

RULE OF LIFE

Provisional Edition 2013

BROTHERS OF CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION



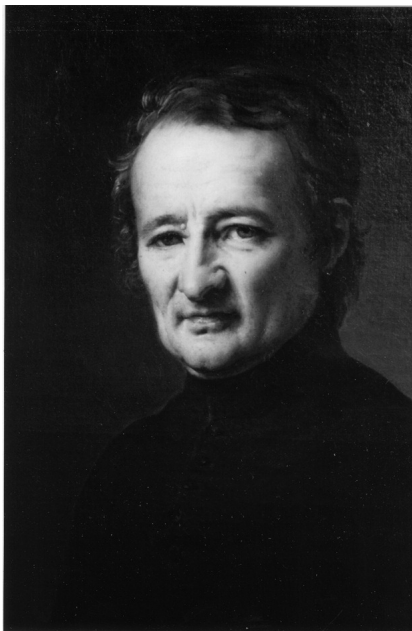
Brother of Christian Instruction of Ploërmel

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00166 ROMA

*"Always give thanks to God for
his favours; and may your gratitude
and piety strongly incite Him
to keep on lavishing upon your ...
society all the graces it needs
to fulfill ... the work to which
it is called".*

(Gabriel Deshayes)





"Each of you will receive a copy of the new Rule.

Read and reread it often, each time renewing from the bottom of your heart the firm resolution to observe it faithfully as long as you live".

(Jean-Marie de la Mennais)

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SACRA CONGREGATIO PRO RELIGIOSIS
ET INSTITUTIS SAECULARIBUS

Prot. n. V. 47-1/82

DECREE

The Brothers of Christian Instruction of Ploermel, whose Generalate is in Rome, lead the consecrated life in fraternal communion by the profession of the evangelical counsels and devote themselves to the Christian education of youth in schools instituted by Father Jean-Marie de la Mennais "to make Jesus Christ known".

In conformity with the decrees of Vatican II and the other norms of the Church, the Brothers have written a new text of Constitutions which the Superior General, with the consent of the Chapter, presented to the Holy See in order to obtain approval.

The Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, after having submitted the text for study by consultants and keeping in mind the favourable vote of the "Congresso," approves and confirms the text with the modifications suggested by that "Congresso," according to the French text kept in its Archives, and binding the members to the approved Constitutions.

This Sacred Congregation firmly wishes that, by the generous observance of these new Constitutions, the Brothers of Christian Instruction will respond perfectly to their calling so well described by their Venerable Founder: "You continue the mission which Jesus accomplished on earth; like Him, you teach and all your undertakings have as goal the salvation of souls". (Corr. III, 321)

Done in Rome on the feast of the Apostle, St. Luke, October 18, 1983.

E. Card. PIRONIO, Praef.

AGOSTINO MAYER O.S.B., Secr..

Provisional edition until the next General Chapter 2018

INTRODUCTION

Since the General Chapter of 1994, amendments to the administrative structures of the Congregation have been adopted, including the abolition of the Regions, which necessitated an update of our Rule of Life. The last General Chapter of 2012 has completed this work in respect of only the articles concerning the government of the Congregation. It has paid attention so that the Rule remains, in all that relates to the consecration, the vows, community life, mission and formation completely identical to the Rule that has guided our steps since 1983.

Following the General Chapter of 2012, there were contacts between the CIVCSVA and the Superior General to obtain the approval of the Constitutions as drafted. Small improvements have been made to the text during these exchanges.

One of the requirements of the Congregation for Religious, however, could not be adopted without receiving the approval of a General Chapter. The Holy See considers, in fact, that

the relationship of subordination between the Brother Vice-Provincial and Brother Provincial do not conform to Canon Law. Any Major Superior, in the law of the Church, depends only on the Superior General and his Council.

The General Chapter of 2012, for its part, had kept three structures: the Province, which is the basic structure of the Institute, the Vice-Province which is often a group of communities in a missionary sector that depends on the founder Province, and the District, which represents a structure close to the Province but with a reduced number of Brothers.

After reviewing the current status of the Congregation, the evolution of each of the Provinces and Vice-Provinces, after taking the time to view and discuss this issue with the Major Superiors directly concerned, the General Council decided to comply with the recommendations of the CIVCSVA and abolished the relationship of subordination between the Vice-Province and the Province, to retain only two structures that have no links between them: the Province and the District.

On 16th November 2012, the Superior General submitted a new draft of the Rule of Life - the one you have in your hands - to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. The latter, by letter dated 29th November 2012, approved the text. This is what the Prefect of the Congregation wrote:

"We acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 29th November about your reflections on the structure of the Institute of the Brothers of Christian Instruction.

Having read it carefully, this Congregation has decided to approve the proposed text for your Constitutions ad experi-

mentum until the next Chapter. This will allow you to take the time to develop your reflection, without losing sight of the directions given in our previous letters.”

Having obtained this approval, the Superior General and his Council wished to seek the advice of all the Major Superiors. The latter, gathered in Session March 2013 in Rome, clearly expressed their agreement and urged the General Council to put in place the new structures as soon as possible, in order to really experience them before the next General Chapter.

The document you have in your hands, therefore, represents the text of the Constitutions and the Directory voted by the General Chapter of 2012, and approved by the CIVCSVA *ad experimentum* after undergoing some modifications.

Finally, it is convenient to specify the following points:

1. Our Rule of Life has been approved by the Holy See. We must therefore rediscover it carefully to know it well and love it as our Path of life to follow Jesus, like Jean-Marie de la Mennais.

2. What is "*ad experimentum*" concerns the suppression of Vice-Provinces, and thus transforming them into Provinces or Districts.

3. Numbers 118-123 of the Constitutions about the District must be approved by the General Chapter of 2018 to be finally adopted.

4. Provinces and Vice-Provinces that currently exist in the Congregation do not change their status immediately. The Ge-

neral Council will review the situation of each of the Vice-Provinces separately in liaison with the Major Superiors and the Brothers concerned, and decide on their possible transformation into Provinces or Districts. It will also examine the case of some Provinces that could become Districts.

5. In the meantime, the Vice-Provinces are governed and animated by the texts that were adopted by the General Chapter of 2012, which are attached at the end of this book.

Therefore let us receive this Rule with joy, as an opportunity to make it ours again. Let us love to read it and meditate it. As our first Brothers, let us take it from the hands of Jean-Marie de la Mennais and Gabriel Deshayes. Let us hear our two Founders inviting us to print it in our heart with letters of fire, and especially to practise it with a burning desire to be Brothers after the heart of God.

Our Past

On 6th June 1819, Jean-Marie Robert de la Mennais, Capitular Vicar of Saint-Brieuc, and Gabriel Deshayes, Parish Priest of Auray and Vicar General of Vannes, signed a treaty uniting their efforts "to provide teachers of solid piety" to the children of the working class, especially those of the Breton countryside,

Animated by the Holy Spirit and encouraged by their mutual understanding, they redoubled their efforts to develop their project. The first profession of the vow of obedience was made during the retreat at Auray on September 1, 1820. The nascent Congregation of the Brothers of Christian Instruction grew rapidly. In November 1824, thanks to an acquisition by Father Deshayes, Ploërmel became the Mother House of the Congregation.

In spite of their hurried professional preparation and of the precarious conditions in which they lived, the Brothers emulated the zeal of their Founders as they carried the light of the Gospel and the rudiments of knowledge to the youth of impoverished regions. With the courage of true missionaries, many crossed the oceans to open the hearts of the people of the West Indies and of Africa to the liberating Word of Christ the Saviour.

Assured of the future of the Congregation to which he had given his all, surrounded by the love of his 852 Brothers and of the Daughters of Providence of Saint-Brieuc, and held in veneration by countless children and parents, Jean-Marie de la Mennais still considered his work unfinished: "My son," he uttered to his successor, Brother Cyprian shortly before his death, "Complete my work." Father de la Mennais died at Ploërmel on 26th December, 1860.

Faithful to the intentions of their Founder¹, the Brothers continue to provide Christian instruction and education in their schools. The missionary apostolate, initiated as early as 1837 in Guadeloupe, was extended to Martinique, Senegal, French Guyana, Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon and Tahiti during the Founder's lifetime, and to Haiti shortly thereafter. When the policies of the French government resulted in the Brothers' expulsion from most of these areas, their apostolic zeal led them to Canada. Meanwhile, the Congregation had been strengthened by the incorporation of two smaller groups, Bishop de la Croix d'Azolette's Brothers of Gascony, in 1876, and Father Charles-Auguste Duguey's Brothers of Saint Marie de Tinchebray, in 1880.

Father de la Mennais is usually called "the Founder" because Father Deshayes, after his selection as Superior General of the Montfort Fathers in 1821, left the direction of the Brothers to his colleague while remaining their co-Superior until his death which occurred at Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre, on 28 December 1841.

In spite of its official suppression in France in 1903, resulting in the loss of more than half its 2,200 members and all of its property, the Congregation kept faith with its destiny. It persisted in France through the willingness of many to live and work clandestinely in constant uncertainty and severe deprivation.

It was temporarily planted in Bulgaria, Turkey and Egypt. It flourished in Canada from 1886 onwards, as well as in Spain, England and the United States after the turn of the century.

Later, several of these countries were sending their own sons, Brothers of Christian Instruction, to help in existing missions or to establish new ones in Africa (Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, the Seychelles, Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire), in Argentina, Uruguay and Chile, in Japan and Alaska. Meanwhile, the French Brothers returned to Senegal and the Marquesas Islands and established new missions in the Ivory Coast and Togo and Benin. In the year 2000, at the initiative of the General Administration, the Provinces of Spain and France sent Brothers to Indonesia for a new missionary foundation.

The work of evangelisation, carried on in a variety of settings, was greatly facilitated because the Founder, from the very beginning, established the Brothers as a religious Congregation. As it expanded, successive general Chapters completed the organization and insisted on the basic unity of the religious life and the apostolate. Adapting to changing times, the Brothers understood that the impact of their work called

for more advanced academic and professional preparation and a deeper spiritual life, lived according to the charism of the Congregation sustained by more serious scriptural and theological studies, hence, for a more solid initial formation and ongoing opportunities for personal development.

Thus, the religious and apostolic heritage of the Founders, authenticated by papal approbation in 1891, is preserved and transmitted today. In a changing world, the Brothers continue to devote themselves generously in the service of children and youth, attentive to the aspirations of their contemporaries, but always in reference to Christ, the supreme rule of their life.

Our Rule of Life

From the very beginning of the Congregation, Father de la Mennais, with the agreement of Father Deshayes, drafted a Rule which the Brothers transcribed themselves. The first printed text, Statutes of the Congregation of Christian Instruction, appeared in 1823. Changes were made as our religious association developed, especially as it expanded overseas and into southern France. The title of subsequent editions became Manual for the Brothers of Christian Instruction, (1835, 1851 and 1865).

The General Chapter of 1876, after obtaining the opinion of the Brothers, prepared a better structured and more detailed text with the same title and divided into two parts: the Constitutions and the Directory. The Manual was replaced after the Chapter of 1889, by a more canonical book entitled Constitutions, which allowed the final approbation of the Institute in 1891.

New editions of the Rules were made (1900, 1910) in view of Roman approval, which was granted in 1910.

The promulgation of the Code of Canon Law, in 1917, led the Chapter of 1921 to make further modifications for the 1925 edition of the Constitutions, Directory and Catechism of the Religious State, which remained in force until 1970.

In 1965, the Vatican II Council, by the decree *Perfectae caritatis*, called for an adapted renewal of the religious life. Each order or congregation was to hold a chapter of renovation and revise its rules so as to foster a deepening of the religious life and of the apostolate, adapting them to the actual conditions of the Church and of society.

In our Congregation, the two sessions of the General Chapter of renovation took place in 1968 and 1970. The outcome was the Rule of Life, faithful to the spirit of the Founders and to its specific charism, and enriched by the spiritual and theological principles of the Conciliar documents. It was to be in force "ad experimentum" until the second ordinary chapter following the chapter of renovation.

The Holy See, by the *motu proprio Ecclesiae sanctae*, requested that the chapter held at the end of the experimental period prepare a new version of the Rule, in the light of the experience of the Congregation during that time, so as to submit the revised Rule for its definitive approval. The General Chapter of 1982 complied with that request and the present Rule of Life -this meaningful title has been kept- contains the text approved by the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes on October 18, 1983.

In compliance with the guidelines of that Sacred Congregation, the Rule of Life is divided into two parts. The Constitutions, which have its formal approval and cannot be amended without its ratification, provide an element of sta-

bility. The Directory, which does not require the Holy See's approval, can be modified by future General Chapters.

The Constitutions succinctly integrate spiritual principles and juridical norms, define the nature and the aim of the Congregation, set the basic standards of its government, outline its rules and regulations, determine the conditions of admission and modes of formation of its members and the object of their religious commitment.

The Directory contains articles of a juridical nature, but especially it features a doctrinal and spiritual elaboration of the Constitutions. At the end of each chapter, quotations from Father de la Mennais, mostly from early versions of the Rules issued in collaboration with Father Deshayes, underscore the continuity of the spirit of the Congregation.

The two mutually complementary books are equally vital components of the Rule of Life, capable of sustaining our spiritual fervor and inspiring our apostolate. As a code of regulations for our daily behavior, the Rule supports our weakness; thus helping to make our consecration more effective. It enhances the gift of ourselves to God, a gift which he accepted through the ministry of his Church. Its prescriptions, observed with the dynamism granted by the Holy Spirit, far from shackling the person, sustain it in the service of love.

In all confidence, we may consider the text presented by the General Chapter and approved by the Holy See as an au-

thenticated life plan for true sons of Jean-Marie de la Mennais and Gabriel Deshayes, as an invitation of Jesus Christ to us whom he has called to follow him more closely. Our fidelity is not to a mere text, not to impersonal principles or cold prescriptions, but to the Lord, the center of our lives, whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light.

CONSTITUTIONS

Summary

CONSTITUTIONS

1. Nature and spirit of the Congregation.
2. Religious consecration.
3. Consecrated chastity.
4. Evangelical poverty.
5. Religious obedience.
6. Fraternal community.
7. Prayer life.
8. Apostolic mission.
9. Commitment in the Congregation.
10. Authority in the Congregation.
11. Local community.
12. Government of Provinces and Districts.
13. General government.
14. Temporal goods.
15. Departure from the Congregation.
16. Obligation.

DIRECTORY

1. Nature and spirit of the Congregation.
2. Religious consecration.
3. Consecrated chastity.
4. Evangelical poverty.
5. Religious obedience.
6. Fraternal community.
7. Prayer life.
8. Religious asceticism.
9. Apostolic mission.
10. Missions.
11. Vocations. Formation.
12. Government of Provinces and Districts.
13. General government.
14. Temporal goods.
15. Particular norms.
16. A Rule for our Life.

1.

Nature and Spirit of the Congregation

Nature and aim

1. The Congregation of the Brothers of Christian Instruction of Ploërmel is a lay congregation of pontifical right, founded by Jean-Marie de la Mennais and Gabriel Deshayes.

It brings together men who, responding to a special call of the Holy Spirit, pledge themselves totally to God by the public profession of the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience in a community of life and of apostolate in the service of God's people, especially youth, with a preference for the poor, through Christian education and instruction.

Religious educators

2. By their religious consecration, the Brothers manifest, not only their determination to die to sin, but also their will to renounce certain authentic values, to attach themselves better to Jesus Christ.

The school constitutes the favoured, but not exclusive, environment of the Brothers' apostolate. Faithful to the intentions of their Founders, they strive above all else to spread the knowledge of Jesus and his Gospel.

Spirit and motto

3. The spirit of the Congregation is one of faith and charity, abnegation and humility. Its motto is "God alone".

Ecclesial context

4. The Brothers profess total submission to the Pope, their foremost superior, by virtue of their vow of obedience, a respectful docility to the directives of their bishops, and a spirit of willing collaboration with the clergy, other religious and the laity.

Patroness of the Congregation

5. The Congregation honours Mary, the Mother of God, as special patroness and celebrates her as such on August 15.

2. The Religious Consecration

Meaning

6. Already consecrated at Baptism, the Brother, captivated by Christ, commits himself to imitate Christ's earthly life of chastity, poverty and obedience, and to associate himself more intimately to his work of salvation.

Total gift

7. The Brother voices his commitment by the public profession of the three religious vows in a special consecration rooted in that of Baptism and expressing it more fully.
At that very moment, he offers his entire life to God.

Contract

8. The profession is also a contract by which the Brother freely pledges to observe the *Rule of Life*. The Congregation, in turn, is bound to provide the spiritual and material conditions necessary to the realization of his life and mission as a Brother.

***Making the
vows***

9. The vows are first made for a stipulated period and then, forever.

They are received by the Superior General or by his delegate. When delegation occurs, it is mentioned in the official record of the profession.

Wording

10. The wording of the profession must include the following essential elements:

I, Brother..., declare my total submission to the *Rule of Life* of the Brothers of Christian Instruction and freely make into your hands, Brother Superior General (or delegate, by title) the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience for (one year,... years, ever), according to the Constitutions of the Congregation.

Candidates wishing to add to this text may do so with the understanding of the Major Superior.

3.

Consecrated Chastity

Meaning

11 To belong more easily to God with undivided hearts and to follow Christ more closely, the Brothers choose perfect chastity as celibates for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Their consecrated celibacy anticipates the life of the Resurrection and evokes in a special way the union of the Church with its Divine Spouse. "It liberates the human heart in a unique way and causes it to burn with greater love for God and all mankind". (PC 12:1)

Matter

12. By the vow of chastity, the Brothers commit themselves to the practice of the virtue of perfect chastity as celibates.

