

2013

## 2013 Spiritan Rule of Life

The Spiritan Congregation

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**CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**SPIRITAN  
RULE OF LIFE**

**2013**

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CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

UNDER THE PROTECTION OF  
THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

**SPIRITAN  
RULE OF LIFE**

**2013**



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## GLOSSARY

Three words from the original French of the Spiritan Rule of Life appear in this English version. They are noted below. In every case the ideas these words treat of, in context, are of importance for the thought and ideals that are expressed in the original French. Since no one term satisfied the need, a version is supplied but the original indicated.

1. *animer / animateur / animation*. The reality that these words deal with is dealt with differently in French and in English. English has “to lead/leader/leadership” or expresses leadership-in-action in a vocabulary that risks misunderstandings, for words in the two languages resemble each other but differ in usage and meanings. English-speaking Spiritans, despite continued exposure to transliterations of the French terms, remain uncomfortable. In eight places the transliteration is used in this version. They are Nos. 47, 72.5, 120, 160, 170, 189, 195, 198. The sense has been rendered in Nos. 8, 107 and 241.1.
2. *projet*. In four cases this word is used in a special sense. No happy English equivalent has been found. The reality might be described as agreement reached within a group of Spiritans to live, to work and to pray with the community, in a way they ar-

rive at together within the framework the Rule supplies. It is at once process and achievement; dynamic rather than static; an instrument and an end. It evolves, is adapted or comes to an end, to be replaced by a fresh and newly elaborated *projet*.

3. *ressourcement*. Not found in any French dictionary, the word seems to express “return to the sources”, or re-creation (in the separate original senses of those two expressions).

## INTRODUCTION (1987)

*Dear Confreres,*

*Here is the Spiritan Rule of Life which the Congregation, in the Church, hands to each of us. By the Holy Spirit's grace it can become for each one who lives it, in spirit and in truth, a road to apostolic holiness.*

*The Church, by beatifying Jacques Laval and Daniel Brottier, recognises that the way Claude Poulart des Places and Francis Libermann pioneered and which generations of Spiritans have travelled, is a right road. So it is in complete confidence that I present this Rule of Life to you as being a gift from the Holy Spirit.*

*It takes up our fundamental inspiration and carries it forward from our former "Rules and Constitutions". It represents the application of the charisms of the Founders to the Church of our times and the modern world – God's present day – an application made possible by the research that has been going on in our Congregation since the 1968 General Chapter.*

*Our Rule comprises two parts, one called "Constitutions", the other "Norms for application". The "Constitutions" set down what is fundamental and stable. The "Norms for application" (which in print*

*are set further in from the margin on the page) add clarification in practical and concrete matters. To guarantee the up-dating of our way of living, General Chapters will be able to adapt, to change these Norms. They may do the same to the Constitutions, following the accord of the Holy See. Our Spiritan Rule of Life consists of both Constitutions and Norms. The same fidelity is asked of us with regard to both.*

*Taking Mary as our model, may we live our mission as she lived hers, in docility to the Holy Spirit.*

Rome, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1987  
The Feast of Our Lady's Nativity



Fr. Pierre Haas  
Superior General

## INTRODUCTION (2013)

*Dear Confreres,*

*Since its initial publication in 1987, successive General Chapters at Itaici (1992), Maynooth (1998), Torre d'Aguilha (2004) and Bagamoyo (2012) have approved a number of modifications to our Spiritan Rule of Life. These changes were introduced in response to the evolution which has taken place over the past twenty-five years both in the Congregation itself and in the world in which we are called to mission. They are reflective of the charism of our Founders and of our Spiritan tradition which call us continually "to respond creatively to the needs of evangelisation of our time" (SRL 2).*

*The approved changes pertain principally to Spiritan formation (Chapter VI) and to our organisational structures (Chapter VII) as we adapt to the lived reality of the Congregation in the contemporary world in the light of our purpose, "the evangelization of the poor" (SRL 4). While the first five chapters of our Rule concerning our life and mission remain unchanged, the modifications introduced in subsequent chapters have necessitated an important change in numbering which should be noted. All subsequent of-*

*ficial references to SRL will be made on the basis of this new 2013 edition.*

*Our Spiritan Rule of Life integrates a profound spirituality and an inspirational missionary vision inherited from our Founders in whose footsteps each one of us is called to follow. It is a treasure with which we have been entrusted. Guided by the Holy Spirit to whom we are consecrated and inspired by Mary our model in faith, may the generous living out of this Rule make us truly of one heart and one spirit in the service of the Gospel and enable us to be faithful witnesses of God's love, especially for the poor whom we are called to serve.*

*Rome, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013  
Solemnity of Pentecost*

*John Fogarty, C.S.Sp.*

*Fr John Fogarty, CSSp.  
Superior General*



CONGREGATIO  
PRO RELIGIOSIS  
ET INSTITUTIS SAECULARIBUS

Prot. n. P. 63-1/86

## DECREE

The Congregation of the Holy Spirit under the protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary has proceeded to the revision of its Constitutions, in accordance with the requirements of the Motu Proprio “Ecclesiae Sanctae” (II,6), and has submitted to the Holy See the text drawn up by its 1986 General Chapter.

After an attentive study of the document, to which certain modifications have been brought, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life recognises that this “Rule of Life” commits Spiritans to respond to the needs of evangelisation in their time, in living fidelity to the charisms of their Founders, Claude Poullart des Places and Francis Libermann. The preaching of the Good News, the practice of the evangelical counsels, and life in a fraternal and praying community, are the three essential elements that give their apostolic life both

its basis and its unity. They participate in the Church's mission, according to their proper vocation, by evangelising the poor, going more especially to those who have not yet heard the gospel message and to those whose needs are greatest.

By the present decree, the Holy See grants, then, the approval requested. This measure does not derogate in any way from the requirements of the Church's universal law.

May Spiritan religious observe these Constitutions with love, so as to have "one heart and one soul" and be totally available for the service of the gospel. May the Holy Spirit, dwelling in their hearts as in the heart of Mary, be the fruitful source of their missionary spirit.

Notwithstanding all things contrary.

Given at Rome, on 7 June 1987, the Solemnity of Pentecost and the opening of the Marian Year.

*Vincentius Fagiolo*  
Archiep. Sec.

† Vincentius Fagiolo  
Archbishop, Secretary

*J. Jerome Card. Hamer*  
Pref.

J. Jerome Card. Hamer, o.p.  
Prefect



CONGREGATIO  
PRO INSTITUTIS VITAE CONSECRATAE  
ET SOCIETATIBUS VITAE APOSTOLICAE

Prot. n. P. 63<sup>1</sup>/2004

## DECREE

The *Congregation of the Holy Spirit* voted unanimously in their General Chapter of 2012 to accept the revised text of their *Rule of Life* to be submitted to the Holy See for approval.

After an attentive study of the amended document, with the present Decree, this *Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life* approves and confirms the changes made of the *Spiritian Rule of Life* for the reasons set forth.

May the generous living of this *Rule* impel all the members of the Institute, who have been called to evangelize the poor, under the protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the inspiration of their Founders, Claude Poullart des Places and Francis Libermann (cf. Rule 1; 4), to live more fully their charism in the Church.

Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at the Vatican, on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of  
January, 2013, Solemnity of the Epiphany of the  
Lord.

João Braz Card. de Aviz  
*Prefect*

*Paciolla*  
Rev. Fr. Sebastiano Paciolla, O. Cist.  
*Undersecretary*

**SPIRITAN  
RULE OF LIFE**

**2013**



## Chapter I

### OUR SPIRITAN VOCATION

*“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
for He has anointed me,  
to bring the good news to the afflicted.  
He has sent me  
to proclaim liberty to captives,  
sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord”  
(Luke 4:18-19).*

**1. Sent by the Father**  
and consecrated by the Holy Spirit,  
Jesus Christ came to save all people.  
He continues in the world of today  
this mission of salvation  
of which the Church is the sacrament.  
In the midst of God’s people,  
among the numerous and varied vocations  
which the Holy Spirit inspires,  
we Spiritans are called by the Father  
and “set apart” (Acts 13:2)  
to follow Jesus  
and to announce the Good News of the Kingdom.

**THE NATURE OF THE CONGREGATION**

**2.** We respond to this call  
in a religious missionary institute,  
the Congregation of the Holy Spirit  
under the protection  
of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.  
The charisms of our Founders,  
Claude Poullart des Places  
and Francis Libermann,  
and fidelity to our tradition  
urge us to respond creatively  
to the needs of evangelisation  
of our time (cf. SRL 4;12).

**THE UNITY OF SPIRITAN LIFE**

**3.** The “apostolic life” is at the heart  
of our Spiritan vocation.  
It is “that life of love and of holiness  
lived on earth by the Son of God  
in order to save and sanctify people.  
By it He continually sacrificed Himself,  
thereby glorifying the Father  
and saving the world”  
(Rule 1849; N.D. X, 505).

So that we may lead this apostolic life  
in Christ’s footsteps,  
our consecration includes three

essential dimensions:  
the proclamation of the Good News,  
the practice of the evangelical counsels  
and a life in fraternal and praying community.

#### **OUR MISSION IN THE CHURCH**

**4.** The evangelisation of the “poor” (cf. Lk 4:18)  
is our purpose (cf. N.D. XIII, 170).  
Therefore we go especially  
to peoples, groups and individuals  
who have not yet heard the message of the Gospel  
or who have scarcely heard it,  
to those whose needs are the greatest,  
and to the oppressed (cf. N.D. II, 241).  
We also willingly accept  
tasks for which the Church has difficulty  
in finding workers.

#### **THE SPIRITAN APOSTOLIC SPIRIT**

**5.** We live out our mission  
in willing obedience to the Holy Spirit,  
taking Mary as our model.  
This condition of habitual fidelity  
to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit  
is the “practical union”  
of which Libermann speaks  
(N.D. XIII, 699-706).

It is the wellspring of our apostolic zeal  
and leads us to being completely available  
and making a complete gift of ourselves.

#### **DEDICATION**

**6.** We are dedicated to the Holy Spirit,  
author of all holiness and  
“source of the apostolic spirit” (N.D. X, 568).  
We place ourselves under the protection  
of the Immaculate Heart of Mary,  
who was filled beyond measure  
by the same Spirit  
“with the fullness of holiness  
and apostolic zeal” (N.D. X, 568).

#### **MOTTO**

**7.** In keeping with our ideal of a life  
that is both fraternal and apostolic,  
we take for our motto the words  
used to describe the early Christian communities:  
“One heart and one soul” (cf. Acts 4:32).

## Chapter II

### OUR MISSION

*“As the Father sent me, so am I sending you. After saying this, he breathed on them and said, Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:21-22).*

*“You will be my witnesses ... to earth’s remotest end” (Acts 1:8).*

#### IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

**8.** The Spirit of the Risen Lord, working in the Church and in the world, gives life and direction to our entire apostolic life. This apostolic life “contains in itself the perfection of the life of Our Lord, on which it is modelled” (*Glose 7*).

**9.** The Spirit pours the Father’s love into our hearts (cf. Romans 5:5). It is this love that produces apostolic zeal in us, shown by a powerful desire to see the same love established in the hearts of all people.

**10.** The Spirit calls us to continual conversion, shapes our personal and community lives, makes us partakers in the death and resurrection mystery of Jesus and prepares us to make the total gift of ourselves for the Kingdom.

**11.** We are participating within the Church in the mission of Christ, in communion with him and all people, proclaiming a salvation that is a gift from God, liberation from all that oppresses people, joy in knowing the Lord and being known by him. (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 9).

#### **OUR COMMITMENTS**

**12.** In faithfulness to the intuitions of our Founders, to their experiences and to the living tradition of our Congregation, we give preference to an apostolate that takes us to:

- those who have not yet heard the gospel message or who have scarcely heard it;
- those oppressed and most disadvantaged, as a group or as individuals;
- where the Church has difficulty in finding workers.

**13.** Any particular work is taken on in communion with the Church as it is in our time. The responsibility for carrying on Christ's mission belongs in each place to the local Church. We, in keeping with the calling that is proper to us, participate in this mission.

**13.1** We take as our own the points that the Church is currently stressing in mission:

- the universal mission understood as the responsibility of local Churches in communion with each other;
- mission understood as preaching the gospel and founding new Churches;
- mission as a service and liberation;
- mission as dialogue;
- mission as the inculturation of the gospel message in each local Church.

#### **COMMITTED TO THE POOR**

**14.** We count the following as constitutive parts of our mission of evangelisation: the “integral liberation” of people, action for justice and peace, and participation in development. It follows that we must make ourselves “the advocates, the supporters and the defenders of the weak and the little ones against all who oppress them” (Rule of 1849; N.D. X, 517).

**14.1** In order to contribute effectively to promoting justice, we make every effort to analyse situations, to lay bare the relationship of individual cases to structural causes.

**14.2** We pay attention to prophetic voices and we encourage them, through a process of discernment, to develop new apostolic initiatives.

