this *small flock* continued to be a story of grace, even in the midst of many trials. For 200 years, the sisters were present and ministered only in Assisi where they overcame some very difficult moments with courage and faith in God: the Napoleonic suppression of 1810 and the Italian suppression of 1860.

This religious Family, shaping itself little by little, began, in 1902, to spread out into various parts of the world: Greece, Turkey, Rumania, Albania, and into other regions of Italy. With these new openings, the *Small Gathering* was slowly transformed into an authentic Institute.

In 1920, the Institute received pontifical, juridical and canonical recognition. In 1927, the Institute adopted the new Rule of the Third Order Regular promulgated by Pope Pius XI. The same Pope approved and confirmed

the Constitutions in 1934. In that same year, we received civil recognition of the Institute, as a juridical body.

In 1977, after Vatican Council II, the Constitutions were significantly renewed. In 1982, Pope John Paul II approved and promulgated the new *Rule and Life of the brothers and sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis* and, in 1989, approved definitively the Constitutions of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Assisi.

Today, in continuity with our origins, the sisters follow together the path to holiness: in fraternity and in poverty, in penance and conversion, in continuous prayer and in the exercise of the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, at the service of the poor. They commit themselves to accomplish every service in the spirit of minority, simplicity and Franciscan joy.

Lastly, the sisters welcome with deep devotion and commitment, *the written intention* of the Founder, which they consider as a spiritual Testament: *Yearn always to become holy. It is not pride to want that, which Jesus Christ desires and wishes; that we become as holy as his heavenly Father.*

Furthermore: ***Finally don't forget the one who wrote. Pray for him that while he is alive, he may live what he has written. Pray for him in death, that the Lord may find him worthy of the place of salvation. Pray for him after death, that he may leave purgatory quickly and go to the holy homeland, and once there, have the greatest joy of seeing you all enter, full of merits and holiness, and even see his head destined as your footstool.*** (*Writings*, p. 248)

Currently, the Institute is present in the following countries: Italy (1702), Romania (1919), Japan (1958), Brazil (1959), Zambia (1960), Croatia (1961), United States of America (1961), Korea (1980), Kenya (1990), Philippines (1996), China (2002), Russia (2003), Indonesia (2004), Republic of Moldova (2006), Mexico (2010), Malawi (2010), Argentina (2011), Germany (2011), Cuba (2012), Vietnam (2013).

ABBREVIATIONS

Acts	Acts of the Apostles
1Cor	First letter to the Corinthians
2Cor	Second letter to the Corinthians
Col	Letter to the Colossians
Eph	Letter to the Ephesians
Gal	Letter to the Galatians
Heb	Letter to the Hebrews
Jn	Gospel according to St. John
1Jn	First letter of St. John
Lk	Gospel according to St. Luke
Mk	Gospel according to St. Mark
Mt	Gospel according to St. Matthew
Phil	Letter to the Philippians
Ps	Psalms
1Pt	First letter of St. Peter
Rom	Letter to the Romans
1Thes	First letter to the Thessalonians
1 Tim	First letter to Timothy

DOCUMENTS OF THE MAGISTERIUM OF THE CHURCH

AG	<i>Ad Gentes</i> (Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, Vat. II 1965)
CIC	<i>Codex Iuris Canonici</i> (Code of Canon Law)
Deus Caritas est . .	<i>Deus caritas est</i> (Benedict XVI, Encyclical letter on Christian love, 2005)
CD	Contemplative Dimension of Religious Life (Congregation of the Institutes of Consecrated life and Societies of Apostolic Life, 1980)
DV	<i>Dei Verbum</i> (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Vat. II 1965)
EE	Essential Elements of the Teaching of the Church on Religious Life (Congregation of the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life Instruction, 1983)
EN	<i>Evangelii nuntiandi</i> (Paul VI, The commitment of announcing the Gospel. Apostolic exhortation, 1975)
ET	<i>Evangelica Testificatio</i> (Apostolic Exhortation on the Renewal of Religious Life, 1971)
FLC	<i>Fraternal life in community</i> (Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, 1994)
FT	<i>Faciem tuam</i> (Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of

	Apostolic Life, The service of authority and obedience. Instruction, 2008)
GS	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i> (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Vat. II 1965)
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i> (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Vat. II 1964)
MC	<i>Marialis cultus</i> (Paul VI, Apostolic exhortation on the veneration of the Virgin Mary, 1974)
NMI	<i>Novo millennio ineunte</i> (John Paul II, Apostolic letter of the Great Jubilee of the year 2000, 2001)
PC	<i>Perfectae Caritatis</i> (Decree on the Renewal of Religious Life, Vat. II 1965)
Poen.	<i>Poenitemini</i> (Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution on the practice of Penance in the Church, 1966)
RD	<i>Redemptoris Donum</i> (John Paul II, Apostolic exhortation to the religious on consecrated life in the light of the mystery of redemption, 1984)
SAC	Starting afresh from Christ (Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, A renewed commitment to consecrated life in the third millennium. Instruction, 2002)
RMi	<i>Redemptoris missio</i> (John Paul II, Encyclical Letter on the validity of the missionary mandate, 1990)

VC *Vita consecrata* (John Paul II, Post-synod
Apostolic Exhortation, 1996)

CHARISMATIC DOCUMENTS

FF Franciscan sources (Edizioni messaggero,
1983.) Writings of St. Francis

St. Francis' script

Adm Admonitions

Cant St. Francis Canticle of Brother Sun

LCap. Letter to the General Chapter and to all
Friars

Lds. The Lauds or Praises

1L Letter to all the faithful

2Let Letter to Clerics

4Let Letter to a Minister

5Let Letter to the whole Order

1Reg. First Rule

2Reg. Second Rule

SBV Salutation to the Blessed Virgin Mary

SV Salutation of the Virtues

Test Testament

Biographies

1C First Life of St. Francis by Thomas of Cel-
ano

2C Second life of St. Francis by Thomas of
Celano

Com Sacrum commercium

LM	Major Life of St. Francis by St. Bonaventure
3S	Legend of the Three Companions

Writings of St. Clare

RsC	Rule of Saint Clare of Assisi
TestCl	The Testament of Saint Clare of Assisi

DOCUMENTS OF THE INSTITUTE

Writings	Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Assisi, Writings of the Founder Fr. Joseph Anthony Marcheselli OFMConv, 2005
Const.	Constitutions
RTor	Rule and Life of the brothers and sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis
Gen. St.	General Statutes
Part. St.	Particular Statutes

THE RULE AND LIFE
OF THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS
OF THE THIRD ORDER REGULAR OF
ST. FRANCIS

Explanation of sources

- The text of the Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis is edited by the Franciscan Federation, 1982.
- The references in the margin are in conformity with the Italian text of the *Fonti Francescane*, Editio Minor, Editrici Francescane 1986.
- The texts of the canons of the Code of Canon law cited in the Constitutions are from the Code of Canon Law, Latin-English edition, Canon Law Society of America, Washington D.C., 1983.
- The texts of the Founder are taken from:
SUORE FRANCESCANE MISSIONARIE DI ASSISI,
Scritti del Fondatore Padre Giuseppe Antonio Marcheselli, OFMConv. (Writings of the founder Fr. Joseph Antony Marcheselli OFMConv.), Tipografia Metastasio, 2005.

APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTION
“FRANCISCANUM VITAE”
JOHN PAUL II
in perpetual memory

Much as in past centuries, the Franciscan ideal of life so also in our times continually attracts many men and women desirous of evangelical perfection and thirsty for the kingdom of God. Inspired by the example of Saint Francis of Assisi, the members of the Third Order Regular set forth to follow Jesus Christ by living in fraternal communion, professing the observance of the evangelical counsels of obedience, poverty and chastity with public vows, and by dedicating themselves to innumerable forms of apostolic activity. To actualize in the best way possible their chosen way of life, they dedicate themselves unreservedly to prayer, strive to grow in fraternal love, live true penance and cultivate Christian self-denial.

Since these very elements and motives for living the Franciscan ideal are clearly present in “The Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis and since they are clearly in accord with the genuine Franciscan spirit, We, bearing in mind what Our Predecessors Leo X and Pius X, with the Apostolic

Constitutions «Inter cetera” and “Rerum condicio” presented on this matter in their own times, in the fullness of our apostolic authority, determine, declare and order that the present Rule have the force and the importance to illustrate to the brothers and sisters this authentic meaning of the Franciscan life.

Since We know how diligently and assiduously this, “Rule and Life” has travelled its path of “aggiornamento” and how fortuitously it arrived at the desired convergence of different points of view through collegial discussion and consultation, proposals and studied amendments, for this very reason with well founded hope We trust that the longed-for fruits of renewal will be brought to full realization.

We decree, moreover, that this our decision have force from this moment on and be effectively binding both in the present and in the future, anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at Rome, at Saint Peter’s
sealed with the ring of the Fisherman,
on the 8th of December, 1982,
the fifth year of our pontificate.

AUGUSTINE CARDINAL CASAROLI
Prefect for Public Affairs of the Church

**The words of St. Francis
to his followers**

(1 Let 1)

All who love the Lord with their whole heart, their whole soul and mind, and with their strength, and love their neighbor as themselves, and who despise the tendency in their humanity to sin, receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and bring forth from within themselves fruits worthy of true penance. How happy and blessed are these men and women when they do these things, and persevere in doing them because the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon them, and the Lord will make His home and dwelling place with them. They are the children of the Heavenly Father whose works they do. They are the spouses, brothers and mothers of Our Lord Jesus Christ. We are his spouses when the faithful soul is united by the Holy Spirit with Our Lord Jesus Christ. We are brothers when we do the will of the

Father who is in Heaven. We are mothers when we bear him in our hearts and bodies with divine love and with pure and sincere consciences; and we give birth to him through a holy life which should enlighten others because of our example. How glorious it is to have so holy and great a Father in Heaven; and to have such a beautiful and admirable Spouse, the Holy Paraclete; and to have a Brother and Son, so holy, beloved, blessed, humble, peaceful, sweet, lovable and desirable over all things: Our Lord Jesus Christ who gave up his life for his sheep and prayed to the Father, saying: Holy Father, keep in your name those whom you gave me in the world; they are yours and you gave them to me. And the word which you gave me I gave to them, and they accepted it and truly believed that it came forth from you. And they have accepted that you sent me. I pray for them and not for the world. Bless them and sanctify them. I sanctify myself for their sakes. I do not pray only for these but also for those who, through their word, will believe in me; may they be holy in oneness as we are. Father, I wish that where I am they too may be and that they may see my glory in your kingdom. Amen.

IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!
THE BEGINNING OF THE RULE AND LIFE
OF THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS
OF THE THIRD ORDER REGULAR
OF ST. FRANCIS

I

OUR IDENTITY

1. The form of life of the Brothers and Sisters is this: to observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, living in obedience, in poverty and in chastity. Following Jesus Christ after the example of St. Francis, let them recognize that they are called to make greater efforts in their observance of the precepts and counsels of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Let them deny themselves as each has promised the Lord.

Cf. Rb 1,2
Cf. RsC 1,2
Cf. RsC 6,1

Cf. 2Lf 36-39
Cf. Mt 16,24
Cf. 2 Lf 40

2. With all in the holy Catholic and apostolic Church who wish to serve the Lord, the brothers and sisters of this order are to persevere in true faith and penance. They wish to live this evangelical conversion of

Rnb 21,9
Rnb 23,4

Cf. Mt 23,4

life in a spirit of prayer, of poverty, and of humility. Therefore, let them abstain from all evil and persevere to the end in doing good because God the son himself will come again in glory and will say to all who acknowledge, adore and serve him in sincere repentance: *Come blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.*

Rb 1,2
Cf. RsC 1,3
Cf. Rb 1,3

Cf. Rsc 1,5
Cf. Rnb 7,15

3. The sisters and brothers promise obedience and reverence to the Pope and the Holy Catholic Church. In this same spirit they are to obey those called to ministers and servants of their own fraternity. And wherever they are or in whatever situation they are in, they should diligently and fervently show reverence and honor to one another.

They should also foster unity and communion with all the members of the Franciscan family.

II

**ACCEPTANCE
INTO THIS LIFE**

4. Those who through the Lord's inspiration come to us desiring to accept this way of life are to be received kindly. At the appropriate time, they are to be presented to the ministers of the fraternity who hold responsibility to admit them.

Cf. Test 16
Rnb 2,1

Cf. Rb 2,1

5. The ministers shall ascertain that the aspirants truly adhere to the catholic faith and the Church's sacramental life. If they are found to have a vocation they are to be initiated into the life of the fraternity. Let everything pertaining to this gospel way of life be explained to them, especially these words of the Lord: *If you wish to be perfect go and sell all your possessions and give to the poor. You will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me. And if anyone wishes*

Cf. Rb 2,2
Cf. RsC 2,2

Mt 19,21
Cf. Lc 18,22

Mt 16,24

Rnb 1,2-3
Cf. RsC 2,8

to follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.

Cf. Rnb 2,14

6. Led by the Lord, let them begin a life of penance conscious that all of us must be continuously and totally converted to the Lord. As a sign of their conversion and consecration to gospel life they are to clothe themselves plainly and to live in simplicity.

Cf. Rb 2,11
Cf. Am 16

7. When their initial formation is completed they are to be received into obedience promising to observe this life and rule always. Let them put aside all attachment as well as every care and worry. Let them only be concerned to serve, love, adore, and honor the Lord God, as best they can, with single heartedness and purity of intention.

Cf. Gv 14-23
Rnb 22,27

Cf. 1 Lf 5-10
Cf. 2Lf 48-53

8. Within themselves let them always make a dwelling place and home for the Lord God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, so that, with undivided hearts, they may increase in universal love by continually turning to God and to neighbor.

III

THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER

9. Everywhere and in each place, and in every season and each day the brothers and sisters are to have a true and humble faith. From the depths of their inner life let them love, honor, adore, serve, praise, bless and glorify our most high and eternal God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. With all that they are let them adore Him because *We should pray always and not lose heart*; this is what the Father desires. In this same spirit let them also celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours in union with the whole Church.

Rnb 23,11

Lc 18,1
Rnb 22,30

The sisters and brothers whom the Lord has called to the life of contemplation, with a daily renewed joy, should manifest their special dedication to God and celebrate the Father's love for the world. It was He who created and redeemed us, and by His mercy alone will save us.

Rnb 23,8

Cf. Mt 11,25

Cf. Cant 3
Rnb 23,1

10. The brothers and sisters are to praise the Lord, the king of heaven and earth, with all his creatures and to give Him thanks because, by his own holy will and through his only Son with the Holy Spirit, He has created all things spiritual and material and made us in his own image and likeness.

Gv 6,63
Cf. 2 Lf 3

11. Since the sisters and brothers are to be totally conformed to the Gospel, they should reflect and keep in their hearts the words of Our Lord Jesus Christ who is the word of the Father, as well as the words of the Holy Spirit which are *spirit and life*.

Gv 6,54
Rnb20,5

12. Let them participate in the sacrifice of Our Lord Jesus Christ and receive His Body and Blood with great humility and reverence remembering the words of the Lord: *He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life*.

LOrd 12-13
Lch1
Cf. Test 12
Cf. Col 1,20

Moreover, they are to show the greatest possible reverence and honor for the most sacred name, written words and most holy Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ through whom all things in heaven and on earth have been brought to peace and reconciliation with Almighty God.

13. Whenever they commit sin the brothers and sisters, without delay, are to do penance interiorly by sincere sorrow and exteriorly by confessing their sins to a priest.

Am 23,3

Cf. 2Lf 25

They should also do worthy deeds that manifest their repentance. They should fast and always strive to be simple and humble, especially before God. They should desire nothing else but our Savior who offered himself in his own Blood as a sacrifice on the altar of the Cross for our sins giving us example so that we might follow in his footsteps.

