

# Constitutions and Rules

of the  
Clerics Regular of Somasca

*Original Italian Edition:*  
*Rome – Curia General 2017*

Houston, Texas, USA  
*2018 English Edition*

*Based on the 2006 Italian Edition*  
*Revised and Translated*  
*after the 2005 and 2011 General Chapters*  
*by the Somaskan Society Publication, Bangalore – India*  
*with the modifications done*  
*by the 2017 General Chapter and*  
*approved by the Apostolic See on January 22, 2018.*



Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.

*(Mt 11:28-30)*

The coat of arms of the Congregation bears the image of Christ carrying the cross, with the inscription: *Onus Meum Leve (My Burden Is Light)*. It was chosen by our Fathers in the General Chapter of 1610.

Prot. No. 58/18

Object: “*Nulla osta*” (no objection) publication of the CCRR in English.

The undersigned Fr. Franco Moscone, Superior General of the Congregation of the Clerics Regular of Somasca,

### GRANTS

his *nihil obstat* (no objection) to the publication of the text of the *Constitutions and Rules* in English language.

We acknowledge that the translation is in conformity to the Italian original, and includes the amendments made by the General Chapters of 2005, 2011, and 2017. Such amendments were approved by the *Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life* of the Apostolic See.

Rome, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018, Solemnity of Ascension.

  
Fr. Augusto Bussi Roncalini crs  
General Chancellor

  
Fr. Franco Moscone crs  
Superior General





## The Superior General's Presentation

*With my heart filled with gratitude to the Lord, I am glad to present the new text of the Constitutions and Rules to the whole Congregation.*

*In communion of faith with the Church, our religious family has undertaken the work, required by the Second Vatican Council, of renewing and updating the Constitutions. It has greatly committed itself to this endeavor, according to the instructions of the Apostolic Letter *Ecclesiae Sanctae*. Sign of and witness to it are the texts of the Constitutions and Rules which came into force *ad experimentum* on June 29th, 1968 and January 1st, 1970. They will remain forever as a necessary reference to know how the Congregation tried to adapt her way of living, praying, and working to the conditions of our time, while remaining faithful to our Founder and charism.*

*The same desire of renewal, in dynamic faithfulness to the spirit of our pristine regulations, compelled the General Chapter of 1975 to prolong the experiment in order to deepen the fundamental values of our tradition.*

*This work, to which all confrères gave their contribution in different ways, through the extraordinary Chapter of 1979-*

1980 and the ordinary one of 1981, came to conclusion with the drawing of a text to be presented to the Holy See.

The approval of the Church was granted on February 8th, 1983. Later on, in order to harmonize our proper law to the new Code of Canon Law, a few changes were introduced. They were approved by the Holy See with a decree dated January 10th, 1985.

Therefore, the Constitutions and Rules that the Congregation, our Mother, gave to herself in order to fulfil her own mission according to the Lord's grace, come now to all of us. The Holy Spirit we have received in order to know the plans and the works of God urges our hearts to welcome them with a constant attitude of faith.

As Scripture has it, every authentic law of the redeemed people is born from a fundamental experience of salvation, and is aimed at leading the community to live in the Lord's covenant. The Constitutions and Rules which are entrusted to us are, therefore, a singular gift of the goodness of God, who raised our religious family and leads her from generation to generation, making her a living witness to His faithful and merciful love, according to St. Jerome's charism. In this light of faith, therefore, they arrive as a privileged means through which our beloved Father comforts us in the love of Christ and in the observance of the Christian rule.

In the Constitutions and Rules, in fact, the need of "remaining with Christ" resounds with different accents, a need that according to our Saint is fundamental for the Congregation to fulfil herself at the service of the orphans and the poor. This need, written by the Spirit of God in the heart of each one of us, constitutes the profound secret of the prophetic and apostolic vocation we received. The very particular norms that characterize the concrete style of our life, aim at drawing the lines within which we open with increasing availability to the One who wants to use us so that the Congregation continue her work in favor of the Church for the life of the world. In both, the fundamental need and the particular norms, is therefore present the spiritual richness that, springing from our Founder, constitutes the living tradition of our religious family.

For this reason the Constitutions and Rules indicate the path in which we are led by the Holy Spirit, so that our hearts may be filled of the feelings which were Christ Jesus', and we



*may participate in the love of God, father of the orphans and defender of the poor. As a consequence, their observance becomes an essential expression of our response to the divine call, and a concrete sign of our love for the Congregation. Only by observing them with joy and commitment will we experience that the Lord continues to manifest His glory in us through our father St. Jerome, become humble instruments of the divine salvation and, more and more united in reciprocal love, walk in sanctity and justice, intent on the goal of perfection.*

*For these fruits to become a consoling experience of our consecrated life and religious family, it is necessary that the Constitutions and Rules be deeply known and studied with the same faith by which we are called to live them.*

*Then, we will truly be able to assimilate, in all their fruitful vitality, the values which characterize our spirituality and manifest in time and space the shining energy of the charism of our Founder. In this context we will develop, not with man's wisdom but with the Wisdom that comes from God, the richness of virtues implied into the Constitutions, so that they may become truly a book of life for all our family, a book that ceaselessly animates the whole Congregation to be attentive to the voice of God, capable of discerning His ways every day in order to be present wherever the Lord calls her, with the same ardor of love for which St. Jerome was called "refuge of the poor."*

*Dear Brothers,*

*aware of the grace that the Lord grants to us, but also of the responsibility to which He calls us, I join you in invoking the Spirit with faith and hope, so that His fire may never grow cold in us, and, through the book of life that is offered to us, we may experience and pass on what we ourselves have received: the extraordinary greatness of the benign mercy of God that shines in the evangelical witness of our Founder and Father.*

*Next year we will celebrate with joy and innermost gratitude the fifth centennial of his birth. Our family, who, in her already long history, has experienced the paternal guidance of St. Jerome, entrusts herself to his intercession so that it may always be the "Company of the Servants of the Poor," certain of achieving the goal, if she will remain with Christ and trust in Him alone.*

*May the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom we invoke with the sweet title of Mother of the Orphans, sustain our prayer, so that our Congregation may experience through these Constitutions and Rules, in a renewed spring, the blossoming of the works for which God raised her.*

*May the Lord hear the holy prayer we raise to Him. May the grace of the Holy Spirit possess our hearts and make us a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. To Him, who alone is wise and has the power to confirm us in His love, through Jesus Christ, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Somasca, February 8th, 1985.

Fr. Pierino Moreno, crs  
Superior General



SACRED CONGREGATION  
FOR RELIGIOUS  
AND SECULAR INSTITUTES

Prot. N. S. 44-1/82

**DECREE**

The Clerics Regular of Somasca, whose General House is in Rome, devote themselves to the care of the orphaned and abandoned children and of the poor, to the education of youth, and pastoral ministry. They commit themselves to manifest with works of mercy the love of the Father and the benignity of our saviour Jesus Christ.

Taking inspiration from the directives of the Second Vatican Council and other ecclesiastical instructions, they have elaborated a new text of Constitutions that the Superior General, after a period of experimentation, presented to the Holy See on behalf of the Chapter, asking for its approval.

This sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, after having entrusted the text to the study of its Experts, having taken into consideration the positive vote of the Congress which was held the fourth of February, by this present Decree approves and confirms it with the changes indicated by the same Congress, according to the copy that is found in its Archives, after having observed what has to be observed in accordance with the Law.

“Trusting in the Lord and having faith and hope in Him alone,” the Clerics Regular of Somasca will “live their offering in humility of heart, meekness, and benignity;” they will therefore be able to be more easily “servants of Christ’s poor” in the Church and in the world, according to the example and teaching of their Founder, St. Jerome Emiliani.

Rome, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 1983, feast of St. Jerome Emiliani.

+ A. Mayer, osb, Secretary

E. Card. Pironio, Prefect



# Abbreviations

## **From the Scripture:**

<b>Acts</b>	Acts of the Apostles
<b>Col</b>	Letter to the Colossians
<b>1Cor</b>	First Letter to the Corinthians
<b>2Cor</b>	Second Letter to the Corinthians
<b>Deut</b>	Book of Deuteronomy
<b>Eph</b>	Letter to the Ephesians
<b>Gal</b>	Letter to the Galatians
<b>Heb</b>	Letter to the Hebrews
<b>Jn</b>	Gospel of John
<b>Lk</b>	Gospel of Luke
<b>Mt</b>	Gospel of Matthew
<b>Phil</b>	Letter to the Philippians
<b>Ps</b>	Book of Psalms
<b>1Pt</b>	First Letter of Peter
<b>2Pt</b>	Second Letter of Peter
<b>Rom</b>	Letter to the Romans
<b>1Thess</b>	First Letter to the Thessalonians

## **From Magisterial Documents:**

<b>CIC</b>	Codex Iuris Canonici (Code of Canon Law, Jan. 25, 1983)
<b>ES</b>	Ecclesiae Sanctae (Paul VI, Apostolic letter issued Motu proprio, Aug. 6th, 1966)
<b>ET</b>	Evangelica Testificatio (Paul VI, Apostolic exhortation, Jun. 29th, 1971)
<b>GE</b>	Gravissimum Educationis (Second Vatican Council, Declaration on christian education, Oct. 28th, 1965)
<b>IGLH</b>	Institutio generalis de liturgia horarum (General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours. Issued by Paul VI on Nov. 1st, 1970 by means of the Apostolic constitution <i>Laudis Canticum</i> .)
<b>LG</b>	Lumen Gentium (Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic constitution on the Church, Nov. 21st, 1964)
<b>OT</b>	Optatam Totius (Second Vatican Council, Decree on priestly training, Oct. 28th, 1965)

**OUI** Ordo unctionis infirmorum eorumque pastoralis curae (Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum. General Introduction. Issued by Paul VI on Nov. 30th, 1972 by means of the Apostolic constitution *Sacramentum unctionem infirmorum*.)

**PC** *Perfectae Caritatis* (Second Vatican Council, Decree on adaptation and renewal of religious life, Oct. 28th, 1965)

**PD** *Post duos menses* (Paul VI, Speech at the conclusion of the third session of the Second Vatican Council, Nov. 21st, 1964)

**SC** *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the sacred liturgy, Dec. 4th, 1963)

### **From Documents of the Somascan Tradition:**

**An** Life of the Most Distinguished Sir Jerome Miani Venetian Nobleman. Venice 1537 (also known as the “Life of the Anonymous”). (Constitutions and Rules. Appendix V)

**BP** Book of Proposals (also known as “Manuscript No. 30”). (Ordini e costituzioni fino al 1569. I. Libro delle proposte (1536-1538). *Fonti per la storia dei Somaschi*, 4. Rome 1978)

**C1555** Constitutions that are observed by the Congregation of Somasca dedicated to the ministry of the orphans in the cities of Lombardy. Bergamo 1555 (?). (Constitutions and Rules. Appendix III)

**C1569** Constitutions of 1569. (*Constitutiones et ordinationes clericorum regularium congregationis S. Maioli Papiæ vel de Sumascha*. In: *Fonti per la storia dei Somaschi*, 8. Rome 1979. 21-61)

**C1591** Constitutions of 1591. (*Liber constitutionum clericorum regularium S. Maioli Papiæ, seu congregationis somaschæ*. *Fonti per la storia dei Somaschi*, 22. Rome 1993)

**C1626** Constitutions of 1626. (*Constitutiones Clericorum Regularium a Somascha*. Editio quarta. Rome 1927)

**GRI** General Rules for the Institutions. 1555 (?). (Ordini e costituzioni fino al 1569. II. 2. Ordini generali per le opere. [...] (1550-1560). *Fonti per la storia dei Somaschi*, 7. Rome 1978. 17-35)

**1Let** Letter of St. Jerome. Venice, July 5th, 1535. (Constitutions and Rules. Appendix I)

**2Let** Letter of St. Jerome. Venice, July 21st, 1535. (Constitutions and Rules. Appendix I)

**3Let** Letter of St. Jerome. Brescia, June 14th, 1536 (?). (Constitutions and Rules. Appendix I)

**4Let** Letter of St. Jerome. St. Martin's Valley, the day of Our Lady (September 8th, 1536?). (Constitutions and Rules. Appendix I)

**5Let** Letter of St. Jerome. Somasca, December 30th, 1536. (Constitutions and Rules. Appendix I)

**6Let** Letter of St. Jerome. Somasca, January 11th, 1537. (Constitutions and Rules. Appendix I)

**Lipp** Pastoral Letter of Bishop Peter Lippomano. Bergamo 1533. (In: Landini G., S. Girolamo Miani. Rome 1947. 483-485)

**Molf** Dedicatory Epistle of Fr. Friar Jerome Molfetta. Approved in Milan, 1539; published in Venice, 1558. (In: Landini G., S. Girolamo Miani. Rome 1947. 489-491)

**OP** Our Prayer. (Constitutions and Rules. Appendix II)

**Note:** quotations of the Constitutions of 1626 are followed by a paragraph number (e.g. "C1626 965"). The text of 1626 carries the weight of the early decades of our Order. The numbering of paragraphs from beginning to end, however, was included only in the edition of 1927. "C1927 965" would be therefore more accurate, but fail to highlight the authoritativeness of this source.





# The Somascan Congregation

## 1. *Founder.*

The humble Congregation of the Somascan religious<sup>1</sup>  
originates from the *Company of the Servants of the Poor*,  
which was founded in the Church of God  
by St. Jerome Emiliani  
under the action of the Holy Spirit.  
Converted to God and deeply renewed  
through the intercession of the Virgin Mary,  
ardently desiring to follow the way of the Crucified  
and to imitate Christ, his Master<sup>2</sup>,  
he became poor  
and dedicated his whole being to serving the poor<sup>3</sup>.  
Moved by divine love,  
he attracted other men  
who, out of love for the Gospel,  
offered themselves to Christ along with him<sup>4</sup>.  
Committed to all kinds of works of mercy,  
our most fervent Father  
proposed to himself and his companions  
a way of life  
which manifests the offering of oneself to Christ<sup>5</sup>  
in serving the poor.  
For this reason, in the beginning people used to call them  
Fathers of the Works and the Poor<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> C 162 1.

<sup>2</sup> An 5,5.

<sup>3</sup> Lipp 483.

<sup>4</sup> Molf 490.

<sup>5</sup> 6Let 6.

<sup>6</sup> C 1626 2.

### *2. Recognition by the Church.*

On December 6th, 1568, St. Pius V included the new Company, that was developing with rich fruits for the Church, among the Congregations of the Clerics Regular<sup>7</sup>. He gave her the right to profess solemn vows and subjected her directly to the Apostolic See.

### *3. Apostolic Mission.*

From the very beginning, for the good of the Church, and in order to respond to the appeals of her shepherds, our Congregation has undertaken various apostolic activities inspired by the love of Christ<sup>8</sup>. With the same intense love of her Founder, our Congregation continues to devote herself to the material and spiritual care of orphans and the poor<sup>9</sup>, undertakes the human and Christian education of youth and pastoral ministry.

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<sup>7</sup> C 1626 5.

<sup>8</sup> C 1626 2 and 4.

<sup>9</sup> C 1626 913.

#### 4. *Form of Life.*

The Somascan Congregation  
is a clerical institute of pontifical right,  
consisting of religious, priests and laymen.  
Their lifestyle is the same,  
even though their ministries are different<sup>10</sup>.  
Following the example of Jesus and his disciples,  
her members live in community<sup>11</sup>  
sharing everything in common;  
they persevere united in prayer and work, strive for the  
perfection of charity<sup>12</sup>  
in humility of heart, meekness, and benignity<sup>13</sup>,  
loving poverty and work,  
with the most ardent desire  
to attract and unite all people to God<sup>14</sup>.

#### 5. *Constitutions and Rules.*

The life of the Congregation  
is guided by the Constitutions and Rules.  
They preserve the spirit of the early regulations  
and adapt them to the needs of the times.  
Our Congregation proposes them to those  
who wish to remain and persevere in her<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> C 1626 5.

<sup>11</sup> C 1626 41.

<sup>12</sup> LG 40

<sup>13</sup> 6Let 7.

<sup>14</sup> Molf 490.

<sup>15</sup> C 1555 13.



# PART I

Note: The text of the Constitutions is printed in Roman type;  
the text of the Rules in Italic type.

# Chapter I

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## Religious Consecration

### *6. Divine and Human Dimension of the Religious Consecration.*

In his love of predilection, God consecrates us,  
calling us to follow his Son<sup>16</sup>  
in the Somascan Congregation  
in order to renew in us the gift of grace<sup>17</sup>  
bestowed upon St. Jerome.  
Wishing to return love for love<sup>18</sup>,  
we offer ourselves freely and totally to Christ.  
Trusting in him alone<sup>19</sup>  
and docile to his Spirit,  
we resolve to live according to the Evangelical counsels  
in brotherly communion  
at the service of the poor.

### *7. Insertion in the Mystery of the Church.*

Religious consecration  
inserts us by a new way into the Mystery of the Church,  
People of God, Bride of Christ, and Temple of the Spirit<sup>20</sup>.  
Therefore, we are to be attentive to her needs,  
faithful to the directives of her shepherds,  
and zealous so that Christ may continuously renew in her  
the sanctity of the Apostolic times<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> LG 34, 39, 40, 44.

<sup>17</sup> Eph 4:7.

<sup>18</sup> C 1626 354.

<sup>19</sup> 2Let 2.

<sup>20</sup> 1Pt 2:9-10; Eph 5:25-31; 1Cor 6:19.

<sup>21</sup> OP 2.

### 8. *Religious Profession.*

By our religious profession  
we express our commitment  
to responding to the divine call.  
In it we profess the vows  
of chastity, poverty and obedience  
and commit ourselves to live in community  
according to the Constitutions and Rules.  
Profession makes us sharers in the charism  
that is recognized by the Church,  
and inserts us in the tradition of sanctity<sup>22</sup>  
that, sprung from our Founder as from a fountain,  
gives life to our Congregation until today.

### 9. *Mary, Model of Our Consecration.*

The Blessed Virgin Mary  
is the model and support of our consecrated life,  
faithful virgin and humble servant of the Lord,  
who carried out in her own life  
the evangelical beatitudes manifesting in the world  
the perfect image of the disciple of Christ<sup>23</sup>.  
We appeal to her motherly intercession  
so that God may accomplish his Word in us<sup>24</sup>  
and, made firm in faith and love<sup>25</sup>,  
we may be able to offer ourselves every day  
as a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to him<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> C 1555 2.

<sup>23</sup> PD.

<sup>24</sup> Lk 1:38.

<sup>25</sup> Gal 5:6; Eph 3:17.

<sup>26</sup> Rom 12:1.



*10. Testimony of Our Consecrated Life.*

Through our faithfulness  
God, who does great things exalting the humble<sup>27</sup>,  
transforms us into the image of his Son<sup>28</sup>,  
making us a sign of the new life<sup>29</sup>  
that unites all people in the love of the Father  
and prolongs on earth  
the predilection of Christ for the little and the poor<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> Lk 1:49; 2Let 9.

<sup>28</sup> 2Cor 3:18.

<sup>29</sup> Rom 6:4.

<sup>30</sup> LG 8 and 46.

## Chapter II

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### Chastity

#### 11. *Spiritual Value.*

Called to be united<sup>31</sup> to God with an undivided heart<sup>32</sup>,  
we foster love and zeal for chastity,  
which is a gift of the grace of the Lord  
and ornament of every perfection<sup>33</sup>.  
It opens our heart  
to a more intense experience of God's love,  
inspires and promotes brotherhood,  
and is a source of apostolic fruitfulness<sup>34</sup>.

#### 12. *Content of the Vow.*

Through the vow of consecrated chastity  
for the sake of the kingdom of heaven,  
freely and consciously assumed,  
we commit ourselves, with the Lord's help,  
to perfect continence in celibacy  
and to abstaining from what is contrary to it.

#### 13. *Means for a Life of Chastity.*

In order to remain faithful to chastity,  
we renew every day our union with the Lord  
with prayer, sacramental life,  
and a filial devotion to the Virgin Mother of God.  
Always grateful to the Lord  
for this gift he continually grants to us,  
we do not presume of our strength<sup>35</sup>,  
we trust in his help,  
and we practice mortification

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<sup>31</sup> Ps 63:8.

<sup>32</sup> 1Cor 7:32-34.

<sup>33</sup> C 1569 43.

<sup>34</sup> PC 12.

<sup>35</sup> 1Cor 10:12; C 1591 f. 17r (page 37-38).

and the custody of our senses<sup>36</sup>.

*Typical Expressions of the Somaskan Tradition.*

*The religious who loves chastity:*

A. *Fosters the means suggested for its custody.*

*Drawing inspiration from our tradition, our religious are to foster those means that are constantly proposed by it for the custody of chastity. They include: faithful fulfilment of one's duties, commitment to study and work, avoidance of laziness as the source of every evil, and use of all natural means which promote physical and mental health<sup>37</sup>.*

B. *Behaves with serene prudence.*

*In our apostolic activities, in relationships with people, and in all the circumstances of our life, we are to behave with serene freedom, enlightened prudence, and great love. In visiting people, selecting entertainments, reading books and magazines, and seeking legitimate recreation, our religious are to be always consistent with their consecration to God.*

14. *Chastity and Community.*

Special safeguard and valuable support to chastity are love, which binds the brothers together in the community<sup>38</sup>, mutual care, benevolence, and sincerity.

Superiors are to help with kindness and understanding those who might experience particular difficulties, and are to intervene with charity and prudence whenever necessary.

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<sup>36</sup> 6Let 7.12; PC 12.

<sup>37</sup> PC 12.

<sup>38</sup> PC 12.

15. *Testimony of Chastity.*

To all those with whom we relate frequently  
may we give such a testimony of chastity  
that, with joy, they may perceive  
that by God's grace  
we are in the world but do not belong to the world<sup>39</sup>;  
with us may they praise the Lord,  
who is the source of every good<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> Jn 17:11.14.

<sup>40</sup> C 1626 508.

## Chapter III

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### Poverty

#### 16. *Spiritual Value.*

Called to follow Christ Jesus  
and to imitate the example left by him and his disciples  
who lived together in communion,  
we have all things in common<sup>41</sup>.  
We also cherish in our hearts and express by our works  
the burning zeal that our Father Saint Jerome<sup>42</sup> had  
for the treasure of evangelical poverty<sup>43</sup>.  
Full of confidence in the goodness of the Lord,  
our heart free from earthly concerns,  
day by day we grow in poverty  
so as to share with our brothers and sisters  
the riches of the love of God<sup>44</sup>  
and the assistance of our fervent charity.

#### 17. *Content of the Vow.*

By the vow of poverty, we commit ourselves  
not to use and handle material goods  
without the consent of our Superiors.  
Therefore, we abstain from making and receiving  
gifts and donations,  
even from relatives and friends,  
from selling and buying,  
lending or borrowing,  
keeping in trust anything,  
and considering as personal property  
what we normally use.  
Whatever a religious acquires,  
by personal labor or on behalf of the institute,  
as well as benefits deriving from pensions or insurance,  
it all belongs to the community,

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<sup>41</sup> Acts 2:44-45; C 1569 41.

<sup>42</sup> BP f. 21v (page 52).

<sup>43</sup> Mt 13-44; C 1626 509.

<sup>44</sup> 2Cor 8:9.

and we share it fraternally in common<sup>45</sup>.

18. *Poverty of the Congregation.*

Even though our Congregation has the right to own the goods necessary for the support of her members and for the development of her apostolic works, she is committed to be a witness of poverty. Hence, she is to be very careful to avoid not only any accumulation of goods, but also what is superfluous and has an appearance of luxury<sup>46</sup>.

19. *Spirit of the Somascan Poverty.*

St. Jerome and his early companions called themselves “Servants of the Poor”<sup>47</sup> and laid down their lives for the relief of the needy. Faithful to this legacy, we recognize as our own vocation the choice for the poor<sup>48</sup>. With them we share our life<sup>49</sup> and even welcome them in our homes. Preferably, we work in underdeveloped areas<sup>50</sup>. We show an evangelical preference for what is modest and humble and commit ourselves to the common law of work<sup>51</sup>.

*Typical Expressions of the Somascan Tradition.*

*The religious who is poor:*

A. *Is confident in the Lord’s Providence.*

*Every religious is to always renew his trust in the Lord’s Providence<sup>52</sup>. In this way, he will be able to accept the hardships and risks of living in poverty with a joyous heart*

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<sup>45</sup> C 1626 516.

<sup>46</sup> PC 13.

<sup>47</sup> 6Let 6.

<sup>48</sup> GRI 33; An 14,2.7; Lipp 483.

<sup>49</sup> An 12,5.

<sup>50</sup> An 11,1-3.

<sup>51</sup> PC 13; 1Let 21-23.

<sup>52</sup> 2Let 2.

and prompt will<sup>53</sup>. Moreover, content with what the Lord grants him<sup>54</sup>, he will provide a genuine testimony of poverty.

*B. Seeks the poorest things.*

Every religious is to abstain from habits and the use of things which are not compatible with poverty. On the contrary, guided by the Lord's Spirit, he is to diligently seek the poorest things<sup>55</sup> in order to comply more faithfully with the Founder's wishes.

*C. Is willing to share everything in common.*

No one is to hold as personal those instruments whose use is allowed in the community, but is contrary to poverty if handled exclusively. Whoever is permitted to use them for a legitimate reason, is to be ready to share them at any time<sup>56</sup>. Every religious is to handle the community's goods with diligent care.

*D. Is willingly dependent upon Superiors and community.*

With regard to the daily needs, the religious is to willingly depend upon his Superiors and his community. Such dependence fosters the spirit of faith through which he begs the Providence of the Father for his daily bread<sup>57</sup>.

*E. Is helped by the example and care of his Superior.*

In every community the Superior is to be a stimulus of poverty by his example<sup>58</sup>. He will try to eliminate all abuses; but, more importantly, he is to take diligent care of his brothers with religious love by providing them with everything before being asked, so that no one may be in a condition of breaking the vow<sup>59</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> Lipp 486.

<sup>54</sup> 3Let 10.

<sup>55</sup> BP f. 21v (page 52).

<sup>56</sup> C 1626 512.

<sup>57</sup> Mt 6:11.

<sup>58</sup> C 1626 517.

<sup>59</sup> C 1626 526.

20. *Poverty as a Community Commitment.*

While adapting its structures and means to the requirements of the environment where it operates, every community is to carry out an effective poverty in its life and ministry<sup>60</sup>, and to this purpose it must proceed to a periodical evaluation. Moreover, moved by Christ's love, it is to generously respond to the appeals of the Superiors for the sake of other communities and the Congregation, for the needs of the Church and the poor<sup>61</sup>.

21. *Testimony of Poverty.*

If, with God's help,  
we will remain faithful to our vocation  
of servants of Christ's poor,  
we will offer a precious testimony to the world,  
and many will be attracted to our institutions<sup>62</sup>.

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<sup>60</sup> ET 18.

<sup>61</sup> PC 13.

<sup>62</sup> GRI 33.



## Chapter IV

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### Obedience

#### 22. *Spiritual Value.*

Following the example of Christ, who remained constantly united with his Father till death on a cross<sup>63</sup>, we offer ourselves to God seeking and accepting his will<sup>64</sup> every moment of our life. In this way, we will attain the freedom Christ promised to his disciples<sup>65</sup>, will proceed faster on the way of perfection<sup>66</sup>, and become more available to serve our brothers and sisters<sup>67</sup>.

#### 23. *Content of the Vow.*

Through the vow of obedience, we commit ourselves to executing the commands of our Superiors and carrying out the offices assigned by them in what is in accordance with our Constitutions and Rules. We recognize the Roman Pontiff as our supreme Superior; we assure our religious respect and humble service to his Magisterium and directives, even by virtue of the vow. In our Congregation, those who have the authority to give orders in virtue of holy obedience, to which we are expected to seriously obey, are: the Superior General to all religious, and the other Major Superiors,

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<sup>63</sup> Phil 2:8.

<sup>64</sup> Mt 6:10; An 10,1.

<sup>65</sup> Gal 5:1.

<sup>66</sup> C 1626 474.

<sup>67</sup> PC 14.

to the extent of their own jurisdiction.

#### *24. Exercise of Authority and Obedience.*

The Superior is to manifest Christ's love<sup>68</sup> to his brothers, entrusted to him by the Lord;

and to the Lord he will be accountable for them<sup>69</sup>.

By the particular grace inherent to the ministry of authority, he is to lead them to the good, seeking God's will with both, individuals and the community, and manifesting it through his decisions.

Religious are to make good use of the gifts which God granted to them for the good of all<sup>70</sup>, with an active and responsible cooperation.

They are to keep an attitude of dialogue with their Superiors and be open to welcome the decisions these will deem suitable<sup>71</sup>.

They are to accept with faith the inner suffering that is often connected with obedience.

#### *Typical Expressions of the Somascan Tradition.*

##### *The true obedient:*

*A. Welcomes and carries out with confidence what has been ordered.*

*The true obedient walks the way of Christ with confidence. He is to welcome the Superior's will not only when it is expressed, but also when it is implied, whenever he can foresee it. He is to do what is ordered with trust, regarding not the person, but whom the person stands for<sup>72</sup>.*

*B. Promotes his personality through obedience.*

*Religious are not to consider humiliating or contrary to the development of their personality any assignment or work that the Lord entrusts to them through obedience. On the*

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<sup>68</sup> PC 14.

<sup>69</sup> Heb 13:17.

<sup>70</sup> PC 14.

<sup>71</sup> ET 25.

<sup>72</sup> C 1626 475.

*contrary, they are to consider as certain that, in God's eyes, the greatest one is the one who humbles himself*<sup>73</sup>.

*C. Is available to changes of place and office.*

*As to changes of place and office, religious are to show complete openness and accept willingly the obedience that is assigned to them; also, they are not to look for support to avoid it*<sup>74</sup>.

*D. Humbly manifests his difficulties.*

*He who is assigned to an office or ministry for which he thinks he is not sufficiently prepared or does not have the skills, is to humbly manifest his difficulty to the Superiors. Then, leaning on obedience as divine strength, he is not to get discouraged, but to undertake the assigned task and to hope in the Lord, because He himself will take care*<sup>75</sup>.

*E. Submits his initiatives to his Superiors.*

*Religious are to confer with their Superiors and obtain their permission before taking or promoting initiatives, even if they are for the sake of Christian charity. They are to avoid, as much as possible, being involved in matters of people from outside*<sup>76</sup>.

*F. Asks in simplicity.*

*In presenting their requests to their Superiors, religious are to refrain from excessive insistence or other means that are unworthy of their religious condition; they are to ask in simplicity, ready to give up on their own wishes*<sup>77</sup>.

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<sup>73</sup> C 1626 485.

<sup>74</sup> C 1626 480-481.

<sup>75</sup> C 1626 477.

<sup>76</sup> C 1626 483.

<sup>77</sup> C 1626 479.

25. *Joyful Obedience.*

He who obeys unwillingly,  
grumbling or out of fear,  
is a source of confusion and ruin within the community<sup>78</sup>,  
and is unworthy of the life he professes.  
It is not he who observes the law by constraint,  
but he who gives cheerfully  
who grows in the freedom of the Gospel<sup>79</sup>.

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<sup>78</sup> C 1569 40.

<sup>79</sup> 2Cor 9:7; C 1626 476.

# Chapter V

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## Community Life

### 26. *New Family.*

By the grace of our vocation  
God gathers us to live in common  
as a new family in faith:  
loving one another as Christ loved us  
and gave himself for us,<sup>80</sup>  
we form in him one heart and one soul,<sup>81</sup>  
and, sanctified by the Spirit of the Lord,  
we announce the kingdom of God and serve the poor.<sup>82</sup>

### **I - The Congregation.**

### 27. *Brothers in the Somascan Congregation.*

The communion of life  
that flows from the bond of our profession,  
makes us brothers in the Somascan Congregation  
and commits us to faithfully live her charism.  
We consider the Congregation as our mother<sup>83</sup>  
and we are to know and love her.  
With generous availability, we offer ourselves to her,  
ready to go wherever obedience may send us,  
so that she might yield abundant fruit in the Church.

### 28. *Priests and Lay Brothers.*

In accordance with our Constitutions,  
our religious, both priests and lay brothers,  
enjoy equal rights and obligations,<sup>84</sup>  
unless otherwise prescribed by canon law.  
Through everyone's faithful cooperation,

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<sup>80</sup> Jn 13:34-35; Eph 5:2; Gal 2:20.

<sup>81</sup> Acts 4:32.

<sup>82</sup> PC 15.

<sup>83</sup> C 1626 361.

<sup>84</sup> PC 15.

in compliance with the grace  
God bestows upon each one,  
the Congregation receives from the Lord the strength  
to grow and build up herself in love<sup>85</sup>.

*29. Constitutions and Rules.*

Our Constitutions, integrated by the Rules,  
are the fundamental norm of our life.  
Our faithful observance of them  
makes us sharers in a common way of life,  
which strengthens the bonds of love,  
assists us in our individual and common journey  
toward holiness,  
and makes our testimony fruitful.  
Our religious are expected to observe  
the Constitutions and Rules  
by virtue of their profession.  
Superiors may temporarily exempt religious  
from some disciplinary norms.

**II - Local Communities.**

*30. Congregation and Local Communities.*

The Congregation manifests and makes herself present  
in the local communities,  
where, gathered in the name of the Lord,<sup>86</sup>  
the brothers are strengthened by his Word,  
welcome each other in love and simplicity of heart,  
share everything in common,  
and persevere unanimous in prayer<sup>87</sup>  
and apostolic work.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Eph 4:15-16; C 1555 6c-6f.

<sup>86</sup> Mt 18:20.

<sup>87</sup> Acts 2:42.

<sup>88</sup> PC 15.

31. *The Journey of the Local Community.*

The local community  
does not only carry out the instructions  
of the Congregation  
but, within the boundaries of her directives  
and in observance of them,  
actively fosters her life through its own initiatives.

32. *Superior and Religious.*

Our communities are guided by the Superior,  
who is a sign of the presence of Christ among his own.  
He is to keep them united  
in the harmony of their minds and in their apostolic work,  
and to welcome all the religious as brothers in the Lord.<sup>89</sup>  
Religious are to express to him  
respect, trust, and confidence,  
and are to gladly, openly,  
and responsibly cooperate with him.<sup>90</sup>  
The elders and the learned  
are to be an example in this.<sup>91</sup>

33. *Communities Open to the Poor and Forsaken.*

The life of brotherhood and love  
that unites the religious among themselves,  
drives our communities to welcome and serve  
the poor and forsaken<sup>92</sup>  
after the example of our Founder,  
and to open themselves generously  
to the needs of the people  
among whom they minister.

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<sup>89</sup> GRI 23.

<sup>90</sup> GRI 24.

<sup>91</sup> C 1626 491.

<sup>92</sup> An 12,5; C 1555 7a.

### III - Brotherly Love, Bond of Community Life.

#### 34. *Value and Fruits of Brotherly Love.*

Every day our communities  
are called to grow in love.  
Moved by faith,  
love leads to give oneself to the brothers.  
Through brotherly love,  
which finds nourishment in the mystery of the Eucharist,  
the community abides in Christ,<sup>93</sup>  
is enriched by his mind,<sup>94</sup>  
and lives in Christian joy.<sup>95</sup>

#### 35. *Inner Attitudes.*

Sanctified by God's love,  
we are called to clothe ourselves  
in heartfelt mercy and kindness,  
humility, meekness, and patience.<sup>96</sup>  
With great love  
we welcome and forgive each other  
and pray for one another.<sup>97</sup>

#### *Typical Expressions of the Somascan Tradition.*

##### *Love:*

##### *A. Fosters our mutual relationship.*

*Our religious are to anticipate each other in mutual respect, foster reciprocal appreciation; they are not to be led by mere human considerations, but with spirit of faith they are to see in everyone the work of the Lord and to appreciate one's virtues and merits.<sup>98</sup> An especially intense love must be*

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<sup>93</sup> Jn 15:4-7.

<sup>94</sup> Phil 2:5.

<sup>95</sup> PC 15.

<sup>96</sup> Col 3:12; 6Let 7.12; BP f.11r (page 31); C 1626 375.

<sup>97</sup> 3Let 2.

<sup>98</sup> C 1626 376.



*expressed to our elder confrères, surrounding them with loving care and reverence.<sup>99</sup>*

*B. Inspires conversation.*

*In conversing, our religious are to take great care to avoid any lack of respect and attention, and to reject what is a sign of thoughtlessness or cause for division.<sup>100</sup> They must strive to be instruments of edification, radiating peace, serenity, and harmony.*

*C. Is the rule of brotherly correction.*

*The love of Christ is to direct us with meekness and understanding toward the brother who failed or is the cause of uneasiness in the community. Praying for him and pleading for God's help, approaching him with goodness and patience, we will be instruments of the Lord, so that he may be enlightened of his mistake.<sup>101</sup>*

*D. Surrounds persons and things with discretion.*

*With outsiders, our religious are to use discretion in talking about the internal life of the community and the members of our Congregation.<sup>102</sup> Whenever it is necessary, for grave reasons, to consult outsiders, they are to proceed according to the requirements of prudence and love.*

## **IV - Moments of Life in Common.**

### *36. Common Acts and Brotherly Communion.*

Prayer, work, the chapter, meals, and fraternal encounters are special moments in the life of the community, a sign and a source of communion. Their practical implementation is determined by the Superior,

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<sup>99</sup> C 1626 496.