**WITNESSES TO THE GOSPEL**

**15.** Our preaching of the gospel has different styles, determined by the times and the places we are living in.

**15.1** We announce the gospel to people and groups that have not yet heard it.

**15.2** We foster the growth of young Christian communities born from the preaching of the gospel.

**15.3** In certain circumstances it is not possible for us to preach the gospel by word. In such cases our motivation is the conviction that the Holy Spirit is already present and that our presence is witness and service in the name of the gospel for the Kingdom (Ad Gentes, 6).

**16.** We preach the gospel under the sign of the Incarnation. “The Word became flesh” (John 1:14).

**16.1** So that the Christian witness may become integrated in the culture, reach people from within and become a force for liberation in their contemporary history, we strive in every way we can for a fruitful coming together of local cultural and religious traditions with the gospel of Christ.

**16.2** When living abroad, we make an effort to study the language and to understand the people’s ways and customs (N.D. IX, 330 ff.). We respect and we accept their human experience in all its

depth. We participate in solidarity with their joys and sorrows.

**16.3** We try in dialogue to co-operate honestly with the leaders and the faithful of other religions as well as with those who do not believe in God. We put our trust in the Holy Spirit, leading both us and them “to the complete truth” (John 16:13).

**17.** In a spirit of ecumenism we take an active role in all that may assist Christians of any confession to meet or to join together as one. We believe that the division between Christians is a scandal to the world and an obstacle to the preaching of the gospel.

**17.1** We concede that there are some cases where it is difficult to hold a dialogue. We try, in so far as is possible, to co-operate sincerely with other Christians.

#### **AT THE SERVICE OF LOCAL CHURCHES**

**18.** In local Churches the following are our principal activities:

- fostering Christian communities and the education and training of a committed and responsible laity;
- vocations’ ministry; training for ministries and for the missionary and the religious life;
- engaging in social and educational work in line with our Spiritan calling;

- awakening an understanding of the universal mission, of justice, and of kinship between peoples.

**18.1** We consider the following to be specially important tasks for our times:

- youth apostolate, because the present situation of young people is crying out more than ever for social and educational works;
- work with refugees, with immigrants and with those who are on the margins of society.

**19.** We are specially attentive to appeals from Churches which have the greatest needs. By the fact that we work in many Churches we can facilitate exchanges between them and contribute to their mutual enrichment. We take up the role that belongs to us in the mission of these Churches in dialogue and mutual respect, never imposing our-selves.

Practical arrangements concerning such collaboration are spelled out in a contract (cf. Canons 675.3; 678.1; 681.1).

**20.** An individual Spiritan cannot enter into such a contract without the agreement of his competent superiors (Canon 681.2).

**SOLIDARITY IN MISSION**

**21.** Because we are members of one single missionary family, we take upon ourselves, in solidarity, responsibility for the Congregation's projects and priorities.

**22.** Our mission is always that of the Congregation, recognised as such through a process of discernment and accepted in obedience in accord with the Rule of Life.

**23.** In the spirit of solidarity, we willingly accept those appointments that are necessary for the life and management of the Congregation itself.

**24.** Whatever may be the work we are engaged in as priests or as Brothers, we aim to bear witness to a kingdom of justice and peace, by living together in community, in genuine charity, in mutual forbearance, pardoning, sharing, ever hospitable and free from prejudice.

**24.1** Our closeness to the poor brings us to hear afresh the gospel that we are preaching. It becomes an unceasing summons to conversion and an invitation to adopt a simple style of life.

**24.2** Variety and complementarity are commonly characteristic of our communities. The sick, the healthy, the young, the old, the priest,

the Brother – together we are but one family, intent on one mission.

**24.3** In some places those who are working with us wish to be associated with us. We welcome them with joy, inviting them to share our spirituality and our apostolic life. The conditions of their acceptance and their work are decided at the level of each circumscription. In every case there is a written agreement.

**25.** One basic characteristic of the Spiritan calling is an *availability* for the service of the gospel, a readiness to go where we are sent by the Congregation. We accept to free ourselves from an engagement in order to respond to new and different calls from a local Church or from the universal Church. Attentive to the signs of the times, we re-examine periodically the reasons that underlie our present commitment and our present apostolate.

**25.1** This review is done through a dialogue with the local Church in a shared exercise of discernment. It takes the individuals who are concerned into account and also the demands of the Spiritan calling and the facts of the case.

**26.** It is the task of the General Chapter to select and to clarify the more important mission objectives of the Congregation as a whole. Regional objectives are to be defined by each circumscription.

## Chapter III

### COMMUNITY LIFE

*“The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul; no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, as every-thing they owned was held in common” (Acts 4:32).*

*“As the chosen of God, then, ... you are to be clothed in heartfelt compassion, in generosity and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive each other if one of you has a complaint against another. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same. Over all these clothes, put on love, the perfect bond” (Colossians 3:12-14).*

#### CALLED TO LIVE IN COMMUNITY

**27.** We have been called in Christ to live out our Spiritan calling in community. “To bring the apostolate life – for which Spiritan life is intended – to its perfection, to assure the continuance and the development of the works in which it engages and to foster the holiness of its members, the Congregation has adopted life in community as its founding principle. Its members shall all live in community at all times” (Rule of 1849; N.D. X, 454).

**28.** Community life is then an essential element in the Spiritan way of life. It is a privileged means of

practising the evangelical counsels in the service of the Good News.

**28.1** By virtue of our calling we are at the service of the Church, whose mission it is “to gather together into one the scattered children of God” (John 11:52). Fraternal life in community builds up the body of Christ. It is living proof that a genuine fraternal unity in Christ is possible.

#### **FOR THE APOSTOLIC LIFE**

**29.** Every member of the community has a part in the apostolic life common to all. We seek to work together in the service of the gospel.

**29.1** The better to carry out this service, our communal life entails sharing our possessions and our talents, mutual support and affection, and discerning in common God’s will for the community and for its mission.

**30.** Our Spiritan community maintains the closest contact with its surroundings and in a very special sense with the “little ones” (cf. Matthew 25:40; Rule of 1849; N.D. X, 517).

**30.1** In solidarity with the life of the people, our community takes an interest in their traditions and seeks to promote justice and peace in social, economic, political and religious life.

**30.2** Our community is in its turn moulded by the persons with whom it establishes bonds.

**31.** Our Spiritan community is part of a wider community – the local Church, with which it lives in communion. These two, community and local Church, enrich each other with their experiences.

**31.1** Our community living is a witness for Christian communities within local Churches. It fosters collaboration among the different persons who are working in the apostolate.

**32.** A religious community lives in a house that has been legitimately erected. Some members, however, because of the necessities of the missionary life and certain circumstances foreseen in Canon 665.1, live with people who are not Spiritans and sometimes even alone.

**32.1** In such cases members are either attached to a local community, when this is possible, or grouped together as a regional community.

**32.2** Genuine communal life, however, will always require:

- a superior;
- regular and frequent meeting with other Spiritans;
- prayer;
- sharing of possessions and of leisure;

- communal discernment regarding work involvements;
- whatever may be necessary for the replenishment of spiritual, physical and moral energies (F. *ressourcement*).

#### **AT THE SERVICE OF ONE ANOTHER**

**33.** The model for our community's life is Jesus with his apostles. "He ... summoned those he wanted. So they came to him and he appointed twelve; they were to be his companions and to be sent out to proclaim the message" (Mark 3:13-14). Our community also draws its inspiration from the first communities of Christians, in which all "remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers" (Acts 2:42). This community is "united, heart and soul" (Acts 4:32).

**34.** In our community each and all are looked upon as confreres, received from the Lord. Each individual according to his gifts – young, old, in health, in sickness – each one has gifts from which all draw benefit.

**35.** The fullness of living together in our community is found in partaking of one faith, listening to the word of God and sharing in the Eucharist.

**36.** Each community maintains close contact with other communities of the circumscription and with the Congregation as a whole. We are collectively responsible for the one same mission.

**37.** We who come from different cultures, continents and nations, and who have different outlooks, are brought together by the Spirit of Pentecost into one larger community, the Congregation. Cultural diversity is welcomed as a positive factor. Our unity bears witness to reconciliation in Christ.

**IN CHARITY ABOVE ALL**

**38.** Each of us keeps in mind the last words of Father Libermann: “above all charity... charity above all... charity in Jesus Christ. Charity through Jesus Christ... charity in the name of Jesus Christ; fervour... charity... union in Jesus Christ... the spirit of sacrifice...” (N.D. XIII, 659-660).

**39.** This charity, the Spirit’s greatest gift, is the sign that it is the Lord who brings us together and sends us out. “It is by your love for one another, that everyone will recognise you as my disciples” (John 13:35).

**39.1** We take special care of those among us who are aged, sick or retired. Their prayer and their pain are a form of our apostolic life.

**39.2** A community's life passes through moments of sorrow and moments of joy. Time is needed for growing to take place. Community living makes unremitting demands upon each member to be converted – even to “die and rise again”. Each one stands in need of help and support so that all may make progress and each individual may be able to bear those stresses that are inevitable in community living.

**39.3** Some may have difficulties with the Congregation and may have to leave the community for a while or even for good. In such cases, all members – but especially superiors – shall help their confrere to reach his decision without undue haste. With him we engage in a deeply considered discernment.

**40.** Simplicity and a welcoming hospitality are two traditional qualities of our Spiritan family.

**40.1** Our charity is expressed too in the interest that we take in our own families and in our attentiveness to them. Each circumscription “of origin” decides upon the manner of hospitality to them and the help it will offer them should the need arise.

**41.** In each house some section of the building shall be reserved to the confreres (cf. Canon 667.1).

**IN JOINT RESPONSIBILITY**

**42.** Our community provides for itself the means it needs and the structures that help its development in “the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together” (Ephesians 4:3).

**43.** Each confrere, according to the gifts he has from the Spirit, has a role to fulfil in his community’s organisation, life and mission (cf. I Cor. 12:4-11).

**43.1** What is given to each one to do is important not only for his own fulfilment, but also for the wellbeing of the community and the spread of the gospel.

**43.2** The superior sees to it that each one does in fact do what has been assigned to him. This responsibility confided to each one is to receive recognition and to be respected by the other members of the community.

**44.** We meet regularly as a community:

- to discern what God’s will for us is;
- to organise our fraternal life together;
- to plan and evaluate our activities;
- to present suggestions and express opinions to help clarify the consequent decision to be made by those in charge.

**44.1** To ensure that our discernment is in conformity with the Spiritan calling, we endeavour

to be receptive to the Holy Spirit as he speaks to us through the local Church, the universal Church, our human environment and through the world we are living in.

**44.2** This discernment process always takes place in an atmosphere of dialogue and prayer, and in the light of God's word.

**44.3** (F. *projet communautaire*) Each community plans what it wants to achieve and how it lives within the framework that the Rule provides. This planning sets down what community life asks of the members, in terms of time and occasions of prayer in common, of deeper sharing of our lives and of periodic evaluation of the community's life and of our apostolic work.

**45.** Each confrere shall exercise prudence and an informed discretion in the way he uses the media (cf. Canon 666).

#### **AT THE SERVICE OF THE COMMUNITY: AUTHORITY**

**46.** Among the services necessary to life in community, authority as a force for unity holds a special place.

In the exercise of authority the superior constantly keeps in mind the words of Jesus: "With you this must not happen. No; the greatest among you

must behave as if he were the youngest, the leader as if he were the one who serves" (Luke 22:26).

**47.** The superior is the leader and the animator of the community. He is responsible for the community. He helps it to respond faithfully to its calling and to lead a joyful fraternal life. He offers his help to one and all, supports and encourages them, especially in moments of trial or weakness (cf. Canons 617, 618).

**47.1** The superior invites and encourages everyone to play a part in the life and the running of the community.

**47.2** As a man who favours dialogue, the superior regularly calls together his council and the entire community.

**48.** The superior tries by every means to arrive at consensus in the community when there is question of a choice to be made. In the final instance, however, as the person charged with responsibility, it is up to him to make the decision, bearing in mind the opinions of the confreres and the work of the community. It is also his duty to see that it is implemented.

**49.** The superior gives the example in the community, in a special sense, of that love Jesus has for his "friends" (John 15:15). The superior gently and patiently uses his authority as Jesus used his (cf. N.D. II, 311 ff.). He has a deep respect for the individual and

tries to evoke a willing obedience. It is the duty of each member of the community to help him in his task, showing him esteem and kindness, working with him in a genuine spirit of coresponsibility.

## Chapter IV

### RELIGIOUS LIFE

*“As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world, and for their sake I consecrate myself so that they too may be consecrated in truth” (John 17:18-19).*

#### CONSECRATED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

**50.** Like all Christians, we have been called in baptism to the fullness of love and holiness, to carry on Christ’s mission in the Church, and to bear witness in the world to the Good News.

**51.** The call to the religious-apostolic way of life is a special gift of the Holy Spirit, inviting us to give ourselves completely in the Congregation, to the service of the Church.

**52.** Taken hold of by Jesus (cf. Philippians 3:12), we then commit ourselves by the act of profession – a free act, public and definitive – to a life of chastity, poverty and obedience lived in order to witness to the Kingdom of God, already existing and still to come.

