



THE _____
CONSTITUTIONS
_____ OF THE
**SOCIETY OF THE
DIVINE WORD**

SVD Publications
Generalate - Rome

2025

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of the
SOCIETY
OF
THE DIVINE WORD

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- * an asterisk placed before an article of the directory indicates that the particular article cannot be changed by a general chapter without the permission of the Holy See.
- c indicates a reference to a constitution or article of the directory (e.g., c 415).
- can indicates a reference to the Code of Canon Law (e.g., can 645.6).

In this updated version, the title “blessed” used for Arnold Janssen and Joseph Freinademetz have been changed to “Saint” in the appropriate places.



FOREWORD

On the occasion of the Sesquicentennial Jubilee of the Foundation of our Society, I am delighted to present the revised edition of our Constitutions that incorporates the amendments made by the 19th General Chapter of 2024.

These changes reflect our ongoing journey of discernment as a religious missionary congregation. Rooted in the Divine Word, they express our desire to respond faithfully to the signs of the times, deepening our commitment to justice, inclusiveness, accountability and communion.

There are several minor yet meaningful additions to the Constitutions that make explicit our sensitivity to ecological concerns and affirm our commitment to integral mission and care for our common home. Some aspects of our updated policies on safeguarding (c. 602.1 & c 611.9) and financial management (c. 212.9 & c. 722.h) are reflected in the new additions to the directories of the respective Constitutions. The changes effected in c. 612.1-2 is in tune with the can 127 §1 that provides for emergency consultations in the decision-making process by using computerized and telematic means.

The amendments to c. 636.8 & c. 637.1 deal with the competence of the Superior General to appoint Brothers to positions of leadership in the Society, in some cases, after having received written permission from the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. Some changes are also made regarding Separation from the Society, such as the length of voluntary exclaustation (c. 715) and grounds for automatic dismissal (c. 720). The directive added to c. 205, clarifies that adoption is incompatible with our consecrated way of life (can 285 §§1-2).



I believe that these constitutional changes will enable us to be more authentic disciples and respond to the call of *Missio Dei* more faithfully and creatively in the true spirit of synodality.

Anselmo Ricardo Ribeiro, SVD
Superior General
Rome, September 8, 2025



FOREWORD TO THE 2000 EDITION

In this centennial year of the approbation of our Society by the Holy See (January 25, 1901), I am pleased to present this revised edition of our 1983 Constitutions which incorporates all the changes adopted by the XV General Chapter of 2000.

Many of the more substantive changes come from the definitive adoption of the ad-experimentum changes introduced by the General Chapter of 1994. The other changes concern adjustments made of some constitutions and directories in order to harmonize better with the actual practice that has developed in the Society in recent years. A number of these changes needed the approval of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life, including the one remaining ad-experimentum change which was introduced by the last general chapter itself, i.e. the term of office of the Superior General (c. 618.1). We received this approval on 30th August 2000. Subsequently, on 8th September 2000, these changes to our constitutions were officially promulgated for the whole Society, along with the other resolutions, recommendations and statements of the XV General Chapter (cf. DW 1, Sept 2000, p. 7).

May this revised edition of our Constitutions help “to interpret for us the call of the Divine Word and to prepare us for our missionary service” (cf. Prologue to the Constitutions).

Antonio M. Pernia, SVD
Superior General
Rome, January 25, 2001

FOREWORD TO THE 1983 EDITION

These constitutions, based on the exertions of the 9th General Chapter of 1967/68, have been compiled by the 11th and 12th General Chapters of 1977 and 1982. After making a thorough examination of them, the Holy See has officially approved them by its decree of October 19, 1983. I now promulgate them in this their final formulation and declare them to be legally binding as from today.

We are celebrating the Jubilee Year of the Redemption and the approach of the 75th anniversary of our blessed founder's death. For this twofold reason may Father Arnold obtain for us from the Holy Spirit, to whom he was so specially devoted, the fullness of his blessing so that we can relate to the new constitutions in the light of Ez 36:26f:

“I shall give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you; I shall remove the heart of stone from your bodies and give you a heart of flesh instead. I shall put my spirit in you, and make you keep my laws and sincerely respect my observances.”

Then, indeed, they will be a source of unfailing encouragement to us in our worldwide missionary task.

Henry Heekeren, SVD
Superior General
Rome, November 5, 1983



**SACRA CONGREGAZIONE
PER I RELIGIOSI
E GLI ISTITUTI SECOLARI**

Prot. No. R.45-1/82

DECREE

The 1982 general chapter of the Society of the Divine Word brought to an end the renewal phase of the legal structure of the institute prescribed by M.P. “Ecclesiae sanctae”, II, 6. Following on the thorough work done by three commissions, which were supported by contributions from the confreres themselves, the chapter concluded the task of drawing up the constitutions of the Society in their final form. These were then presented by the superior general to the Holy See for its approval.

According to the mind of the founder, Blessed Arnold Janssen, the spirituality and apostolic task of the Society, as may be seen in the constitutions, are directed to missionary service, and flow from the word of God itself.

The Society’s members share personally through their missionary service in the purpose and mission of Christ’s life; in this way they glorify God’s name, and work for the salvation of the world’s peoples. The founder saw in the printed word a powerful means for evangelization, and his sons wish to follow him in this by utilizing the various communications media in the service of spreading and deepening the faith and of making the whole church aware of its missionary task.



The S. Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, after a preliminary examination of the constitutions, recommended the generalate to reflect on a few points where the text could be improved and to amend them accordingly. This text was then vetted in the congress of 15 October this year, and its acceptance -- with a few small changes -- recommended. This same S. Congregation herewith approves these constitutions and retains the original in its archives. It recommends all members of the Society to accept them faithfully. Through them they are especially helped to put into practice perfect Christian love in the following of Christ.

For the rest, the prescriptions of church law are to be observed. This decree supersedes any existing contrary regulations.

Given at Rome on 19 October 1983, the anniversary of the founder's beatification.

E. Card. PIRONIO, Pref.
†AUGUSTINUS MAYER - Secretary



PROLOGUE

God's loving grace has gathered us from various peoples and continents into a religious missionary community dedicated to the Divine Word and named after him the Society of the Divine Word.

God so loved the world that he sent his only Son. The Word became flesh in Jesus of Nazareth to reveal the Father's name and to proclaim the kingdom of his love. He made this love, which is limitless, visible in a sinful world by his unconditional devotion to all, especially those in need. Through his death and resurrection he opened the way to the Father for all who believe in him. By the outpouring of his Spirit the glorified Lord formed the new people of God as a sign of salvation for all. Christ continues his mission in his people: to bring the good news to all nations and proclaim the Father's liberating and unifying love. The Holy Spirit repeatedly raises up communities which place themselves at the disposal of the church to help accomplish its missionary task.

In response to the call of the Holy Spirit and the needs of peoples, Saint Arnold Janssen founded our Society as a missionary community. We see our special dedication to the Divine Word and his mission expressed in our name. His life is our life, his mission our mission. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we follow him, glorifying the Father and bringing the fullness of life to others. Wherever the church sends us, we are to proclaim the gospel so that all peoples may walk in the way of salvation, freed from the darkness of sin by the light of the Word and the Spirit of grace. Missionary work is, therefore, the end and aim of our Society. All our activities, diverse though they be, are ultimately intended to help the church fulfill its missionary task.



We perform our missionary service one in mind and heart with the Divine Word who offers us a living example of loving dedication to the Father and selfless service of others. We follow the Lord on the path of the evangelical counsels and bind ourselves to his person and his service by the vows of consecrated chastity, evangelical poverty and apostolic obedience. In this way we join together to form a missionary religious community.

We propose to make the goodness and kindness of God visible in our life and service. As a community of brothers from different nations and languages, we become a living symbol of the unity and diversity of the church. Our communion with the Lord and with one another is strengthened and deepened by celebrating the eucharist, by attentively listening to the word of God and by praying together in the joy of the Holy Spirit.

The purpose of formation and government in our Society is the growth and strengthening of our vocation and the focusing of all our efforts on our one missionary goal.

The idea and purpose of the following rule is to interpret for us the call of the Divine Word and to prepare us for our missionary service.



PART ONE

A COMMUNITY SHARING IN THE MISSION OF THE DIVINE WORD

I. ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF OUR MISSIONARY SERVICE

- 101** Since God wills that all be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (see 1 Tim 2:4) he sent his Son as redeemer to form the one people of God from all nations through the power of the Spirit. Our missionary service helps gather the scattered children of the Lord (see John 11:52) and hasten the hour when all will worship the Father in spirit and truth (see John 4:23). In this way we promote true human progress, go to meet the Lord as he comes and prepare for his glorious second coming and the final fulfillment of all creation in Christ.
- 102** As members of the Society of the Divine Word, we consider it our duty to proclaim the word of God to all, to bring new communities into being within the people of God, to foster their growth and to promote communion among them as well as with the whole church. We work first and foremost where the gospel has not been preached at all or only insufficiently and where the local church is not viable on its own. Other tasks must be oriented towards these primary aims.

Whoever joins our Society must be ready to go wherever the superior sends him in order to fulfill our missionary mandate even if this entails leaving his own country, mother tongue and



cultural milieu. Such readiness is an essential characteristic of our missionary vocation. Confreres always have the right to volunteer for missionary service in another country or culture.

102.1 In the choice of our missionary activity priority will be given to those situations where the need is perceived to be particularly acute, where others are not available for the task of evangelization and where people show greater openness to the word of God.

102.2 Wherever we work, we always keep in mind that we are missionaries: we seek to keep alive the universal church's awareness of its missionary responsibility, promote and prepare vocations for missionary service and support the missionary cause of the church both spiritually and materially.

103 The Divine Word became incarnate in a particular historical situation. Jesus announced peace and salvation to all those of good will, showing special predilection for the poor. This example of Jesus determines the way in which we participate in his mission. Therefore we try to insert ourselves into the actual situation of those among whom we work. With open mind and deep respect for the religious traditions of peoples, we seek dialogue with all and present the good news of God's love to them. We show a special preference for the poor and oppressed.

104 The charism of our Society is further characterized as follows:

- we accomplish our missionary service in a fraternal community of laymen and clerics;
- we give witness to the universality of the church and the unity of all people through the international character of our Society;



- we have the openness of our founder, Saint Arnold Janssen, always to discern anew the will of God, and be available, flexible and ready to venture into new situations.

According to universal law (see can 588.2) we are considered a clerical society of papal right.

- 105** Since missionary activity is by its very nature the work and revelation of the Holy Spirit, we place ourselves and our Society entirely under his guidance and direction. His light enables us to understand the gospel, to interpret the signs of the times and thus discern the will of God. His strength empowers us to become faithful co-workers and missionaries of the Divine Word.

II. REALIZATION OF OUR MISSIONARY SERVICE

- 106** It is by listening to the word of God and living it that we become co-workers of the Divine Word. The witness of a truly christian life on the personal and community level is the first step in the realization of our missionary service. People must be able to recognize that we have experienced in our own lives the kingdom that we proclaim to others.
- 107** Our foremost obligation is the proclamation of the word. We proclaim the love which the Father offers all, the saving power by which Jesus Christ frees us from sin and death and the new life which the Holy Spirit bestows on all believers. Our proclamation should be such that it radiates the splendor of the good news so that God's message can be recognized in our words.



108 Communities born of the word of God through the power of the Holy Spirit and nourished by word and sacrament become signs of the liberating presence of the Lord and of a new manner of living. Through our ministry of word and sacrament we accompany the communities in this process of growth.

108.1 Central to the life of the community is the eucharist. The celebration of the liturgy, therefore, should be dignified and adapted to the mentality of the faithful, expressive of their new way of living together, and conducive to a personal and community participation in the Christ mystery.

108.2 By baptism the faithful are called to take an active part in the liturgy. Therefore, we endeavor to involve them in preparing for and celebrating all the sacraments.

109 From the outset we strive to bring a community to maturity. Without the active participation of the laity who belong to the people of God as fully as to their own country, the gospe cannot take root. It is their task, imbued with the spirit of Christ, so to permeate earthly reality like leaven from within that it become more and more attuned to the mind of Christ. We encourage them in every way to participate actively and take on responsibility.

109.1 We devote much care to the education and formation of truly christian families so that they be open to the real needs of the church and the world.

109.2 In view of our responsibility for the future of the church and society, we devote ourselves to christian education and formation of youth both in and out of school.

109.3 Our presence in an education institution aims at making it a place of evangelization where the word of



God can be heard and its liberating power experienced in one's personal and social life. Such evangelization develops a sense of the universality of the church and her mission to the world. To this end we work with the larger educational community: teachers, students and their families. Our educational institutions are open to the poor.

We must take into account the existing condition in any given country when deciding to what extent and in what manner we should be involved in the apostolate of education.

109.4 Catechetical instruction is an outstanding means of developing and deepening the faith of communities. Other possibilities include retreats, parish missions, scripture sharing, talks on the faith, as well as other forms of religious communication rooted in the local culture. We try to train good catechists and other lay people for these apostolates.

109.5 As much as we can, we promote basic communities and apostolic movements which work for the renewal of christian life in the spirit of the gospel and in vital union with the local church. We help them especially in the formation of their leaders.

110 To assure organic growth of christian communities we have to work for a sufficient number of local vocations for the various ministries of the church and the religious life. In this way their own needs are more and more provided for. We also try to make the local churches mission-minded, aware of their responsibility toward the whole church and ready to spread the good news which they have received.



- 111** Since we emphasize the missionary calling and responsibility of the whole people of God, we encourage lay missionaries from the country itself or from abroad to undertake an active role in building up the kingdom of God.
- 111.1** Individual provinces should be aware of this responsibility and pursue this aim as far as they can. They will do so through their own efforts or in cooperation with existing organizations and institutions.
- 111.2** Details about preparation, travel, support, housing and the social and spiritual care of lay missionaries are regulated by arrangement between the Society's superiors and the local church administration on a territorial level.
- 112** The poor have a privileged place in the gospel. In a world deeply scarred by injustice and inhuman living conditions, our faith calls us to recognize the presence of Christ in the poor and the oppressed. We thus commit ourselves to fostering unity and justice and to overcoming egoism and the abuse of power and the abuse of authority. We consider it our duty to promote justice according to the gospel in solidarity with the poor and the oppressed.
- 112.1** Our efforts to win more widespread recognition and appreciation of the dignity and inner worth of the human person are more important than any material help we can give. We assist the poor and oppressed in such a way that gradually they are able to arrive at better living conditions by means of their own resources and initiative.
- 112.2** Our struggle is not only against famine, ignorance and the denial of human rights and environmental degradation but especially against the sinfulness of



the human heart which is at the root of the oppressive structures and systems that cause these evils.

- 112.3** Active though our commitment must be, nevertheless, we will not choose the path of violence but follow the gospel principle of overcoming evil with good (see Rom 12:21).
- 112.4** In all provinces the commitment to the poor must be promoted and an appropriate awareness of the cause of justice and peace, and the integrity of creation aroused and intensified. The generalate should coordinate and foster these efforts.
- 113** The universal church lives and finds expression in many and diverse local churches. For a local church to be truly a living church, it must be rooted in the cultural and social milieu of its own people. It is our task to work with the local church in its efforts to express the gospel message without distortion in the thought patterns, languages and symbols of its culture. In this way christian and indigenous values complement and mutually enrich each other.
- 113.1** While promoting pluriformity in theology, spirituality, formation programs and structures, our Society learns how to live its own internationality more richly and profoundly.
- 113.2** In line with a tradition of our founder, one of the basic tasks of our scholarly institutes should be to promote reflection on our mission work and research into the interaction of gospel, culture and religion.
- 114** In God's providential plan all nations are called to salvation. His Word is the light of the world that enlightens everyone (see John 1:9). As missionaries of the Divine Word, we must be ready to



recognize the rays of this light in the religious traditions and convictions of peoples. In sincere dialogue we bear witness to the fact that the true light has become man and has come into the world in Jesus of Nazareth. At the same time we will be enriched by other people's religious experience and search for truth.

- 114.1** Inspired by the prayer of Jesus that all be one so that the world may believe (see John 17:21) and convinced that the disunity of Christians is an obstacle to this faith, we will promote ecumenism in line with the concern of our founder.
 - 114.2** Readiness for dialogue encourages us to appreciate the spiritual riches found in the expressions of popular religion both in and outside of christianity.
 - 114.3** The phenomenon of atheism confronts us today in diverse forms throughout the world. Therefore we must be ready and able to enter into serious debate with the advocates of purely humanist or atheist convictions. Our institutes and universities should be involved in this discussion on the basis of solid scientific knowledge and philosophical principles.
 - 114.4** Since the responsibility for the future of humanity rests on all, we cooperate with those of other religions and convictions in facing contemporary problems.
- 115** Communication at its most profound level is the giving of self in love and consequently a basic attitude necessary for us Divine Word Missionaries. Strengthened by this Word we work toward that final unity where God will be all in all (see 1 Cor 15:28).



Our founder saw in the printed word a powerful means to realize this goal. In the different means of communication we recognize indispensable, effective ways of bringing the faith to all peoples and deepening it, of keeping the whole Church aware of its missionary obligation of strengthening that love which is the expression and source of all community.

