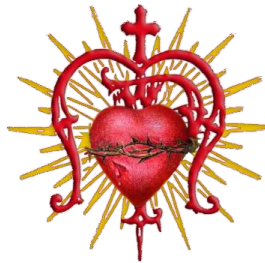


**CONSTITUTIONS AND
DIRECTORY OF
LITTLE MISSIONARIES
OF THE SACRED HEART**



Via Federico Ozanam 5
Antignano, Livorno, Italia
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SACRED HEART OF JESUS I TRUST YOU!

Dear Sisters,

With great joy of spirit I present to you and deliver the new text of the Constitutions, definitively approved by the Holy See by decree of His Eminence Cardinal Monsignor Jérôme Hamer O.P. on 11-3-1984, the anniversary of the death of our Foundress. Approval is a most chosen gift from Heaven that not only guarantees the validity of our renewed texts, but makes us sure of God's Will for us and gives us the comfort that we are with the Church, for the Church and in the Church.

Let us raise our thanksgiving to God the Father, in the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, with Mary our Mother and St. Joseph, our particular patron. The Constitutions will enter into force immediately. As soon as they are received, they should be made aware of them promptly. From now on, without the consent of the Holy See, it will no longer be possible to change what they prescribe.

In the Constitutions we find the teachings and directives of the Second Vatican Council, of subsequent pontifical documents, the prescriptions of the new Canon Law and, above all, the broad guidelines of our religious life and the specific purpose, that is, the charisma proper to our religious family.

The Constitutions, however, contain only the "minimum", required and leave to each soul a space of "freedom", the true freedom of the children of God, so that surpassing the "Norms" with "love", we know how to use the Constitutions and *the Norms of the Directory* as a necessary launching track, however, to take flight to the demands of Love

that are different for each soul, "according to the gift received from God".

Let us commit ourselves ardently to observing these *Constitutions* together with the Rule of St. Augustine and remember that the Norms *of the Directory* are also an integral part of our legislation. Let us love them with all the enthusiasm and fervour of the spirit, so that our consecration to God and to the Church may be ever more generous and bear authentic and joyful witness, in the midst of the People of God, to the Gospel message.

Allow me, dear Sisters, to ask you to accept these "Constitutions" and "Norms of the Directory" with a great spirit of faith: accept them, study them, especially love them. Let us pray to the Holy Spirit so that we may all know how to grasp not the letter that kills, but the spirit that gives life; only in this way will the renewed legislation of our Institute mark for all of us a leap forward in religious spirit and discipline.

May the Blessed Virgin, with the intercession of our Patron Saint Joseph and the Foundress, grant us the grace of unconditional and joyful fidelity, so as to be true Little Missionaries of the Sacred Heart: messengers of love and peace everywhere and always.

Antignano, 15 October 1985.

Your aff.ma Mother
Sr. NAZARENA VECCHINI

FOREWORD

The Congregation of the Little Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Antignano (Livorno), erected by Episcopal Decree on 13 June 1922, became a Congregation of Pontifical Right for the following.

DECREE OF RECOGNITION OF OUR CONGREGATION

The Rev.ma Superior General and the Consigno of the Sisters "Little Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus" in Antignano, Diocese of Livorno, explained to the Sacred Congregation of Religious that their Institute has grown sufficiently and widespread in various dioceses and works effectively for the good of Christian society.

The Institute, in addition to the general purpose of sanctifying the Sisters with the perfect observance, in common life, of the simple vows of obedience, chastity and poverty, has the particular purpose of spreading among the faithful the devotion of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and helping priests in parish ministry in dependence of the Ecclesiastical Authority: with kindergartens, with the teaching of Christian doctrine, with schools, assistance to the sick, managing pensioners and women's boarding schools.

Since it would greatly benefit the greater sanctification of the Sisters and for a greater impulse to the works if the Holy See wished to distinguish the Institute itself with some favor, the Oratrice humbly implores us, comforted by commendatory letters of the Ordinaries of the dioceses where the Sisters reside, and submitting her own constitutions.

The Sacred Congregation of Religious, carefully considering the request and hearing the favorable vote of the Commission of Rev. Consultors, with this Decree (No. 699 - 48L.91) *has elevated* to CONGREGATION OF PONTIFICAL RIGHT *the Institute of the Sisters "Little Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus" in Antignano* according to the norm of the *Constitutions* which declare themselves revised and in exemplary are preserved in the Archives of the Sacred Congregation of Religious while remaining the competence of the Orsinari. There is nothing against it.

Dated in Rome by the Secretariat of the Sacred Congregation for Religious on 14 April 1950.

f.to Card. LUIGI LAVITRANO
(Prefetto)



SACRA CONGREGAZIONE PER I
RELIGIOSI E GLI ISTITUTI SECOLARI

Prot. n. L. 91 - 1-83

DECREE

The Little Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, whose Generalate is located in the diocese of Livorno, have as their particular mission to collaborate with the local Church, especially in parish activities; to promote the Christian education of children, adolescence and youth; assist the sick.

Following the directives of the Second Vatican Council and following the other norms of the Church, they revised their Constitutions and elaborated a new text, which the Superior General, according to the norms of the Chapter, presented to the Holy See, humbly asking for its approval.

This Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, after entrusting the text to the study of its Consultors, taking into account the favorable vote of the Congress, which took place on the 19th of last February last, hereby approves and confirms it with the modifications established by the same Congress, according to the copy in Italian that is preserved in its Archives, Observed what must be observed in law.

Consecrated to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, symbol of God's infinite love, stimulated by the example of the Foundress, Mother Clotilde Gigli, may the Sisters live their


vocation with generous commitment, always bearing witness to joyful dedication, simplicity, meekness and humility in carrying out the specific apostolate entrusted to them by the Church.

Rome, 11 March, the anniversary of the death of the Foundress, the year of our Lord 1985.

+ f. Jovin Thaur, ob
Oro. Pub.

C O S T I T U Z I O N I
DELLA
CONGREGAZIONE DELLE "PICCOLE MISSIONARIE DEL S. CUORE"

approvate
della S. Congregazione per i
Religiosi e gli Istituti Secolari.
Roma, 11 marzo 1985
D. Adirleo Lavasio, c.p.
S.C. Off.