2 Lf 45

2 Lf 11-13

IV

**THE LIFE OF CHASTITY
FOR THE SAKE OF THE KINGDOM**

14. Let the brothers and the sisters keep in mind how great a dignity the Lord God has given them because *He created them and formed them in the image of His beloved Son according to the flesh and in His own likeness according to the spirit.* Am 5,1

Since they are created through Christ and in Christ, they have chosen this form of life which is founded on the words and deeds of our Redeemer. Cf. Col 1,16

15. Professing chastity *for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, they are to care for the things of the Lord and they have nothing else to do except to follow the will of the Lord and to please Him.* In all of their works the love of God and all people should shine forth. Mt 19,12
1 Cor 7,32
Rnb 22,9

16. They are to remember that they have been called by a special gift of grace to manifest in their lives that wonderful mystery by which the Church is joined to Christ her spouse.

Cf. Ef 5,23-26

17. Let the brothers and the sisters keep the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ, ever before their eyes. Let them do this according to the exhortation of St. Francis who held Holy Mary, Lady and Queen, in highest veneration since she is the *virgin made church*. Let them also remember that the immaculate Virgin Mary, whose example they are to follow, called herself the *handmaid of the Lord*.

Sal BVM 1

Cf. Lc 1,38

V

THE WAY TO SERVE AND WORK

18. As poor people, the brothers and sisters to whom the Lord has given the grace of serving or working with their hands should do so faithfully and conscientiously. Let them avoid that idleness which is the enemy of the soul. But they should not be so busy that the spirit of holy prayer and devotion, which all earthly goods should foster, is extinguished.

Rb 5,1-3

Cf. RsC 7,1-2

19. In exchange for their service or work they may accept anything necessary for their own temporal needs and for that of their sisters or brothers. Let them accept it humbly as is expected of those who are servants of God and seekers of most holy poverty. Whatever they may have over and above their needs they are to give to the poor. And let them never want to be over others. In-

Rb 5,3,4
Cf. Rnb 2,4;9,8
1Pt 2,13
2Lf 47

stead they should be servants and subjects to every human creature for the Lord's sake.

Cf. Rb 3,11

Cf. Rb 3,10

Rnb 7,16

Cf. Fil 4,4

Test 23

20. Let the sisters and brothers be gentle, peaceful and unassuming, mild and humble, speaking respectfully to all in accord with their vocation. Wherever they are, wherever they go throughout the world they should not be quarrelsome, contentious, or judgmental towards others. Rather, it should be obvious that they are joyful, good-humored, and *happy in the Lord* as they ought to be. And in greeting others, let them say: *The Lord give you peace!*

VI

THE LIFE OF POVERTY

21. All the sisters and brothers zealously follow the poverty and humility of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Though rich beyond measure, he emptied himself for our sake and with the holy virgin, His mother, Mary; He chose poverty in this world. Let them be mindful that they should have only those goods of this world which, as the Apostle says, *Provide enough food and sufficient clothing; with these we are content*. Let them particularly beware of money. And let them be happy to live among the outcast and despised, among the poor, the weak, the sick, the unwanted, the oppressed, and the destitute.

2 Cor 8,9
Fil 2,7
Rnb 9,1

2Lf 5
Cf. RsC 6,7

1Tm 6,8
Rb 5,3-4
Rnb 8,11

Rnb 9,2

22. The truly poor in spirit, following the example of the Lord, live in this world as pilgrims and strangers. They neither appropriate nor defend anything as their own.

Cf. Am 14

Rb 6,1-2

Cf. 1Pt 2,11
Rb 6,4-6
Cf. Gc 2,5

So excellent is this most high poverty that it makes us heirs and rulers of the kingdom of heaven. It makes us materially poor, but rich in virtue.

Sal 141,6
Cf. RsC 8,5-6

Let this poverty alone be our portion because it leads to the land of the living. Clinging completely to it let us; for the sake of Our Lord Jesus Christ never want anything else under heaven.

VII

FRATERNAL LOVE

23 Because God loves us, the brothers and sisters should love each other, for the Lord says: *This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.* Let them manifest their love in deeds. Also whenever they meet each other, they should show that they are members of the same family. Let them make known their needs to one another.

Rnb 11,5-6

Gv 15,12

Cf. Gc 2,18
Cf. 1Gv 3,18
Rnb 9,10
Cf. TsC 59

Blessed are they who love another who is sick and seemingly useless, as much as when that brother or sister is well and of service to them.

Cf. Am 24
Rnb 9,10

Whether in sickness or in health, they should only want what God wishes for them. For all that happens to them let them give thanks to our Creator.

Rnb 10,3

24 If discord caused by word or deed should occur among them, they should immediately and humbly ask forgiveness of one another even before offering their gift of prayer before the Lord.

Cf. Mt 5,24
Cf. Mt 18,35

And if anyone seriously neglects the form of life all profess, the minister, or others who may know of it, are to admonish that person. Those giving the admonition should neither embarrass nor speak evil of the other, but show great kindness. Let all be careful of self righteousness, which causes anger and annoyance because of another's sin. These in oneself or in another hinder living lovingly.

Cf. Lmin 15

2Lf 44

Rb 7,3
Cf. RsC 9,5-6

VIII

THE OBEDIENCE OF LOVE

25. Following the example of Our Lord Jesus Christ who made his own will one with the Father's, the sisters and brothers are to remember that, for God, they should give up their own wills. Therefore, in every kind of Chapter they have let them *seek first the kingdom of God and its justice*, and exhort one another to observe more exactly this rule which all have professed, as well as how they might more faithfully follow in the footsteps of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Am 3,6
Cf. Sal V 3
Cf. 2Lf 10
Rb 10,2
Cf. Rnb 18,1

Mt 6,33
Cf. Test 34

Let them neither dominate nor seek power over one another, but let them willingly serve and obey each other with that genuine love which comes from each one's heart. This is the true and holy obedience of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Cf. Rnb 5,9

Cf. Gal 5,13

Rnb 5,14-15

26. They are always to have one of their

Cf. Rb 8,1
Rb 10,3
Cf. RsC 10,2

numbers as minister and servant of the fraternity whom they are strictly obliged to obey in all that they have promised the Lord to observe, and which is not contrary to conscience or this rule.

Rnb 4,2
Rb 10,1
Cf. RsC 10,1

27. Those who are ministers and servants of the others should visit, admonish and encourage them with humility and love. Should there be brothers or sisters anywhere who know and acknowledge that they cannot observe the rule according to its spirit, it is their right and duty to have recourse to their ministers. The ministers are to receive them with such love, kindness, and sympathy that the sisters or brothers can speak and act towards them just as an employer would with a worker. This is how it should be. The ministers are to be servants of all.

Rb 10,4-6
Cf. RsC 10,4-5

Cf. TsC 61-66

Cf. Rnb 17,4

28. No one is to appropriate any office or ministry whatsoever as if it were a personal right; rather each should willingly relinquish it when the time comes.

IX

APOSTOLIC LIFE

29. The brothers and sisters are to love the Lord *with their whole heart, their whole soul and mind and with all their strength*, and to love their neighbor as themselves. Let them glorify the Lord in all they do. For He has sent them into the world so that they might give witness by word and work to His voice and to make known to all that the Lord alone is God.

Cf. Mc 12,30
Cf. Mt 22,39

Cf. 1Lf 1

Cf. Tb 13,4
Cf. LOrd 8,9

30. As they announce peace with their lips, let them be careful to have it even more within their own hearts. No one should be aroused to wrath or insult on their account, rather all should be moved to peace, goodwill and mercy because of their gentleness. The sisters and brothers are called to heal the wounded, to bind up those who are bruised, and to reclaim the erring. Where-

Cf. 3Comp 58

Cf. Is 61,1

ever they are they should recall that they have given themselves up completely and handed themselves over totally to Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rnb 16,10-12

Mt 5,10

Therefore, they should be prepared to expose themselves to every enemy, visible and invisible for love of him because the Lord says: *Blessed are they, who suffer persecution for the sake of justice, theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

1 Gv 4,16

Cf. Rnb 17,5-6

31. In that love which is God all the brothers and sisters, whether they are engaged in prayer, or in announcing the Word of God, or in serving or doing manual labor should strive to be humble in everything. They should not seek glory, or be self-satisfied, or interiorly proud because of a good work or word God does or speaks in or through them.

Cf. Rnb 17,17

Rather in every place and circumstance let them acknowledge that all good belongs to the most high Lord and Ruler of all things. Let them always give thanks to Him from whom we receive all good.

EXHORTATION AND BLESSING

32. Let the sisters and brothers always be mindful that they should desire one thing alone, namely, the Spirit of God at work within them.

Rnb 17,4
Cf. RsC 10,8-9

Always obedient to the Church and firmly established in the Catholic faith let them live according to the poverty, the humility and the holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ which they have solemnly promised to observe.

Rb 12,4
Cf. RsC 12,13

Whoever will observe these things shall be filled with the blessing of the Most High Father in Heaven, and on earth with the blessing of His beloved Son, with the Holy Spirit, and with all virtues and with all the saints.

And I, Brother Francis, your little one and servant, in so far as I am able, confirm to you within and without this most Holy Blessing.

Test 40-41

CONSTITUTIONS
OF THE FRANCISCAN
MISSIONARY SISTERS
OF ASSISI

CHAPTER I

OUR IDENTITY IN THE CHURCH

«For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it»

(1 Cor 12: 13, 27)

«I see Brothers, that God in his mercy means to increase our company, let us therefore go to our holy Mother the Roman Church and lay before the Supreme Pontiff what our Lord has begun to work through us, so that with his consent and direction we may continue what we have undertaken».

(3S 46: FF 1455)

«You must be a Congregation under the Rule of St. Francis, called the Third Order (...). This is the purpose of this small gathering: (...) to renew the congregation of the 3rd Order to the model of that highest design that the Holy Father had, that of making many saints, with the perfect observance of the Rule (...). The purpose of this house is for those who yearn for God alone»..

(Writings, pp. 36; 45; 373)

**Franciscan
Missionary
Sisters of Assisi**

CIC 573

VC 37

1 - The Institute of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Assisi is a Franciscan Missionary Religious Congregation of Pontifical right, whose members, living in fraternity in adherence to the same charism, by listening obediently to the Spirit, strive for the perfection of charity through the profession of the evangelical counsels of public vows and live fraternal life in community; by intimately combining contemplation with apostolic action, they live for the edification of the Church and for the welfare of humanity according to the signs of times.

The origins

Cf. Writings, pp.
207-210

2 - In order to renew and revitalize the Third Order of St. Francis of Assisi, our founders Father Joseph Anthony Marcheselli and Mother Angela Maria del Giglio, moved by the Spirit, began the "Piccola Adunanza" (Small Gathering) of Tertiaries who, seeking and desiring God alone, desired to live:

Cf. Writings, pp.
198-207

- a.* in penance and continuous conversion, by observing the Rule of St. Francis as a way of moving towards holiness;
- b.* in fraternity and poverty for the love of Christ, who became poor for our sake, and in accordance with the example of the early Church;
- c.* in the spirit of continuous prayer by keep-

ing their hearts living temples of the Holy Spirit;

Cf. Writings, pp. 188-194; 155; 163; 219-222

- d. a life that is dedicated to evangelization and to the exercise of works of mercy and compassion, with particular attention to:
- the education and Christian formation of young women and of those in need of instruction;
 - hospitality;
 - helping poor families, even by sharing community goods;
 - visiting and assisting the sick in their homes;
 - prayer and penance for one's conversion and for the conversion of humanity.

Cf. Writings, page 112

3 - In keeping with our origins, in the spirit of St. Francis and of our Founders, we follow Christ and we strive to conform ourselves to him, poor and crucified, by making the Gospel our rule of life. **Today**

4 - § 1. In following Christ, we live fraternal love, mercy, humility, poverty, hospitality, joy, peace, trust in divine providence, prayer of praise and thanksgiving, "Assisanship", service to the poor and the needy, availability to mission *Ad gentes*, love for, and fidelity to the Church.

Gen. St. 3

RTor 2

§ 2. We profess the “*Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis*”, in communion “*with all those who wish to serve the Lord God in the holy, catholic and apostolic Church*”.

§ 3. We dedicate our entire life to the service of our brothers and sisters by participating in the evangelizing mission of the Church, with respect to the languages and cultures of every nation. We do works of mercy, and even choose other forms of presence which put us in direct service to the needy, while being attentive, in the places where we are present, to new forms of poverty.

§ 4. We commit ourselves to accomplish every service in the spirit of minority, simplicity, and Franciscan joy.

In the Church

Writings, p. 372

5 - § 1. The Institute is part of the Church; it pertains to its life and holiness, and is at its service. “*Therefore yearn always to become holy, just as Jesus, would want, if possible that we become as holy as his heavenly Father*”

CIC 590 § 2

§ 2. Following the example of St. Francis and of our Founders, we love and faithfully serve the Church; we obey the Pope as our highest Superior, also by reason of the vow of obedience.

§ 3. In the exercise of divine worship and in the external works of the apostolate, we are subject not only to our Superiors but also to the Bishops to whom we show respect and reverence.

CIC 678

6 - § 1. Our Religious family maintains and promotes a relationship of spiritual affinity and apostolic cooperation with the Order of the Friars Minor Conventual, to which we are juridically aggregated, in conformity with its origins and history.

CIC 580;
Cf. Const. 168;
180; 182

§ 2. The Institute fosters acquaintance, communion and collaboration with all the members of the Franciscan family.

7 - § 1. The Institute, a spiritual entity based on the Rule and its Constitutions is also an external and social reality which requires certain determined structures in order to live, develop itself, and accomplish its mission.

Structures and laws

§ 2. Formed by sisters who, by the same profession have equal rights and duties, the Institute is animated and governed by the Superior General assisted by her Council according to the universal law and the Institute's own law.

§ 3. It is divided into Provinces and Vice Provinces, animated and governed by

their respective Superiors assisted by their Councils, into Delegations and Local communities, according to universal law and the Institute's own law. Vice Provinces are equated with Provinces according to the Constitutions.

§ 4. The local communities, governed by a Superior, are composed of sisters ascribed to a Province, a Vice Province or a General Delegation.

8 - § 1. The Rule and the Constitutions comprise the fundamental law of our Institute. They determine and direct our spiritual, apostolic, and normative aspects of our life.

§ 2. The Constitutions are integrated by the Statutes which contain more particular norms in the application of the fundamental ones.

9 - § 1. By religious profession, we assume the obligation to observe the Rule and the Constitutions. This obligation, in itself, does not bind under pain of sin, unless it involves something pertaining to the vows, or to the laws of God or of the Church. We commit ourselves, however, to faithfully observe the Rule and the Constitutions, which are for us the way to move toward the per-

fection of charity and our particular manner of following Christ.

§ 2. Superiors, for just reasons and for a determined period of time, can dispense from the observance of the disciplinary norms of the Constitutions and of the Statutes within the limits of their authority, according to the universal law and the Institute's own law.

Gen. St. 6

10 - The Constitutions, approved by the Church, cannot be modified without the consent of the Holy See, which has the authority to interpret them authentically.

11 - To promote the assimilation of the spirit of the Rule and the Constitutions and to encourage ourselves to observe them faithfully, we commit ourselves to read them frequently and to reflect on them personally and in common.

CHAPTER II

OUR LIFE OF CONSECRATION

«And for their sake I consecrate myself that they also may be consecrated in truth».

(Jn 17:19)

«We are his spouses, when the faithful soul is united by the Holy Sprit with our Lord Jesus Christ. We are brothers when we do the will of the Father who is in heaven. We are mothers when we bear him in our hearts and bodies with divine love and with pure and sincere consciences; we give birth to him through a holy life which should enlighten others by our example».

(1LF 1, 5; FF 178/2)

«Here, there is nothing else to think about except to please God and to make our hearts living temples of the Holy Spirit. Those who will have this lively desire to become holy, will be fit for this House».