**53.** Our religious consecration is joy: through it we discover that God’s love can fulfil all our desire (cf. Matthew 13:44-46). Our religious consecration is ado-

ration: through it we give up for God's glory our in-born longing for possessions and power. Our religious consecration is liberation: it sets us free to serve God and our brothers and sisters.

**54.** Relying on the faithful God of the Covenant, each day, putting on Christ, we make afresh the gift of ourselves to God, to our brothers and our sisters (cf. Galatians 3:27).

**55.** Our practice of religious life takes on different forms among different peoples or in various cultures. These differences in Spiritan religious life are brought about by the apostolic mission given to the Congregation, the charisms of our Founders, and the living tradition of our institute.

#### **IN CHASTITY FOR THE KINGDOM**

*"Yes, I shall betroth you to myself in loyalty and in the knowledge of Yahweh" (Hosea 2:22).*

*"... and there are eunuchs who have made themselves so for the sake of the kingdom of Heaven. Let anyone accept this who can" (Matthew 19:12).*

**56.** "For this is how God loved the world: he gave his only Son" (John 3:16). And Jesus, the Christ, became our brother. Such was his love that he gave his life for us. We volunteer to belong completely to him. We too

freely and unselfishly, carried in the same current of love, desire to love every person, just as he does, with a brotherly love.

**57.** Called by God to the apostolic life and consecrated by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves by a free and public vow to the following of Christ in the single state, keeping without compromise and for an additional reason the chastity proper to that state.

**58.** We have consecrated our capacity for loving to God. We practise this consecration for the world's salvation, in the sharing of fraternal life and in the dealings we have with people both as priests or religious and as professional people.

**59.** "But we hold this treasure in pots of earthenware" (2 Corinthians 4:7). We must be faithful to prayer and to the sacraments if we are to live the celibate state in all its richness.

**59.1** We have need too of prudence, self-denial and the brotherly support of our community, particularly in moments of temptation and of doubt.

**59.2** The true friendships we have are signs of the love of Christ amidst his disciples (cf. John 13:34-35). Such friendships bring our personality to its full development and support us in our apostolic life.

**59.3** We try to lead our lives of consecrated celibacy calmly and in simplicity, trusting in God, even if, at times, for His sake we have to face being misunderstood or opposed or lonely.

**60.** We live our chastity in the single state as a God-given gift that enables us to be available for what-ever the Holy Spirit would have us do to serve the Kingdom. Our celibacy is a sign that the Kingdom has already come. It challenges everything that would evaluate love at less than its true worth.

#### **IN POVERTY FOR THE KINGDOM**

*“You are well aware of the generosity which our Lord Jesus Christ had, that although he was rich, he became poor for your sake, so that you should become rich through his poverty” (2 Corinthians 8:9).*

**61.** Jesus stands before His Father poor in spirit and in fact. All that he is and all that he has he has received as a gift. In order to preach the good news he chose to humble himself and to take on the condition of the poor.

**62.** He is saying to us, as once he said to the rich young man he was calling to the apostolic life, “Go

and sell what you own and give the money to the poor, ... then come, follow me" (Mark 10:21).

**63.** By the vow of poverty, we give ourselves completely to the Father as Christ did, because God has called us and the Holy Spirit has consecrated us to the apostolic life. We freely and publicly take on the obligation of reliance on our superiors in what concerns the use and the disposal of temporal goods.

**64.** We can retain the ownership of our patrimonial goods and can acquire more. Before making profession, we cede the administration of our goods to a person of our choice and we decide how the income from such property shall be used. These arrangements may be changed or revoked only with the agreement of the superior of the circumscription.

**65.** Whatever we receive as a gift or in payment for our work – gifts, salaries, pensions, grants, insurance benefits, mass stipends and every other income we may derive from our work – belongs to the Congregation (Canon 668.3).

**66.** Before making profession, each one draws up a will, valid in civil law, by which he disposes of the goods he possesses or might in the future acquire. This will may be changed only with the authorisation of the superior of the circumscription or, if the case is urgent, of the local superior. Major superiors regularly

remind the members of their jurisdiction to check the validity of the will they have made.

**67.** A member who is perpetually professed may with permission of the Superior General renounce his patrimony, wholly or in part, to the benefit of whomever he may wish.

**68.** The previous explicit permission of the competent superior is required before a major sum of money may be spent or loaned.

**68.1** The amounts involved in these cases shall be settled by the General Chapter or the chapter of the circumscription, which also decide the authority that is empowered to grant the permission.

**69.** Each member may have a certain sum of money for everyday expenses. He shall give an account of this money to his superior. The amount of this sum is determined in consultation with the community and the superior.

**70.** In a world where the poor are often trampled on by the rich, we want our lived poverty to be a sign of the coming of a new world of sharing and of justice.

**70.1** Our poverty and the common life we practise also demand solidarity and sharing with other Spiritan communities and circumscriptions.

**70.2** In witnessing to poverty, we place ourselves in the hands of Divine Providence, accepting cultural uprooting and the degree of separation from our family that is entailed. We accept even that insecurity our apostolic activities may impose.

**71.** Our dwellings, our reception of guests, and our style of living are simple and modest. This simplicity brings us closer to people who are poor, home-less or disadvantaged, and increases our solidarity with them. It facilitates our working alongside them to improve their circumstances in the world. We work with them too to change unjust social structures which victimise them.

**71.1** In every budget a sum of money shall be set aside for the poor; it will be a symbol of our solidarity with them.

**72.** All that we have and all that we are is at the service of our apostolic life.

**72.1** We are collectively responsible for our material possessions. Whether paid or not, each one has the obligation to work.

**72.2** We should treat what belongs to the community or what we use in our apostolic work with care.

**72.3** The intention of the donor is to be respected in the use made of gifts received. This may lead us to refuse certain gifts that are offered, as not being in conformity with the goals of our apostolic life.

**72.4** When budgets are being drawn up, at whatever level, account should be taken of the needs that there are beyond the borders of our community or our circumscription or even outside the Congregation. This is a means by which we give proof of our poverty and of our solidarity with those who are in need.

**72.5** Each Spiritan, but especially bursars, shall take care that material possessions serve the work of evangelisation, the animation of the institute and the formation and support of all the members.

**72.6** Those of us who are not living in community with other Spiritans are equally bound to the practice of the vow and the observance of the spirit of poverty. They shall regularly give an account of their financial situation to their appointed superior.

**73.** Spiritan dress is the dress of the clergy, in keeping with Canon 284 (cf. Canon 669.2).

**73.1** Any alteration in Spiritan dress is the responsibility of the Superior General and his Council.

**74.** Freed from the need to own and finding our fulfillment in God, we try to allow the Spirit of the Lord to take possession of us, so that we may become instruments completely at the service of the Good News.

**IN OBEDIENCE FOR THE KINGDOM**

*“My food is to do the will of the one who sent me, and to complete his work” (John 4:34).*

**75.** We contemplate Jesus Christ, our model, in his total availability for the mission his Father entrusted to him: “even to accepting death” (Philippians 2:5-9).

**76.** The Holy Spirit, who gives us his understanding, imprints the law of love upon our hearts, to help us discern the will of the Father. He gives us willing obedience so that we may conform ourselves to that will, even should it take us where we “would rather not go” (John 21:18).

**77.** We discern this Divine will in dialogue with our superiors and our fellow Spiritans. In this discernment we take into account what is asked by the people among whom we are living and also the signs of the times, interpreting them in the light of the gospel.

**77.1** As members of a Congregation, we do not give ourselves a mission; rather a mission is given to us or confirmed for us.

**77.2** We therefore submit our personal plans to the community for discernment and to our superiors for their decision. Should the community require us to give them up, we are prepared to do so.

**78.** We place our trust in the faithfulness of God, who has called us to the apostolic life. The Holy Spirit has consecrated us by the vow of obedience to the following of Christ. We freely and publicly take upon ourselves in the Congregation the obligation of obedience to the decisions of our legitimate superiors in conformity with the Rule of Life.

**79.** The obligation of the vow of obedience applies more specially to those explicit orders given in the name of the vow, according to the formulation “In the name of holy obedience, I order you to...” or in equivalent wording.

**79.1** Major superiors alone are empowered to give such commands. They shall do so only rarely and with prudence, for grave reasons, in writing or in the presence of two witnesses.

**80.** In virtue of our religious profession we commit ourselves to observe the Rule of Life of the Congregation. By profession we commit ourselves also to the

decisions the Congregation makes in pursuit of its apostolic goals.

**81.** We submit in love to the Church and to the Church's magisterium: *sentire cum ecclesia* is a long-standing tradition of our Congregation. So too is obedience to the Pope by virtue of our religious consecration (cf. Canon 590.2).

**82.** Our consecrated obedience gradually frees us from the urge to hold power and puts us at the service of the poor. In the measure that we freely and responsibly make the demands placed upon us by holy obedience our very own, it has the power both to help us become fully mature persons and to make our apostolate fruitful.

## Chapter V

### SPIRITAN PRAYER

*“Pray constantly; and for all things give thanks; this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thess. 5:17-18).*

*“I do nothing of my own accord. What I say is what the Father has taught me; he who sent me is with me” (John 8:28-29).*

#### PRAYER IN OUR APOSTOLIC LIFE

**83.** Jesus when he prays is giving expression to his union with the Father who sends him and the Holy Spirit who consecrates him. This union marks his entire apostolic life, when he is submitting to the Father’s will as when he is announcing the Kingdom (cf. John 5:19).

**84.** We are sent too in our turn to follow Christ. Our apostolic life as well as our prayer draw upon the same source as his, for like Christ we have been consecrated to God and to his loving plan for the salvation of the world.

**MOVED BY THE SPIRIT**

**85.** It is the Spirit of Christ who “comes to help us in our weakness” (Romans 8:26), who leads us along missionary paths and who prays in the depth of our hearts. We are genuine apostles to the extent that, in our daily living, we entrust ourselves entirely to him.

**86.** In prayer we are purified and we are changed by the Holy Spirit. It is his gifts and the fruits of his indwelling (cf. Galatians 5:22-23) that become in us a source of both human and spiritual maturity and that make our life fruitful in every way.

**87.** Because this is so, our prayer and our apostolic work are intimately linked. They complement each other. Union with God in prayer leads us to be of service to others, and the apostolic work we do is, in its turn, a worship offered to God in the Spirit (cf. Romans 1:9) and a deepening of our union with Him.

**88.** In imitation of the life and teaching of Libermann, we too endeavour to put into practice this dynamic of prayer and activity that is at the heart of all Christian living, a “practical union” – an habitual disposition of fidelity to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. “Practical union” is like an instinct of the heart for a person who, having made the sacrifice of self, has become “free ever after to devote himself completely to others and to bring them along to God”

(N.D. XIII, 708). Thus we endeavour to live every experience in the Spirit of God – our joys, our hardships and our pain, the works we undertake in our zeal, and even our failures.

#### **WITH MARY**

**89.** In every facet of our lives, but particularly in our prayer, Mary is our model of willing obedience and of faithfulness. We offer her veneration and prayer so that we may, as she did, welcome within us the Holy Spirit who dwelt in her Immaculate Heart, and that he may be for us also the abundant source of our apostolic spirit.

#### **DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF OUR PRAYER**

##### *Personal prayer*

**90.** Jesus used to go away by himself to pray. The apostolic life demands the same of us too. We have got to set aside a substantial time for prayer, deeply united to Jesus.

**91.** Each of us shall set aside at least half an hour daily for personal prayer.

*The Word of God*

**92.** Daily reading of God's Word, meditated on in solitude or shared in community, nourishes our apostolic life. This leads us to welcome Christ himself, the living Word of the Father. Through this we learn to read the events of our daily life and of the world around us in the light of faith.

**93.** The Eucharist, the "sign of unity and bond of charity" (Sacrosantum Concilium 47), builds up our fraternal communion in the Body of Christ. In the Eucharist, Christ's Paschal Mystery is made present. Each day then, as we celebrate the Eucharist and receive the Body of Christ, we find light and strength to tell the world of the death and resurrection of the Lord. The Eucharist is at once the source and summit of Spiritan living. The Eucharist commits us to a genuine solidarity with the poor.

**94.** The place in our houses where the Blessed Sacrament is kept is the Community's focal point. It is also the place where prayer is usually offered (Canon 608).

*Conversion and Renewal*

**95.** Fidelity to our vocation demands continual conversion to the Lord and renewal in the Holy Spirit. These are two basic dispositions for our prayer life. We are faithful to daily examination of conscience and we have recourse frequently to the sacrament of

Reconciliation, in which we welcome the Father's merciful love so as to be reconciled to him, to the Church, to others and to our own selves.

**95.1** On an occasion when Spiritans meet among themselves, it is opportune to hold a common celebration of Reconciliation. Such a celebration can help us to discover and to recognise together the faults and sinfulness for which we are collectively responsible.

**96.** Each one shall be faithful in making an annual retreat. Usually this is to be in a Spiritan community, but it may be elsewhere.