CONSTITUTIONS

CHAPTER I

Nature, Charism and Spirit of the Congregation

1. Our Congregation is of Pontifical Right and it is officially recognized by the Church with the name of: “Congregation delle Piccole Missionarie del Sacro Cuore”, or “Little Missionaries of the Sacred Heart”.
2. It is a religious Congregation dedicated to apostolic activity and finds its inspiration in the Rule of Saint Augustine and in the explicit will of the Foundress, Mother Clotilde Gigli. It is particularly consecrated to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.
3. We are called by God to be part of the Congregation through the profession of the public vows of the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience. We share the same charism and consequently we are committed to live the same spirit, to carry on its mission and to form among ourselves an authentic, fraternal community.
4. The charism of the Congregation consists in making the mystery of the Incarnation – that is the mystery of the infinite love of God for mankind which finds its perennial sign in the Heart of Jesus – the inspiring reason of our spirituality and of our whole apostolic activity.
5. We consider the most resilient element of our spirituality as Little Missionaries of the Sacred Heart to grow intimately with Christ our Lord possessing His feelings of mercy, trusting in Him and abandoning ourselves completely in Him, contemplating and absorbing in our personal life the inmost virtues and feelings flowing from the His Heart.

6. Being faithful to the example and the teachings of our Foundress, we feel it is our first and undeniable duty – a duty which we consider closely linked to our vocation – to make out of the meekness and the humility of Jesus the essential law of our individual and community life, so that modesty and simplicity, affability and kindness, serenity and confidence may become the distinguishing sign of the whole Congregation.

7. In harmony with our charism and our specific spirituality, our apostolic service is above all that of a humble cooperation in parish work, of active participation in the missionary life of the Church, of Christian education and formation, of help to the priests in need, of assistance to the sick. It is to be carried out particularly among the poor, the little ones and the marginalized. To these we feel obliged to convey the immeasurable richness of the Heart of Jesus.

CHAPTER II

Consecration to God and Profession of the Evangelical Counsels

8. Having made us, through baptism, similar to his only begotten Son, so that this image may be more complete and manifest, the Father has invited us to be more intimately consecrated to his service by following Christ more closely till He becomes the only reason of our life.
9. This call, which invites us to follow Christ and to run the same way He has gone through, we have answered by our religious profession which binds us to observe and live the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience.
(*Canon 673 § 2*)
10. The consecration realized through the religious profession is essentially a religious act which calls for a stable form of life in which by following Christ more closely under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit we give ourselves totally to God who is to love above all things.
(*Canon 573 § 1*)
11. Because the profession of the evangelical counsels makes us share more deeply the mystery of Christ chaste, poor and obedient, it is our special duty to live in the greatest possible way in his footsteps, by conforming ourselves to Him crucified, dead and risen.
12. Among the effects of religious consecration is that of being united in a special way to the Church and to her mission. Thus each sister and the whole Institute have the serious duty of working dutifully to establish and consolidate in all hearts and minds the kingdom of Christ and to bear it forth

to the ends of the earth. This service to the Church and concern for the salvation of the world will be the more effective and abounding in fruits the more we strive and resolve to become a bright sign of her holiness.

13. Aware that we disown the world and material things as demanded by the practice and observance of the evangelical counsels, we know that by embracing this life with great freedom of spirit and without reservation we shall become capable of denouncing the transitory character of all that is bound to earthly realities and we shall be living witnesses to the kingdom of God. This will give a true invitation for others to seek the things that never end.

Consecrated Chastity

14. The response to the grace of the vocation to which God has called us to go to Him, in the strength of the Holy Spirit and to follow Christ more closely, demands above all that we fully live Christ's love for the Father.
15. As Jesus loved the Father, and in the Father all the brethren, by reserving for Him all His energy and capacity of love, likewise we, by the profession of the vow of chastity, manifest our firm desire neither to seek nor will any other love but the love of God.
16. Through the vow of chastity we renounce marriage for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven and commit ourselves to live a perfect chaste life.
17. In its proper theological meaning, consecrated chastity for the Kingdom of heaven is a gift of divine grace, which renders us totally free, so that we can love God with undivided heart and can approach our brothers and sisters with the same love of Jesus. (*Canon 599*)

18. Furthermore, consecrated chastity is a day-to-day commitment to grow in perfect love. When chastity is lived in this way, with a generous, humble and joyous heart, it does not diminish our human personality or become an obstacle in our relationship with our neighbor, but rather it greatly favors our emotional maturity and it is of help in our apostolic commitment.
19. As happens with all other gifts of divine grace, consecrated chastity is entrusted to our weak and frail nature. Aware of this, but trusting in the help God has reserved for those who hope in Him, we shall resort to a healthy personal asceticism. We shall observe the mortification of the internal and external senses. We shall observe the virtue of temperance and modesty. But above all, we shall devote ourselves to an intensive life of prayer. We shall frequent the sacraments and shall promote within the community a true and deep fraternal love which will bring joy and tranquility to the hearts of all members.
20. In our constant efforts to live for the Lord with absolute purity of thoughts, of sentiments, of affection and actions we ought to have in mind the example and intercession of Mary. To her, our Immaculate Mother, we entrust our whole being, so that in keeping us from all stain we may grow in the love of Christ.

Evangelical Poverty

21. The invitation of Jesus “Come, follow me” resounds in our spirit as a request to love God as Jesus Himself has loved Him. It is furthermore, a call to partake of the mystery of his poverty, by giving up all our material goods, and more especially ourselves. Thus we shall have no other goods or

possession than God alone. It is in accepting this call that we make the vow of evangelical poverty. (*Canon 600*)

- 22.** Through the vow of poverty we renounce the right to use or dispose of temporal goods except with the permission of the Superiors.
- 23.** We maintain the ownership of our own goods and the right to acquire more. But before pronouncing the religious vows we freely cede to some one else the administration of whatever we own as well as of its use and fruits. Furthermore, we are bound, before perpetual profession to dispose, through a valid civil will, of all our possessions, with the most absolute freedom to decide how. Both this will and all other acts named in this article can not be changed without the permission of the Superior General. (*Canon 668 § 1, § 2*)
- 24.** Whatever material goods received as gifts or acquire through our works or skill (salaries, pensions, indemnization, insurance policies, subsidies, gifts) are received and acquired not for ourselves but for the community and, consequently, are to be given to the community. (*Canon 668 § 3*)
- 25.** Following the example of Jesus, who spent the years at Nazareth working as a carpenter, we submit ourselves to the common law of work, fleeing from any privilege and willingly accept the situations, the concrete rigor of poverty and the lack of security for the future. It is in this fashion that we share in the situation of so many of our brethren and can give effective proof of our trust in Divine Providence.
- 26.** Deeply convinced that poverty is our greatest richness in as much as it represents the necessary an indispensable condition of our being filled with the fullness of God, we shall carefully look to improve daily in the acquisition of

that kind of poverty which can be translated into emptying ourselves in a step-by-step search for God.

27. Following the example of Mary and counting on her help, we shall also try to see ourselves as simple creatures that recognize themselves as poor, so are destined to become rich in the fullness of God. It is in this way that we shall better comprehend and practice the gift of evangelical poverty.