- 115.1** It is principally the needs of the people we serve that determine the means and content of our communication apostolate. Each province should decide on these matters, preferably in cooperation with other provinces in that area.
- 115.2** The provinces see to it that all confreres in the course of their formation receive a proper introduction to the meaning of communication and the use of the methods employed.
- 115.3** A coordinator, appointed by the provincial superior with the consent of his council, is responsible for the promotion of all activities in the area of communication.
- 115.4** The generalate furthers and coordinates the efforts made by the provinces. The coordinator for communications media, appointed by the superior general with the consent of his council, is responsible for this.

III. ORGANIZATION OF OUR MISSIONARY SERVICE

- 116** Top-level planning and organization of our missionary activity are the responsibility of the general chapter and generalate. They set priorities and establish guidelines, taking into consideration the necessity and urgency of new undertakings on the one hand



and the actual and foreseeable resources of the Society on the other.

116.1 Confreres ordinarily receive their first assignments on admission to perpetual vows. They make known to the superiors both the country and the kind of work for which they feel themselves best suited. In making the assignments the superior general takes into account their health, inclinations and capabilities.

116.2 Because of the character of our Society, confreres are appointed to various provinces according to the principle of relative internationality.

116.3 Confreres who work in our houses of formation, in vocational work, in mission animation, in the communications apostolate, in providing means for our mission work and in similar activities are performing an important mission service for the church.

117 The generalate mission secretary assists the superior general and his council in planning and coordinating all our missionary endeavors. Within a province, the provincial superior and his council, working in close cooperation with the province mission secretary and the media coordinator, bear the main responsibility for supporting the missions and promoting mission interest.

117.1 The following belong to the competence of the generalate mission secretary: planning and coordination of the mission activities of the Society, caring for the special needs of the missionaries and fostering mission awareness in the Society. He will work in close cooperation with the mission secretaries of the provinces.



- 117.2** The following belong to the competence of the provincial mission secretary: the fostering of mission awareness, particular interest in the personal welfare of the missionaries and raising funds for the missions. Where advisable, central mission offices can be set up. Details are to be found in the Directives for Missions Secretaries.
- 117.3** Wherever necessary or useful, the provincial superior with the consent of his council appoints a “superior delegate” whose main responsibility is for missionaries on leave and for newly appointed ones. His competence, rights and duties are regulated by special statutes.
- In the case of an interprovincial superior delegate candidates for the office are presented by the respective provincial superiors and their councils, who are to agree on a suitable nominee; the provincial superior of the province where the interprovincial superior delegate is to reside appoints him with the consent of the council. The superior general is to be informed about the appointment.
- 117.4** Confreres working outside their home country will help as much as they can, when on home leave, to stimulate interest and promote the missionary cause.
- 118** The primary responsibility for the spirit and organization of apostolic service in the local church rests with the bishops, the successors of the apostles. Our superiors should, therefore, direct the Society’s cooperation in a manner most conducive to unity and efficiency. They do this by coordinating our mission planning and apostolic efforts with that of the local ordinary and the bishops’ conference and by working with the diocesan clergy and other religious congregations.



- 118.1** Relations between the Society and the local ordinary are regulated by a special contract according to the norms of universal law and the proper law of our Society.
- 118.2** The support of the missionary is in principle the responsibility of the local church. When the necessary means are wanting, the Society will try to contribute according to its resources.
- 118.3** The spirit of the vow of poverty demands that we handle mission funds with thrift and conscientious responsibility. It further requires us to make available for common missionary undertakings even those funds and resources acquired through personal efforts, according to the joint plan of the deanery and the diocese.
- 118.4** When assigning areas of work, the superiors must seriously consider a confrere's wish to work within a community framework. If necessary they should represent his case before the responsible ecclesiastical superiors in this matter (see c 303.5).

IV. SPIRIT OF OUR MISSIONARY SERVICE

- 119** Everyone whom the Lord has called to be with him and to share in his mission (see Mark 3:14) should cherish this vocation as a sign of God's love and try to live worthy of it. As ministers of Christ and brothers in the same Society, we seek to carry out our missionary service with joy and gratitude as did Saint Joseph Freinademetz, constantly applying our energies to promote the honor of God's name and the salvation of all peoples.
- 119.1** We foster a sense of personal initiative and responsibility in carrying out our missionary task. Ever open to the



signs of the times, the demands of the apostolate, and with the agreement of the responsible superiors, we are ready to strike out in new directions when these promise to be more fruitful for our missionary work.

120 As St. Paul, the apostle of the gentiles, identified himself with those he served, so we meet with friendliness and goodwill those among whom we announce the gospel, growing into their historical situation, customs and mentality. We will be one with them in respect and love, sharing their joys, sorrows, and aspirations.

120.1 To carry out our mission in a worthy and effective manner, we make every effort to master the language of the people and become familiar with their history and culture.

120.2 Following the principles of the gospel we respect the customs and habits of the people among whom we work, avoiding every derogatory criticism and comparison.

120.3 We do not hesitate to take a prudent and responsible position concerning social-political and environmental conditions. This position should accord with the gospel teaching, the directives of the Holy See and local hierarchy, and be taken in harmony with the community.

121 We share the life and mission of Christ who emptied himself and became a slave, obedient unto death, even to death on the cross (see Phil 2:7-8). We are convinced that the blessing of God upon our apostolic work is found not only in joy and success but also in hardship and disappointment, misunderstandings and persecutions, loneliness and failure. Only when the grain of wheat dies does it yield a rich harvest (see John 12:24).



- 122** Since the Holy Spirit alone makes our proclamation fruitful, we rely upon his guidance and grace and not upon our own efforts and abilities. Therefore, we, like our founder, must be men of prayer, filled with faith and hope, constantly seeking closer union with God. This is the source of our apostolic zeal.
- 123** In our endeavor to live our missionary vocation faithfully we look to Mary, mother of the Incarnate Word and our mother. With full confidence we entrust our life and service to her protection. She will help us become selfless ministers of the Divine Word, dedicating ourselves untiringly for the life of the world.
- 124** Our total commitment to the Lord and to his work of salvation is expressed in following him along the way of the evangelical counsels. These are to make us forgetful of self, available and equipped for complete involvement in the missionary church.

PART TWO

LIFE OF UNION WITH THE DIVINE WORD

I. FOLLOWING CHRIST IN THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS

201 The Incarnate Divine Word in his redeeming love is the source and model of our apostolic holiness. By taking simple public vows of consecrated chastity, evangelical poverty and apostolic obedience, we respond to his call and follow him along the way of the evangelical counsels. Through these vows our commitment to the Lord, to the members of our Society and the church becomes stronger. They provide us with greater stability and freedom for our missionary tasks. By this new consecration the holiness received in baptism is fostered in a special way through a life of missionary service.

1. Consecrated Chastity

202 In a celibate state of life Jesus directed his undivided love to the Father and all people. He calls some persons to celibacy in order to bind them more closely to himself and have them participate in a special way in the work of salvation. Christ's invitation to



celibacy for the sake of the kingdom is his precious gift to us. In response to it we vow chastity in the celibate state.

- 203** Consecrated celibacy, like christian marriage, is a way of loving and must be nourished by love. Total commitment to God and selfless dedication to others in celibacy unite us to the suffering and glorified Christ and become a source of spiritual fruitfulness. In a world where human relationships are often characterized, on the one hand, by loneliness and, on the other, by manipulation and exploitation, celibacy lived in community anticipates and proclaims the authentic unity of all people in the kingdom. Considered in this way, celibacy is a possible and satisfying state of life that does not hinder human fulfillment but rather can lead to true maturity.
- 204** We live the celibate life in community. This means that we strive to form a true brotherhood where every confrere can feel at home, form deep friendships and find fulfillment in his work and in the development of his talents. Such a community makes us more mature and natural in our dealings with people.
- 205** Our life of consecrated chastity is more God's gift to us than our gift to him. Since this calling affects some of the deepest inclinations of human nature, fidelity in it is possible only by trusting in the grace of God who never forsakes those he has chosen. Celibate love matures only with time, and only through lifelong cultivation does it attain full flowering. Those who find the struggle difficult should seek help from an experienced and reliable person and persevere in prayer, trusting humbly in God's faithfulness.
- 205.1** Those in formation should see an example of cheerfully lived celibacy in our communities. Superiors and formation personnel in particular should present to our young men the meaning and implications of celibacy and educate them thoroughly in human sexuality as



well as in the dignity and duties of christian marriage. Above all, they will ensure those conditions that foster greater affective maturity.

- 205.2** Candidates whose suitability is seriously questioned or who are unable to make a decision should not be admitted to vows. Consecrated chastity demands a clear, free and generous choice.
- 205.3** Consecrated chastity calls for prudent and mature behavior not only in our dealings with others but also in what we choose to read and see: books, films, TV programs, etc. In all of this we should be considerate of the customs and sensitivities of those among whom we live.
- 205.4** Adoption falls under those conditions which are not appropriate for religious, from the viewpoint of both the moral and economic obligations which it creates. Moreover, it is contrary to consecrated chastity and celibacy which presuppose freedom from family obligations in order to pursue total dedication to God and service to mankind. For this reason, therefore, adoption is forbidden to those who are obligated to consecrated chastity and celibacy (see can 285, §§1-2).
- 206** A meaningful life in the state of consecrated celibacy presupposes personal friendship with Christ, living faith, fraternal sharing in community and selfless dedication to the commitments of our vocation.

With confidence we ask Mary, who through her fiat became the mother of the Word Incarnate in virginal fruitfulness, to help us live out our vow from day to day in the strength and joy of the Holy Spirit.



2. Evangelical Poverty

- 207** Jesus became poor to make us rich through his poverty (see 2 Cor 8:9). He was sent to preach the good news to the poor (see Luke 4:18) and took his stand with them. He demanded that his co-workers leave all to follow him (see Mark 10:28-30). Our vocation, therefore, entails that we too share the poverty of Christ. For the Lord and for the sake of his kingdom, we place all that we have at the service of our apostolic mission and we choose like Christ to be one with the poor.
- 208** Our life of poverty acquires its deeper meaning and value when it leads us to poverty of spirit. This enables us to accept our dependence on God as his creatures, become inwardly free and detached from all earthly goods and honors and so be available and open to God and others. In this way we attain that joy promised in the beatitudes (see Matt 5:3 ff).
- 209** Poverty as lived by Christ demands of us solidarity with the poor and oppressed. We work with them to defend their rights and to overcome their misery.
- 209.1** Where circumstances indicate, members and communities are encouraged, after a process of discernment and after consulting with those who have experience, to share more radically the life of the poor among whom they live.
- 209.2** In gathering and using the means needed for our apostolic work, we must be consistent with the demands of justice according to the gospel and our solidarity with the poor.
- 210** Our poverty has a missionary character. It calls us to generously place time, talents, work and community goods at the service of



our missionary tasks. Only to the extent that earthly goods serve the kingdom of God can their use in the Society be justified.

- 210.1** As brothers of one family, we share our resources with communities and confreres in greater need.
- 211** As a missionary community pledged to poverty, we have an individual and communal responsibility to give witness to it. Confreres will strive to live a simple way of life and so become a challenge to the mentality of a consumer society.
- 212** The apostolic scope and community character of our poverty demands the conscientious use and administration of all temporal goods given to us. This responsibility falls upon the individual, the community and the superior.
- 212.1** In house communities all funds must appear on the official accounts and normally be kept in a central place.
- 212.2** Confreres living alone are bound by this vow to keep a faithful account of their income and expenses, keep Society money separate from mission or parish money and render an account regularly of how they have handled their finances.
- 212.3** In granting permissions for the needs of confreres, superiors do not have to aim at maintaining complete uniformity. They should take into consideration each one's personal situation, task, health and age. All must keep in mind that permissions in themselves cannot dispense us from the responsibility to be poor in spirit and in fact.
- 212.4** No superior may permit confreres to dispose of money without giving an account of it. Confreres may be permitted to carry money for small personal expenses



according to local regulations, but it should not be allowed to accumulate.

- 212.5** Confreres who are transferring from a house or a mission may take with them all personal effects and whatever else is sanctioned by legitimate custom.
- 212.6** The superior, or at his request the treasurer, will give the members an overall picture of the community's finances from time to time so that they can act with greater awareness and responsibility. Confreres should be discreet enough not to discuss these affairs with outsiders.
- 212.7** Inept and careless management of the financial means entrusted to us contradicts the poverty we have vowed. Larger expenses will be made only after consultation with professionally qualified people.
- 212.8** The following are the chief failings against evangelical poverty:
- a. independence in the acquisition and use of goods;
 - b. lack of simplicity in our manner of life;
 - c. indolence at our work or wasting time;
 - d. misappropriation or neglect of the Society's goods;
 - e. lack of ordinary prudence in expenditures and planning;
 - f. employing improper methods in the acquisition or use of goods;
 - g. failing to give an account of one's finances or deceit in its compilation;
 - h. narrow-mindedness and stinginess in considering the justified wishes of confreres and of the community;
 - i. failing in social justice and charity towards our employees;
 - j. reluctance to pass on surplus funds to needy communities and the poor and for mission work;



k. unwillingness to share the funds and goods that are legitimately given for our use and disposal.

212.9 All members must be educated and aware that any suspicion and/or accusation of possible financial abuse and mismanagement will be appropriately addressed and investigated and, if proven true, that proper canonical measures will be taken and imposed on a confrere violating the vow of poverty and the financial policy (see can 1376, §§ 1-2).

213 By the vow of poverty we bind ourselves to a simple lifestyle and renounce the right to dispose freely of temporal goods. We retain the right of ownership over personal goods and the capacity of owning and acquiring other goods but may dispose of them only with the permission of the superior.

213.1 A confrere retains the right of ownership over any property he held before profession and obtains it over whatever he subsequently acquires by inheritance or legacy (see c 711).

213.2 Whatever a confrere acquires through his own efforts or as a member of the Society, he acquires for the Society. The same holds good for pensions, insurance monies, etc.

213.3 If personal gifts are offered to a confrere and accepted, they become the property of the Society.

213.4 Gifts offered to a confrere for a specific purpose should be disposed of as soon as possible according to the intention of the donor. Before anyone accepts or collects money for larger projects, he must first get the approval of the competent superior. The same holds true of gifts involving greater obligations.



3. Apostolic Obedience

- 214** Jesus came not to do his own will but his Father's (see John 6:38). Moved by the Spirit of love he discerned and obeyed this will in the everyday circumstances of life: in the home at Nazareth, in the midst of his disciples as one who serves (see Luke 22:27) and in his death on a cross (see Phil 2:8). He redeemed the world by obedience. Hence loving obedience is the basis for all christian life and service.
- 215** We are called to follow the Lord in his obedience. In a spirit of faith we devote ourselves to the service of God and his people and bind ourselves to the Society of the Divine Word, its way of life and its missionary commitment within the church. For the glory of God and his kingdom, we bind ourselves through vowed obedience to carry out what our superiors enjoin according to the constitutions of the Society. In exceptional cases and for a serious reason the superior can explicitly invoke the vow of obedience when issuing an order.
- 216** In a world where so many seek to impose their will upon others, our vowed obedience proclaims unity among all people under the sovereignty of God's will.
- 217** Our obedience serves to unite us and coordinates our efforts, focusing them on the Society's missionary goals. To attain these we are ready to go anywhere the Society sends us. We work at our assignments conscientiously but are prepared to hand them over to others, even after years of service.
- 218** We seek to know and do God's will. This implies that we as individuals and communities enter into a true process of discernment. Final decisions rest with the superior, but by this wider participation in the discerning process insight is gained and obedience becomes more meaningful.



219 Despite striving for mutual understanding and collaboration, tensions cannot always be avoided. Our sense of responsibility sometimes obliges us to present a dissenting opinion to the superior and to give reasons for it. This should be done with respect but at the same time, freely and candidly. If the superior's decision seems ill-founded, we should remember that we may not know all the circumstances and reasons known to him, and our submission may be necessary for the sake of unity. A situation of this kind provides the opportunity to penetrate more deeply into the mystery of Christ, who learned obedience through suffering (see Heb 5:8).

219.1 It may happen that a confrere, having considered everything thoroughly before God in prayer, is convinced in conscience that he cannot obey his immediate superior. He should then present the result of his discernment to that superior. If after mutual discernment, the confrere still believes he cannot accept the decision, the case should be presented to his higher superior. The confrere should pray for the readiness to accept the decision of the higher superior. Continuing inability to accept such decisions should be taken as a sign that he is not called to the Society.

220 Our commitment to the Lord and his service unfolds through the observance of the three evangelical counsels. There is but one love at work in them which urges us to an ever greater dedication. Because we are always on the way, this love can never cease to be active. Courage, endurance and joy on this pilgrimage come to us from the enriching presence of the Lord we follow, as well as from awareness that we do not make the journey alone but are accompanied by confreres striving for the same goal.



II. COMMUNITY LIFE

- 301** The Triune God is the origin, the exemplar and the completion of every human community. In baptism we are called to share in the divine life as members of the people of God and disciples of Jesus Christ. Through our vows we enter a community that is caught up in the mission of the Son and the Spirit sent from the Father to the world. This is what draws us into deeper bonds of unity with one another and so enables us to proclaim the message of salvation more effectively. As confreres we cultivate these bonds through prayer, personal relationships and common missionary activities.
- 301.1** No matter where he lives, every confrere is a member of a definite community, be it a house or a district. In either case he should contribute to building up his community.
- 301.2** Our communities should provide us with a suitable environment in which we can grow in the missionary vision that has brought us together.
- 302** The heart of our shared life is the eucharist. Our oneness in Christ grows particularly through its celebration where we are strengthened by listening to the word of God and where the one bread we break is a communion with the Body of Christ (see 1 Cor 10:16-18). While gathered around the table of the Lord we are united in spirit with all our confreres and with those we serve.
- 303** Sincere brotherly love, more than merely living and working together, will make us truly one. We try to develop personal relationships with one another so that all feel accepted and at home in our community.