**96.1** The annual retreat is the responsibility of the council of the circumscription, which shall decide what kind of retreat it is to be. It decides also on the frequency of community days of recollection.

#### *The Liturgy of the Hours*

**97.** Our habitual prayer in common is Lauds and Vespers of the Divine Office. This Liturgy of the Hours is the hymn of praise that Christ, united with his Mystical Body, addresses to his Father (Sac. Con. 84). Priests and deacons shall faithfully celebrate the entire Divine Office every day.

**THE ORGANISATION OF OUR PRAYER LIFE**

**98.** Our prayer in common follows the pattern of the Church's liturgical year. By praying together and with the Christian community, we witness to our common commitment in faith to the service of the Gospel.

**98.1** Our living in community demands that every individual take part in the prayer that is offered in common. Each individual has a right to expect from the community the fraternal support of its prayer.

**99.** Among its expressed objectives (*F. projet communautaire*) each community decides the times and the forms of its daily prayer in common and of the Eucharist, allowing as far as is possible for the participation of the local Christian community. The community also fixes its calendar of retreats and times of more intense recollection.

**99.1** We have special celebrations on the feasts of Pentecost and of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, because of our dedication to the Holy Spirit and because we are under the patronage of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

**99.2** In addition we are eager to express our devotion to the Holy Spirit and to the Virgin Mary through the prayer of the Church and the prayers that are traditional in the Congregation.

**99.3** The recitation of the Rosary is part of our tradition.

**99.4** The following days are celebrated in community:

- the feasts of the Patrons of the Congregation;
- the anniversaries of the deaths of our Founders:  
October 2<sup>nd</sup>, Father Poullart des Places,  
February 2<sup>nd</sup>, Father Libermann;
- the feasts of the Blessed of the Congregation:  
February 28<sup>th</sup>, Father Brottier,  
September 9<sup>th</sup>, Father Laval.

**99.5** We need silence in order to live intimately with God, to welcome in ourselves the gifts of the Spirit and to love our confreres ever more deeply. Each community must arrange for places and times of silence in order to encourage prayer and recollection.

**99.6** Our sick confreres receive special attention from the community. We do all we can to enable them to take part in the prayer of the community.

**99.7** The sacrament of the sick invites us to enter into the Paschal mystery in a special way. It is to be celebrated in community in so far as this is possible.

**99.8** We offer the Eucharist once every month for our fellow Spiritans who are dead and once for the intentions of the Superior General.

**99.9** We endeavour to express in our prayer in common our fraternal ties with deceased confreres. The Masses to be celebrated for a deceased confrere are to be decided by the chapter of the circumscription.

**99.10** The community's prayer in common shall express our solidarity with the families of confreres and benefactors.

**99.11** We shall be open to the devotional practices that are customary in the Church where we are working. We try to harmonise them with our prayers in common and our private devotions.

**99.12** We, being Spiritans, are specially eager to increase awareness of the role and the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in the world.

## Chapter VI

### FORMATION

*“If we live by the truth and in love, we shall grow completely into Christ, who is the head...”* (Ephesians 4:15).

*“... until Christ is formed in you”* (Galatians 4:19).

#### GENERAL ORIENTATIONS

**100.** Formation is the continual deepening of our “apostolic life” (see SRL 3 above) under the influence of the Holy Spirit and in keeping with the spirit of our Founders, our living tradition, and the present needs of the world. It is both a personal task and a shared responsibility. The Congregation, sensitive to the persons that it welcomes and to the call that God addresses to each of them, offers them a formation that is appropriate.

**101.** Spiritan formation centres upon the essential aspects of our way of life:

- the call to follow Christ as did his disciples, so that our lives and all our apostolic efforts may be “of Christ”,
- the call to carry on his mission in the Church,
- and the call to fraternal and religious life.

**102.** The Congregation sets out for us various stages in formation:

- Initial or basic formation, the essential aim of which is to allow us to prepare progressively for our definitive commitment to the following of Christ in the Congregation;
- Ongoing formation through the length of our lives, which is intended to help us to persevere in developing our God-given gifts and talents to the benefit of our mission.

**103.** Candidates for the Spiritan life are a gift from God. We accept them as such and welcome the ways in which they enrich the Congregation.

#### **THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR FORMATION**

**104.** The period of initial formation is lived in community. This allows candidates to grow, to develop and to train themselves on the human, intellectual, spiritual, religious and community levels. The task of accompanying them during this development is entrusted to the Formation Team and the spiritual directors. They help them to respond freely under the influence of the Holy Spirit to the call addressed to them by Christ and to commit themselves to follow him in the Spiritan way of life.

**105.** It is the superior of the circumscription with the consent of his council, in collaboration with the formation team and with the agreement of the General Council, who decides the orientations of formation.

**105.1** The necessary integration of the various stages of formation presupposes true teamwork from those responsible, agreement with the major superior and his council, and the concerted efforts of the candidates.

**105.2** The circumscription shall make long-term plans for changes in personnel for formation work. Appointments should be made so as to allow a reasonable time for the members appointed to prepare for the work.

**106.** The General Council has the task of imparting drive and unity to Spiritan formation through the Congregation as a whole.

**106.1** It encourages and facilitates collaboration between those who in the different circumscriptions are responsible for formation.

**106.2** In particular, it encourages initiatives towards an openness to and interchange between different cultures.

**106.3** It makes sure that the orientations of the Congregation regarding formation are followed in the circumscriptions and it intervenes when it considers it necessary.

**106.4** One of the General Assistants is specially responsible for matters of formation.

#### **THE PROMOTION AND GUIDANCE OF VOCATIONS**

**107.** The vocation ministry is an important aspect of our apostolic and missionary activity in the local Church. Every Spiritan shares this responsibility. The pastoral care of vocations is undertaken jointly with other missionary institutes and the local Church organisation that deals with vocations.

**107.1** The major superior of a circumscription with the consent of his council may retain or set up whatever structure he considers useful for promoting and guiding vocations.

#### **NOVITIATE**

**108.** It is understood that, before a candidate is accepted to begin his novitiate, there will have been a preparatory period involving him, a Spiritan community and his formators. It is for the major superior, with the consent of his council, in collaboration with the formation team to set up a stage of formation preparatory to the novitiate, in keeping with the local needs.

**109.** The major superior of the circumscription admits candidates to the novitiate in conformity with general Church law (Canon 641-645).

**110.** This privileged period of the novitiate allows the novice, attentive to the Holy Spirit, to deepen in three ways the grace of vocation that he has received:

- to structure his spiritual life;
- to come to understand more clearly what God asks of him;
- to be initiated into the Spiritan way of life and formation to it.

In this the novice has the support and the help of community living and of the guidance of the director of novices.

**110.1** The novitiate is primarily time spent bringing structure into the spiritual life. During this time the novice is growing in human and Christian virtue by listening to the word of God, by receiving the sacraments, through personal and liturgical prayer, spiritual direction and the contemplation of the mystery of salvation. He must welcome, in faith, the way in which God is patiently at work with him and within him. He must learn to persevere, even and especially when he does not immediately perceive the results of his efforts.

**110.2** It is also the time for the discernment of a vocation. The novice takes his first steps into the spirit of the Congregation, its history, its tradition and its spirituality. So he is able to judge by his experience whether Spiritan life corresponds to the call which he has heard. The director of novices should, for his part, try to test whether the call be genuine.

**110.3** It is also the time of initiation and formation to the religious apostolic life. The novice opens his mind and heart to the religious life as it is understood by the Church, through its history, its theology and its law and as the Congregation understands and lives it in the present day, drawing inspiration from the Founders' charisms, its own living traditions and missionary history.

**111.** The duration of the noviceship is twelve complete months.

**112.** To be valid, the noviceship must take place in the house designated for the purpose.

**113.** The opening, the transfer or the suppression of a novitiate requires the written decision of the Superior General with the consent of his Council.

**114.** In a particular and exceptional case a candidate may spend his noviceship in another house of the

Congregation under the direction of an experienced confrere who acts as director of novices. Permission for this is needed from the Superior General with the consent of his Council.

**115.** The major superior may allow the novices to stay for a certain period in another house of the Congregation, which he has designated for this purpose.

**116.** The superior of the circumscription, with the consent of his council, may prescribe for the novices one or two periods of apostolic work to be spent outside the novitiate community. These periods are added on to the twelve months necessary for the validity of the noviceship.

**117.** The preceding prescriptions excepted, a noviceship is rendered invalid by an absence, whether continuous or not, of more than three months from the novitiate house.

**118.** An absence of more than fifteen days must be supplied.

**119.** The noviceship may not last more than two years.

**119.1** During this period, all work or study which is not directly related to the formation of the novice is forbidden.

*Those responsible for the formation of novices*

**120.** The direction and the animation of the novitiate, as well as the formation of the novices, are primarily the responsibility of the director of novices under the authority of the major superior. His task is to initiate the novices in the Spiritan way of living, according to the Rule of Life.

**121.** The director of novices must have perpetual vows (cf. Canon 651.1), and preferably some missionary experience. He must be legitimately appointed by the major superior of the circumscription, with the consent of his council. He will be given an assistant.

**121.1** The formation of the novices requires the help of other formators, in the first place the spiritual directors to whom the novices can freely turn, and others who will share in the process as needs may be.

**121.2** It is desirable that the novitiate, while maintaining its autonomy, be placed within a Spiritan community, especially if there are but a few novices.

*The End of the Noviceship*

**122.** A novice is free to withdraw from the novitiate. He can also be sent away by the major superior, on the advice of the director of novices (Canon 653.1).

**123.** The novice who at the completion of his noviceship asks to make profession is admitted to first religious profession by the major superior with the consent of his council, if he is considered to be fit. If not, he is asked to withdraw.

**123.1** In addition to the conditions laid down in the common law of the Church (Canon 656), the request for temporary profession shall be made in writing.

**124.** The normal duration of the noviceship can be extended by the major superior, with the consent of his council, for an added period of probation which must not exceed six months (cf. Canon 653.2).

#### **PROFESSION AND CONSECRATION TO THE APOSTOLATE**

**125.** On the occasion of our first profession, we respond publicly, before the Church and in the Congregation, to the call of God. This is a deepening of our baptismal commitment. By our vows we pledge ourselves to press on unremittingly towards the fullness of charity and to live up to what we have undertaken, knowing that God will keep his faith with us without fail.

**126.** Our religious profession is made or renewed in the following essential terms: "I ... make to God and before you (the major superior or his delegate) for ... the three vows of chastity, poverty and obedience in

the Congregation of the Holy Spirit under the protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, according to the Spiritan Rule of Life.”

**127.** As well as these essential words, the one making profession may freely express and explain, in words that have the approval of the major superior, his understanding of his commitment to Spiritan apostolic life and of the total gift of him-self to God in the service of mission.

**128.** First profession is made for three years.

**128.1** With the approval of the Superior General with the consent of his Council, individual circumscriptions may decide that the first profession be made in stages of one year to be renewed twice.

**128.2** With the permission of the major superior first profession can be anticipated by fifteen days at most.

**129.** Through the ministry of the Church, the person who makes religious profession is consecrated to God. He chooses to live in religious chastity, poverty and obedience. He becomes a member of the Congregation with the rights and duties that derive from the general law of the Church and the Spiritan Rule of Life.

**129.1** The newly professed signs the Act of Profession in triplicate, on copy for himself, one

for the archives of the Congregation, and one for those of the circumscription.

*The Renewal of Temporary Profession*

**130.** At the end of three years of temporary profession, the professed member may request, freely and in writing, either to renew his temporary profession or to make perpetual profession (consecration to the apostolate). The major superior, with the consent of his council, can then admit him to renew profession or, should he not be judged fitted for Spiritan life, shall ask him to leave (Canon 689.1).

**131.** The period of temporary vows is three years, renewable once (Canon 655).

**132.** The major superior may, if this seems advisable, prolong the time of temporary profession for a period that shall not exceed nine years (Canon 689.1).

*Perpetual Profession*

**133.** Our final consecration to the apostolate gives its full expression to the intention that we were keeping in the depths of our hearts, the day of our first profession, of devoting ourselves completely to God in the family of the Spiritans.

**133.1** The act of perpetual profession is always preceded by a period of special preparation lasting at least a month. The major superior shall,

with the consent of his council, decide on the length of this period and how it is to be spent.

**133.2** The request to make final profession shall comply with the requirements of the general law of the Church (Canon 656.3,4,5 and Canon 658). The request shall, in addition, be made in writing.

**133.3** Perpetual profession may be anticipated by up to three months at the discretion of the major superior of the circumscription.

**133.4** Approval for admission to perpetual profession is a right of the superior of the circumscription of “origin” with the consent of his council (see also 156.3 below).

**133.5** The act of temporary or perpetual profession is received by the superior of the circumscription or by his delegate.

**134.** Candidates for the priesthood should make their perpetual profession before receiving the diaconate. It is the major superior’s duty to make the enquiry and prepare dimissorial letters for the reception of holy orders.

#### **OTHER STAGES OF INITIAL FORMATION**

##### *The Common Period of Formation*

**135.** All Spiritans, whether or not they are called to an ordained ministry in the Church, shall follow a

common period of intellectual, religious and missionary formation, which prepares them to live and work together. The noviceship forms part of this period.