Religious Obedience

28. There is no doubt that among the dispositions of the Heart of Jesus, obedience is the first through which He became obedient unto death and death on a Cross, so as to give the highest testimony of His love for the Father and to save the world. With Jesus, because we have been chosen to follow him in his ways, we are bound to seek the will of God in everything and fulfill it with perfect love. The obedience we have professed by our vow has as its fundamental objective to lead us to attain this goal.
29. Through the vow of obedience we commit ourselves to obey the legitimate Superiors in everything that directly or indirectly regards the observance of the vows or the Constitutions. (*Canon 601*)
30. It is a motive of holy joy to recognize in the Holy Father our supreme Superior, whom we have to obey even by virtue of the vow we have professed.
31. The Ordinary of each place where our communities and houses are located is to be honored and respected as the successor of the Apostles. We shall do our best to support their requests and accomplish their will as ordered to the spiritual good of the Church he governs. We shall willingly

accept their authority in accordance with the universal law of the Church.

- 32.** With the help of divine grace, we should not feel any difficulty to submit ourselves to our Superiors. Independent of human realities and their limitations, faith leads us to discover that God avails himself of human means to manifest his will.
- 33.** In obedience to God by obedience to the Superior, we are sustained and encouraged by the reassuring certainty that such obedience creates in us likeness of Christ, unites us more firmly and securely to the salvific will of the Father, makes us walk towards the full maturity of our being and lead us to the freedom of the children of God.
- 34.** Those among us who are called to assume the office of Superior, must realize that it is in the nature of their office to be God's representatives, to exercise authority in spirit of service to the Sisters so that God's love is manifested among them.
- 35.** In the practice of the virtue of obedience it is helpful to remember that it was followed before us by Mary. Looking at her and trusting in her power of intercession before the Heart of Jesus, we shall never fail in our determination to follow the will of God which no matter how it may be manifested becomes food and source of our peace.

CHAPTER III

Community Life

- 36.** It has pleased God to call us to live our consecrated religious life in community, so as to be a living witness to the world of fraternal charity. Here we can abundantly find the necessary help for the realization of our vocation.
- 37.** Considering the help that the community gives to our human nature, which is always weak and in need of much help, it is a means for which we must be thankful to the Lord. But if we look at the deep essence of community as it appears in the words of Jesus: “that they, Father, be one... so that the world may know that You have sent me” (*John 17:21*) the community is an end which the Lord commands us to attain.
- 38.** The community we are called to form is one in which its members can be said to be, as in the case of the first Christian community, “of one heart and one soul.” (*Acts 4:32*)
- 39.** In each of our communities, that which makes us have one heart and one soul is the commitment which we make to love one another as Jesus commanded us to love. Above all, it is the gift of the Holy Spirit infused into our hearts.
- 40.** Loving one another fully and with the help of the Holy Spirit we will be disposed to forget ourselves and our personal interest, to mortify our egoism, to bear the burden of others, to assist each other, to forgive one another and finally to accept each Sister as a gift that comes from the Lord.

41. The differences which exist among us in family background, temperament, age, culture, rather than being obstacles to fraternal charity, give us one more reason to accept one another as we are, so that within the community the unity willed by the Lord may shine forth.
42. If we live according to the principles and ideals already presented, we are confident that all members in our communities, like the members of a family united in the name of the Lord, shall enjoy his presence. At the same time we shall be encouraged to walk with renewed strength in his ways.
43. Having in mind that we are to achieve perfect unity of spirit, we must draw in abundance from the treasures of the word of God, from the liturgy and especially from the Eucharist, the light and the strength needed to grow in communion with Christ and in Him with our Sisters.
44. Realizing that the environment where our religious community lives should be conducive to meditation and life in the presence of the Lord, it is necessary that in our houses there be places and times of silence which are to be observed faithfully by all. Furthermore, the means of communications are to be used with moderation, avoiding whatever could be dangerous to our vocation or pose an obstacle to consecrated chastity.
(*Canon 666*)
45. In order to foster community life, particularly in those matters related to privacy, our houses should be so arranged that a portion of them should be exclusively reserved to the Sisters.

It is reserved to the Mother General, after having consulted the community, to establish which parts of the

house are to be reserved exclusively to the Sisters and hence form the enclosure: thus outsiders should be excluded from this part of the house except for just cause and with the explicit permission of the Superior. (*Canon 667 § 1*)

- 46.** So that all things related to our community life may proceed in order and be oriented to our spiritual good and to be of good example for others, there should be a schedule which takes into account the internal needs of the community and the external activities to which the Sisters must attend. This schedule should be approved by the Superior General.
- 47.** With due care for all that fosters fraternal unity or manifest it clearly, we give great importance to sharing our meals and recreations as set forth in our schedule. These particular community encounters, when carried out with intense participation, cause us to partake of the joy of those who live fraternally united in the Lord.
- 48.** Special care and attention should be dispensed to our aged and infirm Sisters. Because we see them as members of the mystical body of Christ in whom is shown forth and fulfilled that which is lacking in the passion of the Lord, we should give them all the attention, respect and concern which we can. To the Sisters in serious condition the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick should be administered.
- 49.** Although we are united in the love of Christ to our whole pilgrim religious family on earth, we are likewise united to those who have preceded us to the Father's house. Consequently, in witness to our union with them and as a sign of gratitude for the good they have done for the Congregation, let us commend them to the mercy of the Lord and faithfully comply with the prescribed suffrages and remember them often in our prayers.

- 50.** As we bear the inevitable burden of community life we feel encouraged and supported by the thought that this life lived in faithful observance of its laws, in the joy of fraternal sharing, in generous collaboration in work, in mutual support and encouragement in walking the Gospel way, in the joy of praying together; such life is an immense grace which is given to us by the Lord so that we may grow day by day in the perfection of that charity to which we have been called.
- 51.** Gathered around Mary like the disciples in the Cenacle we feel invited by her to realize fully in our communities the mystery of communion which Christ willed.

CHAPTER IV

Prayer Life

- 52.** The vocation we received leads us to follow Christ more closely and especially to commit ourselves to imitate his prayerful relationship with the Father.
- 53.** Admiring fully what we see carried out by Jesus we want our relationship with the Father to be patterned after that of Jesus. Thus, our relationship with the Father shall be that of contemplations, of listening, of trust and filial abandonment, of continuous search for his will and firm determination to fulfill it, of thanksgiving and praise, of adoration and petition.
- 54.** Supported by the grace of the Holy Spirit we shall always live this intimate union with the Father, living not for ourselves but for him who first loved us. Moreover, with the intention of knowing Him better and thus living with Him more intensively, we shall reserve and dedicate some hours of the day exclusively to prayer.