We show interest in the life and work of each confrere and help and encourage him to bring his life and talents to fuller development. We share each other's joy, sorrows, hopes and problems. Goodness and kindness should be characteristic of our Society. We strive to live that evangelical ideal of community we preach to others.

- 303.1** A distinguishing feature of our community life is that confreres from different nations live and work together. This becomes a mutually enriching experience when based on deep respect for one another's nationality and culture.
- 303.2** Wherever a community is made up of persons of different languages, the language of the country in which they are living should normally be used, especially in the chapel, refectory and during recreation.
- 303.3** House and district assemblies are good opportunities for fostering a life of prayer, brotherly love, and for planning and evaluating common tasks.
- 303.4** Mindful of the benefits and blessings we receive and grateful for the joys we experience in our community, we should love the Society and cherish its honor especially in the presence of outsiders.
- 303.5** As far as possible, members shall not live or work alone but together with one or more confreres.

Superiors and confreres should make it a point to visit those who do work alone because of special circumstances. They, in turn, should maintain close contact with the community.



- 303.6** We bear with each other's personal weaknesses patiently and with the tensions that result from differences of temperament, age, nationality and culture. We avoid jealousy and aversions, dissensions and all criticism that impairs brotherly love; we refrain from anything that can bring harm to a confrere's good name. We help each other through fraternal correction (see Matt 18:15). If dissension arises, we quickly seek to be reconciled (see Eph 4:26).
- 303.7** To inform the confreres about what is happening in the Society and in their provinces and to foster a spirit of solidarity, superiors should publish news bulletins. These publications should also be sent to those working outside the provinces they come from.
- 303.8** * In order to render our unity and consecration visible we wear the ecclesiastical dress laid down by the norms of the bishops' conference and by the legitimate customs of the country concerned (see can 284 and 669.2). We also wear a distinctive SVD emblem.
- 304** Each confrere should be eager to work in harmony with others in the activities entrusted to the Society, making his own contribution towards building up the Body of Christ (see Eph 4:11-12). When the occasion demands it, he is willing to renounce personal preferences for the sake of the common good.
- 305** As animator of the community the superior fosters a sense of communion and mutual trust among confreres, showing special concern for each one. He promotes a spirit of cooperation and helps coordinate the activities of the confreres, keeping in mind that the person is more important than the work he performs.



- 305.1** The personal conference (ratio) offers a good occasion for understanding, appreciation and guidance. The superior will provide opportunities for it as often as directed by the Handbook of Superiors.
- 305.2** The superior should give special attention to the troubled, the suffering and the aged.
- 305.3** The superior should not allow a confrere to work in conditions that endanger his well-being.
- 306** Meals taken together are a sign of friendship and love; they promote a sense of community. Likewise, common recreation and friendly get-togethers are of great value in fostering community.
- 307** We esteem our aged confreres for their experience, their prayer and the services they render. We keep them in contact with the community and give them our care and attention.
- Confreres who bear the cross of sickness and suffering contribute in a special way to our community and apostolic service.
- 307.1** We learn to grow older gracefully and take on the responsibilities suited to our age and ability.
- 307.2** Each province or several together will establish a program for aged confreres and those who need special care.
- 308** Whether we live alone or together, we need some regular order to meet the demands of our apostolic service and community life. The times for work, recreation, silence and prayer will be harmoniously integrated.



- 308.1** After consulting the community, the superior with the consent of his council determines the daily schedule for the house, in agreement with the provincial superior. If necessary, this can vary for different confreres and departments.
- 308.2** Out of a sense of community and according to local regulations, one should have permission or inform the superior before leaving the house.
- 308.3** Details regarding annual vacation, which is about three weeks, and visits to relatives are regulated on the provincial level.
- 308.4** Those working in foreign countries may visit their homeland for holidays at regular intervals. For home leaves involving intercontinental travel, the provincial chapter decides the frequency and duration of such visits, subject to the approval of the superior general with the consent of his council.
- 309** Good relations should exist among the communities of a province and neighboring provinces. Visiting confreres should be made to feel at home.
- 310** The brotherhood we experience in community opens out to those entrusted to our pastoral care and leads them into communion with one another and with Christ.
- 311** We wish to cooperate in a spirit of mutual understanding with the local bishop, the diocesan clergy and other religious.

Because of our common ties we seek to work closely with the missionary congregations of the Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit and the Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit of Perpetual Adoration, who have the same father and founder as ourselves.



312 Our parents and relatives are especially close to us. We remain united with them in love and gratitude, keeping in contact with them and recommending their intentions to God in prayer.

312.1 In gratitude each province will keep in contact through letters or personal visits with the parents of those confreres who are stationed elsewhere.

313 We express appreciation and gratitude for those who work with us in our missionary endeavor, and for those friends, benefactors and promoters who support our efforts.

We bear a special responsibility towards those employed by us. We provide for their spiritual welfare and pay them a just wage.

As far as possible we maintain good relations with those who have left the Society.

314 In our relations with civil authorities our attitude should be in accordance with the spirit of the gospel and our prophetic charism, always taking into consideration the circumstances of the country.

315 We promote good relations with our neighbors and offer hospitality to visitors (see Rom 12:13). Insofar as circumstances and community life allow, we make our houses and facilities available to them for retreats, conferences, and whatever promotes vocations and apostolic activity.

315.1 After consulting the community, the provincial superior determines which parts of the house are open to visitors and when. In this way the confreres' right to privacy is respected (see can 667.1).



- 316** In union with the entire people of God, our community moves toward the perfect eternal community, where God is all in all (see 1 Cor 15:28). We desire to grow constantly in dedication to our missionary service and love for one another so as to become a sign of salvation for all people.

III. LIFE THROUGH WORD AND SACRAMENT

- 401** Christ is the center of our life (see Phil 1:21). A living union with him brings unity and give depth to our whole life with its many activities. When we love Christ we are loved by the Father; Father and Son come to make their home in us (see John 14:23) with the Holy Spirit.

We encounter Christ in others and in every aspect of our work as well as in the celebration of the liturgy, in the word of God, in prayer and meditation. This encounter is a continuing challenge to conversion and renewal. The closeness of the Lord brings joy into our lives and enables us to follow him in our crosses and sufferings. Thus we become like him in his self-emptying even unto death and so through the power of his resurrection enter into glory.

1. Encounter with the Lord

- 402** In the celebration of the eucharist the glorified Lord becomes present to his church by the power of the Holy Spirit. In it we proclaim his life, death and resurrection, offering to God the sacrifice through which we are reconciled with him.

Christ gives us a share in his life and unites us with his offering to the Father for all. In this way the eucharist deepens our life with the Lord and becomes the source of strength for our



apostolic service and our union with all. For these reasons, our communities participate in it daily.

- 402.1** Insofar as possible, our priests concelebrate.
 - 402.2** We emphasize the need for good preparation and dignified celebration of the eucharist, respecting the culture of the country and the norms of the local church.
 - 402.3** All articles for worship should excel in simplicity, cleanliness and beauty, adapted to the sacred art of the country.
 - 402.4** Priests apply their mass intentions in accordance with the current regulations of the church and the Society.
- 403** The eucharistic praise of the Father is continued in our community prayers and services which help us live in closer contact with the Lord. Our community prayers are composed according to the spirit of the liturgy, the spirituality of our Society, the customs of the country in which we work and in response to the needs of our time. Allowance should be made for creativity and new prayer forms.
- 403.1** Even though each one is personally responsible for the growth of his spiritual life, a living community of prayer offers everyone a valuable help. The local superior bears special responsibility for the spiritual life of the community; if necessary, he will be assisted by a spiritual director. All confreres should entrust themselves to regular spiritual direction.
 - 403.2** We should make a serious effort to pray together even when few in number. Set times facilitate our common prayer.



403.3 For our morning and evening prayer we give preference to the liturgy of the hours and those which derive from the Society's treasury of prayers. For the rest, our clerics are to be guided by universal law (see can 276, 2.3).

403.4 At midday we dedicate a short time to reflection and common prayer for the intentions and needs of our confreres all over the world.

404 In the course of the liturgical year the church unfolds the mysteries of our salvation culminating in the celebration of the paschal mystery. On Sundays we commemorate this mystery with special solemnity and make the day of the Lord one of apostolic service, prayer and joyful fellowship.

405 In our Society the celebration of the liturgical year bears the stamp of the spirituality of our founder. Therefore:

- The solemnity of the Holy Trinity is our principal feast. In it we celebrate the mystery on which our missionary vocation is founded: the sending of the eternal Word and of the Holy Spirit. We are sent to proclaim the splendor and love of the Triune God and so make it possible for others to enter the fullness of divine life through baptism.
- The solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, titular feast of our Society, and the solemnity of his birth call to mind that the Divine Word was made flesh, endowing every human being with dignity and offering all the promise of abundant life.
- We celebrate Pentecost as the completion of the paschal mystery. The Spirit of the Lord filled the disciples, making them a missionary community to proclaim the gospel with power and courage. In confirmation we too were endowed with the power of this Spirit to profess our faith boldly.



- This Spirit is the first gift of the crucified and glorified Lord from whose opened heart the church receives grace upon grace. We honor this heart as the symbol of the Savior's deepest sentiments, particularly of his love.

405.1 In the daily recitation of the Angelus we recall the incarnation of the Divine Word.

Reflection on the way of the cross helps us to grasp the meaning of his redemptive suffering and to walk with him along the way of self-surrender.

405.2 After the example of our founder, we venerate the Holy Spirit in a special way and promote this devotion.

- We pray the Veni Creator Spiritus or another hymn to the Holy Spirit every day.
- We celebrate one mass in honor of the Holy Spirit and one in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus each month.
- We celebrate seven masses each year in honor of the Holy Spirit for our missionary work, if possible between the Ascension and the Pentecost.
- We renew our consecration to the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

406 In union with the whole church we praise God for what he has done in his angels and saints. We ask for their intercession and strive to follow their example.

- In a special way we honor Mary, virgin and mother. Filled with the Holy Spirit, she was called to bring the Divine Word to all and to take part in his redemptive work. She is our model of faithful attentiveness and ready response to God's word; she will help us bring the Divine Word to others.



- Among the other saints we look particularly to St. Joseph, those recommended by the founder and those of the country in which we live.
- We honor Saint Arnold as our founder, as a man of prayer, trust in God, openness to God's direction and apostolic commitment. Saint Joseph Freinademetz is for us a model of missionary zeal and selfless service.

406.1 We put special emphasis on the feast of the Nativity of Mary, the day our Society was founded.

406.2 Confreres are encouraged to recite the rosary, while meditating upon the mysteries of redemption.

406.3 Every confrere should promote devotion to Saint Arnold Janssen and Saint Joseph Freinademetz.

407 As co-workers of Christ we seek inspiration in the word of God. By reading the scripture we open our hearts to the promptings of the Holy Spirit who helps us grasp the word, make it our own and announce it to the world.

407.1 We devote a suitable amount of time each day to reading the scriptures and studying spiritual and theological questions.

407.2 Common reflection on scripture is a way of allowing the word of God to shape our lives.

407.3 The religious writings and traditions of other peoples can help us understand the word of God better and enrich our spiritual life.

408 God's word awakens a love of prayer in us and deepens it. Our neighbors and world events also stimulate us to a dialogue with the Lord, which we extend into our missionary service.



In this way our prayer is imbued with apostolic spirit, and our apostolic work with the spirit of prayer.

- 408.1** In the course of the day we spend time with our Lord present in the eucharist to deepen our friendship with him.
 - 408.2** We endeavor to live consciously in the presence of God. In this, the quarter hour prayer of Saint Arnold can be of help.
- 409** We dedicate a certain amount of time every day to meditative prayer in which the Holy Spirit leads us to all truth (see John 16:13) and forms our lives more and more according to the image of Christ (see 2 Cor 3:18). Apostolic service will bear fruit when it is accompanied by our dwelling with the Lord in silence and recollection.
- 409.1** The daily meditation lasts at least half an hour.
 - 409.2** We make an annual retreat of at least five full days and at its conclusion renew our vows.
 - 409.3** In addition to Holy Week and the annual retreat, days of recollection should be held at least four times a year. On these days we omit our usual tasks as far as possible. In prayer and common reflection we review our lives as individuals and as community, especially our fraternal love and zeal.
 - 409.4** The constitutions offer suggestions for meditation and spiritual conversation. They should be read especially during Lent as a call to a reassessment and renewal of our lives.



2. Continuing Renewal in the Lord

410 Jesus began his preaching with the good news about the coming of the kingdom and the the challenge to convert and believe (see Mark 1:15). We want to turn continually towards him and renew ourselves in his word that, by the power of his Spirit, we may overcome our weakness and be transformed into his likeness.

410.1 In our daily examination of conscience we reflect on our lives and our following of Christ, keeping alive within us the will to repent.

410.2 Communal penitential services are recommended on days of recollection, during retreats and similar occasions.

411 In the sacrament of reconciliation, we experience the merciful love of the Father through Christ who grants us forgiveness and peace. Thus he reconciles us with God and with one another. Frequent and regular meeting with Christ in this sacrament helps us grow in love and become more credible witnesses of his word.

412 Ongoing conversion requires an asceticism ordered, above all, to the growth of love in our lives as missionaries and religious. This asceticism assists us to overcome selfish inclinations and to bear the contradictions and burdens of everyday life and the demands of our vocation. We try to be all things to all (see 1Cor 9:22), persevering in our missionary commitment, patient in loneliness and undeterred by failure.

412.1 Each confrere should freely choose that form of asceticism which is suitable to his missionary service, personal situation and the conditions of the country he works in.



412.2 In our efforts to live in a selfless way, abstention or restraint in the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other consumer goods is recommended.

412.3 Fasting is a form of penance and an aid to prayer. Along with the general fast days, individual communities may choose fasting or other practices as signs of solidarity with the hungry of the world and as a support for our prayer for God's blessing on our missionary work. The money so saved should be used for the poor.

3. Fulfillment in the Lord

413 Christ proclaimed God as the God of life and of the future. He himself is the resurrection and the life (see John 11:25). The afflictions of sickness and old age lead to a deeper experience of the mystery of his suffering and death. In the patient acceptance of infirmities, our conformity with Christ is brought to completion and our hope in the new heaven and new earth is nourished (see 2Pet 3:13).

414 Sickness and old age should not prevent us from seeing our lives as real missionary service nor from taking on those tasks still to be done for the people of God. In union with Christ's suffering and death we offer ourselves to God for his glory and for the salvation of all.

In the sacrament of the anointing Christ in his care for the sick comes and accompanies us with his loving presence through the hours of suffering.

414.1 It is recommended that we hold communal celebrations of the anointing of the sick, combined with the eucharist.

415 In dying we offer God our final act of self-surrender. We die in that communion with Christ which began in baptism, was



strengthened in religious profession, nurtured in the celebration of the eucharist and is now brought to final perfection. In death Christ calls us home into the perfect community of saints where we will gaze on the Father face to face, taken up into the eternal love which unites the Father and Son in the Holy Spirit.

- 416** The pilgrim church, conscious of her union with the dead, cherishes the memory of those who have gone before us and remembers them in prayer. In this way we remember our dead with gratitude.
- 416.1** News of a confrere's death is sent to his family and the provincial superior, who informs the superior general. Other members of the province are informed either directly or through the provincial superior.
- 416.2** The local community celebrates masses for a deceased confrere as prescribed by the regulations of the Society and remembers him in a special way on the first anniversary of his death. All should remember our deceased confreres in the eucharist particularly on their anniversaries.
- 416.3** Upon the death of their superior (superior general, provincial superior, local superior), all confreres offer the eucharist for him.
- 416.4** Each week the superior general celebrates one mass for the living and one for the deceased confreres of the Society. Each month the provincial superior offers one mass for the living and one for the deceased confreres of his province.
- 416.5** During November mass is celebrated in our houses for all deceased confreres.



- 416.6** When the parents of a confrere die, the local community celebrates mass for them. Additional masses may be said by their son or the superior.
- 416.7** When the Holy Father, the Cardinal Prefect of the Dicastery for Religious and Secular Institutes, or the Cardinal Prefect of the Dicastery for the Evangelization of Peoples dies, a mass is celebrated for him in all the churches of the Society. The same is done in the churches concerned when a local ordinary dies.
- 417** That union with Christ, which attains its perfection when we return home to the Father, is a source of joy during our earthly life (see Phil 1:20-21). God offers us his love in word and sacrament and urges us to proclaim our joy in the Lord through discipleship. The more we ourselves seek to express this joy and share it with others, the more intimately will we be united with the Divine Word in his life and mission.





PART THREE

GROWTH INTO LIVING MISSIONARY COMMUNITY WITH THE DIVINE WORD

I. GOAL AND DIRECTION OF FORMATION AND EDUCATION

501 The goal of all formation and education in our Society is growth by the power of the Holy Spirit into unity with the Incarnate Word of the Father and into a missionary community comprising members from many countries and cultures. This growth is a lifelong task, a shared responsibility to be faced both by the individual and the community. In this way we become capable of carrying out the missionary task of our Society: to be witness of the gospel of Christ to all by our personal lives, our community living and our preaching so that christian communities may be built up.