<sup>100</sup> C 1626 370.

<sup>101</sup> 3Let 3.

<sup>102</sup> C 1626 501 and 911.

after consulting the chapter of the house,  
taking into account the instructions  
of the Chapters and Superiors,  
and with the approval of the competent Major Superior.

A. *Prayer in Common.*

*Our religious are to gather every day for the prayer in common at the time and place established by the Superior, after consulting the Chapter of the house. For such prayer, they may benefit, besides the liturgical celebrations, also from the other forms pointed out by the Constitutions.*

B. *Chapter of the House.*

*Our religious are to meet periodically under the guidance of the Superior to discuss matters regarding the life of the community and Congregation.*

C. *Meals.*

*Our religious are to gather together in the refectory to share their meals in harmony. They are to adjust themselves to the common food, always keeping in mind the age and other particular conditions of health and work.<sup>103</sup>*

D. *Fraternal Encounters.*

*In seeking due relaxation our religious, when allowed by their duties, are to prefer to spend their recreation together with their confrères, as an excellent means of fostering religious unity.*

E. *Fidelity and Punctuality.*

*Each religious is to be faithful and punctual at the common acts, aware that fidelity and punctuality are signs of mutual and brotherly attention and foster individual and community work. Possible absences are to be authorized by Superiors.*

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<sup>103</sup> C 1626 584.

## **V - Norms for an Orderly Community Life.**

### *37. Work and Rest.*

Each religious contributes to the community life also through his own work. The various activities are to be wisely distributed so that each one may perform his daily duties and enjoy adequate time for personal use and convenient relaxation. Each is to arrange with his Superior practical ways of rest and vacation, taking into account the general instructions and the needs of the community.

#### *A. Going out and Travelling.*

*In leaving and returning home, religious are to notify their Superior. In travelling, they are to observe the possible instructions of the local Ordinary. Whenever in need of hospitality, they are normally to turn to our houses. Guests are to be discreet and are to participate in the life of the community as much as possible.<sup>104</sup>*

### *38. Discretion and Silence.*

A section of our houses is to be reserved to the religious only. The need of discretion and silence is to be born in mind<sup>105</sup> so as to attend to prayer, study, and the necessary rest. The use of media of social communication is to be moderate and prudent.

### *39. Habit*

Our habit, a sign of consecration, is to be both poor and appropriate. Our religious are to wear it in accordance with the prescriptions of canon law, major Superiors,

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<sup>104</sup> C 1626 861 and 876.

<sup>105</sup> 1Let 17.

and local ecclesiastical authorities.<sup>106</sup>

*A. Description of the traditional habit and its handing over.*

*The traditional habit of the Somascan Order is the priest's cassock of a simple fashion, black (or other colour, in accordance with the customs of the local church), with a collar and a sash with a short fringe. It is handed over during the rite of temporary profession.*

## **VI - Sick Brothers.**

*40. Love toward Sick Religious.*

Our service of charity is manifested with particular promptness toward our sick brothers;<sup>107</sup> complete care is to be provided for them, even at the cost of heavy sacrifices;<sup>108</sup> seriously ill brothers are to be continuously assisted.<sup>109</sup>

*A. Spiritual Care.*

*Religious are to take spiritual care of their sick brothers, comforting them through words of faith and urging them to voluntarily join in Christ's passion.<sup>110</sup> This attention is to have its peak in the Sacrament of the "Anointing of the Sick," in which the entire community is to take part.*

*B. Memory of the Sick in our Prayer.*

*Sick brothers are to be commended to the suffering and glorified Lord,<sup>111</sup> so that he may bestow on them relief and*

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<sup>106</sup> CIC 284.

<sup>107</sup> 1Let 25.

<sup>108</sup> C 1591 f. 18r (page 41); C 1626 834.

<sup>109</sup> C 1626 840.

<sup>110</sup> OUI 5.

<sup>111</sup> OUI 34.

*health. Other communities are also to be asked to join in prayer for them.*

## **VII - Dead Brothers.**

### *41. Love toward Deceased Brothers.*

Christ's love unites the religious in life and death. Besides accomplishing the suffrages recommended by our Rules, it is our commitment to pray for our brothers who have left this world so that the Lord may make them share in his glorious resurrection.

#### *A. Duties of Piety.*

*When a religious, novice or associate of our Congregation dies, we are to do with loving care what is prescribed by our Ritual. The Superior is to communicate the news to every community at once.*

#### *B. Suffrages.*

*When informed about the death of a brother, each community is to celebrate in common the liturgy of the deceased, in accordance with our Ritual. All the religious are to participate in the Eucharist; priests are to offer one Mass as soon as possible. When possible, this Mass is to be concelebrated.*

#### *C. Memory.*

*To preserve a pious memory of our brothers, at the death of a religious, the Superior is to take steps to ensure that an appropriate biographical sketch is drawn and sent to every religious community. Furthermore, each community is to celebrate every month one Holy Mass for our dead religious, relatives, associates, and benefactors, with the participation of the community. Our brothers' graves are to be diligently looked after with Christian piety.*

## **VIII - Relatives, Associates, Collaborators.**

### *42. People Participating in the Life of Our Communities.*

United among themselves  
and their members by brotherly love,  
our communities  
are to maintain special bonds of love  
with those who participate  
in our life in various ways:  
parents and relatives,  
spiritual associates, collaborators, benefactors,  
people of the area  
where the community lives and works.

#### *A. Parents and Relatives.*

*The divine call, which led us to leave our family, upholds a new bond of supernatural love with it. Our religious are to manifest affection to their dear ones, especially through prayer. They are to celebrate or have someone celebrate Masses for them. The community is to be close to the families of the confrères and is to share in their joy and sadness.*

#### *B. Spiritual Associates.*

*Our Congregation accepts as Spiritual Associates those who are in communion with one of our communities and, though living in the world, conform their spiritual and apostolic life to the Gospel, following the example of St. Jerome. The Act of Association pertains to the Superior General on a written and justified proposal of the Provincial or local Superior. Since they share in the spiritual goods of the Congregation, our associates are to be supported with zeal and discretion. A deep bond with our religious family is to be fostered in them. At the death of one of these associates, the community that requested the association is to celebrate the Eucharist and mention them in the Community Journal.*

C. *Cooperators.*

*The apostolic activities of our institutions often call for the help of outside collaborators. They are to be chosen carefully and trained properly so that they may provide profitable aid. The community is to welcome them warmly and support them in consideration of the common work.*

D. *Benefactors.*

*The benefactors of our institutions are to be acknowledged with sentiments and signs of gratitude, particularly by offering prayers and by spiritual support.*

E. *People of the Area.*

*In order to witness the extent of evangelical love, every community is to be open to the area where it lives and works. For this reason, it fosters interchange of spiritual and human goods, and builds peaceful and hearty relations with everybody. However, this is to be done within the prudent discretion required by our way of life.*

# Chapter VI

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## Prayer

### *43. Prayer and Life.*

Eager to live only for God  
and faithful to the example of our Founder,  
who used to spend long hours in prayer  
in front of the Crucified Jesus,  
we organize our lives  
so as to unite an intense commitment to praying  
with the fervour of our works.  
By means of prayer  
God opens the eyes of our blindness<sup>112</sup>  
to enable us to see that he alone is good,  
and makes us docile instruments of his Spirit.<sup>113</sup>  
By persevering united in prayer,  
we live confident in the Lord  
and, filled with his peace,  
we walk in truth along his holy way.<sup>114</sup>

### **I - Liturgical Prayer.**

### *44. Value of Liturgical Prayer.*

Since we are called to work  
for the perfect glorification of God  
and the sanctification of mankind,<sup>115</sup>  
we give priority to liturgical prayer.  
In it, Christ gives himself to the Church,<sup>116</sup>  
unites us to his voice and work,  
and brings us to share into the mystery of salvation.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> 6Let 13; see Dt 29:3.

<sup>113</sup> 3Let 7.

<sup>114</sup> OP 21.

<sup>115</sup> SC 10.

<sup>116</sup> Eph 5:25.

<sup>117</sup> Heb 7:25; SC 8.



A. *Rite.*

*Our liturgies are to follow the Roman Rite according to our own calendar, taking into account specific pastoral needs. Each religious is to know its spiritual riches to foster an intense and enlightened liturgical life in both, himself and the believers.*

B. *Sacred Chant.*

*As far as possible, liturgical celebrations are to be properly supported by sacred chant. As a treasure of the Church, it is a worthwhile aid in expressing the communion of our souls in prayer and the joy of our hearts.<sup>118</sup>*

C. *Places of Worship.*

*Our churches and chapels are a symbol of the spiritual building, the temple of the living God, formed by all of us, living stones.<sup>119</sup> Therefore, we are to look after to what refers to worship with such a care that God's honour and believers' devotion are promoted.<sup>120</sup>*

D. *Attitude during Celebrations.*

*Every liturgical action is to be celebrated with attitudes of faith, adoration, and praise, which enlighten the hearts of those who serve God. Moreover, it is to be prepared with care, and to be resplendent with dignity and simplicity.<sup>121</sup>*

45. *Eucharist.*

The Eucharist is the foundation of every Christian community because it renews the memorial of Christ's uttermost love.<sup>122</sup> In it, we offer ourselves to the Father<sup>123</sup> and are made perfect in our union

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<sup>118</sup> SC 112.

<sup>119</sup> 1Pt 2:5.

<sup>120</sup> C 1626 435.

<sup>121</sup> SC 28.

<sup>122</sup> Lk 22:19; 1Cor 11:25.

<sup>123</sup> Rom 12:1.

with God and one another.<sup>124</sup>

All the religious are to attend every day the Eucharistic sacrifice,<sup>125</sup> in order to be fed at that abundant source of faith and love.<sup>126</sup>

Moreover, they are to strive to extend into their lives the mystery accomplished on the altar.

*A. Celebration.*

*In order to visibly express the unity of priesthood,<sup>127</sup> our priests are to concelebrate the Eucharist whenever possible.*

*46. Eucharistic Worship.*

The worship of the Most Holy Eucharist is a living component of our tradition. For this reason, we hold a particular devotion to Christ our Lord present in the Eucharistic Sacrament. In this way, we are drawn to participate in his sacrifice and to respond with gratitude and love to him who nourishes and heals the members of his body<sup>128</sup> by giving his life unceasingly.

*A. Adoration.*

*According to our commendable tradition, religious are to foster Eucharistic adoration and the other forms of Eucharistic worship that are recommended by the Church.*

*47. Liturgy of the Hours.*

Every day we are to celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours with attention and devotion. In this way, we prolong in time

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<sup>124</sup> 1Thess 5:23; SC 47 and 48.

<sup>125</sup> C 1626 408.

<sup>126</sup> 1Cor 12:13; PC 6.

<sup>127</sup> SC 57.

<sup>128</sup> Eph 5:23.

the prayer of Christ,  
we offer the sacrifice of our praise to God,<sup>129</sup>  
and we cooperate to building up the Church.  
The Superior, after consulting the Chapter of the house,  
is to decide which part should be celebrated in common.<sup>130</sup>

#### 48. *Sacrament of Penance.*

Through the Sacrament of Penance  
we experience the merciful love of the Father,  
who grants us pardon and peace,  
and reconciles us to his holy Church.<sup>131</sup>  
Our religious are to approach it frequently  
with a sincere spirit of conversion.  
Everyone is free to choose his own confessor.

##### A. *Celebration*

*The community may designate its own confessor when there are reasons that suggest it. In order to adequately express the community aspect of sin and conversion, it is recommended that in particular moments of the year, the Sacrament of Penance be celebrated in common.*

## **II - Devotion to the Blessed Virgin.**

#### 49. *Meaning and Fruits of the Marian Devotion.*

The Congregation fosters in her religious  
a filial love toward Mary,  
the Virgin Mother of God.  
We venerate her as the Mother of graces<sup>132</sup>  
and source of mercy,  
our hope and support of the orphans,  
joy of the afflicted and liberation of the oppressed.  
By imitating and invoking her,

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<sup>129</sup> Heb 13:15; IGLH 10.

<sup>130</sup> SC 99.

<sup>131</sup> LG 11.

<sup>132</sup> OP 7.

our faith and hope in the Lord will increase,<sup>133</sup>  
while our heart will be filled with tenderness and love  
toward the poor and the needy.

*50. Devotion toward the Mother of God.*

In order to promote devotion toward the Mother of God  
in both, the religious and believers,  
each community is to celebrate with particular solemnity  
the liturgical feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary,  
illustrate her inexpressible mission  
in the light of the Scripture and Tradition,  
and foster the practices of devotion in everybody,  
in accordance with the commendable local customs.<sup>134</sup>  
Every day, our religious  
are to express their devotion to the Mother of God  
through appropriate forms of prayer,  
especially by reciting the holy rosary.

*51. Mary Mother of Orphans.*

We venerate the Blessed Virgin Mary  
under the title of “Mother of Orphans”  
as patron of our Congregation.  
From her we derive renewed commitment  
for a generous dedication to our mission.

*A. Liturgical Solemnity.*

*The solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Orphans, is to be celebrated on the 27th of September. Under this title she is also to be venerated on the 27th of every month.*

**III - Devotion to Our Founder.**

*52. Meaning and Fruits of the Devotion toward Our Founder.*

The Lord shows his glory in us<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> OP 7; see 2Let 7-10.

<sup>134</sup> LG 67.

<sup>135</sup> 2Let 1.

through our beloved father St. Jerome.<sup>136</sup>  
By developing a filial devotion toward him  
we celebrate the power of God,  
who accomplishes great things in his servants,<sup>137</sup>  
and partake of the spirit of holiness  
that made our Founder a father of orphans  
and a refuge of the poor.

*53. Devotion toward our Founder.*

For the devotion to St. Jerome  
to be ever more authentic and ardent,  
each religious is to grow in his love toward him  
by a renewed knowledge  
of his deeds and spirit.  
He is to eagerly imitate his virtues  
and proclaim the riches of his Christian testimony  
as much as possible.

*A. Liturgical Solemnity.*

*The liturgical feast of our Founder Saint is to be celebrated  
solemnly, and his memorial is to be honoured in a special  
way on the 8th of every month.*

## **IV - Prayers in Our Tradition.**

*54. Other Forms of Prayer.*

When deriving other forms of prayer  
from the Congregation's tradition,  
we are to make sure that they are  
in accord with and inspired by the liturgy.<sup>138</sup>

*55. Meditation and Spiritual Reading.*

We are to attend to meditation with great diligence.  
Through it, the Lord's Spirit introduces us

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<sup>136</sup> 2Let 4.

<sup>137</sup> 2Let 8.

<sup>138</sup> SC 13.

to the treasure of his Word,<sup>139</sup>  
which, if welcomed and cherished with faith,  
becomes light and wisdom  
to help us recognize God's gifts<sup>140</sup>  
and discern his will.<sup>141</sup>  
Every day, our religious are to dedicate  
one hour to meditation  
and are to try to extend such time  
according to their possibility.<sup>142</sup>  
Superiors are to make sure  
that everyone has the necessary time for it.  
Everyone is to take diligent care  
to acquire familiarity with spiritual authors  
and to study them in order to deepen one's knowledge of God  
and to wisely lead others to this goal.

#### 56. *Spiritual Exercises (Annual Retreat).*

The desire of a more intense encounter with the Lord  
is renewed in the spiritual exercises,  
which are a privileged time to listen to God's Word  
for the conversion of our life.  
Our religious, making themselves free from any activity,  
are to attend them every year  
with inner concentration and commitment.<sup>143</sup>

##### A. *Recollection.*

*In order to grow in their union with the Lord, our religious  
are to devote a convenient time to a monthly spiritual  
recollection.*

#### 57. *Prayer for the Congregation.*

Confident in St. Jerome's intercession,  
we are to raise unceasingly our prayer to the Lord  
so that he will keep the Congregation in his peace,

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<sup>139</sup> Jn 16:13.

<sup>140</sup> 1Cor 2:12.

<sup>141</sup> Rom 12:2; see 3Let 11.

<sup>142</sup> C 1626 378.

<sup>143</sup> C 1626 634.

show his way to those whom he calls to our life,  
assist with his blessing  
those who are entrusted to our care,  
and fill with his mercy  
the benefactors and collaborators of our institutions.<sup>144</sup>

*A. Mass for the Congregation.*

*Every month, our communities are to celebrate and, wherever possible, concelebrate a Mass for the spiritual progress and development of the Congregation, with the participation of all the community members. In remembrance of the Congregation's birthday,<sup>145</sup> every community is to celebrate a thanksgiving Mass on April 29th of every year.*

*B. Devotion toward the Guardian Angels.*

*Entrusted by God to the particular guardianship of the Angels, we are to keep alive our devotion to them, which is a typical feature of our tradition. To their protection we are to recommend those to whom our mission is addressed, so that they may experience the Angels' assistance on the journey of their life.*

*58. Frequent Spiritual Invocations.*

In order to obey the Lord,  
who commanded us to pray constantly,<sup>146</sup>  
and to be faithful to the example of our holy Founder,  
we are to renew the offering of ourselves  
to the most sweet Jesus  
through frequent invocations and spiritual petitions  
so that He may fill us with joy and comfort  
and overwhelm us with freedom and solace.

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<sup>144</sup> See OP 12-14, 15, 21.

<sup>145</sup> C 1626 429.

<sup>146</sup> Lk 18:1.

## Chapter VII

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### Penance and Mortification

#### 59. *Penance.*

We are aware that we live the gift of our vocation  
in the weakness of our human nature.<sup>147</sup>

Therefore, we entrust ourselves  
to the action of the Holy Spirit,  
who, step by step, transforms us  
into the image of the Son,<sup>148</sup>  
we convert ourselves every day to the Lord,  
and carry our cross along with him.<sup>149</sup>

#### 60. *Penitential Journey.*

The purification of the heart  
is enlightened by God's Word  
that is welcomed in frequent prayer in front of the Crucified.  
In this way, we can obtain the gift  
of doing penance in this world  
as a pledge of eternal mercy.<sup>150</sup>

Through the voluntary practice of mortification  
we manifest our commitment to convert ourselves to God,  
which has its climax  
in the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance.

#### 61. *Spirit of Our Penance.*

Our kind of life requires neither great austerity  
nor excessive mortification,  
but it leads the religious on the way of the Lord  
in true humility,  
perfect obedience,  
and evangelical renunciation of oneself.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> 2Cor 4:7; Gal 5:16-17; Rom 7:23.

<sup>148</sup> 2Cor 3:18.

<sup>149</sup> Mt 16:24.

<sup>150</sup> 6Let 13.

<sup>151</sup> C 1626 5.



62. *Community Commitment.*

Every community is called to practice penance by living in poverty, withstanding worldly allurements, helping the needy, and sharing in the sufferings of those who are oppressed by injustice.

63. *Penitential Practices.*

Our religious are to faithfully observe the penitential forms established by the Church. In accordance with the spirit of the liturgy, they are to live Lent as a time of conversion in prayer, fast, and charity, and to spend their Fridays in special penance. They are to engage in the concrete forms of mortification established by the community for both, Fridays and Lent. Moreover, they are also to fast on the days preceding the solemnities of our Founder and Mary, Mother of Orphans, as well as the starting day of the General Chapter.

*Typical Expressions of the Somascan Tradition.*

*Our religious are to practice penance:*

A. *Through fidelity to the commitments of their vocation.*

*Our religious are to practice the virtue of penance most of all through fidelity to the commitments of their vocation, through active dedication to their daily duties, in that spirit of sacrifice that leads them to become servants of all, so as to win all to Christ.<sup>152</sup>*

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<sup>152</sup> 1Cor 9:19.

*B. In daily life.*

*Our religious are to practice penance through sobriety in eating and simplicity in dressing, willingly accepting whatever the community provides. They are to love silence which fosters the union with God and respect for the brothers. They are also to watch their tongue.<sup>153</sup> They are to model their conduct on the virtues of modesty, benignity and humility.<sup>154</sup> They are to apply themselves intensely to study and manual work.*

*C. During moral and physical trials.*

*Also, they are to practice penance by accepting with faith every moral and physical trial, such as illness, old age, discomfort, difficulties, troubles, persecution for the sake of the Gospel and its righteousness. They are to join their sorrows to the passion of Christ, offering them to the Father in a spirit of expiation, and invoking the divine mercy upon themselves, the Congregation, the Church, and mankind.*

*D. In the last moments of their life*

*Our religious are to unite themselves in a particular way to Jesus the Saviour, who elected us and is faithful in love, by offering the last moments of their life. They are to accept their death with faith, comforted by the certainty that they will be with the Lord forever.<sup>155</sup>*

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<sup>153</sup> C 1626 587.

<sup>154</sup> C 1626 603.

<sup>155</sup> 1Tess 4:17.

64. *Example of St. Jerome.*

We are to live intensely the spirit of penance  
drawing inspiration from the good example of St. Jerome.  
Through voluntary mortification,  
he persevered in the conversion to the Lord  
and won from God  
the grace to perform according to the divine will.<sup>156</sup>  
So he lived no longer for himself,<sup>157</sup>  
but for Christ and his poor.  
If we progress in the virtue of penance,  
in the footsteps of our Founder and Father,  
we too will obtain perseverance in our vocation  
and will be made sharers in the glory of the Lord.

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<sup>156</sup> 5Let 5.

<sup>157</sup> 2Cor 5:15.

# Chapter VIII

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## Apostolic Mission

### **I – Apostolate in the Congregation.**

#### *65. Apostolic Nature of the Congregation.*

Our Congregation  
*is directly ordered to apostolic mission.*

Her life and structures are permeated  
by the spiritual and functional needs that flow from it.<sup>158</sup>  
Each religious is part of it  
and consecrates his own energies to it, whatever the situation  
he may be in or the kind of activity  
obedience assigns him to.

#### *66. Apostolic Mission in the Church.*

Our Congregation  
shares in the apostolic mission of the Church  
through a spirit of humble and active collaboration  
and by promoting initiatives consistent with her charism.

#### *67. Apostolic Activities and Our Charism.*

The Congregation views the service to Christ  
present in the poor  
as a characteristic component of her apostolic mission<sup>2159</sup>  
and finds constant inspiration for it  
in her Founder and tradition,  
which is authoritatively recognized by the Church.  
Each community,  
in its various areas of apostolate,  
is to engage itself for the poor  
and needy youth,  
make its acquaintances and collaborators  
sensitive to their needs,  
and cooperate with the initiatives

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<sup>158</sup> PC 8.

<sup>159</sup> 6Let 6.

of the Church and society.

68. *Unity of the Congregation in the Apostolic Mission.*

In order to be capable  
of carrying out her mission everywhere,  
our Congregation presents particular unity.  
Such unity is manifested also in her structures  
and requires apostolic mobility  
and availability of all her religious.

69. *Community Dimension of Our Apostolate.*

Apostolic activities are community oriented in our houses.  
All religious are called to render  
the Congregation's charism alive and effective  
by the richness of gifts they received from the Lord.  
It is the Superiors' duty  
to discern with spirit of humility and love  
the personal gifts of their brothers  
and to promote them  
for the good of their community and the Congregation.

A. *Planning and Evaluation.*

*The common responsibility in apostolic activities entails planning and evaluation by both the community and the individuals. The purpose of planning is to formulate a project which meets the needs of the apostolate, as well as to promote its orderly implementation. Planning implies dialogue as a means to know the Lord's will, and must be carried out in accord with the instructions of the Congregation. A frequent and periodical evaluation requires that each religious inform the community of his work and be ready to receive and give suggestions and collaboration. Such an evaluation allows to verify the suitability of the plans, ensures their execution, and stimulates everybody to attend to their assigned job in a constant and committed way.*

*B. Non-Community Activities.*

*Before committing to apostolic activities that are not part of the common programme, our religious are to seek the permission of the Superior,<sup>160</sup> who will take care to inform the community. Whenever these activities become stable in nature, it is necessary to get the authorization of the major Superiors.*

*C. Apostolate in Institutions not Belonging to the Congregation.*

*In order to perform apostolic activities in institutions not belonging to the Congregation, a suitable agreement is to be drawn, which must be approved by the competent major Superior with the consent of his Council, and ratified by the Superior General with the consent of his Council.*

*70. One Mission, Different Ministries.*

United by religious consecration as priests or laymen, we participate in one and the same apostolic mission but with different ministries, and cooperate as educators of faith in the common service of charity.

*71. Example of St. Jerome.*

The Congregation suggests to her religious some of those attitudes which inspired St. Jerome and his first companions. She urges all her sons to witness through their deeds their faith and hope in the Lord,<sup>161</sup> to serve the least and the needy with humility and fervour, to welcome them with a simple and benign heart,<sup>162</sup> and to prefer those areas where poverty is more critical. She also encourages them to offer

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<sup>160</sup> C 1626 483.

<sup>161</sup> 2Let 7-10.

<sup>162</sup> OP 9.

the living nourishment of God's Word and Sacraments  
to those to whom she is sent,  
to help them grow in faith  
through suitable catechesis,  
to gradually introduce them  
to personal and community prayer,  
to foster their Christian testimony  
and apostolic commitment in the Church,  
and to cultivate  
the seeds of a religious or priestly vocation  
in those who manifest the signs  
of the Lord's call.

*72. Efficacy of Our Apostolate.*

The more we are united to the Lord Jesus<sup>163</sup>  
and docile to the Holy Spirit,<sup>164</sup>  
the more effective will be our apostolate.  
Therefore, our religious are to allow themselves  
to be led exclusively by the love of Christ  
and by their zeal for their brothers,  
working in the spirit of obedience  
and in radical detachment  
from earthly things and personal interests.

## **II - Service to Orphans and Needy Youth.**

*73. Institutions for Orphans and Needy Youth.*

Born to serve the orphans,  
our Congregation perseveres  
with love and care in this mission,  
which is a precious inheritance of our Founder Saint.<sup>165</sup>  
Our Congregation attends  
to the care of orphans and needy youth  
through suitable institutions,  
which she supports even at the cost of heavy sacrifices.

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<sup>163</sup> 1Let 5.

<sup>164</sup> 3Let 7.

<sup>165</sup> C 1626 913.

A. *Meeting Local Needs.*

*In starting or developing any charitable work, religious are to see if it meets the local needs. They are to adjust structures and methods to concrete situations. They are to pay attention to the need of continual updating.*

B. *Other Forms of Apostolate.*

*Different forms of apostolate may be undertaken at the service of needy youth. They must be approved by the competent major Superior with the consent of his Council. Whenever a religious has to work in other ecclesial or social bodies, Superiors are to assess every aspect, and, before giving authorization, are to require adequate guarantees. The religious is to attend to his job with a spirit of obedience and in constant union with his community.*

74. *Educational Style of Our Founder.*

In our work as educators  
we take constant inspiration  
from the example of St. Jerome.  
Becoming a child with the children,  
he lived among them  
as a lovely and tender father<sup>166</sup>  
in order to better know, train, and help everyone  
in their preparation for their life.  
He laid the foundations of his educational work  
on the knowledge  
and practice of the Christian doctrine.  
He pointed out study and work  
as the reliable and dignified tools  
for an integral formation of the individual.

A. *Educational Environment.*

*Institutions which welcome youth deprived of family support are to offer a family environment. They are to express that particular love that brings about self-confidence and mutual*

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<sup>166</sup> Molf 490.



trust; they are to prepare youngsters for their future, fostering their personal propensities; they are to train them to be responsible and available to others, especially to the little ones. In accordance with our tradition, religious are to attach importance to those moments in which educators and youngsters together enhance their human and Christian growth.<sup>167</sup> Such institutions are to guarantee to their students educational continuity in the same environment.

#### *B. Evangelical Inspiration.*

Those who are called by obedience to perform this ministry are to dedicate themselves to it with ardent love,<sup>168</sup> mindful of the words of Christ: “As often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me.”<sup>169</sup> They are to remember that the care of orphans is one of the highest works of mercy and nothing can edify one’s neighbour more than that.<sup>170</sup> In their educational activity they are to draw constant inspiration from the Gospel.

#### *C. Lay Collaborators.*

Following St. Jerome’s example, in our service to the needy youth we are to stimulate the cooperation of lay people.<sup>171</sup> Such cooperation can be accomplished in different ways, but it should especially aim at making it easier and safer for the youngsters to be integrated in family and society.

### **III - School and Youth Ministry.**

#### *75. Commitment for the Christian Formation of Youth.*

Our Congregation devotes herself  
to the formation of youth  
through teaching,  
educational institutions,

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<sup>167</sup> GRI 30.

<sup>168</sup> C 1626 914.

<sup>169</sup> Mt 25:40.

<sup>170</sup> C 1591 f. 9r (page 18).

<sup>171</sup> C 1555 7b-7c.

and youth ministry.

She carries out this ministry by offering to young people a proposal of Christian life and by preparing them to promote the good of mankind and the Church.

*A. Community Environment.*

*Our educational action is to aim at building up an environment inspired by mutual acceptance and common responsibility, and at fostering a relationship of lively friendship among people with different characters and from different conditions, involving youngsters, educators, and parents in the formation program.<sup>172</sup>*

*B. Commitment for the Poor According to Our Tradition.*

*Following St. Jerome's example, we are to train our young people to be sensitive and committed to the needs of the poor. Our institutions are to encourage them to take part in initiatives in favour of the poor and to gradually take responsibility.*

*C. Educational Institutions.*

*Our institutions meant to welcome the young are also to be open to those who are in particularly troublesome situations. Our institutions are to establish with them a friendly relationship, based upon respect and dignity.*

*D. School as a Cultural and Educational Environment.*

*Our schools are to provide the cultural, technical, and pedagogical values necessary to develop the students' intellectual abilities and the ability to judge rightly; they are to foster a sense of values in the students and prepare them for life and a career.<sup>173</sup>*

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<sup>172</sup> GE 5.

<sup>173</sup> GE 5.

*E. Religious Assigned to Schools.*

*Our teaching religious are to be aware that the important mission assigned to them requires qualities of mind and heart, accurate preparation, and constant renewal.<sup>174</sup> They are to possess the required knowledge, hold proper certifications, and enhance every day their experience in the art of educating. Above all, they are to remember that the most valid lesson is the everyday example of their lives.<sup>175</sup>*

*F. Lay Teachers.*

*The lay teachers who cooperate with us are to be chosen as much as possible among those who share our school vision. Beside cultural, professional, educational skills, and training, they are to stand out for their testimony of life. Our religious are to plan and implement adequate initiatives to foster their Christian formation and active cooperation.*

*G. School Structures.*

*Our schools are to be provided with adequate structures and educational aids which are necessary to achieve their scientific and professional goals. Also, they are to promote all those extra-curricular activities which guarantee the students' progress and formation.*

*H. Alumni.*

*We are to continue the formation of our students also after graduation through friendship, advice, and the Alumni Association. Especially, we are to make them sensitive to the needs of the poor and to stimulate them that in their social and professional activities they may shape a society inspired by justice and love.*

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<sup>174</sup> GE 5.

<sup>175</sup> C 1626 912.

## **IV - Parish Ministry.**

### *76. Parishes Entrusted to the Congregation.*

In special circumstances, the Congregation undertakes parish ministry for the good of the Christian people, in order to build communities of faith and love, in accordance with her charism.

*A. Acceptance of a Parish and presentation of the religious to the Bishop for his appointment as the Parish priest.*

*The assignment of a parish to the Congregation takes place through a special agreement between the Bishop and the competent major Superior with the consent of his council, ratified by the Superior General with the consent of his council. The presentation of the religious to the Bishop for his appointment as the Parish priest pertains to the Provincial superior with the consent of his Council and confirmation of the Superior general. The presentation of the parish priest to the Bishop, the starting date of his ministry, his obligations and rights, and the procedures to be followed in case of vacancy of the Parish, are regulated by canon law and the instructions of each diocese.*

*B. Duties of the Parish Priest and His Religious Community.*

*The parish priest is to guide his parish community by coordinating the various ministries according to the guidelines of the Bishop. United in brotherly love and common goals, the other members of the religious community share the pastoral responsibility with him. The local Superior is to assign the different tasks to the religious in accordance with the parish priest. The parish priest and his collaborators are bound to the duties of community life.<sup>176</sup>*

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<sup>176</sup> C 1626 542.

### C. *Characteristics of Our Parish Apostolate.*

*Following the spirit of our tradition, religious involved in parish activities are to love the poor intensely, to become a source of charity toward the needy in the local Church, and to participate in initiatives in favour of the poor. They are to take care of youth, fostering any activity meant to form them in a Christian way, especially catechesis. Finally, they are to assist the sick with goodness and care, frequently visiting them, and bringing them the comfort of the Sacraments.<sup>177</sup>*

### D. *Participation of the Laity.*

*Religious are to urge the collaboration of the laity so that, aware of their Christian vocation, they may take part in the salvific mission of the Church and assume responsibility and proper tasks.*

### E. *Non-Parish Churches, Shrines, and Retreat Centers.*

*Our ministry in non-parish churches must be integrated in the parish pastoral life in brotherly cooperation with the local clergy. In the shrines entrusted to the Congregation, the apostolate is to be performed with zeal and is to be faithful to the features for which God raised them in the Church, as a sign of his merciful and sanctifying presence. The retreat centers are to be schools of prayer where the word of God is listened to, and are to promote an intense Christian life that takes inspiration from our Congregation's charism.*

## **V - Priestly Ministry.**

### *77. Mission and Spiritual Needs.*

By virtue of the Sacrament of Order,  
our priests are sent to proclaim the word of God  
and to celebrate the sacred mysteries.  
For their ministry to be fruitful,  
they are to persevere in prayer,  
to know and love, as fathers in the spirit,

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<sup>177</sup> C 1626 548.

those whom they are called to serve,<sup>178</sup>  
and to practice in their life  
what they preach to their faithful.<sup>179</sup>

*A. Ministry of the Word of God.*

*In order to carry out the Lord's command to preach the Gospel, our priests are to become familiar with the Scriptures and the teachings of the Fathers and the Church.<sup>180</sup> They are to propose clearly and simply the truths of Christian life taking examples and suggestions from the life of the Saints.<sup>181</sup> In publishing writings about religion and morals, our religious are to be granted permission by their major Superior.*

*B. Ministry of the Sacraments.*

*They are to administer the Sacraments with spirit and love.<sup>182</sup> With particular care they are to prepare the faithful for the Sacrament of Penance. They are to welcome everyone with care, goodness, patience, and counsel them to walk in the Lord's way.*

*C. Pastoral Care.*

*Urged by the love of Christ and seeking only the honour of God, they are to devote their time and energies first of all to those who are entrusted to them.<sup>183</sup> They are not to neglect anything so that the fire of the Spirit may not cool down in them.<sup>184</sup>*

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<sup>178</sup> GRI 22.

<sup>179</sup> GRI 22.

<sup>180</sup> C 1626 560.

<sup>181</sup> GRI 22.

<sup>182</sup> GRI 22.

<sup>183</sup> GRI 22.

<sup>184</sup> 1Let 19.

## Chapter IX

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### Admission to the Congregation and Religious Formation

#### **I - Pastoral Care of Vocations.**

*78. Commitment to Vocations.*

The Congregation welcomes vocations  
as a gift of the Lord.  
She promotes and fosters with care  
their growth and formation,  
so that St. Jerome's charism may develop  
to the advantage of the Church and the poor.  
To obtain this grace from the Lord,  
all our communities and individual religious  
are to commit themselves  
to the pastoral care of vocations  
through prayer to the Lord of the harvest,<sup>185</sup>  
the testimony of joyfully living  
their vocation in brotherly communion,<sup>186</sup>  
the proposal of our vocation,  
and the care of those who are attracted to it.

#### *A. Religious Assigned to the Pastoral Care of Vocations.*

*In order to stir each one's responsibility in the promotion of vocations and so that it may be carried out in a planned way, the major Superiors are to choose suitable religious for this duty. They are to carry out this activity carefully and discreetly under the coordination of a promoter general appointed by the Superior General with the advice of his Council.*

#### *B. Initiatives.*

*In the pastoral care of vocations, our religious are to cooperate with the initiatives taken either by the*

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<sup>185</sup> Mt 9:38; 1Let 3.

<sup>186</sup> OT 2; PC 24.

*Congregation or the local Church. In particular way, they are to enhance the Christian formation of the young in order to help them discern and follow the Lord's call generously.*

*C. Minor Seminaries.*

*Adolescents who prove to have some inclination to our life and manifest good attitudes can be welcomed to suitable institutions or minor seminaries, until the time they reach sufficient maturity to be admitted to the Postulancy.*

*D. Goal and Environment.*

*The goal of the minor seminary is to direct adolescents toward a generous service to Christ and the brothers, while gradually discovering their vocation in an environment in accord with the needs of their age. Superiors are also to bear in mind the need of a gradual experience of human realities,<sup>187</sup> so that their personalities may develop properly, especially on the affective level.*

*E. Spiritual Formation.*

*Through an adequate spiritual direction, adolescents are to be led to follow Christ with generosity of spirit and purity of heart.<sup>188</sup> They are to be initiated in reading of and meditation on the Word of God, in Eucharist and Penance, in personal prayer, in filial devotion to the Virgin Mary, and in the service to their neighbour.*

## **II - Formation of Religious.**

*79. Goal of the Somascan Formation.*

Through her formative work,  
our Congregation intends to help  
the candidates to religious life  
to recognize their vocation as a gift of God,  
and to mature their own offering to Christ  
in the spirit of St. Jerome

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<sup>187</sup> OT 3.