The Eucharist

- 55.** Our commitment to prayer life involves liturgy and particularly the Eucharist which is the highest form and the greatest and most complete expression of prayer. As we participate with due disposition of faith and devotion, it is not we who turn to the Father to adore Him, to praise Him, to ask from Him but Christ Himself who acts in all these things on us.
- 56.** Docile to the teachings of the Church concerning the infinite value of the liturgy, we shall assign the first priority in our

prayer life to the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, in which by the will of Christ, we renew the mystery of the Sacrifice which He Himself offered to the Father on the altar of the Cross. This is the sacrifice accepted by the Father, who exchanged the total donation of His Son, with the new immortal life that is the Holy Spirit which is given to all men who are to be united to Christ.

- 57.** The words of Jesus during the institutions of the Eucharist: “Do this in memory of me” invite us to live the mystery of the Eucharist as we reiterate that which Jesus did. As he gave Himself totally to the Father’s glory for the life of the world, likewise we have the duty to transform our lives into a continuous Eucharistic offering. (*cf. Mt. 26:26-29; Mk 14:22-25*)
- 58.** The daily celebration of the Eucharist in which we partake of the Body and Blood of Christ is in itself an extraordinary and efficacious means of spiritual purification. Furthermore, the Eucharist makes us more aware of our unworthy condition and awakens within us a greater longing for divine forgiveness. (*Canon 663 § 1*)

Sacrament of Penance

- 59.** The Sacrament of Penance is the principal and most direct means chosen by the Lord loving concern, in which He comes to us in the fullness of his mercy and forgiveness.
- 60.** So that the Sacrament of Penance will affect in us forgiveness of sins and continuous and progressive conversion of heart, it is absolutely necessary to perceive it as a sacrament of faith. Consequently, we shall adopt an attitude of faith as we frequent the Sacrament of Penance. In faith we believe that Christ accepts the confession of our sins and grants us his mercy and forgiveness.

- 61.** So that we may become more aware of God’s action in us and the way we respond to such love, we shall have a daily examination of conscience. In this fashion our inner conversion as expressed in the Sacrament of Penance may become a continuous journey towards conversion.
(*Canon 664*)

Liturgy of the Hours

- 62.** Our life of piety is rhythm by special community gathering of prayer. Among these in importance the “Liturgy of the Hours”.
- 63.** The Church teaches us that the Liturgy of the Hours have the characteristics of the sanctification of the whole day as well as all our human activity. In fact, it is through this prayers that both time and the human activities we are oriented towards the mystery of salvation and towards the glory in which the mystery of the Kingdom of God will be fulfilled.
- 64.** The spirit of piety which should accompany our celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours is supported and nourished by the awareness that through it we enter into intimate rapport with the Eucharistic Mystery. Furthermore, we come closer to Christ really present when the Church sings psalms and implores the divine assistance. Moreover, we offer our praise together with the heavenly host. Likewise we express more efficaciously our desires and petitions for the salvation of all mankind. Finally, we accomplish an imminently apostolic work, since we add our prayer for the coming of God’s Kingdom on earth.

Every day we shall recite in common Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and Night Prayer, but we shall recite in those

communities where we cannot do otherwise in private the Midday Prayer.

Mental Prayer

- 65.** The time reserved for our daily meditation is to extend at least to half an hour. At meditation, bearing in mind that we are in the presence of the Lord, we shall listen and contemplate the word of God. Furthermore, we avail of this time to present to the Lord our own needs and shortcomings, pleading for his mercy so that we may be touched and transformed by his grace.
- 66.** Being sure that the intensity of our intimate union with God depends in great measure upon our efforts and commitment to meditation and our faithfulness to this obligation, except for very serious reasons we shall not be dispensed to the obligation to dedicate the schedule time to meditation as prescribed by the laws of our Congregation.

Exercises of Piety

- 67.** We shall uphold the importance of spiritual reading, of the faithful observance of silence, of the regular participation in community prayer and acts of piety in accordance with the schedule of the community, particularly those devotions in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Through these various spiritual acts we have a number of means to protect and improve our interior life.

Community Encounter

- 68.** Great importance should be given to the weekly fraternal community meeting. During the meeting after listening to the chosen reading from the Holy Scriptures or any spiritual or liturgical book, or even a part of the Constitutions or the

Directory, we shall reflect upon our relationship with God and neighbor. Furthermore, we shall examine together the inner life of the community and our apostolic work; we shall encourage and help one another to witness in simplicity but fully our common vocation as Little Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

Monthly Retreat

- 69.** The monthly spiritual retreat offers a marvelous opportunity for all of us to renew us spiritually and to nourish ourselves more abundantly with the word of God, allowing ourselves to be more interiorly permeated by his divine love.
- 70.** The annual spiritual retreat is offered to us so that, under the light of God, we may recognize how far we are to act in conformity with God's plan for us and thus willfully submit to his grace. This is possible when the retreat takes place in a distended climate, in peace, in silence, tranquility and unconditional surrender to the Lord. To preach to the Sisters in churches and oratories of the Congregation permission from the Superior General or local Superior is required.
(*Canon 663 § 5*)

Feasts of the Congregation

- 71.** Faithful to a long tradition we celebrate with solemnity in the whole Congregation the Feasts of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, of the Blessed Virgin of Montenero (*January 27*) and Saint Joseph (*March 19*).
- 72.** In our day-to-day pilgrimage towards a life of true union with God we acknowledge the presence of the Virgin Mary. It is to her that we entrust our prayer and resolutions of living in filial union with the Lord and having the same sentiments as Jesus Christ our Lord. In order to manifest our

filial homage we recite in her honor daily the Holy Rosary, the Angelus or Regina Coeli in conformity with the liturgical times.
(*Canon 663 § 4*)

CHAPTER V

Apostolic Life

- 73.** The name which distinguishes us in the Church and by the Church – Little Missionaries of the Sacred Heart – reminds us that we are chosen to carry out a very particular mission.
- 74.** Following the charism of our Foundress the mission which we have to in the Church is that of proclaiming to the whole world that God is Love and that His Love is particularly manifested in the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
- 75.** The first and, in a sense, the most essential manifestation of the love of God for mankind coincides with our testimony of consecrated life whenever it is lived in a constant desire of living in union with God better and more intensively and fully committed to the salvation of our brothers.
- 76.** Faithful to our vocation we are bound to manifest our specific apostolic mission in the Church through the following works:
- collaboration with the local church particularly in the parishes
 - collaboration with the Diocese in Priest's residences
 - christian education of children, adolescents and the youth
 - dispensing assistance to the sick

These works required a constant theoretical and updated practical preparation. All Sisters should sense the need of this preparation and Superiors, in particular, are seriously obliged to favor it by all means available.