502 Missionary service and religious life form a unity in our Society: the missionary mandate determines the form of our religious life, and the spirit of the evangelical counsels permeates our whole missionary work.

This one vocation holds good for both the individual and the community. It demands a radical commitment to the missionary task.



In order that this vocation can develop fully, formation must be integral, rooted in one's own culture, community-forming, directed towards apostolic service and open to the needs of the world. Moreover, attention is to be paid in all aspects of formation to the basic spirituality given our Society by Saint Arnold Janssen.

- 503** Our formation is total and integral: it seeks to bring about human maturity, professional competence and committed faith.

Growth towards human maturity occurs in a progressive deepening of self-knowledge, in the unfolding of one's personal qualities and in the achievement of that inner freedom which makes responsible decisions possible.

The academic and professional training of our confreres should be in accord with the requirements of their respective countries; it should also bear in mind the missionary goal of our Society and its international character.

Religious formation should foster a committed faith that lives the gospel and is a sign of Christ still at work in our day.

- 503.1** For human maturity it is necessary that a person be taken seriously and given responsibility; that he both experience and reciprocate respect, trust and understanding.
- 503.2** The development of one's talents should be in harmony with the charism of our Society. It should also promote a healthy self-esteem which makes it easier to accept one's limitations. The result should be a well balanced person.



- 503.3** Early in his formation each confrere is to learn to develop initiative within the framework of obedience and search out new paths. He should also become accustomed to self-sacrifice and to bearing failure with patience and courage.
- 504** The basic formation must be rooted in the cultural and spiritual milieu of the country and derive inspiration from the acceptable religious traditions of the people.
- 504.1** The pluriformity of formation programs and structures must still emphasize the oneness of our religious missionary vocation and the enriching quality of our Society's internationality. It shall not restrict our universal availability.
- 505** The missionary vocation grows in a living Christ-centered community. In our relations with one another in community we are an image of the Blessed Trinity from whom our life and mission draw their source and strength. Formation should, therefore, develop this relationship both among ourselves and with God and so enable us to help in building up christian communities.

Understanding for one another and interest in our common task and commitment stem from shared experiences. This basic companionship must respect individual, cultural and national values and differences and so become a living witness to unity in diversity.

- 505.1** Fostering the ability to live in community needs to be planned and carried through by a formation team which has a right understanding of what missionary community means and knows how to achieve and live it.



- 505.2** Formation for missionary community will point out the differences between community life in houses of formation and in various fields of work.
- 505.3** All confreres, especially those in houses of formation, conscious of their co-responsibility, should try to live community life in a way that inspires others.
- 505.4** During the time of formation, confreres should develop the ability to work purposefully and harmoniously with others and have consideration for them during work and leisure; we have to learn to live with tensions.
- 505.5** The formation process fosters in each individual an appreciation of the common order as well as the need for being alone; there must be room for both in his life.
- 506** Missionary service is what realizes our vocation and constantly stimulates it. Readiness to serve identifies us as disciples of the Lord who came not to be served but to serve; it begets an unselfish attitude which enables us, like Christ, to live our vocation joyfully despite difficulties.
- 506.1** Manual work, as well as pastoral and social work, develops this apostolic attitude. All confreres should distinguish themselves by their willingness to work and by the high regard they have for all human activity.
- 506.2** Already during the period of formation, confreres should develop a readiness to give up personal interests and desires. In this way they will be able later on to relinquish activities and positions either for the good of our community or to further the development and autonomy of the local church.



507 As religious missionaries we are conscious of our obligation to the world and its needs. Therefore, one aim of our formation is to cultivate a listening ear for God's voice in his creation, its history and happenings, and to respond to it in a christian way. Attentiveness to the signs of the times is part of our vocation. It is to be practiced during the period of basic formation and throughout one's life.

507.1 Critical discernment of the forms and values of the society in which one lives should heighten one's sense of social justice; it should make one ready to stand up for it publicly in a prudent but determined way in accordance with christian social teaching.

507.2 Openness to the world ought always to be in accord with the norms of the gospel; it requires suitable training in the discernment of spirits.

507.3 All our members should learn to enter into fruitful dialogue with other cultures and religions.

507.4 Creation is a sign of God's love for us. Caring for it is not only part of our mission, but also of our heritage. Saint Arnold Janssen believed that nature is the temple of God into which God placed us so that it would proclaim to us God's existence.

The progressive deterioration of the environment due to human actions demands a greater ecological understanding and an effective commitment to defending nature, ecosystems, water sources, and native peoples.

508 We must shape our lives according to our faith by always listening for the voice of the Holy Spirit, who speaks to us in scripture, in the life of the community and of the church, as well



as in contemporary events. Our response should be in prayer and action. As missionaries of the Divine Word, our spiritual lives are inspired by Saint Arnold Janssen's example, for he was a man of faith and prayer, of openness and dedication.

509 The field of endeavor of our Society is diverse and demands different services. The unity of vocation as religious missionaries demands a common way of life and uniformity in formation as far as possible. The difference of services, however, will call for a diversity in education. All should arrive at a point where their spiritual life and their professional activity go hand in hand in order that each confrere, according to his charism, may fill his milieu with the spirit of Christ.

II. PHASES OF FORMATION AND EDUCATION

510 For fulfilling its missionary mandate the church is dependent on those who make themselves completely available for missionary work. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each individual and of every community in the Society to win young men for the missionary ideal by living our vocation in a convincing way as well as by earnest prayer and active effort.

510.1 The provincial superior is responsible for planning and implementing vocation recruitment. He appoints confreres to this apostolate as their principal task, to work as a team wherever feasible. They are to direct young men to the Society and arouse interest in our missionary task.

510.2 Work in our schools and parishes is particularly important to attract vocations. We must constantly evaluate our methods of recruiting, ready to adapt to



circumstances or introduce new ways. Provinces should share their experiences, plan and cooperate as much as possible.

- 510.3** All form of communications media are to be used for recruitment.
- 510.4** Recruitment of vocations to the Society should be done in harmony with that of the diocesan clergy and other religious congregations, especially in countries where the church is in an early stage of development.
- 511** Young men who show an interest in the life and work of our missionary Society but have not completed the education necessary for acceptance into the novitiate should be able to obtain it, as far as seems possible and appropriate, in one of our houses of formation.
- 511.1** The provincial superior and his council together with qualified confreres investigate what kind of formation houses can be most purposefully established or continued in his territory. The final decision on this rests with the superior general with the consent of his council.
- 511.2** In our houses of formation an atmosphere should be created in which missionary vocations can wax strong and develop. Its hallmark should be openness to cultural, social and religious values as well as interest in the problems of other nations.
- 511.3** The human and religious development of the young men should be furthered in such a way that in due time they can freely and responsibly decide whether they want to join our Society or live as responsible christians in some other vocation.



511.4 The following criteria are to be considered in the selection and during the training of the young men:

- physical and mental health;
- sound family background;
- a religious spirit in keeping with their age;
- the necessary talent for the education required;
- sociability;
- active participation in the life of the Church;
- concern and openness for the missionary ideal and vocation.

511.5 During his formation a candidate decides whether he wants to be a brother or a priest in our Society. Depending on the program of formation, the provincial superior with the consent of his council decides at which stage of the formation process the candidate is expected to make his decision. If the formation program serves more than one province, the superior general with the consent of his council settles the matter, after having heard the opinions of the respective provincial superiors and their councils and their education/formation boards.

511.6 If a confrere, after the point of decision referred to in c 511.5, wishes to change his status, he is to present his reasons in writing by way of the prescribed channels to the superior general who shall decide with the consent of his council, taking into account the policy of the country. Ordinarily, however, permission is not granted after perpetual vows.

512 The novitiate serves to mature and clarify a vocation. It provides a basic introduction to the following of Christ as outlined in the life and spirituality of the Society and in our constitutions; thus it leads one to follow him in an ever deeper way. Through a living



union with the Divine Word and through life in community, a novice should come to understand himself more clearly and know our Society better so that he may make a mature and responsible decision about his vocation.

- 512.1** A time of preparation may precede the novitiate. The provincial superior with the consent of his council is to decide whether this is necessary and of what type and duration it should be; he then informs the superior general and his council and admits candidates.
- 512.2** With due regard to the regulations of universal law, admission to the novitiate is granted by the provincial superior with the consent of his council in whose province the novitiate is situated. When an applicant comes from another province, the opinion of his former prefect, and of the local and provincial superiors and their councils must be obtained.
- 512.3** * To be valid the novitiate must be spent in a house duly designated for the purpose. The superior general with the consent of his council establishes the novitiate in writing and decides the particular house of the Society in which it is to be situated; he can transfer it, temporarily or definitively, and suppress it in accord with the norms of universal law and our proper law.
- 512.4** * The novitiate begins on the day when the novice is officially accepted into the community in a private simple ceremony. It lasts for at least twelve months but not more than two years. When the novitiate is to be inserted into the formation program and how long it is to last are determined by the provincial superior and his council, subject to the approval of the superior general with the consent of his council.



- 512.5** The novitiate is directed by the novice master, dependent on the provincial superior; he can also draw on suitable and experienced helpers. If circumstances call for it, the provincial superior with the consent of his council appoints one or more assistants.
- 512.6** * The novices may spend one or more periods of time away from the novitiate house to engage in activities which fall within the scope of our Society. These periods are, however, to be made up for in the novitiate house in order that the 12-month canonical novitiate may be observed in its entirety.
- 512.7** * If a novice interrupts the canonical year of his novitiate for a total of more than fifteen days but less than three months because of illness or other causes, the time has to be made up in order to complete the required 12-month period. An absence from the house of the novitiate for more than three months, whether continuously or at intervals, makes the novitiate invalid.

In individual cases and by way of exception, with the permission of the superior general with the consent of his council, a novice may make his novitiate in another house of the Society under the direction of an experienced religious who will act as novice master.

- 512.8** In principle, the novitiate for brothers and clerics in our Society is made in common. Where it lasts for two years, the canonical year at least is made in common. Should there be difficulties, however, in having a common novitiate, it can be made separately. The decision is made by the provincial superior with the consent of his council; or, if the decision affects other provinces, by the superior general with the consent of his council after having heard the opinions of the



respective provincial superiors and their councils and their education/formation boards.

512.9 If the novitiates for clerics and for brothers are made separately, the novitiate made as a cleric counts also in case someone desires later to become a brother, and vice versa.

513 The years in temporary vows assist the further development of the spiritual life. They serve to dispose confreres to respond better to the claim God has on them through the evangelical counsels and to help them see more clearly the fields of work open to them in the Society. During this time each confrere should grow in the assurance that he will find human fulfillment in his vocation as a religious missionary. Thus self-reliance and balance, the capacity for community life and work, lively faith and readiness for mission should continue to grow during these years.

513.1 Before pronouncing first vows, the novices make a retreat of no less than five full days; the same holds for each time that temporary vows are renewed and also before perpetual profession.

513.2 For all admission, the evaluations previously made of a candidate in the Society should be considered. Confreres who know a candidate are to give their considered opinions of him. If doubts are expressed about him, his side must also be heard before the decision is reached.

The petition for admission in being forwarded to the provincial superior must be accompanied by the said evaluations and by the opinion of the local superior and his council together with the result of their secret vote.



- 513.3** Admission to vows has far-reaching consequences. Preliminary deliberations must be supported by prayer, marked by respect and understanding and carried through in honesty and good will. Every effort should be made to reach as objective a judgment as possible.
- 513.4** * Admission to temporary vows is granted by the provincial superior with the consent of his council in accordance with the regulations of universal law. The consent of the provincial council is also needed for admission to the ministries. In case the local and provincial councils do not agree, the decision cannot be made by the provincial superior but is reserved to the superior general with the consent of his council. If the provincial chapter so wishes, however, the superior general with the consent of his council can allow a decision to be made in another way at the provincial level for these cases.
- 513.5** * Confreres renew their temporary vows every year. However, those going for cross-cultural experience in another country should make temporary profession for a period of two or three years, depending on how long they expect to be away from the sending province.

The duration of temporary profession should not be less than three years nor longer than six (see can 655). If it seems opportune, the superior general with the consent of his council can prolong the period of temporary profession but not beyond a total of nine years (see can 657.2).

- 513.6** * With the permission of the provincial superior first profession may be anticipated by fifteen days (see can 649.2), and final profession by up to three months with the permission of the superior general if there are good reasons (see can 657.3).



- 513.7 * If someone legitimately leaves after completing novitiate or after taking vows, he can be readmitted by the superior general with the consent of his council without having to repeat the novitiate. It is up to the superior general to determine the appropriate period of probation prior to renewing temporary profession and how long a period of temporary profession is required prior to pronouncing perpetual vows (see can 690.1).
- 513.8 Vows are accepted by the superior general. However, the provincial superior too, by right of office, is authorized to receive the vows and can also delegate others to do so. Should the delegation inadvertently be omitted, then, by reason of our particular law the local superior in whose territory the profession is to be made is delegated to accept the vows.
- 513.9 * The following is the formula of profession which must be used in our Society:

I, NN, solemnly promise you,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
to live for one year
(for life) chastity, poverty and
obedience, according to the
constitutions
of the Society of the Divine Word.
I make these vows before you, NN,
as the representative of the Superior
General
and in the presence of this
community.

The provincial may allow the professed to include some personal thoughts either before or after the official formula.



514 The immediate preparation for perpetual vows takes place under special spiritual direction. Conscious regularity in meditation and prayer, scripture reading and participation in the eucharist must now confirm confreres in their response to the Lord's call. In this way, they are helped to make a final decision to dedicate themselves for life to the Divine Word in our Society and thus cooperate in his ministry of salvation.

514.1 Confreres spend the time of preparation for perpetual vows in a house of the Society where thorough training and preparation are assured. Preparation for perpetual vows lasts six to twelve months. The provincial superior with the consent of his council is to decide the exact length of time and appoint the responsible director.

514.2 * The superior general, with due regard to the regulations of universal law and with the consent of his council, admits members to perpetual vows and orders.

515 The brothers are called to carry out the missionary task of the church, entrusted to every christian in baptism and confirmation, in the decisive way called for by the religious life. Through their varied services and witness to the gospel, the brothers share in the mission of Christ to renew all things. The better trained they are for their professional, social and pastoral activities, the more effectively they can fulfill their vocation.

515.1 The brothers are to obtain the training that corresponds to their abilities and inclinations as well as to the missionary tasks of the Society. The program of studies should deliberately emphasize the missionary dimension and provide a basic education in the humanities and social sciences. Insofar as the necessary preliminary stages have been completed, the possibility is there for further professional training or academic study.



- 515.2** Brothers should be offered a suitable basic theological and missiological education in addition to their professional training so that they can enter more deeply into their vocation and work in catechetical and pastoral fields.
- 515.3** At every stage of formation brothers dedicate part of their time to supervised social and apostolic ministry. The possibility of cross-cultural experiences and temporary mission assignments is highly encouraged during their formation.
- 516** The study of philosophy and theology is part of the vocational preparation for the priesthood. It serves to increase one's knowledge of human nature and society and to deepen one's growth into the mystery of Christ. This mystery is continually being communicated in the church, and the priestly ministry is directed to it in a special way.
- 516.1** The program of studies for our seminarians should deliberately emphasize the missionary dimension and the value of social, cultural and religious plurality for the proclamation of the gospel. Education should be of high quality and in keeping with the norms of universal law and our proper law.
- 516.2** At every stage of their education, seminarians should dedicate part of their time to apostolic activity. The goal of such efforts is that life and study, prayer and apostolate may form an organic unity. Purposeful planning, supervised implementation and final evaluation are necessary if these efforts are to be successful. Their planning and implementation can be entrusted to a qualified director.



- 516.3** Seminarians should have the opportunity to gain experience in practical trades. In this way they learn to esteem the value of manual work and make a personal contribution to their support and education.
- 516.4** An extended period of supervised apostolic ministry (regency) is highly encouraged for seminarians. Where it is feasible and seems suitable, this period can be spent profitably in another country or culture. In this way they can strengthen their vocation, test their abilities and become familiar with their future work.
- 516.5** Because of the international character of our Society, seminarians can be permitted to study theology in another country on a limited basis and with consideration given to particular circumstances. Confreres, however, should not be sent to other countries, especially those culturally different, in order to test a doubtful vocation.
- 516.6** * To be presented for orders, a confrere must have pronounced perpetual vows and complied with the other requirements demanded by universal law and our proper law. The provincial superior issues the dimissorial letters.
- 517** The variety of fields of activity in the Society calls for confreres with specialized education. In order to justify the expenditure of time and resources, the choice of such studies should be made not only according to personal interest but also in correspondence with the goals and needs of the Society. The selection of these confreres should be determined by both intellectual and personal qualities.
- 517.1** Unless there are serious reasons to the contrary, confreres should spend at least one year in pastoral or practical activity after their basic theological or



professional training before beginning specialized studies.

- 517.2** If possible and suitable, specialized studies should be undertaken in that country where a confrere is or will be working.
- 517.3** The decision to appoint a confrere for higher studies is made by the provincial superior with the consent of his council. The application for studies must be considered against the background of the general policy statements given by the Constitutions and by directives of the general council.

If a member is to study in another province, the sending provincial superior should obtain the agreement of the receiving provincial superior for the student to come and then make arrangements with the receiving provincial regarding lodging, finances, accountability, length and place of studies, possible changes in the original study program.