<sup>188</sup> OT 3.



with a free and radical response.  
To achieve this goal,  
the candidates are gradually initiated  
in the life of the Congregation  
through the practice of the Evangelical Counsels,  
community life,  
and experience of our apostolic activities.

#### *80. Religious in Charge of Formation.*

Formation to religious life  
is carried out in accordance with the instructions  
of the Constitutions and Rules and of the Chapters,  
through the work of the major Superiors,  
and the religious specifically appointed to this task.  
The Superior General,  
who has the primary responsibility for formation,  
and the other major Superiors  
are to take care above all of the selection and preparation of  
the religious to be entrusted with this task.  
The Superiors are to verify their work  
during the various stages  
and to follow the candidates' progress during formation.  
Religious in charge of formation  
are to keep themselves suitably updated,  
be convinced and enthusiastic about their own vocation,  
act with prudence and wisdom  
in unity of spirit and action with their Superiors,  
be faithful to the Magisterium of the Church,  
and instill such faithfulness in the soul of the candidates.

#### *81. Initial Formation Curriculum.*

The stages of our journey of initial formation are:  
Postulancy, Novitiate, and Post-Novitiate.  
Each formation stage is described in detail  
in the *Ratio Institutionis*.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> See CIC 659.

### **III - Postulancy.**

#### 82. *Goals.*

The candidates who have expressed their desire to undertake our life are welcomed to Postulancy.

Its goal is to verify their aptitudes and prepare them to pass from the life of the world to the radical availability to God.

It takes place in communities expressly designated for this in accordance with the instructions of the major Superiors. Postulancy ends with the beginning of novitiate.

#### *A. Duration and Characteristics.*

*During Postulancy, which lasts as a rule twelve months, the postulant is to be discreetly encouraged to approach the goal, spirit, and apostolic mission of the Congregation, so that he may be properly prepared for the novitiate.*

#### *B. Formation work.*

*The formation work of Postulancy is to be entrusted to a religious who acts under the supervision of the Superior and in accordance with his confrères. It is to be carried out according to proper rules which take into account the characteristics of the places and candidates, especially in case of late vocations.*

#### *C. Studies before Novitiate.*

*Education and cultural training during the period before novitiate is to be in compliance with the school programs and systems of the various countries and, as far as possible, it is to end with the appropriate qualifications.*

### **IV - Novitiate.**

#### 83. *Goals.*

Novitiate marks the beginning of the life in the Congregation. Its goal is to help the candidate to deepen his knowledge

of God's call,  
and to initiate him into our way of religious life.  
In addition, it allows for the verification  
of his intentions and suitability.

#### *84. Establishment.*

It pertains to the Superior General  
with the consent of his Council  
to establish, erect, suppress the novitiate  
or transfer it to other places.

As an exception,  
the Superior General, with the consent of his Council,  
may authorize a candidate  
to validly accomplish his novitiate  
in a house other than the one established,  
under the guidance of an experienced religious,  
who will carry out the task of Master.

#### *85. Master of Novitiate.*

The Master  
is directly in charge of the formation of the novices.  
He is appointed by the Superior General  
with the consent of his Council  
upon proposal of the competent major Superior.  
He must be a priest of solemn vows.  
It is his duty  
to take care of the novices' religious formation,  
in accordance with the goals of the Congregation,  
to stimulate them to an intense love  
for the way of life they have chosen,  
to instruct them in the Constitutions and Rules,  
and to help them overcome the obstacles  
hindering their progress in virtue.

##### *A. Assistant Master.*

*The Master may be helped by an assistant and make use of  
the cooperation of experts, in accordance with the major  
Superiors.*

*B. Superior, Master, and Novices.*

*Unity of minds and hearts is to reign among Superior, Master, and Novices. The Master gives an account of his formative work exclusively to the major Superiors, to whose instructions he has to conform his actions. As for community life, he is to depend on the local Superior, with whom he is also to arrange the activities, which the novices participate in.*

*C. Concern of the Superiors.*

*Major Superiors are to follow the formation of the novices through personal contacts and the reports periodically sent by the Master.*

*D. Cooperation of the Religious.*

*All the religious are to cooperate in the formation of the novices through the testimony of their life, and through prayer. The religious of the community where the novitiate is placed are to be particularly conscious of their involvement.*

*E. Relationships with the Religious.*

*Because of its distinctive character, novitiate requires a certain separation between the novices and the other religious of the community. Relations with them, with religious of other communities, and with outsiders are to be governed by the Master.*

*86. Formation of the Novices.*

The novice is to be led  
to the practice of the human and Christian virtues,  
and introduced to the way of perfection  
by true humility,  
ardent love,  
and self-denial.  
He is to be trained  
in the reading and meditation of the Word of God,  
in the study of spiritual life,  
and initiated in the doctrine and practice

of the Evangelical counsels.  
He is also to be educated  
in the spirituality, history,  
and characteristics of the Congregation,  
and trained in her way of life.<sup>190</sup>

A. *Studies and Apostolate.*

*During novitiate, the normal course of studies is suspended. With the approval of the competent major Superior, some forms of apostolate may be encouraged to an extent and in ways that the Master deems appropriate.*

87. *Admission to Novitiate.*

The admission of the postulant to novitiate pertains to the competent major Superior.

A. *Procedures.*

*Whoever desires to be admitted to novitiate is to send an application to the competent major Superior. The local Superior is to send to the latter a report including useful data and information. In doing that, the local Superior must make sure that the conditions required by canon law for a valid and licit admission are met, and obtain the advice of the community of Postulancy. Documents related to the admission are to be kept in the Province Archives; a copy is to be sent to the Superior General and to the novitiate's house.*

B. *Requirements.*

*The candidate to novitiate must have the required age, physical health, maturity, aptitude to withstand our life and contribute to the Congregation's mission. In addition, Superiors are to ascertain the reasons which lead the candidate to enter our religious family.*

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<sup>190</sup> ES II, 16.

C. *Beginning.*

*Novitiate begins with the welcoming of the novice into the religious community, his being entrusted by the Superior to the Master and the handover of the crucifix. When the Master deems it appropriate, the novice is to attend a convenient period of spiritual exercises.*

88. *Duration.*

The novitiate lasts twelve months.  
Any periods of absence,  
continuous or interrupted,  
that exceeds three months,  
renders it invalid.  
Absences that exceed fifteen days  
must be made up.

89. *Dismissal.*

A novice may freely leave the novitiate.  
However, before making this decision,  
he is to seek the advice of prudent persons.  
When someone is deemed unsuitable for religious life  
and does not offer clear signs  
of good nature and perseverance,  
he is to be dismissed  
after having been previously examined and heard.  
The right to dismiss pertains  
to the novice's major Superior.

90. *Conclusion.*

The novitiate ends with the temporary profession.  
In case any doubt persists  
about the novice's suitability,  
the competent major Superior  
may authorize an extension of up to six months.

A. *Privileges of the Novice.*

*The novice enjoys the benefits and spiritual graces granted to the Congregation. "In articulo mortis" (in danger of death)*

*he may profess; such a profession, however, has no legal value.*

## **V - Religious Profession.**

### *91. Temporary Profession.*

The temporary profession of the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience makes one an effective member of the Congregation and binds him to observe the Constitutions and Rules, and all the other norms.

### *92. Admission to Temporary Profession.*

The novice who desires to profess the temporary vows is to address a written application to the competent major Superior. The latter, after obtaining the advice of the Council of the Superior of the community concerned, receiving the required documents, and obtaining the consent of his Council, proceeds to admit him to the profession. Such decision is to be confirmed by the Superior General.

### *93. Duration.*

Temporary profession is made for three years. It can be renewed for a second three-year period, and, if circumstances require it, even for a third one. However, its total duration can not exceed the period of nine years.

### *94. Acts Required before Profession.*

Before temporary profession, the novice is to make over the administration, use, and revenue of his goods, in accordance with the provisions of canon and proper law. In addition, he is to declare in writing that he professes his vows in full freedom.

*A. Alteration of the Dispositions about Goods.*

*In order to modify the dispositions concerning the cession of the administration, use and revenue of his goods, a just reason and the permission of one's major Superior are needed.*

*95. Renewal of Profession.*

In order to renew his temporary profession, a religious is to address a written application to the competent major Superior. The latter, after obtaining the advice of the Council of the Superior of the community concerned, receiving the required documents, and obtaining the consent of his Council, proceeds to admit him to the renewal of profession. Such a decision is to be confirmed by the Superior General.

*96. Solemn Profession.*

By solemn profession, a religious consecrates himself, forever, to serving God and the Church, becomes a member of the Congregation once and for all, renounces the ownership of his properties, and acquires obligations and rights in accordance with canon and proper law. The religious who desires to profess solemn vows is to address a written application to the competent major Superior. The latter, after obtaining the advice of the Council of the Superior of the community concerned, receiving the required documents, and obtaining the consent of his Council, proceeds to admit him to the profession. Such decision is to be ratified by the Superior General with the consent of his Council. The renunciation of ownership of goods, before the profession takes place, is to be made in accordance with the provisions of canon and proper law.



A. *Regulations and Procedures.*

*Before solemn profession, the religious is to attend a more intense spiritual preparation for an adequate period of time, in accordance with the modalities established by the major Superiors. After profession, the major Superior is to notify the parish priest of the parish where the religious was baptized.*

97. *Requirements for Admission.*

In order that the admission to both, the temporary and solemn profession, be valid and licit, the requirements of canon and proper law are to be met.

98. *Profession Formula.*

In the name of the Most Holy Trinity,  
Father and Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.  
Firmly willing  
to offer myself totally to God,  
who called me  
to follow Christ more closely  
on the example of St. Jerome Emiliani,  
I, ...,  
before you, Father ...,  
in complete freedom,  
for three years (*or*: forever),  
profess the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience.  
I commit myself  
to live in brotherly communion  
and to accomplish the apostolic mission  
according to the Constitutions of the Somascan Congregation.  
May the almighty and merciful Lord,  
in his infinite love,  
accept this offering of mine.  
Through the grace of the Holy Spirit  
and the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Orphans,  
may he grant me the strength to be faithful.

A. *Rite.*

*The rite of the profession is contained in our ritual. The profession is received by the Superior General, in person or through a delegate.*

B. *Preservation of the Acts of the Profession.*

*The act of profession is to be drawn in the Record Book of Professions or in the Community Journal. A signed copy of the act of profession and of the statement of the renunciation of administration and ownership of goods are to be sent to both, the general and provincial Archives.*

## **VI - Post-Novitiate.**

99. *Goals.*

The goal of post-novitiate is to help the religious to develop and consolidate their formation through the direct experience of the life and mission of the Congregation. It starts immediately after novitiate and lasts for at least three years.

100. *Formation.*

Post-novitiate is to be a school of brotherly love and community life, where religious are trained in the faithful observance of the Constitutions and Rules. During this stage, studies are resumed and integrated with apostolic activities.

101. *Organization.*

The first period of post-novitiate is to last at least two years. It is to take place in a house expressly established for this purpose under the guidance of a religious assisted by his confrères

in a spirit of common responsibility.  
It pertains to the Superior General,  
with the consent of his Council,  
upon the proposal of the competent major Superior,  
to establish the house of post-novitiate  
and to appoint the religious in charge.  
The religious in charge  
is to meet the same requirements  
of the Master of novices.

*A. Studies and Apostolic Experiences.*

*During post-novitiate, religious undertake the study of philosophy and theology or other disciplines, in accordance with each one's inclination and the Superiors' instructions. Such studies are to be organically integrated with the knowledge of the Somascan spirituality and the Congregation's history. The apostolic experiences in which the religious are initiated are to be conducted in such a way that formation and studies are not hindered.*

*B. Post-Novitiate Conclusion.*

*At the end of post-novitiate, the religious who is deemed suitable may make the solemn profession. Superiors are to provide that those who do not make the solemn profession continue their formation.*

## **VII - Studies.**

### *102. Study and Formation.*

The study of both sacred and secular disciplines is a necessary means for an effective apostolate. Our religious are to consider study as an important component of their formation, and are to apply themselves to it with seriousness and commitment. It is the Superiors' duty to provide with concern all that is required for the religious' studies,

so that they may attend to it with interest and profit.<sup>191</sup>

*A. Specific Preparation.*

*Our religious, in accordance with their dispositions and with the Superiors' consent, are also to be initiated into the studies required by the particular apostolic ministries to which they may be called.*

*B. Updating.*

*Not only during their initial formation, but through their entire life, religious are to strive to better their own education in order to work fruitfully for the Church and society of their times.*

## **VIII - Sacred Orders.**

### *103. Formation of the Candidates.*

Religious called to the sacred Orders are to receive a spiritual and intellectual preparation which is suitable to the exercise of their ministry. It is the duty of the major Superiors to establish the study house and to responsibly take care of it, employing religious who are sound in doctrine, pastoral experience, and spiritual formation.

### *104. Studies toward Priesthood.*

Philosophical and theological studies are to be carried out in accordance with the instructions issued by the ecclesiastical authority. Special emphasis is given on pastoral training, which is to be particularly cared during the period of diaconal ministry and after priestly Ordination.

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<sup>191</sup> C 1626 802.

105. *Admission to Ministries and Sacred Orders.*

The admission to ministries and sacred Orders pertains to the competent major Superior of the candidate's structure, with the consent of his Council.

The provisions of canon law in regards to requirements, candidate's age, intervals, examinations, and spiritual exercises, are to be followed.

A. *Superiors' Responsibilities.*

*Superiors are to use necessary prudence and care when presenting to the Bishop the candidates to Sacred Orders. They are to be aware that the responsibility for the candidates' sufficient preparation rests upon them.*

B. *Procedures.*

*A religious aspiring to the ministries and sacred Orders is to address a written application to the competent major Superior. To the latter, the local Superior must also send a report which is accompanied by the advice of the Council of the Superior.*

C. *Documents Related to Diaconate.*

*Before being promoted to the Diaconate, a religious must take and sign the oath prescribed by the Apostolic See. After Ordination, the major Superior is to inform the parish priest of the parish where the newly ordained was baptized. The same parish priest must be informed after priestly Ordination as well.*

D. *Filing Documentation.*

*A copy of the application, the report of the local Superior, the act of admission, the oath, and the document attesting the fact that the Ordination has taken place, is to be preserved both in the General and Provincial Archives.*

## **IX - Ongoing Formation.**

### *106. Importance.*

The Congregation offers to her religious opportunities for continuous renewal in order to further their vocational growth, a serious and profound revision of their consecrated life and apostolic mission, and the commitment of their offering to God and the poor.

#### *A. Responsibility.*

*Religious are directly responsible for their own formation throughout their entire life. Superiors are to help them through appropriate initiatives and facilitate their participation.*

#### *B. Forms.*

*Ongoing formation takes place above all in the local community. Furthermore, toward a renewal inspired to the Congregation's charism, courses by expert people and spiritual exercises are to be organized. According to the times and procedures set up by the major Superiors, more intense reflection and thorough verification are to accompany particular events of religious life.*

## **X - Association to the Congregation.**

### *107. Associates.*

Since manifold activities are carried out in our houses, the Congregation may associate priests and laymen who manifest a fervent Christian life and are suitable to living in our communities and to assuming particular tasks.<sup>192</sup> Association is granted by the Superior General on the request of the competent major Superior.

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<sup>192</sup> C 1626 347.

*108. Obligations and rights of the associate*

After a proper probationary period,  
anyone who is willing to be associated  
to the Congregation  
must bind himself by making a formal promise  
and live in accordance with our Constitutions and Rules.  
The associate may profess  
the private vows of chastity, poverty and obedience  
before the local Superior.  
The obligations deriving from the vows  
last throughout the time he remains with us.<sup>193</sup>  
He enjoys all the benefits of the Congregation,  
except those deriving from the public profession of vows.

*109. Documents Related to Association.*

Before association, an act is to be signed  
where the conditions required of individual cases  
are to be expressed.

*110. Association of Individuals Who Completed their Novitiate.*

Those who at the end of novitiate,  
though deemed suitable to our life,  
do not feel up to making the profession of vows,  
may apply to join the Congregation  
as associates.  
Later, if they desire to make the profession,  
they may be admitted in accordance with canon law.

*111. Termination of the Association.*

An associate  
may freely leave the Congregation,  
as well as be dismissed for just reasons.  
With termination, all bonds  
and acquired obligations cease immediately.

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<sup>193</sup> C 1626 351.

## Chapter X

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### Suspension and Termination of the Obligations of Religious Life and Re-admission to the Congregation.

#### *112. Temporary Stay Out of Religious House.*

Religious who have received the consent to live temporarily out of their religious house for particular reasons, are to be followed with care and love. The permission for the leave of absence from a religious house or the indult of exlaustration, as well as the juridical situation which is derived from them, are regulated by canon law.

#### *113. Departure from the Congregation.*

Should a religious encounter grave difficulties in following his vocation, he is to avail himself of all the means to overcome them. The community is to facilitate his search of God's will through brotherly love and prayer. When the time of profession expires, a religious may freely leave the Congregation or he may not be admitted to renew his vows or make solemn profession. If a religious in either temporary or solemn vows leaves or is dismissed, the rules established by canon law are to be followed. Those who depart from the Congregation on their own initiative or are dismissed must not be deprived of the friendship and understanding of their brothers.

#### *114. Readmission to the Congregation.*



Norms for readmitting to the Congregation  
those who, after having left,  
apply to return,  
are established by canon law.  
It pertains to the Superior General  
with the consent of his Council  
to determine the procedures for readmission.

*115. Correction and Sanctions.*

In the case of a serious public and ascertained offence,  
the major Superior is to correct the religious  
with love and responsibility,  
after having listened to him  
and obtained the advice of his Councilors,  
if circumstances warrant it.  
When it is a matter of offences  
which attract sanctions provided by canon law,  
while providing accordingly,  
the Superior is to strive  
for the spiritual good of the confrère  
and to see that the life of the community does not suffer  
disruption.



## PART II

# Chapter XI

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## Structures and Governance of the Congregation

### 116. *Structures of the Congregation.*

Our Congregation is divided into appropriate structures in order to more easily attain the ends for which she was brought about by God, support her communities, respond to the different needs of the places where she works, and foster her own growth in new countries. Of such structures, some are permanent, as the Province; others are provisional, as the Delegation, the Commissariat, and the Vice-Province. Structures and houses are ecclesiastical juridical persons.

### 117. *Governance*

The Governance of the Congregation is exercised collegially by the General, Provincial, Vice-Provincial Chapters; individually by Superiors with the assistance of their Councils. Superiors and their Vicars must be priests of solemn profession.<sup>194</sup>

#### A. *Termination of Offices Conferred by Appointment.*

*Should an office conferred by appointment to a religious become vacant, the competent Superior provides for his substitution, in accordance with proper law, until the completion of his own term of office.*

#### B. *Resignation from Offices Conferred by Appointment.*

*Should an office become vacant by resignation, the latter must be accepted by the competent Superior. Only in the case of the resignation of a General Officer, local Superior, Delegate of a Delegation, Commissary or one of his Councilors, the procedures for the acceptance of the resignation are the same that are followed for the appointment and any subsequent ratification.*

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<sup>194</sup> See CIC 129-130; 274; 596,§2; 620.

*118. Local Government.*

The Congregation manifests her life and accomplishes her mission in the local community ruled by a Superior assisted by his Council.

*119. Provincial Government.*

The Provincial government promotes and arranges the life and development of the Province in accordance with the directions of the General government. It consists of the Provincial Chapter and the Provincial Superior assisted by his Council. The government of the Vice-Province is modelled upon that of the Province.

*120. General Government.*

The General government has the task to guarantee the Congregation's unity in fidelity to her charism and her apostolic mission, and to lead her communities and religious in constant renewal at the service of the Church. It consists of the General Chapter, the Consulta of the Congregation and the Superior General assisted by his Councilors. The General government makes use of the assistance of the General Officers.

# Chapter XII

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## Houses of the Congregation

### **I - Religious Community.**

#### *121. Religious House.*

- a) The religious house is a religious community legitimately erected consisting of at least three religious who live in the house under the authority of their own Superior. The religious house must have at least one oratory in which the Eucharist can be celebrated and reserved.
- b) The filial house is a transitory religious community; it depends upon a religious house, and is ruled by particular Statutes.
- c) The residence is a transitory religious community; it directly depends upon the competent major Superior who governs it through a Delegate.

Erecting, modifying or suppressing a religious house, a filial house or a residence pertains to the competent major Superior, with the consent of his Council; his decision must be ratified by the Superior General, with the consent of his Council. For its erection, the written consent of the diocesan Bishop is required; for its suppression, the same must be consulted.<sup>195</sup>

#### *A. Conditions for Establishment and Modifications.*

*When the establishment of new religious houses, filial houses or residences is proposed, it is necessary to consider the good of the Church and the Congregation, and to verify the existence of the necessary requirements for leading religious life according to the goals and the spirit of the Congregation. Moreover, when a house is to be destined to apostolic activities different from those for which it was established, the consent of the diocesan Bishop is required, unless it is an activity merely internal to the Congregation.*

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<sup>195</sup> See CIC 608-612.

*B. Statutes of the Filial House.*

*Drawing the Statutes of the filial house is the duty of the competent major Superior, after hearing the religious house on which the filial house depends. The approval of the Statutes pertains to the Superior General, with the consent of his Council.*<sup>196</sup>

*122. Religious Houses Depending on the Superior General.*

Directly depending on the Superior General are:

- a) the religious house of the Curia General;
- b) houses established for particular needs of the entire Order.

## **II - Superior.**

*123. Superior.*

The Superior rules the religious house in accordance with canon and proper law. He exercises his authority by placing himself at the service of his brothers and helping with every possible means both, the individuals and the community, to pursue the goal of the institution. The Superior has a duty of residence. Therefore, he is not to assume tasks which may distract him from his office. He is to be seldom absent from the house, and only for a short time and a necessary reason. When he foresees a longer absence, he is to make arrangements so that everything may proceed regularly.<sup>197</sup>

*A. Exercise of Authority.*

*The Superior promotes the life of the community by blending wisdom, serenity, and courage with humility, love, and piety. He commits himself to point out the way of perfection to his confrères more by his example than by his words.*<sup>198</sup>  
*He loves them, willingly listens to them, and provides with great care to their spiritual and material needs.*

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<sup>196</sup> See CIC 608-609; 611-612.

<sup>197</sup> See CIC 618-619; 629.

<sup>198</sup> C 1626 624.

#### 124. *Appointment.*

The Superior is appointed, after suitable consultation, by the competent major Superior, with the consent of his Council. Such appointment is ratified by the Superior General, with the consent of his Council. His term of office lasts for four years and can be renewed for a second, but not for a third consecutive term in the same house. In the houses depending on the Superior General, the term of office lasts for six years and can be renewed in the same house for a second, but not for a third consecutive term. Before undertaking his office, the Superior is to make the profession of faith according to the formula approved by the Apostolic See.<sup>199</sup>

##### *A. Requirements for the Appointment of a Local Superior.*

*A local Superior must be thirty years old and ordinarily have been in solemn vows for five years.*

##### *B. Consultation.*

*It pertains to the competent major Superior to conduct an appropriate individual consultation of the members of a religious community to single out a religious suitable to be appointed local Superior.*

##### *C. Duration and Termination of the Term of Office.*

*The superior takes office with the promulgation of the decree of his appointment, and his term of office ends with the taking of office of his successor. The duration of his office corresponds to the four-year term of the competent major Superior in the Province, Vice-Province, and depending structures. For any reason, should the office of the Superior cease before the term is over, another Superior is appointed until the conclusion of the term of office.*

##### *B. Starting of the Term of Office.*

*After receiving the decree of appointment, the Superior convokes the Chapter of the house as soon as he can, has the Secretary read the decree of appointment, and notifies*

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<sup>199</sup> See CIC 623-624; 625,§3.



*the community of any instructions from the major Superior, which are to be transcribed in the Journal. Finally, he receives the inventories, the registers of Masses and bequests, and the ledgers of both the ordinary and extraordinary administrations, which must be accurately up-to-date.*

*125. Duties.*

The main duties of the Superior are:

- a) to facilitate to his religious the listening of the Word of God and participation in the Sacramental life;
- b) to promote the observance of the Constitutions and Rules and the directives of the major Superiors, assuring that they be read and studied in the community;
- c) to boost the presence of the community in the life of the local Church;
- d) to make provisions that all religious may carry out their spiritual obligations;
- e) to facilitate and promote fraternal relations among the religious;
- f) to animate and coordinate the activities of the house with a wise distribution of assignments;
- g) to discharge all the commitments entrusted to him by canon and proper law;
- h) to give his religious the faculty of hearing confessions and preaching in our churches or oratories.

### **III - Chapter of the House and Council of the Superior.**

*126. Chapter of the House.*

The Chapter of the religious house and residence consists of all the religious of the community. It is convoked and presided over by the Superior or, in the case of his inability, by the Vice-Superior. Its goals are formative, spiritual, and organizational. Its has the value of an advice

A. *Preparation.*

*The Chapter of the house is prepared with care and the Superior, if possible, makes known the agenda beforehand. All religious have the freedom to express their opinion with humility and sincerity. Outside the Chapter, everyone is to maintain due discretion in regard to what has been dealt with, especially if there is a danger of offending charity.*

B. *Community Project.*

*A community plan is drawn at the beginning of the year or of the term of office of the Superior, and its implementation is periodically verified.*

C. *Spiritual and Formative Leadership.*

*At least once a month, the Superior convokes the spiritual and formative Chapter of the house. In it, an exhortation is made with the intent of fostering fervour and brotherly harmony in living and working, and the best suitable ways are sought for reviewing the community's life in the light of the Word of God.*

D. *Community Planning.*

*In the organizational Chapter of the house, the most appropriate means are studied for the community to live religious life in the best possible way, and carry out its ministry in a fruitful way.*

E. *Minutes.*

*The Minutes of the Chapter of the house and of the Council of the Superior are drawn by summarizing the topics of the discussion and the decisions made by the Superior. The Minutes are signed by the Secretary and the Superior. A copy of the most important acts is sent to the competent major Superior.*

### *127. Council of Superior*

The Council of the Superior consists of the religious of solemn vows. It is convoked and presided over by the Superior or, in the case of his inability, by the Vice-Superior, whenever it is necessary by law to express a consent or advice before decisions.<sup>200</sup>

### *128. Juridical Value of the Council of the Superior*

The vote of the Council of the Superior is usually an advice. A consent is required for the appointment of the Officers of the house and for the decisions of financial nature in accordance with the Norms of Administration. Religious of solemn vows enjoy active and passive voice, in accordance with the Constitutions and Rules.

## **IV - Vice-Superior, Finance Officer, and Secretary.**

### *129. Vice-Superior.*

The Vice-Superior is to help the Superior in the governance of the religious house, especially with his advice. In the absence of the Superior he acts as his deputy; otherwise he is vested with the authority conferred upon him by the Superior. He is elected, with the subsequent consent of the competent Major Superior, in the houses comprising of at least four religious of solemn vows. In specific cases, the competent major Superior, with the consent of his Council, holds the right of providing directly. Should the office of Vice-Superior become vacant, a successor is elected until the conclusion of the term unless the competent major Superior exercises his right to appoint him. Should the termination occur by resignation, the latter must be accepted by the competent major Superior.

#### *A. Particular Duties.*

*The Vice-Superior is to keep the community united with the Superior and, during his absence, is to make provisions that all may go on as usual. Should the Superior make any*

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<sup>200</sup> See CIC 127; 627.

*mistake, the Vice-Superior, after having prayed, is to confront him in the Lord with respect and confidence.*<sup>201</sup>

130. *Finance Officer and Secretary.*

The Finance Officer and the Secretary are appointed by the Superior, with the consent of his Council. In particular cases, the competent major Superior may appoint them directly, with the consent of his Council. If required, these two offices can be combined, and even with the office of Vice-Superior.

A. *Office Duration.*

*The Finance Officer and the Secretary remain in office for the duration of the term of office of the Superior.*

B. *Finance Officer.*

*The Finance Officer cooperates with the Superior in the administration of the goods of the house. His tasks and duties are defined by the Constitutions and by the Norms of Administration.*

C. *Secretary.*

*The Secretary draws up the minutes of the Council of the Superior and of the Chapter of the house and compiles the Community Journal, which must be written and kept with care.*

D. *Community Journal.*

*The official acts and the directions of the Superior General, Visitor, and competent major Superiors are to be transcribed in the Community Journal. In it, a mention is to be made of the celebration and decrees of the General, Provincial, and Vice-Provincial Chapter, and of the official letters of the major Superiors. Study meetings, retreats and spiritual exercises, specific activities of the religious, any prolonged and justified absence, changes of residence, solemn celebrations, both of religious and other character, visits of Superiors and personalities, and local events which may*

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<sup>201</sup> C 1626 670.

*make reference to the house: all these events are to be described.*

*E. Documents to be sent.*

*A copy of the following documents is to be sent to the General, Provincial, and Vice-Provincial Archives: certificate of consecration of churches or altars; deeds of acquisition and donation of goods, and of wills which benefit the house or church; lists of benefactors and spiritual Associates; notice of the occurred profession and ordination of religious.*

*F. Archives.*

*Every religious community is to have an Archives, well equipped and well guarded in a safe place, where to preserve rescripts, decrees and ecclesiastical documents regarding the house; the decrees of the General Chapter, the documents and letters of the major Superiors; the official Journal of the Congregation; the authentic deeds, contracts, writs, agreements, and everything that refers to real estate and its administration; the inventories of precious and artistic furnishings; the personal data of the religious, the Community Journals, the registers of bequests, Masses, and administration; important correspondence. A precise index of all the documents is to be drawn up; they must not be removed but for serious reasons and only after entering a removal note in an appropriate form.*

*G. Library.*

*Every community is to have an adequately equipped library entrusted to the care of a suitable religious who is to compile and update the records of the books and suggest any purchase to the Superior by taking into account the study and ministry requirements of the religious. The librarian must not allow any valuable manuscripts and books to be removed from the library.*

# Chapter XIII

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## Provincial Government

### *131. Religious Province and Provincial Government.*

The Province is a group of several houses which constitutes an immediate part of the Congregation under the same major Superior. It includes a sufficient number of religious that can ensure self-sufficiency in carrying out its mission, formation, and sustenance of its members and institutions. The Province, canonically erected, is ruled by the Chapter and Provincial Superior.<sup>202</sup>

### **I - Provincial Chapter.**

### *132. Provincial Chapter.*

The Provincial Chapter consists of the legitimate representatives of the entire Province. The ordinary Chapter is celebrated once in four years, and every time the Provincial Superior needs to be elected; the extraordinary Chapter when serious reasons advise so.

### *133. Calling.*

The ordinary Chapter is called by the Provincial Superior, or by whoever enjoys the right to do so in accordance with the Constitutions, upon agreement with the Superior General. The calling of an extraordinary Chapter pertains to the Provincial Superior, with the consent of his plenary Council. Such decision is ratified by the Superior General, with the consent of his Council.

#### *A. Place and Date of the Celebration.*

*The calling is done by sending an official letter to the religious of the Province, at least two months before the starting date. The place and time of the celebration are decided by the Provincial Superior, with the consent of his*

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<sup>202</sup> See CIC 621-622.

*Council. When there are serious reasons, the starting date can be anticipated or deferred, but not beyond three months from the starting date of the previous Chapter.*

#### 134. *Duties.*

The main duties of the Provincial Chapter are:

- a) to point out practical ways to implement within the Province the directives of the Constitutions and Rules and the decrees of the General Chapter;
- b) to examine the vital issues of the Province and make appropriate decisions;
- c) to elect the Provincial Superior and his Councilors;
- d) to take into consideration the proposals forwarded by individual religious and communities.

#### 135. *Members.*

Members of the Provincial Chapter are:

- 1) the Superior General or his Delegate;
- 2) the Provincial Superior and his Councilors;
- 3) the Commissaries of the Provincial Commissariats and the Delegates of the Provincial Delegations;
- 4) the delegates elected from a single list of the religious of the Province and of the Provincial Delegations who enjoy passive voice;
- 5) the delegates of each Provincial Commissariat, in accordance with their Statutes.

The Provincial Finance Officer and the Master of the Novitiate of the Province are by rights members of the Provincial Chapter; they do not enjoy active voice in the elections of the Provincial Superior and Councilors, unless they participate in virtue of another capacity. The total number of delegates must not be inferior to the number of the by rights members.<sup>203</sup>

##### *A. Number and Election of the Delegates.*

*The number of the delegates of the Province is one out of five electors, or a fraction of five. They are elected from a list which includes the names of all the religious who enjoy passive voice. After obtaining validation from the Superior*

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<sup>203</sup> See CIC 632-633.

*General, the Provincial Superior notifies the names of all the members of the Chapter by an official letter. This letter has the value of convocation.*

*136. Active and Passive Voice in Electing Delegates.*

In electing delegates, religious enjoy active and passive voice in the Province where they reside. The religious living in houses directly depending on the Superior General enjoy active and passive voice in their structure of origin. The requirements for active and passive voice are the same as for the election of the delegates to the General Chapter.

*137. Replacements.*

If any of the members of the Provincial Chapter can not take part in it, he must quickly notify his reasons to the Provincial Superior. To the latter pertains the right to accept the renunciation. In such a case, the members elected as delegates and the Commissaries have a right to be replaced: substitutes for the delegates are those who follow them by number of votes; the substitute of a Commissary is his Councilor according to the order of appointment.

*A. Guests to the Provincial Chapter.*

*People who may offer contribution to the Chapter work may be invited by the Chapter itself or even, before its celebration, by the Provincial Superior, with the consent of his Council. The status of the invitation and the modalities of participation are indicated in the Rules of Order of the Provincial Chapter; however, the right of active voice in elections and approvals of any kind is always excluded.*

*B. Preparation.*

*The preparation of the Chapter is carried out by an appropriate consultation of the religious through the Chapters of the house. Individual religious are to cooperate through prayer and study; they may forward to the Provincial Superior adequately justified proposals about the life and development of the Province. Such proposal will be*



*examined by the Provincial Council in the way prescribed for the General Chapter.*

*138. Validity of the Acts.*

For the acts of the Provincial Chapter to be valid, the presence of the Superior General or his Delegate and of at least two-third of the members to be convoked is required. Only for serious reasons and with the consent of his Council, the Superior General can derogate from the norm that requires his presence or that of his Delegate; in such case, he will give instructions which are to be considered as binding for the validity of the acts.

*139 Presidency.*

The Superior General or his Delegate presides over the Chapter. The president, if he so desires, may be assisted by a moderator.

*140. Voting, Majorities, Postulation.*

In the Provincial Chapter, elections, voting, computation of majorities, postulation, acceptance of renunciation from an elected office, follow the same rules established for the General Chapter.

*A. Consultation for the Election of the Provincial Superior.*

*The Provincial Superior is elected from a short-list of names chosen by the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, after a consultation of the religious of solemn vows of the Province. The short-list includes no less than three names among those who occupy the first places in the consultation of the religious.*

*141. Order of Elections and Their Confirmation.*

The Provincial Superior and his Councilors are elected one at a time, as defined in No. 179 and the followings; the first elected Councilor is also the Vicar Provincial. Elections are considered confirmed when the Superior General or his Delegate signs the pertinent acts, which are to be drawn in accordance with the Rules of Order. Only for very serious

reasons and in particular cases, the Superior General or his Delegate may remit the approval of the elections to the examination of the plenary General Council; should they not be approved, in that particular instance, they will be referred to the Superior General who will provide, with the consent of his Council.

*142. Approval of Decisions.*

Two copies of the acts of the Chapter are to be sent to Superior General within ten days from its conclusion. For the decisions to come into force, the ratification of the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, is required; should they not be approved, the Superior General will notify appropriate instructions to the Provincial Superior. The reply is transcribed in the Journal of the Provincial Chapter.

*A. Copies of the Acts.*

*Two authentic copies of the acts of the Chapter are to be sent to the Superior within a short time.*

*143. Rules of Order and Ritual.*

The Provincial Chapter unfolds in accordance with its proper Rules of Order, whose approval or modification pertains to the Superior General with the consent of his Council. Prayers, formulae, and liturgical ceremonies are contained in the Ritual.

## **II - Provincial Superior.**

*144. Provincial Superior.*

The Provincial Superior is the major Superior of the Province and, within it, is vested with ordinary power over its communities and religious in accordance with canon and proper law. Besides those necessary by canon law, the requirement for his election are that he must be at least thirty years old and in solemn vows for at least five years. His term of office lasts for four years; it can be renewed for a second but

not for a third consecutive term. Before undertaking his office, he is to make the profession of faith.<sup>204</sup>

A. *Exercise of Authority.*

*The Provincial Superior is to exercise his office with wisdom and kindness; he is to be ready to understand, help, and guide his confrères by his example and words, and he is not to overlook anything that may work for the good of the individuals and communities.*

B. *Governance.*

*The Provincial Superior gives the local Superiors, who share with him the responsibility of governance, directives for the good progress of the communities and works of apostolate. He promotes periodical meetings with the Superiors and with the directors of the different fields of activity in order to study problems of common interest and provide the most suitable means for their practical solution. Urged by a pastoral mind and with the intent of helping his confrères, he frequently visits the communities.*

C. *Compatible Offices.*

*The office of Provincial Superior can not be combined with that of Master of Novices or Parish Priest. If there are good reasons, according to the judgement of the Provincial Council, it can be combined with that of Superior of a religious house; in this case, the appointment as Superior pertains to the Superior General, with the consent of his Council.*

D. *Seal.*

*The Seal of the Provincial Superior carries the coat of arm of the Congregation with the inscription: Provincial Superior of the Clerics Regular of Somasca.*

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<sup>204</sup> See CIC 617-621; PC 14.