Ascesis and prudence

13. Besides the renunciations demanded of all Christians, consecrated celibacy requires others, which prudent religious discover "by a kind of spiritual instinct".
(PC 12:2)

Prayer, the sacraments

14. Since chastity has its source in intimacy with God, the Brothers assiduously beg for this grace through prayer and through the sacraments of Reconciliation and of the Eucharist.

and devotion to Mary

Faithful to Father de la Mennais' spirit, "they have a filial devotion to the Blessed Virgin, admirable model and powerful guardian of chastity, and have recourse to her with the greatest confidence in all their temptations". (Rule of 1876)

4.

Evangelical Poverty

Meaning

15. To share more intimately the poverty of Christ, who chose to be poor with the poor, and to detach themselves from what they are and what they have, the Brothers make the vow of poverty. Thus, in the spirit of the Beatitudes exemplified by the community of the apostles, they become more readily available to God and to their fellow men, especially the neediest.

Matter

16. By the vow of poverty, the Brothers forego the free and independent use and disposition of temporal goods having monetary value.

Renunciation of temporal goods

17. Perpetually professed Brothers may, if they choose, renounce their temporal goods in whole or in part.

Brothers may renounce their temporal goods only after at least five years of perpetual vows and with the consent of the Superior General with the assent of his Council.

Those making the renunciation take into account the situation of their family, the needs of the poor, and those of the Congregation and of the Church.

Those who renounce all their property, present or future, surrender the right to acquire and to possess. Thereafter, any act contrary to their voluntary renunciation is null and void. All that they receive belongs to the Congregation.

Personal goods

18. Those who do not make this renunciation retain the radical ownership of their patrimony and the right to acquire property by inheritance or gift, but they must transfer the administration, usufruct and use of their goods to someone else, even to the Congregation if they so choose. This transfer should be made in writing, before the first profession if they already own goods, or otherwise, at the time of their acquisition.

Will

19. At the latest before perpetual profession or when they acquire temporal goods, the Brothers dispose of their property by a legally valid will.

- Modifications** 20. The Superior General's permission is required for any change in one's will or in the administration of one's property. In urgent cases, the Provincial's or Visitor's permission is sufficient.
- Acts of property** 21. Professed Brothers may fulfil all legal formalities with the permission of the Provincial.
- Pooling of income** 22. All salaries, stipends, pensions, gifts, insurance benefits or other income received by the Brothers belong to the Congregation and must be promptly and faithfully surrendered according to the norms of the Province or the District.
- Dépendence** 23. Brothers may not dispose of money without accounting for it. For major expenditures, they request permission from the local superior and they consult him when recourse to higher authorities is necessary. They submit reports of current expenditures according to norms established by the authorities of the Province or the District..
- Permissions do not dispense one from prior personal discernment, nor do they eliminate responsibility in their use.

Spirit of poverty

24. The spirit of poverty leads far beyond the formal matter of the vow. It frees the Brothers' hearts from the grip of temporal values: material comfort and amenities, statuses and careers, success and prestige, and even cultural fulfilment.

Work

25. The Brothers willingly submit to the universal law of work and thus contribute to the resources of their communities and to the activities of the Congregation.

Lifestyle

26. The pooling of goods should not lead to affluence. The Brothers live like persons of modest means, especially in their housing, food, clothing, means of transportation, travel and entertainment.

They avail themselves of the benefits to which they are legally entitled.

Sharing

27. Religious poverty and Christian charity are inseparable. Conscious of their solidarity with the poor, the Brothers treat them generously and strive especially to eliminate the causes of destitution.

5. Religious Obedience

Meaning

28. To have a loving communion into the obedient attitude of Christ, the Saviour, to become more receptive to the will of God, to discern it more readily, to protect themselves against illusions of self-seeking and to make their apostolic action more fruitful, the Brothers make the vow of obedience. Thus, they make a total offering of their will as a sacrifice of themselves to God.

Matter

29. By the vow of obedience, the Brothers bind themselves to obey the orders of the legitimate authorities of the Congregation in all that conforms to the Rule of Life.

The obligation to obey is more serious when the Superior General or his delegate commands "in virtue of holy obedience". Such orders are rare and should be given only when necessary, in writing, or in the presence of two witnesses.

Nevertheless, since the religious profession incorporates the Brothers into the Congregation and its organic structures, and since the consecration permeates all their lives, the vow of obedience is also involved in all other orders issued by chapters or by superiors.

Human intermediaries

30. When they enter the Congregation, the Brothers accept to submit their wills to human intermediaries who express the divine will. They find in the Rule of Life, rooted in the Gospel and approved by the Church, as well as in the authority of their superiors, authentic manifestations of God's will. In a spirit of faith, they strive to recognize the presence of the Lord in the imperfect persons in authority.

Community quest

31. Enriched by the insights and the reflections of its members in which the Spirit speaks and acts, the community is an ideal place for discerning God's will. The superior participates in this common quest, but retains the right and duty to make necessary decisions.

***Collaboration
in faith***

32. In religious life, interaction between authority and obedience is not based on might, but on a spirit of collaboration in faith and love. It reflects the spirit of the Gospel, where the leader is like the one who serves.

With this same attitude of cooperation, the Brothers, in all humility, docility and charity, make it their duty to enlighten their superiors, particularly when they believe that a proposed decision would be inopportune or inadequate. Yet, they remain ready to accept the final decision once made.

Permissions

33. The Brothers ask necessary permissions, especially for projects or activities beyond the regular framework of community life or apostolic work.

6. The Fraternal Community

The mystery of community

34. As participants in the life of God who is love and who is the mystical exemplar of personal relations, the Brothers are brought together in Christ's name. They delight in his presence as this unity is strengthened by his prayer to the Father: "May they be one in us". (Jn 17:21)

Evangelical ideal

35. Each fraternity strives to become an evangelical community, witnessing to the already present Kingdom, where charity breaks down barriers, reconciles all men, sons of the same Father and brothers of Jesus Christ, who calls them together in one body.

The superior

36. The superior has the primary responsibility for the fraternal life. He performs his ministry in fidelity to the purpose and spirit of the Congregation and in readiness to serve his Brothers and to consult with them.

Gradual development

37. In simplicity and joy, the Brothers willingly share who they are, what they do and what they have. Although they have not chosen their confreres, they try to know and love them with the heart of Christ. Through self-denial and the generous gift of self, they gradually build community.

Pardon and reconciliation

38. Faithful to the Gospel precept and to the example of the Saviour, the Brothers know how to forgive and forget grievances. In spite of inevitable conflicts, they seek to live together in peace.

Setting and ambience

39. The Brothers organise their houses and establish their schedules that will facilitate prayer, ministry and community life.

The houses normally include an oratory where the Eucharist is the centre of the community, and quarters for the Brothers' exclusive use.

The community project, approved by the Major Superior, features times of prayer and of silence necessary for all spiritual life. The atmosphere of recollection thus assured in the house, requires from each prudence and discretion in recreational activities and in the use of public media.

Attire

40. The Brothers wear the habit of the Congregation, that is, either the cassock and crucifix or, where circumstances so require, in the judgment of the Major Superiors, a dark suit with the identifying emblem of the Congregation.

Beyond death

41. In their daily community prayers, the Brothers commend to the Lord their departed confreres, relatives and benefactors. They faithfully perform the prayers prescribed for the deceased.

7.

Prayer Life.

Men of prayer

42. As religious in the service of the Church, the Brothers are, by vocation, "delegate" to prayer. Besides being a member of an apostolic community, the Brother is a unique person whom God calls by name to fulfil a role which no one else can assume. In reponse to this call, the Brother quests for God in the very depths of his being, sustained by communal prayer as well as by his own personal prayer addressed to the Father "who sees in secret".

Mass and daily prayers

43. Each day, unless it is impossible, the Brothers participate in the Eucharistic celebration, during which they love to receive the Sacred Body of Christ.

Twice a day, the community assembles for prayer: in the morning, for Lauds and a thirty-minute meditation, and in the evening, a half-hour, for Vespers, the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and personal examen.

Marian prayer

44. The Brothers love to give daily expression to their veneration of the Virgin Mary, especially through the meditated recitation of the Rosary, a traditional prayer in the Congregation.

Spiritual reading

45. The Brothers set aside a minimum of two hours each week for spiritual reading, especially of the Scriptures.

Sacrament of reconciliation

46. For the conversion of their hearts to God, the Brothers frequently receive the sacrament of reconciliation, prepared by a daily examination of conscience. Superiors facilitate the Brothers' access to this sacrament.

Recollections and retreats

47 Periodically, the Brothers avail themselves of quiet periods to renew themselves in the spirit of their calling. Each community organizes its recollections according to the means that it finds convenient and by following the norms set by provincial or district authorities. Each year the Brothers make a six-day spiritual retreat.

8. Apostolic Mission.

Our apostolic mission

48. Christ applied to himself the word of the prophet Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; therefore he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the Poor". (Lk 4:18)

The Congregation shares in this mission. It arose in the Church for the human and Christian education of youth : this is its special charism, and the school is its special field of activity. However, taking into account the aptitudes of some Brothers, it may undertake other apostolates which are outside the academic framework, preferably in the broad area of education.

All the Brothers, regardless of their age or health, share the common mission of the Congregation through their prayer, their work, their sufferings and the holiness of their lives.

***Missionary
apostolate***

49. The Congregation also has a missionary vocation bequeathed to it by its Founders. In response to the needs of local churches, it sends forth Brothers to spread the Gospel outside their native land.

Superiors carefully select Brothers in whom they discern a special call from God, manifested by a serious desire and necessary aptitudes for missionary work, and provide them with adequate preparation.

9.

Entry into the Congregation

Awakening and nurture of vocations

Importance

50. The beauty, the soundness and the fecundity of the Congregation depend largely on the selection and the formation of its members. The Brothers assigned to formation work help each candidate discern whether he is really called to be a Brother of Christian Instruction. Their vital role requires the support of all the Brothers.

Vocation

51. An aptitude for the Brother's life and an attraction which has withstood the test of time are signs of the Lord's call. Response to a vocation entails the total and loving gift of self; it is clarified and sustained with the help of others who serve as instruments of God's grace.

Interest in new members

52. The awakening and nurture of vocations to the Congregation depend on the enlightened zeal and the prayers of each Brother and each community. A religious is interested in all vocations, but he who values his own calling feels a legitimate need to foster the growth and vitality of his religious family.

Choice of candidates

53. In the selection of candidates, the special calling of each person, the aim of the Congregation and the good and honour of the Church are the chief considerations.

Entrance requirements

54. Candidates must be Catholic, free from canonical impediments, prompted by the right intentions and acting of their own free will. They must have good moral habits and possess the following qualities: a genuine piety consistent with their age, an open, firm and sociable character, sound judgment, adequate intelligence, interest in the education of youth, and physical and psychological health rooted in a wholesome heredity.

Formation

Aims

55. Formation involves three major orientations: human and Christian culture, spiritual development, and preparation for educational and apostolic work. The close bonds among these orientations and their interdependence should be kept in mind.

Spirit

56. Formation draws its inspiration from the Word of God, the spirit of the Founders, the aims of the Congregation and the directives of the Church. It takes into consideration the family environment and the socio-cultural conditions which influence the life and the apostolate of the Brothers and it offers appropriate experience of the realities of human life. It leads progressively towards full human and spiritual maturity, provides for the exercise of personal responsibility and initiates the candidates to prayer, community spirit and apostolic work.

Formation community

57. The formation takes place in a community composed of the candidates and their formators.

Stages

58. The dedication of one's life to God and to his people in a consecrated state is a demanding ideal. That is why a serious formation requires several years in well articulated stages.

Initial Formation***Alternative formation programmes***

59. Several forms of preparation to the novitiate are possible. Some aspirants live in juniorates or similar settings; others remain with their families and in their schools and are guided individually. Those who hear the call of God as adults receive appropriate individualized preparations.

Juniorate

60. The juniorate is available to young candidates who meet the criteria for admission, are receptive to the call of God and desire to live in a setting conducive to the study of their vocation.

Postulate***Preparation to the novitiate***

61. The postulate provides a more direct preparation to the novitiate through a deeper experience of the Christian life and a finer discernment of the Lord's call. Preferably, it takes place in a house other than the novitiate, but its director keeps in touch with the master of

novices. The modalities of the postulate and its duration of at least six months are determined by the Provincial or Visitor, and approved by the Superior General and his Council. The admission is the responsibility of the Major Superior.

***Admission to
the novitiate***

62. Admission to the novitiate is made by the Provincial or Visitor Superior on the deliberative vote of his council.

At the appropriate time, each postulant submits to the Provincial or Visitor a written request for admission to the novitiate. His dossier should include certificates of Baptism and Confirmation, at least one letter of recommendation and, when advisable, a certificate of freedom from canonical impediments.

***Canonical
impediments***

63. The following may not be validly admitted to the novitiate: those who are less than seventeen years old, those bound by marriage, or those bound by vows or promises in an institute of consecrated life, or who have concealed the fact of having been thus bound; those who enter fraudulently or under the influence of great fear or duress or whom the superiors have admitted under similar constraints. All other provisions of Canon Law are scrupulously respected.

***Other
impediments***

64. Others who may not be validly admitted to the novitiate include those with debts which they cannot pay, those in financial or legal difficulties for which the Congregation could become liable, those who must support their parents or grandparents, or whose presence is needed for the care of their children.

Novitiate

Organization

65. The Superior General, with his council's consent, gives written authorization for the opening, transfer or closing of a novitiate and determines the special conditions under which it may operate. Likewise, upon the recommendation of the Provincial or District authorities, he appoints the master of novices.

Admission

66. Admission to the novitiate is recorded in an official document indicating the date of the admission and bearing the signatures of the novice and of the person presiding over the ceremony. At the beginning of the novitiate, the novices make a retreat of at least five days.

Aims

67. A novice seeks to develop his knowledge of Christ and his intimacy with him, to acquire a deeper appreciation of his Mennaisian vocation and to assess its requirements. In order to obtain a greater love of God, he strives to practice the evangelical counsels and to integrate in the unity of his being the contemplative and the active dimensions of the apostolic religious life.

He studies the history and activities of the Congregation and the life and achievements of its Founders. Under the guidance of the master of novices, in a fraternal community, he prepares himself through reflection and prayer to make an informed and mature personal decision.

Studies

68. At the novitiate, the study of Scripture and of doctrine is not directed toward a degree, but towards a better formation by a deepening of the life of faith and by the contribution which such studies make to a fuller knowledge and love of God.

Relations with other Brothers

69. The nature and aim of the novitiate and the demands of community life formed among the novices require a certain separation. Nevertheless, the master of novices may, to good purpose, allow some contacts with other Brothers of the Institute.

***Field
experiences***

70. The master of novices may, if he deems it useful, propose to a novice or to an entire group one or more periods of probation away from the novitiate. Such stages must involve experiences in keeping with the character of the Congregation. The novices remain under the responsibility of the master, who makes sure that the norms of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

Probationary stages are not intended to provide the novices with professional training, but rather to help them discover more realistically the demands of their vocation and the means of preserving union with God in the normal circumstances of a Brother's life.

Validity

71. To be valid, the novitiate must be made in a duly designated house. The time spent in probationary stages is added to the twelve months of presence required for validity. The novitiate can thus be lengthened to a maximum of two years.

Absence from the novitiate totalling more than three months during the twelve months of the canonical year makes the novitiate invalid; an absence of more than fifteen days must be made up.

***Limited
numbers***

72. When the number of novices is too small for true community living, the Superior General may allow the novitiate to be established as part of another community. To serve certain needs of the formation process better, the Superior General may authorize the temporary transfer of the novitiate to another community of the Congregation.

***Exceptional
cases***

73. In exceptional cases, the Superior General, with his Council's consent, may allow a candidate to make his formation outside the novitiate, in a house of the Institute or in a novitiate of another Congregation, under the direction of a Brother assigned for that purpose.

***Withdrawal
and dismissal***

74. Novices are always free to withdraw from the novitiate. However, the dismissal of a novice is made by the Provincial or the Visitor, upon the recommendation of the master of novices.

Scholasticate and Temporary vows

First profession

75. Admission to the first profession is made by the Major Superior with the consent of his council, after receiving the written request of the candidate and after considering the written opinions of the master of novices and his colleagues and ascertaining that all the requirements of Canon Law have been met.

The first profession is preceded by a retreat of at least six days.

The renewal of vows

76. The Major Superior, with the consent of his council, decides on the renewal of temporary vows, taking into account required or useful evaluations. Likewise, he determines the duration of each successive period of profession. Normally, these periods last from one retreat to the next. Each profession is officially recorded.

Reports

77. The Major Superior provides the Secretary General with the required data pertaining to admissions, professions and related matters.

Ongoing formation

78. Throughout the Congregation, the initial formation must, according to ecclesial norms, be continued until the perpetual profession. Accordingly, young Brothers continue their spiritual formation and their studies, particularly in theology and catechetics. They acquaint themselves with the apostolic and professional activities of the Congregation and strive to acquire an adequate critical understanding of the values and norms which govern the thoughts and actions in their society.

Perpetual vows***Admission***

79. Admission to perpetual profession is made by the Superior General with the consent of his Council, after receiving the written request of each candidate, verifying that all canonical requirements have been met, and considering the written evaluations of the Brothers of the Province or the District and the vote of the Council. The perpetual profession is made after five or six years of temporary vows, but the Superior General may allow up to three additional years if he deems it useful.

***Special
preparation
and certifica-
tion***

80. A special period of intensive preparation precedes the perpetual profession. The act of profession is recorded in an official document.