**135.1** The Congregation also offers a formation to its associates.

**136.** Involvement in apostolic activity forms part of Spiritan formation at all stages.

**136.1** During initial formation, each circumscription will arrange for a period of missionary experience. Normally this experience takes place in a culture different from that of the candidate. This allows the young Spiritan to discover the worth of intercultural encounter and to prepare better for Spiritan apostolic life. As far as possible it will normally last for a period of two years, with one year being a minimum.

**136.2** The major superiors of the circumscriptions concerned, both the sender and the receiver, after consultation with their councils and with the formation teams, decide concerning the opportunities offered by this period of training, what it is to consist in, its length and its place in the formation course.

**136.3** The choice as to place, community, confrere to provide accompaniment for the candidate, shall all be made in view of the formation, which is the objective. The work that may be undertaken

is not the primary consideration. These choices shall be made with great care and deliberation.

**136.4** So as to benefit as much as possible from this period of apostolic activity, the candidate shall be helped to reflect on his experience, to evaluate the methods being used and to analyse his own reactions.

*Studies With A View To Mission*

**137.** Every Spiritan should try to acquire the competence and the qualifications needed to further our mission. In this effort each one should remain in accord with his own major superior.

**138.** Those who are called to an ordained ministry in the Church must fully complete the cycle of studies laid down by the general law of the Church, and according to the curricula decided on by the circumscription.

**139.** Each Brother completes his professional training according to the programmes in force in his own country.

**140.** We integrate the theology of mission into formation as a whole, in such a way as to highlight the missionary nature of the Church.

*International Formation*

**141.** Our Congregation is international, and our apostolic activity usually puts us in contact with a culture different from our own. Necessarily then our formation prepares us both for living in a community and in a situation that is intercultural.

**141.1** It is therefore advisable that the Spiritan live for a period of his initial formation in community with confreres of a culture different from his own.

**141.2** During the period of initial formation, students shall learn one foreign language in use for communication within the Congregation.

**ONGOING FORMATION**

**142.** God's call to come and work for the Kingdom is not made to us just once for all. Our response has to be updated continually. So it is a necessity for all of us to retrain ourselves without fail if we are to remain true to our calling in the world and in the Church.

**142.1** Ongoing formation involves all aspects of our calling – human, spiritual, theological, professional and pastoral.

**142.2** It should help our thinking on our apostolic activities, our discernment of the signs of the times, and the changes of attitudes and of outlook that are imperative.

**142.3** Every member is earnestly exhorted to look for the support of a counsellor capable of helping him in his spiritual journey.

**143.** Ongoing formation concerns, in equal measure, both the individual and the whole community. Consequently every member, community and circumscription, as well as the whole Congregation is expected both to participate in it and contribute to it.

**144.** The circumscription shall set up, independently or in collaboration with other organisations, regular renewal conferences or courses. Members are to be encouraged to take part in these.

**145.** Superiors shall facilitate for each one, about once every ten years, a lengthy period of renewal to permit a real updating and a spiritual replenishment (*F. ressourcement spirituel*).

**145.1** The members, for their part, shall be concerned about their own renewal and keep themselves abreast of events as they develop in their home Church.

**145.2** Members who have spent some years in a culture different from their own and who, for health or other reasons, return to their home circumscriptions, are given a fraternal welcome. They are helped to fit in again, especially if they

must take up an apostolate that is significantly different from the one they have been used to.

**145.3** The General Council has the duty of helping and encouraging the initiatives of major superiors to provide for ongoing formation.

## **RETIREMENT**

**146.** The Congregation shall help ageing confreres to take up activities in keeping with their years and their capabilities, and to prepare themselves for retirement.

**147.** To our older members and those in ill health, the Congregation will willingly and cheerfully offer its care, to enable them in patience and in faith to take up this different form of the one same mission the Lord chooses to entrust to them.

The retirement years when lived in faith are a time of growth in grace, both on the human and the spiritual planes. They are also a grace given by the Lord to the whole Congregation.

**147.1** So as to be more competent to help retired confreres, those who bear the responsibility for communities shall keep in mind what medical knowledge tells us of the frailties as well as the strengths that are proper to this age of life.

## Chapter VII

### THE ORGANISATION OF THE CONGREGATION

*“I appeal to you, make my joy complete by being of a single mind, one in love, one in heart and one in mind. Nothing is to be done out of jealousy or vanity; instead, out of humility of mind everyone should give preference to others, everyone pursuing not selfish interests but those of others” (Philippians 2:2-4).*

**148.** Our Congregation is a clerical religious institute of pontifical right, comprising clerics and consecrated laymen. We all share the same life, with the same rights and duties, except those which arise from holy orders or which are established explicitly by Canon law (Canon 588).

**149.** Our institute depends directly on the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

**150.** Our institute brings together individuals and communities, assembling them by circumscriptions, under the authority of the Superior General and his Council.

**DIFFERENT TYPES OF COMMUNITY**

**151.** To carry out its mission and build up communion within, the Congregation gives itself various structures. Central to all these, however, is community living. It is practised differently in response to differences both in the members themselves and in the work they are doing.

**152.** Every confrere has the right to live in a local Spiritan community.

**153.** For us community life means the acceptance and the observance of life in common under the authority of a superior.

**153.1** A community normally consists of at least three members.

**153.2** A regional community brings together the confreres who are in a defined geographic area. It has a superior, who is chosen by the same procedure and appointed for the same length of time as the superior of a local community.

**154.** Spiritan houses are erected by the major superior of the circumscription with the consent of his council. The prior written agreement of the bishop of the place is also required (Canon 608; 609.1).

*The Service of Authority*

**155.** The superior of a local community is appointed for three years by the superior of the circumscription, with the consent of his council and following the required consultation of the local community (Canon 624).

**155.1** A community superior shall have at least three years of perpetual profession.

**155.2** His appointment is renewable for a second period of three years.

**155.3** Following upon two terms, save in exceptional circumstances, an interlude of one year is required before he may again be appointed superior of a community.

**155.4** The superior of a large community chooses an assistant after a consultation of the confreres and agreement with the major superior. The assistant replaces the superior if he is absent or impeded.

**155.5** Every community shall have a council. If the number in the community is not large, all are members of the council. If the number is large, the council consists of: the superior, the bursar, and several confreres, who are elected so as to represent as well as may be possible the various sections or the different works of the community.

**155.6** The superior of the circumscription, with the agreement of his council, determines:

- the method of selecting these representative confreres;
- and the number of members, beyond which a community shall have an elected council.

#### **CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS**

**156.** A circumscription is usually a grouping of communities brought together under the authority of a superior and council (Canon 621). Circumscriptions exist to allow the Congregation to be present and accomplish its apostolic task in one or more local Churches.

**156.1** The following are circumscriptions: Provinces and Groups.

**156.2** The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, can create new forms of circumscription *or a wider entity*, according to the needs of particular circumstances.

**156.3** Each member is said to “belong” to a “circumscription of origin”. This circumscription “of origin” is the one to which he was admitted by first profession.

**156.4** Save where other arrangements have been made, the circumscription “of origin” has

duties with regard to each member which it shall diligently discharge. These obligations include caring for sick confreres, whether their incapacity is temporary or long-lasting, for confreres who come home to retire and for other confreres who return home for whatever reason.

**156.5** A member can change his “circumscription of origin” with the consent of the major superiors concerned. Only the Superior General with the consent of his Council has the competence to authorise such a change.

**157.** A circumscription is erected, changed or dissolved by the decision of the Superior General with the consent of his Council. This same decision establishes the nature and the limits of the circumscription.

**158.** The mission appointment of a confrere to a particular circumscription is the responsibility of the Superior General, with the consent of his Council.

**158.1** This appointment is made in understanding with the confrere concerned, his major superior and the major superior of the receiving circumscription.

**159.** Appointment to a circumscription makes one a member of it.

**159.1** The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, can transfer a confrere from one circumscription to another for the good of the Congregation and of its apostolic task. Such an appointment is preceded by an understanding reached with the confrere, the major superiors concerned and the major superior of the confrere's circumscription "of origin".

**159.2** Once the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, has appointed a confrere to a particular circumscription, including mission appointments, any request to withdraw him for another work within the first six years requires the prior consent of the Superior General and his Council.

**159.3** Every superior can – after consultation with his council – transfer a confrere from his circumscription to another one, with the agreement of the major superior of the latter and following dialogue with the confrere himself. In cases where neither of the two circumscriptions is the confrere's circumscription "of origin", the consent of the major superior of the circumscription "of origin" is also required.

**159.4** In each instance of such a transfer, the special ties between a confrere and his circumscription "of origin" as well as the rights and

duties that flow from these ties are to be kept in mind (cf. SRL 156.3).

**159.5** Every transfer from one circumscription to another requires a written document.

**159.6** Copies of this document are to be sent, one to the General Administration, one to each major superior concerned and one to the confrere concerned.

*Different Types of Circumscription*

**Provinces**

**160.** A province is a circumscription whose apostolic activities include, among others, the following tasks: missionary animation; the promotion of vocations; formation; welcoming and caring for those confreres who come home, temporarily or permanently.

**160.1** When a Province can no longer fulfil the conditions set out in SRL 160, the Province can either become a Group, amalgamate with a neighbouring circumscription, or become part of a wider entity, following a decision of the Superior General with the consent of his Council.

**Groups**

**161.** A Group is a circumscription created to undertake a specific missionary task. It has a level of organisation that gives it a degree of stability.

**161.1** The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, and in dialogue with the Unions of Circumscriptions (cf. SRL 184), decides on the founding of new Groups and determines the place of these circumscriptions within the Congregation as well as their mission and their organisation.

**161.2** Members of such circumscriptions have the same rights and duties as do members of a Province.

**161.3** When a new Group is to be established, the General Council must clarify the reasons for its existence and the aims that have been set for it. It will organise the setting up of the necessary support in finance and personnel. Such a Group should, preferably, be international.

**161.4** Any new commitment, beyond the actual field of the apostolate of an existing circumscription, needs the approval of the Superior General with the consent of his Council. It could be confided either to a community of Spiritans or to a Group. In the case of a com-

munity, it can be confided either to a circumscription or a Union of Circumscriptions (cf. SRL 184). Particular attention will be given to its links with the rest of the Congregation.

*Superiors of Circumscriptions*

**162.** The authority of a religious superior is personal, not territorial.

**163.** The following are major superiors in our circumscriptions:

- the provincial superior,
- the group superior,
- other superiors who shall have been named as such by the Superior General with the consent of his Council.

**164.** A major superior exercises ordinary authority in his circumscription. He acts in accordance with the Spiritan Rule of Life, in conformity with the decisions of General Chapters and the directives of the chapters of the circumscription. He is responsible for the implementation of these directives and decisions.

**164.1** The major superior appoints a confrere to a community following discussion with the parties concerned.

**164.2** Each one always has the right of appeal, against a decision of his superior, to a higher au-

thority and even to the Holy See. However, before such a step is taken, an effort shall be made, in fraternal dialogue, to seek a solution. The chapter of a circumscription, to provide for such dialogue, may set up a conciliation authority. Should such an appeal be made, the superior ought to be informed of the fact.

**165.** A superior of a circumscription is appointed by the Superior General with the consent of his Council. Before such an appointment one of two possible procedures is followed. The chapter of the circumscription decides to have either a consultation or an election.

**165.1** If the method of consultation is chosen, the procedure is as follows. Where circumstances make it possible, a straw vote is held and the results published. Then the members of the circumscription are consulted in writing and the results are transmitted *sub secreto* to the Generalate. The Superior General with the consent of his Council then chooses the superior from among the three confreres who receive the greatest number of votes. If a circumscription has more than fifty members, the choice is made from the five who have the greatest number of votes. In the case of the office of provincial superior, the consultation extends to all confreres whose circumscription “of origin” it is.

**165.2** If the method of election is chosen, the procedure is as follows. The confreres appointed to the circumscription and, in the case of the election of a provincial superior, all the confreres whose circumscription “of origin” it is, are consulted in writing. Then an assembly, which may be the chapter, the enlarged council or the general assembly of the circumscription, proceeds with the election, after it has been informed of the results of the written consultation. The election takes effect when the Superior General with the consent of his Council has confirmed it. The Superior General and his Council may refuse to confirm this election (Canon 625.3). In such case, the former superior remains for the time being and the method of proceeding by consultation is employed.

**165.3** It is the duty of the outgoing major superior and his council to carry out the procedure for consultation or election.

**165.4** In the case of a newly formed circumscription, the major superior is appointed by the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, after consultation of the confreres.

**165.5** The election procedure is that of SRL 236.

**166.** Major superiors are appointed for three years.

**167.** Their appointment can be renewed once. Exceptionally, it can be renewed more than once.

**168.** Every priest who has been perpetually professed for three years may be appointed as a major superior.

**168.1** A major superior shall be at least thirty years old.

**168.2** He may be chosen from among the members of another circumscription.

**169.** The superior of a circumscription, in person or by delegate, shall visit the communities and the confreres regularly at least once in each year. He gives his attention in these visits to the spiritual, community and pastoral life of the confreres.