- 77.** The works which incarnate and manifest the missionary aspect of our vocation, works that are especially addressed to the needs of the little ones and the poor, the marginalized, and the outcast, are done in the name and by the mandate of the Church and in full communion with her.
- 78.** As a proof of the ecclesial character of our apostolic work we shall give Bishops and their representatives the obedience, respect and reverence which are their since they have prime responsibility within the Church.
- 79.** Moved by a genuine and effective love for the Church we shall always take to heart, in our apostolic activity, the peaceful collaboration with other religious Institutes and the diocesan clergy under the guidance of the Bishop, keeping in mind however the character and special ideals of our Congregation.
- 80.** So that our apostolic work will produce its desire spiritual effects in us who perform such work, it has to follow some principles: first, it has to be done in adherence to the teachings of the Church for which the “apostolic action belongs to the very nature of institutes...”

Therefore, the “whole life of the members is to be imbued with an apostolic spirit and the action is to be informed by a religious spirit.” (*Canon 675 § 1*)

- 81.** Another principle which we should always remember reminds us that as we carry out our apostolic work we do not act in our own personal name even though we carry the weight of our work’s burden and responsibility. However, we act in the name of the community to which we belong. Truly it is the community and not the individual person to whom the Church entrust a concrete apostolic work.

(Canon 675 § 3)

- 82.** Since we act on behalf of and in the name of the community we are compelled to assimilate its spirit, to report by all means the work we are doing, to accept with simplicity and respect observations and suggestions, to put our apostolate under the guidance of obedience. Likewise the community should feel involved and committed to support in every possible way sisters who work in its name. Should we wish to publish any book on matters of religion or morals the permission of the Superior General is required.
- 83.** To avoid conflict between regular life and apostolic life, the different communities of the Congregation will arrange a schedule in which the demands of community life will have a just place, aware of the fact that regular life is ordered to and should contribute to a more fruitful apostolate. Therefore, all such provisions should make us feel the need to seek in religious observances the recollection and prayer which are indispensable if our activity is to bear supernatural fruits.
- 84.** Believing in the Communion of Saints and in the real participation in the common vocation of the Little Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Sisters who because of age or sickness, or any other cause, can not carry out or participate in any apostolic work should remember that by adhering to and accepting God's will they equally collaborate in a very fruitful apostolate. Nothing fosters the Kingdom of God more than the acceptance of the cross in union with Jesus.
- 85.** From the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom we joyfully called Queen of the Apostles, we learn through the continuous contemplation of the great works the Lord has done through her, that a true apostolic work is done whenever we abandon

ourselves to the Lord to become instruments in his hands for the salvation of the world.

CHAPTER VI

Admission to the Congregation

- 86.** The particular experience of God and his love which, because of an absolute gratuitous gift of his divine grace, has been granted to us as members of the Congregation of the Little Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, enkindles in us the desire that other persons will receive the same gift and may be given the opportunity of sharing our own experience.
- 87.** Those who wish to join us in our Congregation should possess, besides the requirements lay down by the universal law of the Church for those who aspire to consecrate themselves to God in a religious Institute, the requisites inherent in the ideals and goals of the specific mission of the Little Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. (*Canon 642 § 1*)
- 88.** Among the requisites to be met by those who wish to become part of our religious family we consider of capital importance the acceptance of our ideals and way of life, by this we mean our charism, our spirit and our mission.
- 89.** Assisting the young who are seriously discerning the things about religious vocation to discover the will of God for them, is itself an important apostolic work for which we should all feel responsible.
- 90.** Though the problem of vocations affects and involves us all in the sense that all Sisters should feel personally, nevertheless, it is good and necessary that a Sister or a team of Sisters be especially charge with promoting vocations in a more suitable way.

91. We can accept Catholic women who, besides having canonical age and right intention, are free from impediments. Candidates must enjoy good health and be gifted with those natural gifts which render possible a progressive and sufficient psychological and intellectual maturity needful for assuming the specific life of the Congregation. (*Canon 643 § 1*)

92. Candidates, before being accepted to the novitiate, should present the following documents:

- a) certificate of Baptism, Confirmation and the affidavit of being single.
- b) certificate of good conduct from their parish priest or another priest known to them.
- c) a medical certificate prepared by a medical doctor known to the Congregation. Said medical certificate should take the medical history of the family of the candidate into consideration.
- d) school academic records.
- e) a formal declaration written and properly signed in which the candidate confirms that she freely and willingly want to join the Congregation and that she neither is affected by any chronic nor grave illness. Furthermore, she should declare her willingness to render services in accordance with the dispositions of the Superiors and without any economic remuneration should she chose to leave or should she be dismissed from the Congregation. If the candidate is a minor the affidavit shall be countersigned by her parents or guardians and shall be kept in the Archives.

(*Canon 645 § 1*)

CHAPTER VII

On Formation: General Criteria and it's Cycles

- 93.** The Congregation is duty bound to foster solid formation for its members from the day in which they joined the Congregation until the day on which their pilgrimage on earth is ended.
- 94.** Formation is of such great and decisive importance that everything in the Congregation should be subordinated to fostering its results. Neither the scarcity of personnel nor the demands of our apostolate should ever be sufficient reason to justify its omission or relent its vigor.
- 95.** Formation aims at making us to grow everyday in interior knowledge, love and imitation of Christ by faithfully following the specific charism and mission of our Institute.
- 96.** So that the formation process will be effective, it must be personal, progressive, comprehensive, and integral. Doubtless, this is the kind of formation which should characterize the Little Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Thus, sisters may come to enjoy that human and christian maturity needed for living in a manner proper to our vocation.
- 97.** The first inspiring force in formation is the Holy Spirit who, after configuring us to Christ, constantly impels us to fully assimilate our life, virtues and will to those of Christ. Therefore, the sisters should be docile to his divine guidance and inspiration as not to hinder his sanctifying action.
- 98.** In the practical order, as clearly stated above, the Superior General and the members of her Council assume the first

responsibility in formation. It is their duty to prepare and implement a Program of Formation for the Congregation.

99. The program of formation of the Congregation should give special attention to the different stages of formation namely: the Postulancy, Novitiate and Juniorate. The Mistresses of Formation, who are responsible for formation during these periods, are appointed by the Superior General with the deliberate vote of her Council.

100. The Mistresses of Postulants, Novices and Juniors shall be chosen from among perpetually professed Sisters:

(Canon 651 § 1)

- 1) that gives signs of loving sincerely the Congregation
- 2) that is well knowledgeable about the charism, history and mission of our Institute
- 3) and qualify pedagogically for the position to which they are assigned

101. The Mistresses of Formation shall, in the implementation of their assignments, scrupulously follow whatever is laid down in the program of formation, whether it refers to the programs or to the spirit and method of their implementation. Moreover, they shall try to conform what they teach to others with the witness of their own lives.

102. Though formation is the special concern of the Mistress, yet it is not her exclusive responsibility but the commitment and responsibility of all the members of the community, because we are all duty bound to create in our communities a climate of faith, fraternal peace, tranquility and joy without which religious formation is meaningless.