(Writings p. 155)

Consecrated in baptism

Cf. SAC 8; VC 32; Cf. Writings, p. 372

Cf. 2Cor 5,17

Cf. VC 19

Cf. VC 35

12 - Called to holiness as every Christian is, we recall the exhortation of our Founder of yearning always to be holy.

13 - § 1. In baptism we have become a new creature in Christ. Day by day, we are called to respond in faith so that the Spirit who dwells within us, conforms us to the image of the Son, according to the plan of the Father. Allowing ourselves to be guided by the Spirit in an unceasing journey of purification, we gradually become Christ-like, prolonging in history a special presence of the Risen Lord.

§ 2. In Baptism we are born to new life in the Church, the new people of God, on the journey with Christ towards the new heavens and a new earth. We belong to a community of brothers and sisters present in every part of the world, with whom we are called to share our joy, our suffering and our commitment for the Kingdom.

§ 3. Seeking above all the Kingdom of God, our consecrated life, before anything else, is a call to continuous conversion, to the renunciation of our selves, in order that each can live fully for the Lord, so that God can be all in all.

14 - § 1. The call to follow Christ more closely, with a new and special consecration, is a gift of the most Holy Trinity. In response to this divine call, we offer ourselves to God through the profession of public vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, received by the Church.

and by religious
profession

Cf. VC 20. 30;
CIC 573 § 2; 575

Having become temples of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of Baptism and being more closely united to Christ with the gift of consecration, we give witness to our radical orientation towards Him, who is to be loved above everything else.

CIC 573 § 1

§ 2. As consecrated persons, we are called *to make visible* the wonders of God through a transfigured life, capable of amazing the world.

Cf. VC 20

§ 3. The special conformity to Christ chaste, poor and obedient, received as a gift of the Spirit, is a commitment for one's entire life, a prophecy for the church and for the world. We are called to move towards the perfection of charity at the service of the Kingdom of God, by virtue of our consecration and to become special witnesses to the mystery of the Church, virgin, bride and mother, pre-announcing the heavenly glory.

VC 57; CIC 573
§1-2

15 - In Mary, the Immaculate Virgin,

humble servant and Mother of the Lord, we have the model of our life of consecration. We imitate her, in her total dedication to the person and the work of her Son, through a progressive stripping of ourselves, in order to receive Christ in our heart and to offer him to our brothers and sisters.

Cf. Writings, pp.
241-242

16 - In our Institute the formula of profession is as follows:

For the glory of God

I sister...,

with the firm will

to observe more perfectly the Gospel of Christ,

since the Lord has given me this grace, by inspiring me to seek and desire Him alone and to serve Him in fraternity and minority; in the presence of the Sisters and in your hands, Mother...,

vow to live (for a year) for all of my life

in chastity, poverty and obedience according to the Rule and Life

of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis

and the Constitutions of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Assisi.

Therefore with all my heart I entrust myself to this Family in order to complete my total consecration in the service of God and of the

brothers and the sisters, through the efficacious action of the Holy Spirit, the intercession of the Immaculate Virgin, of our Father St. Francis, the protection of our Founders; Father Joseph Anthony Marcheselli and Mother Angela Maria del Giglio, and your fraternal help.

17 - § 1. The religious habit is a sign of consecration, of poverty and of belonging to our religious family. We wear it according to the form described in the General Statutes and as adapted according to situation, time and place.

CIC 669 §1;
Cf. VC 25

Gen. St. 7

§ 2. The Superior General with the opinion of her Council, can for particular reasons and for as long as these prevail, permit the use of secular dress.

18 - § 1. Our consecrated chastity, an outstanding gift of grace, springs from an encounter with Christ, which commits us to live with passionate love the form of life, which He himself, the Virgin Mary and the Apostles lived.

living in
chastity

Cf. SAC 9-11

Choosing Him, who first chose each one of us, and belonging no longer to ourselves, but to him, as to an exclusive Spouse, we become a sign of the mystery of union of Christ with the Church his spouse.

CIC 599

§ 2. The evangelical counsel of chastity for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven, which implies the obligation of perfect continence in celibacy, is the sign of future life and the source of rich spiritual fruitfulness in an undivided heart. Through this precious gift, we do not renounce love, but we expand our capacity to love in imitation of Christ.

§ 3. Our preferential love for Christ makes us mothers and sisters of every person created and formed in His image: free, open, capable of listening, sharing and of sacrificing.

§ 4. We believe that our response to God's love is a source of peace and profound joy. We live in the confidence that God gives us peace even in solitude, reminding humanity that God is the ultimate end for all.

Cf. FLC 37

19 - § 1. We can help each other live consecrated chastity by committing ourselves to building fraternal communities characterized by authentic relationships, mutual trust, free self giving and friendship; learning to add promptness and gentleness to our gestures.

§ 2. Union with God through prayer; sacramental life, personal ascetical life, an

encounter with the Word of God, apostolic service, give each of us the possibility of purifying our heart, making it capable of loving our brothers and sisters with a love that is chaste.

§ 3. The vow of chastity demands vigilance of our thoughts, desires and senses. Faithfulness to the vow requires the necessary discretion in the use of means of social communication and avoiding that which can be harmful to our vocation.

CIC 666;
Gen. St. 8

20 - The Kingdom of God is of the poor. In the spirit of the Beatitudes, we choose to live in poverty *“in order to imitate Jesus Christ, who even though he was rich, as the apostle says, made himself poor for our sake”*. We acknowledge our complete dependence on God, in whom we place all our confidence and security.

In poverty

Writings, p. 201;
Cf. 2Cor 8, 9

21 - § 1. Following the example of the primitive Church, we choose to share material and spiritual goods as a sign and an instrument of communion. We receive what we need from the community.

«All that which will be brought in the House by the daughters, either through work, charity or in any other way, should be put in common and should be distributed, with the

Cf. Acts 4, 34;
Writings, p. 198

consent of the Superior, to all according to the needs, as the early Church used to do».

Writings, p. 173;
Cf. 1Tm 6: 8;
Writings, p. 201

§ 2. Modest and limiting our needs to the essentials, we rejoice in that which is given to us: *«Food and clothing are enough for us. One who desires heaven does not try to be well off on this earth.»*. *«To ask for something when in need (...) is not against the perfection of poverty. Not asking, depending on providence of the Lord, who inspires us and makes us needy, is higher perfection»*.

Cf. VC 82

22 - § 1. We choose to live a simple, humble and austere style of life at personal and community level. We maintain a style of poverty in our houses in conformity with the poverty that we have professed.

§ 2. We accept in a spirit of faith the privations and the insecurities of the present life, health or sickness, as pilgrims on a journey to our lasting dwelling place: God.

Writings, p. 202

«That soul is poor, who is able to bear hunger, cold and other miseries which poor beggars experience, and can bear that suffering with patience, peace and joy.»

23 - § 1. In the spirit of service and generous submission to the common law of labour, we work with our hands to procure

what is necessary for our sustenance, for formation and the apostolic works.

§ 2. Carrying out every work with faithfulness, availability and much diligence, we experience work as a grace, task, and service, in the spirit of sacrifice, and avoiding any excessive preoccupation for tomorrow, trusting in the providence of the heavenly Father.

24 - § 1. Evangelical poverty lived together, leads to the sharing of material and spiritual goods and fosters concrete fraternal communion. According to the principles of subsidiarity, equity and justice, we exchange temporal goods among Provinces and communities in such a way that the one who has more resources can be of help to the one who is in need.

§ 2. In the spirit of poverty and fraternity, with faithfulness and commitment, each Province or Vice Province must contribute to the needs of the General Curia and of the Institute, according to the established percentage, by the norm in the Constitutions n. 235, 1.

§ 3. According to the norm of the General Statutes, we destine part of the community goods to the needs of the Church.

Gen. St. 9

ch and of the poor, whom we must particularly love in Christ.

Cf. SAC 28

25 - § 1. In whatever environment we live, we are humble and submissive, giving ourselves with respect, patience and avoiding every form of privilege. We should desire to share the condition of the poor, even to insert ourselves among the most marginalized.

§ 2. In our call to conversion and in every commitment for human promotion, in listening to our brothers and sisters and in walking along with them, we choose the Gospel as the criteria of discernment, avoiding to yield one's power, and promoting justice and peace, through witnessing and in action.

CIC 600

26 - § 1. The vow of poverty freely chosen, entails dependence and the limitation of one's use and disposal of goods, according to the norm of the Institute's own law. Whatever we earn through work and whatever we receive as pension, grant, insurance – in whatever form, and whatever is given as a gift, we put all in common for the benefit of the Institute and for the service of the common mission.

Cf. Writings,
p. 198;
Cf. CIC 668 §3

§ 2. Superiors shall be attentive and so-

licitous that the Sisters are provided with what is necessary for their personal needs and for the fulfillment of their mission.

27 - § 1. By the vow of poverty we also renounce the independent use of patrimonial goods, though we retain the capacity of possessing and acquiring other goods.

§ 2. Before temporary profession, we hand over the administration of our goods to whoever we believe suitable and we freely dispose of their use and revenues.

§ 3. Before perpetual profession, each one is to draw up a will, in a form valid even according to civil law. CIC 668 §1

§ 4. In order to change such a disposition for just reasons, even for any other relative acts regarding temporal goods, the permission of the Major Superior is needed. CIC 668 §2

28 - § 1. Whoever among us is eager to follow the poor Christ more closely, in imitation of St. Francis, and desires to make a radical renunciation of all or part of her goods, should obtain permission from the Superior General. CIC 668 § 4-5;
Gen. St. 10

§ 2. The religious who makes a total renunciation of goods, does not lose the capacity to acquire or to possess the go-

ods that come after the renunciation. She should hence, dispose of them freely and in favour of whoever she wants, in the manner in which she did with what she possessed at the time of her profession. The renunciation can only be done after 15 years of perpetual vows and should be drawn in a form valid according to civil law.

29 - Each community must recognize its commitment to a real experience of poverty. We live poverty to the extent in which, while not retaining anything for ourselves of what we are and have, we put at the service of others every gift received. In this way, we become credible and a sign of freedom and joy, experienced by those who trust only in God.

In obedience

30 - In Christ, constantly united to the Father in love and obedient to him even unto death on the cross, we find the motivation for our life of obedience.

Cf. FT 5- 8

31 - § 1. Our obedience is a trustful abandonment to God the good Father, a response of love to the call of Christ and collaboration in the work of redemption. It presupposes the communal search for the will of God for each one of us and for our

communities, under the guidance of the Spirit: a search, which should be accomplished, in the light of the Word of God, in present history, and in open, trustful dialogue with our Superiors. Cf. FT 1.4-15

§ 2. The vow of obedience, undertaken in a spirit of faith and love, implies submission of our will to the legitimate Superiors as representatives of God, when they command according to the Rule and Constitutions. CIC 601, 618

By the strength of this sacred bond, we are to obey the Supreme Pontiff, as our highest Superior. CIC 590 § 2; Cf. FT 13

§ 3. The Rule and the Constitutions become *“means of mediating the will of the Lord: human mediation but still authoritative, imperfect but at the same time binding, the starting point from which each day begins, and also for moving forward in a generous and creative impulse towards that sanctity which God ‘wills’ for every consecrated person”*. FT 9

§ 4. In this way we unite ourselves more firmly and securely to the salvific will of the Father and we conform ourselves to Christ obedient in his mystery of death and of life.

32 - § 1. We are in true obedience when

we persevere in the commandments of the Lord according to the Gospel and our Rule. We mutually help and exhort each other to be faithful to the form of life we have professed.

§ 2. In mutual service and obedience, we build a community in which the one who wishes to be greater makes herself servant and she who wishes to be first makes herself last.

Cf. SAC14;
FLC 50

33 - § 1. Superiors are to exercise authority in the spirit of service. In their task of mediation, animation and guidance, Superiors should promote collaboration and union of energies, such that all the sisters should feel co-responsible in living our fraternal life and mission in the Church. The Superior should be committed to her mission of animating, offering fraternal help, making proposals, listening and engaging in dialogue.

§ 2. In communion with the sisters, the Superiors search for the divine will in order to live it and to communicate it, fostering a voluntary adherence.

CIC 618;
FLC 50c

However, the Superiors have the task of making the final decision and of ensuring the conditions for fulfilling it.

34 - Each sister should accept the task assigned to her and perform it with the dedication of all her energies of mind and will, as well as with her gifts of nature and of grace. By means of active and responsible obedience, we achieve the true freedom of the children of God and full maturity in Christ.

35 - Each community and the entire Institute should feel committed to a constant search for the will of God, through an encounter with the Word of God, the orientations of the Church and through understanding of the signs of the times, so that every form of our presence and service may be in conformity with the Gospel and correspond with the needs of our brothers and sisters.

36 - To live obedience is not easy.

If at times it seems to limit our personal freedom, we recall that we have dedicated our life in faith.

Christ *"learned (...) obedience through what he suffered"*: The cross should be for us, as it was for Him, the proof of greatest love.

Heb 5, 8

Cf. ET 29

CHAPTER III

OUR LIFE WITH GOD

«Jesus was in a certain place praying; when he had finished, one of his disciples said: “Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples”».

(Lk 11: 1)

«When Francis prayed in the woods and in solitary places... he would often speak with his Lord with words. There he would give an answer to his judge, there he would offer his petitions to his father, and there he would talk to his friend; there he would rejoice with the bridegroom.... All his attention and affection he directed with his whole being to the one thing which he was asking of the Lord, not so much praying as becoming himself a prayer».

(2 C 95: FF 682)

«One external worship offered to the Lord, is the use of the tongue to praise the Lord. Actually, our Holy Father Francis, desires that the canonical Hours be recited every-day during their proper times, such that the Lord may be praised by his daughters day and night (...). They should remember that we are here to talk with God and to praise His mercies».

(Scritti, pp. 189-190)

Prayer as
experience of
God

Cf. SAC 25

VC 69

Col 3: 3

37 – § 1. The vocation to consecrated life arises from a deep relationship with Christ, in contemplating Him, and it is by remaining in this intimate relationship with Him that our vocation can mature.

§ 2. As consecrated persons we can “never claim to have completely brought to life the ‘new creature’ who, in every circumstance of life, reflects the very mind of Christ”.

38 – § 1. Consecrated totally to God in baptism and by religious profession, we seek and love God who first loved us above everything else and in every circumstance, we nourish our life hidden with Christ in God.

§ 2. Through Christ in the Holy Spirit we have access to the Father, we are introduced into the mystery of the Trinitarian communion, we know and taste the depth of God and we enter into Him who is our peace, joy and happiness.

39 - Turned entirely toward God in love, we develop an attitude of continuous and humble adoration of His presence in persons, events, and in creation.

40 - § 1. All of us “in every place, at every hour, at all times, each day without ceasing, truly and humbly believe, we hold in our hearts and we love, honour, adore, serve, praise and bless, glorify and exalt, magnify and thank the Highest and Supreme eternal God, Three and One, Father and Son and Holy Spirit”.

1Reg 23,10:
FF 71

§ 2. This experience of God gives unity to our person and to our life; it is the interior source of peace through which we become peacemakers.

41 - The call to holiness is received and cultivated in silent adoration before the infinite transcendence of God; this call in practice, entails faithfulness to personal and communal prayer and to the rediscovery of ascetical means, that are typical of the spiritual tradition of the Church and of the Institute.

Gen. St. 13. 1; Cf.
VC 38; Writings,
pp 163; 176; 178

42- Baptized in Christ, confirmed in the Spirit, we are inserted in the very life and prayer of the Church.

Sources

Sacred Scripture, the liturgy of the Hours, the liturgy of the Eucharist and the sacrament of reconciliation are the privileged sources of our union with God in prayer.

Listening to the Word of God

Rm 1:16

43 - The Word of God is a divine power *“for the salvation of anyone who has faith”*.