It is his duty to give approval to the publication of writings of the members concerning religion or morals (Canon 832).

**169.1** He shall participate in the regional or national conference of religious superiors. He is the Congregation's representative to civil authorities.

**170.** The council of the circumscription assists the major superior and helps him in the administration and animation of the circumscription.

**170.1** The advice of the council of a circumscription may be either consultative or deliberative (see SRL 245.1 and SRL 246.1).

**170.2** The councillors are chosen for a period of three years which can be renewed.

**170.3** The chapter of the circumscription decides the number of the councillors and the method of their selection.

**170.4** They are chosen in function of the variety of the circumscription's undertakings and of the diversity of the membership.

**170.5** The bursar of the circumscription is a member by right of the council.

**170.6** The superior chooses a first and a second assistant from among his councillors. The first assistant replaces the superior when he is absent or otherwise impeded. The second replaces the superior when both he and the first assistant are absent or impeded. At all events, in important affairs that do not necessitate an urgent solution, the assistants shall await the return or the advice of the superior.

*The Care of Material Goods: The Function of Bursar*

**171.** The bursar manages the material goods of the community. He works, however, under the superior's

authority and he shares with the community the responsibility confided to him.

**171.1** The bursar, even in a small community, shall not, in so far as is possible, be the superior (Canon 636.1).

**172.** The bursar of a community is appointed by the major superior of the circumscription with the consent of his council and after a consultation of the community.

**173.** The bursar is appointed for a period of three years. This period may be renewed.

**173.1** The bursar is by right a member of the community council.

**173.2** An extraordinary expense, exceeding the limits of the budget for the current year, requires the approval of the major superior with the consent of his council.

**173.3** Every year, the bursar shall present to the community and to the major superior a balance sheet and a budget which have already been approved by the superior and the council of the community.

**173.4** Every year, the bursar of a circumscription presents to the General Administration a balance sheet and a budget which have already

been approved by the superior of the circumscription with the consent of his council.

**174.** The bursar of a circumscription, on the occasion of the chapter of the circumscription, shall present a detailed financial report.

**174.1** Once every year the bursar in a large circumscription shall call a meeting of the local bursars for the purpose of dealing with their management and administration.

**174.2** The General Bursar shall provide technical assistance to the bursars of circumscriptions. He regularly audits their accounts and their balance sheets.

**174.3** The bursar of a circumscription shall do the same for bursars of communities.

**174.4** Bursars shall put away in security, in a special safe or in a bank, the title deeds to properties, transferable securities, insurance policies and other important documents.

**174.5** Superiors and bursars shall not make investments in businesses of dubious moral rectitude.

*The Chapter of a Circumscription***Provincial Chapters**

**175.** The chapter of a province works out the goals and objectives of the circumscription. It lays down directions and gives guidelines for the circumscription and it applies the prescriptions and the directives of General Chapters, in function of local circumstances.

**176.** The chapter of a province is composed of members by right and elected members. The number of elected members shall be at least equal to the number of members by right.

**176.1** Regarding the election of delegates to a chapter, all professed members have the right to vote. All those with perpetual vows can be elected.

**176.2** The chapter of a province can take the form of a General Assembly with all the members being convoked. This assembly then functions as a chapter.

**177.** The following are members by right: the provincial superior and the members of the council of the circumscription.

**178.** Delegated members are elected in part by the confreres who are appointed to the province and in part by confreres who have been appointed to other circumscriptions but who belong to the province “by origin”.

**178.1** Delegates are chosen by a system of representation that is decided by the provincial superior with the consent of his council.

**178.2** Care is taken to assure an adequate representation of confreres appointed to other circumscriptions.

**179.** The chapter of a province shall meet at least every six years, convoked by the circumscription superior, with the consent of his council.

**179.1** In the space of these six years there may be a meeting of the enlarged provincial council. Its members have deliberative voice. The circumscription chapter shall decide the mode of representation at this enlarged council.

**179.2** Some representatives from the General Council and from neighbouring circumscriptions are invited to the provincial chapter.

#### **Group Chapters**

**180.** The chapter of a group works out the goals and objectives of the circumscription. It lays down

directions and gives guidelines for the circumscription and applies the prescriptions and directives of General Chapters in function of local circumstances.

**180.1** The chapter consists in principle of all the members of the circumscription by origin or by appointment. It has the ordinary deliberative powers of a chapter if in fact two thirds of the membership is present.

**180.2** For practical reasons, it may be organised on a basis of representation. The decision to do this is made by the superior of the circumscription, with the consent of his council.

**180.3** For the purpose of this representation, all the Spiritans who have been appointed to the circumscription are electors.

**180.4** The chapter of a group shall meet at least every six years, convoked by the circumscription superior with the consent of his council.

**180.5** In the space of these six years there may be a meeting of the enlarged circumscription council. Its members have deliberative vote. The chapter of a group shall decide the mode of representation at this enlarged council.

**180.6** The chapter of a group decides for itself how it shall function.

**180.7** Some representatives from the General Council, the circumscriptions of “origin” of the confreres, and neighbouring circumscriptions are invited to the chapter.

**181.** The decisions of the chapters of circumscriptions are subject to the approval of the Superior General and of his Council.

*Relations between circumscriptions*

**182.** The members of a circumscription remain subject to the authority of their major superior, whether they live within the circumscription or elsewhere, until such time as a transfer shall have been effected.

**182.1** When a confrere goes to reside in a country where there is a Spiritan circumscription, for whatever reason, there will be a previous understanding between the superiors of the two circumscriptions concerned. This will include the reason for the stay, its length, pastoral engagements foreseen, community life and financial arrangements.

**183.** Special bonds exist and are fostered between the circumscription where a confrere is working and his circumscription “of origin”.

**183.1** So as to make this close collaboration real, frequent meetings shall be held touching

on matters of mutual interest between the circumscriptions concerned.

**183.2** In a spirit of solidarity and shared responsibility, each one shall be prepared, should the need arise, to come home to his circumscription “of origin”.

**183.3** Periodically, the General Council shall organise meetings of major superiors, in order to facilitate relations between circumscriptions.

#### *Unions of Circumscriptions*

**184.** Circumscriptions in the same geographical region, or of the same linguistic area, may come together to form a Union of Circumscriptions for the purposes of collaborating in carrying out the mission of the Congregation. Specific areas of collaboration might include, but would not be limited to, common formation programmes or a common missionary project. The organisational structure and modus operandi of such Unions of Circumscriptions will be formulated in written statutes approved by the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, and subject to regular review. In this collegial organisation the rights of each superior and his council remain intact (cf. SRL 246.1).

**THE GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

*The Superior General*

**185.** Ordinary power over the whole Congregation resides in the Superior General. The General Council, which helps the Superior General, is composed of his Assistants.

**185.1** The place where they habitually live is decided by the General Chapter. Should it be changed, the Holy See shall be notified.

**186.** To be elected Superior General, one must be a priest, have completed at least ten years of perpetual profession, and be more than thirty-five years old.

**187.** He is elected for eight years.

**188.** He cannot be re-elected.

**189.** The Superior General has direct and personal authority to govern and to animate the Congregation according to the Spiritan Rule of Life and in keeping with the directives given him by the General Chapter.

**190.** He has all the rights and faculties of a personal ordinary (Canon 134.1).

**191.** He presides over the General Council.

**192.** He confirms his fellow members in their Spiritan calling, in keeping with the spirit of the Founders and the living tradition of the Institute. He makes the unity among all Spiritans a reality. He assures the unity of all with the Church. He strives for the common good and the vitality of the Congregation.

**193.** In a spirit of communion with the Holy See, he gives it an account, in the way and at the times fixed, of the state of the Institute and of its life.

**194.** He is the official representative of the Congregation to the Union of Superiors General and to civil and religious authorities.

#### *The General Council*

**195.** The General Assistants take part in governing and animating the Congregation.

**196.** There are at least four General Assistants.

**196.1** At present there are seven, including the General Bursar.

**196.2** Responsibility for geographic regions is given to the individual Councillors. They are also given responsibilities corresponding to their competencies and their interests. The primary purpose of this division is to use each one's ability to the best advantage in the task that they share.

**196.3** The Superior General, with the help of his Assistants, carries out the visitation of the circumscriptions during his tenure of office.

**196.4** The Superior General, with the consent of his Council can, for a particular piece of business, or in special circumstances, name as an official Visitor someone who is not a member of the General Council. The responsibilities of such a Visitor are set out in the letter of appointment.

**197.** When the Superior General is absent or impeded, the First Assistant replaces him. In the event of both these being absent or impeded the Second Assistant stands in. The acting Assistant presides over the General Council and has the powers of the Superior General except those that are expressly reserved.

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL**

**198.** In all that concerns the government and animation of the Congregation, the General Council acts under the authority of the Superior General in a spirit of collegiality, of collective responsibility and of close collaboration, within the limits set by the General Chapter and faithful to the spirit of the Founders.

**198.1** While respectful of its diversity, the General Council safeguards the unity of the Congregation. While making due allowance for

subsidiarity, it watches over the work of the circumscriptions and their faithfulness to the Spiritan calling. It works for the growth of the Institute and promotes new initiatives in mission.

It safeguards and encourages the solidarity between circumscriptions and also the international character of the Congregation, because these two bear witness to brotherhood and to community.

Should there be need, the General Council vindicates the legitimate rights of both the Congregation and its members.

**198.2** It maintains a close contact, by discussion and co-operation, with other religious and missionary institutes, with episcopal conferences and with the central offices of the Holy See. It maintains relations in the same way with ecumenical organisations and those which either at national or international level touch upon activities of a missionary interest.

**199.** The General Council shall meet frequently. All members who can be present are summoned to the meetings.

**199.1** The quorum for a valid meeting is four, inclusive of the one who is presiding.

**200.** The Superior General discusses ordinary business with his Council. The final decision belongs, however, to him alone (Canon 127.1).

**200.1** Decisions requiring consultation with the General Council (consultative vote) are listed in Appendix II, SRL 247.1.

**201.** The Superior General must have the consent of his Council for the validity of the decision in important business concerning the Congregation or its members as also in cases laid down by Canon law. This consent is by an absolute majority of the deliberative votes (Canon 127.1).

**201.1** Decisions requiring the agreement of the General Council (deliberative vote) are listed in Appendix II (SRL 248.1 to 248.6).

**202.** Deliberative voting shall be secret should one member of the Council request it. In the following cases it is always secret:

- an election;
- the alienation of a property;
- the acceptance of debts or of onerous obligations.

No member of the Council may refuse to vote or to give his opinion.

**203.** If the election or resignation of a member of the General Council is in question, all should be present. In the event that a resigning member cannot be present at the meeting, he shall sign a letter of resignation which is presented to the meeting.

**204.** In the case of the dismissal of a professed member of the Congregation there must be a collegial vote by the Superior General and his Council (cf. SRL 248.6.7).

#### *The Enlarged General Council*

**205.** The Enlarged General Council is a consultative assembly.

**205.1** It is convoked by the Superior General with the consent of his Council.

**205.2** It shall meet at least once between two ordinary General Chapters.

**205.3** Its purpose is:

- to check on the implementation of the decisions of the General Chapter;
- to study new means of strengthening and bringing about the Congregation's objectives;
- to reinforce collaboration between different circumscriptions both among them and between themselves and the Superior General and his Council.

**205.4** For reasons of efficiency and to avoid excessive costs, the total membership is limited to 30-35 individuals.

**205.5** The following are part of the Enlarged General Council:

- the Superior General and his Council;
- superiors of circumscriptions directly concerned with matters on the agenda;
- a certain number of representatives from circumscriptions and from the Unions of Circumscriptions to be determined by the General Council. The representatives of the Unions are chosen by the superiors of circumscriptions inside the Unions.

**205.6** The preparation for the Enlarged General Council is done

- first by sending the agenda to all the superiors of circumscriptions and
- then by holding regional meetings of the same superiors.

*The Services of the General Administration*

**206.** The Superior General and his Council are assisted in their work by the staff of the Generalate, who serve the General Council and the needs of the Congregation.

**206.1** The persons charged with these functions are appointed by the Superior General with

the consent of his Council for a period of three years, save in the case of the General Bursar.

**206.2** Their appointment is renewable.

#### **THE GENERAL BURSAR**

**207.** The General Bursar works under the direction of the Superior General and his Council. He informs the General Council about matters of business and finance.

**208.** He is in charge of the administration of the property, both movable and immovable, of the Congregation as such. He oversees the financial administration of the circumscriptions.

**208.1** He presents a financial report to the General Chapter. This report gives an accounting for the years that have elapsed since the preceding General Chapter.

**208.2** This report shall first have been approved by the Superior General, with the consent of his Council.

#### **THE GENERAL SECRETARY**

**209.** The General Secretary registers and preserves the administrative acts. He communicates important information concerning the Congregation. He is normally present at meetings of the General Council.

**209.1** He is responsible for the minutes of the General Council. He supervises the keeping of the Archives and the editing of the Bulletin of the Congregation.