Ongoing formation

81. Personal formation is an unending process. Throughout their lives, the Brothers try to progress in the service of God, the Church and society. Whenever possible, therefore, the superiors and the communities provide them with periodic opportunities to acquire a deeper understanding of their religious and apostolic lives, to broaden their knowledge and to improve their professional skills.

10.

Authority in the Congregation

Levels of authority

82. Every Brother normally belongs to a local community. As a rule, communities are grouped into Provinces and Districts.

Communities, Provinces, Districts and the whole Congregation, strive, under the authority of their respective superiors, to form a single body, united in mind and heart.

General Chapter

83. The General Chapter represents all the Brothers and is the supreme collegial authority of the Congregation.

Major Superiors

84. In the Congregation, the Superior General, the Provincials and the Visitors are Major Superiors. The Assistants general act as Major Superiors when the Superior General gives them a special assignment, such as the canonical visitation of communities.

Local superiors 85. In each community, a duly appointed local superior exercises authority.

Authority as service 86. Superiors carry out their ministry in view of the common good according to the common and to the proper Laws. They willingly seek the advice of the Brothers, especially their councillors.

The primary purpose of religious authority is not the material or administrative life of the Congregation; it is the fidelity of all to the spirit willed by the Founders and to the mission entrusted to them by the Church.

Subsidiarity 87. The principle of subsidiarity is applied at all levels, so that responsible persons make the decisions within their areas of competence. Intervention by higher authorities occurs only in case of special need or deficiency.

11.

The local Community

Basic unit

88. The local community is the basic unit of the Congregation. In it the Brothers are gathered together by the competent authority to live their religious life and ordinarily to share a common apostolic undertaking.

Community living

89. The Brothers lead community life in regularly constituted houses.
For brief absences, they obtain the permission of the local superior. For extended absences, they seek permission from the Provincial or Visitor, who can, with the consent of his council and for good reasons, grant leaves of up to one year unless such absences are for reasons of health, for studies or for apostolic work mandated by the Congregation.

The local superior

Appointment

90. The local superior, who must have perpetual vows, is appointed for three years by the Provincial or the Visitor, with the consent of his

council, after appropriate consultation. He may be kept in office for a second or a third term, but for additional terms, the authorization of the Superior General with his council's consent is needed.

The nomination of local superiors is submitted to the ratification of the Assistant delegated by the Superior General.

Local council

91. The local superior may be assisted by an assistant and a treasurer. He can also have a council including his assistant.

This council is only consultative. It meets periodically, and every time its members deem it fit. Its deliberations are written down.

The assistant superior, the bursar and the councilors are named by the Major Superior with the consent of his council, after consultation with the Brothers of the community.

Transition

92. When the new superior takes office, he verifies, in the presence of the Major Superior or his delegate, the financial situation and notes in the local annals the act by which he receives the direction of the community.

When he leaves office, he informs his successor of the current situation, using the same procedure.

***Direction and
animaion***

93. The local superior is the community's principal animator.

He organizes periodic community meetings. At the beginning of the school year, he organizes with all the brothers the community project, he assigns the various responsibilities, and he schedules the prescribed time for prayers. The major decisions taken by the community are conveyed to the Major Superior for ratification.

With the Brothers, he determines the practical means by which the community is to give its religious witness. He sees to the periodic reading of the Rule of Life in community and brings to the Brothers' attention the documents dealing with the life and work of the Congregation, especially communications from Major Superiors.

He makes sure that the quarters designated for the Brothers' exclusive use are indeed reserved for them.

***Division of res-
ponsibilities***

94. The local superior may be different from the director of the school or other apostolic project staffed by the Brothers; nevertheless, the superior is concerned with their apostolic and professional activity and with all other aspects of their religious life.

Administration 95. The local superior administers directly, or through a treasurer under his responsibility, the goods of the community.

He acquaints the Brothers with whatever they should know about the functioning of the community, its economic and material situation and the various projects under consideration.

He sees to the upkeep of house annals, archives and community accounts. At specified dates, he forwards to the Major Superior financial accounts and other required reports.

12.

Provincial and District Government

96. The Congregation is divided into Provinces and Districts. Their establishment and suppression, as well as changes in their boundaries, are determined by the Superior General with his council's consent.

The Province.

97. A Province comprises a certain number of local communities under the authority of a superior.

In principle, it should be self-sufficient in personnel and finances. Its relative autonomy, the stability of its membership, common apostolic concerns, all tend to favour among the Brothers a deep solidarity and a true family spirit in the service of a common ecclesial mission.

98. The animation and administration of a Province is entrusted to a Brother Provincial assisted by a council. He is helped by one or more assistant-provincials.

The Provincial

Appointment

99. After appropriate consultation with the members of the Province, the Superior General, with the consent of his council, appoints the Provincial to a six-year term.

The Provincial must be at least thirty-five years old and perpetually profess for five years. He may be re-appointed for one or two three-year terms. Upon leaving office, he cannot be a member of the next provincial council.

Powers

100. The Provincial is the Major Superior of the Province and has authority over its members and its activities. With the help of his council, he administers the province according to the Constitutions, the Directories and the directives of the Superior General.

He has delegation from the Superior General to receive temporary and perpetual vows and has he right to subdelegate that power to other Brothers.

Role

101. Before all else, he is the animator of the religious and apostolic life of the Brothers and the promoter of an ever necessary renewal. The organization and animation of retreats and recollections is the object of his special attention.

He considers the judicious assignment of Brothers one of his most important duties.

As much as possible, he frees himself from tasks which could prevent his closeness with the Brothers or his sharing their life.

***Community
visitations***

102. The Provincial visits each community twice a year. One of the visitations is canonical. On this occasion, he interviews each Brother and studies with the entire community means of promoting the religious and apostolic life. One a year, he will inform the Superior General of his most important observations.

Vocation

103. The Provincial frequently reminds the Brothers of their vital role in the awakening of religious and priestly vocations. He gives special support to those engaged in vocational ministry, and pays particular attention to aspirants to religious life.

***Temporal
administration***

104. The Provincial is responsible for the material and financial administration of the Province. He entrusts the temporal management to a treasurer.

Guided in the administration of goods by the evan-gelical spirit of poverty and showing a concern for judicious adaptation, he tries to meet the needs of the communities and the activities; he pays attention to the fraternal sharing of resources.

The Assistant-Provincial

Nomination

105. The assistant-provincial, who must have been perpetually professed for five years, is appointed by the Superior General, with his Council's consent, from a list submitted by the Provincial. He is named for three years and his assignment is renewable.

Role

106. The assistant-provincial helps the Provincial and performs the duties to which the latter assigns him. He replaces the Provincial in case of absence or disability. Should the Provincial die, he replaces him until a successor is appointed. He is by right member of the provincial council and of the provincial chapter.

The Provincial Treasurer

Appointment 107. The provincial treasurer is appointed by the Provincial, with his council's consent, for renewable three-year terms.

Rôle 108. Under the authority of the Provincial and the control of his council, the treasurer manages the financial affairs of the province, sees to the proper keeping and verification of accounts, and administers the personal and real property of the province.

He maintains records of titles and assets, of property transactions and other documents concerning contracts, credits and obligations of the local communities.

He administers the goods which the Brothers entrust to the Province.

At the end of the fiscal year, the provincial treasurer sends the financial statement approved by the Provincial, to the treasurer general.

109. He is invited to give his advice to the provincial council when important financial matters are being considered.

Major financial projects in the houses of the Province are under his supervision.

The Provincial Council

Composition

110. The provincial council is composed of ex-officio members: the assistant-provincial(s) and a specified number of elected members, all holding perpetual vows. The Provincial is its ex-officio president.

The number of elected councillors and the modality of their election are determined by the provincial chapter and must be approved by the Superior General with the consent of his Council.

Councillors are elected for renewable three-year terms. Their mandate, however, necessarily expires with that of the Provincial.

Meetings

111. The council is convened by the Provincial at least three times a year and whenever two or more councillors request it.

It considers all matters of interest to the Province: religious, apostolic and professional life, vocations and formation, the evolution and adaptation of activities, missionary action, administrative and financial matters.

Powers:

112. The Provincial seeks the approval of his council notably for the following decisions:

- admissions to the novitiate and to the temporary profession
- appointments to different positions such as provincial treasurer, director of the juniorate or vocation director, local superiors, assistant-superiors, bursars and councillors for the local communities.
- extraordinary expenditures, foreign travel and sojourns, etc.

The nomination of local superiors requires the ratification of the Assistant general delegated by the Superior General.

113 When decisions pertain to the Superior General, the recommendations of the Provincial and his council are submitted to him. For instance:

- admissions to the perpetual profession
- the appointment of local superiors, the master of novices and the director of scholastics
- the foundation, a major change and the closing of schools and communities.
- important extraordinary expenses, loans and construction projects.
- the purchase or sale of major personal property or real estate

Decisions 114. Decisions requiring a deliberative vote are taken by absolute majority, two-thirds of the members being present.

The Provincial Chapter

Aim 115. The provincial chapter studies the realities of life in the Province and formulates guidelines and decisions conducive to the common good.

Composition 116. The provincial chapter includes:

- the Assistant general delegated by the Superior General,
- the Provincial and his assistant(s),
- the members of the council,
- the elected delegates who are always more numerous than the ex-officio members.

Powers 117. The provincial chapter has powers of decision and of recommendation.

According to the orientations of the General Chapter and the General Council, the decisions of the provincial chapter, adopted by the majority of voices and approved by the Superior General and his council, are binding to the entire Province.

The District

118. The District comprises some local communities under the authority of a Brother Visitor. It is constituted by a small number of Brothers or it does not have a sufficient autonomy in financial matters.

119. Under the authority of the Superior General and his Council, links of solidarity of personnel or in the economic field can be established between the District on one hand and a Province on the other.

The Brother Visitor

Appointment

120. A Brother Visitor is appointed for three years by the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, after consultation with the Brothers of the District. He must be perpetually professed for at least five years. His mandate is renewable. After leaving office, he will not be part of the new district council.

Powers

121. As Major Superior of the District, he is responsible for its animation and its administration according to the provisions set forth in sections 100 to 104 of the Constitutions for the Brother Provincial. He has authority over people and works. He meets his material and financial management which he entrusts to the treasurer. He is an ex-officio member of the General chapter.

The District Council**Composition**

122. The Visitor is assisted by a council whose members are elected for three years. They must be perpetually professed. Their mandate is renewable, but it stops with that of the Brother Visitor.

The number of elected councillors and the manner of their election are determined by the district chapter and must be approved by the Superior General with the consent of his Council.

Competence

The responsibilities of this council are identical to those of the council of the Province set forth in Articles 112 and 113 of the Constitutions.

The District Chapter

Composition

123. A district chapter is composed of

- Brother Assistant General, Delegate of the Superior General,
- Brother Visitor,
- district council members
- elected members, always outnumbering the ex-officio members.

If the number of members of the District is too small, all the Brothers may be invited to participate in the chapter.

Compétence

Powers of a district chapter are identical to those of the provincial chapter set out in section 117 of the Constitutions.

13.

General Government

Membership

124. The general government of the Congregation comprises the Superior General, the members of the General Council, and the persons who, under the control of the Superior General, are entrusted with the general services of the Congregation: the secretary general, the treasurer general, the procurator general and the postulator.

The Superior General

Election

125. The Superior General is elected for six years by the General Chapter. He must be at least forty years old and have at least ten years of perpetual vows.

126. The election is by secret ballot and requires an absolute majority of the votes cast. If an absolute majority has not been achieved after the third ballot, only the two Brothers with the most votes on the third ballot are eligible for the fourth. If more than two had an equal num-

ber of votes, only the oldest two would remain eligible. If two were tied for second place on the third ballot, the older Brother would be retained as candidate. In case of deadlock, lots would be drawn.

127. The Superior General is reeligible. Yet, after a second term, he can only be postulated, that is, he must receive at least two-thirds of the votes and be confirmed in his charge by the Holy See. If he fails to obtain the needed majority after two ballots, he is ineligible thereafter.

128. The outgoing Superior General may not be a member of the next General Council.

Powers

129. The Superior General is the supreme ordinary authority in the Congregation. He has over the Provinces, Districts, communities and individual Brothers direct and immediate authority which he must exercise according to the proper law of the Congregation.

He may authorize temporary exemptions from the Constitutions and the Directory, but only in disciplinary matters.

130. As he sees fit, he delegates some of his powers to the Assistants and the Major Superiors beyond their usual attributions. He may also delegate his powers to other Brothers for specific assignments.

He may revoke any authority which he has delegated.

Mission

131. The Superior General's mission is to foster in the Congregation:

- the quest for evangelical perfection through a more deeply lived consecration to God and through a greater apostolic spirit
- compliance with the Church's teaching and with the directives of its hierarchy
- fidelity to the spirit of the Founders
- respect for the special mission of the Congregation
- observance of the Constitutions, the Directory and capitular decisions and orientations
- unity amidst the diversity of nationalities and the complementarity of cultures
- adaptation to the needs of the times in view of greater efficiency in the Church
- a greater vitality achieved through :
 - the solid formation of candidates and Brothers.
 - fraternal life which strengthens the bonds among all Brothers,

- and impetus given to apostolic and missionary activity

- Information** 132. The Superior General keeps abreast of the life of the communities and of the Provinces and Districts by visits and personal interviews and through the reports and briefings of the Assistants general and the Major Superiors.
- Reports** 133. He provides the Holy See with required reports and transmits to it the requests from the different parts of the Congregation sent to him for that purpose.
- Substitution** 134. For major reasons, the Superior General may temporarily cede his powers to the first Assistant.
- Resignation** 135. Only the Holy See can accept the resignation of the Superior General.
If physical or moral impediments prevented him from fulfilling his duties, the General Council would urge him to resign. In case of refusal, the First Assistant, with the consent of the other Councilors, would refer the matter to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

The Assistants General

Election

136. The Assistants general are normally elected for six years by the General Chapter. The vote, taken separately for each Assistant, is by secret ballot and requires an absolute majority. They may be reelected.

They must be at least thirty-five years old and have at least five years of perpetual vows. At each election of a new Superior General, there is an election of the Assistants general.

Role

137. Their role consists in giving their advice and consent when it is needed for the validity of certain decisions of the Superior General and to help him in the government and animation of the Congregation by their fraternal collaboration, information and suggestions.

138. The Assistants general have the Superior General's delegation to receive the Brothers' vows and they can subdelegate that power to other Brothers.

Replacement

139. In case of death, resignation or any other unavoidable occurrence, the replacement of an Assistantgeneral, even the First Assistant, is the responsibility of the General Council. An Assistant general thus selected remains in office until the next General Chapter.

Resignation

140. The competent authority to accept the resignation of an assistant is the Superior General with the consent of his council. The discussion does not take place on the day the resignation is submitted, nor in the presence of the one who is resigning. The vote is by secret ballot.

Dismissal

141. The grounds for deposing an assistant are a grave and public scandal. Unless a General Chapter is in session, the General Council judges the case and if necessary, temporarily suspends or permanently deposes the accused. The dismissal of an Assistant general requires confirmation by the Holy See.

Vacancy

142. If the offices of both the Superior General and the First Assistant became vacant, the remaining members of the General Council would convoke a General Chapter to be held within twelve months of the vacancy. They would elect one among themselves President of the Council until the election of the new Superior General.

The First Assistant

Election and role

143 The First Assistant, elected by a special vote of the General Chapter, is the immediate collaborator of the Superior General and fulfils the responsibilities assigned to him by the latter.

144 Should the office of Superior General become vacant, the First Assistant becomes by right the Superior General of the Congregation until the next General Chapter. The General Council then selects a new Assistant general and proceeds to the election of a new First Assistant general .

The General Council

Composition and role

145. The Superior General is assisted by a Council of three or four Assistants. He is by right its President and must, for the validity of his acts, seek its advice or obtain its consent in cases stipulated by Canon Law or by the Rule of Life.

146. With faith and realism, the General Council studies questions concerning the Congregation, especially those dealing with its personnel and its works.

It sets general orientations and, in conformity to the Constitutions, makes the decisions needed to foster the proper functioning and unity of the Congregation. It pays special attention to questions of spirituality, recruitment, formation, apostolate and government.

It is the normal interpreter of the Constitutions and of the Directory as well as of Capitular documents, and it sees to their application. It rules on the validity of decisions taken by the authorities of the Provinces or the Districts.

Meetings

147. The General Council meets at least twice a year.

Competence

148. The presence of all the members of the General Council is required in the following cases, for which they cast deliberative votes:

- the convocation of a General Chapter
- the convocation of a General Conference
- the application to the Congregation of guidelines or faculties issued by the Holy See: admissions, formation, departures, readmissions, general dispositions concerning the Brothers' personal goods, etc.

- the approval of reports requested by the Holy See concerning the general condition of the Congregation
- changes in the administrative division of the Congregation
- the foundation or the closing of a mission
- the acceptance of the resignation of an Assistant general and the cooptation of his replacement
- the cooptation of the replacement of a deceased Assistant general
- the appointment of the Secretary general, the Treasurer general, the Procurator general and the Postulator of causes of beatification and canonization
- the nomination of Provincials, assistant provincials, and Visitors
- the nomination of the Brother in charge of the ongoing formation for the Congregation
- the approval or proposal of experiments involving exemptions from the Constitutions in matters of discipline, or from the Directory and Capitular decisions
- the approval of Provincial or District directories
- the annual approval of the accounts of the Congregation
- the assessment of the Provinces and Districts for the general fund of the Congregation

- all other cases required by Canon Law.

For the dismissal of a professed Brother, the General Council, by secret ballot, exercises collegial authority.