103. Since the aim of formation is to focus on attaining the fullness of Christ's life in us, we shall understand that this matter involves our whole life. Consequently, we may refer

to two types of formation: “Initial formation” extended to Postulancy, Novitiate and Juniorate and “Permanent formation.”

Postulancy

104. No Candidates to religious life can be accepted to the Novitiate unless she has first undergone a suitable period of Probation. This period of Probation is called Postulancy and takes place in one of our Houses in direct contact with the kind of life we live in the Congregation. The admission to Postulancy is decided by the Superior General.

(Canon 597 § 2)

105. The period of Postulancy shall help the candidates to know themselves better and in the discernment of their vocations. Moreover, this period will offer to the candidates the possibility of evaluating whether our Congregation can respond to their longings and hence the chance of arriving at a well founded decision. Furthermore, Postulancy provides the Congregation with ample time to evaluate and pass a judgment on the vocations and attitudes of the candidates. Likewise the Congregation will be able to judge on the psychological maturity of each candidate and effectively assist her on the first steps towards the realization of her vocation.

106. Direct contact with the postulants shall give the Mistress of Formation a chance to evaluate the candidate’s real commitment to consecrating herself to the Lord in religious life, her concern for prayer life, her disposition to practicing the virtues proper to the Heart of Jesus finally how she understands and values the spirit of our Congregation. The Superior General shall be informed on the progress of each candidate, so that she may be able to decide on the acceptance of the postulant to the Novitiate.

107. The candidate may freely interrupt her Postulancy. Likewise the Superior General, for just cause, enjoys the right to dismiss her after consulting the Sister-in-charge of formation and obtaining the opinion of her Council.

Novitiate

108. We accept to the Novitiate only those candidates who have successfully completed their Postulancy and have been considered fit for religious life and after they have presented their explicit written request.

109. The right to accept a candidate to the Novitiate is reserved to the Superior General with the consent of her Council after the candidate has been favorably recommended by the Mistress of Formation.

110. The entrance to the Novitiate shall be presided by eight day of spiritual retreat and takes place following our ritual duly approved by the competent ecclesiastical authority. During the celebration a copy of our Constitutions is given to the Novice.

111. The entrance of the candidate into the Novitiate marks the beginning of religious life in our Institute. (*Canon 646*)

112. The novitiate is intended to give the novices a clear comprehension of the meaning of divine vocation, of that which is proper to our Institute as well as an opportunity of experiencing our lifestyle and of forming themselves on the spirit of our Congregation. (*Canon 646*)

113. The aim of the Novitiate is that of verifying the real intention which motivates the Novices and of finding out if they are fitted to become members of the Congregation.

114. Both the nature and purpose of the Novitiate demand that the time of its duration be dedicated exclusively to true and real formation. Consequently, novices shall neither undertake studies nor tasks not related to their formation.
(*Canon 652 § 5*)

115. In accordance with the special purpose of the Novitiate this is a period of intense spiritual activity in which novices should be guided in the following:

- promoting and cultivating all human and Christian virtues;
- introducing themselves in a more serious and committed fashion to perfection availing themselves of prayer and self-denial;
- directing them to contemplate the mystery of salvation and reading and meditating the Holy Scriptures;
- rendering worship to God through Sacred Liturgy;
- to be formed in accordance with the demands of a life consecrated to God and mankind in observance of the evangelical counsels;
- finally, candidates shall be informed about the ideals of our spirit, about the purpose of our discipline, about the history and life of the Congregation and shall be taught how to love the Church and her sacred ministers.
(*Canon 652 § 2*)

116. In receiving the education imparted to them, Novices, conscious of their own responsibility, shall devote themselves wholeheartedly to this task by active participation and collaboration with the Mistress in order to respond more faithfully to the grace of their vocation.
(*Canon 652 § 3*)

117. The following two conditions affect the validity of the Novitiate:

- a) It must take place in a designated house, through a decree issued by the Superior General with the consent of her Council.
- b) The stay in the novitiate community shall last for twelve months. (*Canon 648 § 1*)

In order to integrate the apostolic activity proper to our Congregation into the formation of novices, it is hereby ordered that in addition to the length of the novitiate there will be one or more periods of time devoted to pastoral exposure which will take place outside the novitiate house. The comprehensive length of novitiate and pastoral exposure will be two years. (*Canon 648 § 2-3*)

118. During the canonical novitiate period, a continuous or discontinuous absence of three months invalidates the novitiate. Likewise, an absence of more than fifteen days but which will not exceed the three months be made up. When the absence does not reach the fifteen days there is no need of extending the novitiate period. (*Canon 649 § 1*)

119. The guidance of the novices, under the jurisdiction of the Superior General, is exclusively reserved to the Mistress. She is appointed by the Superior General with the consent of her Council and is chosen from among the perpetually professed sisters who have reached the age of thirty. (*Canon 650 § 1*)

120. Novices are free to leave the Novitiate at any time. Likewise, when there is just cause, the Superior General has the right to dismiss a novice after consenting her Council and the Mistress. (*Canon 653 § 1*)

Towards the end of the novitiate, the novice makes a petition letter requesting the acceptance to first religious profession.

121. Once the Novitiate is completed, the novices shall be accepted by the Superior General if, after having examined the written recommendation of the Mistress, they are found suitable for religious life. Otherwise the novice should be dismissed from the Congregation.

In case of doubt concerning the candidates qualities, the Superior General with the consent of her Council, can extend the probation period for no more than six months.

(Canon 653 § 2)

Temporary Profession

122. Religious Profession marks the end of the formation undergone during the Novitiate and consists of taking of the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience.

The form used in making temporary or perpetual profession is as follows:

“In honor of the Most Blessed Trinity, I Sister... trusting in Divine Grace and in the help of the Blessed Virgin Mary, make to Almighty God, into your hands, Sister... Superior General (or delegate of the Superior General), the vows of CHASTITY, POVERTY AND OBEDIENCE for a year (or for life) in accordance with the Constitutions of the LITTLE MISSIONARIES of the SACRED HEART of JESUS”.

123. With Religious Profession the Little Missionaries of the Sacred Heart assumes in a public manner and by vow the obligation of observing the Evangelical Counsels. Likewise she consecrates herself through the ministry of the Church and incorporates herself to the Congregation with all the rights and duties of its members.

124. During the religious profession the sister is dressed with the religious habit proper to our Institute as a sign of consecration to God and testimony of poverty, which the Sister shall always wear. *(Canon 669 § 1)*

125. The first Religious Profession is temporary in the sense that the vows will be emitted for one year. These are renewed on a year-to-year basis for four consecutive years. The right of acceptance to the renewal of vows is reserved to the Superior General with the consent of her Council. (*Canon 655*)

126. For the validity of the temporary profession we require:

- 1) that the candidate be at least 19 years old.
- 2) that the novitiate year has been validly completed.
- 3) that the acceptance to religious profession has been freely granted by the Superior General with the deliberative vote of her Council.
- 4) that the acceptance and taking of vows is done in freedom and without violence, fear or deceit.
- 5) that the profession be received by the Superior General or her lawful delegate. (*Canon 656*)

A retreat of eight days shall precede the taking of vows which are to be pronounced during the celebration of the Eucharist in accordance with our rite.