- 517.4** Before an application for further studies is approved, an exact plan for these studies is to be worked out after consultation with all concerned.
- 517.5** While engaged in special studies, a confrere should live in a house of our Society. If this is not possible, or if there are good reasons to the contrary, he may live with other priests or religious, but he should keep in close contact with a community of the Society.
- 517.6** During the time of study made outside one's own province, the student is subject to the superior delegate or, if there is none, to the provincial superior, in whose province he is living unless other arrangements are



made by common agreement between the respective provincial superiors. Although the one responsible for the student is the superior delegate, the sending provincial superior should keep regular contact with his students abroad, informing them of province developments, monitoring the progress of their studies, their expenses, and all things connected with their life as students.

518 The introduction of a new missionary into his field of work is an important and critical time that has a decisive influence on his future. Both he and the superior are responsible for its success.

518.1 The new missionary has the right to a thorough introduction into the language and culture, the ecclesial and pastoral situation, as an important prerequisite for fruitful missionary labor. The provincial superior of the province to which the confrere is appointed is responsible for planning and carrying through this program.

518.2 Where it is possible and appropriate, the Society should develop a detailed program in cooperation with other institutes and make it obligatory for the new missionary.

518.3 No new missionary destined for pastoral ministry is to be appointed at once to an isolated post but rather is to be introduced to his work by a competent confrere for a period of about three years.

519 The tertiate is intended as a period for reflection, deepening one's religious life, strengthening one's missionary vocation and ongoing education. It aims at familiarizing participants with new methods of pastoral care as well as with present theological and spiritual trends. It strengthens the family spirit of our international community and also is a time for relaxation.



- 519.1** This opportunity for renewal and ongoing education in the tertiate is to be given to confreres between ten and fifteen years after perpetual vows.
- 519.2** Application for the tertiate are made to the provincial superior who, taking into account each individual's welfare and the province's needs, sends the request together with his opinion and that of his council to the superior general. If there are justifiable reasons for making an equally valuable course elsewhere, it should be possible to do so.
- 520** Changes in the world and in the church, in the sciences and theology, as well as development in the different phases of one's life, demand of each confrere and community continual study, development in one's field and lifelong maturing.
- 520.1** Each confrere as well as the community is responsible for his continuing education. Superiors, however, should take care to further this, e.g., by providing appropriate magazines and books and indicating suitable courses.
- 520.2** Superiors are obliged to offer all confreres, particularly those in the first five years of perpetual vows, special opportunities for exchanging experiences and further education.
- 520.3** Confreres of a district or of a house meet at least four times a year to discuss questions of religious life, pastoral work and theology. The date and themes are made known to all as early as possible to give time for adequate preparation.
- 520.4** Missionaries on leave should be given the possibility of taking part in ongoing education courses.



520.5 Courses helpful for carrying out their duties are recommended to superiors and their officials.

III. DIRECTORS OF FORMATION AND EDUCATION

521 Those engaged in formation and education should be conscious that they accompany those entrusted to them on their way to Christ. Therefore, they treat them with the respect due to their dignity and personal responsibility while making demands that help them grow and develop. Such personnel must be of balanced character and determined in achieving their goals, stand true to the church and the Society, and be mission-minded. They must be attuned to the Holy Spirit and so be able to share their faith experience for the benefit of others. The more their words are borne out by their deeds, the greater will be their influence.

521.1 Formation personnel are to have a professional education corresponding to their task; they should constantly try to further their own training.

521.2 Since formation is possible only in an atmosphere of mutual trust, those engaged in it must know how to respect the trust placed in them and be able to keep silent about things told them in confidence.

521.3 All engaged in the formation of future missionaries should be given the opportunity, as far as possible, to experience the reality of the mission situation.

522 The success of formation depends on the trusting and purposeful cooperation of all concerned. Thus they should form a close community among themselves and those entrusted to them. The young men also contribute essentially to their own



formation by helping one another reach their goal through their words and attitudes.

522.1 The secretary for formation and education (see c 620.1) has the following responsibilities:

- to advise the generalate on matters of education and formation;
- to implement various programs of vocation promotion and education according to the goals of the Society;
- to coordinate the formation work of the Society and provide information about it;
- to work towards making a sufficient number of suitable confreres available for education and formation;
- to provide for the professional training of staff for our novitiates, philosophical and theological institutes and universities.

522.2 Since the conditions and demands of education and formation in our Society vary greatly from country to country, the application of the respective constitutions must be regulated as far as possible on the provincial, interprovincial or national level. To facilitate this, provincial or interprovincial education/formation boards shall be set up; they are directly accountable to their provincial superior(s) and keep in contact with the secretary for formation and education at the generalate. Within the range of their competence, they supervise the education, formation, and ongoing formation at all levels. In the case of an interprovincial board its statutes are to be approved by the superior general with the consent of his council.

522.3 A director is to be appointed in each province or for several provinces, responsible for the recruitment, education and formation of brothers. He sets up and



implements a suitable formation program; in this he is responsible to the provincial superior and his council.

522.4 Within the framework of combined planning, the local superior allows each official to be responsible for his own area. Department heads keep the rector informed in a suitable way of their activities. They are not, however, to make major decisions without first consulting the rector and obtaining his approval since it is he who bears the final responsibility for administering the house and keeping its activity on target. Where the responsibility for academic affairs does not rest with the local superior, the provincial superior with his council is responsible for the school being conducted according to the legal requirements of the country and the goals of the Society.

522.5 Unless the statutes prescribe otherwise, the professors elect the director of studies in our scholasticates. In other houses of formation and schools he is appointed by the provincial superior with the consent of his council. The task of the director of studies is to arrange the curriculum in collaboration with the teaching staff. He also supervises the teaching and makes sure the education is in line with state requirements and Society goals. He seeks, moreover, to facilitate good cooperation, especially by regular faculty meetings. He will also take care that individual teachers have the opportunity for sabbaticals to further their education and research.

522.6 Conferes engaged in teaching and formation are to dedicate themselves as best they can to this important calling and continue to better themselves in their field. Work that would hinder them in their proper task should not be given them nor be taken on by them.



- 522.7** The competent superior, after consulting his council, determines the age of retirement if it is not already fixed by the statutes of the institute or the laws of the country. By competent superior in this case is meant that level of authority which originally appointed the confrere to the post. He also implements the ruling for the good of the persons and the community concerned.
- 522.8** Prefects of our students and candidates must form them in the religious and missionary spirit. They assist them in a way suitable to their age and stage of development, following tested principles of formation. In this, good cooperation with the parents is necessary.
- 522.9** * It is the novice master's duty to give spiritual direction to the novices and introduce them into the life of the Society. As a rule this demands that he has been in perpetual vows for at least five years, be familiar with the principles and forms of religious life, know the spirituality of the Society and be aware of present day issues.
- 522.10** Prefects of those in formation accompany them with counsel and assistance on the way to their vocational goal. They must have sympathy for the opinions, questions and problems of young confreres. They should keep alive and strengthen within them a love for their vocation and a sense of responsibility for the church and the Society.
- 522.11** Superiors are obliged to provide capable spiritual directors. It is recommended that all confreres entrust themselves to regular spiritual direction in order to foster the harmonious development of their vocation.



523 All should be aware that both our life and our vocation aim at constant growth and maturity. We never reach the goal but we are always on the way. Sometimes we are discouraged by disappointments and troubled by doubts. Nevertheless, we remain deeply convinced of the steadfast fidelity of God. Conscious of his presence promised to those united in his name, and trusting in his strength which breaks through precisely in our weakness, we strive together towards our goal: that by our unity of faith and our knowledge of the Son of God we grow into the perfect man, fully mature with the fullness of Christ himself (see Eph 4:13).

PART FOUR

GOVERNMENT OF OUR SOCIETY

I. EXERCISE OF AUTHORITY

601 In our Society the use of authority should be modeled on the words and deeds of the Lord who came to serve and not to be served (see Mark 10:45). Likewise the meaning of authority lies in service to the community. Its task is:

- to inspire all confreres to live in a way befitting their call as missionaries of the Divine Word;
- to build up true community;
- to coordinate the varied undertakings of provinces, local communities and individual confreres and bring them into line with the goals of the Society;
- to represent the community and protect its interests;
- to foster unity, peace and ready cooperation among all.

602 Respect for the personal dignity of each member is a fundamental attitude for all who exercise authority. Every confrere should be aware, however, that this dignity is not only a gift but also a responsibility. Therefore, while working in cooperation with the responsible superiors, he must exercise initiative and zeal to achieve the Society's goals.

602.1 Canonical measures must be imposed on a confrere who, established in some position of dignity, or who,



in order to commit a crime, has abused a position of authority or an office (see can 1326, §1,2°).

603 The principle of solidarity requires each confrere and community to be co-responsible for and contribute to the well-being of the individual and the whole Society.

603.1 This solidarity should enable superiors to delegate authority within their area of competence if this serves the purpose better. It should also enable confreres to accept responsibility resulting from such delegation.

604 By virtue of the principle of subsidiarity each confrere and community has the right to function with full responsibility within each one's sphere of competence. A higher superior should intervene only in cases of inadequate resources, evident neglect or when the common good otherwise requires it.

604.1 Although each confrere is free to deal directly with higher superiors, he should normally forward all proposals and petitions through the proper channels, that is, through his immediate superior who may add his view and those of his council. In like manner higher superiors usually send official letters to confreres through the lower superiors.

605 The superior should possess the ability needed for his office. He is to zealously strive:

- to promote the welfare of the Society for the sake of the kingdom of God;
- to be an inspiring model above all of the spirit of prayer, love and harmony;
- to show brotherly concern for those in his care;
- to recognize and respect each one's individuality and maturity and try to understand his needs and difficulties.



- 606** All share the responsibility for our religious-missionary life and work. Superiors then should continually seek fraternal discussion of common concerns, consult with confreres and weigh their opinions so that united in prayer they may discern the will of God.
- 607** The superior must keep in mind that, after all discussion and consultation, the final responsibility for decision making and implementation rests with him.
- 608** Not only he who exercises authority but also every confrere should be mindful that we are but stewards accountable to God and the community.

II. GOVERNMENT OF THE SOCIETY IN GENERAL

- 609** In our Society there are three levels of government and administration: the Society as a whole, provinces, and houses or districts.

Each of these levels, according to our proper law, is governed and administered with ordinary authority:

- a. the Society as a whole by the superior general with his council;
- b. the province by the provincial superior with his council;
- c. the house or district by the local superior with his council.

The superior general and the provincial superiors as well as their lawful substitutes rank as major superiors or ordinaries. Superiors and chapters possess ecclesiastical power of government both in the external and internal forum in accordance with universal law and our proper law.



By virtue of our vow we owe obedience to the Pope as highest ecclesiastical superior of the Society.

610 The extraordinary government of the Society is vested in chapters, which are the lawful representatives of the whole Society, of a province or of an individual community.

610.1 Chapters should be well prepared and hence convoked in good time. All confreres are entitled to submit requests and proposals to their respective chapters. The capitulars should receive these requests and proposals early enough so that they may be thoroughly studied.

610.2 * For a valid election or vote more than half of the capitulars must be present. However, all must have been summoned.

610.3 A report of the proceedings and outcome of the chapter should be given to the members of the whole Society, of the province or of the local community as the case may be. The chapter decides what can be communicated.

610.4 An official promulgation of the decrees and resolutions of a chapter is made by the competent superior as soon as possible.

611 Superiors are answerable to God and the Society for those entrusted to them. They are bound in conscience to take care lest, through their inattention and passivity or through lax interpretation or unjustifiable permissions, the faithful observance of our constitutions and directory should gradually disappear.

611.1 * Superiors and their councilors (see c. 612) are either elected by confreres in perpetual vows or appointed according to our proper law. Insofar as possible



according to universal law (see c. 104) and our proper law, all offices in the Society are open to all confreres in perpetual vows. Nobody has a claim to any office. No one, however, should refuse an office unless there are grave reasons against accepting it; these reasons are usually to be put in writing.

- 611.2** Care must be taken that members do not remain in the office of superior uninterruptedly for too long a time.
- 611.3** In the election of superiors members in perpetual vows have an active and passive vote in that province to which they have been assigned or transferred.
- 611.4** It is forbidden to canvass for oneself or for others; a vote cast for oneself is invalid. However, responsible discussion prior to voting is useful and recommended.
- 611.5** Teamwork with councilors and officials is necessary. It enables superiors to make use of their experience and insights.
- 611.6** Superiors should not issue directives of greater importance without first gathering all necessary information. They should also take suitable counsel not only with knowledgeable confreres but, if necessary, with competent outsiders as well.
- 611.7** Unless a higher superior or our proper law has decided otherwise in individual cases, no superior may relinquish his post at the end of his term of office until a lawful successor or administrator has taken over.
- 611.8** Resignation from office may be accepted only after the reason for it have been submitted in writing and judged sufficient by the appropriate authorities mentioned in



c. 618.6, 619.9a, 619.9i and 630.3g. Once his resignation has been accepted, a confrere may not be reinstated in the same office as long as the reasons given still hold true.

- 611.9** When there is question of removing a confrere from office for serious reasons, the appropriate council mentioned in c. 618.7, 619.9a, 619.9i, 619.10c and 630.3g should weigh the matter well. Some such serious reasons are: proven inability to perform the duties of one's office; a clear lack of the religious and missionary spirit; acts committed or omitted by negligence in cases of abuse of minors or vulnerable adults; every other serious personal failing or some external circumstance, as a result of which grave harm threatens the community. Before being removed the confrere concerned should be given an opportunity of defending himself. In addition he enjoys the right of recourse to higher authorities. If the final decision favors removal, it shall be carried out with firmness and kindness.
- 611.10** All superiors and officials appointed by the superior general in accordance with c. 619.9i are, by that very fact, made full members of the province in which they are to exercise office if they did not belong to it already. On the other hand if a confrere is elected superior in a province not his own, the election is equivalent to a request to the superior general for a transfer and/or appointment. Before accepting the request the superior general will consult the provincial superior and council of the province to which the candidate belongs.
- 611.11** Both during and after their term of office all superiors shall strictly and forever guard what should be kept secret.



611.12 Whatever is said of superiors in c. 611.1 to 611.11 inclusive also holds good, with the necessary changes, for councilors and officials.

612 On each level of government and administration superiors are given councilors who share their responsibilities so as to attain the goals of our Society together as efficiently as possible. Councilors are to support superiors with their advice and prayer. The vote in the council is either consultative, deliberative or collegial as explained in c. 612.1.

612.1 Whenever the constitutions or directory require the advice of the councilors to be taken, the superior must ask their opinion (consultative vote) in order to act validly, but he is not bound by it. He should not, however, make light of their considered advice. When the consent of the council is required (deliberative vote), a superior cannot act validly without it.

The convocation of councilors by the superior is the normal process for obtaining a consultative vote. When not possible due to exceptional circumstances, the superior can convoke his councilors for a meeting in order to obtain their opinion (consultative vote) using computerized and telematic means (can 127, §1). The system must assure confidentiality, verification of identity, and the possibility for two-way communication. Communication by electronic means is based on trust and appeals to the sense of responsibility so that technologies are at the service of discernment and good governance. Only in cases of a consultative vote may a superior abstain from calling the council and instead ask each councilor individually.



In cases where a collegial vote is required, or the superior wants it (insofar as it is possible), the superior and his councilors vote jointly and decide by a majority.

To be licit, for elections, appointments, admissions and dismissals, the deliberative or collegial vote must always be taken by secret ballot. A councilor may demand a secret ballot in other matters besides those just mentioned.

- 612.2** * Where a collegial or a deliberative vote is called for, the councilors must be assembled and deliberate as a body.

Dispensation from the requirement of the physical presence of part of the council for a deliberative vote, as prescribed by can 166 §1, must always be asked from and given by the Holy See.

Dispensation for a collegial vote is not possible (cf. can 699).

- 612.3** * When a deliberative vote is taken, the superior can also cast his vote (see can 127.1).

- 612.4** * For elections, appointments, admissions and dismissals, the entire council must be present, with the exception given in c. 619.8. If a councilor is unable to attend, another confrere who has the right of passive vote for membership in that council must be chosen in his stead by the councilors and brought into the meeting. Substitutes can never be more than half of the council members. The same procedure is to be followed in cases of admission or dismissal when one of the provincial councilors has already voted on the same candidate in the local council; it should also be



followed, if possible, when a councilor has already given his opinion as prefect or novice master concerning a candidate's admission or dismissal.

612.5 For admission to vows, ministries and sacred orders, as well as for dismissal, abstention from voting is not allowed. If, however, a councilor feels that for reasons of conscience he cannot vote, then a substitute must be called in to replace him.

612.6 Even if their term of office has not yet expired, councilors are chosen anew each time superiors are appointed or elected, excepting the cases mentioned in c. 613.1 and c. 613.2. They can be reappointed or reelected an indefinite number of times.

613 The vice-superior, who must have the same qualifications required for the respective superior, is *ex officio* one of the councilors. He takes the place of the superior whenever the latter is absent or prevented from exercising his office.

If, however, the vice-superior (in addition to the superior) must be absent for some extraordinary reason, the councilor longest in vows takes his place. Should the councilors in question have been in vows equally long, then the oldest takes his place. Temporary substitutes shall not introduce any important changes unless the matter is urgent and the council has given its consent.

613.1 Whenever the superior leaves office before his term has expired by reason of resignation, death, or any other event, the vice-superior takes over the office as a new superior in order to complete the said term unless our proper law expressly makes some other provision. The new superior with the consent of his council presents a list of candidates to the respective higher authority,



which appoints a new councilor and a new vice-superior. The same holds for a councilor who leaves office before his term expires.