#### *145. Duties of the Provincial Superior.*

The Provincial Superior promotes the good of the Congregation within the Province by effectively fostering the observance of the Constitutions and Rules and the union of hearts through the practice of brotherly love. In order to achieve this purpose in an easier way, he himself is to give example of unity with, respect for, and obedience to the Superior General. A specific task of the Provincial Superior is to arrange the communities of his Province. In assigning to the communities, according to the needs of their activities, he must bear in mind the needs of community life and the good of his confreres, arousing in all a spirit of sacrifice and availability required by our apostolic mission.

##### *A. Annual Report to the Superior General.*

*The Provincial Superior keeps the Superior General informed about the progress of the communities and, every year, he sends a report about the state of his Province, which is signed also by his Councilors.*

##### *B. Procedures for Ratifications and Appointments.*

*The deliberations and appointments which must be submitted for ratification are sent to the Superior General, along with the required documentation. It pertains to the Provincial Superior to communicate the appointment to the concerned religious and make the presentation to the diocesan bishop, in the case of parish priests. A copy of the acts that do not require ratification is also sent to the Superior General.*

##### *C. Direction of Institutions.*

*In choosing the Superior, both the needs of the community and those of its activity are to be equally taken into consideration. Should the Superior be also the director of the activity, individual religious and the community must not be neglected. A way to guarantee expertise and continuity in carrying out the activity must also be found.*

*146. Erection of Autonomous Associations of Faithful or Charitable Foundations.*

The Provincial Superior, with the consent of his Council, may erect autonomous Associations of faithful<sup>205</sup> or Charitable Foundations of canonical right, and approve their Statutes. Their erection and Statutes must be ratified by the Superior General, with the consent of his Council.

*147. Vocation Promotion, Initial and Ongoing Formation.*

In special way, are entrusted to the Provincial Superior the animation of vocation promotion, the care of the houses of formation – for which he must feel the obligation to prepare and assign suitable religious – and the ongoing formation of the religious entrusted to him.

*148. Termination of Office.*

Should the office of Provincial Superior become vacant, because of resignation or other reason, the Vicar takes over the governance of the Province, while the Councilors remain in office. It pertains to the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, to decide:

- whether to conclude the four-year term with the governance of the Vicar Provincial and to appoint another Councilor;
- whether to convoke, within three months, an ordinary Provincial Chapter for the election of the Provincial Superior and his Councilors; in this case, all provincial elected offices and all the appointments made during the four-year term, would come to an end;
- whether to appoint a new Provincial Superior for the conclusion of the four-year term; in this last case, a previous consultation of all the religious of solemn vows of the Province and of the structures depending on it is required; if necessary, a fourth Councilor will be appointed, assuring the order of the Chapter election, after the Provincial Superior.

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<sup>205</sup> In accordance with Canon 303.

The resignation of the Provincial Superior must be presented to the Superior General who will accept it with the consent of his Council, and take care of his substitution in accordance with proper law.

### **III – Provincial Councilors.**

#### *149. Vicar and Provincial Councilors.*

The Vicar and the other Provincial Councilors are elected, with separate ballots, by the Provincial Chapter in accordance with the Constitutions and the Chapter's Rules of Order. Ordinarily they are four of them; they may be two of them whenever the Province and the dependent structures comprise less than thirty religious with active voice, at the starting day of the Chapter. They remain in office until the following ordinary Provincial Chapter. They can be re-elected for a second but not for a third consecutive term of office. They must be thirty years old and ordinarily they must have been in solemn vows for at least five years. The precedence in the Council is determined by the order of election.

##### *A. Number of the Councilors in Particular Cases.*

*In particular cases, the Provincial Chapter may decide that the Provincial Council will consist of only two Councilors.*

##### *B. Exercise of Office.*

*In carrying out their task, the Councilors are to be united with the Provincial Superior and with each other. Their aim must always be the common good. When called to give their advice or consent, they are to do so with freedom and responsibility. Outside the Council, they are to be extremely discreet and try to implement every decision as if it were taken unanimously, even though someone could have held a different opinion.*

#### *150. Vicar, Chancellor, and Finance Officer.*

The Provincial Vicar, who is vested with ordinary vicarious power, is also the first Councilor, must be thirty years old and must have been in solemn vows for at least five years; he can

be re-elected for a second but not for a third consecutive term. Before undertaking his office, he is to make the profession of faith. The Provincial Chancellor is appointed by the Provincial Superior with the consent of his Council and he is to be chosen among the other Councilors. The duties of the Provincial Vicar and Chancellor are similar to those of the Vicar General and the Chancellor General. The Provincial Finance Officer may be chosen among the Councilors, excluding the Vicar; he is appointed by the Provincial Superior, with the consent of his Council, and remains in office for four years and his term of office may be renewed.

#### *151. Duties of the Provincial Council.*

The Provincial Council gives its advice and consent in accordance with canon or proper law.

The Provincial Councilors:

- a) cooperate with the Provincial Superior in implementing the decisions of the Provincial Chapter, in assigning the religious to the religious houses, and in coordinating the vocational, formative, and apostolic activities of the Province;
- b) assist and advise the Provincial Superior in carrying out his office and in writing official acts.

#### *152. Consent.*

The Provincial Council gives its consent:

- a) when it is called to decide on matters which are to be presented to the Superior General for ratification or consent;
- b) in all those cases in which the Constitutions and Rules or universal law state that the decision is referred to the Provincial Superior and his Council.

#### *153. Validity of the Acts.*

For the acts of the Council to be valid, the presence of the Provincial Superior, or his substitute, and at least two Councilors is necessary.

154. *Plenary Council.*

By plenary Council we understand the presence of the one who presides over it and of all Councilors (1+4; or 1+2). It is required:

- a) any times the Provincial Superior appoints someone to an office;
- b) in those cases in which it is explicitly required by universal or proper law.

Should one or two Councilors be absent, the Provincial Superior, with the consent of the Councilors present, appoints ad actum those who can replace them.

A. *Minutes and Acts.*

*The Provincial Chancellor writes the minutes and the acts of the Council's sessions, which must be signed by the Provincial Superior and undersigned by the Chancellor. A copy of them is to be sent to the Superior General as soon as possible.*

155. *Termination of a Councilor from His Office.*

Should the office of a Provincial Councilor become vacant, the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, appoints a successor, after hearing the concerned Provincial Superior. He will remain in office until the end of the running term of the Provincial Superior. Precedence is determined by the order of election or appointment. The resignation of a Provincial Councilor is to be accepted by the Superior General, with the consent of his Council.



# Chapter XIV

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## Transitory Structures

### **I - Delegation.**

#### *156. Delegation and its Erection.*

The Delegation is a transitory structure depending on a Commissariat, a Vice-Province, a Province or the General Government. It consists of one or more religious houses in particular situations. Erecting modifying, and suppressing a Delegation pertains to the competent major Superior with the consent of his Council and must be ratified by the Superior General with the consent of his Council.

#### *157. Delegate.*

In order to coordinate the Delegation and to achieve the goals of the new foundation, the competent major Superior, with the consent of his Council, appoints a Delegate, to whom he confers delegate power, appropriate faculties, and directions. The appointment of a Delegate is to be ratified by the Superior General, with the consent of his Council.

### **II - Commissariat.**

#### *158. Commissariat and its Erection.*

The Commissariat is a transitory structure and consists of more than one religious community. It has its own government and may depend either on the General or Provincial government. Erecting, modifying, suppressing a Commissariat, and establishing its dependence, pertain to the Superior General with the consent of his Council, after consulting the major Superiors of the Order, either when they are gathered in the Consulta or individually.

#### *159. Statutes.*

The Commissariat is ruled by suitable Statutes. Drawing up the Statutes pertains to the competent major Superior with his

Council, after hearing the officers of the Commissariat. Its approval pertains to the Superior General, with the consent of his Council.

*160. Commissary and Government of the Commissariat.*

A Commissariat is governed by a Commissary. As a major Superior, he rules it with ordinary vicarious power, and is assisted by his Council. The requirements for the Commissary are the same as those for the Provincial Superior.

The Commissary and the two Councilors of a General Commissariat are appointed by the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, for a three-year term of office. The Commissary and the two Councilors of the Provincial Commissariat are appointed by the Provincial Superior, with the consent of his Council, for a four-year term of office. Its appointment is ratified by the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, and is preceded by the consultation of the religious of solemn vows of the Commissariat.

### **III - Vice-Province.**

*161. Vice-Province and Its Erection.*

The Vice-Province is a transitory structure and consists of a number of religious houses. Due to lack of sufficient formative or financial autonomy it cannot be constituted a Province, and it therefore avails itself of the support of other structures of the Order. Its erection, modification, and suppression pertain to the General Chapter or to the Consulta of the Congregation.

*162. Governance.*

The governance of the Vice-Province is modelled on the Province's; therefore, what the Constitutions state for the Province's rule is extended to that of the Vice-Province, with the exceptions provided by the Constitutions or Statutes.

*A. Statutes.*

*It is the duty of the Superior General with the consent of his Council to draw up, approve or modify the Statutes of the*

*Vice-Province, after hearing the officers of the Vice-Province and other concerned bodies.*

*163. Chapter of the Vice-Province.*

The Chapter of the Vice-Province is celebrated once in four years. Its convocation, composition, duties, and unfolding are guided by the Rules of Order of the Chapter itself.

*164. Superior of the Vice-Propvincial and his Council.*

The Vice-Province is ruled by the Superior of the Vice-Province who, as a major Superior, is vested with ordinary power over the houses and the religious of the Vice-Province and is assisted by a Council of two Councilors. The Superior of the Vice-Province and his Councilors are elected by the Chapter of the Vice-Province.

# Chapter XV

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## General Governance

### **I - General Chapter.**

#### *165. General Chapter.*

The General Chapter is the supreme body of governance of the Congregation. The development of the Congregation particularly depends on it. It consists of the legitimate representatives from the entire Congregation.

#### *166. Recurrence.*

The ordinary General Chapter is celebrated every six years and whenever a new Superior General has to be elected, in accordance with the Constitutions. When grave matters suggest it, in the opinion of the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, after hearing the opinion of the major Superiors, an extraordinary General Chapter may be celebrated.

#### *167. Preparation, Calling, and Convocation.*

The ordinary General Chapter, after an adequate period of preparation, is called by the Superior General by an official letter at least five months before its starting date and is convoked at least three months before it. The place and date are determined by the Superior General with the consent of his Council. Due to serious reasons, the celebration of an ordinary Chapter may be anticipated or deferred, but not beyond three months before or after the expiration of the term of office started with the previous ordinary Chapter.

#### *168. Duties.*

The foremost duties of an ordinary General Chapter are:

- a) to safeguard the spiritual patrimony of the Congregation and promote a suitable renewal in accord with this patrimony;
- b) to examine the most important issues of the Congregation, to issue general decrees concerning

- religious life, and make decisions that foster the development of the institutions;
- c) to elect the Superior General, his Vicar, and Councilors;
  - d) to add, amend, abolish, and interpret constitutions and rules in accordance with canon law;
  - e) to erect, modify, and suppress Provinces;
  - f) to examine the proposals sent to the Chapter.

*169. Amendments of Constitutions and Rules.*

Amendments of Constitutions, ad experimentum or already into force, must be approved by the Apostolic See, to whom their authentic interpretation also pertains. The amendments of ad experimentum Constitutions are into force until the ordinary General Chapter which follows the one when they were presented. They come into force at the moment of their approval. As to amendments of rules, the same procedures must be followed, except for the petition to the Apostolic See.<sup>206</sup>

*170. Members.*

By rights members of the General Chapter are:

- 1) the Superior General;
- 2) the Vicar General and the other three Councilors;
- 3) the Provincial Superiors, Vice-Provincial Superiors and Commissaries.

Elected members are:

- 1) for each Province and dependent structures up to 40 religious enjoying active voice: two delegates to be elected from a single list of the religious who enjoy passive voice residing in the Province and dependent structures; one delegate is added from 41 to 80 religious enjoying active voice; the same from 81 to 120, and so on;
- 2) for each Vice-Province: one delegate to be elected among its members who enjoy passive voice;
- 3) for each Commissariat: one delegate to be elected

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<sup>206</sup> See CIC 577-578; 587; Congregation for the Institute of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life: Reply to the Superior General Fr. Franco Moscone, dated July 26, 2011.

among the resident members who enjoy passive voice, if the number of the religious who enjoy active voice exceeds twenty; if not, the members of the Vice-Provincial Commissariat are listed with those who enjoy passive voice in the respective Vice-Province; the members of the Provincial Commissariat are listed with those who enjoy passive voice in the respective Province; the members of the General Commissariat are listed with those who enjoy passive voice in their respective structures of origin;

- 4) the members of the General Delegations and Commissariats will send a representative to be chosen from a list of their own.

Possible chosen member:

If no religious who is not a priest is elected as a delegate to the General Chapter, the Superior General with the consent of his Council will appoint one, having active voice, among the ones who took part in the chapters of their own Provinces or Vice-Provinces.

The Procurator, Chancellor, and Finance Officer General are also by rights members; however, they do not enjoy active voice in the elections of the Superior General and the Councilors, unless they participate in virtue of some other capacity. The total number of the delegates must not be inferior to that of the by rights members.

Should the number of the elected members to the General Chapter be inferior to that of the by rights members, the number of the delegates of the Provinces and Vice-Provinces is increased by one, starting from the Province which has the largest number of religious who enjoy active voice, in accordance with the criteria stated in the Rules of Order of the Chapter, until the number of the by rights members is equaled.

#### *171. Active and Passive Voice for Electing Delegates.*

Only the religious of solemn vows enjoy active voice in electing delegates. Religious who are in solemn vows for at least five years enjoy passive voice. The religious in the General Delegations and houses directly depending on the Superior General enjoy active and passive voice in their structure of

origin. Active and passive voice become effective at the date of the calling of the Chapter.

*A. Replacement.*

*All the members of the General Chapter have both the right and the obligation to participate in it. In case of impediment, the Provincial or Vice-Provincial Superior are replaced by the one who follows in rank within the respective Council, the Commissary by his first Councilor, and the delegates by their runners up.*

*B. Procedures for Resigning.*

*If a member of the General Chapter cannot participate in it, as soon as possible he must communicate his resignation and the reasons for it to the Superior General, who is competent to accept it.*

*C. Guests to the General Chapter.*

*To offer contributions on specific topics and issues the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, and the General Chapter itself, may invite people to participate to moments of the Chapter work. The status modalities of participation are indicated at the moment of inviting; however, the right of active voice in elections and approvals of any kind is always excluded.*

*172. Preparation.*

The preparation of the General Chapter is the duty of the Superior General with his Council. All religious are invited to co-operate.

*A. Cooperation of the Religious.*

*Aware of the importance of the Chapter, all religious are to cooperate in its preparation by praying and studying the issues which are of interest to the life of the Congregation. They are encouraged to send appropriate and substantiated proposals to the Superior General. It is the Superior General's task, with the advice of his Council, to examine such proposals. Even when it is not deemed convenient to*

*take them into account, they must explain the reason to the Chapter.*

*173. Quorum for the Validity of the Acts.*

For the acts of the General Chapter to be valid, the presence of at least two thirds of the members to be convoked is required, and one of them must be the legitimate president.

*174. Presidency.*

The Chapter is presided over by the Superior General or, in his absence, by the Vicar General, so that everything may proceed in accordance with the norms, and in an atmosphere of faith, brotherly love, freedom, and responsibility.

*A. Moderators, Tellers, and Coordination Committee.*

*In directing the sessions, the president of the Chapter is assisted by two moderators; during voting and elections, he is assisted by tellers, and in organizing the works he is assisted by a coordination committee, in accordance with what is stated by the Rules of Order of the General Chapter.*

*175. Voting and Types of Majority.*

Voting is secret. A public vote, “per verbum placet,” is allowed only by a Chapter decision that is unanimously expressed, but never in elections. In computing the votes, two thirds of the valid votes are required for a qualified majority; more than half of the valid votes for an absolute majority; a number of valid votes superior to those received by any immediate alternative party for a relative majority. The votes expressed by blank or spoiled ballots are considered valid for the computation of majorities.<sup>207</sup>

*176. Majority for Various Issues.*

Decisions concerning issues submitted to the examination of the Chapter must be approved by an absolute majority. If there are equal votes in two subsequent ballots, the president may solve the tie.

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<sup>207</sup> See CIC 626.



*177. Majority for Constitutions and Rules.*

In order to add, amend, or abolish constitutions and rules, a qualified majority is always required.

*178. Majority for Elections.*

The election of the Superior General and the Vicar General, in the first two ballots, requires a qualified majority. In the third ballot, an absolute majority is sufficient. If the latter is not obtained, another ballot is required between the two candidates who obtained the highest number of votes. The election of each of the other Councilors always requires an absolute majority. The voting takes place in a way similar to the one followed in the election of the Superior General. In case of an equal number of votes, the older in profession is elected; if the number of years of profession is equal, the older in age is elected.

*179. Postulation.*

Should an election meet any juridical impediment from which one can be (and usually is) dispensed, postulation is allowed in accordance with the norm of canon law.

*180. Non-Acceptance of Elections.*

He who is elected to any office is to receive it as from God's hands. The non-acceptance of an election must be accepted by the Chapter thus respecting the conscience of the person who was elected.<sup>208</sup>

*181. Rules of Order.*

The General Chapter proceeds in accordance with the relevant Rules of Order. Their approval or amendment pertains to the same Chapter. Rites, prayers, and formulae are found in the Ritual.

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<sup>208</sup> See CIC 626.

## **II - Consulta of the Congregation.**

### *182. Consulta.*

The Consulta of the Congregation is a body of collegial governance. It consists of the Superior General, who presides over it, the General Councilors, the Provincial Superiors, Vice-Provincial Superiors, and Commissaries. In case of impediment, the Provincial and Vice-Provincial Superiors are replaced by their Vicars, and the Commissaries by their first Councilor.

### *183. Convocation.*

The Superior General is to convoke the Consulta of the Congregation at least once in his six-year term, if possible half way through. He is free to convoke it when particular circumstances in the life of the Church or the Congregation would advise it.

### *184. Preparation.*

The preparation of the Consulta is a task of the Superior General and his Council. Date, place, and agenda are communicated to all participants in accordance with the time-frame foreseen by the Rules of Order.

### *185. Duties.*

The Consulta of the Congregation:<sup>209</sup>

- a) proposes and verifies the implementation of the directives of the General Chapter;
- b) promotes the good of the Congregation, fosters its unity in practical way, achieves the linking among the structures, and searches for the most suitable means for an effective cooperation in the spiritual, formative, apostolic, and economic fields;
- c) directs and coordinates the endeavor of the Congregation for foundations in areas where no structure is present;
- d) erects, modifies or suppresses a Delegation, a

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<sup>209</sup> See CIC 677.

- Commissariat or a Vice-Province;
- e) elects the Vicar General and the General Councilors when required by proper law;
  - f) discharges other assigned by proper law (See CCRR 216);

186. *Validity of the Acts.*

For the acts of the Consulta to be valid, the presence of more than half of the members to be convoked is required, and among them, the one who legitimately presides over it. Decisions are to be voted upon by secret ballots and must obtain an absolute majority.

### **III - Superior General.**

187. *Superior General.*

The Superior General, successor of St. Jerome and bond of unity within the Congregation, is vested with ordinary power over the Provinces, Vice-Provinces, Commissariats, Delegations, houses, and all religious, and exercises such power in accordance with canon and proper law.

A. *Exercise of Authority.*

*As father and leader of his brothers, the Superior General is to be fervent in promoting and safeguarding religious life. He is to be an example of observance, faithful to the Congregation's good, devoted to prayer, distinguished for his love for all, especially for the orphan and the poor. He is to unite humility of heart with authority, severity with benevolence. In exhorting and correcting, he is to use goodness and wisdom so that the religious may accept his warnings with a serene heart. He is to demonstrate firmness of heart and is not to let himself be easily deflected from just decisions, nor allow that they be negligently overlooked under a false pretext of meekness. He should be endowed with human qualities, have knowledge and experience of people and things <sup>210</sup>.*

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<sup>210</sup> C 1626 133-137.

*B. Respect for the Superior General.*

*The Superior General takes precedence in all the Congregation, and to him are due those signs of respect which are customary in our tradition. All religious are to invoke for him from the Lord the aids necessary to carry out his task.*

*C. Seal.*

*The Superior General's seal carries the coat of arms of the Congregation with the inscription: Praepositus Generalis Congregationis Clericorum Regularium a Somascha.*

*188. Election, Requirements, Duration.*

The Superior General is elected by the General Chapter in accordance with the Constitutions and the Chapter's Rules of Order. In order to be elected, besides the requirements of canon law, a religious must be at least thirty-five years old and have been in solemn vows for at least ten years. His governance lasts for a six-year term, which can be renewed for a second six-year term, but not for a third consecutive one. Before undertaking his office, he is to make the profession of faith.

*189. Duties.*

The Superior General, besides the faculties assigned by canon and proper Law, has the chief task to promote, by way of example, teaching, and governance:

- a) the observance of the Constitutions and Rules, and the implementation of the General Chapter's instructions;
- b) the unity in spirit and the effective cooperation among religious members and the bodies of the Congregation;
- c) the action of the other Superiors, who share with him the responsibility of governance;
- d) the development of our apostolic activity in accordance with the most urgent needs of the Church;
- e) religious formation, both initial or ongoing;
- f) relations with the Church's authority and other religious families.

*190. The Superior General and His Council.*

In carrying out his office, the Superior General avails himself of the cooperation of the General Council, to which he submits the various issues and asks for its advice or consent, in accordance with canon and proper law.

*A. Dispensation from the Observance of Rules.*

*For just reasons, the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, may dispense from the observance of particular rules.*

*B. General Committees.*

*The Superior General, after having obtained the advice of his Council, may establish some General Committees led by the General Councilors or other religious appointed by him, with the task of assisting him and cooperating with him in a particular sector of his governance. The working modalities of the General Committees are specified by Rules of Order whose approval and amendment pertains to the Superior General, with the advice of his Council.*

*191. Canonical Visitation.*

At least once during his six-year office, the Superior General is to make a canonical visitation to all the houses of the Congregation, in accordance with canon and proper law.

*192. Religious' Transfer.*

In order to promote the good of the entire Congregation and to foster unity and mutual help, after hearing the concerned major Superiors, the Superior General may assign, by obedience, any religious from one structure to another.

*193. Power over Superiors.*

The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, may, for serious reasons, remove a Superior or a Delegate appointed

by such Superior, limit his powers, or transfer him to another office, in accordance with proper law.<sup>211</sup>

*194. Termination or Removal from the Office of Superior General.*

Should the office of Superior General become vacant, the Vicar General takes over with full authority. After hearing the General Councilors, the Provincial Superiors, Vice Provincial Superiors, and Commissaries, he must convoke within one year an elective General Chapter. In case of resignation the Superior General, after having informed the General Council, presents his request of renunciation to the Apostolic See, whose decisions must then be followed. In special circumstances, if serious reasons require it, it is possible to proceed to the removal of the Superior General. In such a case the Vicar General, with the consent of the other members of the Council, while being absent the Superior General to whom the convocation of the Council with its agenda must be notified and a copy of their decision must be given, presents the issue with the respective indications to the Apostolic See, whose decisions must then be followed.

#### **IV - Vicar General.**

*195. Vicar General.*

The Vicar General is also the first Councilor; he is vested with ordinary vicarious power and as a rule resides in the house of the Curia General. To be elected to this office, a religious must

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<sup>211</sup> According to a decision of the 2005 General Chapter, the institutional serious reason which may induce the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, to transfer a Superior from his office, are:

1. his appointment as master or Novices or Assistant Master of Novices of a Novitiate established in any structure of the Congregation;
2. his appointment as formation director of the first period of Post-Novitiate in any structure of the Congregation;
3. his appointment as Superior of a house directly depending on the Superior General;
4. his appointment, subsequently ratified, as Commissary of a Commissariat.

be at least thirty-five years old and be in solemn vows for at least ten years. He can be re-elected for a second term, but not for a third consecutive one. The total terms as both, Vicar General or General Councilor, cannot be more than two consecutive ones. Before undertaking his office, he is to make the profession of faith.

*A. Cooperation with the Superior General.*

*As he shares the responsibility for the good of the Congregation with the Superior General, the Vicar General is to be united with him, be faithful to his directions, and ready to assist him with advice and action.*

*B. Seal.*

*The seal of the Vicar General carries the coat of arms of the Congregation with the inscription: Vicarius Generalis Congregationis Clericorum Regularium a Somascha.*

*196. Duties of the Vicar General When He Replaces the Superior General.*

If the Vicar replaces the Superior General in the governance of the Congregation, the duties which ordinarily pertain to the Vicar are carried out by the Councilor who follows him by the order of election.

*197. Termination or Removal from the Office of Vicar General.*

Should the office of Vicar General become vacant, because of resignation or other reason, the Consulta of the Congregation provides for the election of the successor the first time it is convoked by the Superior General in accordance with proper law. The resignation of the Vicar General is presented to the Superior General, who will notify it to the Consulta the first time it is convoked by him in accordance with proper law. In the case of removal of the Vicar General, the Superior General, with the consent of his Council without the person in question, presents the case to the Apostolic See, whose decisions must then be followed.

## **V - General Council.**

### *198. General Council.*

The General Council consists of the Superior General, who presides over it, and of four General Councilors.

### *199. Advisory and Governing Body.*

The General Council ordinarily acts as an advisory body, by giving its consent or advice when required by canon and proper law. The Council acts as a collegial governing body only in those cases provided by canon law.

### *200. Validity of Its Acts.*

For the Council's acts to be valid, the presence of its legitimate president and of at least two Councilors is required. The absence of one or two Councilors duly convened does not invalidate the acts. When the plenary Council is required, the president, with the consent of the present Councilors, appoints one or two "ad actum" Councilors in order to replace the absentees. When this case occurs, the absent Councilors must then be informed about what was done.

### *201. Plenary Council.*

By plenary Council we understand the presence of the one who presides over it and of all the General Councilors (1+4).

Plenary Council is required:

- a) when it acts as a collegial body;
- b) for the appointments reserved to the Superior General and his Council;
- c) in the interpretation of rules and dispensation from their observance;
- d) all the times it is explicitly required by universal or proper Law.

### *202. Extraordinary Cases.*

When the Superior General is unable gather the Council and an urgent decision is needed, for which the advice or consent of the Council is required, he may by way of exception appoint at least two "ad actum" Councilors so long as the plenary



Council is not required. If such case occurs, he will later report to his Council about what he had done.

### *203. General Councilors: Election, Duration.*

The General Councilors are elected by the General Chapter in accordance with the Constitutions and Chapter's Rules of Order. They remain in office until the following ordinary General Chapter. They can be re-elected for a second term but not for a third consecutive one. They must be at least thirty years old and in solemn vows for at least five years. Priority within the Council is determined by their order of election.

#### *A. Requirements and Duties.*

*The General Councilors must be at least thirty years old and in solemn vows for at least five years. They are to be possibly chosen in a way that the Council may represent the different activities of the Congregation and the geographical areas where she is present. The General Councilors must know by experience the activities of the Congregation and be distinguished for exemplary religious life, wisdom, and prudence.<sup>212</sup> They are to be united in charity to the Superior General and cooperate with him toward the best governance of the Congregation. Faithful to their office, they are to prepare themselves on the issues which are to be dealt with, express themselves with freedom and sincerity, guided by a spirit of faith and the desire for the good of the entire Congregation. They are to commit themselves to facilitate the implementation of the decisions with prompt and humble support, and maintain due discretion on what has been the object of consultation and resolution.<sup>213</sup>*

#### *B. Offices Compatibility.*

*Particular tasks and any other possible commitments of the General Councilors are to be approved by the Superior General so that the Councilors are not hindered in the regular and diligent accomplishment of their main task at the service of the Congregation.*

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<sup>212</sup> C 1626 330-331.

<sup>213</sup> C 1626 332.

*C. Procedures for Elections.*

*The Superior General may propose, after the election of the Vicar General, a time for a convenient discernment before the election of the other Councilors, and he may openly mention some names and criteria for their election.*

*204. Duties.*

The General Councilors:

- a) assist the Superior General in the exercise of his office by studying the issues regarding the life of the Congregation, by giving him advice and support in times of difficulty, and by pointing out to him with love and respect any shortcoming that may emerge in his actions;
- b) cooperate with him in implementing the decisions and directives of the General Chapter and Consulta;
- c) help him prepare official documents.

*205. Termination or Removal from the Office of General Councilor.*

Should the office of a General Councilor become vacant, because of resignation or other reasons, the Consulta of the Congregation provides for the election of his successor the first time it is convoked by the Superior General in accordance with proper law. The resignation of a General Councilor is presented to the Superior General, who will notify it to the Consulta the first time it is convoked by him in accordance with proper law. In the case of the removal of a General Councilor, the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, except the concerned person, presents the case to the Apostolic See, whose decisions must then be followed.

**VI - General Officers.**

*206. General Officers.*

The General Officers are the Procurator, the Chancellor, the Finance Officer, the Postulator General and the Historical Archivist. They are appointed by the Superior General and his

Council and must be at least thirty years old and in solemn vows for at least five years. Their office lasts for the entire duration of the office of the Superior General.

A. *Compatible Offices.*

*The offices of Procurator, Chancellor, Finance Officer, and Postulator General are compatible with the office of General Councilor and, for just reason, can also be combined.*

207. *Participation in Governing Bodies.*

The Procurator, Chancellor, and Finance Officer General are by rights members of the General Chapter. However, they do not have active voice in elections, unless they enjoy it in virtue of another capacity. The Chancellor participates in the Consulta of the Congregation and General Council by virtue of his office, the Procurator and Finance Officer may be summoned for those issues which pertain to their office; however, they do not enjoy voting rights.

208. *Procurator General.*

The Procurator General handles the affairs between the Congregation and the Holy See. The religious who is appointed to this office must have the required competence and offer guarantee of acting with diligence, fidelity, and discretion for the good of the Congregation.

A. *Duties.*

*The Procurator General has the task to maintain the usual relations with the offices of the Roman Curia, and to impetrate from the Apostolic See indulgences, favours, and dispensations for the Congregation and individual religious. When dealing with issues related to the state of the Congregation and Constitutions, he is to be provided with a special commission.*

B. *Seal and Documentation.*

*The Procurator General holds the seal with the coat of arms of the Congregation and the inscription: Procurator Generalis Congregationis Clericorum Regularium a*

*Somascha. He is to carefully preserve in the General Archives the documents regarding the affairs that have been dealt with, and not allow any of them to be removed.*

*C. Residence.*

*If possible, the Procurator General resides in Rome so that he can conveniently attend to his office. He cannot be removed from his office before the time defined by the Constitutions without having consulted the Apostolic See.*

*209. Chancellor General.*

The Chancellor General acts as a registrar and a notary for the ecclesiastical affairs of the Congregation.

*A. Duties.*

*The Chancellor General has the task to integrally and diligently write in the Journal the minutes of the sessions of the General Chapter, the Consulta of the Congregation, and the General Council, by faithfully and briefly stating the progress of the debates. As a notary, he draws up and authenticates the acts of the elections and the decrees which have to be signed by the Superior General. In addition, he is responsible for the Archives of the Curia General.*

*B. Particular Obligations.*

*The Chancellor is bound to official secret. He is to be discreet, avoid showing anyone the Journal, nor to transcribe or allow anyone to transcribe from it even small parts without authorization from the Superior General.*

*210. Finance Officer General.*

The Finance Officer General has the task to administer the goods of the Curia General at the dependence of the Superior General, in accordance with the instructions of canon and proper law, and the particular rules issued by the Apostolic See, the General Chapter, and the Consulta of the Congregation.

*A. Qualities and Duties.*

*The qualities, duties, and specific tasks of the Finance Officer General are described in the chapter concerning the administration of goods. Furthermore, he assists and helps the Provincial and local Finance Officers, and examines their administrations upon assignment from the Superior General.*

*211. Postulator General.*

The Postulator General takes care of the causes of beatification and canonization promoted by the Consulta of the Congregation, and he must present to the General Chapter a report on the state of each cause.

*212. Historical Archivist.*

The Historical Archivist is responsible for the historical Archives of the Congregation. With passion and expertise, he must care for the preservation, cataloguing, study and consultation of the documents and materials preserved in them. He is to submit to the General Chapter a report on the state of the Archives and its activity during the six-year term.

## Chapter XVI

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### Canonical Visitation

#### 213. *Canonical Visitation.*

The Canonical Visitation is an act of governance with the purpose of verifying and promoting the religious life and activities of the Congregation, in her structures and persons, by making decisions and issuing decrees according to need.

#### 214. *Visitors.*

In our Congregation, the Canonical Visitation is a duty of the Superior General. It can also be made by another major Superior within his jurisdiction whenever he deems it convenient.

##### A. *Delegate Visitor.*

*The Superior General may transfer the duty of the Visitation to another religious; in particular cases, he may appoint an extraordinary visitor with specific tasks. In order to appoint a visitor for the entire Congregation, the consent of the General Council is required. Whenever someone performs the Visitation by proxy, he must have the Secretary read the letter of appointment during the opening Chapter. He is to follow the given instructions.*

##### B. *Procedures and Goals of the Visitation.*

*The prayers and the procedures to be followed during the Visitation are established by the Ritual. The Visitor is to gather information concerning persons, regular life, apostolic activity, institutions, goods, and administration of the house. He is to listen to all the religious and proceed with a fatherly heart, with the intention of helping everyone with appropriate suggestions. In exhorting and correcting, he is to use goodness and wisdom. Religious are to act with confidence toward him and answer his questions in truth and love.*

*C. Conclusion.*

*At the end of the Visitation, the Visitor convokes the Chapter of the house, in which he encourages the religious to renew their commitment to spiritual life and brotherly union, and communicates any decisions which he considers suitable. Before convoking the Chapter, he informs the Superior of the house about such decisions.*

*D. Report and Decrees.*

*The Visitor prepares a report of what he observed and did during his Visitation. The Superior General examines it with his Council and, after hearing the competent major Superior, takes the necessary measures.*

## Chapter XVII

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### Administration of Goods

#### *215. Possession of Temporal Goods in the Congregation.*

Temporal goods, a gift of the Providence and fruit of our work, belong to the Congregation. Their use is ordered to the glory of God through a wise administration, use for the common good, and a charitable distribution. Also Provinces, Vice-Provinces, Commissariats, Delegations, and houses are capable of possessing, as they are juridical persons. They have the right of acquiring, alienating, and administering goods. Such right is exercised through the provided governing bodies.

#### *216. Administrative Faculties of the Chapters.*

The General Chapter provides the criteria for financial planning and has full right to distribute, exchange, acquire, and alienate the goods of the Congregation, Provinces, Vice-Provinces, Commissariats, Delegations, and local communities. The Provincial Chapter enjoys similar faculties within the Province under the conditions established by the Constitutions.

#### *217. Faculties of the Consulta.*

The Consulta of the Congregation verifies the implementation of the financial decisions made by the General Chapter. It determines the criteria for the communion of goods among the various bodies of the Congregation. It issues and updates the Norms of Administration and establishes the contributions set aside for the General Fund or other particular needs.

#### *218. Faculties of the Superiors.*

The Superior General, with his Council, plans and supervises the ordinary and extraordinary administration of the goods of the Curia General; he verifies and approves the administrative statements of the other bodies of the Congregation, and ratifies, with the consent of his Council, the decisions of the extraordinary administration that are reserved to his competence. The Superior of the Province and of the Vice-



Province, with his Council, is vested with similar faculties within his Province or Vice-Province. The Commissary administers and makes decisions about the goods of the Commissariat in accordance with proper law. The local Superior administers and makes decisions about the goods of the religious house in accordance with proper law. The Superior General and the Provincial Superiors, Vice-Provincial Superiors and Commissaries make use of the goods of the houses that are suppressed, in accordance with universal law.

#### *219. Finance Officers.*

The Finance Officer General administers the goods of the Curia General, the Provincial Finance Officer the goods of the Provincial Curia, and the local Finance Officer the goods of the house. It pertains to them, besides to the Major and local Superiors, to effect purchases and perform juridical administrative acts within their office and under the direction of their respective Superiors.