Docile to the action of the Holy Spirit, we let ourselves be moved by the Word of God. It opens our intelligence and our heart to God's initiative, who reveals in Jesus Christ the Word of the Father, His covenant of love with human kind. The Word of God unveils for us the deep meaning of the events in our personal and communal history and that of humanity.

44 - § 1. We encounter daily, the Word of God and we keep it in our heart, just as the Virgin Mary did: we shall find the source to praise God who has done and continues to do great things.

Cf. VC 94;
Cf. Gen. St. 14, 2

§ 2. Our listening to the Word of God, both personally and in common should be followed by a joyful sharing of the riches drawn from there, which help us to grow and progress together in our spiritual life.

45 - Each one of us must give maximum importance to daily meditation on the Word of God and to find and choose the most suitable time for personal prayer. The modalities are determined by the General Statutes.

Gen. St.14

46 - § 1. The liturgy is fundamentally the realization of the salvation brought about by Christ. In it lies the meaning and realization of the sanctification of man and the glorification of God in Christ through the Church.

Liturgical life

§ 2. Committing ourselves to participate in an intelligent and active way in the liturgy of the Church, we become transformed and receive the energy to express in our life what we have celebrated in faith.

We prolong prayer into life and life into prayer.

47 – § 1. The Eucharist, source and climax of the whole Christian life, by its nature, is found at the heart of personal and community consecrated life. We do everything possible in order to participate daily at the celebration of the Eucharist. United to Christ, we renew the offering of our life and we present all humanity to the Father.

LG 11;
Cf. VC 95;
CIC 663 § 2;

§ 2. We participate, whenever possible, in the celebration of the Eucharist, as a community. We receive with humility and great veneration, Him who “*each day comes to us under humble appearances*”.

Adm 1, 17:
FF 144

§ 3. We recognize the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and we receive

Him into our house as a precious gift to be experienced with gratitude and commitment. We adore his presence and we never cease to sing psalms and hymns to the Lord and to his infinite love.

48 - § 1. The liturgy of the Hours is orientated to the sanctification of time and the entire course of our activities.

CIC 663 § 3;
SC 83

Each day, we celebrate Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer in common aware that we are the voice of the Church, which through Christ in the Spirit, *“is ceaselessly engaged in praising the Lord and interceding for the salvation of the entire world”*.

LOrd 6,41:
FF 227

§ 2. We pray regularly, with care, calmly and in a way *“that the voice should be in agreement with the mind and the mind in agreement with God”*, so that through purity of heart, we can be pleasing to Him.

§ 3. Compline, the last prayer of the evening, may also be celebrated in common.

49 – The Lord whom we love is risen.

Rejoicing profoundly, we celebrate *“His Day”* together with the Ecclesial community. Our listening to the Word and sharing the Eucharistic Bread, is followed during

the day, by our commitment to give witness and to serve in charity.

«*The Feast days, being the days of the Lord, should all and entirely be His*». Writings, p. 166

50 - We live intensely the liturgical year with which the Church, our Mother, offers us a gradual journey of assimilation of Christ in his mysteries.

We celebrate with particular commitment the *favourable* times of Advent and Lent, in order to unite ourselves in a profound and effective way, to the mystery of the incarnation, to the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord. Cf. 2Cor 6: 2

51 - § 1. In personal prayer, we turn to God who knows our heart. To him we express our desires, our joys and our sufferings: we supplicate him, we thank him, and we praise him. **Personal prayer**

§ 2. By means of prolonged, silent prayer, we learn to await the grace of the presence of the Lord who communicates Himself to us in a simple, mysterious experience. Contemplating intensely the face of the Crucified, we learn what love is and how we are called to love God and humanity; in this way, we find the fullness of life. Cf. SAC 27

§ 3. Frequently, we enter into our-

1 Reg 22,27: FF
61; Cf. Writings,
pp. 163; 176; 178

selves to pray to the Father in secret; indeed «*we always build in ourselves a house, a permanent dwelling for him who is our Lord God almighty*» .

Cf. SAC 46

52 - § 1. We look up to Mary, mother and teacher for each one of us, who is the first consecrated person to live the fullness of charity. Fervent in spirit, she served the Lord with joy even in tribulations, persevering in prayer, prompt in serving the needs of her brothers and sisters.

§ 2. Following the example of St. Francis and of our Founders, we nourish a most tender devotion to the most holy Virgin, Mother of God and our Mother. With particular solemnity we celebrate her Nativity and her Immaculate Conception, and we recite the rosary every day.

Gen. St. 16,1

53 - Celebrating the memory of the Saints as living Gospel, with the whole Church, we turn with particular devotion to our Father St. Francis, so that he might help us walk in the footsteps of the poor and crucified Christ. According to the tradition of our Institute, we invoke St. Joseph that he may help us imitate his faith and unconditional obedience to God.

54 - Our relationship with God requires prolonged periods of silence and solitude. We do the monthly, community recollection day, and every year we participate in annual retreats as times of grace and particular conversion. Away from daily preoccupations, in the silence of our whole being, we encounter the Lord in order to have a taste of His presence and to confirm our personal spiritual journey, allowing ourselves to be renewed in faithfulness to Him and to the mission entrusted to us.

CIC 663 § 5;
Gen. St. 17,1

55 - Guided by the Spirit, we can ask to live for a period in a hermitage or house of prayer. Such places foster our praise to the Father, our knowledge of His will and the desire to fulfill it.

Such periods can be the occasion of a profound renewal in our journey of adherence to God and of dedication to our brothers and sisters.

56 - § 1. The Lord, who has granted us the grace to begin to do penance, will bring his work in us to completion. We persevere, therefore, in this grace, by our conversion to Him with all our heart, by living according to the Gospel and doing worthy works of penance.

Conversion and
penance

Cf. Test. 1:
FF 110

Mt 16,24

§ 2. Recalling to mind the words of the Lord: *“if any man would come after me, let him deny himself”*, we walk in his footsteps and live in a spirit of penance the renunciations inherent in our religious profession and in common life.

§ 3. We accept and offer continually to God every suffering arising from work and the circumstances of life; we unite ourselves knowingly and lovingly to the sufferings of Christ for the sake of his body, the Church.

57 - § 1. Since true penance cannot be separated from spiritual and even physical asceticism, we intensify penance in times proposed by the Church with prayer, fasting and the works of charity in favour of our brothers and sisters in need.

§ 2. We live as penitential seasons proper to our Institute, both the vigils of the feasts of the Immaculate Conception, of St. Francis, and the “lent for vocations” in preparation for the Feast of the Nativity of Mary Most Holy.

58 - Each day we make an examination of conscience, calling upon the grace of the Holy Spirit to know ourselves better before

God and to know that which turns us way from him.

59 - § 1. Frequently, we have recourse to the sacrament of reconciliation to encounter the merciful love of the Father, so as to receive strength for our journey of conversion, to nourish our growth in Christ and to re-establish communion with our brothers and sisters.

§ 2. We approach this sacrament in true repentance for our sins: *«Let there be in you great love for the Lord and even greater will be your sorrow for the sins committed voluntarily»*. We receive absolution *«with lively faith, as one who receives the blood of Jesus Christ»*.

Writings, p. 186

60 - § 1. *“Forgetting what lies behind but straining forward to what lies ahead, I continue my pursuit towards the goal, the prize of God’s upward calling, in Jesus Christ.”*

Phil 3:13-14

Persevering in faith, hope and charity, and in the life of penance, we go forward to meet the Lord who comes to us.

We welcome “sister death” with confident abandonment to the will and mercy of the Father and we offer into his hands our life, as an act of final praise and sacrifice.

§ 2. With fraternal charity and in-

Gen. St. 20

tense prayer, we entrust the sister who is dying to the intercession of Mary Most Holy and of St. Joseph. (Gen. St. 20)

§ 3. Offering prayer and suffrages for the sisters who have preceded us in the experience of faith and have shared in the following of Christ, we continue our communion with them awaiting the resurrection.

CHAPTER IV

OUR FRATERNAL LIFE IN COMMUNITY

«So that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me».

(Jn 17:21)

Francis «loved his brothers beyond measure with an affection that arose from his innermost being, because they were of the same household of faith and united by participation in an eternal inheritance according to the promise».

(2C 172: FF 758)

«Let there be love and charity always in this community. In dealing with others no differences should be made between one and the other or show more confidence in one more than the other (...). Therefore, compete in mutual esteem, in pleasing one another and in such a manner, you will observe the commandment of charity, insisted upon so much by the Lord. This, he says, is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you

(Writings, pp.112, 114)

**Fraternity
mystery
and sign of
communion**

Cf. CIC 607 § 2;
665 § 1; VC 42

61 - § 1. The Holy Spirit, “bond of love” between the Father and the Son, makes us participate in the Trinitarian communion, the source and model of Christian life. Animated by faith and by mutual love, we experience the beauty of fraternal communion, along the journey of daily conversion.

§ 2. The Church, the community of sons and daughters in the Son, is the place and instrument of encounter and communion with God, an open fraternity moving toward the fullness of the Kingdom when God will be all in all.

Mt 19:29

62 - § 1. Without life in communion there is no Church. Ours is a vocation to communion. For this reason, by “*leaving houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother*” for the name of Christ, we choose to live in fraternity and we experience ecclesial communion according to the example of the first Christians, who “*were of one heart and one soul*”.

Acts 4:32

§ 2. As a religious community, we are a permanent sign in the Church of the communion of grace to which God calls all persons. We celebrate the Eucharist, in fact, as the sign and source of our unity and charity, and we remain a community

of persons committed to grow each day in fraternal communion.

§ 3. Reunited in the name of the Lord, we form a true family that enjoys his presence. We build up our experience in faith around Christ, who died and rose, to become a witnessing community: “*what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we looked upon (...) concerning the Word of life (...) we proclaim now to you*”. 1Jn 1: 1-3

63 - Just as «*the Church cannot be referred to as such unless it includes Mary, the Mother of our Lord, together with His brothers and sisters*», so we acknowledge her maternal presence and intercession which sustains and strengthens us in both, our fraternal bond and in the testimony we are called to give of her Son. Mk 28

64 - § 1. Called to live according to the Gospel, in the following of one Lord, we also participate in the same gift given by the Spirit to our Founders. Sisters in Christ Jesus

Our Founder proposes the path of holiness to us to be lived together in perfect community and charity. Writings, pp. 198. 204

§ 2. We achieve our vocation to holiness and mission, in fraternity and throu- Cf. FT 19

gh fraternity, since the Risen Lord makes Himself present in and through it, thereby sanctifying the fraternity.

Cf. FLC 29-31

§ 3. In the community, we receive one another reciprocally as a gift of the Lord. In order to become truly sisters, we commit ourselves to know each other through a more extensive and ever deeper communication among us so as to grow in mutual esteem. In so doing, we nourish our true sense of belonging to the same religious family.

Cf. Writings,
p. 205

65 - All of us, sisters in Christ Jesus, free and responsible, eager to grow and to help others grow, we strive to strengthen that which unites us and to harmonize our differences of: education, age, nationality, ethnic group and culture.

2C 19l: FF 777

St. Francis *“desired that the majors and minors should merge, that the learned should be bonded with affection to the simple, that the religious, even though distant from each other, should feel united, cemented by love”*

66 - We are sisters who come from various parts of the world; we try to live inter-culturality as a value that can build the fraternity and to witness to the world that Christ wants to reunite into one people,

all men and women of every nation. Multi-culturality offers us the possibility of an exchange of gifts, through which we mutually enrich and correct each other, along this journey which continually commits us to live the Gospel in a more radical way.

Cf. FLC 42

67 - Nourishing love and tenderness for all God's creatures, we are open to let the love of Christ make us more intensely sisters *"of those who bear in themselves the image of the Creator"*

LM 9,4: FF 1168

68 - § 1. In order to live charity, our Founder exhorts us to mutual respect and benevolence, not to judge or to make observations more than necessary for a correction; he asks us to accept the diversity of opinions, to know how to receive and give comfort and even material help, and bearing one another's burden.

Cf. Rm 12:10; Cf. Writings, pp. 204; 112

§ 2. Peace and joy are signs of the Kingdom of God. A fraternity that is rich in joy is a true gift of the Lord; we ask for this gift and we commit ourselves to live it, trusting in the action of the Holy Spirit.

Cf. FLC 28

69 - § 1. Ours should be a fraternity of mutual pardon that enables each one to experience the pardon of the Lord. And

Writings, p. 170;
285; 425

«if some discord arises, or one says or does something displeasing to another, immediately they should become reconciled by promptly asking and granting pardon and by exchanging signs of friendship and peace»

Cf. Rm 12:10;
Cf. Writings,
p. 114

§ 2. By loving each other with fraternal affection and competing in esteeming each other mutually, we fulfill the commandment of the Lord: *“This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you”*

Jn 15: 12

2Reg 6,8: FF 91

70 - § 1. In whatever fraternity we are, we are to deal with one another in a familiar way. With confidence, each one should manifest her needs to the other; *“if a mother loves and nourishes her son in the flesh, should not someone love and care even more deeply for his brother in the spirit?”*

§ 2. We express particular affection and care for the aged and the sick sisters. We value their experience, their prayer and contribution of work which they often continue to offer even in suffering. They are for us, an example of fidelity and of generous dedication and we serve them as we ourselves would like to be served.

§ 3. We support all by helping them to accept their weakness and infirmity which, offered and united to the sufferings of

Christ, are a source of strength and salvation for all of us, for the Church and for humanity.

71 - § 1. In every fraternity, moments of encounter and of verification with the Word of God, especially with the Gospel, the norm according to which we have chosen to live, are necessary.

Encountering
each other in
truth

§ 2. In every encounter, the truth of the life that the fraternity is living should emerge: before the Word, we remove every obstacle arising from our egoism, in order to begin to live the truth that we have come to know together.

72 – § 1. Each Fraternity commits itself to draw up a Community Project and to evaluate it periodically.

Gen. St. 21

§ 2. During the revision of life, we dispose ourselves to listen to God and to the sisters. We confront ourselves with the Word; we learn how to receive and offer fraternal correction which our Founder calls, «works of mercy».

Gen. St. 22. 1;
Writings, p. 121

73 - Each fraternity should assemble once a month, in Community Chapter, to plan and evaluate its life and mission. Searching attentively for the will of God,

Gen. St. 23;
Cf. FT 20

even through community discernment, with responsibility and creativity, we place ourselves before the choices to be carried out.

Cf. FT 12.a

74 - In the fraternity, we accept with faith, as a gift of the Holy Spirit, the service of authority through animation, communion and guidance.

Writings, p. 340

75 - § 1. Each Superior, in the exercise of her ministry, is to be a sign of the love of God for the persons entrusted to her care and, by word and example, encourage them to serve him. *«Humble, patient, benign, abounding in charity to all (...), she should be servant of all, listening to all, consoling all», so that each one can have recourse «to her as to a mother».*

§ 2. She is to promote fraternal love by helping her sisters to grow in faith, in mutual respect, in the recognition and appreciation of different gifts, in the willingness to share responsibilities. She is to be solicitous in seeing that the aspirations of each one, be rooted in the one will of communion and of realization of the common project.

2C 191: FF 777

§ 3. She should remember the constant desire of St. Francis and his vigilant concern *“to maintain among his sons the*

bond of unity so that those drawn by the same spirit and generated by the same father might live in harmony in the embrace of their one mother”.

76 - § 1. Fraternal life implies that we live in the same house and that we persevere in the tasks inherent in common life and that we may not leave without the permission of the competent Superior.

Signs and ways
of communion

CIC 665 § 1

§ 2. The Major Superior with the consent of her Council and for just reasons can permit a sister to live outside a religious house, but not for more than a year, except for health reasons, for studies or for undertaking an apostolate in the name of the Institute.

77 - As a Franciscan fraternity, we have our particular form of life to live and to foster. We live in simplicity and in poverty, remain serene in every circumstance of life and limit our needs to the essentials.