613.2 If the vice-provincial superior cannot accept the office of provincial superior as provided for in c. 613.1, the superior general with the consent of his council may either call an election of a new provincial superior, the former vice-provincial and councillors remaining (as an exception to c. 612.6), or decide to hold completely new elections for provincial superior, vice-provincial superior and councillors by vote of the members of the province.

614 The admonitor is likewise one of the councillors. Should the need arise, his task is to speak in the name of the Society and remind the superior of his duty.

615 On each level of government and administration the superior and his council are assisted by officials for certain specialized areas. These officials should support the superior and his council with expertise and prayer.

615.1 Officials are accountable to their respective superior and his council and are to submit regular reports to them. Their role in council meetings is advisory.

615.2 Their tenure of office is usually three years unless the contrary is laid down in our proper law. They may be appointed repeatedly. Their limits of competence should be clearly described before they take office.



III. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

1. The General Chapter

616 The general chapter in session represents the whole Society and is its highest internal legislative authority. As such, it:

- takes cognizance of the Society's state in its totality and in the various units which compose it;
- joins individuals and communities more closely in brotherly love;
- inspires all to new zeal for our religious-missionary life and activity;
- seeks by reflection and common deliberation adequate solutions for current problems;
- issues decrees and ordinances deemed necessary and opportune in response to the Lord speaking to us constantly through the church and the world.

616.1 It is the superior general's right and duty to convoke a general chapter. Besides the ordinary general chapter which takes place every six years, he may call an extraordinary one whenever he judges it necessary. For just reasons the superior general can anticipate or postpone the next ordinary general chapter by six months. In all three cases, he needs the consent of his council.

616.2 Members of the general chapter by right of office are:

- the superior general,
- the general councillors,
- the procurator general,
- the treasurer general,
- the secretary general,



- the generalate mission secretary,
 - the secretary for formation and education,
 - provincial superiors or their lawful substitutes,
 - after elections at the chapter have taken place, and if they are not members of the chapter, the superior general and general councillors elect who must be summoned to the chapter,
 - the most recent former superior general.
- 616.3** Elected members are those delegates who have been duly elected in the provincial chapters in accordance with the norms for general chapters. Whenever necessary to ensure an adequate presence of Brothers, the superior general with the consent of his council may summon additional Brothers with voting rights. The superior general with the consent of his council can also invite others to attend the sessions and present their views. These, however, have no vote.
- 616.4** All members who have the right to vote are bound to take part in the chapter insofar as they are not legitimately impeded. If a capitular is unable to come, he should inform the superior general in good time through his provincial superior, stating the reasons. The latter adds his opinion and that of his council. If the superior general considers the reasons sufficient, he will summon the rightful substitute in accordance with the norms for chapters. If a capitular thinks he should leave the chapter, he presents his reasons to the superior general. The chapter decides whether he will be replaced by a substitute or not.
- 616.5** The superior general has the right and duty to place on the agenda those topics which, in his judgment, must be treated. For this he needs the consent of his council.



- 616.6** The general chapter must be convoked at least six months before its opening date. Delegates should, if possible, be elected at least three months before the chapter so that they may have sufficient time to study the topics of the agenda.
- 616.7** * The superior general prepares the chapter with the aid of his council, opens it and presides. If someone who is absent is elected superior general, he acquires membership of the chapter by virtue of election by the Chapter and must be summoned immediately. The chapter, however, is not interrupted and continues as usual even before his arrival.
- 616.8** * A general chapter is meant to do the following:
- a. assess the overall state of the Society. The superior general give the chapter a report on the state of the Society's personnel, its religious and missionary spirit, its apostolic activity and the administration of its temporal goods. Reports of the individual provinces should also be presented so that the overall state of the Society be known to all the capitulars;
 - b. hold the necessary elections;
 - c. request the approval of the Holy See for whatever changes may have been made in the constitutions and in the directory which demand this approval and lay before it doubtful cases for authentic interpretation;
 - d. adjust the directory to changed circumstances and examine the manuals and other official documents of the Society;
 - e. correct abuses which may have crept into the Society;
 - f. lay down goals and priorities for the generalate's administration;
 - g. issue regulations and decrees for the Society;
 - h. confirm, modify or abrogate resolutions of former general chapters.



616.9 When all business has been discussed and dispatched, the superior general with the consent of at least two-thirds of the capitulars closes the chapter. Therewith its jurisdiction ceases.

2. The Superior General and His Council

617 The superior general is vested with the power of government over the entire Society as well as over all provinces, local communities and confreres. Together with his council he exercises this authority in accordance with the norms of universal law and our proper law.

618 The primary task of the superior general is to lead our confreres in the following of Christ according to the gospel and our constitutions.

As spiritual leader the superior general has the duty of caring that our Society remain true to its religious-missionary life and activity, and that it place itself at the disposal of the church according to the demands of the times.

While being concerned for the whole Society's unity in its religious life and missionary activity, he should allow each area to develop and grow in its own particular way. He does this within the framework of the Society's interests as laid down in the constitutions and directory and in accord with the principle of subsidiarity. He should even encourage and support confreres along this line.

In view of the weighty responsibility he bears for the whole Society, confreres should pray fervently that the Lord may bestow on him the help he needs to fulfill his office.



- 618.1** * The superior general is elected for six years. An absolute majority of capitulars present is required for the election of a superior general to his first term of office. He must have been in perpetual vows for at least ten years. The general chapter determines the effective date for his assumption of office. This date shall not be more than three months after the conclusion of the general chapter which elected him.
- 618.2** * The superior general can subsequently be reelected for a period of six years; for this he needs an absolute majority. He can be reelected for a third and last six year term; for this he needs a two-thirds majority. If he has not reached this by the third ballot, he is no longer eligible. The capitulars then continue balloting until someone receives an absolute majority.
- 618.3** The superior general with the consent of his council has the right and duty to issue directives for the practical implementation of the constitutions and directory. Any such directive remained in force until revoked.
- 618.4** Within the limits laid down by the constitutions and directory the superior general can issue regulations either for the whole Society or for particular territories or departments.
- 618.5** The superior general cannot validly:
- appoint a substitute at his own discretion and hand his powers to him, or
 - confer an active or passive vote on confreres or deprive them of it except in cases determined by universal law or our proper law or in cases of serious failings.



He cannot licitly

- be a local superior or provincial superior, or
- be absent from the residence of the generalate for longer periods of time except in the line of duty or for other important reasons and always with the consent of his council.

618.6 If the superior general is convinced that he should resign from office outside a general chapter, he should explain his reasons to the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life, which is competent to accept or reject his resignation. If he resigns at a general chapter, the chapter may accept the resignation but must then immediately elect a new superior general and all others whose terms automatically expire when a superior general leaves office according to our proper law (see c. 612.6, 613 and 618.8).

618.7 * Should it ever seem necessary to depose the superior general or deprive him of his authority, the general councillors must bring the matter to the attention of the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life.

618.8 * If the superior general resigns, is deposed or dies, the vice-general takes charge of the Society as the new fully authorized superior general until the next ordinary general chapter. In this case the new superior general with his council's consent appoints a new councillor. He and his councilors then elect by a collegial vote the new vice-general from among the councillors elected by the general chapter.



619 The general council consists of the vice-general and five other councillors, one of whom is the admonitor general.

619.1 * The term of office of the general councillors is six years. The general chapter determines the effective date for their assumption of office. This date shall not be more than three months after the conclusion of the general chapter which elected them (see c. 618.1).

619.2 In electing councilors as well as in electing or appointing officials of the generalate, both the capability of the candidates and the international character of our Society should be taken into account.

619.3 * The rules of universal law hold good for electing general councillors.

619.4 After the election of the superior general, the general chapter elects the vice-general and then on separate ballots the other five general councillors. Between the election of the superior general and the ballot for the vice-general and the remaining general councilors there should be suitable intervals, the lengths of which are proposed by the superior general to the chapter, which decides by vote of an absolute majority of the capitulars present.

619.5 * The vice-general must have been in perpetual vows for at least ten years. He takes the place of the superior general whenever the latter is impeded in the exercise of his office and should, therefore, be present at the generalate if this situation arises.

619.6 * The admonitor general is elected on a separate ballot from among the five general councillors.

- 619.7** The general councillors must take up residence where the superior general lives. They may not be given any task which would hinder them from carrying out their duties. They are to meet regularly with the superior general to discuss the development and progress of the Society and to facilitate long-range planning and evaluation.
- 619.8** The quorum necessary for all voting that according to c. 612.4 requires the presence of the whole council is four councilors in addition to the superior general or his lawful substitute.
- 619.9** * The general council has a deliberative vote in matters such as the following:
- a. naming the officials of the generalate, naming of a general visitator who is not a member of the general council; the removal from office of one of the aforesaid or the acceptance of his resignation; naming a general councillor or a general admonitor to fill a vacancy until the next general chapter, or the acceptance of the resignation of one of them;
 - b. convocation of a general chapter and the fixing of its time and place; inviting to the general chapter those who are not members by virtue of their office or election; the convocation of a general assembly;
 - c. transferring the residence of the superior general and his council in cases where it is impossible to await a decision of the general chapter, in which case the Holy See is to be informed;
 - d. decrees which are issued for the whole Society and are valid indefinitely; the suspension of any particular disciplinary norms of the constitutions or directory for the whole Society until the next general chapter provided these norms do not deal with the essentials of

- our religious-missionary life; the approval of the acts of a provincial chapter; the approval of general visitation protocols;
- e. erection or suppression of provinces or changing their boundaries;
 - f. acceptance, division or surrender of mission fields;
 - g. erection or suppression of houses, novitiates, colleges, universities and institutes according to the norms of universal law;
 - h. acceptance of parishes in cases where it is beyond the competence of the provincial superior and his council to do so (see c. 630.2a);
 - i. designation of provincial superiors, provincial councillors, including the vice-provincial superiors and admonitors according to the methods of election decided upon by the respective provinces (see c. 628d); appointment of officials of generalate agencies and of provincial mission secretaries after consultation with the respective provincial superiors (see c. 630.3g); approval of a rector for a third term; removal from office of any of the aforesaid or acceptance of his resignation;
 - j. granting a sanation of irregularities committed through ignorance or inadvertence in the election of superiors and of delegates for chapters, with the exception of those irregularities which contravene universal law and the general norms contained in the constitutions;
 - k. admitting members to perpetual vows and sacred orders; admitting members to temporary vows when according to c. 513.4 their case must be submitted to the superior general; the secularization of confreres in temporary vows, whereby juridically dispensation from vows automatically results; the dispensation from impediments of our proper law for admission to novitiate and sacred orders, as well as from those irregularities of our proper law mentioned in the directory, which are dispensable by the superior general;



- l. granting of dispensations and permission or subdelegating of the necessary authority for which the consent of the general council is required according to the prescription of the Holy See;
- m. the first appointment of members and their transfer from one province/region to another after consultation with the respective superiors, excepting those cases mentioned in c. 630.3.n;
- n. erection and suppression of generalate agencies;
- o. alienation or mortgaging of property; assuming debts or accepting perpetual foundations; permitting the superior general or any provincial superior to sign a contract:
 - which creates financial obligations beyond the signatory's limit of competence according to existing norms, or one
 - which accepts a new field of labor for which the Society will be responsible in any way;
 - accepting some individual work for which the province will be unable to furnish personnel from its ordinary resources;
- p. transfer of material goods from one province or region to another, after consultation with the respective provincial superiors and their councils;
- q. investing income from property administered by the generalate;
- r. establishing limits of financial competence at lower levels of administration;
- s. financial outlays drawn from funds administered by the generalate but in excess of the sum determined for the superior general by the general chapter;
- t. approval of the annual budget and the periodic reports of the treasurer general; approval of extraordinary

expenditures which exceeds the competence of the provincial superior with his council.

- u. approval of building plans when the cost exceeds the competence of lower levels of administration;
- v. all other matters in which universal law or our proper law require a deliberative vote on the part of the council;
- w. some cases in which the consent of the council is required to forward the matter to the Holy See such as those of c. 715 and c. 717.

619.10 The superior general and his council have a collegial vote in the following cases:

- a. the election of a vice-superior general to fill the vacancy until the next general chapter;
- b. the dismissal of professed members in temporary or perpetual vows;
- c. the removal of a generalate councillor;
- d. matters which have to be referred to the Holy See (see c. 619.9w).

619.11 Powers reserved to the superior general or to the superior general with the consent of his council by right of office or delegation, insofar as they can be delegated or subdelegated, may in particular cases be delegated or subdelegated to other superiors. This should not usually be done except on condition that the delegated superior or subdelegated superior act as far as possible with the consent of his own council.

619.12 The superior general with his council should issue a report concerning the Society about every three years. It could include:

- a review of developments in the Society;
- selected questions arising from provincial reports,



- priorities, hopes and expectations for the coming years;
- progress reports on the implementation of the insights and requirements of the past general chapter.

3. Officials of the Generalate

620 The officials of the generalate in their respective specialized fields assist the superior general and his council in their government of the Society and in the planning and execution of its missionary tasks (see c. 615).

620.1 The procurator general, the treasurer general, the secretary general, the generalate mission secretary, and the secretary for formation and education are appointed by the superior general with the consent of his council.

620.2 The officials are elected or appointed for a term of six years at the expiration of which they can be reelected or reappointed any number of times. If for any reason any one of them leaves his office before the time expires for which he was elected or appointed, the superior general with the consent of his council appoints someone to complete the unfinished term, in accord with c. 619.9a.

620.3 Unless something else is expressly provided for in our proper law, the officials shall reside at the generalate; but they cannot be regular members of the general council.

620.4 Additional offices and secretaries may be established by the superior general with the consent of his council. In these cases what was provided for in c. 620.2 and 620.3 holds good for them.



- 620.5** The rights and duties of these secretaries will be described in handbooks.
- 620.6** The superior general with the consent of his council can designate other collaborators and private secretaries to carry out defined functions. These, however, do not enjoy the same rights as the secretary general or any other official.
- 621** The procurator general represents the Society's interests at the Holy See.
- 621.1** The procurator general resides in Rome.
- 622** The treasurer general administers the temporal goods of the Society as well as its mission funds in the spirit of justice, poverty and charity. He also supervises the way provinces and regions, mission procures and, insofar as necessary, local communities administer their goods.
- 623** The secretary general keeps the minutes of the general council meetings, is responsible for expediting the superior general's official correspondence, cosigns as notary the superior general's letters and supervises the generalate's archives.
- 624** The mission secretary assists the superior general and his council in matters dealing expressly with mission questions (see c. 117 and 117.1).

The secretary for formation and education assists in these areas (see c. 522.1).



4. Ties between the Generalate and the Society

625 To better the ties between the generalate and the various areas of the Society, the superior general can convoke assemblies and various meetings from time to time at the generalate or elsewhere to discuss common concerns of the Society.

625.1 These assemblies and meetings will be attended by members of the generalate and by all major superiors as representatives of the entire Society (general assemblies) or by representatives from several provinces located in a given geographic area, or by confreres engaged in certain specific fields of activity.

625.2 It may be advisable to invite the superior general and/or other members of the generalate to attend, when convenient, assemblies and meetings in other countries.

626 General visitations are undertaken either by the superior general himself or by his delegate. They are an occasion for the visitor to come into personal contact with the individual confreres.

The visitation has the task of strengthening the confreres' conviction that the Society cares for each and every one of them. It also helps give the generalate more exact information of the life and work of our confreres and a realistic picture of the conditions and needs of the various areas of the Society. This should result in our confreres living in line with the Society's norms and working towards our common goal. When circumstances warrant it, special visitations for specific departments should be undertaken.

626.1 General visitations take place every six years, preferably at the time of a provincial chapter or provincial assembly or both.



- 626.2** When calling matters to the attention of the visitorator, every confrere should speak openly but with due regard for truth, justice and charity.
- 626.3** The visitorator should seek advice and information from all sides.
- 626.4** If action is called for, the visitorator should act only with due authorization through the proper channels.
- 626.5** When the visitorator has gained good insight into the overall situation of the province and its members, he draws up a visitation protocol which he discusses previously with the respective superiors, councils and the confreres. Once the protocol is approved by the superior general with the consent of his council, its regulations remain in force until the next visitation. On that occasion they can be either confirmed, modified or abrogated.
- 626.6** Apart from the general visitations, members of the generalate should keep in mind the possibility of making informal visits to the provinces when the occasion warrants them.

IV. GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE

1. The Province and the Provincial Chapter

- 627** The province consists of several local communities within a given geographical area, united into a larger community to realize more effectively the goals of the Society. All confreres normally belong to a province. (see c. 629.1).



- 627.1** The first assignment of a confrere to a province takes effect for juridical purposes only when he arrives at his new province, saving what is stated in c. 611.3. Until then, he will be under the jurisdiction of the provincial superior of the province to which he has belonged.
- 627.2** The transfer of a confrere from one province to another takes effect for juridical purposes from the date stipulated in the letter of the superior general. In case that the confrere still stays for some time in his old province, the superior delegatus will be in charge of him.
- 628** The provincial chapter in session represents the entire province and is its highest extraordinary internal authority. The provincial chapter's task is to:
- a. examine and promote the religious-missionary life and work of the confreres in the province;
 - b. take care that efforts be made to realize the goal of our Society in a way corresponding to the needs and circumstances of the province;
 - c. elect delegates and the substitutes for each to the general chapter;
 - d. decide, in line with can 625.3, the province's method of selecting the provincial and local superiors, provincial and local councilors, including vice-superiors and admonitors together with all other superiors, councilors and officials whose designation is not reserved to the superior general with the consent of his council (see c. 619.9i);
 - e. confirm, modify or abrogate statutes and manuals of the province, resolutions of former provincial chapters and regulations of the provincial superior;
 - f. issue new resolutions and establish guidelines and priorities for the provincial administration.