##### *A. Compatible Offices.*

*The respective major Superiors and their Vicars cannot hold the General and Provincial Finance office. It is preferable that the office of local Finance Officer not be entrusted to the Superior, unless required by real necessity and with the approval the competent major Superior.*

##### *B. Qualities.*

*The Finance Officer is to be adequately prepared and up-to-date on a technical level, so that he may fulfil the requirements of the Congregation. This presupposes that he is open-minded, flexible, practical, and, at the same time, possessing a spirit of love and service. He is to act with filial respectful submission to his Superior and act with the necessary administrative honesty. He is to excel in his care for his brothers and place spiritual concerns over material ones.*

C. *Finance Committee.*

*Where it is deemed useful, a Finance Committee, with a subsidiary role, may be established at a level of General and other structures' governance. Such committee is to analyse the situations of particular common interest, to keep an eye on amendments of legal norms so as to be able to assist the communities in a spirit of brotherly cooperation, to pay special attention to fostering sharing within and without the Congregation, and to prevent any counter-witness of poverty.*

D. *Legal Representative.*

*The legal representative is appointed by the competent major Superior for the duration of his term of office; this appointment can always be renewed. He civilly represents the religious entity having recognized juridical personality, acts in conformity with the directives of his Superiors, preserves in the Archives the original documents of all the acts concerning the entity he represents. Aware of his responsibility, he is to always act with great prudence and accuracy.*

E. *Administration Statements.*

*The Finance Officer General accounts for his administration to the Superior General and his Council twice a year and to the General Chapter at the end of the six-year term. The Provincial and the Commissarial Finance Officer report to the respective Superior and his Council twice a year and to the Provincial Chapter at the end of the four-year term. The local Finance Officer presents every month to the Superior the balance of revenues and expenditures, including the related documents and the cash verification. Together with the Superior and Vice-Superior, he signs the register of both, ordinary and extraordinary administration, and once in three months he reports to the Chapter of the house on the financial state of the house.*

*F. Annual Financial Report.*

*At the end of every year, the local Superior sends a report of the ordinary and extraordinary administration of the house to the Provincial Superior; the latter is to send to the Superior General the report of the individual houses along with the Province's.*

*G. Personal Needs of the Religious.*

*For their needs, religious depend on the Superior. He is to provide for them adequately and with love. He also places a modest sum at their disposal for personal expenses.*

*220. Norms of Administration.*

In the ordinary and extraordinary administration of the goods of the Congregation, structures, and houses, it must be followed what is prescribed by canon and proper law, the decrees of the General Chapters and the Consulta of the Congregation, and the particular Norms of Administration.

We warmly exhort our religious  
that, supported by God's grace  
and moved by the spirit of our Founder,  
they may persevere on the way of perfection,  
supporting one another  
in the faithful observance  
of these Constitutions and Rules.  
In this way, they will keep themselves worthy  
of the vocation they received,  
and their life will be a praise and glory to God,  
a testimony of peace,  
and a source of edification and salvation  
for all men and women<sup>214</sup>.

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<sup>214</sup> C 1626 965.



# **Table of Requirements for Offices**

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Offices	CC.RR 2017	Age	Years Solemn Vows	Major Superior CJC 620	Priest or not
<b>General Government</b>					
General	188	35	10	M. Superior CJC 620	Priest (1)
Vicar General	195	35	10	M. Superior CJC 620	Priest (1)
Councilors	203/A	30	5		
General Officers	206	30	5		
Delegates, active voice	171		solemn vows		
Delegates, passive voice	171		5		
<b>Provincial Government</b>					
Provincial	144	30	5	M. Superior CJC 620	Priest (1)
Vicar Provincial	150	30	5	M. Superior CJC 620	Priest (1)
Councilors	149	30	5		
Delegates, active voice	136		solemn vows		
Delegates, passive voice	136		5		
<b>Delegation</b>					
Delegate	157	absent	absent		
<b>Commissariat</b>					
Commissariat	160	30	5	M. Superior CJC 620	Priest (1)
Councilors	160	absent	absent		

Offices	CC.RR 2017	Age	Years Solemn Vows	Major Superior CJC 620	Offices
<b>Vice-Province Government</b>					
Vice-Provincial	164	30	5	M. Superior CJC 620	Priest (1)
Vicar of Vice Provincial	164	30	5	M. Superior CJC 620	Priest (1)
Councilors	164	30	5	Modeled on the Provincial Government	
<b>Religious House</b>					
Local Superior	124/A	30	5	Priest (2)	
Vice-Superior	129	absent	absent	Priest (2)	
<b>Novitiate and Post-Novitiate</b>					
Novice Master	85		solemn vows	<i>Our CCRR requires a priest</i>	
Formator Post-Novices	101		solemn vows	<i>Our CCRR requires a priest</i>	

(1) Our Religious Order is of Pontifical Right, therefore the Superiors qualify for ordinary power of governance or jurisdiction that comes from having received sacred orders. (cfr. CJC 129; 130; 274; 596 §2)

(2) When a non-priest has been appointed with the permission of the Holy See, the vice-superior has to be a priest.





# Subject Index

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*Numbers refer to the Constitutions; numbers followed by a letter refer to the Rules.*

## A

- Abandoned:** see *Orphans; Poor.*
- Absence:** from common activities, 36E; from Novitiate, 88; from the religious house, 112; of the Superior, 125, 129, 129A; in the Community Journal, 130D; of the Superior General, 173, 193; of the Councilors, 153, 199.
- Acts, common:** and brotherly communion, 36; list, 36A-D; competency of the local Chapter and major Superior, 36; fidelity and punctuality, 36E.
- Administration:** Ch. XVII; archives, 130F; verification during the Canonical Visitation, 214B; ordinary and extraordinary, 218, 219E, 220;
- *Administrative faculties:* General Chapter, 216; Provincial, 216; Consults, 217; major Superiors and their Councils, 218; local Superiors, 218; Finance Officers, 219;
  - *Norms of, 220;* define the duties of the local Finance Officer, 130B; issued and updated by the Consulta, 217;
  - *Reports:* 219E; annual reports, 219F; verification and approval of the annual administrative statements 219. See also: *Finance Officer; Goods; Poverty.*
- Adolescents:** minor seminaries, 78C, 78D; formation, 78E. See also: *Youth.*
- Adoration:** attitude of, 44D; Eucharistic and other forms of Eucharistic worship: 46 A.
- Age, old:** to be welcomed in faith, 63C. See also: *Elderly.*
- Aggiornamento:** See: *Update.*
- Agreement:** for activities in institutions not belonging to the Congregation, 69C; for the acceptance of parishes, 76A.
- Alumni:** Christian formation and means, 75H; sensitive to justice and love, 75H.
- Angels, Guardian:** devotion, 57B.
- Anointing of the Sick:** 40 A, See also: *Sick.*
- Apostolate:** Ch. VIII;
- *and Congregation:* nature, 65; mission in the Church, 66; activities and charism, 67; unity in apostolic activities, 68; community

dimension, 69-69C; one mission, different ministries, 70; example of St. Jerome, 71; effectiveness, 72; responsibility of the Provincial Superior, 144B;

- *and religious life*: chastity as a source of fruitfulness, 11; poverty, 16, 19, 20; obedience, 22; dependency in initiatives, 24E; common life, 26; mutual love source of, 33;
- *Formation to*: during formation, 79; during Novitiate, 86A; during Post-Novitiate, 100; study, 102, 102A; ongoing formation, 106.  
See also: *Mission, apostolic*.

**Appreciation:** reciprocal, 35A.

**Archives:**

- *General*: of admission to Novitiate, 87A; of profession and related acts, 98 B; of ministries and sacred orders, 105D; of the houses, 130E; of the Procurator General, 208B; religious in charge, 209A; documents of the General Government, 209 A. See also: Chancellor General.
- *Provincial*: documents of admission to Novitiate, 87A; documents of profession and related acts, 98B; documents of ministries and sacred orders, 105D; documents of the houses, 130 E; legal representative, 219D;
- *Local*: documents to be transmitted, 130E; to be preserved, 130 F; index, 130F;
- *Novitiate*: documents of admission, 87A; of temporary profession, 98B.

**Archivist, Historical:** 212.

**Assistant Master:** of novices, 85A; note to 193.

**Association:** Ch. X, X;

- *associates*: deceased, 41A, 41C; institution, 107; quality, 107; competent major Superior, 107; obligations and rights, 108; act of, 109; of individuals who completed their Novitiate, 110; termination, 111;
- *Spiritual associates* bond with the community, 42; requirements for an act of, 42B; support, 42B, suffrages, 42B. 41C; list to be sent to Superiors' archives, 130E.

**Associations of Faithful, autonomous:** erection and statutes, 146.

**Availability:** in offices entrusted by obedience, 24C, 24D; to go anywhere, 27, 68; in apostolate, 22, 68, 72, 145; formation to, 82.

## B

**Beatification:** causes, 211.

**Benefactors:** 42; suffrages, 41C; relation, 42D; prayer, 57; list in archives, 130E.

**Benignity:** 4, 63B; See also: *Kindness; Love; Meekness; Mercy.*

**Birthday of the Congregation:** memory, 57A.

**Bishop:** agreements for parishes, 76A; presentation of the parish priest, 76A, 145B; pastoral guidelines in leading the parish community, 76B; for ordinations, 105A; consent and consultation, 121, 121A. See also: *Church, local; Shepherds of the Church.*

**Blessed Virgin Mary (Mary):** Ch. VI, II; role model of our consecrated life, 9; devotion in order to live in chastity, 13; intercessions, 9; in the conversion of our Founder, 1; meaning and fruits of devotion, 49; veneration, 50; celebration of the liturgical feasts, 50; to illustrate her mission, 50; to foster devotion, 50; to introduce seminarians to a filial devotion, 78E;

- *Mary Mother of Orphans:* patron of the Congregation, 51; veneration, 51; solemnity, 51A; monthly memory, 51A; fasting on the day before the solemnity, 63; profession formula, 98,

## C

**Canonization:** cause, 211.

**Care, spiritual:** of orphans and the poor, 3; of the sick brothers, 40A. See also: *Sick.*

**Catechesis:** example of St. Jerome, 71; one of the characteristics of the parish apostolate, 76C,

**Celebrations, liturgical:** in common prayer, 36A; rite, 44A; sacred chant, 44B; places, 44C; attitude, 44D.

**Chancellor:**

- *General:* 206, 206A; function, 209; member of the General Chapter, 170; participation in the Consulta and General Council, 207; duties, 209A; particular obligations, 209B. See also: *Officers; General.*

- *Provincial:* appointment, 150; duties, 150, 154A; See also: *Archives; Journal.*

**Chant, sacred:** 44B,

**Chapter, General:** Ch. X, I; fasting on the day preceding the starting, 63; governance, 117; part of the General Government, 120; journal, 130D; archives, 130F; definition, 165; ordinary and extraordinary, 166; recurrence, 166; convocation, 167; place and date, 167; anticipation or postponement, 168; duties, 168;

members, 170, 207; electing delegates, 171; renunciation, 171B; replacement of members, 171A; guests, 171C; preparation, 172; cooperation of the religious in its preparation, 172A; quorum for the validity of the acts, 173; presidency, 174; moderators, tellers, coordination Committee, 174A; voting procedures, 175; qualified majority, absolute majority, relative majority, 175A; majority for the issues and affairs, 176; for Constitutions and Rules, 177; for the election of the Superior General and Councilors, 178; postulation, 179; declining and acceptance of declining, 180; Rules of Order, 181; rites, prayers and formulae, 132; minutes of the sessions, 209A; administrative reports, 219C; report of the Postulator General, 211; administrative faculties, 216; approval and modification of the Provincial Chapter's Rules of Order, 143.

**Chapter, local (of the house):** Ch. XI, III; definition, 126; goals, 126; preparation, 126A; attitude, 126A; community plan, 126B; spiritual and formative, 126C; organizational, 126D; recurrence, 126; minutes, 126E; periodical evaluation of poverty, 20; moment of the community life, 36, 36B; implementation of the community acts, 36; is consulted about the celebration in common of the Liturgy of the Hours, 36A, 47; planning and follow-up of the apostolic activities, 69A; beginning of the Superior's office. 124; secretary, 130C; consultation for the preparation of the Provincial Chapter, 137B; opening of the Canonical Visitation, 214A; conclusion of the Canonical Visitation, 214C; administration report, 219E.

**Chapter, Provincial:** Ch. XIII, I; governance, 117, 119; journal, 130D; definition, 132; recurrence, 132; calling, 133, 133A; convocation of an extraordinary Chapter, 133; place and date, 133A; duties, 134; members, 135; number and election of delegates, 135A; renunciation of members, 137; substitution, 137; guests, 137A; preparation, 137B; quorum for the validity of the acts, 138; presidency, 139; voting, 140; majorities, 140; elections, 140; postulation, 140; consultation towards the election of the Provincial Superior, 140A; transmission of the acts to the Superior General, 142; approval of decisions, 142; Rules of Order, 143; administrative faculties, 216; administrative report, 219E. See also: *Delegate of the Superior General to the Provincial Chapter, Province.*

**Chapter, Vice-Provincial:** 163; governance, 117; journal, 130D); administrative faculties, 216; administrative report, 219E. See also: *Chapter, Provincial.*

- Charism:** of the Founder, 1, 6; religious profession, 8; lived in the community life, 27; faithfulness in apostolic initiatives, 66; apostolic activities, 67; in parish ministry, 76; in spirituality centers, 76E; implemented through individual religious' gifts, 69; promotion of vocations for development, 78; in ongoing formation, 106B; General Government's duties, 120.
- Charity:** Ch. V, 111; aiming at its perfection in our form of life, 4; in dealing with chastity, 14; and poverty, 16; and obedience, 24E; and sick religious, 40; and penance, 63; in mission, 70; in parish ministry, 76 C; in the local Chapter, 126 A; in the General Council, 203 A. See also: *Love*.
- Chastity:** Ch. II; profession of the vow, 8, 91, 98; spiritual value, 11; object of the vow, 12; aids to live it, 13; means for its custody, 13A; prudence, 13B; and community, 14; testimony, 15; associates, 108. See also *Counsels, evangelical; Vows*.
- Christ, Jesus:** discipleship, 1, 59; imitation, 1; offering to him, 1, 6; our 159 mission inspired by his charity, 3; consecration transforms us into his image, 10, 59; his predilection for the little and the poor, 10; and brotherly love, 26, 41; Superior as a sign of his presence, 32; in the local community, 34; the sick are to join in his passion, 40 A; in liturgical prayer, 44, 47; Eucharist as a memorial of his love, 45; devotion to his presence in the Eucharistic Sacrament, 46; prayer to the Crucified Jesus, 43; invocations, 58; servant of all to win all, 63A; to join our sorrows to his passion, 63C; to join him in the acceptance of death, 63D; service to him in the poor as a characteristic of our apostolic mission, 67; allow ourselves to be led by his love in our apostolate, 72; love of him as soul of priestly ministry, 77C; to direct adolescents to love him in the minor seminary, 78D, 78E; goal of formation is to mature one's offering to him, 79. See also: *Sequela Christi*.
- Church:** recognizes the Congregation, 2; recognizes the charism, 8; Congregation in her, 1, 2, 3, 27; consecration inserts us into her mystery, 7; and poverty, 20; liturgical prayer, 44; 44 B, 46A, 47; sacrament of Penance, 48; penitential practices, 63, 63C; participation in her apostolic mission, 66, 71, 120; cooperation in her initiatives for the poor, 67; youth, 75; shrine's function, 76E; faithfulness to the Magisterium, 80; solemn profession, 96; Post-Novitiate formation, 102B; in opening new houses, 121, 121A; duties of Superiors, 125, 189. See also: *Shepherds of the Church*.

- *Local*: parish ministry, 76A, 76B, 76C, 76D; collaboration for pastoral care of vocations, 78, 78B. See also: *Bishop*.

**Churches, non-parishes**: apostolate, 76E.

**Clerics, regular**: inclusion of the Congregation in their list, 2; clerical institute, 4.

**Commissariat**: Ch. XIV, II; structure of the Congregation, 116; participation to Provincial Chapter, 135; and Delegation, 156; erection, modification, suppression, 158; General or Provincial, 158; statute, 159; governance, 160; Government's appointment, 160; participation to General Chapter, 170; and Consulta, 185; and the Superior General, 187, 193; can own, acquire, alienate, administer goods, 215; administrative faculties of Chapters, 216; administrative faculties of Superiors, 218. See also: *Commissary*.

**Commissary**: resignation, 117B; member of the Provincial Chapter, 135; replacement at the Provincial Chapter, 137; authority, 160; dependency, 160; appointment, 160; requirements and duration of the commission, 160; member of the General Chapter, 170; replacement at the General Chapter, 171A; consultation in drawing the statute of the Commissariat, 159; and the Superior General, 193; administrative faculties, 218. See also: *Commissariat*.

**Committee, Finance**: 219C.

**Committees, General**: 190B.

**Communion, brotherly**: in the religious consecration, 6. See also: *Charity; Love, brotherly; Community*.

**Community**: and chastity, 14; and poverty, 17, 19D, 20; commitment to poverty, 20; and obedience, 25; commitment to penance, 62; commitment for the poor, 67; dimension of the apostolate, 69, 69A, 69B, 69C; unity with religious working in extra-community apostolic activities, 73B; commitment for the promotion of vocations, 78; and religious in difficulty, 113. See also: *Communion, brotherly; Life in common*.

- *local*: Ch. V, II; Ch. XII, I; and Congregation, 30; its journey, 31; Superiors and religious, 32; open to the poor and neglected, 33; relatives, associates, collaborators, 42, 42A, 42B, 42C, 42D, 42E; information about extra—community apostolic activities, 69B; in parishes, 76B; environment of ongoing formation, 106B; associates, 108; formation, 146. See also: *Chapter, local; House; Superior, local*.

- of *Novitiate*: cooperates with the formative action of the Master, 85D; relationships with the novices, 85E; welcomes the novice at the beginning of Novitiate, 87C. See also: *Novitiate*.
- of *Postulancy*: designation, 82; advice for the admission to Novitiate, 87A. See also: *Postulancy*.
- *Project*: 126B.

**Confessor:** of the community, 48A; freedom of choice, 48.

**Congregation:** Ch. V, I; Founder 1; recognition by the Church, 2; apostolic mission, 3; form of life, 4; priests and laymen, 4, 28; Constitutions and Rules, 5; call to her, 6; enlivened by her tradition of sanctity, 8; mother, 27; Mary Mother of the Orphans as her patron, 51; prayer, 57; Mass, 57A; Poverty, 18; and material goods, 18, 215; and community life, 27, 28, 29; and local community, 30, 31; apostolic nature, 65; mission in the Church, 66; apostolic activities and charism, 67; unity in the apostolic mission, 68; and service to the orphans, 73; and formation of youth, 75; and parish ministry, 76; and opening of new houses, 121, 121A; and promotion of vocations, 78; and formation, 79; novices' instruction about spirituality, history and characteristics, 86; introduction into her life during Novitiate, 86; members through temporary profession, 91; definite insertion through solemn profession, 96; direct experience of her life during Post—Novitiate, 99, 101A; associates, 108. See also: *Departure*; *Dismissal*; *Readmission to the Congregation*.

- *Structures*: 116; governance, 117; local, 118; Provincial, 119; General, 120.

**Consecration, religious:** Ch. I; divine and human dimension, 6; inserts into the mystery of the Church, 7; and religious profession, 8; Mary as a model, 9; testimony of consecrated life, 10; habit as a sign, 39; and ongoing formation, 106. See also: *Profession*.

**Constitutions:** goals and characteristics, 5; commitment to live in accordance, 8; and obedience, 23; observance, 29; fruits of faithful observance, 29, final exhortation, dispensation, 29; norm of life in common, 29; teaching during Novitiate, 85; obligation to observe them after temporary profession, 91, 98; observance during Post—Novitiate, 100; obligation to the associates to live in accordance, 108; reading in the community, 125 ; duties of Superiors and Chapters, 134, 145, 168, 189, 208; modification, 168, 169; majority required for amendments, 177; interpretation, 169. See also: *Rules*.

**Consulta of the Congregation:** Ch. XV, II; instrument of collegial governance, 117; part of the General Government, 120; definition, 182; members, 182; presidency, 182; substitution of member, 182; convocation, 183; recurrence, 184; preparation, 184; date and place, 184; duties, 185; presence required for the validity of the acts, 186; required majority, 186; voting procedures, 186; participation of the Chancellor General, 207, 209A; of the Procurator and Finance Officer General as guests, 207; minutes of sessions and acts, 209A;

- *competence:* erection, modification and suppression of a Vice-Province, 161; of Commissariats, 158; of Delegations, 156; election of the Vicar General in a replacement, 197; election of a General Councilor as a replacement, 205; promotion of causes of beatification and canonization, 211; administrative faculties, 217.

**Consultation:** for the appointment of a local Superior, 124; for the short-list of the eligible to the Provincial Superior's office, 140A; for the appointment of a Provincial Superior ad complendum triennium (to complete a three year term), 148; for the appointment of a General and Provincial Commissary, 160; of religious for the preparation of the General Chapter, 172; of the Provincial Chapter, 137B.

**Conversion:** of St. Jerome's to God, 1; and Sacrament of Penance, 48, 48A; in spiritual exercises, 56; and penance, 59; and mortification, 60, 64; and Lent, 63. See also: *Penance*.

**Cooperators, Collaborators:** choice and care, 42C; prayer, 57; awareness of the needs of the poor, 67; in the service to the orphans, 74C; in the school, 75F; in the parish activities, 76D. See also: *Teachers*.

**Correction:** brotherly, 35C; of the religious' offences, 115.

**Council, General:** Ch. XV, V; advisory body, 199; governing body, 199; presence required for the validity of the acts, 200; plenary, 201; extraordinary cases, 202; duties, 204; Chancellor General participates with no voting right, 207; Procurator and Finance Officer may be called in, 207; Chancellor General writes the minutes, 209 A. See also: *Councilors, General; Superior General*.

- *consent:* ratification of agreements for institutions not belonging to the Congregation, 69C; ratification of parish agreements, 76A; establishment, erection, suppression, transfer of Novitiate, 84; authorization to accomplish the Novitiate in a house other than the one established, 84; appointment of the Master of Novices, 85; establishment of the house for Post-Novitiate, 101; appointment



of the religious in charge of Post-Novitiate, 101; procedures for the readmission to the Congregation, 114; ratification of the erection of a religious house, dependent house and residence, 121, 121A; statute of a dependent house, 121B; ratification of a local Superior, 124; ratification of the extraordinary Provincial Chapters convocation, 133; compilation of the short-list of candidates to the office of Provincial Superior, 140A; approval of the elections of the Provincial Chapter, 141; possible election of the Provincial Superior and Councilors, 141; ratification of the Provincial Chapter's decisions, 142; appointment of a Provincial Superior as a local Superior, 144C; erection of Associations of faithful and Pious Foundations and approval of their statutes, 146; option to choose when the office of Provincial Superior comes to an end, 148; appointing a replacement for a Provincial Councilor, 155; appointment of the Delegate of a General Delegation, 157; statute of a Vice-Province, 162A; statute of a Commissariat, 159; appointment of the Commissary and Councilors of the General Commissariat, 160; ratification of the Commissary and Councilors of the Provincial Commissariat, 160; celebration of the extraordinary General Chapter, 166; place and date of the General Chapter, 167; invitation of religious to the General Chapter, 171C; suspension and limitation of the Provincial and local Superiors' authority, 193; appointment of a Delegate Visitor for the entire Congregation, 214A;

- *Advice*: examination of the proposals to the General Chapter, 172A; preparation of the Consulta of the Congregation, 184; examination of the Visitor' report, 214D; administrative duties, 218.

**Council of the Commissariat:** see: *Councilors, of the Commissariat.*

**Council of the Superior:** advice for admission to temporary profession, 92; for admission to renewal of temporary profession, 95; for admission to solemn profession, 96; for the presentation of candidates to sacred orders, 105B; definition, 127; juridical validity, 128; active and passive voice, 128; minutes, 126E, 130C; consent for the appointment of the Officers of the house, 130.

**Council of the Vice-Province:** see: *Councilors, of the Vice-Province.*

**Council, Provincial:** number of members, 149, 149A; duties, 151; presence required for the validity of the acts, 153; plenary, 154; appointment of an "ad actum" Councilor, 154; transmission of the sessions' minutes, 154A. See also: *Councilor, Provincial; Superior, Provincial; Province.*

- *consent*: agreements for activities in institutions not belonging to the Congregation, 69C; approval of alternate apostolic forms, 73B; agreements for parishes, 76A; appointments of parish priests, 76A; admission to temporary profession, 92; admission to ministries and sacred orders, 105; erection of a religious house, dependent house and residence, 121, 121A; appointment of the local Superiors, 124; possible appointment of the Vice Superior, 129; possible appointment of local Officers, 130; calling of an extraordinary Provincial Chapter, 133; venue and date of the celebration of the Provincial Chapter, 133A; guests to the Provincial Chapter, 137 A; erection of Associations of Faithful or Pious Foundations and approval of their statutes, 146; appointment of the Provincial Chancellor, 150; appointment of the Provincial Finance Officer, 150; appointment of the Commissary and Councilors of the Provincial Commissariat, 160; appointment of the Provincial Delegate, 157;
- *advice*: examination of the proposals of the religious to the Provincial Chapter, 137B; appointment of a Provincial Superior as a local Superior, 144C; preparation of the Provincial Commissariat's statute, 159; administrative faculties, 218.

### **Councilors:**

- *General*: the second Councilor takes over the office of Vicar General when his office comes to an end during his regency, 150; the second becomes Vicar when the Vicar takes the office of the Superior General, 196; number, 198; mandate, 203; requirements and duties, 203A; compatibility of tasks, 203B, 206A; members of the General Chapter, 170; members of the Consulta, 182; and General Committees, 190 B; election, 203, 203C; majority requirements, 178; duration in office, 203; priority, 203; "ad actum", 200, 202; duties, 204; cessation and substitution, 205; removal, 205. See also: *Council, General*.
- *Provincial*: Ch. XIII, III; members of the Provincial Chapter, 135; election and ratification, 141; signature of the annual reports on the state of the Province, 145A; number, 149, 149A; mandate, 149; duration, 149; requirements, 149; exercise of the office, 149B; duties, 150, 151; "ad actum", 154; cessation and substitution, 148, 155; priority, 155. See also: *Council, Provincial*.
- *of the Vice-Province*: number, 164; election, 164; duration, 164.
- *of the Commissariat*: number, 160; appointment, 160; substitutions of the Commissary, 137, 171A, 182.

**Counsels, evangelical:** life according to mem, 6; formation to practice, 79; novices' introduction to doctrine and practice, 86. See also: *Chastity; Obedience; Poverty.*

**Crucifix:** prayer, 60; handover to the novices, 87C.

**Curia General:** directly dependent on the Superior General, 122; residence of the Vicar General, 195; archives and Chancellor, 209A; Finance Officer General, 210, 219; contribution to the Superior Generals fund, 217; administration, 218, 219.

**Custody of the senses:** see: *Chastity; Mortification.*

## D

**Death:** offering of the last moments and acceptance, 63D. See also: *Deceased.*

**Deceased:** Ch. V, VII; charity towards them, 41; piety, 41A; suffrages, 41B, 41C; memory, 41C; graves, 41C.

**Declaration:** in writing, before temporary profession, 94.

**Delegate:**

- *of the Superior General for the Canonical Visitation:* 214A.

- *of the Superior General to receive professions:* 98A.

- *of the Superior General to the Provincial Chapter:* 135, 138, 139; approval of elections, 141. See also: *Chapter, Provincial; Superior General.*

- *of the Delegation:* procedure after resignation, 117B; participation to the Provincial Chapter, 135; duties, 157; appointment, 157. See also: *Delegation.*

- *of the residence:* 121; removal, 193. See also: *House.*

**Delegates:**

- *to General Chapter:* number, 170; requirements, 171; replacement, 171A;

- *to Provincial Chapter:* 135; number, 135, 135 A; requirements, 136; election, 135A; validation and communication, 135A; replacement, 137.

**Delegation:** Ch. XIV, I; structure of the Congregation, 116; definition, 156; General or Provincial dependency, 156; erection, modification, suppression, 156, 185; juridical personality, 215. See also: *Delegate.*

**Departure:** of a novice, 89; of an associate, 111; of a religious, 113. See also: *Dismissal.*

**Detachment:** from earthly things and personal interests in apostolate, 72. See also: *Poverty.*

**Devotion:** promoted by the place of worship, 44C; to the Eucharist, 46; during the Liturgy of the Hours, 47; to the Blessed Virgin, Ch. VI, 11, 13, 49, 50 51, 51A, 78E; to our Founder, Ch, VI, III, 52, 53,53A; to the Guardian Angels, 57B.

**Diaconate:** pastoral training and duration, 104; oath before, 105C; information to the parish of baptism, 105C. See also: *Orders, sacred.*

**Dialogue:** in obedience, 24; in planning apostolic activities, 69A; in exercising authority, 123A.

**Difficulty:** in obedience 24D; to be accepted with faith as a practice of penance, 63C; in following one's vocation, 113; support to the Superior General, 204.

**Direction, spiritual:** in priestly ministry, 77B; in the minor seminary, 78E.

**Discernment:** duties of Superiors to discern the religious' gifts, 69; dialogue as a means of, 69A; before electing the Vicar General, 203C.

**Discretion:** in talking with outsiders about people and issues of the Congregation, 35D, 42E; in the religious house, 38; in supporting spiritual associated, 42B; about the local chapter, 126A; of the General Councilors, 203A; of the General Procurator, 208; of the Chancellor, 210B.

**Dismissal:** of a novice, 89; of an associate, 111; of a religious, 113.

**Duties, daily:** means for chastity, 13A; and rest, 37; as a form of penance, 63A.

## E

**Education:** mission of the Congregation, 3; Founder's way to educate, 74; educational environment in institutions for orphans, 74A; for youth, 75A; in schools, 75C; before Novitiate, 82C; updating, 102B. See also: *Orphans; School; Teachers; Youth.*

**Elderly:** love, care and reverence, 35A; example of obedience, 32. See also: *Age, old.*

**Emiliani:** see *Jerome Emiliani, St.*

**Eucharist:** 45; nourishment of brotherly love, 34; for the deceased, 41B, 42B; participation, 45; concelebration, 45A; worship, 46; adoration, 46A; initiation in the minor seminary, 78E; reserved in the oratory, 121. See also: *Mass; Sacraments.*

**Exclaustration:** 112.

**Exemption:** of the Congregation, 2, 4; from disciplinary norms, 29.

**Exercises, spiritual:** nature, 56; frequency, 56; at the beginning of Novitiate, 87C; for the admission to ministries and sacred orders, 105; ongoing formation and, 106B.

**Experts:** as an aid to the master of novices, 85A; in ongoing formation 106B. See also: *Guests*.

## F

**Faith:** increased with the help of Mother Mary, 9, 49; in the practice of poverty, 19D; of obedience, 24, 24A; basis of our religious family, 26; in mutual relationship, 34, 35A; in taking care of the sick, 40A; attitude during liturgy, 44D; the Eucharist as its source, 45; right attitude towards the Word of God, 55; in accepting physical and mortal trials, 63C; in accepting death, 63D; object of education of people, 70, 71, 76; witnessed through deeds, 71; catechesis as a means for its growth, 71; profession of faith, 124, 144, 150, 188, 195; atmosphere of the chapters, 174; guidance of the General Councilors, 203A.

**Faithfulness, fidelity:** to the directives of the Church, 7, 76A; Mother Mary as a model, 9; to consecration, 10; to one's duties as a means to live chastity, 13, 13A; to our legacy of poverty, 19, 19B, 21; to the charism, 27; in cooperation, 28; in observing the Constitutions, 29, 100, final exhortation; to activities in common, 36E; to the example of prayer of our Founder, 43, 58; to the observance of penitential practices, 63; to vocation's commitments as a practice of penance, 63A; of formators to the Magisterium, 80; to religious profession, 98; General Government's duty, 120; of the Superiors to the Congregation's good, 187A; to the direction of the Superior General, 195A; of the General Councilors, 203A; of the Procurator General, 208, of the Chancellor General, 209A.

**Family:** community of faith, 26; environment of education, 74A; aim of education, 74C. See also: *Community; Relatives*.

**Fasting:** Lent, 63; on the days preceding the solemnity of the Mother of Orphans, St. Jerome and the starting day of the General Chapter, 63.

**Father(s):**

- *God the Father:* united in His love, 10; to offer our sorrows to Him in spirit of atonement, 63C:
- *St. Jerome:* see: *Jerome Emiliani St.*
- *of the Church:* knowledge of their teaching, 77A.

**Feasts, liturgical:** of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 50; solemnity of Mary, Mother of Orphans, 51A; solemnity of St. Jerome, 53A.

**Finance Officer:** 219, qualities, 219B;

- *General:* member of the General Chapter, 170; may be called to the Consulta and General Council, 207; office, 210; qualities, 210A; duties and competencies, 210A; depends upon the Superior General, 219; compatible offices, 219A; administrative reports, 219E. See also: *Officers, General*.

- *Provincial:* choice, 150; appointment, 150; duration, 150; competencies, 219; depends on the Provincial Superior, 219; compatible offices, 219 A; administrative reports, 219E;

- *Local:* appointment, 130; duties, 130B; competencies, 219; depends upon local Superior, 219; compatible offices, 219A; administrative reports, 219E. See also: *Administration; Goods, material; Officers of the house*.

**Food:** age, health, work, 36C; temperance in eating as a form of penance, 63B.

**Forgiveness:** and brotherly love, 35.

**Formation:**

- *of lay people:* integral, 74; of youth, 75, 75A, 75G, 75H; of teachers, 75F.

- *of vocations:* 78, 78B, 78E, 147;

- *of religious:* Ch. IX; goal, 79; religious in charge, choice and duties, 80, 85; curriculum, 81; duties of major Superiors, 85C, 147; importance of education, 102; of candidates to sacred orders, 103; pastoral, 104; houses directly depending upon the Superior General, 122. See also: *Novitiate; Orders, sacred; Post-Novitiate; Postulancy; Seminary, minor; Studies*.

- *Ongoing:* Ch. IX, IX; importance, 106; person in charge, 106A; forms, 106B; courses, 106B. See also: *Review; Revision; Update*.

**Foundations, charitable, autonomous:** erection and statutes, 146.

**Foundations, new:** duty of the Consulta; 185; condition for opening, 185; Delegation, 156.

**Founder:** see: *Jerome Emiliani. St.*

**Freedom:** and chastity. 13B; and obedience, 22, 25; through prayer, 58; in profession. 94, 98; during the local Chapter, 126A; of Provincial Councilors, 149B; atmosphere at the General Chapter, 174; of General Councilors, 203A.

**Friday:** day of particular penance, 63; forms of mortification, 63.

**Friendship:** in educational environment of youth, 75A, 75C; with Alumni, 75H: with those who leave the Congregation, 113.

## G

**Gift:** of grace, 6; chastity, from God, 11, 13; abstain from, 17; of penance, 60; personal, for the sake of all, 24; vocation, 59, 78, 79; duty of the Superiors to discern them in their religious, 69; temporal good, 215.

**Going out and travelling:** 37A.

**Goods, material:** Use of and poverty, 17; handing over administration, use and revenue before temporary profession, 94, 94A; renouncing ownership, 96; archives, 98B; Congregations right to ownership, 18, 215; possession and witness of poverty, 18; care of the house, 19C; house, 130B, 130 E, 218, 219; Curia General administered by the Finance Officer General, 210; Canonical Visitation, 214B; Chapters, 216; Consulta, 217; Curia General, 218, 219; Provincial Curia, 218, 219. See also: *Administration; Finance Officer.*

**Gospel:** reason for consecration, 1; evangelical freedom gained through obedience, 25; the spiritual associates conform their life to it, 42B; persecution for its sake, 63C; evangelical inspiration in the apostolate for orphans, 74B. See also: *Word of God.*

**Governance, Government:** Ch. XI; of the Congregation, 117; at the local level, 118, 129; at the Provincial level, Ch. XIII, 119; at the General level, Ch. XV, 120; at a Commissariat level, 160; at a Vice-Provincial level, 162; Canonical Visitation, Ch. XVI. See also: *Structures.*

**Grave:** of our deceased religious, 41C.

**Guests:** hospitality towards our religious, 37A; to the Provincial Chapter, 137A; to the General Chapter, 171C.

## H

**Habit:** characteristics, 39; use, 39, traditional, 39A.

**Holiness:** Constitutions and Rules as aid in the journey toward it, 29; fruit of devotion to our Founder, 52. See also: *Sanctity.*

**Hope:** confidence in the Lord, 6; in obedience, 24 D; imitation and intercession of the Blessed Virgin to increase it, 49; example of our Founder, 71.