78 - § 1. In every house, we promote a climate of recollection in order that each sister can live in interior silence and in the assiduous search for God. This climate must be evident to one who enters; that we live in the presence of the Lord and in peace, the

fruit of inner freedom, serenity and fulfilment.

Writings, p. 219

«You must keep the whole house like a Church, because the Lord is everywhere».

Ref. CIC 667 § 1;
Gen. St. 25

§ 2. For the harmony and intimacy of fraternal life, some areas of the convent are reserved only for the community, according to the norm of the General Statutes.

79 - § 1. The schedule for the regulation of the daily life of the fraternity, drawn up in mutual agreement by the Superior and the community, must be flexible and adapted to individual places. Times must be divided so as to provide the proper balance between common prayer and personal prayer, service and formation, relaxation and rest.

§ 2. Each fraternity is to establish periods of silence which foster recollection, in order to preserve and nourish our intimacy with the Lord and our respect of each sister.

Gen. St. 27. 1

80 - Sharing the same table strengthens the bonds of unity: we go to table as to a fraternal agape.

81 - Ours should be a fraternity capable of receiving every sister and every person

with simplicity and joy. We strive as a fraternity, to be a sign of love, in the places in which are present, and to be an invitation to experience *“how good and how pleasant it is when brothers and sisters dwell in unity”*. Ps 133,1

82 - §1. The love that unites us does not diminish communion with our families; as St. Francis desired that we regard the parents of each sister as parents of all.

§ 2. We have left our family of origin in order to follow Christ, poor and crucified; we have been received into the religious family, and we are part of this new family. We nourish the awareness that every absence, even temporary, can distance us from what we have professed. Cf. Gen. St.
28-29

83 - The ordinary occasions for leaving the house and for contacts with the external world are regulated according to prudence, responsibility, confidence, personal respect, and spiritual inner freedom.

CHAPTER V

AT THE SERVICE OF THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

«What we have seen and heard, we proclaim now to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; for our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing this so that our joy may be complete».

(1Jn 1: 3-4)

«Let us consider our vocation, and how God, in his great mercy, called us not only for our salvation but for that of many, and to this end we are to go throughout the world, exhorting all men and women by our example as well as by our words to do penance for their sins, and to live keeping in mind the commandments of God».

(3S 36: FF 1440)

«Since from prayer we conceive love for God, who then inclines us to love creatures for God; therefore, it is the holy Father St. Francis, who recommending prayer, proposed to all his daughters to dedicate themselves to works of piety and mercy».

(Writings, p 112)

Consecrated
and sent

Cf. AG 2

84 - § 1. The Church, moved by the grace and charity of the Holy Spirit, continues in time the mission of Christ, who, according to God the Father's plan of love, was consecrated and sent into the world that the world might be saved by him.

§ 2. Like every disciple of Christ, and by reason of our particular consecration, we are called, with the grace of the same Spirit and according to the charism of the Founders, to give testimony by our life and by our works, to the merciful goodness of God toward all humanity.

Cf. NMI 50;
SAC 33; CIC 673

85 - The communion that originates from our adherence to Christ, the first to be sent, represents the first proclamation of our life of consecration because it is an efficacious sign and persuasive force which leads one to believe in Christ. Communion therefore, is in itself mission; in fact, «*communion generates communion and configures itself as missionary communion*». Our first apostolate is the testimony of our consecrated life, which we are obliged to nourish with prayer and penance.

86 - § 1. Our Institute is a missionary Institute, based on the development of the founding charism. As faith is strengthened

when it is given to others, so the mission strengthens our consecrated life, giving it new enthusiasm and new motivation, and elicits our faithfulness.

Cf. VC 78

§ 2. From the very beginning of our formation, we are called to mature a particular sensitivity to mission: pastoral care, the first announcement *ad gentes*, and the new evangelization. Such formation must permeate all aspects of our consecrated life, in order to create in us an open mentality that helps us to understand and to dedicate ourselves to others unconditionally, so as to make our love which we nourish for the universal Church credible.

Cf. RMi 33

87 - § 1. Since Christ is the source and the origin of the entire apostolate of the Church, only if we remain united to him as the branch to the vine, can we produce much fruit and be capable of *giving an explanation of the reasons of the hope* that is within us.

Servants of the Lord

Cf. 1Pt 3: 15

§ 2. Fully aware that “*neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who causes the growth*”, we work freely and confidently, believing that the power of Christ is manifested in our weakness.

1 Cor 3:7

88 - Like Mary, Mother of the Church, we live our mission by rendering unceasing worship to God in charity, with the sole desire of accepting and doing the will of the Lord to whom we belong.

Cf. CIC 607 §1

89 - § 1. Imitating the example of St. Francis, we live and proclaim peace and penance and, by performing works of mercy, we insert ourselves in the movement of charity which animates the Church in respect to all human beings, especially the most weak.

§ 2. Our style of mission recommended by St. Francis has two fundamental attitudes: the witness of the whole fraternity to harmony, dialogue and benevolence, which prepares a fertile environment for the proclamation of the Word.

Cf. Reg 16: FF 42

Bearers of the same gift

90 - § 1. Each fraternity is a gift that the Spirit makes to a particular Church and its very presence, if authentic, is efficacious in reference to its testimony of the Gospel and the opening of the hearts of our brothers and sisters to the Gospel.

§ 2. In whatever fraternity we may be and in whatever we do, we recognize that we are bearers of the same gift of vocation and mission, and of collaboration to make

such a gift fruitful, for the building up of the Kingdom of God.

91 - The evangelical witness and the apostolic service of our fraternity could become an invitation for young women to share our life.

92 - § 1. In our apostolic ministry, we present all the wealth of the gifts we have received and must make fruitful.

We consider manual labour a value, a typical expression of our Franciscan way of being.

§ 2. Our awareness of being members sent by the community to which we belong sustains us in our commitment; it makes us feel in communion with the sisters even when we are far away, and it moves us to share and sincerely evaluate our mission.

The Major Superior should provide an adequate preparation for the assignment entrusted to each sister.

93 - § 1. No sister may accept duties and offices outside the Institute without the permission of the Major Superior. Cf. CIC 671

§ 2. In order to publish writings dealing with questions of religion or mo-

rals, the sister needs the permission of the Major Superior.

Cf. CIC 765

§ 3. Choosing preachers for special occasions (spiritual exercises ‘retreat’, formation courses, etc.) requires the permission of the Major Superior. For occasional preaching with a brief duration, the permission of the local Superior is sufficient.

Evangelization

94 - Missionary animation, an integral part of evangelization, concerns each one of us and every community because it recalls the universal dimension of salvation in every environment.

The aim of Missionary animation is to foster the values of the Kingdom present in creation and in history. With a critical and prophetic awareness, one consecrates her whole life with passion, even up to extreme consequences, so as to incarnate the missionary ideal in availability and constant commitment.

95 - § 1. As Franciscans, we are particularly called, to love and serve the local Church. We cooperate in the growth of the Christian community with our evangelical testimony of life and with our generous response to the diverse pastoral needs according to our charism, in due respect “for the

ministry of bishops, with ready acceptance of their concrete pastoral directives”.

VC 49;
Cf. CIC 678 §1

§ 2. We commit ourselves to catechesis, liturgical animation and to the vocational apostolate among youths and families, collaborating with priests and other animators, in the parish and in the diocese.

§ 3. Open to the promptings of the Spirit that arouses different charisms, we move together with the lay faithful in our commitment to evangelization, fostering an exchange of communion in:

- a. sharing Franciscan spirituality and our specific charism;
- b. growing together in our passion for the Kingdom.

96 - § 1. With the Church and according to our specific charism, we accomplish a true preferential option for the poor.

**Preferential
option for the
poor**

«In as much as possible, do not lack in assisting the poor. Try to console some family, and give everything all at once. Do not give a bit to all, but give all to some, such that they remain relieved».

Cf. VC 82;
Writings, p. 210

§ 2. In a simple, unpretentious way, we enter the homes of our brothers and sisters to bring them peace and to help them create peace.

We pay particular attention to fa-

milies in difficult situations and to people suffering because of poverty, abandonment and loneliness.

Educators

97 - From its very beginning, the Institute considered it important to take part in the educational mission of the Church through various forms of assistance and instruction.

Ref. Writings,
pp. 210-215

We direct our assistance to the most poor, oppressed and marginalized persons, with particular attention to women, according to places and the most urgent needs.

98 - § 1. In every educational environment, and especially in schools, we try to create a familiar atmosphere where one can live with spontaneity, trust, and joy.

§ 2. We commit ourselves to promoting a human-christian integrated development of the person, in particular children, adolescents and youths. We seek to further their intellectual, affective, moral and spiritual maturity, by taking into account scientific methods and proceeding along the Christian plan of life.

In our service, we cooperate with families, educators, and social workers.

99 - § 1. By the witness of our life, through our actions, our way of talking, our silence and our example, we become credible witnesses of Christ. While we serve, we form others for a service lived generously and joyfully.

Cf. *Deus Caritas est*, 31 c.

§ 2. As Franciscans we commit ourselves, through opportune initiatives, to promoting justice, peace, and the protection of creation in the environment where we live and work, according to the teachings of the Church.

100 - In our work in nursing homes, hospitals, the families of the infirm, or with our solitary brothers and sisters, we strive to be human, generous, and attentive to the particular needs of each person, remembering always the words of Jesus: *"whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me"*.

Among the sick and the aged

Mt 25:40

101 - When we render even the most simple service to someone aged or sick, we keep in mind the dignity of the human person and with due respect for the individual's conscience, we help the person accept suffering as participation in the paschal mystery of Christ in order to encounter Him.

102 - United to the passion of Christ, we feel that we share in every human suffering. Mindful of our limitations in the help that we can offer, we recall that the essential element of our apostolic service is love.

Missionaries

AG 5

103 - Our Institute, in keeping with its Franciscan origins and history, shares in the evangelizing mission that the Church carries out among all peoples *“in order to lead them to the faith, freedom and peace of Christ (...), to open up for all men a free and sure path to full participation in the mystery of Christ”*.

2C 172: FF 758

104 - As Franciscan missionaries, we want to follow the example of St. Francis who desired ardently to make his Lord known to all men and women. *“He did not consider himself a friend of Christ if he did not love the souls that He loved”*

Cf. NMI 40

105 - § 1. In our commitment to the new evangelization, we are open and attentive to people of every culture, nationality and religion, so that the Christian message can take root in every social environment in which we find ourselves.

§ 2. Available and welcoming to all, respectful of the consciences of our broth-

ers and sisters of other confessions and religious faiths, and guided by the example of Saint Francis, with particular attention, we choose to be involved in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue.

§ 3. We desire to open our houses to our brothers and sisters who may want to share our prayer and whenever possible, and if requested, we introduce them to Jesus our Lord.

106 - A profound experience of the Word and of the person of Jesus can help us mature in our response to his invitation to leave all things and to go and preach the Gospel to every creature. Thanks to our religious consecration, we are volunteers par excellence, free to leave all and to go and proclaim the Gospel to the ends of the world.

Cf. EN 69

107 - In every social and ecclesial environment in which we work, we strive to be the leaven of the Gospel and we collaborate in order that fraternal and loyal understanding may increase the efficacy of our common effort to achieve unity, the visible sign of the presence of Christ.

108 - Our fraternal life in common has a special value in the *missio ad gentes*, be-

cause it demonstrates to the world, above all to non-Christians, the *uniqueness* of Christianity, or rather, the fact that charity is capable of overcoming the divisions brought about by race, colour and tribe. In some countries, where the Gospel cannot be preached, this practically remains the only sign of the silent and efficacious witness to Christ and the Church.

FLC 66

109 - The Institute commits itself to form all its members in missionary spirituality contributing to the growth of the life and holiness of every local Church where it is present.

110 - § 1. Since we belong to a missionary Institute, all of us must grow in availability to be sent. Whoever among us has this divine inspiration should manifest her intention to the Major Superior and to the Superior General, who have the authority to discern and to make a decision on her request.

Cf. 1Reg. 16, 3 -
4: FF 42

The Major Superior can propose, to a particular sister to avail herself for a mission.

§ 2. Sent to a mission, we prepare and learn to insert ourselves in a diverse mentality and culture and to adapt with

generosity, to the customs and conditions of the people whom we desire to serve.

§ 3. We all commit ourselves to promoting a missionary sensitivity in the environment in which we live. We maintain lively communication and communion with the sisters who are sent; by promoting the sharing of experiences, joys and difficulties lived for the reign of God.

111 - § 1. By persevering faithfully in the grace of our vocation and mission, we dedicate ourselves to a constant renewal of our mentality and our means so as to provide a service that responds to the concrete and new situations of times and places.

**In continuous
renewal**

Cf. CIC 677 §1

§ 2. If we become aware that the service we render no longer responds to the needs of the ecclesial and social milieu in which we are inserted, or that it no longer permits a normal development of community life, in communion with the Major Superiors, and in dialogue with the pastors of particular churches, we are ready for new expressions, redefining our communities with this provisory character, which is one of the characteristics of our Franciscan vocation.

CHAPTER VI

FORMATION IN OUR INSTITUTE

«May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you».

(Eph 1: 17-18)

«Therefore the blessed father Francis was being daily filled with the consolation and the grace of the Holy Spirit; and with all vigilance and solicitude he was forming his new sons with new learning, teaching them to walk with undeviating steps the way of holy poverty and blessed simplicity».

(1 C 26: FF 363)

«Above all it should be impressed on their minds that in this house all is done for holiness, that this must be the principal, even the sole undertaking here (...). In short, this house must be a continuous Novitiate».

(Writings, p. 348)

Importance of
formation
PC 18

112 - § 1. The Institute recognizes the fundamental importance of the formation of its members, aware that the vitality in its commitment and fidelity to the Lord and its mission in the Church chiefly depend on this.

Cf. VC 65

The primary objective of the formation process is to touch the depth of the person at the human and spiritual level, to prepare her in a fitting manner, for the consecration of self to God in the following of Christ, at the service of the Church's mission.

§ 2. The call of God and our consecration to Him continue throughout our life, with a possible and permanent capacity to grow and develop.

Cf. CIC 661

The formation process accompanies us towards a total gift of ourselves to God at the service of the mission of the Church.

113 - § 1. Formation is a process that lasts the whole of one's life and aims at enabling each one of us to acquire the identity of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Assisi, in the following of Christ, poor and crucified, in a gradual journey of conformity to Him, to the point of saying: *"It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me."*

Gal 2: 20

§ 2. It implies a progressive assumption of the real spirit of our Founders

and the early “Piccola adunanza” (small gathering): «*Here, there is nothing else to think about except to please God and to make our hearts as living temples of the Holy Spirit*».

Writings, p. 155

114 - § 1. There is a *Ratio Formationis* for the entire Institute, which must be appropriately updated according to the needs of the times and approved by the Superior General with the consent of her Council.

VC 68-69;
CIC 659

§ 2 The Provincial Superior with the consent of her Council, draws up the Project of Formation according to the *Ratio* of the Institute, bearing in mind diverse contexts and needs.

Gen. St. 37. 1

115 - The vital environment in which formation takes place is the fraternity. Every community as a matter of fact, is a community in formation and of formation. In it, each one is received as a gift of the Lord, finds the suitable conditions for the development of her personality, is helped in the search for the plan of God for her, and is stimulated to a personal and communal response.

116 - Our religious family is characterized even more by multi-culturality. For-

Cf. SAC 18

mation therefore, should educate us in community dialogue, in friendliness, and in the love of Christ, so as to grow towards inter-culturality.

117 - § 1. Formation is a commitment to personal and communal conversion, to searching for, and being faithful to, the covenant with the Lord, through a constant verification of our vocational identity before Him, ourselves, the community, and the events of life.

§ 2. It implies a theological-pastoral and human-professional updating for an efficacious and ever-renewed service.