127. With temporary profession Sisters acquire the right to active voice in accordance with the specific norms of our Institute.

Juniorate

128. The Juniorate covers the period from the first Religious Profession until the Perpetual Profession.

129. The Juniorate following the formation received in the Novitiate, aims to continue it, striving to integrate it into the perspective of community life and the preparation for the apostolic activity which the juniors are expected to carry out in our Congregation.

- 130.** So that the formation in the Juniorate will accomplish the desired goals, this formation should be systematic, fitting to the condition of the young professed, spiritual and apostolic, doctrinal and practical, so designed that Sisters may obtain civil or ecclesiastical degrees which they may need in order to carry out the apostolic mission of the Congregation in their respective fields of work. (*Canon 665 § 1*)
- 131.** When the time for Perpetual Profession is approaching, the Sister shall put her petition in writing and address it to the Superior General. The Superior General with the consent of her Council and after hearing the opinion of the Mistress of Juniors is to decide on the merits of the petition. (*Canon 657 § 1*)
- 132.** Before perpetual profession, the Juniors who have been accepted, will spend two consecutive months in the house of the Juniorate or in other house designated by the General Council. To better prepare themselves for this solemn occasion Juniors will devote their time to an intense spiritual preparation for their definitive consecration to the Lord.
- 133.** Perpetual Profession will be preceded by eight days of spiritual retreat and shall be pronounced in accordance with the rite of our Congregation.

Perpetual Profession and Permanent Formation

- 134.** Through Perpetual Profession the Little Missionaries of the Sacred Heart consecrate themselves to the Lord for life and are incorporated in a final way to the Congregation. Likewise they assume fully all our duties and rights and commit themselves to live until death observing the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. Furthermore, under the

guidance of the Holy Spirit they dedicate themselves to the Father's glory, to build up the Church and to work for the salvation of mankind.

- 135.** Because Perpetual Profession is first a gift of God's infinite generosity and secondly a gesture of human generosity, we firmly believe that we are continuously assisted by a particular grace which aimed to support our personal effort, so that we may remain ever faithful to our commitments.
- 136.** For the validity of Perpetual Profession aside from the conditions prescribed for temporary Profession, it must be preceded by no less than five years of temporary vows. Therefore, this profession can not be made before the candidate is twenty-four years old.
- 137.** For just cause, according to the judgment of the Superior General with her Council, Perpetual Profession may be advanced by no more than three months. (*Canon 657 § 3*)

CHAPTER VIII

Leaving of and Dismissal from the Congregation

- 138.** The leaving of or dismissal from the Congregation always involves a painful situation. Though necessary, therefore, it should be treated prudently and with a sense of propriety. For this reason Superior will be well advised not to take a decision on this matter without having examined and pondered seriously the causes and without having implored divine wisdom and enlightenment and without securing advice from prudent and conscientious persons.
- 139.** In matters concerning the leaving or dismissal of a temporary perpetually professed Sister from the Congregation, we shall rigorously observe, though with charity and respect for the human person, the dispositions of the universal law of the Church. (*Canon 686 § 1, § 2*)
- 140.** Following the example of Jesus Christ and his inspiration, we shall not leave alone a Sister who may find herself facing difficulties because of the uncertainty concerning her vocation. We shall try to be close to all Sisters assisting them with our fraternal support, with our understanding, with our love and with our prayer.
- 141.** In relation to those Sisters who by their behavior expose themselves to the danger of being separated from the Congregation, the Superior shall resort to all available means to help them change their ways. However, should means turn out to be useless, the Superior shall not hesitate to resort to the procedures laid down in the universal law of the Church, particularly when the honor, the good name and the moral integrity of the community are at stake. (*Canon 696 § 1*)

142. In accordance with evangelical charity we shall provide the Sisters leaving the Congregation with the assistance they may be in need of. Nevertheless, they do not have nor right to claim any retribution for the services rendered during the stay in the Congregation.

If possible, the Congregation shall continue to maintain bonds of charity and fraternal concern towards the Sisters who leave us. (*Canon 702 § 1, § 2*)

143. A Religious who has lawfully left the Congregation after having completed the Novitiate or after her profession can be readmitted in the Congregation by the Superior General with the consent of her Council without the need of repeating the Novitiate. Nevertheless, in each case and in accordance with the laws of the Church, the Superior General with the consent of her Council shall determine the periods of probation and the length of the temporary profession to be required.

(*Canon 690 § 1*)

144. All separations from the Institute become for us a motive of reflection on the gratuitous gift of religious vocation and how we should always care for, and be vigilant as regards it in order to protect this precious treasure lovingly and faithfully.

CHAPTER IX

Government of the Congregation

The Service of Authority

- 145.** Let us be disciples of the Lord Jesus, who did not come among men to be served but to serve and to give his life for the salvation of many. Sisters, who within the Congregation are being called to exercise authority, shall not have any other model than that of the Son of God.
- 146.** With their eyes constantly fixed on their Divine Model, Superiors shall exercise in spirit of service the authority which they have received from God through the ministry of the Church.
- 147.** It is the duty of Superiors, in their rapport with the Sisters entrusted to them, to treat and guide them as daughters of God, and they shall try to be the expression of God's love for them. With respect for the human person, Superiors shall promote the free submission of their subjects, shall listen to them and shall exert all efforts to create mutual collaboration in providing the good of the Institute and of the Church.
- 148.** In fulfilling diligently the duties of her office, the Superior shall look forward to establishing in Christ, together with the sisters entrusted to her, a fraternal community in which above all they search for and love Christ.
- 149.** So that there may be a continuous searching for God and of his love, it is necessary that Superiors be first in giving example by acting in everything in conformity with the spirit

of the Lord. In this way their role as animators and leaders within the community, will attain the desired goals.

150. It is of absolute importance that all Superiors have one heart and one mind in guiding the Congregation towards its goal. They shall respect one another and their respective levels of authority so that the spirit of subsidiary in the exercise of authority within the Congregation will favor the unity of all its members.