149. The presence of at least three members of the General Council is required in the following cases, for which they cast deliberative votes:

- admission to the perpetual profession
- the remission of temporary vows
- the nomination of directors of noviciates and scholasticates
- the extension of the mandate of a local superior beyond a third three-year term
- financial transactions defined as important or requiring the Holy See's approval
- the foundation or closure of a school or community by the Congregation.

The Secretary General

Appointment 150. The Secretary general is appointed for three years by the Superior General with the consent of his Council. He may be reappointed.

Role 151. He is responsible for the organization and administration of the general Secretariat.

He attends the meetings of the Council at the Superior General's invitation and, in the latter's name, he prepares the reports requested by the Holy See.

The Treasurer General

Appointment 152 The Treasurer general is appointed for three years by the Superior General with the consent of his council. He may be re-appointed.

Role 153 The Treasurer general, under the authority of the Superior General and the control of the General Council:

- manages the funds of the Congregation
- keeps the books of accounts, records of titles and assets, property transactions and other documents concerning contracts, credits and obli-

gations be it for Provinces or Districts, or the general Treasury, according to the advice of the General Council.

- invests the funds of the Congregation,
- sends financial aid to needy Provinces or Districts and distributes charitable gifts as determined by the General Council.

He receives the financial reports of the Provincials and Visitors treasurers, verifies their accounts and sends them his comments.

At dates set by the Superior General, he renders to the General Council an account of his administration and reports on the financial status of the Congregation.

He prepares the balance sheet which, after being signed by the Superior General and the Assistants, is presented to the General Chapter.

The Procurator General

Appointment

154 The Procurator general is appointed for three years by the Superior General with the consent of his council. He may be reappointed. His nomination is subject to the Holy See's approval.

Role

155 He is the official representative of the Congregation in dealings with the Holy See. Under the direction of the Superior General, he deals with Church officials and offices in matters affecting the Congregation.

He makes the consultations, takes other steps required by the Superior General and keeps him abreast of the decisions and guidelines of the Holy See concerning the Congregation.

The Postulator

156 The Brother Postulator for the Causes of beatification and canonization is named for a three-year mandate by the Superior General with the consent of his Council. He may be reappointed.

The General Chapter**Composition**

157. The General Chapter is an assembly of ex-officio and elected members from the various parts of the Congregation.

The ex-officio members are:

- the Superior General and the Assistants general,
- the former Superior General, during the six

years following the end of his Generalate,

- the Majors Superiors,

The elected members, who must be perpetually professed, are always more numerous than the ex-officio members.

Convocation

158 The General Chapter is convened:

- ordinarily, every six years, by the Superior General
- extraordinarily when with his Council's consent, he deems it necessary
- exceptionally by the General Council, as stipulated in Article 142.

The time and place of the Chapter are set by the Superior General on a deliberative vote of his Council.

The Capitulars' mandate ends at the closing of the Chapter.

Purpose

159 The purpose of the ordinary General Chapter is to:

- elect the Superior General and the Assistants general
- define the orientations of the Congregation
- adapt the structures and the activities of the Congregation to its specific mission according to the needs of the times.

Competence

160. When duly assembled under the presidency of the Superior General or his substitute, and with two-thirds of its members in attendance, the General Chapter has full authority to legislate, within the limits set by the Constitutions, on all aspects of the life of the Congregation.

It may amend the Constitutions and the Directory. Any amendment to the Constitutions requires a two-thirds majority of those present and the approval of the Holy See, to whom their authentic interpretation belongs.

**Preparation
and participation**

161. Since the General Chapter concerns all the members of the Congregation, the Brothers, collaborating with superiors, use their initiative in its preparation which may include meetings, consultations, pools and postulations. The postulations may have more than one author, but must bear the signature of each co-author or sponsor. Guidelines for the preparation of postulations are provided by the Superior General and his Council.

The General Conference

- Aim*** 162. The General Conference is a consultative assembly designed to maintain close ties among the different parts of the Congregation and to strengthen its unity.
- Composition*** 163. The assembly brings together, under the presidency of the Superior General, the Assistants general, the Major Superiors, and other Brothers whom the General Council deems proper to invite.

14. Temporal Goods

Canonical status

164 The Congregation as a whole, the Provinces and Districts, have the canonical right to acquire, sell, own and administer temporal goods, both personal and real property.

The ownership of property is subject to the control of higher authorities, to which it reverts in case a subsidiary unit is dissolved.

Except in special circumstances, local communities are not empowered to act as moral or legal entities.

Legal status

165 In all countries where it is possible, Superiors seek the official incorporation of the Congregation so as to obtain the power to act under statutes in conformity with the Constitutions of the Congregation.

Responsibility 166 At all levels of government, the superiors are responsible for the administration of the goods of the Congregation.

167. According to Canon Law, the Provincial or the Visitor, with his council's consent, has the power to administer the temporal goods of his Province, to perform and authorize all transactions allowed to religious by ecclesiastical and civil legislation and which are not reserved to the General Council.

For all declarations and formalities required by law, and for all civil transactions, the Province or District is represented by its Superior or by another officially designated Brother.

Stewardship 168 Treasurers and others who, in various capacities, are assigned to the administration of temporal goods consider themselves stewards of ecclesiastical property; they observe the norms and prescriptions of the Church and of civil authorities and the statutes of the Congregation.

They act as agents of their Superior and under the control of his council.

Treasurers

169. Treasurers are entrusted with the routine management and administration of real and personal property to assure its appropriate use and upkeep.

They prepare annual budgets, have them approved by competent authorities and oversee their implementation. For extraordinary projects and expenditures, they refer to their respective Superiors.

***Implications
for
the apostolate***

170. The financial status of the Congregation influences its ability to fulfill its mission in the Church. Those assigned to oversee it act as diligent stewards, keeping in mind the apostolic implications of their administrative duties.

Duties

171. Administrators fulfill their duties with the accuracy required in all financial operations. They see to it that accounts are well kept and they regularly audit the various funds.

All accounts are opened in the name of the moral and legal entity involved, not in the name of the Brother who manages them. Prudence requires that at least two persons be empowered to sign checks.

Extraordinary expenses

172. Requests for extraordinary expenses mention the source of funds and specify the means of payment.

Debts

173 Superiors authorize debts only after ascertaining that they can be paid without undue delay. The validity of the authorization, even by indult, require that requests to contract debts be accompanied by information on existing indebtedness.

Alienation of property

174 Alienation includes not only the total and definitive transfer of title of property through sale, gift or inheritance, but also the suspension of legal rights to the property in question, as in mortgages, services and liens, long-term leases, etc.

Without the written permission of the competent Superior given with his council's assent, the alienation of property and all transactions which devalue the property of a corporate entity are invalid.

For sums exceeding the limits set by the Holy See for a country, or for objects vowed to the Church or considered precious from the artistic or historical viewpoint, the permission of the Holy See is required.

Commerce and speculation

175 Businesses as such are forbidden to religious except in special circumstances acceptable to the local ordinary.
Financial speculation is prohibited.

15.

Separation from the Congregation

Secularization

176 The Superior General may, with his Council's assent, grant an indult of severance from the Congregation to a temporarily professed Brother requesting such an indult for grave reasons.

For the perpetually professed, the indult is reserved to the Holy See.

Both indults entail dispensation from the vows and from the obligations contracted by the religious profession.

Withdrawal

177. A temporarily professed Brother is free to leave the Congregation at the end of the term for which he had pronounced his vows.

To withdraw from the Congregation before the end of the term for which he had made his vows, he needs a valid and legitimate dispensation.

Refusal of admission

178. The Provincial or the Visitor with his council's consent may, for just cause, refuse the request of a Brother to renew his temporary vows. Likewise, the Superior General may, with his Council's consent, refuse a Brother's request to make his perpetual vows.

179. All separations from the Congregation are made in strict conformity to the universal law of the Church.

***Help to those
who leave***

180 A Brother who leaves the Congregation may not claim compensation for services rendered. The Congregation returns his personal property without interest and, in Christian charity, facilitates his transition to a new way of life. With due discretion, the Brothers offer to those who have left the Congregation the moral support which they may need.

16.

Binding Force of the Rule of Life

Constitutions 181. The Constitutions do not, of themselves, bind under pain of sin, except in matters dealing with the substance of the vows or with divine or Church law, or when their transgression would cause grave scandal, would entail the danger of grave sin, or would be prompted by formal contempt.

Directory 182. The binding force of the Directory is the same as that of the Constitutions.

Frequent reading 183 The Brothers frequently and attentively read the *Rule of Life*, which they have pledged to observe.
Their care in rereading it bears witness to the importance they attach to it, the respect which they have for it, and their determination to observe it faithfully.



DIRECTORY

1.

Nature and Spirit of the Congregation

*The Brother, a
religious edu-
cator*

1. The Brother is a religious educator. By his religious consecration, he seeks a closer imitation of the kind of life which Jesus led and which he proposed to his disciples.

By his apostolic mission, he actualizes the charism of the Founders, Jean-Marie de la Mennais and Gabriel Deshayes, making himself available to serve the needs of the Church and of the world in the field of education.

*Distinct from
the laity*

2. As an educator of youth, especially in schools, he collaborates with lay people in building the temporal city, but he differs from these by a particular consecration which marks and informs all his activities and directs them in a new way towards the fulfilment of the Kingdom.

LG 46, 2

By doing that the Brother bears in mind that all religious life should be penetrated by an

apostolic spirit and that all apostolic action should be animated by a religious spirit.

PC 8:2

Central aim

3. The presentation of the Faith and the spiritual formation of youth constitute the central aim of the Brother's apostolate as he recalls the words of Jean-Marie de la Mennais: "My schools are established to make the Name of Jesus Christ known".

Missionary apostolate

4. Heirs of a tradition dating back to Jean-Marie de la Mennais, the Brothers make it a duty to support the missionary work of the Church and of the Congregation, willingly responding to Christ's call: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations".

Mt 28:19

Apostles till the end

5. Regardless of his age, even in retirement, the Brother remains available for the service of God and of the Congregation in apostolic work suited to his strength and aptitudes.

***In union with
his Brothers***

6. It is in community that the Brother seeks God and exercises his apostolate, and that he tries to discern the Will of God by listening the Word of God and by reading the signs of the times.

Living with men whose company they have not cho-sen and whom they call Brothers, they witness to the new and universal brotherhood instituted by Christ. Their unity is a special sign of the Kingdom and a powerful source of energy in the realization of their mission.

The community and apostolic aspect of his life gives the Brother a sure guide in his quest for God. It assures true freedom and authenticity in the choice of ministries.

***Love of Christ
and of the
Church***

7. The Brother knows that the more fervent is his union with Christ, the more enriched is the life of the Church.

With his entire heart and soul, he wants to love and serve the Church for which Jean-Marie de la Mennais wished to live and die.

That is why he is determined to remain faithful to the precious heritage contained in the examples and writings of the Founders which inspire him to grow in the spirit of faith and charity, abnegation and humility.

Spirit of faith

8. Under the dynamic influence of the faith received at Baptism, the Brother answers the call of God as did the apostles. Their spiritual adventure consisted in believing that their master was the Lord and, on this belief, they staked their lives.

In order to preserve the full impetus of his initial consecration, the Brother frequently renews the joyful offering of his entire being. He calls on the Holy Spirit to open his heart to the faith that makes him see the world, people and events as Christ sees them.

Confronted with the many duties of his religious apostolate and distrustful of his own powers, he puts all his confidence in God alone, "as if he saw the Invisible". He accepts with serenity the mysterious and often bewildering development of a life of service animated by an active faith.

He 11, 27

Spirit of charity 9. Having received God's gratuitous love, the Brother strives to grow in charity. He loves his religious family whose members seek to have but one heart and one soul. Like Christ's love for mankind, his charity is active, alert, imaginative, efficacious and respectful, without expectation of profit or gratitude. Ac 4, 32

Spirit of abnegation 10. "Unless the grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat, but if it dies, it produces a rich harvest". The intimate knowledge of the cross and of the death of Christ assures the Brother that renunciations, contradictions, loneliness and failures, all inherent in his life's work, are not signs of defeat; rather, they are tokens of his participation in the sufferings of the Redeemer and a prelude to resurrection and life. Jn 12, 24

Spirit of humility 11. The Brother acknowledges that it is God who has made him what he is and, with the help of his grace, he deals with others in humility and kindness. Like his divine master who, for thirty years, lived a hidden life, he accepts with joy situations without glory and he devotes himself to his work without

seeking or expecting praise. Thus, he is true to the thought of the Founder, "The strength of the Congregation will not be in its numbers, but in its humility". (August 1822)

***Devotion to
Mary and Jo-
seph***

12. The Brother venerates Mary in the mystery of Christ and of the Church. In the handmaid of the Lord, fully docile to the Holy Spirit and totally devoted to the person and to the work of his Son, he sees the outstanding model of the consecrated life of chastity, obedience and poverty.

Faithful to a long-standing tradition of the Congregation, they honour Saint Joseph as model of educators and patron of religious vocations.

Listening to the Founders...

1. May the Lord make of you men according to his heart, devoted to his Church, detached, poor in spirit, humble, zealous, eager to meet every challenge, to endure every suffering, to spread his word, to promote his reign and to enkindle in the world the divine fire brought to it by Jesus; a purifying fire, that ineffable love which is divine life itself. You have been called to something great; keep in mind the greatness of your vocation and strive to become worthy of it.

S VII, 2297¹

2. The spirit of the Congregation is a spirit of peace and of charity. The Brothers shall live together in the most perfect unity, loving and helping one another.

Rule of 1823

3. Judge of all things in the light of faith and always keep eternity in mind.

Rule of 1825

4. One must be determined to persevere in his vocation; to renounce the world and its honours, its pleasures and its riches; otherwise he would be unworthy of membership in a Congregation which has chosen for its motto those meaningful words, God alone!

Circular of the 1824 retreat

5. O Mary, in your maternal goodness, guide all the members of this Congregation whose patroness you are, through the perils which beset them. May your love protect them still at the time of their death!

S III, 1025b

1. Sermons of Father de la Mennais.

2. A travers la correspondance de l'abbé J.-M. de la Mennais

2. The Religious Consecration

Christ's consecration, shared by all Christians

*Jesus, the
consecrated
one.*

13. Jesus is "He whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world". By the sacrifice of his death and his passage into glory, the Servant consummates his consecration: "I consecrate myself for their sakes now, that they may be consecrated in truth".

Jn 10, 36

Jn 17, 19

*...consecrates
the world
through the
Spirit.*

14. By his Resurrection, the Lord, freed from the temporary ties which had bound him to the world, now permeates it with a new presence. He pours forth his Spirit, source of youthfulness and life. "By the same power with which he can subdue the whole universe" , he sums up all creation and by his cross leads it towards the light that knows no setting.

Ph 3, 21

Lc 9, 3

***The Church,
instrument of
Christ...***

15. Until his return, the Lord communicates the effects of his paschal mystery through the Church, his body and sacrament. Through the baptismal consecration, those in whom the Word has elicited faith are grafted onto his glorified humanity.

***to establish a
holy people...***

16. Strengthened by Confirmation and sustained by the Eucharist, the faithful, "as a leaven and as a kind of soul for human society", form a new people, a holy priesthood, offering themselves and all their actions as spiritual sacrifices. When the Lord returns, God will be "all in all" so that the messianic people will include all those who have been saved in a consecrated universe, a new heaven and a new earth"

Rom 12, 1

1 P 2, 5

1 Co 15, 28

Rv 21, 1

***...through visible
institutions***

17 The entire Christian community, blessed with a variety of gifts but animated by the same Spirit, participates in Christ's consecration. Yet, the divine plan unfolds in a structured universe amid visible institutions comprising sacred persons, places, objects and rites, which make the Saviour present and accessible to mankind.

The religious life, special consecration in the Church

Religious congregations

18. Jesus entrusted the evangelical counsels to the Church. Diverse religious families, prompted by the Spirit, have arisen amid God's people to live by these counsels. All these families contribute in different ways to the adornment of the Church, radiant like a bride made beautiful for her spouse . They remain subject to historical contingencies, but the evangelical way of life which they represent forms an integral part of the institutional Church and "belongs inseparably to her life and holiness".

PC 1,3

LG 44, 4

The Brother's vocation...

19. The Brother hears the voice of God who calls him by name. Responding to the Lord's pressing invitation, he joins a religious family which attracts him. He sets himself at a certain distance from the ordinary conditions of human existence which include undeniable values compatible with the Kingdom, thus attempting to avoid the seductions of an ambivalent world, emancipated by Christ, but ever threatened by sin and always in need of salvation.

*...in Christ's
footsteps...*

20. An unshakable conviction gives the Brother's life its orientation. He sees in his calling a more evangelical way of life, with greater freedom to follow Christ and imitate the chastity, obedience, poverty and brotherly love of the divine Master among his disciples.

*...a fulfilment
of Baptism...*

21. As a Christian whose life has already been enriched by the effects of Baptism, the Brother lives so that his original consecration may develop to the greatest possible degree and find fulfillment in an abundance of the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

*...through a
new consecra-
tion*

22. Through a superior's intermediary, he makes his religious profession, which the Church recognizes as a special consecration and unites to her Eucharistic sacrifice.

Cf. LG 45, 3

The meaning of the Brother's consecration

*A personal
and public
act...*

23. The religious profession is the action of one whom the person of Christ has captivated, who wills to declare publicly his desire to follow him and who therefore joins a society organized specifically for mutual support in God's service. This traditional aim of all religious is the Founders' legacy, which the Brother cherishes and carefully transmits to his successors.

***a spiritual
sacrifice...***

24. At the moment of his profession, the Brother, drawn by an unshakable hope, takes hold of his entire life with all its unforeseeable vicissitudes and places it as a spiritual sacrifice in God's almighty hand. The dynamic impact of that fleeting act, sustained by grace, endures as a permanently willed oblation despite superficial variations in his dispositions.