**House:** Ch. XII;

- *religious:* section reserved for religious, 38; juridical persons, 116; structure, 121; erection, modification, suppression, 121A; conditions for the opening, 121B; can own, alienate, administer goods, 215; monthly administration report, 219E; annual

financial report, 219F. See also: *Chapter, local; Community; Superior, local.*

- *Dependent*: structure, 121A; dependency, 121A; establishment, 121A; statute, 121A;
- *Residence*: structure, 121A; dependency, 121A; establishment, 121A. See also: *Delegate.*
- *Dependent on the Superior General*: 122. See also: *Religious depending upon the Superior General.*

**Humility**: characteristic of the Congregation, 1, 4, 10; of Mother Mary, 9; in poverty, 19; in obedience to the Magisterium, 23; in accepting obedience, 2 B; in manifesting difficulties, 24D; in brotherly love, 35; in our penance, 61, 61B; as a form of mortification, 63B; in sharing the mission of the Church, 66; attitude of Superiors, 69, 123A, 188A; in sewing the needy, 71; in the formation of Novices, 86; in the local Chapter, 126A; of Councilors, 203A. See also: *Simplicity.*

## I

**Illnesses**: to be welcomed in faith and spirit of penance, 63C. See also: *Sick.*

**Injustice**: sharing in the suffering of the victims, 62. See also: *Poor.*

**Instruments (objects)**: used in the community, 19C; media, 38.

**Invocations, spiritual**: 58.

## J

**Jerome Emiliani, St.:**

- *Founder*: 1, 6; source of sanctity for the Congregation, 8; intercession for the Congregation, 57; support in the observance of Constitutions and Rules, final exhortation;
- *Example*: charity, 3; poverty, 16, 19, 19B; welcoming of the poor, 33; spiritual associates and his spirit, 42B; prayer, 43; knowledge of his deeds and spirit, 53; imitation, S3; spiritual invocations, 58; penance, 64; service to the poor, 67; apostolate, 71; of orphans, 73; educational style, 74; selection of lay cooperators, 74C; education of youth to commitment to the poor, 75 B; training in his spirit, 79;
- *devotion lo St. Jerome*: meaning and fruits, 52; veneration, 53; proclamation of his testimony, 53; fasting on the day preceding the liturgical solemnity, 53; liturgical solemnity, 53A; monthly memorial, 53A.



**Journal:** of the Provincial Chapter, 142; of the Provincial Council, 154A; of the General Chapter, 209A; of the Consulta, 209A; of the General Council, 209 A. See also: *Chancellor, General; Chancellor, Provincial.*

- *of the house:* mention of the deceased spiritual associates, 42B; acts of profession, 98B; beginning of the local Superior's mandate, 124; minutes of the local Chapter, 126E; content, 130D; preserved in the archives, 130F. See also: Secretary of the House.

**Joy:** fruit of chastity, 15; in poverty, 19A; in obedience, 25; in brotherly love, 34; sharing of it, 42A; expressed by chant, 44B; Mother Mary, 49; fruit of prayer, 58 attracting vocations, 78.

## K

**Kindness:** attitude of Superiors, 14, 144A; conducive to brotherly love, 35.

## L

**Laziness:** escape from it, in order to live in chastity, 13A.

**Lay(men):** members of the Congregation, 4; equal rights and obligations as priests, 28; one mission in the Congregation, 70; as associates, 107;

- *Collaborators (cooperators), lay:* see: *Cooperators, Collaborators.*

**Legal Representative:** 219D.

**Lent:** time for conversion, 63; forms of mortification, 63.

**Librarian:** tasks, 130G.

**Library:** 130G; catalogue, 130G.

**Life in common:** Ch. V, 4, 6, 8; called by God to live in common, 26; in the Congregation, 27, 28, 29; in the local community, 30, 31, 32, 33; love as its bond, 34, 35, 35A, 35B, 35C, 35D; moments, 36, 36A, 36B, 36C, 36D, 36E; norms for an orderly life, 37, 37A, 38, 39; sick brothers, 40, 40A, 40B; deceased brothers, 41, 41A, 41B, 41C; relatives, associates, benefactors, 42, 42A, 42B, 42C, 42D, 42E; and poverty, 16; formation to it, 79; Post-Novitiate as a school of it, 100. See also: *Community.*

**Liturgy:** Ch. VI, I; office of dead, 41B; value of liturgical prayer, 44D; rite, 44A; sacred chant, 44B; place of worship, 44C; attitude during celebrations, 44D; of the Eucharistic, 45, 46, 46A; of the hours, 47; penance, 48, 48A; liturgical feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 50; and prayer of our tradition, 54; and penance, 63. See also: *Feasts, liturgical.*

**Love:** of Christ, of God, 3, 6, 20, 24, 26, 45, 48, 63D, 72, 77C, 98; imitation and intercession of Mary to increase it, 9, 49; and chastity, 11, 13B, 14; and poverty, 19E; for the Congregation, 27, 28, 85; and Constitutions, 29; towards St. Jerome, 53; for silence, 63B; attitude of superiors, 69, 115, 123A, 188A, 219E; for orphans, 73, 74, 74A, 74B; in parishes, 76, 76C; in priestly ministry, 77, 77B; of the General Councilor, 204; in Canonical Visitation, 214 B; Finance Officers, 219B;

- *brotherly*: 30, 33, 42, 145, 174; value and fruits, 34; inner intentions, 35; in relations 35A; in conversations, 35B; in brotherly correction, 35C; and discretion, 35D; towards sick brothers, 40; towards dead brothers, 41; towards people, 42; towards parents and relatives, 42A; in parish ministry, 76B; formation of novices to it, 86; Post-Novitiate as school of it, 100; towards religious who stay out of the house, 112; towards religious in discernment, 113. See also: *Benignity; Charity; Communion, brotherly; Kindness; Meekness; Mercy.*

## M

**Mary:** see: *Blessed Virgin Mary.*

**Mass:** for the deceased, 41C; for relatives, 42A; for the Congregation, 57A; on April 29, 57A; register of Masses, 130F. See also: *Eucharist; Suffrages.*

**Master of Novices:** appointment, duties, requirements, 85; accountable to major Superiors, 85B; periodical reports, 85C; depends on the local Superior for the activities in common, 85B; novices' relation with religious of the community and outsiders, 85E; novices entrusted to him, 87C; time for the novices' spiritual exercises, 87C; ways and degrees of the novices' apostolate, 86A; Assistant Master, 85A; religious in charge of novices in a house other than Novitiate's 84; member of the Chapter by rights, 135; incompatibility with the office of Provincial Superior, 144C. See also: *Novices; Novitiate.*

**Meal:** moment of the life in common, 36, 36C.

**Media:** moderate and prudent use, 38.

**Meditation:** nature and value, 55; time, 55; in minor seminaries, 78E; for novices, 86.

**Meekness:** and Somascan charism, 4; and brotherly love, 35, 35C; Superior General, 187A. See also: *Benignity; Love; Mercy.*

**Memory:** of deceased confreres, 41C; of spiritual associates, 42B; of benefactors, 42D.

**Mercy:** works of, 1, 74B; mercy of God and offering of one's sorrows, 63C; inner attitude for brotherly love, 35; and Mother Mary, 49; in prayer, 57; in penance, 60, 63C. See also: *Benignity; Love; Meekness.*

**Ministry:** mission of the Congregation and pastoral ministry, 3; diversity of it in the Congregation, 4; of authority, 24; sacred ministries, admission, 105, 105A, 105B, 105D.

**Mission, apostolic:** Ch. VIII; of the Congregation, 3, 118, 120, 131, 146; Mary as a source of commitment, 51; and Guardian Angels, 57B; apostolate of the Congregation, 65-72; service to orphans and needy youth, 73-74C; youth and school ministry, 75-75H; parish ministry, 76-76E; priestly ministry, 77-77C; in formation, 82A, 87B, 99, 106; commitment in profession, 98. See also: *Apostolate; Ministry.*

**Mortification:** Ch. VII; in our style of life, 61; voluntary exercise, 60; for chastity's practice, 13; during Lent, 63; example of St. Jerome, 64. See also: *Penance.*

## N

**Neighbor:** edification of the, 74B; introduction to his service in minor seminaries, 78E. See also: *Apostolate; Charity, Love.*

**Novices:** formation, 86; religious in charge of formation, 85; unity with master and Superiors, 85B, 85D, 85E; and Major Superiors, 85C; dismissal, 89; privileges, 90A; admission to profession, 92; documents, 94. See also: *Master of novices; Novitiate; Profession, temporary.*

**Novitiate:** Ch. IX, IV; goals, 83; establishment, 84; Novitiate outside the Novitiate house, 84; master, 85; assistant master, 85A; Superior, master, novices, 85B; concern of Superiors, 85C; cooperation with religious, 85D; studies and apostolate, 86A; admission, 87; procedures for admission, 87A; requirements for admission, 87B; beginning, 87C; duration, 88; absences, 88; conclusion, 90; conclusion with association, 110. See also: *Community of Novitiate; Master of novices; Novices.*

## O

**Oath:** before Diaconate, 105C, 105D.

**Obedience:** Ch. IV; profession of the vow, 8; spiritual value, 22; object, 23; orders in virtue of holy obedience, 23, 192; and authority, 24; qualities of the true obedient, 24A; and personality, 24B; and availability, 24C, 27, 73B, 74B; difficulties, 24D;

dependency in initiatives, 24E; simplicity in asking, 24F; and penance, 61; and apostolic activities, 65; and effectiveness of apostolate, 72; commitment in profession, 98; of associates, 108; of Provincial Superiors, 145. See also: *Counsels, evangelical; Vows.*

**Officers:**

- *General:* Ch. XV, VI; resignation, 117B; 120; who are they, 206; appointment, 206; requirements, 206; duration, 206; compatible offices that can be combined, 206 A. See also: *Chancellor General; Finance Officer General; Postulator General; Procurator General.*
- *of the Commissariat:* 159.
- *of the house:* Ch. XII, IV; appointment, 128, 130; who they are, 130; consent of the local Chapter for their appointment, 130; offices that can be combined, 130; duration, 130. See also: *Finance Officer, local; Secretary.*
- *of the Vice-Province:* 162A.
- *Provincial:* 150.

**Oratory of the religious House:** 121.

**Orders:** in virtue of holy obedience, 23.

**Orders, sacred:** Ch. IX, VIII; formation of the candidates, 103; curriculum for priesthood, 104; admission, 105; Superiors' responsibility, 105A; procedures, 105B; documentation, 105D. See also: *Diaconate; Formation.*

**Ordinary, local:** instructions for religious travelling through the diocese, 37A; dress, 39, 39A; consent for establishing a house, 121; consultation for suppressing a house, 121A; agreement for a parish, 76A; appointment of parish priests, 76A. See also: *Parish; Parish Priest.*

**Orphans:** Ch. VIII, II; mission of the Congregation, 3; Mary Mother of, 49, 51, 51A; St. Jerome father of, 52; institutions for, 73; institutions' answer to needs, 73A; other forms of apostolate for, 73B; education after the example of our Founder, 74; family environment, 74A; evangelical inspiration of apostolate for, 74B; collaboration of lay people, 74C; love of the Superior General for, 187A. See also: *Poor, Youth.*

**Outsiders:** see: *People.*

**P**

**Parish:** Ch. VIII, IV; entrusted to the Congregation, 76; acceptance, 76A; duties of the parish priest and community, 76B;

characteristics of the apostolate, 76 C; participation of the laity, 76D. See also: *Ordinary, local; Parish Priest*.

**Parish Priest:** appointment, 76A: duties, 76B: life in common, 76B; incompatible with the office of Provincial Superior, 144C; presentation to the local Ordinary, 145B. See also: *Ordinary, local; Parish*.

**Patience:** and brotherly love, 35; and brotherly correction, 35 C; in priestly ministry, 77B.

**Penance:** Ch. V11.

- *Virtue:* spiritual value, 59; penitential journey, 60; spirit, 61; community commitment, 62; penitential practices, 63; typical aspects of the Somascan tradition, 63A, 63B, 63C, 63D; example of St. Jerome, 64; fruits, 64. See also: *Mortification*.

- *sacrament:* nature and fruits, 48; community celebration, 48A; best expression of conversion, 60; administering the sacrament, 77B; introduction to it in the minor seminary, 78E. See also: *Confessor; Conversion; Sacraments; Sin*.

**Pension:** vow of poverty, insurances, 17.

**People:** and early Somascans, 1; and chastity, 13B; outsiders, unrelated to community, 24E, 35D; of the area, outsiders, 42, 42E; novices and outsiders, 85E,

**Perfection:** striving for, 4, 123A; chastity as an ornament of, 11; and obedience, 22; in Novitiate, 86; final exhortation.

**Person:** 24A; promotion of personality in obedience, 24B.

**Piety:** toward deceased, 41A, 41C; toward parents and relatives, 42A, towards the Blessed Virgin, 50; Superior, 123A.

**Pius V:** approval of the Order, 2.

**Planning:** of apostolic activities, 69A; in the local Chapter, 126D; financial, 216.

**Poor:** Company of the Servants of the Poor, 1, 19; service to them, 1, 3, 6, 10, 20, 26, 106; preferential option for them, 10, 19; welcoming of them in our communities, 33; love for them as a fruit of devotion to the Blessed Virgin, 49; St. Jerome as their refuge, 52; helping them as a community penitential form, 62; example of St. Jerome, 64; service to them as a characteristic of our apostolic mission, 67; example of St. Jerome, 71; commitment to the poor, 75B; and Alumni, 75H; characteristics of our parish ministry, 76C; and promotion of vocations, 78; and Superior General, 187A. See also: *Orphans; Poverty*.

**Pope:** obedience to the Roman Pontiff, 23. See also: *Shepherds of the Church; See, apostolic*.

**Post-Novitiate:** Ch. IX, VI; goals, 99; duration, 99, 101; house, 101; formation, 100; religious in charge of formation, 101; studies and apostolate, 101A; conclusion, 101B. See also: *Formation; Profession, solemn; Studies.*

**Postulancy:** Ch. IX, III; and minor seminary, 78C; goals, 82; duration, 82A; formation, 82B; studies, 82C; religious responsible for formation, 82B. See also: *Community, of Postulancy; Formation.*

**Postulation:** at the Provincial Chapter, 140; at the General Chapter, 179.

**Postulator General:** duties, 211. See also: *Officers, General.*

**Poverty:** Ch. III; love for, 4; vow, 8, 91, 98; spiritual value, 16; object of the vow, 17; of the Congregation, 18; spirit, 19; confidence in the Divine Providence, 19A; personal interest in the poorest things, 19B; share everything, 19C; depending upon Superiors and community, 19D; help from Superiors, 19E; community commitment, 20; testimony, 21; and community penance, 62; preference for poor areas in our apostolate, 71; of the associate, 108; and Finance Committee, 219C. See also: *Administration of goods; Counsels, evangelical; Goods; Poor; Vows.*

**Prayer:** Ch. VI; aid to live in chastity, 13; aid for brotherly love, 30, 35, 113; in common, 36A, 47; for sick brothers, 40B; for deceased brothers, 41, 41B, 41C; for relatives, associates, benefactors, 42, 42A, 2B, 42C; and life, 43; liturgical, 44-48A; devotion to the Blessed Virgin, 49-51A; devotion to our Founder, 52-53A; of our tradition, 54-58; introduction to personal and community practice, 71; during Lent, 63; spirituality centers as schools of it, 76E; for apostolate's fruitfulness, 77; for vocations, 78; introduction to personal prayer in the minor seminary, 78E; cooperation in formation, 85D; for the Chapter, 137B; and Superior General, 187A.

**Preaching:** in priestly ministry, 77A; faculty, 125.

**Priests:** members of the Congregation, 4; and laymen's equal rights and duties, 28; one mission, 70; requirement for Superiors, Vicars and Masters, 85, 117; associates, 107;

- *Priestly ministry:* Ch. VIII, V; mission and spiritual demands, 77; of the Word, 77A; of the Sacraments, 77B; pastoral care, 77C; Eucharistic concelebration, 45A.

**Procurator General:** qualities, 208; duties, 208A; special mandate for certain issues, 208A; seal, 208B; member of the General Chapter, 170; can be called to the Consulta or General council

with no voting right, 207; residence, 208C; documentation, 208B.  
See also: Officers, General.

**Profession of faith:** at the beginning of the mandate of Superiors and vicars, 124, 144, 150, 188, 195.

**Profession, religious:** Ch. XI, V; and consecration, 8; foundation of life in common, 27; commitment to observe the Constitutions, 29; formula, 98; rite, 98A; “in articulo mortis,” 90A; preservation of the acts, 98B, 130E; of associates who went through the Novitiate, 110; precedence in elections, 178. See also: *Consecration, religious.*

- *Temporary:* consequences, 91; time, 90; admission, 91; procedures for admission, 92; duration, 93; required documentation, 94; renewal, 93, 95; requirements for admission, 97.

- *Solemn:* values and consequences, 96; admission, 96; preparation and procedures, 96A; requirements, 97; communication to the parish of Baptism, 96A.

**Promise:** of the associates, 108.

**Promoter of vocations, General:** appointment and duties, 78A.

**Promotion of vocations:** Ch. IX, I; commitment, 78; proposal of vocation, 78; care, 78; religious assigned, 78A; initiatives, 78B; commitment of the Provincial Superior, 148. See also: *Vocations.*

**Province:** structure of the Congregation, 116, 131; governance, 119; erection, suppression, modification, 168; can own, acquire, alienate, administer goods, 215; annual report to the Superior General, 145A; 219F; six-month report of the administration to the Provincial Superior and council, 219F; relations among Provinces, 185. See also: *Chapter, Provincial; Council, Provincial; Provincial Superior.*

**Providence, Divine:** confidence in it, 19A, 19D; material goods as gifts, 215.

**Prudence:** custody of chastity, 13B; of Superiors, 14, 105A; in talking with outsiders, 35D; of formators, 80; of General Councilors, 203A; of the legal representative, 219D.

**Punctuality:** activities in common, 36E.

## R

**Readings:** and chastity, 13B.

**Readings, spiritual:** 55, 78E, 86.

**Readmission:** Ch X; to the Congregation, 114.

**Record Book of Professions:** 98B.

**Recreation, relaxation:** 37; in accordance with our choice of life, 13B; as a community moment, 36D.

**Relatives:** Ch. V, VIII; and poverty, 17; parents, relatives, and community, 42A; monthly suffrages, 41C.

**Religious depending upon the Superior General:** in the Provincial Chapter, 136; active and passive voice in the General Chapter, 171. See also: *House dependent on the Superior General*.

**Renunciation:** to administration of goods, 94; to ownership of goods, 96; documentation, 98B; of a member of the Provincial Chapter, 137; of an office elected by the Provincial Chapter, 140; of the Superior General, 194. See also: *Resignation*.

**Report:** of the Master of novices, 85C; for admission to Novitiate, 87A; for admission to ministries and sacred orders, 105B, 105D; annual, on the state of the Province, 145A; of the Postulator, 212; of the Visitor, 214D; financial, 219D. See also: *Administration*.

**Reservedness:** in the religious house, 38.

**Resignation:** from offices conferred by appointment, 117B; Vice-Superior, 129; Provincial Superior, 148; of a Provincial Councilor, 155; as a member of the General Chapter, 171B; of the Superior General, 194; of the Vicar General, 197; of a General Councilor, 205. See also: *Renunciation*.

**Rest:** adequate time and ways, 37; and silence, 38.

**Retreat, Spiritual:** goal, 56A; time, 56A; and community journal, 130D.

**Review:** of community life, 126C. See also: *Formation, ongoing; Revision*.

**Revision:** about the practice of poverty (evaluation), 20; of the apostolic activities (evaluation), 69A; in the ongoing formation, 106. See also: *Review*.

**Rite:** Roman, 44A.

**Ritual:** for the deceased, 41A, 41B; for profession, 98A; for the Provincial Chapter, 179; for the General Chapter, 181; for the Canonical Visitation, 214 B.

**Rosary:** reciting, 50.

**Rules:** goal and characteristics, 5; commitment to live according to them, 8; and obedience, 23, rule of common life, 29; obligation of observance, 29; dispensation, 29; rule of formation, 80, 85, 100; commitment of religious, 91; commitment of associates, 108; and Superiors, 125, 145, 189; and Provincial Chapter, 134; and General Chapter, 168; modification, 169; approval, 177;



dispensation from their observance, 190A; interpretation and dispensation, 201; final exhortation. See also: *Constitutions*.

**Rules of Order:** of the Consulta, 185; of the General Chapter, 170, 171C, 174A, 180, 181, 184, 185, 188, 203; of the Provincial Chapter, 132, 137A, 141, 143, 149; of the General committees, 190B.

## S

**Sacraments:** to live in chastity, 13; to foster their practice on the example of St. Jerome, 71; consequence of Order, 77; attitude in administering, 77B; Superiors, 174. See also: *Anointing of the sick; Eucharist; Orders, sacred; Penance*.

**Sacrifice:** spiritual, 9; to cure the sick, 40; of praise, 47; penitential observance, 63A; to serve orphans, 73; spirit of, 146. See also: *Eucharist*.

**Sanctions:** provided by Canon Law, 115.

**Sanctity:** of the apostolic times, 7; tradition of s. of the Congregation, 8. See also: *Holiness*.

**School:** Ch. VIII, III; commitment to Christian formation, 75; educational environment, 75A, 75D; preferential option for the poor, 75B; educational institutions, 75C; religious assigned to it, 75E; lay teachers, 75F; structures, 75G; extracurricular activities, 75G; alumni, 75H. See also: *Teachers*.

**Seal:** of the Provincial Superior, 144D; of the Superior General, 187C; of the Vicar General, 195B; of the Procurator General, 208B.

**Secretary of the house:** appointment, 130; duration, 130A; duties, 130C; writes and signs the minutes of the local Chapter, 126E; of the Delegate Visitor, 214A. See also: *Journal, Officers of the house*.

**See, Apostolic:** recognition of the Congregation, 2; directly subjected to it, 2, 4; oath prescribed by it, 105C; profession of faith approved by it, 124; modification and interpretation of Constitutions, 169; and resignation of the Superior General, 194; and resignation of the Vicar General, 197; and resignation of a General Councilor, 203; affairs to be dealt with it, 208. 208A; must be consulted before removing the Procurator General from his office, 208C; rules for administration, 210. See also: *Pope*.

**Self-denial:** in obedience, 24 F; form of penance, 61; formation of the novice, 86. See also: *Mortification*.

**Seminary, minor:** definition, 78C; goals and environment, 78D; spiritual formation, 78E. See also: *Formation*.

**Sequela Christi:** in the Founder, 1; and consecration, 6; poverty, 16; obedience, 22, 24A; formation in the minor seminary, 78E. See also: *Christ Jesus*.

**Service:** 6, 67, 70, 73B, 74C, 78D, 78E, 120; to the Magisterium out of obedience, 23; to sick religious, 40; to God and Church in profession, 96, Superiors, 123; General Councilors, 203B; requirement for Finance Officers, 219 B. See also: *Poor*.

**Shepherds of the Church:** the Congregation responds to their appeals, 3; faithfulness to their instructions, 7. See also: *Bishop; Church; Pope*.

**Shrines:** apostolate, 76E.

**Sick:** Ch. V, VI; love towards sick religious, 40, 36C; spiritual care, 40A; prayer, 40B; care as a characteristic of the parish ministry, 76C. See also: *Illness*.

**Silence:** in the religious house, 38, as a form of penance, 63B.

**Simplicity:** in asking Superiors, 24F; of heart, 30; in liturgical celebrations, 44D; in dressing, 63B. See also: *Humility*.

**Sin:** community aspect, 48A. See also: *Conversion; Penance*.

**Spirit, Holy:** the Congregation founded under His action, 1; docility, 6; guidance to poverty, 19B; sanctifies us, 26; we are His docile instruments, 43; in meditation, 55; in penance, 59; for the fruitfulness of the apostolate, 72; transforms us into the image of the son, 59; sanctifies us in the life in common, 26; pastoral care to preserve His fire, 77C; profession formula, 98.

**Spirituality:** retreat centers, 76E; in the formation of novices, 86; in the formation of post-novices, 101A.

**Statute:** of the dependent house, 121B; of the houses established for the benefit of the entire Congregation, 122; of Commissariat, 135, 159; of associations and foundations, 146; of Vice-Province, 162, 162A, 163.

**Structures:** are permeated by the spiritual and operational needs of the apostolic mission of the Congregation, 65; manifest the unity of the Congregation, 68; local, 73A, 75G, 118; of the Congregation, 116; General, 120; Provincial, 119; Delegation, 156; Commissariat, 158; Vice-Province, 161; and Consults, 185; transfer of religious, 192; Canonical Visitation, 213; Finance Committee, 219C; Norms of Administration, 220. See also: *Governance*.

**Studies:** Ch. IX, II; means for a chaste life, 13A; silence as a means for, 38; of spiritual authors, 55; as a form of modification, 63B; means for one's own formation, 74; before Novitiate, 82C; of

spiritual life during Novitiate, 86; suspension during Novitiate, 86A; in the Post-Novitiate, 100, 101A; and formation, 102; specific preparation to apostolate, 102A; update, 102B; for priesthood, 104; of the Constitutions in the communities, 125; of the means for local religious life, 126D; and community journal, 130D; and library, 130G; in preparation to the Provincial Chapter, 137B; in Superiors' meetings, 144B; in preparation to the General Chapter, 172A; of General Councilors, 204. See also: *Curriculum; Formation; Teachers*.

**Study house:** established by the major Superiors, 103; requirements of the religious in charge, 103.

**Suffrages:** for deceased confreres, novices, associates, 41, 41A, 41B, 41C; for spiritual associates, 42B; for relatives, benefactors, 41C. See also: *Mass*.

**Superior:** Ch. XII, II; exercise of authority, 24; exemption from disciplinary norms, 29; duty to discern and foster the personal gifts of religious, 69; duty to evaluate the conditions for activities not belonging to the Congregation, 73B; commitment to formation in the minor seminary, 78D; instructions for studies in the Post-Novitiate, 101A; duty to guarantee formation until the solemn profession, 101B; to provide for the studies of religious, 102; responsibility in presenting the candidates to the Bishop, 105A; help in ongoing formation of religious, 106A; priest with solemn vows, 117.

**Superior, General:** Ch. XV, III; function and authority, 187; qualities, 187A; exercise of authority, 187A; respect, 187B; prayer, 187B; seal, 187C; election, 188; requirements, 188; office's duration, 188; duties, 189; and council, 190; dispensation from the observance of the Rules, 190A; Canonical Visitation, 191; transfer of religious from our Province to another, 192; power over Provincial and local Superiors, 193; cessation from office, 194; deposition, 194;

- *General Chapter:* summons the General Chapter 167; summons the extraordinary General Chapter, 167; determines places and date, 167; acceptance of the resignation of the members, 171B; invite religious, 171C; examines proposals with his council, 172A; presides, 174; if there are equal votes, he may decide on ballots regarding issues and affairs, 176; majority required for election, 179;

- *Consulta:* summons the Consulta, 183; prepares the Consulta with his council, 184;

- *General Council*: presides over, 198; in extraordinary cases he can replace absent Councilors with “ad actum” Councilors, 202; authorizes the Chancellor General to transcribe from the journal, 209B; gives direction to the Finance Officer General in administrating goods, 210; entrusts the Finance Officer General to examine administrations, 210A;
- *Provincial Chapter*: he is consulted for the convening of an ordinary Provincial Chapter, 133; ratifies the election of the delegates, 135A; his presence or his De l egate’s is required for the validity of its acts, 138; when he derogate from the norms of his presence, 138; presides over the Provincial Chapter, 139; compiles the short-list of the candidates eligible to the office of Provincial Superior, 140A; ratifies the elections, 141; when he remits the approval of the elections to the plenary General Council, 141; ratifies the decisions of the Provincial Chapter, 142; appointment of a Provincial Superior as a local Superior, 144C; option when the office of a Provincial Superior ends, 148; appoints the successor of a Provincial Councilor, 155. See also: *Delegates to the Provincial Chapter*.
- *Vice-Provinces, Commissariats, and Delegations*: approve statutes of Vice-Provinces, 162A; approves the statutes of Commissariats, 159; appoint commissaries and Councilors of the General Commissariats, 160; appoints the General Delegate, 156, 157; ratifies the appointment of the Provincial Delegate, 157;
- *Houses*: ratifies the establishment of a religious house, dependent house or residence, 121, 121A; approves the statute of a dependent house, 121B; houses dependent on him, 122; ratifies the appointment of local Superiors, 124; Canonical Visitation, 214; appoint the Delegate Visitor, 214A; appoints the extraordinary Visitor, 214A; appoints the Visitor for the whole Congregation, 214A; examines the reports and issues the decrees of the Canonical Visitation, 214D; administrative faculties, 218;
- Can give orders in virtue of holy obedience, 23; associates spiritually to the Congregation, 42B; ratifies agreements for institutions not belonging to the Congregation, 69C; ratifies agreements for parishes, 76A; confirms the appointment of parish priests, 76A; appoint the General promoter of vocations, 78A; primary responsible for formation, 80; establishes, erects, suppresses Novitiates, 84; authorizes to do Novitiate out of the Novitiate house, 84; confirms the admission to temporary profession, 91; and to solemn profession, 96; receives the profession directly or

through a Delegate, 98A; appoints a religious in charge of Post-Novitiate, 101; establishes the house for Post-Novitiate. 101; associates to the Congregation, 107; readmits to the Congregation, 114. See also: *Consulta; Council, General; Officers, General; General Chapter; Superior, Major.*

**Superior, local:**

- power, 123; exercise of authority, 123, 123A; authority limited by the Superior General, 193; appointment, 124; requirements, 124A; appointment of a Provincial Superior as a Superior, 144C; duration, beginning and end of commission, 124; cessation during commission, 124; duties, 125; residence, 125A; council of the Superior, 127; convocation and presidency of the local Chapter, 126; preparation of the local Chapter, 126C; minutes, 126C; aid of the Vice- Superior, 129; appointment of the Officers, 130; to be informed before the conclusion of the Canonical Visitation, 214C; convenience of not being Finance Officer, 219A; review and approval of the houses' administrative reports, 219E; annual administrative report, 219F. See also: *Chapter, local; Community; House.*
- aid in the practice of chastity, 14; consent for the use of material goods, 17; dependency of religious in poverty, 19D; example in practicing poverty, 19E; in the local community, 32; vacations and rest of religious, 37; duties towards deceased religious, 41A, 41C; proposal for spiritual association, 42B; provides religious with the time necessary for meditation, 55; permission for activities outside the community, 69B; assigning offices in communities which take care of parishes, 76B; private vows of the associates, 108; for the personal needs of religious, 219D;
- *in the houses of formation:* postulant's admission to Novitiate, 87A, 87B; entrusting the novice to the Master, 87C; Master's dependency for the community activities in Novitiate, 85B; report for admission to sacred orders, 105B.

**Superior, major:** can give orders by virtue of holy obedience, 23; approves the practical realization of the activities in common, 36; allows stable non-community apostolic commitments, 69B; approves agreements for institutions not belonging to the Congregation, 69C; approves new forms of apostolate for orphans, 73B; enters agreements for parishes, 76A; gives license to publish writings, 77A; chooses suitable religious for the formation of vocations, 78A; responsibility in formation, 80; instructions for Postulancy, 82; proposal of the Provincial Master of novices, 85;

to be heard for the cooperation of experts in Novitiate, 85A; must follow the formation of novices, 85C; consent for apostolate during Novitiate, 86A; admission of the postulant to Novitiate, 87; procedures for admission, 87A, 86B; for solemn profession, 96A; communication of the solemn profession to the parish of Baptism, 96A; proposal of the house for Post-Novitiate, 101; proposal of the religious assigned to Post-Novitiate, 101; establishes the study house, 103; appoints religious, 103; communication of the diaconate to the parish of Baptism, 105C; ongoing formation, 106B; proposal of the associates, 107; correction of religious' offences, 115; draws the statute of the Commissariat, 159; appoints the Delegate of the Delegation, 157; government of residence, 121A; erection of a religious house, filial house or residence, 121A; appointment of the Superiors of the houses, 124; Canonical Visitation, 214; to be heard by the Superior General before issuing the decrees for the Canonical Visitation, 214D; incompatible with the office of Finance Officer, 219A. See also: *Superior General; Provincial Superior; Vice-Provincial Superior.*

**Superior, Provincial:** Ch. XIII, II;

- Function and authority, 144; requirements, 144; office's duration, 144; exercise of authority, 144A; instructions to the local Superior, 144B; periodical meetings with Superiors and appointees, 144B; visit to communities, 144B; his office is not compatible with that of Master of novices or parish priest, 144C; appointment as a local Superior, 144C; seal, 144D; duties, 145; annual report to the Superior General, 145A; establishment of religious families, 146; procedures for ratifications, 145B; for appointments, 145B; management of institutions, 145C; erection of Associations of Faithful or autonomous Pious Foundations, 146; promotion of vocations, 147; cessation of the office, 148;
- *Provincial Chapter:* calls the ordinary Provincial Chapter, 133; convokes the extraordinary Provincial Chapter, 133; determines the place and date of the celebration, 133A; communicates the names of the members, 135A; accepts resignations, 137; invites to the Provincial Chapter, 137A; proposals for the Provincial Chapter, 137B; consultation for the election to the office of Provincial Superior., 140A; election and approval, 141;
- *Provincial council:* appoints the Provincial Chancellor, 150; appoints the Provincial Finance Officer, 150; presides the Provincial council, 153; appoints "ad actum" Councilors, 154; signs the acts of the Provincial council, 154A; proposes to the Superior General

- the successors of the Provincial Councilors, 155; appoints commissaries and Councilors of the Provincial Commissariats, 160;
- *houses*: establishes dependent houses of residences, 121; draws the statute of a dependent house, 121B; appoints the local Superiors, 124; in specific cases, appoints the Vice-superior, 129; and the local Officers, 130; administrative faculties, 218; approves the office of Finance Officer entrusted to a local Superior, 219A; examines the annual administrative statements of the houses, 219E; sends them to the Superior General, 219E;
  - Proposes spiritual associations, 42B; appoints parish priests, 76A; proposes the appointment of the Master of novices for the Province, 85; admits to temporary profession, 92; to the renewal of profession, 95; admits to ministries and sacred orders, 105, 105B; gives his opinion about the extraordinary General Chapter, 166; for the transfer of religious from one Province to another, 192; his authority can be limited or suspended by the Superior General, 193. See also: *Chapter, Provincial; Council, Provincial; Province; Superior, major*.

**Superior, Vice - Provincial:** function and authority, 164; election, 164; duration, 164; to be heard for the statute of the Vice-Province, 162A. See also: *Superior, Provincial; Superior, major, Vice-Province*.

## T

### **Teachers:**

- *Religious*: qualities and skills, 75E; preparation, 75E; update, 75E; certifications, 75E; example, 75E;
- *Lay*: criteria for selection, 75F; preparation and testimony of life, 75F; initiatives for their formation and training, 75F. See also: *Education; School; Studies*.

**Testimony:** of consecrated life, 10; of chastity, 15; of poverty, 21; of obedience, 25; of observance of Constitutions and Rules, 29; of St. Jerome, 53; Christian, to be encouraged after the example of St. Jerome, 71; of lay teachers, 75F; of our priestly life, 77; for promotion of vocations, 78; of religious to the novices, 85D; final exhortation.

**Tradition:** of sanctity, 8; typical aspects in the practice of chastity, 13A, 13B; of poverty, 19A-E; of obedience, 24A-F; Eucharistic worship, 46, 46A; and the Blessed Virgin, 50; in prayer, Ch. VI, VI, 54-58; in penance and mortification, 63A-D; in the service to

the poor, 67; in institutions for orphans, 74A; and the poor, 75B; in parish ministry, 76C; respect for the General Superior, 187B.

**Travelling:** norms for religious, 37A.

## U

**Unity:** fostered by Fraternal encounters, 36D; of the priesthood, 45A; of the Congregation in the apostolic mission, 68; with Superiors, 80; of the Congregation, 120; of the Provincial Superior with the Superior General, 145; promoted by the Consulta, 185; Superior General. 187, 189, 192.

**Update:** institutions for orphans, 73A; education, 102B; of the library, 130G. See also: *Formation, ongoing*.

## Y

**Youth:** Ch. VIII, II-III; mission of the Congregation, 3; our apostolic activity, 67; needy youth, 73, 73B, 74A; cooperation of lay people, 74C; commitment to Christian formation, 75; educational environment, 75A; preferential option for the poor, 75B; educational institutions, 75C; particular care in the parish ministry, 76C; promotion of vocations, 78B. See also: *Education; Orphans; School*.

## V

**Vacations:** 37.

**Verification:** of community planning, 69A, 118B; of the work of formators, 80; aptitudes of candidates, 82, 83; of life in ongoing formation, 105B; for the erection of a house, 121B; by the Consulta, 185; Canonical Visitation, 213, 217; of administrative statements, 218, 219E.

**Vicar:** Ch. XV, IV; priest with solemn vows, 117;

- *General:* function, 195; is the first General Councilor, 195; requirements, 195; office duration, 195; cooperation with the Superior General, 195A; seal, 195B; presides the General Chapter when the Superior General is absent, 174; when the Superior General's office ends, 194; cessation and substitution, 197; cannot be Finance Officer, 219A. See also: *Councilors, General*.

- *Provincial:* is the first Councilor, 141, 150; election and ratification, 141; office duration, 150; duties, 150; cannot be Provincial Finance Officer, 150, 219A; takes over the government when the Provincial Superiors office ends, 148. See also: *Councilors, Provincial*.



**Vice-Province:** Ch. XIV, III; structure of the Congregation, 116; erection, modification, suppression, 161; governance, 161; statute, 161A; Chapter, 162; may own, acquire, alienate, administer goods, 215. See also: *Superior, Vice-Provincial*.

**Vice-Superior:** Ch. XII, IV; convenes and presides over the council of the Superior, 127; election or appointment, 129; duties, 129, 129A; termination, 129; and other offices, 130; approves the administrative reports of the house, 219E; convenes and presides over the Chapter of the house, when the Superior is impeded, 126.

**Visitation, canonical:** Ch. XVI; duty of the Superior General, 191; frequency, 191; definition and goals, 213; procedures, 214B; conclusion, 214 C; decisions and decrees, 214D. See also: *Visitor*.