628.1 The provincial chapter has the right to make regulations for the whole province and for individual local communities or departments. These have binding force as soon as they are approved by the superior general with the consent of his council.

628.2 A provincial chapter is to be held at least once every three years. The superior, however, with the consent of his council can call a chapter as often as he deems it necessary or useful. A chapter must be held before every general chapter, at least in order to elect delegates.

What has been stated earlier about the agenda and procedure of the general chapter holds also for the provincial chapter.

628.3 * The following are members of the provincial chapter with active and passive vote by right of office unless universal law or our proper law disposes otherwise:

- the provincial superior
- the provincial councillors,
- the provincial treasurer,
- the provincial mission secretary,
- the superiors of those houses and districts which send at least one delegate to the chapter,
- the superior chosen to represent the superiors of smaller houses or districts which have been combined into a voting unit,
- prefects of confreres in temporary vows,
- novice masters,
- the provincial director of brother formation,
- the director of studies on the provincial level,
- other officials of the province to whom the provincial chapter gives this right.



- 628.4** Delegates lawfully elected at local chapters are also voting members. Their number should at least equal that of the ex officio members if at all possible.
- 628.5** The provincial superior convokes and opens the chapter and presides at it; if he is impeded, the vice-provincial superior takes his place. Sufficient notice should be given of its opening date. The provincial superior with the consent of the chapter in absolute majority closes the chapter.

2. The Provincial Superior and His Council

- 629** The ordinary government of the province is the task of the provincial superior with his council. He is to administer its affairs and undertakings with prudence and discretion. Keeping in mind the overall goals of the Society, he strives by word and example to get all the members to work together zealously for the goals of the province. He has authority over all communities and confreres of the province and over their work according to the prescriptions of law.
- 629.1** In areas where no province has been yet established, and which are called regions, the superior general after first consulting the members of the region and with the consent of his council appoints the regional superior and determines his rights and duties.
- 629.2** * A provincial superior, who must be in perpetual vows at least five years, remains in office for a term of three years. He can, however, be reappointed or reelected for a second term and, in exceptional cases and for grave reasons, for a third. He chooses his place of residence after consulting his council and having received the consent of the superior general.

- 629.3** Within the limits laid down by the constitutions and directory, the provincial superior can issue regulations for the whole province and for individual houses and departments.
- 629.4** The provincial superior has the right to grant dispensations for the whole province from the disciplinary prescriptions of the constitutions and directory. He has no right, however, to dispense from matters concerning which dispensations are not usually given in our Society or which affect an entire province permanently or for a longer period of time. In such cases, he should consult the superior general without delay.
- 629.5** An official visitation must be held at least once every three years by the provincial superior or by his delegate. All that is said in c. 626 concerning the general visitation also holds good here.
- 630** The provincial council normally consists of the vice-provincial superior and three other councillors, one of whom is the provincial admonitor.
- 630.1** * In smaller provinces, it is enough to have two councillors. The superior general with the consent of his council decides the number.
- 630.2** The provincial superior and all councillors must be present and forward the results of their collegial vote to the superior general and his council for a decision in the following cases:
- a. erection and suppression of houses and the acceptance and rejection of parishes in cases where it is beyond the

competence of the provincial superior and his council to do so, i.e., when contracts cannot be made according to the stipulations of our proper laws;

- b. recommendations of confreres for admission to perpetual vows and sacred orders and for their first appointment; proposal of the dismissal of a confrere in temporary or perpetual vows;
- c. requests for prolonging or shortening in individual cases the period in temporary vows according to c. 513.5;
- d. approval of extraordinary expenditures which exceed the limits of competence of the provincial superior with his council;
- e. all other affairs of greater importance which are to be taken up with the general administration or with civil or ecclesiastical authorities.

630.3 The provincial council has a deliberative vote and all must be present in the following cases:

- a. regulations of the provincial superior for the whole province;
- b. exercise of delegated or subdelegated faculties which a provincial superior possesses but which, according to the prescription of universal law, he cannot use without the consent of his council;
- c. convocation of a provincial chapter, preparation of its agenda and the decision on where and when it is to be held;
- d. combining smaller communities into voting units for the local chapter; fixing the quorum of members in perpetual vows from which a delegate to the provincial chapter is to be chosen;
- e. erection and suppression of districts;
- f. appointment of a visitor for the whole province if he is not a member of the council;

- g. proposal of candidates, three if possible, for the posts of superiors, councilors and officials whose appointment is reserved to the superior general and his council; forwarding the resignation or requesting the removal of any of the above;
- h. appointment or confirmation of all officials in the province whose appointment is not reserved to the superior general and council; appointment of local superiors, also the rector of a formation house, councillors (including vice-superiors and admonitors), the provincial treasurer, superior delegate (see c. 117.3), the novice master, prefects of confreres in temporary vows, provincial and interprovincial directors of brother formation, professors of our own formation institutions; removal of any of the above or acceptance of his resignation;
- i. the decision on the number of local councillors;
- j. admission to postulancy and novitiate, to temporary vows and to ministries; (for the dismissal of postulants and novices the consultative vote of the provincial council suffices);
- k. approval of budgets and financial statements of local communities and of the province, except for acts of extraordinary administration which exceed the limits of competence of the provincial superior and his council;
- l. approval of detailed building plans within the framework of the planning and construction budget approved by the superior general with the consent of his council;
- m. transfer of assets from one local community to another after consultation with the respective local superiors and their councils;
- n. transfer of the following members:
 - retiring confreres returning to their country of origin;



- formators who are to work in another province or region within the same zone;
- confreres in temporary vows who are to go for cross-cultural experience in another province or region, country or zone;

In all of these cases, the sending provincial superior with the consent of his council makes the transfer after an agreement has been reached with the receiving provincial superior and his council;

- o. acceptance and rejection of various fields of activity, parishes and other undertakings (see c. 630.2a).

The superior general is to be informed of the decisions made according to h), k), n) and o) above.

3. Provincial and Interprovincial Officials and Assemblies

631 The provincial treasurer administers the temporal goods of the province and watches over the way goods belonging to local communities are administered.

In addition there should be a mission procurator whose special tasks are to promote missionary interest and to support our missions and missionaries.

Both are under the supervision of the provincial superior and his council and administer their offices according to the guidelines of universal law and our proper law.

631.1 The provincial treasurer should normally not be a member of the provincial council.

- 632** Officials directly under the supervision of the provincial superior shall be governed by norms and policies to be determined by the provincial superior with the consent of his council.
- 633** Officials whose competence goes beyond the boundaries of a province are to be governed by norms and guidelines mutually agreed upon by the provincial superiors concerned (see c. 630.2e) and approved by the superior general with the consent of his council. In matters concerning religious life they are subject to the rector of the local community to which they are assigned.
- 633.1** The norms and guidelines mutually agreed upon are to be placed in statutes dealing with each generalate agency and/or each interprovincial agency.
- 633.2** The structure and business management of these agencies are to conform to the civil law of the countries in which they work.
- 634** A good way to foster cordial relation with the confreres is to hold various types of provincial assemblies. On these occasions the provincial superior and the confreres should discuss matters dealing with their religious-missionary life and activity in the province and especially the best way to involve every confrere in the tasks of the province.
- 634.1** A provincial assembly has only an advisory function.
- 635** The system of zones is an appropriate means for animating and coordinating the communion and mission of the provinces in the same geographical area, and of the zones among themselves. These objectives will be reached through a close relationship between the zones and provinces, the formulation of a common vision, and the search for a unified orientation and joint projects for our religious life and missionary service.

- 635.1** The zonal organization does not modify the norms of government of our Society and leaves the levels of authority unchanged.
- 635.2** Each zone has its own statutes which are approved by the superior general with the consent of his council.
- 635.3** Each zone will maintain close contact with the Generalate and with the other zones of the Society so as to guarantee unity in the service of the universal mission of the Church.

V. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. The Local Superior and His Council

- 636** The term “local superior” is used for both the rector of a house and the superior of a district. By a district is meant a community of confreres assigned to parishes or engaged in other ministries and not ascribed to a house, but who have been combined into a unit by the provincial superior with the consent of his council.(1)

The community of confreres assigned to a house is governed by a rector together with his council. The district superior with his council heads a district as described above. Every member of the Society must be assigned to a house or district.

It is on the local level that our religious apostolic living becomes a reality. Accordingly, the local superior leads and governs the individual confreres in a spirit of loving service and encourages, supports and visits them so that they truly grow together into a community sharing in the mission of the Divine Word. He strives to form the life and activity of his community along the



lines of the constitutions and directory. He has authority over all in the local community. He is, nevertheless, to respect the rights conferred on some members by reason of office or by higher authority.

- 636.1** It is the duty of the rector with the consent of his council to discuss the daily schedule with all who live in the house and then in agreement with the provincial superior to determine the times for prayer, work, meals and recreation.
- 636.2** It is the duty of the district superior to discuss with the members of the district the number and type of gatherings to be held so that a community spirit can be fostered. He will further discuss the implementation of community living in the individual stations.
- 636.3** The local superior according to our proper law oversees all the property of the community. With his council, the treasurer and other officials he provides for the proper administration of the community's temporal goods.
- 636.4** When there is sufficient reason, local superiors have the right to grant dispensations from disciplinary prescriptions of the constitutions and directory for individual confreres in particular cases and for the whole community in an individual instance and for a short time.

In other instances and generally in matters of greater importance, local superiors should not grant dispensations without previously consulting the provincial superior. It is left to the provincial superior's prudent judgment to decide whether it is fitting to grant a dispensation or not.



- 636.5** Confreres who are guests in a house are also subject to the local superior; all other guests and employees are subject to him insofar as their presence affects the well-being of the community.
- 636.6** If the community is involved with an educational or other kind of institute, a clear delineation of the rights and duties of each entity and their mutual relationship is to be put in writing to facilitate community living.
- 636.7** The local superior who must be at least three years in perpetual vows is designated for a three-year term according to the regulations of the provincial chapter. A rector can be redesignated for a second term but usually not for a third consecutive term. A district superior can be redesignated repeatedly.
- 636.8** The *praeses* of a residence has authority delegated by the provincial superior; he is appointed by the provincial superior who first consults the community and obtains the consent of his council; his rights and duties are also delineated by the provincial superior with his council's consent.
- 636.9** The superior general, with the consent of his council, can appoint a brother as a superior of a local community.
- 637** Depending on the size of the house or district, the local superior has a council consisting of two or four members of whom one is vice-superior and one is admonitor.
- 637.1** The superior general, with the consent of his council, can also appoint a brother as a vice-superior of a local community.



- 637.2** The local superior should meet with his council at suitable intervals to discuss the concerns of the community. At the beginning of their term of office, they should decide when and how often they will meet.
- 637.3** The local treasurer, when possible, should not be a member of the local council.
- 637.4** All members of the local council must be present and vote collegially with the local superior in cases such as the following, which are to be forwarded with the voting result to the provincial superior and his council for decision:
- a. recommendation of candidates for admission to postulancy, novitiate, temporary vows and ministries;
 - b. recommendation of candidates for perpetual vows, sacred orders and for their first appointment;
 - c. proposal for the dismissal of a confrere in temporary or perpetual vows; proposal for the dismissal of a postulant or novice (see c. 630.3j);
 - d. approval of the yearly budget, the yearly financial report as well as applications for raising the budget;
 - e. approval of extraordinary expenditures which exceed the competence of the local superior with his council, such as for building plans and major repairs.
- 638** Officials are chosen as needed to assist the local superior and his council. In larger houses it may be advisable to have a technical council, comprising the head of the various shops or offices.
- 638.1** The local superior, after hearing the opinion of his council, appoints those officials and heads of workshops and enterprises whose appointment is not reserved to higher authority.



2. Local Chapter and Assembly

- 639** The local chapter helps the local community to exercise solidarity and co-responsibility with the province and the entire Society. In this spirit the local chapter has the task of:
- a. examining and animating the religious-missionary life and work of the community;
 - b. making proposals to the provincial and general chapters;
 - c. electing delegates to the provincial chapter together with a substitute for each.
- 639.1** The local chapter is convoked by the local superior with the consent of his council. Regarding the frequency, participation, agenda, procedure and termination, the norms established in the statutes for chapters are valid.
- 639.2** The members of the local chapter are those confreres in perpetual vows belonging to the province and assigned to a given local community. Only they enjoy active and passive vote.
- 640** The local superior may convoke assemblies to discuss matters affecting the local community. These assemblies are advisory in nature.
- 640.1** A local assembly consists of all members of the local community who are in perpetual and temporary vows as well as of others specially invited by the local superior with the consent of his council.
- 640.2** In addition partial assemblies may be convoked, consisting of certain members of the community according to the purpose of the assembly.



VI. ADMINISTRATION OF TEMPORAL GOODS

641 The Society as a whole as well as the individual province and local community has the right to acquire, own, administer and alienate temporal goods according to the norms of universal law and our proper law. Consequently the goods of our Society pertain to several categories: either they belong to the Society as a whole and are administered by the generalate, or they belong to a province and are administered by the provincialate, or they belong to a local community and are administered as provided for in c. 636.3.

641.1 A distinction must be made between Society property and goods entrusted to the Society, such as mission funds, foundations and deposits. The latter may be used only for the purpose of which they were given.

642 Although local communities and provinces are the real owners of their goods, these goods must serve the goals of the whole Society. Hence for just and serious reasons, the superior general and the provincial superior may transfer temporal goods: the former from one province of the Society to another; the latter from one house of the province to another. In such cases the conditions and obligations accepted when the goods were acquired or received must be faithfully observed.

642.1 To enable the superior general to obtain a summary view of the financial needs and status of the local communities and provinces, the annual budgets and financial statements, after having been approved by the respective provincial superior with his council, must be forwarded to the superior general for information.



643 The administration of temporal goods is entrusted to the treasurer appointed for this purpose. He works under the direction and vigilance of the superior and his council. Treasurers are distinguished according to the three levels of administration: the treasurer general, the provincial treasurer and the local treasurer. In addition to these there are the mission procurators and the directors of special agencies.

643.1 Treasurers as well as mission procurators and directors are responsible for the ordinary and extraordinary administration of temporal goods within the limits of their competence.

643.2 It is their duty to obtain the means which the Society needs to fulfill its tasks.

643.3 It is likewise their duty to keep superiors and their councils accurately informed about the state of financial affairs. They have the right and duty to render an opinion about all financial transactions. The superior will respect their responsibility, gladly ask for their advice and bring them into council meetings when important financial affairs are being discussed.

643.4 Before the beginning of each fiscal year, the treasurer draws up a budget for the year, which is to be submitted for approval to the competent superiors and their councils.

643.5 The treasurer submits his financial report at designated times to the proper superior for examination and approval. If so desired, he also submits his records. The provincial treasurer at fixed times will audit and collate the financial reports submitted by confreres about those parishes, institutions and other undertakings permanently entrusted to the Society.



The budgets and annual reports of the provinces, houses and districts must include at least the profit and loss statements, the balance sheet and their explanations. These are submitted to the provincial superior and his council for examination and approval.

As a minimum the provincial treasurer prepares a general synopsis of all budgets and annual reports for submission to the superior general.

It is recommended that all superiors and treasurers make use of the advice of experts in the management of finances. Insofar as circumstances in a country permit, all treasurers, mission procurators and directors should have their books audited by certified public accountants.

- 643.6** All involved in the administration of temporal goods such as treasurers, pastors, etc., are obliged to carefully preserve all contracts, title deeds, receipts and similar documents. They should also draw up an inventory of movable and unmovable goods and keep it up to date.
- 643.7** * They must likewise observe all the regulations of civil law and the rules laid down by ecclesiastical authorities. This is especially true of alienations, debts and obligations. If sums are involved that exceed the maximum stipulated by the national bishops' conference, or if it is a question of alienating objects of historical or artistic value, then the approval of the Holy See is needed.
- 643.8** Superiors and their councilors as well as treasurers and mission procurators, including managers of business ventures, must be acquainted with and follow the guidelines laid down by our proper law.



644 Insofar as the superior general and his council deem them capable of doing so, provinces and regions of the Society make an annual financial contribution to the generalate for Society purposes.

644.1 The norms for this and other contributions are determined by the general chapter; the superior general with the consent of his council determines the details.

645 In the administration and use of means entrusted to us, we must observe poverty, simplicity, justice and care for the integrity of creation. This holds true especially for extraordinary administration, that is, for acquiring, alienating and mortgaging property, as well as for building, investing and assuming debts.

Note 1:

The word “district” does not have the same meaning here as it has in ecclesiastical documents where it normally means the grouping of houses which have a superior delegated for certain matters. See “district” in the glossary.

PART FIVE

ADDITIONAL NORMS OF UNIVERSAL AND PROPER LAW

I. ADMISSION TO THE SOCIETY

1. Requirements for Admission to the Novitiate

- 701** In principle, any Catholic man may be admitted to the novitiate if he is properly motivated, has the qualification required by universal law and our proper law and is not prevented by some impediment (see can 597.1).
- 702** For admission to the novitiate the following qualifications are required (see can 642):
- a. physical and mental health;
 - b. sufficient ability and maturity to fulfill the tasks of the Society;
 - c. a religious spirit corresponding to one's age;
 - d. sociability;
 - e. active participation in the life of the church;
 - f. interest in and readiness for the missionary vocation and its tasks.