Thereafter, the Brother belongs to God in a new way, as a living parable of the love relationship between God and regenerated mankind: "I will espouse you to me forever,... I will espouse you in fidelity".

Hos 2, 21-22

***a sacred
contract...***

25. By his vows, the Brother binds himself in a way which gives consistency to a community undertaking; he signs a contract. In complete freedom, he assumes all the obligations of the Rule of Life, particularly the moral and juridical exigencies of the three vows. He thus erects barriers between himself and certain worthwhile activities, which he willingly foregoes as being foreign to his life.

...for a life according to the Spirit

26. In its deepest meaning, the profession inscribes in all the Brother's activity, even the most spontaneous behaviour, an interior law engraved in his heart by the Holy Spirit. The vows sustain and vivify three basic attitudes in all the baptized. They facilitate the mastery of disruptive forces in man and contribute to the harmony and unity of the "new man". Thus, fulfilment is achieved, for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom".

p 2,15
2 Co 3,17

The influence of the Brother's evangelical life

A state of life conducive to holiness

27. Holiness can flourish in all states of life. It is rooted in charity, which is the supreme law and bond of perfection. As he strives towards it by the particularly effective means available, the Religious does not glory in his special status. Enriched by the support of all those around him, like the Apostle Paul, he boasts of nothing but his weakness .

Rm 13,10

Cf. 2Co 11,30

...productive... 28. The religious consecration places the Brother under the divine influence so that he may bear much fruit. Dedicated in a special way to the service of others, he exercises a kind of spiritual paternity in the Church and cooperates with the Lord in making available to mankind the immeasurable riches of his paschal mystery.

...radiant... 29. Throughout his life, the Brother is a witness in the eyes of the children of light, but also a sign for those who remain in darkness: God exists, Christ lives on, holiness is possible. Like his patroness, the Virgin Mary, like the saintly Founders and a multitude of predecessors in the Congregation, he strives to exemplify in his life the virtues of faith and charity, abnegation and humility, in other words, the spirit of the Beatitudes, so necessary for the transformation of world.

... in community... 30. The meaning of the Brothers' community life is to attempt the realization – always fragile in a world which is still vulnerable to the forces of evil – of the perfect community of the heavenly Jerusalem where all are one.

Ps 122,3

...light of the world...

31. Just as Jesus, light in the darkness, pre-saged the coming of the Kingdom, every genuine community visibly united in his name announces the Kingdom of God. Its witness, like that of Jesus, may be rejected often. But those who are present to the Brothers in Christ's heart in a more profound way, will fill its quiet impact.

Cf. LG 46

...and presence in the Church

32. Placed by his consecration at the very heart of the Church, the Brother nevertheless remains a member of the earthly city whose hopes and anxieties he shares. In cooperation with others, along with his community, he adapts to the needs of an evolving society, drawing from his resources "things old and new" . Thus he participates in the ongoing dialogue between the Church and the world.

Mt 13,52

Fidelity In the evangelical life

The faithful God...

33. God is faithful in his relations with men. All his promises have their "Yes" in is Son, the suffering Servant who conquered death. "Jesus Christ is the same today as he was yesterday and as he will be forever". In him, the Brother, a frail and changing partner, has contracted an inexpressible covenant.

He 13,8

***...sustains the
Brother's fidelity.***

34. To make his oblation the source of a continuously fresh outflow, even in times of severe trial like his Master, the Brother leans on this Rock. Begging for a stronger faith, he stands firm in the hope he professes, and, grasped by the Lord Jesus, he forges ahead toward the meeting with God, the joy of his youth .

He 10,23

Ph 3,12-14

Listening to the Founders...

1. Surely your vocation is a grace, but God gave it to you, not for yourself, but for himself, so that you could work for his glory... The religious profession is a participation in Jesus Christ's priesthood, since it associates you with the divine work of the redemption, with his love for mankind and with his zeal for his Father's glory. That is why your calling requires such exalted perfection and such celestial virtues.

S VII, 2168, at a sister's profession

2. *Laetus obtuli universa* (in joy, I have offered all): I have offered God my property, my time, my freedom, my reputation, my body, my soul, my life; I have given him everything without exception. Let him therefore dispose of me and of all that I own according to his pleasure. I no longer have any thought, any desire, but to contribute to his glory according to the full measure of my means and my strength.

S VIII, 2428, to the Congregation of St. Meen

3. Consecrated Chastity

God's design

35. Jesus Christ "comes into the life of married Christians through the sacrament of matrimony, " thus restoring the original dignity of marriage and making it a participation in the covenant of love which binds him and his Church.

GS 48, 2

To some, he has showed the way of celibacy, "for the sake of God's Kingdom," which manifests more clearly and more completely the thoroughly innovative character of the covenant inaugurated by his Incarnation.

Mt 19, 12

Cf. S. C. 1, 20

The Brother chooses consecrated celibacy.

36. In a fully deliberate response to God who shows him this way, the Brother chooses consecrated celibacy. Consecrated chastity, a decidedly positive virtue, "witnesses to a preferential love for the Lord". It "reaches, transforms and imbues with a mysterious likeness to Christ man's being in its most hidden depths" .

ET 13

***Chastity
requires
prudence and
discipline...***

37. The free and generous response to this precious gift involves a difficult, sometimes painful struggle. The Brother accepts the inevitable loneliness of his condition like a cross to be carried in Christ's footsteps.

OT 10, 1

An informed and serene acceptance of his sexuality and temperament helps the Brother in the gradual achievement of the mastery of his heart and of his mind without which self-control is impossible.

The Brother seeks life conditions conducive to wholesome psychological and emotional balance. He is not presumptuous of his strengths. He practices self-control and, through asceticism, he gradually acquires the personal discipline which allows him to integrate his celibacy into the development of his personality.

PC 12, 3

...calls for prudence

38. The nature of his calling, the concern for his reputation and the awareness of frailty impel him to be prudent in mixed company in the course of his apostolic, professional or social activities.

***..favours the
gift of self...***

39. Perfect continence is "a sign and stimulus of love and a singular source of spiritual fertility".

LG 42, 3

Bearing in mind that one cannot live without love and that self-absorption is unproductive, the Brother gladly offers to others the resources of his unfettered heart.

His friendship is straightforward, prudent, simple and respectful.

His preferential love for the Lord confers a special quality to his love for his family and relatives and makes him more available in his apostolic and professional activities.

***...flourishes
in fraternal
harmony.***

40. Knowing the importance of emotional balance in celibate apostolic life, the Brothers live together in genuine fraternal love, characterized by the joyful gift of self, mutual trust and unobtrusive concern for others.

They help one another generously as all, superiors especially, bear in mind "that chastity has stronger safeguards in a community when true fraternal love thrives among its members". They know how to offer timely help to those experiencing special problems.

PC 12, 2

To the world which questions and doubts the possibility of perfect continence, a united community offers the convincing witness of a group of men whom vowed chastity has neither depressed nor frustrated, but has enriched and fulfilled.

***A divine gift,
lived in hope***

41. The Brother prays with humility and perseverance for the grace of fidelity. Undaunted by his frailty and his shortcomings, he moves ahead in confidence and hope, for he knows in whom he has believed.

PO 16

He 3, 6

2 Tm 1, 12

Listening to the Founders

1. They shall be very vigilant and practice self-restraint, in constant watchfulness over their hearts and senses, sacrificing whatever could pamper their bodies or tarnish their behaviour.

Rule of 1825

2. Remember that you are sons of Mary, that she looks down upon you from heaven and watches over your struggles.

S 111, 984

3. Have for the Immaculate Virgin Mary a deep devotion because she is the Mother of God; a filial love, because she is your Mother, and a boundless trust because she is God's Mother and yours. May her sweet name be ever in your hearts and on your lips. Whoever invokes her obtains life, true life, everlasting life; the true servant of Mary, her child, cannot perish.

Rule of 1876

(This quotation, very much in the Founder's Spirit, was introduced into the Rule by the chapter of 1876).

4. Evangelical Poverty

*Participation
in the mystery
of Christ's po-
verty*

42. Religious poverty has its source in the basic attitude of Jesus. "His state was divine, yet he did not cling to this equality with God, but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave, and became as men are". Renouncing all will to power, he accepted his dependence on God the Father. Similarly, in an analogous emptying, the Brother, in all humility, commits himself to follow Christ more closely in his poverty.

Ph 2, 6-7

Personal poverty

*Interior dispo-
sition*

43. As a pilgrim in the world, the Brother lives inwardly free from temporal goods, in cheerful availability to others and readiness to share. Religious poverty involves this interior disposition; it is more than a merely social or economic condition.

Since the temporary possession of wordily goods comes from God, the Brother, in submission to his superiors and in cooperation with his confreres, learns how to use material goods without attaching himself to them.

***Expressions
of personal
poverty***

44. The Brother knows that there are many ways to extend his practice of personal poverty so as to become "poor in fact and in spirit" :

- exclude not only the superfluous but occasionally what is useful or pleasant
- welcome certain forms of austerity, privations imposed by circumstances, or even destitution.
- eliminate the tendency to appropriate things and excessive concern for the future
- willingly devote time and talents to the poor.

PC 13, 2

Death, the ultimate poverty

45. Poverty finds its fullest expression in death. When, like Christ, the Brother accepts death, he reaches the culmination of his poverty. He is then ready to receive the imperishable treasure promised to those who left everything to follow in the footsteps of Christ.

Communal poverty

Sharing

46. The Brothers meditate on the example of Christ and his apostles and that of the early Christians where "no one claimed for his own use anything that he had, as everything they owned was held in common"

Ac 4:32.

The community of goods is an essential element of religious poverty. It allows Brothers, who are aware of their close ties to all the members of the Congregation, to provide for their sick and elderly confreres, for the upkeep of the houses of formation and for communities, Provinces and Districts special need. It also allows some Brothers, with the Major Superior's permission, to devote themselves to worthwhile unsalaried work.

To make their poverty real, the Brothers avoid appropriating objects meant for community use. They are kept informed of the financial situation and thus share a sense of responsibility for their resources.

Trust in the Lord

47. The insecurity inherent in a rapidly changing world is accepted and lived in community by the Brothers with deep trust in the Lord.

Communion with the poor

48. The condition of disadvantaged countries, "Poorer in economic goods but quite rich in wisdom", imposes special obligations in the practice of poverty. Brothers working in such countries are called to real communion with the poor.

GS 15, 3

Witness

49. Religious poverty is not readily perceived as a sign of the Kingdom, especially by a world which is rather insensitive to evangelical values.

Yet, by pooling their resources in view of a fairer distribution, religious poverty shows an ideal to which many respond. Through the detachment it expresses, it anticipates the holy City when God will fulfill every aspiration.

Consequently, the Brothers help one another in the practice of personal and communal poverty and all, especially superiors, challenge whatever could, even unwittingly, offer a counter-witness in matters of poverty.

Struggle against destitution

Through instruction and education

50. As member of a Congregation established "to provide Christian instruction and education, especially to children of the working class", the Brother knows that one of the most effective ways to fight dire poverty is to fulfill its specific mission.

Rule of 1891

Through choices of apostolates

51. The Congregation has concern for the poorest of the poor who are illiterate people, and keeps them in mind in its bold, yet prudent choices of missionary activities and other undertakings.

By special projects in local communities

52. Each community tries to provide appropriate and timely assistance to the poor in its neighbourhood through special classes for the illiterates, evening courses for others with special needs, religion courses for youths and adults, emergency assistance, hospitality and participation in organized charities.

The Brothers' sharing is done mostly through the intermediary of the community and of the Congregation. Occasionally, the Brothers reflect together on what they can give and how they can share more generously, keeping in mind that their charitable deeds take on added meaning when they involve personal deprivation.

Listening to the Founders

1. In all things, love and practice religious poverty, which will give you access to all the treasures of heaven.

Rule of 1825

2. They shall free their hearts of all affection for material goods; they shall perform no acts of property without the permission of the Superior of the Congregation.

Rule of 1823

3. The Sisters shall remember that wanting to be poor means wanting to experience the harsh reality of indigence in food, clothing and shelter. To reject poverty when it presents itself in this triple form is to have for this virtue a fanciful esteem and to reduce it to an inconsequential formality.

Rule of the Daughters of Divine Providence, 1848

4. They shall diligently take care of the objects at their disposal; thrift and cleanliness are especially recommended.

Rule of 1825

5. Religious Obedience

Christian obedience

53. "My aim is to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me". "Although he was Son, he learned to obey through suffering", consenting "to give his life in ransom for many".

Jn 5, 30

He 5, 8

Like Christ, every baptized person must seek to know the will of the Father and obey him through human intermediaries in order to collaborate in the salvation of mankind.

Mt 20, 28

Religious obedience

54. Impelled by the desire to live the baptismal consecration to its fullest extent, the Brother chooses to enter fully in the divine plan and makes it his own, even when, at times, it entails sharing the anguish of the crucified Christ. The vow of obedience introduces him intimately into that surge of love which led Christ to state, just before his Passion: "The world must be brought to know that I love the Father and that I do exactly what the Father told me".

Jn 14, 31

55. The Brother thus actualizes in his own life the mystery of Christ's obedience. Submissive to the Scriptures and to the Law, to his parents and to his religious and secular rulers, Jesus discerned the Father's will and made it his. Thus, he became "the Son who is made perfect forever". Like his Master, the Brother, through an active obedience, offers himself to God as a daily holocaust and freely accepts the implications of his sacrifice.

He 8, 20

Motivation

56. The Brother's obedience is motivated by faith and charity which prompt him to want to obey and to seek a Rule to guide his behaviour.

Responsible obedience

57. Religious obedience is all-encompassing. It is an active and responsible virtue which fosters initiative so that the Brother finds in his assignments ample opportunity to exercise his intelligence and will, his natural talents and the gifts of grace.

This obedience, far from diminishing human dignity, leads the religious to maturity, enhancing his freedom as child of God.

PC 14, 2

In the Church's service

58. The Brother's obedience makes him participate more closely in the Church's work of salvation, building the Body of Christ.

Just as Mary, through her obedience gave birth to the Son of God, so the Brother contributes to the birth and growth of Christ in the souls confided to him. In carrying out this noble assignment, the Brother generously co-operates with others in the pastoral mission of the portion of the Church to which he has been assigned by his Superiors.

Authority as loving service

59. The superior exercises his authority in a way that "manifests thereby the charity with which God loves" the Brothers.

PC 14, 3

The superior remembers that "the subject and goal of all social institutions is and must always be the human person" and considers each member of his community in the totality of his being, not merely in terms of professional or apostolic tasks to be carried out.

GS 25, 1

He fulfills his ministry in charity, simplicity, humility, prudence and wisdom, showing great trust in his Brothers, thus obtaining from them, through a loyal and willing obedience, a collaboration built on faith.

***Obedience and
Community***

60. Together with his Brothers, keeping in mind differences in age, formation and mentality, the superior tries to discern the will of God in persons and events. Together, the Brothers give priority to the common good, they adjust individual opinions in the light of other people's views, study situations, and devise responses suited to the needs of the Church and of the world. Thus, religious obedience and fraternal understanding reinforce each other.

***Paschal
mystery***

61. The Brother obeys with confidence and joy. He knows that he is performing his Father's will and shares in the peace of Christ who was able to say, after hours of turmoil, "All is accomplished"

Jn 19:30.

In this most intimate communion with the paschal mystery of Christ, the Brother acquires, like him, an eternal greatness. "Being as all men are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross. But God raised him high and gave him the name which is above all other names".

Ph 2:7-9.

Listening to the Founders...

1. The Brothers shall be bound to the most complete obedience to the Superior of the Congregation, as well as to their local superiors, except for appeal to the Superior of the Congregation in doubtful cases; yet, pending the latter's decision, they shall submit to the local superior's orders unless there is evident evil.

Rule of 1823

2. When a Brother wishes to express a demurrer, either to his local superior or to the Superior of the Congregation, he shall do it in a Spirit of humility, docility and charity, acquiescing fully and without complaint to the eventual decision.

Rule of 1823

3. Whatever order, advice or rebuke they receive, the Brothers shall express no displeasure. They shall always be prepared to do what they are told, without allowing themselves to judge their superior's motives, never forgetting that perfect obedience is not only a matter of deeds, but also involves the heart and the mind.

Rule of 1823

4. A true religious must not cling to anything on earth. Whether you are here or there, what does it matter, provided you be where obedience calls you, Never become attached to a place or to a position; have only one wish: to accomplish God's holy will as manifested by your Superiors.

A III, 390

6. The Fraternal Community

Principles

Community and consecration

62. The Brothers' religious consecration creates a closer intimacy with the Lord present in the midst of the community. Chastity amplifies the capacity to love, rendering one available for the apostolate, while religious poverty makes one share his temporal goods, place his talents in the service of others and submit to the universal law of work. Obedience involves dependence on others and community discernment of God's will.

Community and prayer

63. Religious community life, founded on the Eucharist and on the Word of God, cannot exist without communal prayer. The Brothers find therein the source and the highest expression of their unity in Christ.

Together, they bear the responsibility for their prayer life; together, they meditate the word

of God, celebrate the divine office and participate in the Eucharist.

They observe Sunday as the Lord's day and periodically schedule for themselves times for spiritual renewal.

***Community
and mission***

64. Dedicated to the common task of evangelization, the Brothers of the community know that they must constantly work at its implementation. With humility and realism, the community adjusts its orientations, revises its approaches and evaluates the effectiveness of its witness. In the school, it exerts its influence to create an authentic Christian community.