**THE GENERAL PROCURATOR TO THE HOLY SEE**

**210.** The General Procurator to the Holy See handles the business the Congregation has with the various offices of the Holy See. He acts at all times in accordance with the decisions of the Superior General and his Council and within the powers accorded to him.

**THE GENERAL CHAPTER**

**211.** The General Chapter is the supreme authority in the Congregation (Canon 631).

**211.1** The General Chapter may be ordinary or extraordinary.

**212.** The ordinary General Chapter takes place every eight years. It is always an elective chapter.

**212.1** The extraordinary General Chapter is convoked by the Superior General with the consent of his Council either for exceptional reasons or at the request of two thirds of the major superiors.

**212.2** It is not elective except in the case where the Superior General resigns at the Chapter.

**213.** The General Chapter has the responsibility:

- to check that the Congregation has remained faithful to the mission that it has within the Church;
- to augment the apostolic and religious vitality of the members of the Institute;
- to evaluate the effect in practice of measures taken by previous Chapters;
- to decide objectives in missionary activity for the coming years;
- to examine the financial state of the Congregation.

**214.** The General Chapter has the power of modifying, abrogating or giving an interpretation of the Spiritan Rule of Life by means of a two-thirds majority of votes.

Modification to the Constitutions or an authentic interpretation requires the approval of the Holy See.

**214.1** The General Chapter, will examine, approve, and where necessary modify, the “Directory for the Organisation of the Congregation” and other Directories of a similar nature. An absolute majority of the votes of delegates is required.

**215.** The General Chapter elects the Superior General and the General Assistants, except the General Bursar.

*Procedure for a General Chapter*

**a) Convocation**

**216.** The General Chapter is convoked by the Superior General, with the consent of his Council.

**216.1** The convocation is published at least one year before the opening day of the Chapter.

**216.2** The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, draws up the list of matters to be discussed at the Chapter.

**216.3** The circumscriptions are consulted in the drafting of this list.

**b) Members**

**217.** The General Council is made up of members by right of office and members elected.

**218.** The members by right of office are the Superior General, the General Assistants, and the General Secretary.

**218.1** A member by right of office who is not present at the Chapter cannot be substituted.

**219.** All other members of the Chapter are elected.

**e) Electoral Circumscriptions**

**220.** The Superior General, having consulted the major superiors, and with the consent of his Council, fixes the number of capitulants and the method by which representation is to be achieved.

**220.1** The Chapter of a circumscription or, in default of this, the council shall decide a procedure for the election of its delegates.

**220.2** The election shall be by secret ballot.

**220.3** An absolute majority of the valid poll is necessary at the first ballot.

**220.4** A second ballot is held if necessary. In this ballot a relative majority suffices.

**d) Election of Delegates**

**221.** All professed members have the right to vote. All those with perpetual vows can be elected.

**221.1** Should an elected delegate be unable to take part in the Chapter for reasons judged valid by his major superior, he is replaced by a substitute.

**221.2** A substitute is one who obtains most votes after the last elected delegate of the electoral circumscription.

**221.3** Should a circumscription have but one delegate and the prospective substitute have re-

ceived less than one third of the valid ballots, a new election is held in order to find a substitute.

**221.4** The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, can invite observers and experts selected because of their competence to be present for part or the whole of the Chapter. Persons invited in this way do not have and cannot be given a deliberative vote in the Chapter.

**e) The Chapter in Progress**

**222.** The General Chapter assembles on the day set down in the letter of convocation. The members of the Chapter make a retreat together. The Chapter then opens with a Eucharistic celebration.

**222.1** A set of procedural regulations, drawn up in advance by the General Council, is proposed for approval by the Chapter.

**222.2** In the course of its first assembly the Chapter begins by verifying its own legal status and that of each member.

**222.3** The Superior General proposes the two youngest members as tellers, to check and count votes.

**222.4** After the opening session the Superior General and his Council present two reports. The first treats of the general state of the Congregation, the other of material and financial affairs.

**222.5** Next the procedure for the Chapter is discussed, altered if necessary, and then adopted.

**222.6** The moderators are then elected, and also the secretary and assistant secretary. They are elected on the first ballot by an absolute majority of the valid vote and in the event of a second ballot by a relative majority. They are not necessarily members of the Chapter.

**222.7** The remaining members of the Central Commission are then elected. It becomes responsible from then on for the management of the Chapter. The Chapter procedural regulations set down the time in office of the Central Commission either for the entire Chapter or for periods that are renewable.

**223.** The presence of two thirds of the members is required for the validity of the meetings of the Chapter.

**224.** Decisions that concern changes to the Spiritan Rule of Life need a majority of two thirds of the valid votes. Other decisions need but an absolute majority.

**225.** It is the Superior General's prerogative to declare the Chapter closed.

**225.1** After the Chapter the General Council sets up a committee, which shall include at least

one member of the Chapter, to take charge of the editing of the papers from the Chapter.

**225.2** Such texts are published by the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, following upon approval by the Holy See should that be necessary.

**225.3** The act of promulgation shall fix the date when the decisions of the Chapter come into force.

**225.4** A year after the publication of the texts from the Chapter, each circumscription through its superior shall report to the Superior General on how the decisions of the Chapter have been put into effect.

**f) The Election of the Superior General and Council**

**226.** The election of the Superior General and Council is held at the time that is most suitable for their entry into office before the close of the Chapter.

**226.1** The procedure for these elections is set out in Appendix I, SRL 235 to 244.3.

**THE ADMINISTRATION OF MATERIAL GOODS**

*General Principles*

**227.** The material goods of the Congregation are administered in accordance with Canon and Civil law.

**228.** The Congregation and the circumscriptions, but not the houses, are juridical persons, with the power to acquire, possess, administer and dispose of material goods.

**229.** All the Congregation's goods are put to use to serve its aims. This completely excludes the accumulation of goods for the sole purpose of possession. To prevent abuses, the authorities of the Congregation carefully investigate the use made of possessions and the policy of financial investments.

**230.** The way of living together in community that we practise requires not only the sharing of possessions both within and between circumscriptions but, in addition, an individual acceptance of shared responsibility in material and financial affairs. So these affairs cannot be handed over to the care of "specialists" who are then left to themselves.

Each office-bearer in the Congregation has the task of discovering apt means to improve collaboration in this responsibility.

**230.1** The possessions of the Congregation are never registered under a single signature.

**230.2** The same rule applies to the personal bank accounts required by some civil authorities.

*The Management in Circumscriptions*

**231.** The rules below govern the management of material goods by circumscriptions.

**231.1** Each circumscription, being a moral person, has the right to possess property. The status of a juridical person shall be acquired in the state or states where it is established.

**231.2** All the possessions of a circumscription, both movable and immovable, must be protected by legal title properly registered.

**231.3** Possessions are to be insured by policies taken out with well-established companies. These policies shall include civil responsibility arising from ownership, and perhaps also insurance of the personnel in keeping with the law and the customs of the country.

**231.4** Each circumscription makes every effort to attain financial independence. For this purpose it may establish a Reserve Fund with a capital fixed by its council in agreement with the General Council.

**231.5** Circumscriptions take the steps necessary to insure their members against illness and pay into a retirement or pension fund.

**231.6** The General Council shall be consulted about important property transactions. It gives

its advice in writing. The prescriptions of Canon 638.3 shall also be observed.

**231.7** One circumscription may in special circumstances directly help another, on condition that it inform the General Council.

#### *The Management of the General Administration*

**232.** The following rules govern the management of material goods by the General Administration.

**232.1** The financial security of the General Administration is ensured against difficult times by a Reserve Fund.

**232.2** Interest from this Reserve Fund allows it to meet the larger part of its needs and the demands which are put on the Administration by the service it gives to the whole Congregation.

**232.3** Granted that a capital sum which would suffice to provide interest adequate for all the expenses of the General Administration is beyond our means, what is lacking has to be made up by contributions from the various circumscriptions.

**232.4** This contribution is settled by the General Council in agreement with the circumscription.

**232.5** This contribution is proportioned to the total number of confreres of the circumscription. This total includes only those between

their mission appointment and the age for retirement. Those who are permanent invalids are not included.

**232.6** Should the General Council have a surplus, it decides how to use it:

- to build up the Reserve,
- or to increase the Allocation Fund,
- or for the “Cor Unum” account.

**232.7** An allocation Capital Fund is maintained. The interest from this capital is paid into the “Cor Unum” account which the General Council shares out according to the needs of the Congregation.

**232.8** For the purpose of making this distribution the appeals for help that have been sent in are carefully evaluated and dealt with in order of need.

**232.9** To build up this Capital Fund the General Council may also appeal to organisations likely to answer the needs that are in question.

### *Disputes*

**233.** Whether we act as individuals or as a collectivity, whether in the Congregation’s name or not, disputes or litigation with regard to material goods are to be avoided in so far as is possible.

**233.1** It is however right to have recourse to legitimate vindication should our rights or our interests be gravely endangered.

**233.2** The express written permission of the major superior is required before entering any legal action before a civil tribunal.

### *Contracts*

**234.** Contracts are drawn up to cover every work that is confided to the Congregation and for every job given to a Spiritan, whether by a Church body or any other.

**234.1** Contracts shall specify:

- the apostolic responsibilities that are undertaken;
- the duration of the contract;
- conditions for annulment or renewal of the contract;
- the material support of the confreres employed in the work;
- monthly payment to be received;
- travel expenses;
- board and lodging;
- health insurance and pension payments.

**234.2** Contracts concerning Spiritans are drawn up by the major superiors. They are signed too by the member whom they concern.

**234.3** Contracts that concern a circumscription (as a unity) are entered into by the major superior, with the consent of his council and the agreement of the General Council.

**234.4** In works or establishments that do not belong to the Congregation but are placed under its care, we always make a clear distinction between what belongs to the Congregation and what belongs to the work or establishment.

## Appendix I

### THE ELECTION OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL AND OF HIS COUNCIL

**235.** The General Chapter elects the Superior General.

**235.1** Capitulants may privately seek information about possible candidates so as to be able to cast an informed vote. However, canvassing for oneself or for others is not permitted.

**235.2** Voting is by secret ballot.

**236.** The method of election is as follows:

- the first ballot is purely exploratory;
- it is followed by a second and if necessary by a third round of balloting, in which a majority of two thirds of those present is required for election;
- if these two rounds give no result, a fourth round of balloting is held, with an absolute majority being sufficient for election;
- if there is still no result, a fifth round of balloting is held, to separate the two candidates who have received the greatest number of votes;
- should a tie result, a further ballot is held;
- if there is still a tie, the elder is elected *ipso facto* (Canon 119.1).

**236.1** In any single session the maximum of ballots is two. Moreover after each ballot the session is suspended for at least a quarter hour.

**236.2** The person elected shall have an interval of at least two days, from being told of his election, to decide whether to accept or not. If he should refuse, then a fresh election is held, commencing the balloting from the beginning again.

**237.** An elected candidate who accepts is officially declared Superior General by the president of the Chapter.

**237.1** Following the declaration of his election, each capitulant promises obedience to the new Superior General.

**237.2** The General Procurator to the Holy See then notifies the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

**238.** The out-going Superior General cannot be re-elected.

**239.** If the position of Superior General should become vacant because of death, resignation or any other cause, the First Assistant becomes Superior General and fulfils the office up to the following ordinary General Chapter.

**240.** The Chapter proceeds, following its election of the Superior General, to elect the General Assistants.

**240.1** The General Assistants are seven in number. Six are elected by the General Chapter. The seventh, the General Bursar, is appointed by the Superior General with the consent of his Council after consultation with the major superiors.

**241.** The General Assistants must be professed with perpetual vows and be at least thirty years of age.

**241.1** The following are the criteria used for their election:

- they represent the Congregation and not a particular territory;
- it is necessary to ensure internationality in the composition of the Council;
- they are selected because their competencies complement each other, and because they are capable of teamwork and of leading and inspiring others (F. *capacité d'animateur*).

The newly elected Superior General can express his opinion about the choice of his Assistants.

**241.2** The procedure for the election of Assistants is as follows:

- each capitulant writes on his ballot paper as many names as there are Assistants to be elected;
- the first round of voting is purely exploratory;
- in the second and third ballot a majority of two thirds is required for election;

- for election in the fourth ballot an absolute majority is required;
- if a result has still not been obtained, election on a fifth ballot is by a relative majority;
- in the case where two or more candidates remain still tied, a further round of balloting is held to decide between them.

**241.3** Those who have been elected shall have two days in which to decide whether to accept appointment as General Assistant.

**242.** The mandate of the General Assistants is for eight years.

**243.** They cannot be re-elected.

**244.** The Chapter elects the First Assistant from among the General Assistants. He must be a priest. In a second balloting it elects the Second Assistant.

**244.1** The following is the procedure for these two elections:

- in a first and second ballot the required majority is two thirds;
- in a third ballot an absolute majority;
- then a relative majority;
- should a tie remain, a further ballot decides between the candidates.