**Visitor:** and community journal, 130B; Superior General, 214; other Major Superiors, 214; Delegate, 214A; extraordinary Delegate, 214A; appointment of the Delegate V., 214A; duties, 214B; report, 214D. See also: *Visitation, Canonical*.

**Vocation:** answer to God's call, 6, 8; as choice of the poor, 19; and testimony of poverty, 21; and community life, 26; need of penance, 59; penance, fidelity to it, 63A; perseverance, 64; Christian, 76D; to cultivate the seed in the charism of St. Jerome, 71; enthusiasm, 80; and ongoing formation, 106; difficulties, 113; and Constitutions and Rules, final exhortation.

**Vocations:** and testimony of poverty, 21; prayer, 57, 78; religious for this task, 78A; initiatives, 78B; care in the minor seminary, 78D; acknowledgement of it as a gift of God in Postulancy, 79; late vocations, 82B; maturation during Novitiate, 83; and Provincial Superior, 147; Provincial council, 151 See also: *Promotion of vocations*.

**Vows:**

- *Profession:* 2, 8, 91; formula of profession, 98. See also: *Chastity; Poverty; Obedience; Profession, temporary and solemn;*
- *Private:* associates, 108.

**W**

**Will of God:** search in obedience, 22; by Superiors and community, 24.

**Word of God:** and meditation, 55; and spiritual exercises, 56; Mary's intercession so that it may be accomplished in us, 9; support of the local community life, 30; and penitential journey, 60; example of St. Jerome, 71; in our retreat centers, 76E; in priestly ministry, 77A; initiation to its meditation in minor seminaries, 78E;

formation of the novices in reading and meditating it, 86; duties of the Superior, 125; revision of life in its light, 126C. See also: *Gospel*.

**Work:** and Somascan charism, 4; means and aid to live in chastity, 13A; and poverty, 19; and life in common, 36, 37; and mortification, 63B; means of training, 74; and goods of the Congregation, 215.

**Works of mercy:** example of the Founder, 1; in taking care of orphans, 74B.

**Worship:** places, 44C; Eucharistic, 46, 46A.

**Writings:** license to publish, 77A.

# APPENDICES

*The General Chapter of 1981 decided that, along with the text of the Constitutions and Rules, a few documents of our Founder and tradition be included, documents that are particularly relevant for the life of the Congregation. The two introductory chapters of the Constitutions that are observed by the Congregation of Somasca, the only remaining portion of our ancient Constitutions, are dated 1555. The Suggestions for interior life are included in our Constitutions of 1626, the first ones to be approved by the Church, and had a great impact on the spiritual tradition of our Congregation.*

# Appendix I

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## Letters of Saint Jerome

### 1

*Venice, at the Trinity, July 5, 1535.  
To Agostino Barili, Servant of the Poor*

<sup>1</sup> Father, beloved in Christ. With the last [letters] I sent you the answers to your letters from Como and from Giovannantonio. <sup>2</sup> As far as freeing myself from my commitments, it seems that it will take a long time and only God knows the manner and where. <sup>3</sup> In regard to the help we have requested several times, I do not see any other remedy but these two: one that we pray to the eternal Father to send workers because there is the same if not greater need here, believe me; the other, that we persevere until the end, that is until the Lord will show a sign and we will understand that it is really His. <sup>4</sup> As to my absence, know that I never abandon you through those little prayers I know; and, though I am not on the battlefield with you, I hear the clash and raise my arms in prayer as much as I can. <sup>5</sup> But the truth is that I am nothing. And you must also believe that my absence is necessary: the reasons are infinite, but if the Company remains with Christ, the goal will be reached; otherwise everything will be lost. The question is debatable, but this is the conclusion. <sup>6</sup> Therefore, pray to the pilgrim Christ by saying: Remain with us, Lord, because it is nearly evening. If you do not understand the reason why my absence is necessary, write to me: I will give you a satisfactory reply. <sup>7</sup> Tell all the communities to write to me often and in detail, and to send the letters first to you. Once you have read them, send them to me; however, in the meantime, do not fail to make provisions according to what God is inspiring you to do. <sup>8</sup> Command Sir Giovanpiero to continue in his two special tasks which seem to suit him well, and to report to me often and in detail, always in the way we stated, and always by sending to you the letters which are addressed to me. The two tasks mentioned above are: that he must not forget to use the best ways God inspires him in order to strengthen the people

of the Valley in their religious devotions; the other that he has to assume the responsibility to find work for the Company.

<sup>9</sup> Recommend Giovannantonio from Milan to maintain the Company firmly in peace, in observance of the appropriate traditions and devotions, and to send to work in the hospitals those who do not work with peace, devotion, and modesty.

<sup>10</sup> Tell the seven to remember to take care of strengthening themselves in the love of God and neighbor, to go to confession and communion at the proper time.

<sup>11</sup> Recommend to the twelve to confirm themselves and their brothers in the works of Christ, to be careful not to turn back, nor allow others to turn back.

<sup>12</sup> The guardian is to make sure that the good traditions be preserved, to spare no one reproach, and to see that no one be idle.

<sup>13</sup> The lector is to urge that reading may be done more often than has been done so far.

<sup>14</sup> The prayer leader is to be sure that prayers are said at the proper time; to continue to read during meals, explaining what he understands and asking for the meaning of anything he does not; above all, he is to make sure that everything is done early in the morning and <sup>15</sup> he is to keep the Company in devotion: if devotion is lacking everything is lacking.

<sup>16</sup> The steward is not to let the children become gluttonous nor let them be deprived; he is to calculate well the amount of bread needed so not to let any lack of food occur in the house, and he is to put some order in the begging so that <sup>17</sup> the Company may not lose its ability to remain in solitude.

<sup>18</sup> Tell Father Lazarin to take good care of those sheep if he loves Christ. When it is time for confession, he should not wait for the children to call him, but he himself must warmly invite them to go to confession and communion according to the usual good devotion. <sup>19</sup> He also must not allow the spiritual fire to cool which would cause everything to be ruined. <sup>20</sup> And he should often eat with them and frequently ask who wants to go to confession. After confession, he must privately or publicly give them that advice that the love of Christ will inspire in him. Moreover, he should do the same thing for the people of the Valley; he is to continue the good devotions.

<sup>21</sup> The supervisor is to urge no one to be idle but provide some work, keep the hermitage in order, with discretion ensure that

everyone work. <sup>22</sup> Work, devotion, and love, the three foundations of the “work,” must not be lost.

<sup>23</sup> See that Giovannantonio from Milan follow the rule of working because by not working, the brothers cannot be confirmed in the love of Christ.

<sup>24</sup> The mule-drivers are to take care of the donkey; they are to provide something good for her food; they are to keep the house clean.

<sup>25</sup> The nurse is to have love for and take care of the sick; for the first days he is to pay particular attention to the sick; later, should their condition become worse, they are to be sent to Bergamo. <sup>26</sup> He is also to take care of those who are well so that they may not do something disorderly and get sick, even though it has never been customary to give such a task to nurses.

<sup>27</sup> Remind Sir Giovanni to take very good care of the “work,” not to get discouraged nor cool down in making sure that they continue working.

<sup>28</sup> Above all, tell Father Alessandro that this time he has to make the effort of strengthening that “work” with the modesty Christ inspires him with, especially by restraining a little those procurators from Milan, and by having Romiero at heart.

<sup>29</sup> I cannot write any longer. I am looking forward for a detailed answer from all the above mentioned people.

Venice, at the Trinity, July 5, 1535

Jerome

## 2

*Venice, at the Trinity, July 21, 1535  
To Agostino Barili, then to the Company*

<sup>1</sup> Dearly beloved brothers and children in Christ of the Company of the Servants of the Poor.

Your poor father greets you and encourages you to persevere in the love of Christ and in observance of the Christian rules, as I showed so much by deeds and words when I was with you, that the Lord has glorified Himself in you through me.

<sup>2</sup> Our end is God, source of every good, in whom alone – as we say in our prayer – we must put confidence and not in others.

<sup>3</sup> Our benign Lord has wanted so in order to increase in you the faith, without which – as the evangelist says – Christ cannot perform many miracles, and to answer your holy prayer to Him. <sup>4</sup> He also wants to make use of you, who are poor, troubled, afflicted, wearied, despised by all, and even abandoned by the physical presence, but not by the heart, of your poor and very much beloved and dear father.

<sup>5</sup> And certainly we cannot know why He acted thus; however, three things can be considered:

<sup>6</sup> The first is that our blessed Lord wants to show you that He desires to number you among His dear children, if you persevere in His way. He has done so with all His friends whom at the end He has made saints.

<sup>7</sup> The second, He wants to increase your faith in Him and not in others, because – as it is said above – God does not work His things in those who have not put all their faith and hope in Him alone. <sup>8</sup> Those in whom there is great faith and hope He has filled with love, and He has done great things for them. <sup>9</sup> Therefore, if you are not lacking in faith and hope, He will make great things of you, exalting the humble. <sup>10</sup> For this reason He has taken me away from you together with every other instrument that gives you satisfaction, and has brought you to these two choices: either you will be lacking in faith and go back to the things of the world, or you will be steadfast in faith and in this way He will put you to the test.

<sup>11</sup> The third, He wants to test you as gold is tested in a furnace: the dross and impurity that are in the gold are consumed in the fire, while the good gold is preserved and increases in value. <sup>12</sup> So it is for the good servant of the Lord who hopes in Him: he remains steadfast during tribulations and then God comforts him, giving him both a hundredfold in this world for the things he leaves behind out of His love, and eternal life in the next. <sup>13</sup> So He did with all the saints. So He did with the people of Israel: after many tribulations in Egypt, not only He led them out of Egypt with many miracles and fed them with manna in the desert, but He gave them the Promised Land.

<sup>14</sup> Even you know it, since I and others assure you of it, that God will do the same things with you if you are steadfast in faith. <sup>15</sup> And right now I repeat and affirm it again: if you



remain steadfast in faith, especially during temptations, the Lord will console you in this world, will lead you out of temptations and will give you peace and tranquility in this world. In this world, I say, temporarily, and in the next forever. <sup>16</sup> And of this I have some visible certainty, by having our Company here in this world as a place of peace. <sup>17</sup> The reason for sending you this letter is for you to send us two youths so that I may show them the aforementioned promised land we call “place of peace.” <sup>18</sup> In addition, this paragraph has to be confidential, read it only to the members of the Company of the Servants. <sup>19</sup> Therefore, send me two youths of the Company of the Servants; and those who will stay back are to be steadfast in the way of God, which is love and humility with devotion.

<sup>20</sup> Be on guard that no scandal or disruption may occur in the Company or in the places you minister in. Regarding those you are sending, it does not matter if they are more experienced or less, mature or younger, first or last. <sup>21</sup> Pay particular attention to two things: first, that for no reason you disturb the Company in the above-mentioned places; <sup>22</sup> rather, give them more care than ever and do not spare any trouble in order to keep everyone in the way of God. <sup>23</sup> Second, regarding those you are sending, make sure that they intend to stay in the Company and observe our good Christian traditions, and that they come willingly.

<sup>24</sup> Again I beg the whole Company to give this task to Father Agostino and his assistant Giovannantonio; and everybody is to be content with those whom those two will agree to choose, after consultation and prudent examination because there is no hurry. However, when God sends an opportunity, we must not waste it.

<sup>25</sup> This is also another reason I remind you not to hurry. I want them to be instructed by Father Agostino in everything and by Giovannantonio about the Company, and also by Sir Giovanpiero, <sup>26</sup> so that they may be able to answer what I will ask them, in addition to the letters those three will write to me. Therefore, start writing immediately and do write extensively all three.

<sup>27</sup> Nothing else. You must all believe my word in this: know for sure, sure, sure that my being far away is for the great honor of God and the benefit of the Company, if you do not fail.

<sup>28</sup> But if you do fail, God's honor will not fail, but in others [and not in you]. <sup>29</sup> Therefore, everything depends on you because God will not fail.

<sup>30</sup> Give them those two white collars that Giovannantonio and I used to wear, and tell them that they should go to the hospitals to lodge, saying that they are carrying important letters for me, and that they beg them on my behalf to give them some bread for God's love, in order not to waste time in begging for food. However, they are not to trust in that but in the Lord, and are to be willing to suffer. <sup>31</sup> To everybody they are to say that, besides the letters, they have to tell me directly and confidentially something of behalf of Sir Agostino the priest.

<sup>32</sup> Father Agostino, after having read this letter, please send it to the Company, comforting everybody in the Lord.

Jerome wrote

*Venice, at the Trinity, July 21, 1535.*

<sup>33</sup> Again, I remind you to take care, especially you, beloved Father Agostino and Giovannantonio vicar, to commit yourselves to have some concern to maintain the Company in peace, with a greater concern than when I was there, such a good concern that I cannot express.

<sup>34</sup> And should anyway refuse to obey, do not hesitate to take action, without any regard because it is better that one person suffer than have the entire Company be disturbed or any bad habit arise.

<sup>35</sup> The same is true for the contrary as well, should Giovannantonio wish that someone not be taken away from him; about this detail, for the time being, find an understained between the two of you, until God will show something else.

*at the back*

To Father Agostino servant of the poor at the hospital of La Maddalena, most reverend Father, then to the Company, Bergamo

*by a different hand*

Received in Milan on August 11, 1535.

*Brescia, June 14, 1536*  
*To Lodovico Viscardi in Bergamo*

<sup>1</sup> Sir Lodovico, dear beloved in Christ. With your patience you will save your soul. What advantage would it be to man, in fact, if he gains the entire world? I know that you can understand me: unfortunately, we are like the seed sown among the stones, like those who believe for a certain time, yet they give up in the hour of temptation. <sup>2</sup> It is up to us to bear with our neighbor, excuse him and pray for him within ourselves, and outwardly, to try to talk to him with some kind Christian words; <sup>3</sup> pray that the Lord may make you worthy, with your patience and gentle talking, to give him much words that he may be enlightened about his error on the spot. <sup>4</sup> The Lord permits such an error for your and your neighbor's benefit, so that you may learn to be patient and know the human frailty, and he, through you, may be enlightened, and the heavenly Father may be glorified in His Christ.

<sup>5</sup> Be careful not to do the opposite when one of these cases occurs, that is to murmur, speak ill, become angry, be impatient, say: "I am not a saint; they are not things one can bear; these are not men of self-control," or similar things; <sup>6</sup> and then to pass your responsibility to others by saying: "It would be better that that fellow would talk to him, or write to him or warn him, because he would do it better than I; he will not believe me; I am not able to do this, etc." <sup>7</sup> We must think that God alone is good and that Christ works in those instruments who let themselves be guided by the Holy Spirit.

<sup>8</sup> And since I have read your letter and seen with great pleasure the zeal you have for the "work," it seemed fitting to me to send you this letter, poorly written as is usual. Anyway, being your letter addressed to Father Agostino, I rely on him to give you proper advice.

<sup>9</sup> As to the pharmacy, it has been unwisely decided to pay monthly and to reduce the previous debt by a little each month. It would have been better to have found the way to get the money to pay it all. <sup>10</sup> However, we have to accept what the Lord sends and make good use of everything. We must also always pray to the Lord that He may teach us to bring

everything to a successful conclusion. <sup>11</sup> We must firmly believe that all that happens is for the best. We need to pray much so that we may see and, seeing, we may do what is necessary at the moment. <sup>12</sup> If you should not in a month have the means to pay either the new expenses or the old debt, if the Lord should not inspire anything else, you could then call again on the friends of the “work” and remind them that it was decided by them to pay the pharmacy every month, etc., that at the present there is no way to do it, and <sup>13</sup> that everybody should be mindful of the way to do it. And you could not find another way, remind Sir Marcantonio and Sir Giovanni that it has been said at other times that all the “works” must be united and the begging must be done in a unified way. <sup>14</sup> However, first we must feed the poor, then pay the debts incurred for food, then the other expenses. Do this and forget every other thing. <sup>15</sup> Organize begging for this purpose with the best means you know, and let us pay this debt.

<sup>16</sup> As far as the second item, we think that with three begging we will annoy the people, divide the “work,” and compete against each other, and, what it is worse, we will cause complaining and clashes between one “work” and another.

<sup>17</sup> About the idea that the Bishop could take upon himself the support of one “work,” I do not believe that his Lordship said that, or he must have been misunderstood because I know that his Lordship will do what he can: either half, or one, or two, or three, or all, or part, according to the strength the Lord will give him. <sup>18</sup> As far as looking for chosen men, we pray earnestly to and praise the Father that He may send workers.

<sup>19</sup> About the third item, we know nothing of that Venetian woman. Therefore, we cannot give you any answer. <sup>20</sup> I am very sorry about Father Zanon: I would appreciate it if he could be warned and begged for the love of God to withstand this temptation. He will be blessed if every kind of evil would be said about him falsely. He should bear this with great joy, awaiting a great reward in heaven. <sup>21</sup> Of that good person we know nothing yet; and no good news we have in our hands.

<sup>22</sup> Fourth. I warn you not only not to intrude upon these things, but also, if someone should speak of them, to interrupt the conversation. <sup>23</sup> Not because working is not good, (in fact, it is written: “He who does not work, must not eat”), but because every time a good thing is proposed but cannot be done, it

must be considered for sure to be a Lucifer-like temptation and not from God, because God does nothing in vain. This temptation is not a new temptation, but an old one. <sup>24</sup> About working, we are not foreigners to this desire, but we have continuously taken effort to put it into practice. <sup>25</sup> As it is publicly known, we have worked in Venice for three years publicly with the abandoned ones; for two years, (and this is the third) we have worked in the fields in the Milanese and Bergamo territory, publicly: and everyone knows that. <sup>26</sup> And Lady Ludovica knows how much we have toiled in order get home textile art orders, even to the point of working for free. And now here in Brescia we have started to sew caps. <sup>27</sup> I tell you this because while others grumble and have this desire [to work] in words, we have manifested in deeds. Therefore, do not spur the running horse. <sup>28</sup> I say: do not do it. Not because it has not to be done or we have not to work. <sup>29</sup> But, whom do you have qualified to work at home? And whom do you have who wants to teach them for the love of God? And what experience do you have in this regard? <sup>30</sup> I maintain that work is good and continually I am looking for it, and pray to God that He may grant it to us. Yet, I do not see any way out, except one, and I think that it will certainly succeed everywhere it is established: that is, making straw plait for hats. Regarding this, recently we have found new methods for preparing the straw. Therefore, I ask you, with all the influence you have, to make sure that this work be started. <sup>31</sup> What you could do for now is to ask friends to set aside hundreds of stalks of wheat and spelt before they are beaten. Then, at your request, we will send you adequate instructors.

<sup>32</sup> Fifth. We had much comfort from the news about Basilio. Take care of him, treat him kindly, stay near him when he sees patients; praise him for commendable things and be patient with him in other things. <sup>33</sup> See to it that he be helped, so that, when he comes, everything is ready: nurses, ointments, bandages, threads, cotton, needle, thread, etc. <sup>34</sup> Do not promise him anything so that he may gain merit for what he does, but if you want to surprise him with some gifts, the Lord will inspire you. <sup>35</sup> Tell him that if I find any good medicine where I am, I will send it to him, even if I have to get out from a hospital. And so you will see the honor of God, of the hospital, and of Basilio increase.

<sup>36</sup> Sixth. Organize the begging in the best way you can. I hope that in whatever we are lacking, the Lord will make up for abundantly.

<sup>37</sup> Seventh. As to the cloth, I like it a lot. Is it enough for so many people? However, let us thank the Lord for everything.

<sup>38</sup> Eighth. As to the priest, you have done well in remembering him, although everybody looks for, needs and cannot find [priests]. However, we will not stop searching for.

<sup>39</sup> Ninth. I do not know what to say about Romiero and Martino but that the disciples are according to the master. Therefore, pray to God that He may grant me the grace of setting them a better example than I did so far, and that God may give to them a better master and to me better cooperators.

<sup>40</sup> Tenth. As far as Ambone, keep him to this condition, agreed by him and by you; otherwise, send him to me. Tell him in this agreement: he must always sit at the end of the table, and every time he does something evil, he must not have wine; and if he does evil of greater importance, he must be disciplined. His task is to empty the night pots with someone you will assign, to sweep the entire house, get water, wood, etc., and never handle food. He must not leave the house or speak to anyone but you, to our supervisor, who is called deputy, and to the guardian. <sup>41</sup> If he observes this rule for a short while, have him sit higher at the table with the others. The more he improves, the more this yoke of penance for his mistakes will be lifted. See to it he be punished every time he speaks as before, and if he knows it and he does not confess it, give him the same punishment. <sup>42</sup> It would be better if you could have him observe this rule with kind words without telling him that I wrote to you. Be careful and warn the porter that he may run away and take with him some of the children, because this is one of his habits, and he has said he would take Giovanni.... Should he mention he would like to leave, make him happy right away and do not give him extra time.

<sup>43</sup> Eleventh. For now, and not as an ordinary rule, but only for one time when it occurs, or more, as you may deem it, I give you permission to feed the beggars. <sup>44</sup> I do not have the authority to give you more permission. The thing must be dealt within the chapter or at our meeting; what will be agreed upon will be communicated to you, if you would request it.

<sup>45</sup> Twelfth. As to the reading, do not trust the children: be vigilant, question, examine, and listen to them often if they read or recite. And do not trust Bernardino either. <sup>46</sup> As far as grammar, I do not know whom you have who can teach grammar; when you have somebody, notify Father Alessandro about who it is, his aptitude and condition, and he will answer you.

<sup>47</sup> Thirtieth. As to Sir Giovanni, you must not speak to him with dead letters as are my letters, but you must pray for him and directly speak to him the words of life.

*Written by Barili*

<sup>48</sup> Jerome, the Servant of the Poor, wrote the above. Since it seems to me that Sir Jerome has answered sufficiently what you have written, I will not enlarge upon it, except that we are returning your letter so that you may compare it with this one, and with another one addressed to Sir Amedeo, brother of Sir Giovanni Cattaneo. See to it that he has it soon because it is important. <sup>49</sup> It remains for me to say that you made a great mistake in not sending a letter to that priest in Somma Campagna, although I had advised you to do so. You could have given it to Sir Leone. Nothing else. Be well in the Lord and pray for us all.

From Brescia, at the Hospital of Mercy, June 14.

Father Agostino, Servant of the Poor.

#### 4

*St. Martin Valley, the day of the Blessed Virgin.  
To Giovanni Battista Scaini in Bedizzole*

*The part of the letter that describe the recipe for curing an illness of the eyes is omitted, and only the last sentences are reported.*

<sup>1</sup> .... Nothing else. Please, entrust us to the prayers of our brothers, especially to those of Sir Bartolomeo and Sir Stefano.

<sup>2</sup> The result of the convert shows you that you are not asking

the Lord for the grace to act, and faith without works is dead. Doubt of not being before God what to you seems you are.

<sup>3</sup> Written in the St. Martin Valley, on the day of the Blessed Virgin. [September 8, 1536?]

## 5

*Somasca, December 30, 1536*  
*To Giovanni Battista Scaini in Salo'*

<sup>1</sup> Dear Beloved brother in Christ. The peace of the Lord be with you. Through Sir Francesco I have received your letter and seen what you write. <sup>2</sup> You need not worry because you collected little in the begging, for the Lord, who says that first we must seek the kingdom of God, will provide opportunely. <sup>3</sup> The collectors of alms were sent there only for giving you an opportunity for merit. Therefore, having done what you could, the Lord will be satisfied with you because for Him, who is the most benign, good will compensates for the lack of success. <sup>4</sup> As far as sending again for begging next year, only God knows what will happen then. I think I could be well anointed with the last anointment by that time. Therefore, I would not need to ask for oil to anoint throats. As far as the oil collected, I leave it to you, and, once you have sent it to Brescia, we will see how to use it. <sup>5</sup> We will not forget to remember you in our prayers. You too pray to God that He may answer them and grant you the grace to understand His will in your tribulations and to follow it. His Majesty, probably, wants something from you, but you do not want to listen. Keep well and pray to God for me and remember me to Sir Stefano.

From Somasca, December 30, 1536

## 6

*Somasca, January 11, 1537*  
*To Lodovico Viscardi in Bergamo*



<sup>1</sup> Sir Lodovico, beloved brother in Christ. Since Father Agostino, our father, is not here, with his permission I read the letter you have addressed to him. <sup>2</sup> Since you notified him about those disorders in order to take some provisions, I assure you that at his return, in a few days, I will show him the remedy and the provision.

<sup>3</sup> In the meantime I ask you to call the supervisor, the man in charge of the donkey, Giovanni the nurse, Job the steward, and Martino, bearer of this letter, and warn them that I tell them on behalf of Christ that God will punish them, <sup>4</sup> as several times I told Bernardino Primo that God will punish him if he does not mend his ways. I have been a bad prophet although I have prophesized the truth. <sup>5</sup> Beware of God: God will punish them if they will not mend their ways.

<sup>6</sup> Do they not know that they have offered themselves to Christ and they are in His house and eat of His bread and allow themselves to be called servants of Christ's poor? <sup>7</sup> How, therefore, do they want to do the above without love, without humility of heart, without bearing with their neighbor, without looking for the salvation of the sinner and praying for him, without mortification, without shunning money and women's face, without obedience, and without the observance of our rules? <sup>8</sup> Because they are far away from me, do they think that they are far away from God? Let them clearly see what the Lord, though I am far away, makes me say. <sup>9</sup> They know that it is the Lord who makes me say it; if I do not speak the truth, I become a slave of the father of lies and become a member of this father of lies. <sup>10</sup> They know I speak the truth. How come they do not accept it as from God? And if God shows them through this means that He sees them, why do they not fear God? Will they live as hypocrite and stubborn ones? <sup>11</sup> If they do not amend their ways and if the fear of God does not work, even the fear of men will make no difference. <sup>12</sup> Therefore, for now I do not know what else to say but to beg them for Christ's wounds to be mortified in their every external action and, within, be filled with humility, love, and fervor; to bear with one another; to observe obedience, respect the supervisor and the old holy Christian norms; to be meek and kind to everybody, especially with those who live in the house; and above all, not to grumble about our Bishop, but always – as I have written in all my letters – to obey him; <sup>13</sup> to be assiduous

in praying before the Crucified by asking that He may open the eyes of their blindness and by seeking mercy, that is, that they be made worthy to do penance in this world as a guaranty of eternal mercy.

<sup>14</sup> In other letters we have asked to send to these poor a pair of scissors and ointment for the scabious; I repeat, they have a great need of it.

<sup>15</sup> Also, take care of your health. I do not have time to write more because almost all of the people of this house are seriously ill, and that is more than sixteen. Peace be with you.

<sup>16</sup> Since the donkey is coming, we are sending you Giovan Francesco whose leg is festering.

Somasca, January 11, 1537

Jerome Miani, by proxy

## Appendix II

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### Our Prayer

1 In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

*Our Father. Hail Mary. Creed. Hail, Holy Queen.*

2 Our dear Father, Lord Jesus Christ, because of your infinite goodness we ask you to restore the Christian people to the sanctity of life of the time of the Apostles.

3 Hear us, O Lord, because you are kind and merciful. In your compassion, look upon us.

4 Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on us (*repeat 3 times*).

5 May the power of God the Father, the wisdom of His Son, and the strength of the Holy Spirit and the glorious Virgin Mary guide and protect me on the journey toward peace, love, and prosperity. Also, may the Angel Raphael, who assisted Tobias, be always with me everywhere I am and go.

6 My dear Jesus, my dear Jesus, my dear Jesus, my love and my God, I trust in you so that I never be disappointed.

*7 (The invitation to pray for a true trust in the Lord follows)*

Let us put our trust in our good Lord and let us have true hope in Him alone because those who hope in Him will never be disappointed but will be firmly established upon solid rock. In order to obtain such a holy grace, we invoke the Mother of Graces by saying: *Hail Mary*.

8 Let us again thank our Lord, God and heavenly Father, for all the gifts and graces He has bestowed and continues to bestow on us. Let us pray that in the future He may help us in all our spiritual and material needs: *Our Father*.

9 Let us again invoke the Blessed Virgin that she may pray to her delightful Son for all of us, so that he may make us humble and meek of heart, bring us to love His divine Majesty above all things, and our neighbor as ourselves, that He may uproot

our vices, increase our virtues, and give us His holy peace: *Hail Mary.*

May God grant you peace

*(people may exchange a sign of peace).*

10 Let us also pray to God for His most perfect Church in heaven, that is, for the Blessed, so that their joy may grow; for the perfect Church on earth, that is, for those who are in His grace, so that He may increase their virtues and grace, and preserve them in the observance of His commandments; for the imperfect Church, that is, the sinners, so that He may grant them conversion of life and remission of sins; for the atoning Church, so that He may free them from torments and grant them eternal glory; for those who will become His Church, that is, those who are unbelievers now but to whom in the future He may grant the light of faith.

11 *After saying an "Our Father" and a "Hail Mary," in our hearts let us ask the Lord for the things mentioned above.*

12 Then an "Hail Mary" for Monsignor Cardinal Of Chieti and for Father Cajetan and his Congregation, for the Capuchin Fathers, For Father Paul and his Companions, for Mother Andrea and Mother Archangela and Sister Bonaventura, for Madonna Elisabetta Capello, and Madonna Cecilia.

13 Then an "Hail Mary" for all our Fathers who are present and absent and are about to join us in these holy works; for all the stewards and all the brothers who are entrusted in their service, so that the Lord may grant them perfect charity, deep humility, and patience because of the love for His Majesty.

14 Then for all the benefactors of all our works, for the procurators, the bursars, the spenders, and for those who provide these works with help, advice, and favors: *Hail Mary.*

*Then for ....*

15 Then for those who rely on our prayers, for those who pray to God for us and those to whom we owe prayers, for our friends and enemies and for the deceased faithful, especially our parents, brothers and sisters, and especially for our father Jerome and all the other brothers of the Company and all the deceased of these pious works: *Hail Mary.*

16 Then let us raise our mind to God and pray that because of His mercy He may hear our prayers, make up for our mistakes because He is the beginning, means, end, and fulfillment of every good.

*Pray in this way or in others as the Lord may inspire you.*

17 *Then, we may continue to pray mentally for the space of a "Miserere."*

*Them we may continue:*

18 Let all of us be humbled before our heavenly Father as prodigal sons who have squandered every spiritual and material good by living badly. Therefore, let us ask for His mercy by saying: Mercy, grant us your mercy, Son of the living God. O God, help me, a sinner. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

19 *Then the priest says a prayer as the Lord may inspire. At the end, we shall say three "Our Fathers" and three "hail Mary," very softly, with arms crossed, by praying in memory of the three nails by which He wanted to be crucified, so that He may grant us the grace of despising this world and ourselves.*

20 And let us pray for the Church so that She may return to the early condition of Holy Church, and so that peace and harmony may return among the Christian leaders, and united in holy peace, they may march against the infidels and heretics in order to convert them and lead them under the yoke of the holy Catholic Church.

21 *Then we shall say an "Our Father" and a "Hail Mary" in secret for the glory of all Saints, all the angels, archangels, especially those who guard us, so that they may protect us from any temptations of the world, flesh, and evil; so that they may present our lukewarm prayers to our Lord God and beseech Him to bear with us and spare us from every backbiting and rash judgment, and lead us in truth on His holy way.*

## Appendix III

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The Constitutions which are observed by the Somascan Congregation dedicated to the ministry of the orphans in the cities of Lombardy.

### *Origin of the Congregation and Life of Its Founder*

<sup>1</sup> In the name of the Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and of the glorious Virgin Mary.

<sup>2</sup> It is sung that the holy Church has her foundations on the holy mountains, that is, the apostles and prophets. Since we are concerned with this Congregation, that is a particular Church, we need to show its foundations, those who have been resplendent with sanctity and perfection of life.

<sup>3</sup> This Congregation, dedicated to the ministry of the orphans, began in Bergamo in the year of the Lord 1531 by the work of Sir Jerome Emiliani, a Venetian nobleman. As a young man, he gave himself to the world and its pleasures. Later on, he turned to God. By having the Most Reverend Bishop of Chieti as spiritual director, he became so inflamed with the love of God that, having left the world, he put himself at the service of the wretched poor and dressed himself very poorly. For a long time, he performed this humble exercise in Venice, his hometown.

<sup>4</sup> His spiritual fervor increasing, he left the city out of obedience to his spiritual director. Impelled by the Spirit of the Lord and eager to do things agreeable to Him, he went to Bergamo where he gathered numerous abandoned and miserable orphans, some covered with ringworms and scabies, and affected by other diseases. They gave him a place in the hospital of the Maddalena where with great love he cleaned and cured them both from corporal misery and, with saintly teaching, from spiritual misery. Similar to a lamp on the chandelier, he radiated so much light of good example that he invited many to run after the fragrance of his virtues and to follow him. Among these there were the reverend and worthy

priests Sir Agostino Barili from Bergamo and Sir Alessandro from Besozzo, and some good and devout lay-people.

<sup>5</sup> Since the number of the orphans increased, this holy man was not content to perform this pious deed only in Bergamo, but he started to expand his activity by going to Somasca, then to Como, and later on to Milan with a good number of his own. There, after more and more suffering, either because of illness and material needs, or because of mockery, harassment, and persecution, at last he was given as a shelter for those creatures a property of the Major Hospital, called San Martino. When the institution was established and running, he accepted into his Company Monsignor Federico Panigarola, Apostolic Protonotary, and Angelo Marco, count of Gambarana, who became a priest later.

<sup>6</sup> Having established a stable administration in this institution, the servant of God, invited by Sir Bartolomeo Borello, returned with some to the village of Somasca, on the border between the territory of Venice and Milan. There being no other means to live, he went to work in the fields with the beloved poor. He led a very austere and tiring life. To draw everyone along the right way, he became the most humble and the lowest of all. Even though he was a noble and venerable man, he followed the rules of the lowest orphan, imitating the benign Jesus. Such deep humility and love, fervor and fragrance of virtues, attracted distinguished souls from different places. Besides those mentioned above, two other young men from Pavia [joined in]: the first, Sir Marco, a man of great learning who lived as a priest with great fervor of spirit and holiness of life; he second, Sir Vincenzo, a count of Gambarana, who was not of lesser learning and holiness than the lover of poverty mentioned before. Then, Sir Leone Carpani, from Incino's parish, converted and dedicated himself to God's service by following this holy man in the works of piety. Many other priests and fervent laypeople joined this holy Company, and some of them still live in it to the edification of the world.

<sup>7</sup> To these servants of the Lord gathered in Somasca the holy man Sir Jerome revealed his intentions: to bear fruits in the world not only by establishing these communities of orphans, caring for them and rescuing them from corporal and spiritual miseries, but also by assembling for the same goals

associations of citizens and noblemen. They were to take care of the temporal aspects of the institutions and their temporal administration while the priest of the Company would handle the spiritual aspects. All together, they were expected to obtain the grace and glory of God.

<sup>8</sup> After this holy man had assembled these companies and established institutions for orphans in Bergamo, Somasca, Como, Milan, Brescia, and Pavia, he lived in great austerity and poverty with such a vibrant faith that he performed miracles because of it.

<sup>9</sup> Called to Rome by the cardinal of Chieti to perform the works of the Lord, he assembled those brothers who were in Somasca at that time. After the customary prayer, he told them he had been called to Rome and to heaven, and he said: "Brothers, I think I will go to Christ." And he suddenly fell sick with an epidemic fever. In a very few days, he came to the end of his life, giving great example of holiness. As his children and brothers wept, he said: "Do not cry because I will be more helpful to you from there than from here." Having received the Holy Sacraments, he went over to the Lord on February 8, 1537.

<sup>10</sup> About the same time, the Reverend Friar Tommaso of the Order of the Preachers passed happily to the other life. He had been with Sir Jerome and preached very successfully to the neighboring people, fostering peace and harmony among them, in cooperation with the servant of the Lord. Also after many years an excellent physician from Piemonte died: he had been in the Company of those just mentioned. All were buried in the church of St. Bartholomew in Somasca. We believe that their souls, because of their good deeds and the mercy of God, are seated in heaven where they pray for the success of the Congregation and the spiritual profit of these holy institutions, that the Lord may deign to increase them in number and merit, for the glory of God.

### *Authority in the Congregation*

<sup>11</sup> The death of this servant of the Lord, who had been the leader and foundation of this Congregation, left all the brothers, priests, and laymen like sheep without a shepherd, fearful sailors without a pilot, not knowing what they should



do: should they go ahead and steer the boat themselves or each one return to his former state of life. The favor of the Lord did not abandon them in this quandary because they gave themselves up to fervent prayer and remembered that their deceased father had said not to doubt at all but to continue the enterprise with courage. Therefore, confident in divine help and in the prayers of the pious servant of God, since the Company had grown with priests and laymen (among whom there were two reverend and worthy priests, Sir Mario de Lanzi from Bergamo, a man of great zeal and holy life, and Sir Francesco della Mora, a nobleman from Piemonte), they all together took courage and appointed as their leader Father Agostino and devoted themselves to the service of the orphans. Many of the priests remained in Somasca living in common as poor religious, in prayer and spiritual fervor, practicing virtue in peace and tranquility.