703 A person is invalidly admitted to the novitiate (see can 643.1) who:

- a. has not yet completed his eighteenth year, as laid down by our proper law;
- b. is married, for as long as the marriage lasts;
- c. is obligated by a bond of incorporation in some other institute of consecrated life, except in the case of a religious transferring to the Society in virtue of can 684;
- d. is compelled by force, grave fear, or deceit, or whom superiors, being similarly influenced admit;
- e. has concealed his admission (novitiate or profession) into some other institute or consecrated life.

704 Superiors may not admit the following persons to the novitiate (see can 644);

- a. diocesan clerics without previous consultation with their local ordinary;
- b. those who have debts to pay and are unable to meet their obligations before entering.

705 The following documents are required before admission:

- a. certificate of baptism and confirmation;
- b. proof that one is unmarried unless this fact is otherwise evident;
- c. a testimonial letter from the local ordinary or his seminary rector in the case of a diocesan cleric or from his major superior in the case of someone who was accepted into an institute of consecrated life if such are to be admitted (for a, b, c see can 645.1 and 645.2);
- d. a letter of recommendation from one's pastor or some other ecclesiastical superior;
- e. a physician's certificate of good physical and mental health;
- f. a report on one's studies.



706 The following declarations are to be made in writing by the candidate before admission:

- a. that he knows that he can be dismissed at any time if he has fraudulently concealed an impediment that would bar his admission, or if he becomes ill before perpetual profession in a way that would make him unfit for the work of the Society, with due regard for can 689.2 and 689.3.
- b. that he knows that he cannot demand any remuneration or pension for work done in the Society if he should at some future time leave or be dismissed, since admission and profession entail no legal work contract with the Society.

2. Requirements for Profession

707 For valid profession of temporary vows (see can 656) the following conditions are required:

- a. completion of nineteen years of age, as laid down by our proper law;
- b. completion of validly made novitiate; admission freely granted by the competent superior with the consent of his council;
- c. that it not be compelled by force, grave fear, or deceit;
- d. acceptance by the confrere's competent superior or by someone delegated by him.

708 The following conditions are required for licit admission to vows:

- a. worthy character, religious striving, and especially a living faith and spirit of prayer;
- b. sense of community life and ability to live it;



- c. ability and readiness to comply with the demands of life and work in the Society, even if this requires giving up one's homeland and culture;
- d. diligence and initiative.

709 In addition to the conditions in c. 707, the following are required for valid perpetual profession:

- a. completion of at least the twenty-second year of age, as laid down by our proper law;
- b. completion of at least three years of temporary vows (see can 658).

3. Regulations Concerning Property

710 During the novitiate the novice retains not only the ownership of his property but also the management, usufruct and use of it. However, he must not dispose of anything without the knowledge and consent of the novice master. The latter shall see to it that nothing is done contrary to the spirit of poverty.

710.1 * A novice can neither licitly nor validly renounce an ecclesiastical benefice nor surrender property rights nor encumber them.

710.2 No compensation can be demanded for the keep of the postulant or novice unless an explicit agreement was made prior to the beginning of the novitiate that they pay for their board and clothing. In order to better safeguard its freedom of action, the Society may not accept donations from novices.

710.3 If a postulant or novice leaves, he receives back all things he brought with him in the condition in which



they are at the time. The money which he deposited will be returned to him. He may not demand any financial remuneration for services rendered to the Society (see c. 706.b).

711 Before their first profession novices sign a declaration by which they state that they renounce the administration of their goods and freely designate someone to assume this administration. In this declaration they also dispose of the use and usufruct of their property and may do it in favor of the Society if the latter accepts it (see can 668.1).

711.1 If the above-mentioned transfer and disposal were omitted because the novice had no property at the time of his first profession and he later acquired some, or if it was made and additional property was acquired later, it should be made or renewed in the manner defined above. The disposal of the use and usufruct of property made before or after profession can be changed with the permission of the provincial superior, on condition that the change of a notable part of the property is not made in favor of the Society. In urgent cases permission of the local superior is sufficient.

If a member leaves the Society, this disposal of property loses its force (see can 668.2).

712 Before perpetual profession, those in temporary vows make a last will in which they determine who will inherit their property after their death. This will must be valid according to civil law.

712.1 To change a will made before perpetual profession, members need the permission of the provincial superior. In urgent cases the local superior can give this permission (see can 668.2).



712.2 * If for any reason a member did not make a will before perpetual profession, it should be made in case he later acquires some property or funds.

713 The superior general may permit a member in perpetual vows to renounce a part of his property (see can 668.4).

714 If a confrere leaves the Society, or is dismissed, he will receive back whatever property he has given to the Society or its equivalent value. All his personal effects are returned to him in the condition in which they happen to be at the time.

II. SEPARATION FROM THE SOCIETY

1. Exclaustration

715 For a serious reason the superior general with the consent of his council can grant an indult of exclaustration for up to five years to a confrere in perpetual vows. In the case of a cleric the consent of the local ordinary in whose diocese he will reside is also required. Only the Holy See can prolong the indult of exclaustration beyond five years or grant it initially for a longer period (see can 686, §1).

715.1 * An exclaustrated member is free from all obligations which are incompatible with his new situation. However, he remains dependent upon his superior who should be concerned about his welfare, and he also remains subject to the local ordinary if he is a cleric. He loses his active and passive vote in the community (see can 687).

715.2 * If serious reasons require it, the superior general with the consent of his council can petition the Holy See



to impose excommunication on a confrere. In such cases, charity and fairness are always to be observed (see can 686.3).

2. Departure

716 A member who wishes to leave the Society after the expiration of his temporary vows may freely do so. For a serious reason a member in temporary vows may be dispensed by the superior general with the consent of his council (see can 688).

716.1 * A major superior, after consulting his council, may also refuse to allow a temporarily professed member to renew his vows after they have expired (see can 689.1).

716.2 * Physical or psychic illness can be grounds for exclusion from further profession even if such illness occurs after first profession, provided it renders the confrere incapable, in the judgment of specialists, of living according to the demands of the Society. The only exception to be made is in the case of an illness due to work done in the Society or caused by some neglect on the part of the Society (see can 689.2 and .3).

717 Only for the most serious reasons, prayed over before the Lord, may a perpetually professed confrere request a dispensation from vows. A petition of this kind is to be sent to the superior general who will transfer it to the Holy See with his vote and that of his council (see can 691.1 and c. 619.9w).

718 Once the indult of secularization has been communicated to the confrere and unless he rejects it at the time of notification, it carries with it an automatic dispensation from his vows and from all obligations arising from profession (see can 692).



719 An indult of secularization cannot be given to a cleric before he has found a bishop who will incardinate him into his diocese or at least accept him on an experimental basis (see can 693).

719.1 * If a confrere is received into a diocese on an experimental basis he becomes automatically incardinated after five years unless the bishop rejects him (see can 693).

3. Dismissal

720 The following members are automatically dismissed from the Society (see can 694):

- a. one who publicly falls away from the faith;
- b. one who gets married or attempts to get married even if only civilly.
- c. one who has been unlawfully absent from the religious house for at least twelve (12) uninterrupted months, whose whereabouts are unknown and, in whose case, a normal process for his dismissal cannot be followed.

In the first two cases the major superior and his council should immediately collect the corresponding proof and issue a declaration of the fact to establish the dismissal juridically.

In the third case, major superior is called to assemble all the facts of the case and to issue the declaration of the fact. However, in order for the dismissal to be implemented and legally valid, the declaration of the fact must be confirmed by the Holy See.

721 A confrere must be dismissed if he is guilty of the following crimes (see can 695.1):

- a. concubinage and other serious sins against the sixth commandment if he fails to reform despite admonitions and the imposition of lesser punishments;



- b. murder or seriously inflicting bodily harm;
- c. effectively procured abortion.

721.1 * In these cases the major superior has to collect the proof concerning both the facts of the matter and their imputability, inform the confrere in question of the accusations against him and the evidence and give him the opportunity of defending himself.

721.2 * All documentation in the cases must be signed by the major superior and duly notarized. These are then sent to the superior general together with the reply of the accused confrere in writing and signed by him.

722 A member can be dismissed for other reasons, provided they are serious, external, imputable and juridically proven (see can 696.1), as in the case of:

- a. habitual neglect of the obligations of religious life;
- b. repeated violations of the vows;
- c. stubborn disobedience to superiors in serious matters which are legitimately required of the confrere;
- d. serious scandal resulting from some culpable conduct of the member;
- e. stubborn adherence to or propagation of doctrines condemned by the ecclesiastical magisterium;
- f. public adherence to materialistic or atheistic ideologies;
- g. an illegitimate absence of up to six months referred to in c. 731.1.
- h. other reasons of similar gravity that can be determined by proper law, e.g. repeated grave failings against poverty, financial mismanagement (see can 1376 and 1377)

Other reasons of similar gravity can be determined by proper law.



722.1 * Less serious reasons suffice to dismiss a confrere in temporary vows (see can 696.2).

723 In the cases mentioned above (c. 722 and 722.1), if the major superior after consulting his council feels that the process of dismissal should be initiated, he proceeds as follows:

- a. he should assemble and complete the proof;
- b. he should warn the member in writing or in the presence of two witnesses with the explicit threat of dismissal unless he mends his ways, clearly indicating the reason for dismissal and giving the member full opportunity to defend himself. If this admonition proves to be futile, he should repeat it after allowing an interval of fifteen days.
- c. if this second admonition also proves futile and the major superior and his council consider the member's incorrigibility sufficiently evident and his defense insufficient, fifteen days after the second admonition the major superior should transmit the documentation signed by himself and duly notarized to the superior general along with the signed reply of the member (see can 697).

724 In all cases regarding dismissal (c. 721 and 722) the confrere maintains his inviolable right to communicate with the superior general and to make his defense directly known to him (see can 698).

725 For the validity of the process, the superior general and at least four of his councilors must be present. Together they shall carefully examine all the proofs, arguments, and defenses, and if through a secret collegial vote they decide upon a decree of dismissal, they shall issue the same with at least a summary of



their reasons both in terms of the law and of the facts of the case, which summary is required for the validity of the decree (see can 699.1).

- 726** The decree of dismissal is to be sent to the dismissed confrere and it takes effect from the time that it is communicated to him. To be valid, however, the decree must indicate the right which the dismissed confrere possesses to make recourse to the competent authority within thirty days from receiving notification. If the confrere exercises his right of recourse, the decree of dismissal is suspended (see can 700).
- 727** The vows and all obligations and rights resulting from profession automatically cease once dismissal legitimately takes place. However, if the dismissed member is a cleric, he cannot exercise his orders until he has found a bishop who will accept him into his diocese according to can 693 after a fitting probationary period, or who at least will permit him to exercise his orders (see can 701).
- 728** Whoever legitimately leaves the Society or is dismissed cannot demand any reimbursement for work done while a member (see c. 706.b). The Society should in all fairness and evangelical charity provide in a fitting way for the former confrere (see can 702).
- 729** In case of grave public scandal or of very serious harm threatening the Society, the major superior, or if there is some danger arising from delay, the local superior with the consent of his council, may evict a member from the house. If necessary the major superior should initiate the process of dismissal according to the requirements of the law or refer the matter to the Holy See (see can 703).
- 730** In the report on the condition and life of the Society, which the superior general presents to the Holy See at prescribed times, he



also has to report on those confreres who have left the Society for any reason at all (see can 704).

III. SOME RIGHTS AND DUTIES

731 For reasons of sickness, studies or apostolic work within the scope of the Society, a confrere can be absent from the local community for a longer period of time. For other reasons the major superior with the consent of his council can permit an absence for up to a year (see can 665.1).

731.1 * If a member is illegitimately absent from his community with the intention of withdrawing from the authority of his superiors, the superior should seek him out and help him to return and to remain faithful to his vocation (see can 665.2).

732 Before publishing writings dealing with religious or moral themes, confreres need the permission of their major superior as well as that of the local ordinary either of the place of their residence or of the place of publication (see can 824 and 832).

733 Superiors should accord members the freedom necessary to receive the sacrament of reconciliation as well as spiritual direction in keeping with the discipline of the Society (see can 630).

733.1 * Superiors should appoint confessors for their communities so that the members may approach them frequently.

733.2 * Superiors are not permitted to hear the confessions of members of their communities unless a confrere explicitly requests it.



- 734 Superiors are in no way permitted to put pressure on confreres to expose matters of conscience. Confreres should willingly and spontaneously approach their superiors to discuss matters with them.
- 735 The degree to which the regulations contained in our constitutions are binding depends in each case on the nature of the regulation in question.





EPILOGUE

The aim of our constitutions and directory is to clarify the Master's invitation, "Come, follow me".

To follow the Divine Word and entrust ourselves to his service demands that we remain loyal to the Society we have joined and to the way of life we have vowed. Such loyalty, however, entails more than a conscientious observance of the letter of the law. For us the supreme norm of a life of service should be the self-surrender of the Lord who for love of us died that we might live.

In following the Master we commit our lives on a venture that can only be understood and attained through faith and love. We accept this challenge, placing our trust in the word of the Lord and the power of the Spirit given to us by the Father.





GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN OUR CONSTITUTIONS AND OTHER SVD DOCUMENTS

ACTIVE VOTE

Right to cast a vote in elections and in matters to be decided at chapters.

CONSTITUTION/CONSTITUTIONS Depending on the context the word means:

- the book or the whole assemblage of constitutions with or without the directory;
- a particular constitution or several constitutions with or without the corresponding points of the directory.

COUNCIL

Group of duly designated councilors who assist the superior in governing a community. The activity of the council is carried on in four different ways (see c 612):

1. ***In general:*** The council helps the superior by working with him as a team. This refers to everything that the council can and should do without specifying the details. To indicate this general activity, the constitutions use these expressions: “*the superior with his council*” (e.g. c.



522.4, 609); or also “*the superior and his council*” (e.g. c. 117, 522.3, 615), if it is clear from the context that a collegial decision is not involved.

2. **Consultative vote:** In order to act validly the superior must first obtain the opinions of the councilors. Although he is not bound to follow these opinions, he would be imprudent to disregard them too easily. A consultative vote is indicated by phrases such as: “*after consulting his council*” (e.g. c. 522.7, 629.2); or “*after hearing the opinion of his council*” (e.g. c. 638.1); or “consultative vote” (e.g. c. 630.3j).
3. **Deliberative vote:** The consent of the council is needed for the superior to act validly. While a superior cannot act contrary to the stand taken by the council, he can abstain from taking positive action recommended by his council. Indicated by phrases such as: “*with the consent of his council*” (e.g. c. 115.3, 513.7); or “*needs the consent of his council*” (e.g. c. 616.1).
4. **Collegial vote:** The council and the superior decide as a body by a majority of votes. The superior is bound by this decision. Indicated by the phrases: “*superior and his council*” (e.g. c. 511.1); “*collegial vote*” (e.g. c. 618.7, 725).

DESIGNATION (of superiors, councilors, officials, others)

A general term to indicate either the election or the appointment of a confrere to an office (see c. 611.1).

DIRECTORY

The aggregate of norms which appear below the constitutions. Each number is a point or article of the directory. * An asterisk placed before an article of the directory indicates that the particular article cannot be changed by a general chapter without the permission of the Holy See.



DISTRICT

A group of confreres who live in different places, parishes or mission stations, united into one community by the provincial superior with his council.

In our proper law, therefore, “*district*” refers to a local community whose members do not live in a religious house and yet enjoy the same privileges and duties as those who do.

DISTRICT SUPERIOR

The local superior of a district which has been constituted a local community. (see also District). In our proper law, therefore, the term “*district*” and “*district superior*” do not have the same meaning as they have in other ecclesiastical documents (see c. 636).

LOCAL COMMUNITY (see c. 636ff)

Group of confreres who live in a house or district (see also District superior).

MAJORITY VOTE (see Voting at Chapters)

NOTARY

The secretary general by virtue of his office, in accordance with c. 623. The confrere so appointed by the competent superior (see c. 721.2, 723).

PASSIVE VOTE

The right to be a candidate for an office (superior, councillor, official).

POSTULANCY (POSTULANT)

The time which a candidate spends in immediate preparation for the novitiate (see c. 512.1, 630.3j, 637.3a and c).



PROPER LAW

The assemblage of legislation which has its origin within the Society: constitutions, directory, manuals, handbooks or statutes approved by the superior general with his council, resolutions of general and provincial chapters, norms and directives of the superior general.

UNIVERSAL LAW

The totality of laws, decrees and norms which regulate ecclesiastical discipline, whether contained in the code of canon law or in other documents of the Holy See.

USUFRUCT

The legal right of using and enjoying the fruits or profits of something.

VOTE (of or in council): See Council

VOTING AT CHAPTERS

MAJORITY (i.e. of votes in elections and in balloting at chapters):

1. **TWO-THIRDS:** means that one alternative measure or one candidate has received the valid vote of at least two-thirds of the electors present, whether everyone actually votes or not.
2. **ABSOLUTE:** means that one alternative measure or one candidate has received the valid vote of at least more than one-half of the electors present, whether everyone actually votes or not.
3. **RELATIVE:** means that one alternative measure or one candidate has received more valid vote than any other.

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