§ 3. The Major Superiors have the responsibility to guarantee such a formation with initiatives and opportune means.

**Perseverance in
the vocation**

1C 103: FF 500

118 - § 1. Responding to the call to holiness, which our Founder urged continuously, we proceed on our journey of conformity to Christ, by following the way that leads to life, which is the evangelical way according to the example of St. Francis, who, *“persevering untiringly in his desire of a holy renewal, always hoped to be able to begin afresh,” because “up until now we have done little or nothing”*.

§ 2. Our perseverance in following

Christ is always a gift from God, asked for in prayer, corresponded to with personal commitment and promoted by an intense fraternal life.

§ 3. Like Mary, we go forward each day on our journey of faith. We entrust ourselves to her, so that by her example, we may listen attentively, respond zealously, and persevere in living the gift.

119 - § 1. In our life as Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Assisi, the journey of formation (formation process), is realized through a unitary and continuous process, characterized by subsequent and complementary stages. It gradually leads to fostering the action of the Spirit, *“until we reach the measure of the fullness of Christ”*.

Formative
process

Eph 4: 13

§ 2. The formation process begins with vocational accompaniment, continues in the stages of initial formation (postulancy, novitiate and juniorate), and continues in on-going formation.

Formation accompanies the process of human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral growth of each sister in all the phases of life: the time of youthful apostolic involvement, the time of middle age, the time of matured age and the time of the ultimate moment.

Cf. VC 70

120 - § 1. Initial formation has the decisive importance in discerning one's vocation in the Spirit and in fostering the person's gradual assimilation of the values specific to our life in reaching her definitive choice for this life.

§ 2. It involves the presentation and the gradual experience of the charism: the values, the life, the spirit and the mission of the Institute, so as to assume them and live them in faithfulness and in freedom, so all can incarnate them, individually and as a community, in the new circumstances and in various cultural and Ecclesiastical situations.

121 - The entire Institute, the individual fraternities, and each one of us, must feel involved in the task of formation by our witness of life, thereby fostering and supporting the gradual maturation and the apostolic effectiveness of each sister. The ones directly responsible for formation are the Major Superiors and the sisters in charge of initial formation, namely the Formators.

Those
responsible for
formation

122 - § 1. The Formators in various stages of formation, depending on and in communion with the Major Superiors, have the mission and the task of educating and

forming young women for religious life, according to the Rule and Constitutions, in the spirit of the Institute.

§ 2. The Major Superiors are to entrust the task of formation to sisters capable of listening and discerning; they are to be joyful and generous witnesses of their vocation, have the spirit of prayer and an adequate preparation for the responsibilities.

§ 3. The Formators, sisters with at least five years in perpetual profession, are nominated by their respective Major Superior with the consent of her Council, for a period of four years.

§ 4. Free from other assignments that might hinder the fulfilment of their primary duty; they enjoy autonomy in the work of formation, while in what regards the life of the community they depend on the local Superior.

123 - § 1. In fulfilling their role, Formators are to be attentive to the action of the Spirit in each young person and are to foster a free and generous response to the project God has for them.

§ 2. They should help and sustain them in their commitment to continuous conversion by forming them for a profound interior life, in the values of humility, a spirit

of sacrifice, penance and poverty, simplicity of life, welcoming, work, apostolate, missionary spirit and interculturality, according to the charism of the Institute.

124 - The Major Superiors should promote and coordinate the task of the Formators and provide for their on-going (continuing) formation so that they can adequately accomplish their service.

125 - § 1. If the Major Superior sees the need, she can assign an assistant to each Formator, who will collaborate more directly with her in the formation of young people.

§ 2. The Formators together with the Vocation Animator of the Province; form a team for Initial formation. They meet together to consult one another, to evaluate various experiences and to foster the unity and continuity of the formation process. They work in communion with the Major Superior, in communion among themselves, and in communion with other sisters who collaborate in formation.

126 - § 1. *“The invitation of Jesus: ‘Come and see’ (Jn. 1:39), even today still remains the golden rule of pastoral vocation. Through*

the example of the Founders, it aims at presenting the fascinating Person of the Lord Jesus and the beauty of the total gift of self for the sake of the Gospel". VC 64

§ 2. The variety of vocations serves for the building up of the Church, in order that it may grow in the proper measure that is worthy of full maturity of Christ.

§ 3. Each one of us and each community of the Institute, aware of being a participant in the common responsibility of the people of God in view of the vocation of each person, should be committed to give joyful and credible witness to the evangelical life and have recourse to the "*Lord of the harvest*" with unceasing and confident prayer.

127 - § 1. Taking part in the apostolate for vocations within the Church, we render a service to the person so that she may accept life as a gift and as a call, in order that by gradually discovering her vocation and mission, she may respond to it freely and generously.

§ 2. Accompanying adolescents and young people on their journey of human and Christian maturation, we propose the invitation of Jesus to "*come and follow me*", even with reference to the vocation of

special consecration and according to our form of Evangelical-Franciscan life.

128 - § 1. The Provincial Superior with the opinion of her Council nominates the Vocation Animator of the Province, who has the task of animating and coordinating the initiatives of different communities, as well as the initiative we offer to orient and accompany young women before they join the Institute.

§ 2. Each Province should assign some sisters to work directly with the Vocation Animator of the Province.

FLC 28

129 - The joyful witness of fraternal life *constitutes a powerful attraction to religious life, the source of new vocations, and an encouragement to perseverance.*

Each community lives in such a way as to present again, the words of Jesus “*come and see*”, and shares its prayer, its form of life and its service to our brothers and sisters with the young women. (FLC 28)

130 - The Institute receives as a gift of God each young woman called to religious life that extends in time the charism given by the Spirit to our Founders.

Writings, p. 156

«So high is the aim of this foundation

that, with a good heart, you should ask the Lord, so that he may send you souls chosen by him for this purpose (...). You should never cease asking for this daily through the Most Holy Virgin, that is, both specifically and in common».

131 - § 1. Acceptance of the candidates into the Institute is the competence of the Major Superior, who through listening to the Vocation Animator of the Province and when possible, through personal dialogue with the young woman, verifies if there are signs of a true call in her, if she has the qualities required by universal law and the Institute's own law and if she is not hindered by any impediment.

**Acceptance in
the Institute**

Cf. CIC 597, 643,
642

§ 2. The Vocation Animator of the Province must, as far as is possible, get to know the social-ecclesial background where the candidate comes from and verify her capacity and the possibility of her growth in this vocational commitment.

132 - § 1. The following are the requirements of each candidate: sufficient age, right intention, and freedom of choice, good physical and psychological health as certified by experts, adequate intellectual, moral and spiritual formation; sufficient maturity

Cf. CIC 597

and a character suitable for fraternal life and for apostolates of the Institute.

Writings, p. 157

«You should take care that they are of a docile nature, friendly, healthy, cheerful by nature, calm and, to say all in one word, they should be suitable for the service of the Lord».

§ 2. The candidate must present a written request as well as the required certificates and documents

Gen. St. 34

133 - § 1. With acceptance into the institute, the candidate begins her specific formation, to be accomplished in the periods of postulancy, novitiate and juniorate.

§ 2. Every formative period begins with a retreat, whose duration is determined in the Ratio Formationis of the Institute. During the initial formation, candidates are gradually introduced to spiritual retreats, according to the needs of each formative phase.

Postulancy

134 - The Postulancy period has the aim of offering the candidate the possibility of seeing in its daily reality, our life as Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Assisi; that is, our identity, our manner of fraternal life and our mission.

135 - § 1. The postulant, under the guid-

ance of the Formator, lives this period in a community that allows her to gradually experience God, fraternal life and service, in a familiar, simple and calm atmosphere.

§ 2. Such a community is specifically designated by the Major Superior, with the advice of her Council.

136 - § 1. The duration of the Postulancy period is determined by the General Statutes

Gen. St. 40. 1;
CIC 597.2

§ 2. The postulant should freely present a written request of admission, to the Major Superior and her Council, at least two months before beginning novitiate.

137 - § 1. Admission into the Novitiate is the duty of the Major Superior, with the consent of her Council, taking into consideration the report of the Formator.

**Admission into
the Institute**

CIC 641

§ 2. The Major Superior communicates the result of admission in writing. By virtue of this act, the candidate begins her life in the Institute and she is ascribed to a General Delegation or to a Province or to a Vice Province.

CIC 646

138 - The Novitiate is the fundamental formative period. Its aim is to enable the young woman to know and to experience

Novitiate

CIC 646

the following of Christ, chaste, poor and obedient, according to the spirit, the form of life and the mission of the Institute.

The novice comes to know her vocation better and the Institute verifies her intentions and her suitability.

139 - The process of human, Christian and religious maturity of the novice is entrusted to the guidance and responsibility of the Mistress of Novices, to prayer and to the example of the community, so that she can begin to live the following of Christ in true communion. The novice, docile to the Spirit, commits herself to this process in active collaboration.

Cf. SAC 18

CIC 650-653

140 - § 1. In order to achieve the objectives of the novitiate, formation should take place in a suitable community.

A recollective climate and the family spirit foster one's internalization of the values, one's gradual detachment from all that hinders *the desire for God alone*, and one's sense of belonging to the Institute.

Writings, p. 373

§ 2 Through a gradual experience of religious life, according to the charism of our Institute, the novice prepares herself to assume, with freedom and responsibility, the commitments which such a life implies

and to devote all her energies for the good of the Church and of humanity.

141 - § 1. The Novitiate has a duration of two years. For its validity, twelve months should be spent in the house of the novitiate, a house designated for this purpose in a formal decree by the Superior General with the consent of her Council. Cf. CIC 647

§ 2. For particular motives, a novice may make her novitiate in a house of the Institute, other than that which was canonically erected, with the permission of the Superior General, with the consent of her Council, according to the norm of Can. 647 § 2.

142 - § 1. For the integration of the formation of novices, during the second year of novitiate, opportunities for apostolic experiences done outside of the designated place are offered. Gen. St. 47.1; CIC 648 § 2

§ 2. The apostolic formative periods outside the house of the novitiate have the aim of allowing the novice to experience more directly fraternal life in community and the apostolic services of the Institute, to help her integrate contemplation and action. Cf. Gen. St. 47 - 49

CIC 653 § 2

143 – At the end of the Novitiate, if some doubt remain about the suitability of the novice, the Major Superior can prolong the novitiate, but not beyond six months.

CIC 649 § 1

144 – Absence from the novitiate house, during the canonical year, which lasts more than three months, accumulated either continuously or interruptedly, renders the novitiate invalid. An absence that lasts more than fifteen days must be made up.

CIC 653 § 1

145 - § 1. The novice can freely leave the Institute and the Major Superior, having listened to the opinion of her Council, can also dismiss her.

§ 2. A novice who is dismissed or who leaves the Institute, if readmitted, should begin the Novitiate again.

Cf. CIC 690.1

146- § 1. The Superior General with the consent of the Council, can readmit without the burden of repeating the Novitiate, one who has legitimately left the Institute after completing the Novitiate or after profession.

§ 2 The Superior General must determine the length of a suitable probation period, prior to temporary profession and the time of temporary vows, before perpet-

ual profession, according to the norm of Constitution n. 149.3.

147 - § 1. At least two months before temporary profession, the novice must return to the house of the Novitiate.

Temporary
Profession

§ 2. Two Months before profession, she must make a written request to the Major Superior and her Council, declaring her free will in wanting to belong to the Institute.

148 - § 1. The Major Superior, with the consent of her Council, on the basis of the written report of the Mistress of novices and other additional documentation, has the authority to admit a novice to temporary profession.

§ 2. With the permission of the Superior General, first profession can be anticipated, but not more than fifteen days.

149 - § 1. Regarding the norms for the validity of profession, universal law and the Institutes own law, should be followed.

Cf. CIC 656

§ 2. The Major Superior or her delegate, receives the temporary profession of the novice.

§ 3. Temporary profession is made for one year and is renewed every year for

Cf. CIC 655;
Cf. CIC 657 § 2

a period of five years. In exceptional cases, this period can be extended by the Superior General with the consent of her Council, but not beyond nine years.

Juniorate

150- § 1. The Juniorate is a period of temporary profession during which the junior sister continues her formation so that she may live more fully her life of consecration in the Institute and more suitably carry out its mission.

CIC 659 § 1

Acquiring a more profound human and spiritual maturity and sense of belonging to the Institute, she prepares herself to choose definitively religious life with full knowledge, freedom and responsibility, rejoicing in the gift received.

CIC 660 § 1

§ 2. During this period, the junior sister, with the guidance of the Superior of the community and the sister responsible for the junior sisters, deepens and completes her human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation, according to the mission of the Institute and her capabilities.

§ 3. She lives her choice of Christ and for Christ in the daily experiences of prayer, fraternal life, study and apostolic service. She learns to integrate contemplation and action in a harmonious unity of life.

151 - § 1. The junior sister may be inserted in the house of formation designated for this purpose by the Major Superior with the consent of her Council, or into another community.

§ 2. Such a community must be sensitive to its commitment to bear witness and to insure the conditions and means that favour the formation of the junior.

152 - § 1. The Superior of the community in which the junior sister is placed, accompanies the sister in daily life, so that she can be strengthened in the motivations and convictions of her choice and her vocational identity and gradually grow in healthy autonomy.

§ 2. The sister who is responsible for the junior sisters, through a respectful and trustful dialogue, accompanies their formative process, by visiting them periodically in the communities where they are placed.

She draws up an annual programme for meetings and formative experiences, keeping in mind, the processes of the Institute and the Province, proposed to all the sisters.

§ 3. The Superiors of the communities in which the junior sisters are inserted together with the sister responsible for

them, should collaborate in a mature relationship of mutual trust.

153 - § 1. At least two months before the expiration of temporary vows, the junior sister should present a written request to the Major Superior, expressing her desire to renew the vows. Such a request should be accompanied by a written report of the local Superior and of the sister responsible for junior sisters, if the junior sister is inserted in the Juniorate house.

§ 2. The Major Superior must give a written confirmation that the junior sister has been admitted to renew her vows.

CIC 688 § 1

154 - § 1. The sister of temporary profession, at the expiration of the period of profession, if she wishes, she can freely leave the Institute.

CIC 688 § 2

§ 2. A sister who during temporary profession, for a grave reason asks to leave the Institute, may obtain the relative indult from the Superior General with the consent of her Council.

CIC 689 § 1

§ 3. At the expiration of temporary profession, the Major Superior, after listening to the opinion of her Council, for just reasons, can exclude the sister from subsequent profession.

155 - Admission to perpetual profession is the competence of the Major Superior, with the consent of her Council. The junior sister should present a written request and the required documents at least two months before.

**Perpetual
Profession**

Cf. Gen. St.
54. 1-2

156 - The Major Superior or her delegate, receives perpetual profession in the name of the Church.

157 - With perpetual profession, the sister assumes the obligation to observe the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience for her whole life and definitively chooses to live her consecration in the Institute of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Assisi.

CIC 654

The Institute becomes her family. Participating fully in its life and mission, she commits herself to love and sustain it in fidelity to the charism that she enriches with her particular gifts.

158 - § 1. Superiors should be very solicitous for the fidelity of their sisters by prudently preventing evil and strengthening in good those who may be in difficulty. They should continue to follow and support with

prayer and concern, the sisters who are absent for any reason whatsoever.

§ 2. If for the common good and for the good of the individual sisters the Superiors need to reprimand, correct or admonish them, according to universal law and the Institute's own law, let them do so with charity and discretion.

**Separation
from the
Institute**

CIC 686 § 1

159 - § 1. The Superior General with the consent of her Council, for grave reasons can grant an indult of exclaustation to a sister in perpetual vows, but not for more than three years.

CIC 686 § 3

§ 2. At the request of the Superior General, with the consent of her Council, exclaustation can be imposed by the Holy See for grave reasons, with equity and charity being observed.