<sup>12</sup> However, those who went to the cities found it difficult to work. They considered necessary apostolic authority in order to strengthen and stabilize the Congregation. Therefore, they chose Father Angelo Marco from Pavia to go to Rome. There he remained a long time and he requested a brief from Pope Paul III of happy memory: to be able to elect a superior pro tempore who, once elected, would be the superior of the entire Congregation with the authority to command and to transfer the brothers from place to place; furthermore, it gave the priests the authority to administer the Sacraments and absolve their subjects even from episcopal cases; it submitted them directly to the Apostolic See; finally, it gave authority to the Congregation to draw Constitutions in its Chapters and to amend them, as it is customary and necessary in Congregations.

<sup>13</sup> The Congregation being strengthened and stabilized by this authority, the present Constitutions are drawn and established for the observance of all, priests and laymen, who want to stay and persevere in this Congregation. They were approved in the Chapters by the majority of votes. These Constitutions intend nothing but to make us live devoutly for God, temperately in regard to ourselves, and justly and without scandal in favor of our neighbor. Therefore, may the grace of the Holy Spirit possess our hearts, so that we may

always accomplish things pleasant to the Divine Majesty,  
forever and ever.

## Appendix IV

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### Suggestions for an Interior Life and Spiritual Progress

(from *Constitutiones Clericorum Regularium Congregationis Somaschae*, 1626. Book II. Chapter 1, # 353-380. The paragraph numbers are found only in the edition of 1972)

#### *Reasons for the Proposed Suggestions*

**353.** All of us who have joined the militia of the Somascan Congregation from the very beginning have set for ourselves this goal: to uproot the shortcomings which disfigure and deface one's soul; to avoid the occasions of sin which in the world present themselves numerous at every step; and to ascend together to the apex of perfection by going along the way of virtues. We must keep this end before our souls in such a way that we will never remove our interior eyes from it. In this way, full of solicitude to obtain it, with joy we will welcome what is offered as valid aid in our Constitutions. Therefore, here are the main suggestions for the development of an interior life. Those who are eager for spiritual progress will welcome them as commands of the Lord and will observe them diligently.

#### *Returning Love with Love*

**354.** We are to think that the Lord has called us from the land of Egypt, that is the world, to a land that exudes milk and honey, that is the Congregation, to be a holy nation, a chosen and favored people, among which He is delighted to dwell. Therefore, without delay we are to let us do away with what may displease His eyes. We are to return love and, by loving God, we are to consider the rest as nothing.

#### *The Glory of God, Our Salvation and Our Brothers'*

**355.** In everything we think, say, or do, either in private or in public, even in the smallest things, we are always to take sight of the glory of God and the spiritual usefulness both of ourselves and our neighbor.

*Life in the Presence of God*

**356.** As there is no moment in which we do not enjoy the goodness and mercy of God, there should be no moment in which with our interior sight we do not see Him present as a witness and a judge of our deeds, words, and thoughts. Nothing is, in fact, more effective than this commendable memory of the divine presence if we want to avoid evil and reach perfection.

*Joyful Acceptance of Trials in Communion with Christ's Sufferings*

**357.** Trials of every nature, degree and origin, even the obstacles which seem to slow down our spiritual progress, except sin, are to be welcomed with serenity as from the hand of God, Father of great goodness. To Him we are to offer all them in unity with the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, to His glory and praise.

*Tepidity*

**358.** Tepidity must be immediately and totally uprooted from the soul, otherwise, as tuberculosis, it will debilitate every strength and energy of the spirit.

*Trust In God, Father of Infinite Love*

**359.** When we face serious difficulties which may lead us away from the service to God and from the search of perfection, when fear of the sins committed and the severity of the just judge compel us to lose trust, we are to take refuge confidently in God and think of Him as the Father of great love. May the certainty that those who hope in the Lord are never disappointed support us. On the contrary, as St. Bernard maintains for our consolation, nothing makes the power of the Word brighter than the fact that He makes powerful those who hope in Him. In this way, they are able to obtain everything they wish and ask in prayer.

*Avoid Evil and Do Good*

**360.** We are to avoid what we blame in others or what we heard others blame. On the contrary, we are to imitate and attain what is worthy of praise.

*Love for the Congregation, as for Our Mother*

**361.** We are to consider our Congregation as a mother. We are to love her and, as far as it is in our power, we are to do our best so that everybody may appreciate her. We are, however, to eliminate any exclusive feelings.

*The Fervor of Our First Conversion*

**362.** The habits we have brought from the world into religious life must be completely uprooted with zeal, with the help of our superiors and spiritual directors. We are, then, to do our best so that, with time, our initial fervor may not grow weak. In the beginning of our conversion, it used to inflame us to serve God in sanctity and justice.

*Monthly Exercise of One Virtue*

**363.** At the beginning of every month, everyone is to choose a virtue in which he will train himself for the entire month. At the same time, he is to wage a particular war against the vice opposed to that same virtue. Everyone is to choose by lot one of the Saints celebrated in the month as his patron, to recite every day an “Our Father” and a “Hail Mary” in his/her honor, and to ask that by his/her intercession he may obtain from God the help necessary to conquer that virtue and uproot that vice.

*Attention to Even the Small Shortcomings*

**364.** Nobody is to overlook the seemingly small evils of the soul or petty shortcomings, since a small sparkle often can ignite a big fire.

*Freedom from Disorderly Loves and Fellowship of the Crucified Lord*

**365.** If love for parents, relatives, friends, goods, and similar things we have given up to follow in nakedness the naked Crucified one, takes over our soul and owns it, we will be judged unworthy of the vision of Christ and, therefore, of the kingdom of Heaven.

*Love for Every Person and Place*

**366.** For the servant of Christ every country is his homeland, or better, the whole world is an exile and his homeland is only the heavenly Jerusalem for which he longs. Therefore, for us

there should not be difference of places and people. Since we have one Father, who is God, one mother, who is the Congregations, and one homeland, that is Paradise, we are to embrace with equal benevolence and love every person and place, and we are to prefer to live in those places and with those people where we find more frequent and greater opportunities to give up our will.

*Trials as Opportunities to Imitate Christ Carrying the Cross*

**367.** During temptations, by which those consecrated to the service of the Lord must be tested in some ways and even with difficulty, we need to avoid and carefully anticipate the soul's weakness and frailty, excessive fear, sadness without reason, scruples of conscience which slow down our interior freedom and spiritual growth. On the contrary, we must recall the great reward promised to those who fight the good fight, and imitate Him who endured the weight of the cross in order to reach the promised joy. It will be very useful to open up completely to one's superior or spiritual director with confidence and live according to their advice.

*Spiritual Reading as Nourishment of the Soul*

**368.** Every day our religious are to imprint in their mind a passage of a spiritual book until they can read it entirely, and they are to do their best to learn from it for their interior progress.

*Trust Only in God, Source of Our Peace*

**369.** Our interior peace must not depend on the words and judgments of men but on the witness of our conscience and the trust we have to place in God, either in adversity or in prosperity.

*Control of Tongue to Preserve Peace*

**370.** If out of weakness and fragility we feel provoked by one of our brothers to impatience and indignation, and if we do not want to disturb the peace, we are to guard our tongue diligently, so that we may not let escape words dictated by an upset and embittered state which we will regret once we settle down. We are to remember that we are blessed when we endure offenses and insults for the love of Jesus Christ.

*Imitation of Jesus Christ's Humility and Meekness*

**371.** Nobody on this earth is happier than a truly humble religious. By considering himself and earthly goods as nothing, he rejoices when ridiculed, he is joyful when put down, he takes responsibility when reprehended, he forgives right away when offended. Therefore, everyone is to make an effort to imitate Jesus Christ's humility and meekness, and to prefer to be the last in the house of the Lord, busy in the humblest duties, to obey rather than to give orders, to be taught rather than to teach, to be considered meaningless rather than humble. In this way, he will enjoy a tranquil life in this world and full joy in the future one.

*Pleasing God Only*

**372.** Happy only because of the love and kindness of God, we are not to look for being loved by men, except the good ones, because God does not like those who long to please men.

*Abstaining from Judgment*

**373.** We will be easily upset, suspicious, prone to anger, and forgetful of ourselves if we want to pry around others' words and business. Therefore, if we are not urged by our ministry or charity, when it a matter of others' shortcomings, we are to be silent and prudently stop talking and to redirect our conversation to more useful topics.

*Sorrow for the Sins of Others Rather Than Ill Thinking*

**374.** We are to avoid carefully passing rash judgments, not easily consenting to suspicion that worms into our souls, and we are not to think right away that there are no virtuous people where we see many living wrongly. We are to feel sorrow for the sins of others. With insistent prayers we are to ask God for their conversion and never despair of the true conversion and penance of every sinner.

*Being Good to All*

**375.** All of us, especially our Superiors, are to show on their faces modesty and religious serenity rather than austere seriousness. We are to be good to all, not to refuse anyone the

marks of charity, not to envy anyone, to do good, especially to those who have offended us, and to use a greater meekness and benevolence especially with them.

*Incomparable Worthiness of the Human Person*

**376.** In order to love our neighbor in deeds and truth, as it is our duty, and in order to help him to progress in the service of God according to our vocation, we must not consider in man exterior poverty but the incomparable nobility and beauty of the soul, that the Son of God loved so much that He became flesh for it till the cross. In this way, we will feel pain if we see it disfigured by sins and shortcomings, we will rejoice if it progresses in the way of salvation, and we will take advantage of any opportunity to be helpful.

*Only in God Our Joy*

**377.** We are not to look for consolation and comfort in external things but only in God and divine things.

*Endeavor in Meditation*

**378.** We surely will reach perfection of virtue with great joy and happiness if, besides morning and evening meditations in common, we add another half-hour privately.

*Avoiding Excessive Effort in Spiritual Endeavor*

**379.** We are to assure that the spirit and mind not be overexerted in the exercises of the interior life, so that we may persevere in God's service sound in mind and body, as well as intact in spirit.

*Service to Neighbor in Order to Please God*

**380.** God immensely enjoys not only interior commitment but also exterior activities undertaken with faith because of love. Therefore, laymen and those committed to serving others, if they carry out their ministry with zeal, will be pleasing to God and will be guided by Him to heavenly rest through the labors of the present life.



## Appendix V

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### Life of Jerome Miani Venetian Nobleman

*God's Benefits to Mankind, the Gift of Writing, Purpose of the Author in Writing the Story of His Friend Jerome.*

1.

<sup>1</sup> God has bestowed innumerable gifts upon mankind. Only those who have been purified by faith know how much those gifts are necessary and give grace because of their number and greatness. <sup>2</sup> Those who contemplate the depth of divine goodness see that this immense God not only has been the omnipotent creator and giver of gifts, but also the most gentle and loving Father, <sup>3</sup> a Father who so loved man that, almost forgetful of his superiority and out of overwhelming love, clearly showed that He had planned everything for man, His noblest creature, or better yet, His most beloved child.

<sup>4</sup> I will not talk about His unheard-of mercy, which fills everyone not only with wonder but also with awe and gratitude, if he thinks about it. <sup>5</sup> I would, rather, refer to one of the smallest gifts from His divine majesty, one without which mankind's history and the discoveries of things would be lost, and exchanges among mortals would be hindered. <sup>6</sup> I am talking of the invention of writing by which things always live on, the far ones become closer, and the ones hidden in the innermost parts of the soul become open and clear. Writing preserves the things of the past, teaches those of the present, and prepares us for the things of the future. Although it is useful to us in every situation, it is more useful when, by narrating the history of the people of the past, it guides and makes prudent and wise our deeds.

<sup>7</sup> This marvelous and immortal gift of writing was given to us as it had been to Moses and to the other prophets by God for the benefit and greatness of man. <sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, because of the miserable blindness of human intellects, of their folly, or better yet, of their corrupt malice, today it is greatly perverted and directed to the pitiful detriment of the world. Instead of being a powerful means of life, it has become a most harmful instrument of death. <sup>9</sup> Hence, writing, that is to be of the best, gave us stories of dishonest and despicable loves. One author,

through foolish and fictitious tales, deceived people. Another, of beastly rather than human mind, taught the rules of fighting, depicting as good a most cruel act, while yet another wrote convincingly that under certain conditions it is legitimate and blameless that a man kill another. <sup>10</sup> Furthermore, some writers, already beguiled by the devil, endeavored also to beguile others by spreading the cult of false gods, very demons themselves, and filled the world with ideas not only contrary to divinity but also to nature itself. <sup>11</sup> Therefore, nowadays, human blood is being shed in a most cruel war, sincerity is besmirched by decadent extravagance, mutual love is destroyed by greed, and, whereas the world should be a shelter for humanity, temperance, and decency, it has become a horrible den of cruel and merciless wild beasts.

## 2.

<sup>1</sup> However, being a Christian born of Christian parents by the grace of God, having the gift of writing with Christian freedom, and wanting to give to intelligent people the opportunity to follow this noble undertaking, I would like to start in this way.

<sup>2</sup> In these days, our Lord God has called to heaven our Sir Jerome Miani. I have lived with him for a long time. He loved me very much in this life even though I was not worthy. <sup>3</sup> In telling the story of his life and death, I would like, first, to honor our Lord God, and second, to give an example for others to follow. I think that it would be fitting that in this sweet and human life, his work be a gift from a Christian to a Christian, from a friend to a friend, from a Venetian to a Venetian. <sup>4</sup> In this way, our young and old Venetians, who feel that Baptism alone makes a man a perfect Christian, may learn to what purpose they should direct their efforts and, in this brief and miserable life, know what should be their action and desires.

<sup>5</sup> I now pray that that blessed and friendly soul who loved me so much when in his mortal body, now, I believe, ascended to heaven, may help me by his prayers. May he obtain that what I write for the glory of his beloved Lord be a cause of repentance for the wicked and of greater perfection for the good. <sup>6</sup> In this way, our free republic, which has known no other Lord than Christ, may know by what thoughts and actions she calls herself Christian, a name that she so ardently desires and rightly attributes to herself.

*Fatherland, Family, Character, Army, Care of Nephews and Nieces.*

3.

<sup>1</sup> Jerome Miani was a native of our city of Venice, which is situated in the lagoons of the Adriatic Sea. Because of the beauty of its palaces, its antiquity, and liberal government, people from all over the world come to live here. By worldly standards, its fame is such that there is little need of praise from others.

<sup>2</sup> Jerome descended from a noble family that in the vernacular is called the House of Mianis. But, as many claim, it should be called the House of Emilianis. As many families of our city, because of the wars with the Goths and other barbarians, they left Rome with their belongings and came to live in Venice. Instead of Emiliani, the family was called Miani by the populace, always the foolish interpreters of things. <sup>3</sup> Many prelates and saintly senators who were issued from this family give witness of its nobility. Many of them reached high government posts in our Republic and brought to it illustrious fame with their wise counseling.

<sup>4</sup> Jerome was nurtured and brought up by his parents in the bosom of the Republic. His father's name was Angelo, and his mother's Dionora, or rather Leonora Morosini. There was something like an omen that, by means of an angel and the action of God, a saint with a sacred name would be born. Jerome had older brothers, Charles, Luke, and Mark.

4.

<sup>1</sup> He did not lack friendships, either because he was gracious in keeping them, or because by nature he was affectionate and benevolent in making them. He was naturally joyful, kind, and strong-minded; as far as being talented, he could hold conversations with equal, but his love was superior to his intelligence. He was short of stature, of rather dark complexion, robust and vigorous. Sometimes he was quick-tempered.

<sup>2</sup> During his youth, he lived in a variety of ways and always adapted himself to the different changes of the times. In the war our Republic waged against the League of Cambrai, he told

me that for a time he was a member of the cavalry. And, as St. Paul says, “our injustice praises God’s justice,” he did not know how to guard himself from those errors into which the army men fall. <sup>3</sup> This is not because they are in the army but because of the ruined souls which join the army, corrupted as they are by the bad example of vicious leaders, who with their sinful villainy corrupt and spoil the army. Instead of being the guardians of Christian customs and defenders of honesty, because of them the army has become an impure and wicked band of criminals, or still worse, a cesspool of every wickedness, as if to be a soldier means to be lustful, insolent, cruel, and greedy, instead of being chaste, modest, strong, and liberal.

<sup>4</sup> When the war quieted down and his brother Sir Luke was called to his eternal rest by the grace of God, leaving some young children and a widow who, because of their age and the sudden departure of their father, needed assistance, <sup>5</sup> the pious man undertook the care of the poor widow and orphaned nephews and nieces. Since they had some wool clothing business, for several years, until the children grew old enough, Jerome administered both the family affairs and the wool trade without taking any profit for himself, but solely out of sheer and sincere charity.

### *Conversion, Christian Life*

5.

<sup>1</sup> Even before the creation of the world, God because of His infinite mercy, from eternity loves and predestines His children. Therefore, when it pleased the good God to perfectly move his heart and by holy inspiration to draw him to Himself from the occupations of the world, Jerome, by going often to listen to the word of God, started to recall his ingratitude and remember his offenses against his Lord. <sup>2</sup> He therefore wept often and at the feet of the Crucified he prayed to Him that He would be his savior and not his judge. He hated himself and his past life. He attended churches, sermons, and Masses. <sup>3</sup> He sought the company of those who would help him with their counsel, example, and prayer. Among the many the Lord sent to him for his salvation was an illustrious priest, <sup>4</sup> a Venetian Regular Canon, a man of outstanding doctrine and kindness. Since he is still living, I shall not mention his name. For many

years he took care of Jerome's soul and directed him in the way of eternal life.

<sup>5</sup> Pondering in these holy thoughts, the servant of God often heard repeated the Gospel's words, "he who wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." Inspired by grace from above, he applied himself to imitate as much as possible his beloved master Christ. <sup>6</sup> Therefore, he began, by moderate fasting to conquer gluttony, the beginning of every vice. He would keep watch at night, never going to bed if he were not sleepy. He would read, pray, get tired, humble himself as much as he could in dress, speech, conversation, and much more in his heart. He considered himself nothing, knowing that speech has been given to praise God, to edify the neighbor, and to ask for necessary things. <sup>7</sup> He would keep diligent vigil over his eyes that they might not see anything over which he would have to repent, knowing that it is written, "turn my eyes away so that they may not see vanity."

<sup>8</sup> He helped the poor with whatever alms he could, with counsel, with visits, and he defended them; what was delightful to note was that he was always joyous except when he remembered his sins.

6.

<sup>1</sup> Wanting to uproot them from his soul, he proceeded in this way: first, he chose one sin, then, every day he would try to overcome it by practicing the opposite virtue; having conquered one, he would go to the next. In this way, with the help of God who granted him every greater favors every day, every weed of vice soon was uprooted from his soul and he became ready to receive the seed of divine grace. <sup>2</sup> Often he would remind me of his system: "Brother, if you want to cleanse your soul from sins in order to make it the dwelling place for the Lord, start by pulling one by the hair so that you may punish it in your own way, then go to the others and soon you will be sound."

<sup>3</sup> He set his heart on suffering every misfortune for the love of his Lord. <sup>4</sup> One day, as the nobleman Paul Giustiniani who was present told me, when a scoundrel viciously insulted him for no reason at all and threatened to pull out his beard (that was very long) one hair at a time, he said nothing else but these words: "If God wills it so, here I am. Do it!" <sup>5</sup> Those who heard

this said that had Jerome Miani been his former self, not only would he have not tolerated the offense but he would have torn him to pieces with his teeth.

<sup>6</sup> He stopped attending the Council and put the concern he had for the Republic into the care of his soul, yearning for the heavenly fatherland. He talked with few people, <sup>7</sup> guarded himself from being idle as much as he could, and grieved over nothing except when an hour passed without doing something good.

*Famine of 1528, Works of Mercy, Illness of Jerome, St. Rocco's School, Hospital of the Incurables.*

<sup>8</sup> While the servant of God was keeping this holy vigilance and was trying to amend his body and his habits, the Heavenly Kindness provided sweet opportunities to His new soldier to imitate his captain, Jesus Christ, and so to gain heaven.

8.

<sup>1</sup> In His justice, or better in His love and mercy, God wanted to awaken the Italians from the deep sleep of abominable vices. Therefore, as everyone knows about and remember with sorrow, <sup>2</sup> in 1528 a famine so serious broke out in Italy and throughout Europe that in towns, cities, and villages thousands of people died of starvation. There was such a shortage of grain that little of it was to be found, and that at intolerably high prices. The poor people were compelled by hunger to eat dogs and donkeys, then grass but not from their gardens or cultivated fields, because on account of the difficult times there were no gardens; therefore, they ate wild grasses, and these without oil and salt, because they did not have any. But, what am I saying, grass? In many places stale hay and straw from the thatched roofs were finely chopped and tried as food.

<sup>3</sup> Hearing that in our city there were more opportunities than in other Italian cities, with their wives and children, men left their homes, more like tombs for the living, and in bands invaded Venice.

<sup>4</sup> You could see the poor people in the squares and the streets unable even to cry but weeping silently at their approaching death. <sup>5</sup> Seeing such a spectacle and moved by ardent charity,

our Miani decided to help them with whatever he could. So, in a few days he spent the money he had in this mission, sold his clothes, tapestries, and household goods, and spent everything in this pious and holy enterprise. He would feed some, clothe others because it was winter, shelter some in his own home, comfort and exhort others to patience and to dying for the love of God, reminding them that eternal life was intended for just such a faith and patience.

In these activities he would spend the entire day, <sup>6</sup> but many times the day was not enough. So during the night he would go through the city helping the living and the sick as he could. The dead, whom he found at times in the streets, unseen and unknown, he would put on his shoulders as though they were balsam and gold and carry them to cemeteries and sacred places.

<sup>7</sup> There is not enough time for me to give the details of all his Christian works.

8.

<sup>1</sup> Having spent all he had in these works, Jerome was tested by God in his personal life, as He had done with the patient Job.

The horrible famine was suddenly followed by a fatal epidemic disease which caused purple and red spots to cover human bodies. <sup>2</sup> Avoiding neither the sick or the dead, the valiant soldier of Christ contracted the same disease. <sup>3</sup> Once he realized this, he made his confession, received the Holy Sacrament of the altar, and committed himself to the Lord, who was his unique hope and refuge. Then he spoke and cared no more for himself, as if the illness were not his, but patiently he awaited God's will. <sup>4</sup> Doctors had already despaired and were waiting for his death when in a few days he recovered unexpectedly, and immediately he resumed his previous work, though not yet entirely healed. He worked with greater fervor <sup>5</sup> as he was more sure after this personal experience, that the Lord does not abandon those who work at His service; rather, He accomplishes in His servant new and wonderful things.

<sup>6</sup> Living in this way more and more each day, he decided to leave the wool trade to his nephew, already grown up. After having given an excellent account of everything, <sup>7</sup> he left the business and at the same time civilian attire, a long robe with

closed sleeves, called elbow-sleeve robe. Instead he wore a thick cloth, heavy shoes, and a short cloak.

9.

<sup>1</sup> Having gathered some children who had been begging in the street, he took a shop near St. Rocco, where he opened a school which even Socrates in all his wisdom would have not dreamt of. <sup>2</sup> Here, neither Plato nor Aristotle taught their vain sciences, but Jerome taught how man, because of faith in Christ and imitation of His holy life, becomes the dwelling of the Holy Spirit, the son and heir of God.

<sup>3</sup> Jerome had brought in some craftsmen who would teach the art of making iron pitchers, and he and his children practiced that art. While working, they would sing psalms; they prayed night and day and everything was held in common. <sup>4</sup> Among them there was a special awareness of poverty and everyone was eager to be the poorest. Their beds were bare straw, their blankets the shabbiest. Their food was coarse bread and water, eaten with fruits and vegetables. <sup>5</sup> God's Saint taught these children to fear God, to consider nothing their own, to live in common, and to live not from begging but from their labor. Begging, he used to say, was less than a Christian practice, except for the sick who cannot live from their own labor; as to the others, everyone should support himself by the sweat of his brow, according to the saying: "He who does not work, should not eat."

<sup>6</sup> No one more than Jerome loved and served the servants of God, whatever might be their condition. To bishops and priests he paid great honor. <sup>7</sup> Not only to the children mentioned above did he extend his care, but as a universal father of the poor he used to give alms he could to Mazonbo, Torcello, Burano, Chioggia and other similar places called districts, either by himself or through others. He was so sincere that whatever was not in himself he did not suspect in others; moreover, he thought well of everybody.

<sup>8</sup> He lived a long time in this good and saintly way.

10.

<sup>1</sup> Later, he was called by the directors of the Hospital of the Incurables to unite both the school for children and the



hospital in one institution under his responsibility. Since he did not want to confine his soul made in the likeness of God to any particular work, but wished to act according to the will of his Lord, he willingly went there. How much he worked there, how much of his life he gave was witnessed by those good spirits who are in charge of that place today. <sup>2</sup> How many times I visited him either here or at St. Rocco before! During the pious conversations he had with me – the Lord knows well the pure and Christian love he had for me – he would show me the work of his hands, the groups of children and their talents. <sup>3</sup> He pointed out among others four who, I believe, were not older than eight. And he would say: “These pray with me, are pious and have great grace from the Lord; those read well and write; those others work; that one is very obedient, and this other observes silence well; these are their supervisors, that one is the Father who hear their confessions.” <sup>4</sup> He would show me his small bed, which was more a tomb than a bed because he was so narrow. <sup>5</sup> He would ask me to live with him, even though I was not worthy of the companionship of such a man. Often in my presence he would weep for the desire of the heavenly fatherland. Surely, had I not been more than cold, his words could have been for me as flames of divine love and of desire for heaven.

*Departure from Venice, Activities in the Regions of Bergamo, Milan, and St. Martin Valley, The Congregation of the Poor.*

11.

<sup>1</sup> Here we need to defend Jerome against those who, through ignorance, accused him of inconstancy for leaving the care of the hospital and Venice to go elsewhere. <sup>2</sup> Don't they know the hidden designs of God, and that Christ himself said to those who wanted to keep Him: “I must also evangelize the other towns?” Why is it a wonder if he left his fatherland? Don't we know that the precious stones found in one place are imported in to another? That incense, cinnamon, cassia and other valuable goods often see a new sky? That the sun does not remain where it rises but always going around ends his daily course? <sup>3</sup> And so, this precious stone, this rich merchandise of the Lord, this sun so bright, because of his exemplary life, did nor remain always in one place. Aware that Christians were like a flock without a shepherd, he left Venice and went to

Bergamo. <sup>4</sup> Here, bishops, prelates, and other pious persons who knew him are witness to the fire of divine love he had, to his love for his neighbor, and to his eagerness to save souls.

<sup>5</sup> He hated heresies and their supporters. <sup>6</sup> He used to say that the Lord allows Christians to be in need of material things so that they would see God in those who are able to give them living alms. <sup>7</sup> In the Bergamo region, with the help of the bishop and other good people, he set things in order in the hospitals, which were many in those places. He kept with him some children who were trained in the Christian life. With them he would go through the villages of the territory exhorting the peasants to the blessed life of the holy Gospel.

<sup>8</sup> Not only here he did show his charity but he also went through the region of Cremona and Crema where he performed the same deeds.

## 12.

<sup>1</sup> Having crossed the Adda River, he entered Milanese territory where an outstanding act of his cannot be overlooked. <sup>2</sup> After having arrived in this territory with many of his poor, he and many of his followers fell sick. Having found by chance and old abandoned and unroofed hospital where there was only straw, <sup>3</sup> he lay down on that. He had neither bread nor wine, nor money, because the ardent Christian would bring with him for his need nothing but a living faith in Christ. <sup>4</sup> While waiting for His grace, a friend of his and ours, divinely inspired, entered where the holy man was laying feverish, recognized him and said: "Sir Jerome, if you like it, I will have you transported to a nearby place of mine, you alone, where you will be well cared for." <sup>5</sup> With a generous soul, he answered him: "Brother, I thank you very much for your kindness and I would be happy to go there only if you would also accept these brothers of mine with whom I wish to live and to die." <sup>6</sup> Deeming this response a serious one, our friend left and went to Milan where he related it to Duke Francesco Sforza, whose soul may the Lord God guard with kindness. Having understood the character of the servant of God, the Duke sent him the necessary means and had him taken to a Milan hospital, a place where he would prefer to stay with his companions more than anywhere else.

13.

<sup>1</sup> Nor did his charity ends there. Indeed, having given a good and Christian shape to that place, moved by the Holy Spirit, he went on to Crema, where in a short time he assembled many good persons, some of whom were priests and some laymen. <sup>2</sup> In St. Martin Valley and in Bergamo, these people gathered in communities homeless poor who were healed, clothed, and taught Christian customs, and who earned their living from their own just labor. <sup>3</sup> How nice it was to see in times so corrupted by vice a Venetian nobleman garbed as a peasant, accompanied by many mendicants, or better, by reformed Christians and noblemen according to the holy Gospel, go through the countryside hoeing, cutting grain, and doing similar works, always singing psalms and hymns to the Lord. They would teach the poor peasants the principles of Christian life, and eat sorghum bread and other such food of the countryside. <sup>4</sup> I think we must pity the great men who, idle and fat, give themselves up to games and feasts in their haughty palaces and gilded rooms and never think of the happy, future immortal life full of every delight. Suddenly, they leave their pomp and wealth, and, poor and alone, stripped of everything, they are borne to the grave.

<sup>5</sup> The holy man had gathered in these communities in the territory of Bergamo, Crema, and Como more than three hundred souls. They led a holy and Christian life, having poverty as a friend and living <sup>6</sup> under the guidance of good priests and laymen whose names I do not want to mention, so that the glory will be the Lord's; they are known to the Holy Spirit and their names are written in the Book of Life.

*Return to Venice, His Main Friends, Epidemic in the Bergamo Territory, Death of Jerome.*

14.

<sup>1</sup> Having been a long time in this state of perfection, Jerome came to Venice for some pious works and stayed a little less than a year. He was clothed, as usual, as a peasant. <sup>2</sup> For holy eyes it was admirable to see such a man of poor and humble clothes, but of so sublime soul, of so chaste, modest, cautious, and prudent customs; for the purified ears it was a concert of virtues. <sup>3</sup> And to me it looked like a divine deed that he would

have great compassion on evildoers and that he would never think ill of anybody. <sup>4</sup> He would frequently visit his friends. We were often together and he filled me with so many holy memories and so much Christian hope that they still resound in my mind. <sup>5</sup> Then he left, never to see us again in this life, but, as I hope through the mercy of God, to see us forever in the next. <sup>6</sup> His closest personal friends were priests: the Most Reverend Archbishop of Chieti, now Cardinal; the two Lippomanos, one Prior of the Trinity, the other bishop of Bergamo; the bishop of Verona and others less important. <sup>7</sup> But, above all, he loved his dear poor who best represented Christ for him.

15.

<sup>1</sup> He had reached, I believe, the fifty-sixth year of his life, of which twelve had been spent in austere Christian living, when our most benign God, who for small trials gives us eternal goods, was pleased to call him to His celestial fatherland. It was the Divine Will that a contagious disease should break out in the Bergamo territory, a disease not understood by the doctors, which in fourteen days or so would kill the sick. <sup>2</sup> At that time, the holy man was in St. Martin Valley with many of his own. From them, occasionally, he would withdraw alone to a grotto for contemplation. <sup>3</sup> It happened at that time that one of his own was taken ill and, in a few days, was at death's door. Since he was in the last stage, he was watched as it is done in such a case by many, and among them Sir Jerome. <sup>4</sup> Now this one had been a long time without speaking or giving any sign of life, when, suddenly, as rousing from a deep sleep, he got up as best as he could, saying: "Oh, what a thing I have seen!" Asked what he had seen, he answered: "I have seen a most beautiful throne surrounded by a great light, on which set a child holding in his hands a banner that read: This is Jerome Miani's throne." Everyone was amazed to hear this, most of all, Jerome.

<sup>5</sup> Then, he wanted to go visit various places, but being forbidden by his own to do so, he said: "Let me go, because in a little while, neither you nor anyone else will see me." Even though this caused apprehension in those who heard it, no one could believe that the Lord wanted to deprive them of their father and shepherd. <sup>6</sup> But the most benign God, in order to

reward his labors and so that no one would trust in any man regardless of how saintly he might be, on the day the world calls Carnival Sunday but that the Church calls Quinquagesima, made him fall sick with the plague. <sup>7</sup> Struck very hard, in four days he returned his soul to his Maker with so great a faith (as those who were present said) that he never showed signs of fear. On the contrary, he said that he had made his covenant with Christ. <sup>8</sup> He exhorted everyone to follow the way of the Crucified, to hold the world in contempt, to love each other, to take care of the poor, saying that whoever did those deeds would never be forsaken by God. <sup>9</sup> Saying this and other similar things, he left this mortal life and went to enjoy the eternal one, <sup>10</sup> which, we hope, the Lord in His goodness will grant to us. Amen.

<sup>11</sup> So ends the life of the most distinguished Jerome Miani, written in Venice, in 1536, under the happy government of the most learned and valiant Andrea Gritti, most serene Prince of Venice.



# Table of Contents

---

THE SUPERIOR GENERAL'S PRESENTATION .....	9
ABBREVIATIONS .....	15
THE SOMASCAN CONGREGATION.....	19
<b>Chapter I .....</b>	<b>25</b>
RELIGIOUS CONSECRATION .....	25
<b>Chapter II .....</b>	<b>28</b>
CHASTITY .....	28
<b>Chapter III .....</b>	<b>31</b>
POVERTY.....	31
<b>Chapter IV .....</b>	<b>35</b>
OBEDIENCE.....	35
<b>Chapter V .....</b>	<b>39</b>
COMMUNITY LIFE .....	39
I - <i>The Congregation</i> .....	39
II - <i>Local Communities</i> . .....	40
III - <i>Brotherly Love, Bond of Community Life</i> .....	42
IV - <i>Moments of Life in Common</i> . .....	43
V - <i>Norms for an Orderly Community Life</i> .....	45
VI - <i>Sick Brothers</i> . .....	46
VII - <i>Dead Brothers</i> . .....	47
VIII - <i>Relatives, Associates, Collaborators</i> . .....	48
<b>Chapter VI .....</b>	<b>50</b>
PRAYER.....	50
I - <i>Liturgical Prayer</i> . .....	50
II - <i>Devotion to the Blessed Virgin</i> .....	53
III - <i>Devotion to Our Founder</i> . .....	54

IV - Prayers in Our Tradition.....	55
<b>Chapter VII .....</b>	<b>58</b>
PENANCE AND MORTIFICATION.....	58
<b>Chapter VIII .....</b>	<b>62</b>
APOSTOLIC MISSION .....	62
I - Apostolate in the Congregation. ....	62
II - Service to Orphans and Needy Youth.....	65
III - School and Youth Ministry.....	67
IV - Parish Ministry. ....	70
V - Priestly Ministry.....	71
<b>Chapter IX .....</b>	<b>73</b>
ADMISSION TO THE CONGREGATION AND RELIGIOUS FORMATION	73
I - Pastoral Care of Vocations.....	73
II - Formation of Religious. ....	74
III - Postulancy. ....	76
IV - Novitiate. ....	76
V - Religious Profession.....	81
VI - Post-Novitiate.....	84
VII - Studies. ....	85
VIII - Sacred Orders. ....	86
IX - Ongoing Formation. ....	88
X - Association to the Congregation. ....	88
<b>Chapter X.....</b>	<b>90</b>
SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION OF THE OBLIGATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIFE AND RE-ADMISSION TO THE CONGREGATION. ...	90
<b>Chapter XI .....</b>	<b>94</b>
STRUCTURES AND GOVERNANCE OF THE CONGREGATION .....	94
<b>Chapter XII .....</b>	<b>96</b>
HOUSES OF THE CONGREGATION .....	96
I - Religious Community. ....	96
II - Superior. ....	97
III - Chapter of the House and Council of the Superior. ...	99



IV - Vice-Superior, Finance Officer, and Secretary.....	101
<b>Chapter XIII.....</b>	<b>104</b>
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT.....	104
I - Provincial Chapter.....	104
II - Provincial Superior.....	108
III - Provincial Councilors.....	112
<b>Chapter XIV.....</b>	<b>115</b>
TRANSITORY STRUCTURES.....	115
I - Delegation.....	115
II - Commissariat.....	115
III - Vice-Province.....	116
<b>Chapter XV.....</b>	<b>118</b>
GENERAL GOVERNANCE.....	118
I - General Chapter.....	118
II - Consulta of the Congregation.....	124
III - Superior General.....	125
IV - Vicar General.....	128
V - General Council.....	130
VI - General Officers.....	132
<b>Chapter XVI.....</b>	<b>136</b>
CANONICAL VISITATION.....	136
<b>Chapter XVII.....</b>	<b>138</b>
ADMINISTRATION OF GOODS.....	138
<b>Table of Requirements for Offices.....</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>Subject Index.....</b>	<b>147</b>
<b>Appendix I.....</b>	<b>183</b>
LETTERS OF SAINT JEROME.....	183
1	183
2	185

3	189
4	193
5	194
6	194

**Appendix II .....197**

OUR PRAYER .....	197
------------------	-----

**Appendix III .....200**

THE CONSTITUTIONS WHICH ARE OBSERVED BY THE SOMASCAN CONGREGATION DEDICATED TO THE MINISTRY OF THE ORPHANS IN THE CITIES OF LOMBARDY.....	200
---	-----

**Appendix IV.....205**

SUGGESTIONS FOR AN INTERIOR LIFE AND SPIRITUAL PROGRESS .....	205
--	-----

**Appendix V.....211**

LIFE OF JEROME MIANI VENETIAN NOBLEMAN .....	211
--	-----

**Table of Contents .....225**



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