Brothers working in communities give their support and encouragement to those who may be engaged in other activities.

Applications

***The superior
and the
community***

65. The superior animates the community and consolidate its unity so that it constitutes a living cell within the Church. He willingly listens to each Brother and promotes community discussions to achieve a meeting of minds and a convergence of wills. In his decisions, he gives due consideration to his Bro-

thers' views. With their cooperation, he assigns tasks so as to promote the well-being of each person and the harmony of the entire body.

***Brotherliness
and
the community***

66. To the best of its ability, the community provides conditions conducive to the personal growth and fulfilment of its members who, to build community and foster its mission, accept one another as different and complementary.

As members of a united family, the Brothers are attentive to the quality of their interaction. They are open to the younger Brothers and willingly help them, and show special concern for the aging, the sick and others who are burdened.

Fraternal life in no way excludes friendship, an important factor in emotional balance and apostolic service.

***Retired
Brothers***

67. Retired Brothers and those who have to relinquish full-time employment, as much as their condition allows, work tirelessly for the common good, finding countless ways of providing service, especially in the apostolate.

By their assiduous prayer, their serenity, their readiness to serve, they often contribute effectively to the harmonious unity of the community, and manifest their faithfulness to the God who received the first fruits of their consecration.

***Special gifts
and charisms***

68. Each Brother makes his ongoing response to his calling in constant reference to the Gospel and to the Rule of Life, attentive to his Brothers' aspirations and to the needs of the times.

The rich diversity of gifts and charisms manifests the freedom to the Holy Spirit who "blows where he pleases". Used in union with authority within the framework of the Congregation, they impart great vitality to the community for, "to each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good".

Jn 3, 8

1 Co 12, 7

***Community
meetings***

69. Community meetings, where everyone expresses himself and listens to others in truth and charity, provide excellent opportunities for mutual understanding, planning and the sharing of the values by which the Brothers live.

Joy

70. Just as the Brothers bear together the burdens of the community, they also share their joys and moments of leisure and relaxation. Community meals are cherished occasions of fraternal togetherness, as are weekends and holidays.

***Community
openness***

71. The community opens itself widely to the Church and to the world in order to discover their needs and deep aspirations. It collaborates actively with various organizations concerned with education and evangelization. It is interested in people's lives, especially the poorest, and readily participates in cultural activities and social works.

Means of communication

72. Attentive to the events and to the ideas of their time, the Brothers use the means of social communication to enrich their culture, enlighten their ministry and improve their teaching. They readily avail themselves of "whatever fosters virtue, knowledge or art"

IM 9, 1

Hospitality

73. The Brothers make it their duty to be hospitable, especially for their own confreres and missionary Brothers on home leave, as well as for their own parents and relatives.

When receiving their guests, they remain mindful of the needs and priorities of the community. They treat their guests with openness and simplicity, as if they were receiving Christ himself. PC 24, 3

Concern for vocations

74. Each community concerns itself with the growth and development of the Congregation. The Brothers bear in mind that their own example is the best recommendation for the Congregation and a compelling invitation to the religious life.

Listening to the Founders...

1. As long as we are united, we shall be happy and strong. Our blessed unity shall be our delight, the grace, the strength of our association. "Quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum".

S viii, 2404

2. Let brotherly love prevail among all the members of the community. Let each one rejoice at the others' joy and grieve at their sorrows. In questing for God and doing his work, let all help one another, avoiding quarrels and rivalries, ridicule and jealousy, everything offensive, divisive or likely to impair charity.

Rule of 1835

3. Instead of shirking work at another's expense, the Brothers shall strive to ease one another's burdens and shall take up with eagerness the least appealing tasks.

Rule of 1823

4. They shall carefully avoid all occasions of discord, all expressions of coldness or ill-humour. They shall refrain from harsh, bitter, reproachful language, from manifestations of scorn or impatience. They shall speak to one another with unfailing kindness... Should even the slightest dissension arise, they shall not fail to make up before night prayer.

Rule of 1823

7. Prayer Life

Authentic prayer

Christ's prayer...

75. Christ's prayer during his earthly life flowed from his intimate union with his Father. He prayed with his people in the temple, he prayed alone in the desert, even when crowds eagerly sought him. He prayed before the major decisions of his public life, before the cruel ordeal of his Passion, and he prayed especially for the steadfastness of his followers in faith and unity.

He taught his disciples the greatest of prayers and urged them to pray relentlessly with the assurance of being heard when, in faith, they sought the Kingdom of God and its justice.

Lc 18, 1

...continued in the Church...

76. The everliving Christ intercedes for us; he appropriates the prayer of the Church and pours forth on men the Spirit that inspires them to say, "Father"! Like the apostles, the early Christians, together with Mary, "devoted themselves to constant prayer, "praising

Cf. He 7, 25

Ac 1, 14

God," especially at the great moments in the life of the early Church.

Ac 2, 47

... in community...

77. United in response to the Spirit's call and working together in the Father's vineyard, the Brothers share the same ideal. Their community participation in prayer and liturgical worship, and the mutual support which they bring to their spiritual lives are the bonds of brotherhood that unite them with Christ "present among them".

Cf. Mt 18, 20

in today's world

78. Enlightened by faith, nurtured by the daily reading of the Scripture, the Brothers "carefully detect the God's signs and the impulses of his grace in the various happenings of life".

PO 18, 2

The Brothers' prayer unites with that of God's people which intercedes for the salvation of the world for the hopes, the joys and the distress of mankind. I assures them of strength and discernment "to be witnesses to Christ in all things in the midst of human society" and thus recapitulate all the effort as religious working to educate youth who are the future and hope of the world.

GS 43, 4

Prerequisites of authentic prayer

Interior peace and recollection

79. The growth of the spirit of prayer requires adequate physical and mental health as well as Christian asceticism and interior silence to control the vagaries of the imagination and of the emotions. In the midst of a turbulent world and of absorbing occupations, the Brother centres his life on God, who calls him to walk in his presence in peace of soul, the fruit of single-hearted love.

Personal responsibility

80. The Brother understands that he is personally responsible for the quality of his prayer life, which he sees less as a subjection to a schedule of prayers than the loving attention to the Word and the free surrender to a Person.

Community support

81. The Brothers find the needed support for their personal and community prayer in the fraternal charity which reigns in their communities.

They willingly keep the silence necessary for serious prayer and consider the regular participation in community prayers an important element in the building of true community.

Doctrinal basis 82. A sound doctrinal and scriptural foundation, combined with humility in the quest for God, helps the Brothers find him in prayer.

Sacraments and spiritual exercises

83. "Drawing on the authentic sources of Christian spirituality," the Brother expresses to the Lord his praise and thanksgiving, his atonement and supplication, using the spiritual exercises prescribed by the Rule of Life to integrate prayer and action. PC 6, 2

When circumstances prevent a Brother from participating in community prayer, he tries to compensate privately. The community, on the other hand, includes absent Brothers in its intentions.

The Eucharist 84. The Eucharist, "sign of unity and bond of charity," is the summit towards which the life of the community is directed. For all the Brothers, "it is the source of divine love, of zeal and of selflessness which has given strength to the martyrs, fashioned the purity of virgins and formed all the saints" SC 47
Rule of 1876

The Eucharistic worship unites the Brothers in the sacrifice of Christ. At Mass, the Brothers renew their consecration which unites them with the supreme and ongoing sacrifice of the Redeemer.

When the community finds it impossible to participate in the Mass, the Brothers are urged to join in the liturgy of the Word and in sacramental communion.

The Brothers visit the Blessed Sacrament to express their love and gratitude, and to render to their Lord due homage and adoration.

The divine office

85. Through the divine office, religious participate in the official prayer of the Church, "which is ceaselessly engaged in praising the Lord and interceding for the salvation of the whole world".

SC 83, 2

This prayer, made in the name of all for the benefit of all, is a "source of piety and nourishment for personal prayer" and thus, an exceptionally fitting encounter with God.

SC 90, 1

Mental prayer

86. The Brother seeks Christ in the meditation of the Word of God and the contemplation of his mysteries. He thereby learns "to live in familiar and constant companionship with the Father, through Jesus Christ, his Son, in the Holy Spirit".

OT 8, 1

Mental prayer

87. The Brother attaches great importance to the Scriptures and studies them diligently. Realizing that "ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ," he strives, by assiduous reading, to gain "the supreme advantage of knowing the Christ Jesus".

Ph 3, 8

Cf. DV 25, 1

Regularly, he finds time to study "the teaching of the faith and the good doctrine,". This intellectual depth enables him to better proclaim Jesus-Christ.

1 Tm 4, 6

To foster community awareness of the major documents of the Church and of the Congregation, it is desirable that they be read in community. Such texts can provide excellent subject matter for community meetings.

Beyond the mandatory

88. Besides the daily prescribed prayers, the Brothers are encouraged to add certain prayers according to their personal dispositions: the office of readings, the midday prayer or compline, the way of the cross, prayer related to their work, shared prayer, participation in a prayer group, etc...

The Lord's day

89. On Sunday, the Lord's day, the Brothers try to free themselves from their ordinary occupations. They willingly join the parish community in prayer and make the day one of joy,

relaxation, brotherhood and more intensive prayer.

***The sacrament
of
reconciliation***

90. In the sacrament of reconciliation, the Brother acknowledges his failings and gratefully receives the Father's forgiveness. He thus strengthens his bonds with the Church which he had weakened by his sinfulness.

***Spiritual
direction***

91. Guided by the Holy Spirit and helped by a competent spiritual director or his habitual confessor, the Brother gradually discovers the path to God. The practice of particular examen provides added stimulus for generous progress towards his spiritual goals.

Annual retreat

92. The annual retreat gives the Brother an excellent opportunity to intensify his quest for God. Setting aside his usual occupations and concerns, the Brother spends time only on God's affairs in solitude, silence and prayer. In more intimate union with God, he assesses his performance, rekindles his spiritual life and forges ahead with renewed hope in God's goodness.

Marian devotion

93. The Brother has a great love and veneration for the Virgin Mary. In the Scriptures, he meditates on her role in salvation history and in the liturgy, he relives with her the mysteries of her divine Son's life. To liturgical celebrations in her honour, he adds acts of devotion inspired by true faith. He entrusts to her maternal solicitude his religious and apostolic life.

Prayer and action

94. The same Spirit who vivifies the Brother's whole life calls him to praise God in prayer and to serve him in the apostolate, a participation in Christ's mission which leads to union with God.

To avoid becoming too engrossed in his many tasks, the Brother reserves certain times for prayer, which he needs to stay united with Christ in his daily occupations.

In actual life, the competing demands of his dual calling present difficult choices, particularly on tiresome and stressful days when prayer may become less appealing. It is then especially that the Brother remembers that God never fails those who seek him.

Accepting these inevitable tensions, the Brother insures his fidelity through an ever-closer union with Christ, the source of his being and the goal of his existence.

Cf. 1 Co 8, 6

Listening to the Founders...

1. If, under the Old Covenant, prayer was so powerful, how much more potent must it be under the New Dispensation, since Jesus Christ has consecrated it in a special way, since our voices are now one with his!

S IV, 1463

2. During this visit (to the Blessed Sacrament), one may use varied forms of prayer: thanksgiving, praise, atonement; but also speak to Jesus Christ about your sorrows, that he may comfort you, about your problems, that he may enlighten and strengthen you, about your failings, that he may forgive you. Listen, as from the tabernacle, he addresses these touching words, "Come to me, all who labour and are burdened, and I shall give you rest".

Before taking leave of the Lord, humbly beg for his blessing upon you and upon your students.

Rule of 1825

3. Never abridge your meditation for any pretext whatsoever, for, of all your prayers, it is the most necessary.

Rule of 1825

4. During a pious reading, do not seek to satisfy a vain curiosity and do not skip aimlessly from one book to another.

Do not read too much at a time; stop now and then to ponder passages which you find especially touching or striking and recall them later, praying God to conform your life to them so as to progress in his love.

Rule of 1825

5. Each year, during vacation, the Brothers participate in the spiritual exercises of the retreat, to renew themselves in the spirit of their calling, to strengthen themselves in their vocation, to rekindle their piety, their fervour and their zeal.

Rule of 1825

6. The rosary is among the most beautiful devotions to Mary and among the holiest of prayers, but one must be wary lest the repetition of the same words lead to distraction...

Always carry the rosary with you, for it is the emblem of Mary's servants and the mark of her children.

Rule of 1825

7. Develop the habit, by a holy orientation of your intentions, of directing all your actions to the glory of God and of uniting them to those of Jesus Christ, so that they may receive from his merits an infinite reward.

Rule of 1825

8. Religious Ascesis

Participation in the paschal mystery

95. It is only by his suffering and cross that Jesus entered the Glory of his resurrection as Lord. When men walk in his footsteps, suffering and death take on a new meaning: they suffer with him and are conformed to him in death and thus enter into his glory. By his loving participation in the Saviour's Passion, the Brother completes in his flesh "all that has still to be undergone by Christ for the sake of his body, the Church".

Col 1, 24

Ascesis and li- beration

96. Ascesis leads to an ongoing conversion of the heart. It frees the Brother from the obstacles which prevent him from hearing the voice of God within him. To the extent that he strives toward that liberation, the Brother is prepared for intimate union with his Lord and for generous dedication to others.

***Ascesis and
consecration***

97. Faithfulness to the evangelical counsels according to the Rule of Life constitutes the essence of the Brother's abnegation. As a true disciple of the chaste, poor and obedient Christ, the Brother submits with generosity and joy to the purifications imposed or inspired by his religious consecration.

***Personal
ascesis***

98. Personal discipline is an effective means of interior liberation. Daily punctual rising, real effort to pray, observance of the times of silence, self-discipline to promote physical and mental fitness, the lucid acceptance of one's shortcomings, resistance to the constant attraction of comfort and selfishness, moderation or even abstention from tobacco and alcohol, in brief, all that favours the mastery of self, helps the Brother achieve that penance-conversion that the Lord asks of him.

***Ascesis and
community***

99 Community living entails inevitable constraints which the Brother willingly accepts so that others may be happier. Thus, he tries to understand his confreres and dialogues with them, he accepts extra work when it presents itself, and he tries to be pleasant to all.

The community adopts a lifestyle of people of modest means for food and clothing, lodging and travel. By avoiding luxury and superficiality it chooses a law of simplicity in everything.

It is desirable at times, for instance, during Lent, that the Brothers agree on a community penance, like the better observance of a point of the Rule, or some material deprivation, in view of some special sharing with the poor.

Ascesis and mission

100. The Brother generously accepts the self-denial required by the exacting demands of his apostolic and professional calling. Willingness to adapt, to develop competencies, to expand human and religious culture, the judicious and unselfish use of his time, his availability to students and parents, the acceptance of the monotony of his work and its apparent inefficiency, all these are forms of ascesis which give the Brother's mission its fruitfulness.

Ascesis and presence to the world

101. The Brother's willing presence to the world does not lead him to forget that he is not of the world. A kind of "spiritual instinct" informs his conduct. Accordingly, he is discri-

PC 12, 2

minating in his choice of meetings and family relationships, visits, in his selection of television programmes, films and shows, etc. PC12, 2

Ascesis and illness

102. The Brother who is burdened by infirmity and illness unites himself more closely to Christ suffering for the salvation of the world. Thus, in truth, he becomes a spiritual offering agreeable to God as he joins Jesus Christ in the Eucharistic oblation, while waiting to be associated with him in glory. "Through Christ and in Christ, the riddles of sorrow and death grow meaningful. Apart from his Gospel, they overwhelm us". GS 22,6

Return to the Father

103. The Brother does not fret over the gradual deterioration of his body, since it bears the seed of immortality. Death is no longer an inevitable fate to which he resigns himself. In Jesus Christ, it has a new meaning; it represents a gain, and he longs "to be gone and be with Christ" to whom he is consecrated. Ph 1,21
Ph 1, 23

Listening to the Founders...

1. We must bear that cross by which we have been saved and we must, like Saint Paul, complete what has still to be fulfilled in Christ's Passion.

A VI. 240

2. Rise at the appointed time; failure to do so would offend God who asks of you this first sacrifice and would lead you to dangerous temptations.

Rule of 1825

3. Offer to God, in a spirit of penance, the distaste and weariness occasionally induced by monotonous and repetitive tasks. Consider that work done for the glory of Jesus Christ and the salvation of souls will atone for your sins, sanctify your life and earn for you a heavenly reward.

Rule of 1825

4. Do not aspire to be sent to one parish rather than to another. If you seek God alone, you will find him everywhere. You may be sure that the more you suffer, the more abundantly God will bless you and your work. The best places are those which have the most crosses.

Rule of 1835

5. Their love for their parents will be thoroughly Christian and religious, and therefore will not lead them to abandon or neglect God's work. They shall visit their parents only after obtaining the permission of the Superior of the Congregation.

Rule of 1823

6. When will you belong wholeheartedly to God? Why do you withhold the small sacrifices which he asks of you?... Be stronger and more courageous. Do not sadden the Holy Spirit with those continual lapses which prevent him from filling you with the abundance of his gifts and of his grace. Finally, be what you ought to be and what you long to be, a true religious. Then, you will taste, in the depth of your soul, peace, comfort and heavenly joy.

A VI, 8; May 25, 1824

9. The Apostolic Mission

Basic principles 104. Their baptismal and their religious consecrations associate the Brothers closely with the redemptive mission of Christ as they work towards the realization of God's plan for the world by proclaiming the Gospel. "Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation... Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you".