CIC 691 §1-2

160 - A sister in perpetual vows should not ask for an indult to leave the Institute without very grave reasons, after serious reflection, counsel and discernment.

The granting of such an indult is reserved to the Holy See.

CIC 684-685

161 - The transfer of a sister in perpetual vows to another Institute is governed by universal law.

162 - The dismissal of a sister from the Institute is regulated by the norms of universal law. CIC 694-701

163 - The sister who legitimately leaves or is dismissed from the Institute cannot demand anything from it for any work done in it. The Institute, however, is to help her with means suggested by equity and charity and should continue to keep in touch with her through prayer and true fraternal relationship. CIC 702 §1-2

CHAPTER VII

THE SERVICE OF AUTHORITY IN OUR INSTITUTE

«Let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves».

(Lk 22:26)

«All the friars without exception are forbidden to wield power or authority, particularly over one another. Our Lord tells us in the Gospel that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. That is not to be the way among the friars. Among them, whoever wishes to become great shall be their servant, and whoever wishes to be first shall be their minister, and he is their servant. Let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest».

(1R 5, 9-12: FF 19)

«It is proper that in this house there be the superior in order that the body has a head; and there are to be officials, in order that the body with a head is not without hands and feet. The superior should be virtuous, humble in spirit, patient, benign toward all; so that, since in the Rule, she is called minister, she should be the servant of all».

(Writings, p. 224)

**Basis of
authority**

Cf. FT 11; PC 2;
CIC 576

164 - § 1. The service of authority proceeds from the Spirit of the Lord in communion with the authority of the Church, that canonically erected, approved and authenticated the Charism given to the Founders, through the approval of the Constitutions.

CIC 617

§ 2. Authority in the Institute is ecclesial authority exercised in conformity with the universal legislation of the Church and the Institute's own law, the visible principle of unity that unites our religious family to the Church and in it through Christ to God. (CIC 617)

FT 3

165 - § 1. Authority exercises a threefold service: to the individual sisters who are called to live their own vocation, to build fraternal communities, and to participate in the same mission.

§ 2. The service of authority therefore, is a concrete and committed way of living together the obedience of Christ, in order to achieve growth in charity and in personal and communal holiness and that of all the members through the living of Franciscan-Evangelical values and the mission of the Institute in the Church.

166 - § 1. Authority is a service. Following the example of Jesus, who came not to be served but to serve and of Friar Francis, who wanted the Superiors as ministers to be servants of the other friars and called himself their little servant. Superiors are to exercise their mandate not in the form of domination, but as an authentic service.

§ 2. Authority in consecrated life is, above all, spiritual authority, called onto guarantee quality time for prayer for one's community, to foster the dignity of each sister, to inspire courage and hope in difficult times, to keep alive the charism of the Institute, to feel part of the Church, and to accompany the on-going (continuous) formative journey. FT 13

167 - § 1. A sister called to exercise authority should be aware that she can accomplish this responsibility, only if she is in the forefront, in consistently searching for the will of God. She is called to grow daily in familiarity with the Word of God, with the Rule and the Constitutions, and to cultivate an attentive listening to the sisters and to the signs of times. FT 12-13

§ 2. In order to promote the common good, the Superiors should foster obedience CIC 618; VC 43

in all the sisters, and respect for each person.

All of us, co-responsible for the life and mission of the Institute, though exercising diverse roles, we obey in faith the sisters who exercise the service of authority.

CIC 590 § 1-2;
CIC 678; VC 49

168 - Our mission in the universal Church is fulfilled in communion and under the authority of the Supreme Pontiff, in respect for the authority of the Bishops, by welcoming their pastoral directives for diocesan life; and in bond with the Order of Friars Minor Conventual, according to the universal law and the Institute's own law.

**Authority
in the Institute**

CIC 631 § 1

169 - § 1. The service of authority in the Institute is exercised, as collegial authority, through General and Provincial Chapters, and as personal authority, by the Major Superiors in collaboration with their respective Councils.

§ 2. In the exercise of its functions, authority is mindful of the principles of subsidiary, co-responsibility, and complementarity, always in union with and dependent upon higher authority.

Gen. St. 67. 1-2;
CIC 633

§ 3. The Institute avails itself of various forms of participation and consultation: assemblies and commissions and the

Secretariat for Missionary Activities, all as expressions of the co-responsibility of all the sisters in the realization of our charismatic identity.

§ 4. The Secretariat for the missions is an organ at the service of the General Leadership, which avails itself of its collaboration for the development of missionary life, in order to accomplish its goals of animation, formation and evangelization and to respond to the demands of the Church, with particular attention to the signs of times. It is coordinated by the Secretary General for the missions, nominated by the General Superior with the consent of her council, every six years. The Secretary General for the missions collaborates with a consultative and effective team nominated by the Superior General with the consent of her Council.

Gen. St. 36,1-2;
67,2

§ 5. All the sisters should manifest their concern for and participation in the life and the well being of the Institute by diverse means: reciprocal information, consultation, proposals and elections.

170 - In the Institute, the following are Major Superiors: the Superior General over the entire Institute, the Provincial Superior and the Vice Provincial Superior, and their

CIC 620

respective Vicars, in the exercise of their office.

Offices

171 - All the offices in the institute are conferred for a determined period of time; according to the modalities and duration determined by the Institute's own law.

CIC 624 § 1

Sisters who are called to an office should accept it humbly and fulfill it faithfully.

172 - § 1. The general offices are: the office of the Superior General, of the Vicar General, of the General Councillors, of the General Secretary and of the General Treasurer.

§ 2. The Provincial and Vice Provincial offices are: the office of the Provincial Superior and of the Vice Provincial, and their respective Vicars, Councillors, Secretaries and Treasurers.

§ 3. The offices of the local community are: the office of the local Superior, of the Vicar and the Treasurer of the community

173 - § 1. The general offices have a term of six years; those of provinces, of vice provinces and of communities, have a term of four years.

§ 2. All the other offices considered

in a generic sense in our Constitutions are called appointments.

174 - § 1. In elections the universal law and the Institute's own law must be observed.

§ 2. All General, Provincial and Vice-provincial offices are conferred in their respective Chapters by an election using written votes, unless otherwise determined.

§ 3. The local Superior, in accordance with the Institute's own law, is nominated by the respective Major Superior with the consent of her council.

§ 4. If the office of the local Superior becomes vacant before the term of office expires, the Leadership proceeds with a new nomination that has the same duration of four years.

175 - § 1. In chapter elections, with the exception of what is prescribed in the following paragraphs 2 and 3, the sister shall be considered elected, and so proclaimed by the presiding officer, who has obtained the absolute majority of those present, or who, after two ineffective ballots, in the third ballot has obtained a relative majority. In case of a tie, the elder in profession and then in age is to be considered elected. CIC 119

§ 2. All offices can be conferred for two consecutive terms. For the third and last successive election to the same office a qualified majority is necessary to be obtained on the first or second ballot.

§ 3. For the election of the Superior General, Provincial and Vice-Provincial five ballots are permitted. After the second ineffective ballot, the sisters who need a qualified majority are deprived of passive voice.

If on the fourth ballot, no sister obtains an absolute majority, the fifth and last ballot is to be cast in which only the two sisters who, in the fourth ballot obtained the greater number of votes have passive but not active voice.

She shall be considered elected who has received a relative majority. In case of a tie, the elder in profession and then in age, shall be considered elected.

§ 4. The Superior General is designated by means of a canonical election, according to the Constitutions n. 175.3, while the Provincial Superior and Vice-Provincial Superior need to be confirmed by the Superior General.

176 - In order to be elected Superior General, a sister must be in perpetual profession for at least ten years; Superior of a Province,

of a Vice province, the General Councillor and General Treasurer, must have at least five years of perpetual profession; Provincial Councillor, of the Vice Province and Provincial Treasurer at least three years of perpetual profession.

177 - § 1. The General Chapter is the most significant expression of the entire Institute: the sign of its unity in charity, the moment of intense spiritual and fraternal life, of thanksgiving and of availability to the Spirit in order to seek and follow the ways of the Lord

General
Chapter

§ 2. The General Chapter is the supreme authority, the collegial organ constituted by sisters who function with equal responsibility and power in representing the entire Institute.

178 – The General Chapter has the duty to:

- a. protect, enhance, actualize the charism and the spiritual patrimony of the Institute and confirm our fidelity to it;
- b. promote the spiritual and apostolic unity and vitality of the Institute in plurality;
- c. verify the general situation of the Institute, by examining its problems and its

- proposals, and by defining the objectives to be pursued;
- d.* ascertain the economic and financial situation of the Institute;
 - e.* promote a constant renewal and updating of the members and structures;
 - f.* elect the Superior General, the General Councillors and the General Treasurer;
 - g.* erect, divide, unite, or suppress a Province;
 - h.* forward to the Holy See, with two-thirds of the votes of the participants in the Chapter, the proposals of amendments, abrogations or new norms of the Constitutions;
 - i.* modify, update and enact or promulgate the General Statutes.

Convocation

179 - § 1. The Ordinary General Chapter is celebrated every six years, when the term of office of the Superior General expires, or even before, when that same office becomes vacant for whatever reasons.

§ 2. Its convocation can be anticipated or postponed, for just reasons, but not for more than six months.

§ 3. When the office of the Superior General becomes vacant, the convocation of the General Chapter is determined by the Vicar General with the consent of the

councillors. The Chapter must be convoked within three months and must be celebrated not beyond six months from the cessation of the office of the Superior General.

§ 4. The General Chapter is celebrated according to the norms in the General Statutes. Gen. St. 56ff

180 - The convocation of the General Chapter is to be communicated to the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life and to the Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual.

181 - The Superior General, with the consent of her Council, can convene an Extraordinary General Chapter when there are urgent and important issues regarding the life and mission of the entire Institute.

182 - § 1. The Superior General presides over the General Chapter.

§ 2. The Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual or his delegate, presides over the election of the Superior General, as a sign of communion and in continuity with our origins.

Members

183 - § 1. The following are members by right or ex officio of ordinary and extraordinary General Chapters:

- the Superior General;
- the General Councillors;
- the General Treasurer;
- the Provincial and Vice Provincial Superiors;
- the last Superior General emeritus.

§ 2. The number of sisters, members by election and elected according to the modalities determined in the General Statutes, should not be inferior to those who participate by right.

§ 3. By the invitation of the Superior General, with the consent of her Council, sisters and experts who can offer a particular contribution can participate in the General Chapter, without the right to vote.

CIC 631 § 3

§ 4. The Provinces, the Vice Provinces, the Delegations, the local communities and every sister can freely forward their proposals and desires to the General Chapter.

184 - § 1. For the validity of the Chapter acts, at least two-thirds of the sisters having voting rights must be present.

Cf. CIC 119

§ 2. In the elections or in reference to concerns about other affairs, what is ap-

proved by the absolute majority of those present, has force of law.

185 - § 1. The Superior General is competent to promulgate the Chapter decrees which thereby obtain normative force for the entire Institute.

The interpretation or the modification of any of these, between Chapters, is up to the Superior General, with the consent of her Council, and remains valid until the succeeding Chapter.

§ 2. The Superior General shall see to it that the Chapter acts are properly drawn up and she shall make known to all the communities, both the situation of the Institute and the decisions made.

186 – § 1. The designation of the Superior General takes place by means of election by secret ballot in the General Chapter.

**Election of
the Superior
General and
Council**

§ 2. If the one elected Superior General is not present at the Chapter, every other election and decision is suspended until her arrival.

CIC 625 § 1

The elected Superior General, having accepted the office, assumes the presidency of the Chapter.

187 – The Chapter proceeds in separate

ballots through written votes, to the election of the four General Councillors, who can be proposed by the Superior General. They immediately take part in the Chapter. From among the Councillors, upon the presentation of the Superior General, the Chapter elects by bead-ballot the Vicar and the Secretary General. Afterwards, the chapter elects the General Treasurer.

Duties

CIC 622

188 - The Superior General exercises her authority of guidance and discernment, in reminding and serving the plan of God for the Institute.

189 - The Superior General, sign of unity in the Institute, has ordinary authority over each and all the sisters, over the Provinces and houses, and she exercises this authority alone or with her Council according to universal law and the Institute's own law.

Writings, p. 225

190 - § 1. «*The Office of Minister or Mother is to supervise all the sisters, so that each one may faithfully and devotedly exercise her office. She should inspire the subjects in the service of God more by her actions than by her words*».

Cf. Writings,
p. 372

Mother General, following the example of the Foundress, leads the sisters by her

witness of life; with charity and firmness she sustains and encourages them on the path of holiness undertaken in fidelity to the Rule and the Constitutions.

§ 2. It is her duty to preserve and deepen the spirit of the Institute and to animate its life and mission in the Church. She promotes unity in charity; she keeps in touch with the different Provinces and houses, and exhorts all to know and be faithful to the teachings of the Church and to participate in its life.

§ 3. She verifies the journey of each community of the Institute through the canonical visit that she or her delegate makes, on the occasion of the Provincial Chapters.

She meets some communities more frequently, according to needs and circumstances.

§ 4. She handles the matters of the Institute with the Holy See, availing herself of the advice of the Procurator General of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual.

191 – § 1. In the case of resignation from her office, for serious and founded reasons, the Superior General presents a written request to the Apostolic See, to whose dispositions she must adhere.

§ 2. If for very grave reasons, the

dismissal of the Superior General becomes necessary, the Vicar General with the consent of the other Councillors will forward the issue to the Holy See, to whose decisions she must adhere.

CIC 627 § 1

192 - § 1. The Superior General, in the exercise of her office, must avail herself of the collaboration of the Council, composed of four sisters, according to what is established by the universal law and the Institute's own law.

§ 2. The General Councillors collaborate with the Superior General in the guidance of the Institute with a sense of co-responsibility and with their opinion and vote, according to the Constitutions.

§ 3. When the Councillors are delegated by the Superior General to perform some acts of leadership, they have thereby the authority conferred on them by the delegation.

193 - § 1. The Superior General can entrust to the individual Councillors specific duties regarding religious life, formation, apostolic ministry, and relations with the missions.

§ 2. The Councillors should remain in contact and in communion with each oth-

er and with the Superior General, and strive to be ever more capable of performing their duty, paying attention to the changing reality, to life and to the service of all their sisters.

194 - The Vicar General is the closest collaborator of the Superior General. She substitutes her when she is absent or when she is impeded from acting in person and in the absence of the Superior General, she deals with the ordinary matters of the Institute according to the Superior General's directives.

The Vicar General cannot hold the office of Secretary General or General Treasurer.

If the office of Superior General becomes vacant, the Vicar General by right assumes the leadership of the Institute according to the Constitutions n. 179. 3. CIC 152

195 - The Secretary General has the duty to draw up the acts of the meetings of the Council, to help the Superior General with correspondence, to countersign official acts, and to preserve and keep in order documents referring to the history and leadership of the Institute that are filed in the general archives.

196 - The General Treasurer executes her

office, administering the temporal goods at the service of the whole Institute, under the direction of the Superior General, and in conformity with universal law, the Institute's own law and civil laws.

The Treasurer each year, presents the administrative report to the Council and at the end of the six-year term, she prepares a report on the economic condition of the Institute to be presented at the General Chapter.

197 - The Superior General convenes her Council every two months and whenever she considers it necessary.

CIC 127 § 2, 1°

198 - § 1. In each case that universal law or the Institute's own law prescribes that the Superior General must have the consent of her Council, she acts invalidly if she has not obtained the consent of the majority of the Councillors. In such a case, the Superior General does not concur to form the majority, nor can she break a tie vote.

CIC 119, 2°

§ 2. When universal law and the Institute's own law call for a collegial procedure, the Superior General is considered a member of the Council; she votes and the majority vote decides the issue. In case of a tie vote, the Superior General after the sec-

ond ballot, can break the tie, if it is not a question of an election.