**244.2** In the event of a vacancy as Assistant occurring between two ordinary General Chapters, by reason of death, resignation or any other cause, the General Council elects a replacement following the consultations which it judges necessary.

**244.3** After the election of the new General Council, the outgoing Superior General and his Council continue to be part of the Chapter. The new Superior General and the new Assistants, if they have not already been members, now become members of the Chapter. In the event of the new Superior General being absent from the Chapter, the Chapter deliberations are suspended pending his arrival.

## Appendix II

### THE COMPETENCIES OF THE VARIOUS COUNCILS

#### THE COUNCIL OF A CIRCUMSCRIPTION

**245.** Certain decisions require that the major superior consult the council of the circumscription.

**245.1** The following require this consultation:

- 1) the admission of a candidate to the novitiate;
- 2) the transfer of a member, within or from the circumscription;
- 3) the choice of personnel for special training;
- 4) the arrangements concerning missionary experience during formation;
- 5) the refusal to allow renewal of temporary profession;
- 6) the initiation of a process of dismissal (Canon 697).

**246.** Certain decisions require according to general law the deliberative vote of the council of the circumscription.

**246.1** The following require this vote:

- 1) the founding of a house (with the prior written consent of the diocesan bishop), the setting up of a regional community or of any other type of work;

- 2) the way the community council is to be set up in a large community;
- 3) the convoking and organising of the chapter and of other meetings of the circumscription;
- 4) the drafting and passing of new rules in the circumscription;
- 5) the appointment or removal of the bursar or secretary of the circumscription;
- 6) the appointment or removal of superiors, bursars, directors of a work, directors of novices, members of the formation personnel;
- 7) the granting to a confrere of permission to live outside community in accord with Canon 665.1;
- 8) admitting to temporary or to perpetual profession;
- 9) admission to stable ministries (Canons 230, 1035) and to holy orders;
- 10) the prolongation of temporary vows for more than six years but not for more than nine;
- 11) the determination of the general orientations of formation in the circumscription;
- 12) the creation of whatever structure is needed in the quest for vocations and their fostering;
- 13) the creation of a formation stage to precede the noviceship;
- 14) the decision as to when in formation the novitiate takes place;

- 15) the prolongation of noviceship, but for not longer than six months;
- 16) the setting up of periods of apostolic experience in the course of the noviceship;
- 17) the decision regarding the duration and the contents of the preparatory period before perpetual profession;
- 18) the decisions about retreats and recollections in the circumscription;
- 19) the signing of a contract with an associate member;
- 20) entering into contracts in the name of the circumscription;
- 21) approving budgets, balance-sheets and the financial reports of the circumscription;
- 22) the sale of movable or immovable property, within the limitations imposed either by the general law of the Church (Canon 638) or local law or decisions of General Chapters;
- 23) the authorisation of extraordinary expenses in a community.

#### **THE GENERAL COUNCIL**

**247.** Certain decisions necessitate the consultative vote of the General Council.

**247.1** The request for dispensation from perpetual vows necessitates this consultation.

**248.** According to Canon law, certain decisions demand the deliberative vote of the General Council.

**248.1** Decisions concerning evangelisation:

- 1) the acceptance of a new field of apostolate or the leaving of one where we have been engaged;
- 2) the appointment, the removal or the transfer of ecclesiastical superiors who are members of the Congregation.

**248.2** Decisions concerning persons:

- 1) the resignation or removal of a General Assistant and election of a replacement;
- 2) the appointment of an official Visitor who is not a member of the General Council and deciding the terms of reference of his task;
- 3) the mission appointment of a member at the end of his initial formation;
- 4) certain cases of transfer of a member from one circumscription to another;
- 5) a change of “circumscription of origin”;
- 6) the appointment or confirmation of election of superiors of circumscriptions, or their removal from office before the end of their term;
- 7) appointment of a superior as a major superior, outside cases of provincial superiors;
- 8) appointment of the General Bursar;

- 9) appointment of the General Secretary and the persons in charge of the other services of the General Administration;
- 10) appointment of formation personnel in houses of an international character;
- 11) permission to spend the noviceship in a house other than the novitiate house (Canon 647.2).
- 12) authorisation given to a circumscription to admit to first profession for one year, twice renewable.

**248.3** Decisions concerning circumscriptions and houses:

- 1) establishment, reunification, modification or canonical suppression of a circumscription;
- 2) canonical suppression of a Spiritan house, following consultation with the diocesan bishop (Canon 616.1);
- 3) establishment, transfer or suppression of a novitiate (Canon 647.1);
- 4) authorising a circumscription to undertake additional commitments that necessitate added investment of money and of manpower;
- 5) the founding of new missions, or of a work that is a new departure, under the direct control of the General Administration; also the uniting of houses or works already in existence;

- 6) setting up or suppression of international houses of formation;
- 7) the creation, the approval of the organisation and the functioning of Unions of Circumscriptions.

**248.4** Decisions concerning law-making and the General Chapter:

- 1) convoking and preparing for the General Chapter and Enlarged General Council;
- 2) promulgating the acts and decisions of the General Chapter;
- 3) dispensing, in certain cases, from regulations specific to the Congregation, with the power to delegate the faculty of dispensation to major superiors;
- 4) promulgating regulations and ordinances within the framework of the Spiritan Rule of Life and Chapter decisions;
- 5) interpreting private Spiritan law, in cases of doubt, in a declaratory but not in an extensive sense;
- 6) approving the acts of chapters of circumscriptions or of assemblies that have the same status.

**248.5** Decisions with regard to material possessions:

- 1) approving the budget and checking the accounts of the General Bursar;

- 2) approving the extraordinary expenditures not provided for in the General Bursar's budget;
- 3) permitting the acquisition of properties and goods in the name of the Congregation;
- 4) allocating the revenues from the Allocation Capital Fund and the Cor Unum Account;
- 5) permitting the alienation of movable or immovable capital of the Congregation;
- 6) authorising a circumscription to go guarantor for sums not in excess of the limits imposed either by common Church law or local legislation.

**248.6** Decisions with regard to separation from the Institute:

- 1) exclaustation not exceeding three years;
- 2) presentation to the Holy See of a request for imposed exclaustation;
- 3) dispensation from temporary vows;
- 4) permission to transfer to a different Institute;
- 5) authorisation for a cleric to be incardinated in a diocese;
- 6) readmission into the Congregation, even with a dispensation from repeating the noviceship or with permission to make it outside the novitiate house;
- 7) for decisions relative to the dismissal of a cleric, the vote is collegial and the prescriptions of Canons 694-703 are followed.

## Appendix III

### ABSENCE OR SEPARATION FROM THE CONGREGATION

**249.** Every case dealt with in this Appendix imposes a duty of scrupulous regard for equity and of fraternal charity.

#### *Readmission*

**250.** A member who legitimately leaves the Congregation, having completed the noviceship or having made profession, may be readmitted by the Superior General with the consent of his Council without the obligation of repeating the noviceship. The Superior General decides the conditions of such a readmission (Canon 690.1).

#### *Absence*

**251.** If a member absents himself from his community with the intention of withdrawing from the authority of his superiors, the latter shall make every effort to contact him, help him come back and persevere in his vocation (Canon 665.2). If the member proves obstinate, the canonical procedure for dismissal may be begun (cf. SRL 204).

*Exclaustration*

**252.** For a grave reason the Superior General with the consent of his Council can grant an indult of exclaustration to a perpetually professed member. Such an indult cannot be granted for a period of more than three years. In the case of a cleric, this requires the prior consent of the local ordinary of the place where the cleric is going to live. To extend this indult, or to grant one for more than three years, is reserved to the Holy See (Canon 686.1).

**253.** At the request of the Superior General with the consent of his Council, exclaustration can be imposed on a member by the Holy See for a grave reason, equity and charity being observed (Canon 686.3).

**254.** Exclaustrated members have neither active nor passive vote. The indult of exclaustration specifies their religious and canonical situation (Canon 687).

*Leaving the Congregation*

**255.** A professed member with temporary vows may leave the Congregation when they expire (Canon 688.1).

**256.** A professed member with temporary vows may ask to leave the Congregation for grave reason during the time of his vows. The permission to leave is given by the Superior General with the consent of his Coun-

cil (Canon 688.2). The member is released *ipso facto* from his vows.

**257.** A professed member with temporary vows may, if there is just cause, be refused renewal of his vows at their expiry, by the superior of the circumscription who has taken the advice of his council (Canon 689.1).

**258.** A physical or psychological infirmity, even though it may have been contracted after profession, which, in the judgement of experts, renders the member unsuited to lead a life in the Institute, constitutes a reason for not admitting the member to renewal of profession or to perpetual profession, unless the infirmity was contracted through the negligence of the Congregation or because of work performed in the Congregation (Canon 689.2).

**259.** A professed member in temporary vows who becomes insane, cannot, even though incapable of making a new profession, be dismissed from the Congregation (Canon 689.3).

**260.** A professed member in perpetual vows may for very grave reasons, weighed before the Lord, seek from the Holy See an indult to leave. This indult is to be asked from the Superior General, who sends the petition to the Holy See with his opinion and that of his Council (Canon 691).

**261.** The member is notified of the indult to leave the Congregation. It brings a dispensation from the vows and from all obligations arising from profession unless the member refuses to accept the indult at the moment when he is notified of it (Canon 692).

**262.** If the member is a cleric, the indult is not granted until he has found a bishop who will incardinate him or receive him on probation (Canon 693).

*Transfer to another Institute*

**263.** For a definite transfer to another religious institute, a perpetually professed member must necessarily obtain the permission of the Superiors General of the two institutes, given with the consent of their respective Councils (Canon 684.1).

**264.** Transfer to a secular institute or to a society of apostolic life requires an indult from the Holy See (Canon 684.5).

*Dismissal*

**265.** The dismissal of a professed member, especially one with perpetual vows, requires very grave reasons, of an external nature and juridically proven.

**266.** A member is automatically dismissed from the Congregation if:

- he has notoriously defected from the Roman Catholic faith;
- he has contracted marriage or attempted to do so, even civilly.

In these cases the major superior with his council must not delay. Having collected the evidence he makes a declaration of the facts, so that the dismissal is juridically established (Canon 694).

**267.** Canon Law sets out a certain number of cases where a professed member may be or ought to be dismissed. The principal are:

- cases of crime against human life or liberty;
- repeated breach of the obligations arising from the vows, particularly:
  - a serious misappropriation of funds, properties and goods;
  - the violation of the sixth commandment committed with a minor under the age of 18 years (Canon 1395.2), without prejudice to the instructions of the *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith* on how to handle the matter;
- unlawful absence for more than 6 months (Canon 696.1);
- cases of public scandal or of grave harm threatening the Congregation;
- conducting a defamation campaign against a confrere (Canon 1390.2).

The procedure for dismissal is given in Canons 695 to 701 of the Code of Canon Law. At every stage in the procedure of dismissal the member concerned has the right to defend himself, to communicate directly with the Superior General, and to appeal *in suspensivo* to the Holy See within ten days upon the receipt of the notification (Canon 700). By lawful dismissal both the vows and the rights and duties deriving from profession automatically cease (Canon 701).

#### *Laicisation*

**268.** Cases of loss of the clerical state are governed by common law (Canons 290-293).

**269.** A member who leaves, or is dismissed from, the Congregation has no right to indemnity or remuneration for the period he spent in the Institute. The Congregation, nevertheless, should show equity and evangelical charity towards him (Canon 702). In case of necessity the Congregation should assist him materially for a certain length of time. Every member shall try to remain in touch with him and to maintain friendly relations with him.

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Reference is to the New Jerusalem Bible, Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1985, from which quotations are taken. In SRL 4 and 7, however, to retain words of import in the text, the previous (1966) Jerusalem Bible is used.

### **References to Documents of the Holy See**

<i>No.</i>		
15.3	<i>Ad Gentes</i>	Decree of the Second Vatican Council on the missionary activity of the Church.
11	<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i>	Encyclical letter of Pope Paul VI.
93, 97	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i>	Dogmatic Constitution of the Second Vatican Council on the Sacred Liturgy.

**Numbers in the Rule referring  
to the Code of Canon Law**

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<i>No.</i>	
3	Rule 1849 <sup>1</sup> N.D. X <sup>2</sup>
4	N.D. XIII
4	N.D. II
5	N.D. XIII
6	N.D. X
8	Glose <sup>3</sup>
14	Rule 1849 N.D. X
16.2.	N.D. IX
27	Rule 1849 N.D. X
30	Rule 1849 N.D. X
38	N.D. XIII
49	N.D. II
88	N.D. XIII
100	refer to No. 3 above.

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<sup>1</sup> *Règlements de la Congrégation du Saint-Esprit sous l'invocation de l'Immaculé Coeur de Marie* – Paris, Gaume Frères 1849.

<sup>2</sup> *Notes et documents relatifs à la vie et à l'oeuvre du Vén. Libermann* – 13 volumes and supplement, Mother House, Paris, 1929-1949.

<sup>3</sup> *Glose: Règle provisoire des missionnaires de Libermann, avec la Glose du Père Lannurien, pro manuscripto*; Mortain, France 1967.

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