Mt 28, 19-20

They fulfill this mission "as fellow workers with God" who is always active among men. "The apostolate is carried on through faith, hope and charity which the Holy Spirit diffuses in the hearts of all members of the Church". Accordingly, the Brothers lead an intensely spiritual life, which is the basis of sanctification for themselves and others. To succeed in their mission, they use human means, without forgetting that it is God who gives their work its fecundity.

1 Co 3, 9

AA 3, 2

1 Co 3, 6

The Brothers' work is essentially ecclesial and therefore integrated into the comprehensive pastoral effort of the Church on behalf of God's people.

The mission of the Congregation

105. The approbation of the Congregation by the Holy See gives the Brothers' mission an official status. In fidelity to their calling and in loyalty to its Founders, the Brothers eagerly respond to the pastoral directives of the Pope and of the bishops in whom is vested prime responsibility for the apostolate.

The Congregation fulfills its apostolic mission primarily by the human and Christian education and instruction of youth, especially of the lowly and the poor. This specialization increases efficiency, prevents the dispersal of efforts and provides the Brothers with the benefit of an ever-growing experience.

Special mission, the schools

106. The Congregation has made the school its special field of action. Today, as in the Founders' times, schools offer an essential service to individuals and to society by the formation of free and responsible persons. Christian schools do even more, integrating the acquisition of knowledge, the preparation to responsible freedom and education in the

faith. To accomplish this, the Brothers devote themselves to teaching, to catechesis, to pastoral ministry in schools, and other activities deemed necessary or useful in special circumstances.

Shared Mission 107 Shared mission is a call from the Spirit addressed to the Brothers and the Laity to live the Mennaisian charism in communion. In the context of shared mission, the Brother is called to be a witness of the primacy of God, a prophetic sign of fraternity and a reminder of the charism.

With the Laity the, the Community discerns the mission, shares and deepens the spirituality and sense of mission, and involves itself in the experiences of communion and collaboration, while respecting the requirements proper to the different lifestyles.

Unity of life

Religious-educators

108. Between the Brother's religious state and his educational mission there is profound unity and reciprocal influence. His religious consecration finds expression in apostolic action and gives it a specific character. This interaction permeates all aspects of the Brother's life.

***Mission and
vows***

109. The vows of the religious educator favour his greater availability.

Consecrated celibacy helps him be a Brother to all, in a simple and genuine relationship which expresses Christ's universal love.

Evangelical poverty is expressed by the pooling of resources for apostolic work. The spirit of detachment facilitates true dialogue and moves the Brother to share the benefits of his cultural achievements with others, especially the less fortunate.

Religious obedience makes the Brother more attentive to the designs of God on him and makes him more available for apostolic responsibilities proposed by his superiors and his community.

***Mission and
witness***

110 The Brother's apostolic religious life, by its very nature, offers a striking witness to the transcendence of God and to the restoration of mankind in the risen Christ.

Having centred his life on God's Kingdom, which even now is a reality of history, and yet engaged in temporal activities, the Brother gives priority to eternal values as he pursues his educational work.

He strives to make his message convincing to men of good will, to hearts that are straightforward and receptive. He does this mainly by the quality of his relationship and by his obvious happiness in the service of God and of men.

Mission and community

111 In his community, the Brother develops a spirit of understanding and collaboration which disposes him to cooperate within his educational and parish communities. In turn, the Brother's apostolate enhances the unity and dynamism of the fraternal community.

Mission and prayer

112. The apostle's relationship with others will be genuine if it reflects a deep union with God and leads back to him. Hence, the Brother prays for those who depend on him or with whom he lives and works. Occasionally, he invites them to participate in the prayer of the community and he, in turn, joins the parish community for prayer.

Specific mission: education

Educational climate

113. The Brother's educational apostolate depends on the love and respect for his students in whom he recognizes the dignity of man, created in God's image and destined to live in union with his Creator. Personal development requires interaction marked by sympathetic understanding, personal contacts and mutual trust in dialogue.

Collaboration

114 The success of the human and spiritual formation requires the collaboration and the complementary witness of all educators: parents, religious and lay colleagues, priests, etc. It also demands the active participation of students, whom they progressively prepare to assume responsibility for their own lives and for the society in which they live.

Education in the faith

115. Education in the faith must be the major concern of all the Brothers. To the witness of their own lives and to the climate of freedom and charity which they help create in the school, they add special attention to catechesis, the awakening of vocations and the promotion of youth movements.

Catechesis

116. Catechesis is a participation in the ministry of the Word. To be fruitful, it should correspond to the deep personal convictions of the teacher and be reflected in his lifestyle.

The Brother never ends his doctrinal and catechetical formation. He collaborates closely with other members of the Christian community involved in the same apostolate.

Vocations ministry

117 Attentive to the special vocation of each person, the Brother willingly listens to his students in order to understand and help them. Concerned about the laity in the Church, he promotes all vocations, but nurtures with special care vocations to the priesthood and to the religious life.

Christian life movements

118. Religious education finds an essential complement in sodalities and other movements of spiritual development and Catholic action. Brothers readily collaborate with those who animate and direct such movements.

Devotion to

Mary

119. Having been called to work at the growth of divine life in souls, the Brothers seek Mary's help in their ministry of evangelization and try to promote her devotion among their students. The Virgin Mother indeed gave birth to a Son, whom God made "the first-born of many brothers," whom she surrounds with her love as she participates in their birth and development.

Rm 8, 29

**Teaching
secular
subjects**

120. The Brother respects the autonomy of the secular subjects which he teaches. Yet, he knows how to relate profane knowledge to man's call to salvation, so that faith "illuminates the understanding which students gradually acquire about life, mankind and the world".

GE 8, 1

**Formation to
social
responsibility**

121 The Brother prepares his students to their future roles by an appropriate social and civic formation. He prepares them to work toward the gradual elimination of unjust social and economic structures and of all forms of discrimination in basic human rights, thus disposing them to carry out God's plan for mankind.

He sensitizes them to the major problems of the world and to the great aspirations of his fellowmen for peace, justice, freedom and truth.

Means of communication

122. The importance of modern means of communication in society induces the Brothers to use them in prudent and appropriate ways in their apostolate. They are open to all that interests youth and are thus better prepared to serve them.

Listening to the Founders

1. Your calling is beautiful and holy because it aims to produce saints rather than scholars. Your ministry is sublime, it is divine, because, not only do you undertake to give to the children entrusted to you the care related to their earthly interests but also because you are called to make of them disciples of Jesus Christ and heirs of his Kingdom and of his glory. Thus, your school is a temple where you fill one of the most important priestly functions, teaching.

S VII, 2326

2. You are sent as apostles to fulfill these words of the Saviour: "I have come to light a fire on the earth. How I wish the blaze were ignited". Charity and zeal for the salvation of souls are your goal, your life, the very essence of your being; all else, even knowledge, is incidental.

S VII, 2305

3. The Brothers will constantly remember that the children in their care are entrusted to them by God himself to teach them to love and serve him; hence their main concern will be to teach them to be virtuous.

To do this, they will strive to earn their trust, respect and attachment, but without indulging in familiarity. They shall be both mild and firm, tolerating no disorder, but never chiding or punishing intemperately.

They will try to control the impatience they could feel at the children's light-headedness, indocility and lack of diligence.

Rule of 1823

4. If the superior sees fit to assign you to manual work rather than to studies, do not grieve as if your lot were inferior to your Brothers'. Did not Jesus Christ, Son of the Most High and Lord of Lords, work with his hands and at the sweat of his brow, until the age of thirty, in Saint Joseph's humble workshop? Did he not say, "I Have come, not to be served, but to serve"?

Rule of 1825

10.

Mission and apostolic Activities abroad.

Origin and aim of missionary activity

123 The missionary activity of the Church derives its inspiration and dynamism from the Trinity itself. It partakes of the mission of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, since it aims to fulfill the Father's design to manifest his love by making all men his adopted sons in Jesus Christ.

Baptism makes every Christian share in this responsibility which stems from the very nature of the Church. The religious consecration, itself rooted in Baptism, gives it a special completeness and leads the Brother to participate more fully in this missionary calling.

Missionary spirituality

124. The Brothers participate in the work of evangelization and salvation accomplished by Christ by living their religious life generously and by dedicating themselves wholeheartedly to Christian education and instruction.

Comprehensive effort 125 All the members of the Congregation collaborate in the missionary action of the Church by making known the missions and their needs, by emphasizing the importance of prayer and penance for their success, by promoting missionary vocations.

Alone or in partnership, each Province or District tries to take responsibility for a mission.

The specifically missionary vocation 126 Some Brothers receive from God, through the Holy Spirit who distributes his gifts as he wills, a special call to the missionary apostolate. In faith and obedience, they leave their homelands to spread the Good News of salvation brought by Jesus-Christ.

Aptitudes and dispositions 127. The missionary vocation requires certain aptitudes and natural dispositions:

- openness of mind and heart, leading one to accept others as different and to love them as such
- adaptability to the modes of thought and action of their adopted country
- empathy, which facilitates interaction with the local people and with other expatriates

e

- initiative and creativity suited to the novelty and the complexity of diverse and changing situations.

***Separation and
adptation***

128. Leaving his homeland for the country which God has shown him, the Brother courageously accepts inevitable changes and separations. He "readily adapts to new folkways and to evolving situations", and collaborates with others also engaged in evangelization.

AG 25, 1

Preparation

129. To the basic formation received by all the members of the Congregation, the Brother adds a solid grasp of the Church's teaching on missionary activity.

He begins his preparation in his own country and continues it in his new one by an assiduous study of its local language, national history, cultural expressions, social structures, value system and religious mentality, etc.

Convinced about the necessity of continuous updating of the knowledge and skills needed in his special apostolate, he avails himself of regular home leaves.

Partiality of heart

130. The apostle who would bring the Gospel message to a people sees them, not only as they are, with their resources and shortcomings, but as Christ sees them, with unconditional, non-judgmental love. He approaches them with "partiality of heart," a favourable prejudice which goes beyond mere objectivity.

Open-mindedness

131. Expatriate Brothers strive to adapt to the living standards, lifestyles and types of educational activities of the country in which they work. Avoiding ethnocentrism, they seek, as much as possible, to integrate with the people of the host country.

Service orientation

132. The Brothers bear in mind that they have come to serve the local Church. They are attentive to the needs of the population and, without forgetting the specific mission of the Congregation, they willingly respond to the requests of local bishops in matters of evangelization.

Progress towards self-sufficiency

133. The Church has not been firmly established in a country until it has produced a solid corps of local priests, religious and laity. The Brothers strive, therefore, to promote priestly and religious vocations and to develop a vigorous Christian laity.

Aid and development

134. The evangelical message entrusted to the Brothers impels them to consecrate themselves to the service of the people. The Brothers use all available means within the specific framework of their calling to contribute to the development of the people whom they serve.

Education as public service

135. Christian schools offer a particularly valuable service in developing nations because they aim to better the persons in attendance and to improve living conditions in their country.

The Brothers work with special zeal at forming youth in civic virtues of the highest order so that they will want to promote the common good of their people, using the social teachings of the Church as their guides. Yet, the Brothers refrain from political activity.

***Evangelization
through the
mission school***

136. In countries where Christians are in minority, the school can be an effective means of evangelization, the Brothers' central objective in such situations. Using the traditional religious culture as their starting point, they try to create in their schools an environment likely to elicit interest in the Christian faith. They instill in their non-Christian students a desire to know the person and message of Jesus Christ, the Church and its history. They offer to all the students, through formal courses and other means, opportunities to become acquainted with the Christian religion.

They offer more detailed instruction to those who want it and they carefully prepare for Baptism those who have received the gift of faith.

Furthermore, they impart an especially solid religious formation to their Catholic students and try to prepare them to live their faith generously in the relative isolation of their society.

Finally, as much as possible, they extend their apostolate to their non-Christian colleagues and to the parents of their students.

***The Brothers in
their native
country***

137. The Brothers serving in their own land preserve their socio-cultural identity and share the outlook, the concerns and the aspirations of their people.

Their apostolic religious life is deeply rooted in the charity which unites them to God, who has called them and to the people whom they are to serve. This same charity leads them to contribute, in conformity with Christian principles and with the special mission of the Congregation, to the full development of their compatriots.

All Brothers

138. The expatriate Brothers show great understanding and tact with their confreres in whose country they work. Not only do they respect their persons, but also the national traits and values. They help them to express their religious life according to the interior wealth and very character of their nation.

In turn, the Brothers serving in their own country patiently and tactfully help their expatriate confreres understand and appreciate the mentality and adapt themselves to it.

Together, all work to form fraternal communities where each one feels accepted and loved and which proclaim to the world the Kingdom where all men are brothers and where "God is all in all".

1 Co 15,28

Listening to the Founders...

1. Deeply convinced of the holiness and importance of their calling, the missionary Brothers will overlook nothing to respond generously; no sacrifice will seem too painful to insure the success of their mission insofar as it depends on them.

Let them realize that they are called, not to rest and transient pleasure, but to work and combat.

If therefore, they encounter difficulties, privations, fatigue or illness, instead of losing courage and fleeing the cross, they shall embrace it with love.

Rule of 1851

2. In the colonies, even more than elsewhere, they shall completely shun politics.

Rule of 1851

3. The most tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is particularly recommended to the Brothers in the missions. They shall strive, by imitating her virtues, to draw her Son's blessings on themselves and on the youth entrusted to their care.

Rule of 1851

11. Vocations and Formation

Awakening vocations

Vocation ministry

139 In general terms, the vocation ministry is a concerted animation among the people of God in view of helping every individual to commit their lives freely and deliberately in the state of life to which God invites them.

In a more limited sense, it refers to the activities and means employed in fostering the awakening and nurture of vocations to the service of God in the priestly, religious or missionary life.

Concern for vocations

140 The Brothers' concern for vocations needs the active support of superiors at all levels. It is desirable that a vocation committee be organized in each province.

Apostolic groups

141. Apostolic groups constitute fertile grounds for the germination and growth of ecclesial vocations. The Brothers therefore zealously dedicate themselves to promoting such movements, especially among the youth of their schools.

Vocation directors

142. Vocation directors guide and sustain the zeal of their confreres, suggest and support their undertakings, provide useful information, and engage in activities which they deem helpful or which are requested in contacts with students, parents, educators and pastors.

Initial and ongoing formation

Continuity

143. Superiors provide the means considered most likely to promote continuity, articulation and progression in the formation of candidates and young Brothers.

Preparation of formation personnel

144. Superiors consider the preparation of formators essential. They are not content with short-term approaches, but are willing to provide solid long-term formation to Brothers capable of offering high-quality instruction especially in theology, spirituality and disciplines related to education.

***Cooperation
with parents***

145. It is essential to establish and maintain genuine collaboration between parents and formators throughout the years of the candidates' preparation for religious life.

***Young adults:
host communi-
ties***

146. Brothers should develop appropriate methods and structures to discover, sustain and nurture vocations among young adults. Communities willingly open their homes to men considering a religious vocation. The community receives them with simplicity and trust, to share the common life.

The aspirant must have a sufficient social integration to begin a formation to the life of Brothers of Christian Instruction according to the guidelines approved by the Major Superior.

Scholasticate

147. After the noviciate, it is essential that the newly professed Brother continue his theological, religious, apostolic and professional formation in an appropriate setting.

Most statements about the noviciate apply to the scholasticate as well. However, this programme has the specific purpose of preparing the young religious to join a local

community, fulfill his apostolic mission and engage in the practice of his profession as teacher and educator.

***Initial
community
assignment***

148. In the community which receives him after the scholasticate, the young Brother continues his formation in new circumstances presenting a variety of novel experiences. Now fully involved in educational and apostolic work, he learns to bear responsibility in a more personal way, to communicate and collaborate with others for the success of a common enterprise. He overcomes his early challenges more readily if he can count on the interest and support of a cheerful and charitable community.

***Preparation to
the perpetual
profession***

149. The Major Superior makes sure that a Brother's immediate preparation to the perpetual profession is serious and sufficiently long. The spiritual exercises of Saint Ignatius, an extended retreat, a special year of preparation are examples of possible approaches.

Student-Brothers

150 For better service to the Church and to society, each Province or District attaches great importance to the Brothers' advanced studies.

The Brothers, superiors especially, give to those who are studying the spiritual and community support which their fraternal charity, dedication and understanding suggest.

Whenever possible, the Student-Brothers participate in the life and apostolic mission of a community.

Formation Sessions

151. Formation and renewal sessions are offered to the Brothers all along their religious life. Their main purpose is to foster a deeper relationship with God through prayer, reflection and study. They also contribute to a better knowledge of the spirit and activities of the Congregation, thereby encouraging the unity in diversity of the societies and cultures.

Listening to the Founders...

1. My God, at the sight of the immense harvest mentioned in your Gospel, often, as you well know, I beg you to send labourers to that harvest; "Rogate dominum messis Ut mittat operarios in messem suam," but at the same time, I beg you to select from a thousand those to whom you will entrust that mission, which is your own.

S VIII, 2272.73

2. You have been called to something great; keep in mind the exaltedness of your vocation as you strive to become worthy of it.

S VII, 2297

3. An absolute detachment from earthly things, a sincere desire for perfection, a spirit of obedience and humility, the capacity to participate in the works of the Congregation are the conditions necessary for admission into the Congregation of Christian Instruction. Whoever loves the world, its riches and its pleasures, or wants to behave according to its maxims, whoever is not determined to submit to all that the superiors would command and does not intend to practice, to an eminent degree the Christian virtues, must not dream of becoming a member of the Congregation.

Rule of 1825

4. Study for the glory of God, with all the diligence at your command. If you lack the necessary learning, the children will not come to your school...

One must constantly study the very things he knows best, so as not to forget them, and to become more and more proficient.

But one must not seek to acquire useless knowledge, which would merely feed his pride and make him loathe his lowly but holy ministry

Rule of 1825.