§ 3. In those cases in which the Superior General must ask for an opinion, it is necessary for validity, that she hears what all the Councillors have to say, but for just reasons, she is free to act as she thinks best. CIC 127 § 2, 2°

199 - In order to act validly, the Superior General must seek the consent of her council in the following cases:

- a. the erection of a house with the previous written permission of the diocesan Bishop; CIC 610
- b. the suppression of a house after having consulted the diocesan Bishop; CIC 616
- c. the granting of an indult to leave the Institute to a sister in temporary vows; CIC 688 § 2
- d. the granting of an indult of exclaustation to a sister in perpetual vows, or for a grave reason, asking the Holy See for imposed exclaustation;
- e. the convocation of an extraordinary General Chapter;
- f. the acceptance outside the General Chapter, of the resignation of Major Superiors and General Councillors and the appointments for the substitutes of the Councillors;

- g. the erection, transfer and suppression of a novitiate.

And where there are no Provinces:

- a. the admission to the novitiate, to temporary and perpetual vows;
- b. the dismissal and re-admission of a novice;
- c. the appointment of local Superiors and formators;
- d. the acceptance of the resignations.

Other than what has been indicated above, the Superior General must ask for the consent of her Council in other cases requested by the universal law and the Institute's own law.

CIC 691 § 1

200 - The Superior General, with her own vote together with that of her Council, will forward to the Holy See the request of a sister in perpetual vows to leave the Institute.

General
Assembly

201 - § 1. The General Assembly is an organ of participation, evaluation and planning.

Its juridical nature is exclusively that of consultation and its function is to study and deepen understanding on specific matters as in n. 202 of the Constitutions.

§ 2. The General Assembly is convened by the Superior General ordinarily three years after the General Chapter.

202 - The General Assembly has the duty to:

- a.* examine the situation of the Provinces, Vice Provinces and the communities under the direct jurisdiction of the Superior General;
- b.* verify and promote the actualization of the decisions made at the General Chapter;
- c.* deeply examine problems regarding specific aspects of our life;
- d.* determine a unitary programme for the succeeding three year term that should be presented for approval to the Superior General with the consent of her Council.

203 - § 1. The members of the Assembly are:

- the Superior General who presides;
- the General Councillors;
- the General Treasurer;
- the Major Superiors.

§ 2. The Superior General, with the consent of her Council, can permit sisters, expert in proposed matters to be covered

to participate in the assembly, but without voting rights.

Province
Vice Province
Delegation

204 - § 1. The Province, immediate part of the Institute, is normally constituted by the sisters ascribed to it, who are animated and guided by the Provincial Superior assisted by her council, according to universal law and the Institute's own law.

The Province, as an active part of the Institute, in its fundamental unity of its life and mission, fosters the incarnation of the charism in diverse cultural and ecclesial contexts.

§ 2. The Vice Province, which lacks one or more of the requirements to be erected as a Province, is an organism equated to a Province, according to the Constitutions.

What is stated about the Province, applies also to the Vice Province, unless otherwise specified.

Gen. St. 68. 1-2

205 - § 1. The erection of a Province or a Vice Province requires the availability of sufficient human and economic resources in order to ensure the exercise of authority, apostolic vitality, formation of the sisters, and the novitiate, according to the General Statutes

§ 2. One or more houses that are

not yet erected in a Vice Province are called General Delegations, if they depend on the Superior General, Provincial Delegations if they depend on a Province.

§ 3. It is the responsibility of the Superior General with the consent of her council to open a General Delegation.

§ 4. The respective Major Superior nominates her Delegate, to whom she will specify her duties of representation in the same letter of appointment.

206 - The Provincial Chapter is the supreme authority of the Province. It is constituted by the sisters representing the Province, and as an expression of the Province itself, has accordingly, the same significance as the General Chapter for the Institute.

Provincial
Chapter

207 - § 1. The Provincial Chapter has these duties:

- a. to examine the life and the apostolic activities of the province and verify fidelity to the charism in its particular incarnation, in keeping with the directives of the Institute and of the Church;
- b. to search for the means, and to carry out the most opportune choices for its growth and apostolic efficacy;

- c.* to examine the proposals and requests from the communities and the sisters;
- d.* to promote the apostolate for vocations and formation with adequate initiatives;
- e.* to verify the economic and financial situation;
- f.* to elect the Provincial Superior and the Councillors;
- g.* to draw up Particular Statutes to be submitted for the approval of the Superior General with the consent of her Council.

§ 2. The Provincial Chapter can erect and suppress a Provincial Delegation. This decision needs to be confirmed by the Superior General, with the consent of her Council.

Convocation

208 - § 1. The Provincial Chapter is celebrated every four years. It is convoked by the Superior General at least three months prior to its celebration.

§ 2. For just reasons the Chapter may be anticipated or postponed, but not for more than four months.

§ 3. The Superior General, personally or through her delegate, presides over the Chapter until the election of the Provincial Superior. The newly elected Provincial Superior presides over the other sessions of the Chapter.

§ 4. The Chapter is conducted and regulated according to the General Statutes and the Chapter Directory.

§ 5. The Provincial Superior, with the consent of her Council, can convoke an extraordinary Chapter whenever very important issues make it necessary.

209 - The Provincial Chapter is constituted either by all the sisters in perpetual vows or by the sisters in perpetual vows, who by virtue of their office or by election have a right to participate in the Chapter. The method for participation, and the proportions and modalities of membership to the Chapter, are specified by the Particular Statutes.

Members

210 - The following are members by right or *ex officio* of the ordinary and extraordinary Provincial Chapters:

- the Superior General or her Delegate;
- the Provincial Superior;
- the Provincial Councillors;
- the Provincial Treasurer;
- the last Provincial Superior Emeritus.

The following are members of the Provincial Chapter by election:

the sisters in perpetual vows according

to the modality established by the Constitutions n. 209 and by the Particular Statutes, with attention to the disposition of n. 183, 2 of the Constitutions.

**Election of
the Provincial
Superior and
Council**

211 - § 1. If the Chapter is composed of all the sisters in perpetual vows, for the election of the Provincial Superior, the norms given in the Constitutions n. 175.3 are followed.

§ 2. In the representative system, the election of the Provincial Superior may take place by either:

- a.* direct suffrage during Chapter, following the norms of the General Statutes;
- b.* direct suffrage, with up to three epistolary ballots, according to the norms in the General Statutes.

Gen. St. 69. 2-3

§ 3. In the case that the election takes place with the epistolary (mail) balloting, we proceed according to the norms prescribed in the General Statutes.

§ 4. Every Province must establish its own system of election, in its Particular Statutes.

212 - For the validity of Chapter acts the norm of the Constitutions n. 184 is to be observed.

213 - In separate balloting, the Provin-

cial Chapter elects by written votes, the four Councillors who can be proposed by the Provincial Superior. They immediately take part in the Chapter.

From among the Councillors, and at the proposal of the Provincial Superior, the Chapter elects by bead-ballot the Vicar and the Provincial Secretary. Thereafter, the Chapter elects the Provincial Treasurer.

214 - The Provincial Superior, sign of **Duties**
communion in the Province, has ordinary authority over each and all of the sisters and communities of the Province, which she exercises either alone or with her Council, according to universal law and the Institute's own law.

215 - § 1. The Provincial Superior, showing charity and concern for all the sisters, meets them frequently, fosters the growth of fraternal life through the service of listening and dialogue, and exhorts them to a life in conformity with the Rule and the Constitutions. By promoting an incarnation of the charism that corresponds to the local needs, she does all she can in order that the sisters live both the Franciscan spirit and the spirit of the Institute and to which they feel closely

Cf. FT 20

united. Attentive listening is one of the principle services required of the Superior.

§ 2. She promotes and sustains the Province's commitment to the apostolate for vocations, provides for initial and on-going (continuing) formation, and fosters the communion and the formation of all the sisters through periodic encounters.

§ 3. Once a year, personally or through one of her Councillors, she visits all the communities; and she makes the canonical visit twice to each community, within a four-year term.

§ 4. Each year, she sends her report on the life of the Province and its financial administration, to the Superior General.

216 - In the spirit of communion and co-responsibility, at least once a year, she invites the local Superiors to a meeting, together with her Councillors to:

- a.* verify and promote the actualization of the decisions made at the Provincial Chapter;
- b.* examine the life and apostolic service of the communities;
- c.* make a profound study of specific problems and to evaluate proposals and directives;
- d.* draw up the annual programme.

217 - § 1. The Provincial Superior in the exercise of her responsibility of leadership, is assisted by her Council, which she normally convokes every two months and whenever she deems it necessary.

§ 2. For the Councillors of the Province and of the Vice Province the norms of Constitutions n. 192 apply.

218 - In the case of a vacant office of a Provincial Councillor, the nomination of a new Councillor is done by the Superior General, following the proposal made by the Provincial Superior.

219 - The Provincial Superior needs the consent of her Council to:

- a.* erect a religious house, with the prior authorization of the Superior General with the consent of her Council, and the prior written consent of the diocesan Bishop;
- b.* admit to novitiate, to temporary and to perpetual vows;
- c.* dismiss or re-admit a novice;
- d.* nominate local Superiors and Formators;
- e.* accept, outside of the Provincial Chapter, the resignation of Councillors;
- f.* accept other resignations.

220 - For the acts of the Council the

norms prescribed in n. 198 of the Constitutions apply.

221 - The Vicar Provincial, in the absence of the Provincial Superior, and according to her directives, deals with the ordinary questions of the Province. If the office of Provincial Superior becomes vacant, the Vicar assumes the exercise of Authority by right until the subsequent ordinary Chapter.

222 - The Provincial Secretary and Treasurer exercise their office according to what is prescribed in nos. 195 and 196 of the Constitutions.

**Local
Community**

223 - The local community, a vital part of the Institute and its concrete expression, is constituted by sisters united in one religious house, in communion with and under the authority of the Superior, incarnate fraternal life and the mission of the Institute in a particular socio-ecclesial context.

Gen. St. 71ff

224 - The local Superior is placed for the guidance and the animation of the local community; she has ordinary authority over the sisters of her community and over other sisters who temporarily become part of the community. She exercises her authority

either alone or with the Chapter of the community according to the General Statutes.

225 - § 1. At the service of the spiritual and apostolic unity of the community, the Superior promotes the development and the action of each sister, according to each one's vocation in fidelity to the Rule and the Constitutions.

§ 2. The local Superior animates and coordinates the life and activities of the community by promoting an open and constructive dialogue so that the community becomes aware of and responsible, for each choice in its journey toward ever increasing maturity.

§ 3. She stimulates communion with the other fraternities of the Province and with the Institute. She confers frequently with the Major Superior and sends in her annual report, on the situation of the community.

226 - § 1. The local Superior, a sister at least two years in perpetual vows, is elected for a four-year term and can be confirmed for a second mandate, but not for a third consecutive mandate.

§ 2. During the time of her mandate, the local Superior can be removed from of-

Gen. St. 71,4

fice or transferred, for reasons given in the General Statutes.

§ 3. The Provincial Superior, with the consent of her Council, for the sake of the common good, can transfer a local Superior during her mandate, with the latter's consent.

227 - § 1. In the Institute some houses are directly dependent on the Superior General for they function for a common need or for other particular reasons.

§ 2. The Superior General exercises over these houses alone or with her Council, besides her supreme authority, the authority that a Provincial Superior exercises over the houses of the Province.

Chapter of the community

228 - § 1. The community Chapter is the highest expression of the participation and co-responsibility of all the sisters of a community in dealing with all that regards their spiritual, community, and apostolic life.

Gen. St. 71,1-3

Presided over by the local Superior, the Chapter act is consultative or deliberative, according to the norms laid down in the General Statutes.

§ 2. All the sisters must participate in the community Chapter with a sense of responsibility, and with the ardent desire of

contributing to the growth of the community and to its apostolic efficacy.

§ 3. The local Superior convokes the Chapter of the community once a month.

229 - In each community, the Vicar is elected by the community Chapter; is confirmed by the Provincial Superior and remains in office four years. In the absence of or in circumstances that impedes the Superior, the Vicar takes her place in the ordinary governance of the community.

230 - The local Treasurer is elected by the community Chapter, according to the General Statutes, and remains in office for four years.

In collaboration with the Superior, on whom she depends:

- a. she administers the goods of the community;
- b. each month, she presents the administrative accounts to be submitted to the examination and approval of the community Chapter;
- c. she prepares the annual report, which duly approved by the community Chapter, is sent to the Provincial Superior.

Insertion in
the Province
Vice Province
Delegation
Community

231 - § 1. All the sisters are stable members in the house where they reside and in which they exercise their rights and fulfill their duties according to the Constitutions.

§ 2. Each sister in perpetual vows enjoys active and passive voice in only one house, one Province, Vice Province or General Delegation.

§ 3. A sister residing in a house outside her Province has rights and duties according to the agreement made by the respective Major Superiors, after consulting the sister involved. This agreement must be clearly stated in her letter of obedience, indicating the period of time that the sister will spend outside of her Province.

§ 4. It is permissible, with the consent of the sister, to transfer her from her own Province to another, either definitively or for a sufficient lengthy period of time, in agreement with the respective Major Superiors and the Councils of the Provinces concerned.

§ 5. A sister sent to another Province for an indefinite period of time, exercises her rights during that period in that Province; in the meantime her rights in the Province she has left are suspended.

§ 6. The General Councillors, ascribed to a Province, exercise their rights

and duties there; but during their mandate, they have only active voice in respect to the election of the Provincial Superior and her Council.

232 - The Institute, the Provinces, the Vice Provinces and the houses have the capacity to acquire, possess, administer and alienate movable and immovable temporal goods.

Administration
of goods

Ecclesiastical goods and goods pertaining to the life and the mission of the Institute are governed by the norms of universal law and the Institute's own law.

233 - The administration of temporal goods and their use must always be in keeping with the principles of justice, evangelical poverty and the purposes for which they are destined.

Those who have the responsibility of administration must faithfully observe all the norms prescribed for the preservation and increase of goods, taking care of the revenue and using it for its established purposes.

234 - For the validity of acts of alienation or for any other act that may prejudice the patrimonial situation of the Institute or a part of it, the written permission of the

Superior General with the consent of her Council, according to the General Statutes is necessary.

If such transaction goes beyond the sum fixed by the Holy See or if they involve items given to the Church in virtue of the vow, or items of precious art or of historical value, besides the permission of the Superior General with her Council, the authorization of the Holy See is necessary as well.

Gen. St. 75

235 - § 1. The General Chapter determines the sum of money which the Superior General, alone or with the consent of her Council, may dispose of, and establishes the contributions the Provinces and Vice Provinces are to make for the needs of the General Curia and the Institute.

§ 2. The Provincial and Vice Provincial Chapters determine in the Particular Statutes, the amount of money which the Major Superior alone or with the consent of her Council, may dispose of and which, the local Superior alone or with the community Chapter, may dispose of. The same Chapter establishes the contribution each community is to make to the Province or the Vice Province.

EXHORTATION TO FIDELITY

«May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, and he will do it».

(I Thes 5: 23-24)

«I pray and beg you as my most dear sons and daughters, that you persevere in the things that you have begun at the instigation of the Holy Spirit, not forsaking your perfection as so often happens among certain ones, but that avoiding all the snares of darkness, you strive always for more perfect things. Your profession is very exalted...».

(Com 65: FF 2024)

«Strengthen yourselves in the Lord, put into execution that which is written here, and I assure you that what is written in the psalm “having sown in tears you will reap in joy” will be verified in you. Do not let yourselves be seduced by the present which soon ends, but look to the future that

will never end. The suffering is slight; the glory is infinite, the reward is God himself».

(Writings, p. 372)

«May she, the faithful Virgin, also be the Mother of your evangelical way: may she help you to experience and to show to the world how infinitely faithful is God himself».

(RD 17)

Praise be to the Lord God

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