5. We need mature, resolute and committed men who, once they know the right path, do not deviate from it because of some unpleasantness or some imprudent advice. We need strong souls, capable of overcoming obstacles, dangers, loathing and their own weaknesses. We need sensible people, driven, not by whims, but by the standards of faith, who do not start to build only to abandon incomplete structures. In a word, we need Brothers filled with the spirit of sacrifice, impelled by one thought, one desire: to attain heaven by giving themselves unreservedly to God, by sacrificing themselves for his glory. That they be stationed here or there, little matters. God Alone is their motto.

S VII, 2296

12. Provincial and District Government

The Major Superior

Consultation

152. Before the appointment of a Provincial or a Visitor Superior, the General Council consults the Brothers of the Province or the District concerned.

Every professed Brother is invited to list, in order of preference, the names of three Brothers who are at least thirty-five years old and have at least five years of perpetual vows. The choice may include Brothers who are not part of the administrative unit. The consultation is not binding and only the members of the General Council learn of its results.

Service and animation

153 The Major Superior considers himself a servant among his confreres. He shows concern and charity to all, particularly the sick and the aged.

He encourages personal and community initiatives in harmony with the Rule of Life and invites the Brothers to support those taken at the congregation level.

Aware of the inevitable diversity among the persons and works confided to his care, he stimulates and coordinates everyone's efforts. He also strives to maintain the unity of minds and hearts which gives strength to the Congregation.

Young Brothers 154 Conscious of the importance of the early years of apostolic life and of the possible problems of adaptation at that time, the Major Superior assigns young Brothers to communities whose members are likely to provide help and encouragement, and he visits them often.

Appointments 155 The Major Superior is careful to assign for various local responsibilities (superiors, directors, bursars...) Brothers who combine competence and religious spirit, charity and dedication.

Before making a transfer, he ordinarily contacts the Brother and the superiors involved. He does not hesitate to make needed transfers.

Collaborators 156. To help him in his duties, the Major Superior counts on collaborators and establishes committees according to the needs of the Province.

Provincial and District Council

Meetings 157 The Major Superior council meets at least three times a year and whenever the councillors request a meeting. (C. 112)

Whenever possible, the Major Superior sends the agenda to each councillor before the meeting. Minutes are ordinarily kept and a copy, signed by the Major Superior, is sent to the Assistant delegate of the Superior General and the Secretary General.

With prudence and judiciousness, the Major Superior informs the Brothers of the Province concerning the orientations and decisions of the council.

Provincial and District Chapter

158 The chapter meets at least once between General Chapters. The Assistant delegated by the Superior General convenes the Chapter and, if possible, presides over it.

The Major Superior, with his council's assent and the Assistant's accord, prepares the agenda.

On the advice of the Major Superior and his council, the Chapter may invite experts and observers, as well as auxiliary personnel.

The capitulars' mandate expires at the end of the Chapter.

13.

General Government

The Superior General

159. The Superior General is the highest authority in the Congregation and all the Brothers have the right to appeal to him.

The Assistants

160. The Superior General and his Assistants constitute a force of animation and dynamism in the service of communion, mission and formation. They form a community and, together, they research the unity of purpose and spirit for the good of the Congregation

161. While respecting the inherent authority of the Superior General, who is primarily responsible for the Congregation, the assistants help him, through the quality of their reflection and of their discernment, to develop the policies of the Congregation, to adopt major orientations and to take the appropriate steps to govern in fidelity to the Rule of Life and chapter decisions.

162. They strive to acquire a thorough understanding of the thought of the Founders, of the spirit of the Congregation, of guidelines issued by the Holy See or by Episcopal conferences.

163. They give special attention to the spiritual, apostolic and missionary animation of the entire Congregation, coordinate efforts for recruitment and formation, and promote among the Brothers a better knowledge and greater love of the Founders.

164. On the request of the Superior General, the Brother Assistants visit Provinces and Districts. They give him periodical reports on the situation of the communities. They inform him on the general orientations adopted or planned, envisaged projects and decisions taken.

165. They contribute to the unity and the solidarity of the Congregation by seeing to the implementation of chapter guidelines and decisions of the Superior General and his Council.

The General Council

166. In the General Council, decisions are made by an absolute majority of the votes cast. In case of a tie vote, the president acts as he sees fit.

In urgent cases, votes by mail or by telephone are allowed if privacy is assured.

The General Conference

167. It pertains to the Superior General, with the consent of his council to set the date and place of the General Conference and to convene it. It also pertains to him to establish the agenda after having consulted the Major Superiors.

The General Chapter

Composition

168. The General Chapter includes ex-officio members and elected delegates whose number equals at least three halves ($3/2$) of the ex-officio members.

The secretary general, the treasurer general and the procurator general participate in the deliberations of the chapter without voting rights in the general assembly.

169. Taking into account the evolution of the membership of the Institute, the General Chapter will seek to maintain a sufficient number of Capitulants and provide a fair distribution of delegates in all sectors of the Congregation.

The practicalities of elections will be inserted in the *Chapter Book*.

Listening to the Founders...

1. A superior is always entitled not only to external respect and obedience, but also to obedience of the spirit, even if one notices flaws and foibles in him; for one obeys, not to man, but to God.

A III, 197

2. I have some advice to give you on the way you should exercise authority. More than ever, be gentle with everyone. Avoid bitter expressions and harsh actions in your dealings with people, including persons against whom you could rightly complain. Put a lot of oil in the wheel-work of your administration.

A III, 165

3. You ask me what to do when a Brother resists you or does not immediately listen with enough docility to your remarks. You should not then insist too strongly, but wait until calm has returned to the one with whom you are dealing and has made him better disposed to accept your advice. Especially, do not allow yourself to be carried away and to push things to extremes from the very start. A little later, point out to the Brother in question the error he committed and calmly invite him to make amends.

Laveille 1.365

4. Notes, excerpts, books, all those do who speaks, who explains, who, in a difficulties and gloom, not equal a man word, dissipates.

A I, 252

14. Temporal Goods

The right to property

170. The right to property is exercised in accordance with the practice of the different countries where the Congregation is established. The code of civil law is strictly observed, with due respect to legal obligations concerning corporate ownership and management, accounting and bookkeeping.

As much as possible, with the consent of the General Council, official guidelines and accounting procedures used in civil administrations are followed.

Prudent and thoughtful stewardship

171. To a certain extent, community life is affected by the way temporal goods are managed, and by the spirit, skill and tact of those in charge.

Having relinquished all personal remuneration for their work, the Brothers rightly expect from the Congregation, not only daily

subsistence, but also a certain degree of security. Superiors and bursars try to meet these expectations and satisfy the Brothers' legitimate requests without delay or parsimony. They provide them with adequate health and medical care and a becoming retirement.

In a true family spirit and with due discretion, they keep the Brothers informed about the financial situation of their community, Province or District.

***Witness
of poverty
and justice***

172. The Brothers individually and as a group can be witnesses to Gospel values or become stumbling blocks, according to the way they make use of temporal goods.

The spirit of poverty requires a modest living standard. Lavishness or prodigality would be a scandal to people who often have to worry about the cost of living or who experience insecurity.

Administrators act according to principles of social justice and charity. They bear in mind that the Brothers' educational ministry must,

as much as possible be accessible to poor and rich alike, and that the work of chaplains, lay colleagues, service personnel and other collaborators entitles them to just remuneration.

Temporal administration

Routine operations

173 Bank deposits and savings accounts are considered current operations within the bur-sars' competence, provided the funds can be withdrawn on short notice.

Extraordinary transactions

174 Transactions of an exceptional nature, such as the purchase or sale of real estate, construction projects, major repairs, long-term investments, loans and the acquisition of stocks and bonds, are the responsibility of the Major Superiors and their councils.

The necessity of such operations does not authorize their implementation but entails the obligation to seek permission from the competent authorities.

The Superior General, with his council's consent, establishes ceilings on loans and expenditures which can be incurred without recourse to his authority.

Within those limitations, Provincials and Visitors, with their council's consent, regulate extraordinary expenditures within their jurisdiction.

***Moral and
legal
responsibility***

175. In matters of responsibility the following rules have to be noted:

- . When a religious has contracted without valid authorization, he is personally responsible for the action, not the Congregation, the Province, the District or the community.
- When a corporate body has incurred debts or other obligations, even with proper authorization, it is responsible for the action.
- In any event, legal action can be against the person who was to benefit from the contract.

Almsgiving

176. Almsgiving from the resources of a community is allowed within limits set by the competent authority.

Financial reports

177. Each year, at dates set by the Superior General, financial administrators at all levels forward to the competent authorities a report on their financial situation, including statements of their accounts, their assets and liabilities.

Available funds

178. Local communities send their available funds to the Provincial or Visitor administration according to norms set by the latter.

Each Province or District annually sends to the treasurer general a contribution set by the Superior General with his council's consent.

Listening to the Founders...

1. Keep a good account of your expenses, even minor ones so that you may always provide an accurate account of your income and expenses.

Rule of 1825

2. The brothers should not lack necessities, nor should they incur expenses for items of luxury, or inappropriate delicacies contrary to the religious spirit. Simplicity and thrift should be your goal as it is your Rule.

A III, 123

3. A wise and sympathetic administration will not make light of such information (a detailed account of a student's expenses); it would appear meticulous only to those who do not realize that nothing is inconsequential when important interests are at stake.

A 1, 152

4. In a business venture, one must strive to know all that is involved and then, before acting, all that could possibly occur. Sometimes, after all those precautions, one realizes that he has not been sufficiently cautious and foresighted.

Memorial, 97

15. Miscellaneous Regulations

Severance from the Congregation

Exclaustration

179. The Superior General, with his council's assent, may grant formal exclaustration for up to three years to a perpetually professed Brother requesting it.

The exclaustrated Brother remains under the authority of the Major Superior, but he has neither active nor passive voice in matters pertaining to the Congregation.

Dismissal

180. In specified cases, and according to procedures stipulated by Canon Law, a Brother with temporary or with perpetual vows may be dismissed from the Congregation.

Such a Brother is always free to present his defence.

A dismissed Brother is automatically dispensed from his vows.

Grounds for dismissal

181. Brothers may be dismissed for the following reasons: contempt for the Rule of Life, habitual and deliberate disobedience in grave matters, prolonged unauthorized absence, a pervasive and persistent attitude tending to divide the Brothers or turn them against their superiors, grievous external faults in matters of morality or integrity, any habit likely to jeopardize the welfare and honour of the Congregation.

Procedure

182 A Brother with temporary or with perpetual vows may not be dismissed unless he has committed at least three serious offences and received two canonical admonitions without amending his conduct. In such a case, the General Council, acting collegially, issues the dismissal. For a perpetually professed Brother, the ratification of the Holy See is required.

However, a serious scandal or the likelihood of great harm to the Congregation or to the community could justify an immediate dismissal by the Superior General with the consent of his Council.

In urgent cases, the Major Superior could act on the dismissal, pending ratification by the Superior General.

Right of appeal

183 A dismissed Brother may appeal to the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signature, and while his case is pending, the dismissal has no juridical effect.

Readmission

184 The readmission of formerly professed Brothers requires the permission of the Superior General with the consent of his council.

Godfathers and legal guardians

185. A Brother cannot be a legal guardian without the Superior General's permission, nor can he be a godfather without the Major Superior's authorization.

Administrative correspondence

186. Administrative correspondence consists of official written communication with superiors at different levels of responsibility in the Congregation. Preferably, each subject is trea-

ted on a separate page, not inserted in the body of a letter.

In such communications and in all official documents, the Brothers use their family and baptismal names, without alteration by a translation.

Confidential letters to the Superior General should be sent under double cover with the caption, "For the Superior General personally," or some equivalent, on the inner envelope.

Prayers for the deceased

187. The death of a Brother or a novice is announced promptly throughout the Congregation. During the week that follows, the Brothers commend the deceased to the Lord in their community prayers. The congregation requests the celebration of thirty Masses for the repose of the soul of the deceased Brothers, plus two Masses per year of profession.

The stipends for the Masses are the responsibility of the deceased Brother's Province or District, or of the General Administration.

188. During the annual retreat, a memorial Mass is celebrated for departed Brothers, parents, students and benefactors.

189 At the death of a Brother's father or mother, his community offers a special Mass and prayers for the soul of the deceased.

16.

A Rule for Our Lives

A Rule

190. The Rule of Life, inspired by the Gospel and the intuition of the Founders is for each Brother a sure guide along the way he has chosen.

It clearly traces the major orientations of his spiritual life and precisely defines the aims of his religious life. It is the application of the Gospel to his own particular state and mission.

to be studied

The Brother strives to grasp its meaning and to absorb its richness and spirit through diligent study and frequent meditation.

and lived

He makes it an integral part of his life because he knows that by being faithful to his Rule he is following and serving Jesus Christ himself.

Listening to the Founders...

1. Consider the Rule as the its strict observance as the perfection.
expression of God's will and shortest and easiest way to perfection.

Rule of 1825

2. The Rule is a rampart against temptation, a friend who never
deceives and a guide who never misleads.

Rule of 1825

3. If one article or an other seems unimportant, do not trust your
own judgment..

In God's service, nothing is small. Your perfection consists, not in
great deeds which rarely happen, but in little ones which occur
every day.

Rule of 1825

4. Reading the rules assiduously is a mark of the holy respect
which they inspire and of the desire one has to keep them.

Rule of 1835

APPENDICES

Appendix I

Text for the Renewal of the Perpetual Profession

In the name of the Most Holy Trinity,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
Mother of God,
after having already committed myself for ever
to the imitation of Christ
in His way of life by the practice
of the evangelical counsels,
and in His mission by the Christian education of youth,
I pray God to strengthen me in my holy vocation,
and declare anew my complete submission
to the Rule of Life of the Brothers
of Christian Instruction.
Therefore, relying on the bounty of God,
freely and voluntarily,
I renew my perpetual vows of chastity,
poverty and obedience,
according to the Constitutions of the Congregation
and in the spirit which animated
our venerable Founders.
May God and his holy Mother help me.

Appendix II

IMPORTANT:

This text concerning the Vice-Province was adopted by the General Chapter of 2012, but not approved by the CIVCSVA.

Until the General Chapter of 2018 and in as much as their transformation into District or Province has not been decided, the Vice-provinces will refer to this page which replaces, for them, No. 118 to 123 of the Constitutions.

In this case, any reference to the District in the text of the Rule, must be interpreted in favour of the Vice-Province.

THE VICE PROVINCE

1. Vice-Province groups, under the authority of the Vice-Provincial, a number of communities farther from the centre of the Province, especially the missions.
2. Brother Vice-provincial is appointed for three years by the Superior General with the content of his Council, after consultation with the Brothers of the Vice-Province and the

Brother Provincial. He must be perpetually professed for at least five years. His mandate is renewable. At the end of his mandate he will not be part of the new Council of the Vice-Province.

3. He is the major Superior of the Vice Province. Under the authority of Brother Provincial, he is responsible for its animation and administration, he has authority over the persons and works, he meets its material and financial management which he entrusts to the care of a Treasurer.

He is a member by right of the Provincial Council and of the Provincial Chapter.

4. Brother Vice-Provincial is assisted by a Council whose members are elected for three years. They must be perpetually professed. Their mandate is renewable, but it stops with that of the Brother Vice-Provincial.

5. The number of elected Councillors, the manner of their election and the powers of the Council are determined by the Provincial Chapter, and must be approved by the Superior General with the consent of his Council.

Appendix III

Animés de l'amour

Refrain

Animés de l'amour dont on s'aime entre frères,
Qu'il est bon, qu'il est doux d'habiter un seul lieu:
Qu'il est bon, qu'il est doux, au sein de nos misères
De n'avoir qu'un seul coeur pour n'aimer qu'un seul Dieu.

I

Être unis par l'amour, quel sort plus désirable!
Que l'âme goûte en paix ce saint contentement!
Le monde n'en a point qui lui soit comparable;
Restons unis toujours, comme en ce doux moment.

II

Les Chrétiens autrefois étaient une seule âme;
On les reconnaissait à ce signe éclatant.
Qu'un exemple si beau de zèle nous enflamme;
Restons unis toujours, comme en ce doux moment.

Appendix IV

List of Scriptural References

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Appendix V

List of References to Papal and Conciliar Documents

Apostolicam actuositatem

(The Apostolate of the Laity)

AA 3:2 D 104

Ad gentes

(The Church's Missionary Activity)

AG 25:1 D 127

Dei Verbum

(Divine Revelation)

DV 25:1 D 87

Gaudium et Spes

(The Church in the Modern World)

GS 48:2 D 35

15:3 D 48

25:1 D 59

43:4 D 78

22:6 D 102

Gravissimum educationis

(Christian Education)

GE 8:1 D 119

Inter mirifica

(Means of Social Communication)

IM 9:1

Lumen gentium

(Constitution on the Church)

40:2 D 2

9:3 D 14

44:4 D 18

45:3 D 22

46:3 D 31

42:3 D 39

Optatam totius

(Priestly Formation)

OT 10:1 D 37

8:1 D 86

Perfectae caritatis (The Appropriate
Renewal of Religious Life)

PC 12:1 C 11

12:2 C 13

8:2 D 2

12:3 D 37

12:2 D 40

13:2 D 44

14:2 D 57

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24:3 D 74

6:2 D 83

12:2 D 101

Presbyterorum ordinis (The Ministry
and Life of Priests)

PO 16:5 D 41

18:2 D 78

Sacrosanctum concilium

(The Sacred Liturgy)

SC 47:1 D 84

83:2 D 85

90:1 D 85

Evangelica testificatio (Papal Exhorta-
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