151. All Sisters are called to have a spirit of collaboration to attain the good of the Congregation: no one can evade this lest she seriously fail in one of her grave duties. Nevertheless, it is the special role of the Superior to favor and encourage such collaboration so that it may be effective. Among the most useful means, Superior avails the attitude of dialogue, respect for the personal tasks, true and real representation in the General Chapter and any other means of participation with decisive powers for the Institute. (*Canon 833 § 2*)

The General Chapter

A) Nature – Role – Celebration

152. The General Chapter is a collegiate body which exercises within the Congregation the supreme authority in accordance with the Universal Law of the Church. (*Canon 631 § 1*)

153. The General Chapter while is a sign which shows unity, participation in charity of all the members of the Congregation, for its own good, it has to be composed in such a way that truly represent the entire Congregation. (*Canon 631 § 1*)

- 154.** First and foremost, the General Chapter has the duty to protect the spiritual patrimony of the Congregation which is constituted by the intention and projects of the Foundress concerning the nature, ideals, spirit of the Congregation. Moreover, it is within the Chapter's competence to promote a sufficient renewal in harmony with the charism of the Institute. (*Canon 631 § 1*)
- 155.** The celebration of the General Chapter follows the norms established by the Universal Law and the proper rules of the Congregation. The Chapter may be "Ordinary" or "Extraordinary".
- 156.** By "Ordinary General Chapter" we mean the Chapter which takes place every six years or when the office of the Superior General falls vacant. The Superior General with the consent of her Council, for grave and just reasons, can advance or postpone the Chapter, for six months. The Chapter which is celebrated every six years is to be convoked by the Superior General six months before its celebration. Place and date of its celebration are determined by the Superior General with her Council. When the office of Superior General is vacant the Vicar General convokes the Chapter in such a manner that the General Chapter can take place within six months of the vacancy of the office of Superior General.
- 157.** The following are the roles of the Ordinary Chapter:
- to elect the Superior General, the Councilors and the General Econome.
 - to make an accurate revision of the spiritual discipline and apostolate of the Institute.
 - to remedy abuses and deviations observed in the running and life of the Congregation by providing opportune corrective means.

- to deal with the most important and general concerns of the Congregation so as to obtain a better view of them and draw up or even decide matters related to them.
(*Canon 631 § 1*)

158. The Superior General with the consent of her Council can convoke the General Extraordinary Chapter when there are important and urgent matters to be decided. Convoking this chapter is the responsibility of the Superior General with the deliberate vote of her Council and the decisions of an Extraordinary Chapter should be limited to the matters which caused it to be convoked.

159. The General Chapter is composed of members by “right” and “elected” members.

Members by right are:

- a) the Superior General;
- b) the General Councilors;
- c) the Econome General;
- d) the Ex-Superior General;
- e) the Mistress of Novices.

Those named in a), b), c), remain as members of the Chapter until its end even though they are not re-elected.

160. The elected members who participate in the Chapter should be at least equal in number to the numbers by right. The elected members are legitimately chosen following the norms of our particular laws by all the Professed Sisters of the Congregation.

161. Only Sisters in perpetual vows can be elected as delegates to the General Chapter.

162. In the celebration of the General Chapter we shall faithfully observe the following:

- for the validity of the Chapter, that all the Sisters who have the right to participate should have been convoked and at least two thirds be present; (*Canon 167 § 1*)
- the ballot that we give in the elections must be free, secret, certain (without ambiguity), absolute (without any condition) and specific (by clearly naming the person whom we intend to elect); (*Canon 172 § 1*)
- it is forbidden to obtain directly or indirectly votes for one's self or other. Nevertheless, it is not prohibited to give information on the sisters whom we consider fit for a given position or to be candidates for an office;
- in accordance with our particular norms, no one can validly vote for herself;
- we must vote for that Sister who, after due and mature consideration in the presence of God, we think should be elected for a given office;
- when one or more Chapter members, present in the house where we hold the Chapter, are impeded because of illness and cannot be present in the chapter room, the two scrutators should go to their quarters to obtain their written and secret ballot. (*Canon 167 § 2*)

B) On The Elections

163. The election of our Superior General, in accordance with the particular laws, is presided over by the Bishop of the Diocese in which the celebration of the Chapter takes place or by a Priest who has been duly delegated by the Bishop. (*Canon 625 § 2*)

164. In order that a Sister may be elected Superior General it is necessary that she be forty years old and that she have been perpetually professed for five years. (*Canon 623*)

The Sister who obtains the absolute majority of votes (half plus one) shall be considered elected Superior General. The number of votes shall take into account the number of chapter members who are present.

When no Sister obtains the majority of votes in the first three scrutinizes, there will be a fourth one. In this last scrutiny the two Sisters who polled highest in the previous scrutiny and only they enjoy passive but not active voice.

If in the third scrutiny more than two Sisters have obtained an equal number of votes, only the two senior in first Religious Profession enjoy passive voice and are to be presented for voting on. In case the Sisters referred to above have professed on the same day the two oldest in age will be voted on.

If in the fourth scrutiny the votes are equally distributed the eldest in profession shall be considered elected or the eldest in age if they have the same date of profession. (*Canon 119 § 1*)

165. The Superior General is elected for six years and may be reelected for another term of six years, but in this case she should obtain two thirds of the votes in the first two scrutinizes. However, no Sister can be elected Superior General for three consecutive terms of six years. (*Canon 624 § 1, § 2*)

166. The proceeding on the election of the Superior General promulgated by the Secretary of the Chapter will be signed by the President of the election, the two Scrutinizers and the Secretary of the Chapter to be kept in the Archives of the Congregation together with the Acts of the Chapter.

- 167.** If the newly elected Superior General is not present at the Chapter she should be immediately informed of her election and the work of the Chapter is suspended until she arrives.
- 168.** After the election of the Superior General, in the time established by the same Chapter, the four Councilors will be elected with separate ballots under her presidency.
- 169.** The method followed for the elections of the General Councillors will be the one followed for the election of the Superior General, with the difference that if in the first two ballots the absolute majority of votes was not obtained, in the third ballot the Sister who has obtained the relative majority will remain elected; if in the third ballot the votes are equal, the norm for the election of the Superior General will apply.
- 170.** One of the Councillors elected by the General Chapter, directly chosen by the Superior General, and replaceable at her discretion, holds the office of Vicar General and, as such, takes the place of the Superior General when she is absent or ceases for any reason from her office.

Matters to be taken up in the Chapter

- 171.** In the General Chapter we take up all major problems connected with the life and progress of the whole Congregation. (*Canon 631 § 1*)
- 172.** Given the particular nature of the General Chapter and so that it may attain its goals, Sisters are free to send their own personal suggestion and proposals. However, these will not be presented for discussion in the Chapter until a special commission of three charged with their diligent study, approved and endorses them favorably. (*Canon 631 § 3*)

- 173.** The decisions of the General Chapter are taken by a majority with secret vote by the members present who have the right to vote. In case of equal ballots the Superior General may decide. Nevertheless, to modify the Constitutions a majority of two thirds of votes is needed.
- 174.** The proceeding of each session diligently formulated by the Secretary and the Chapter duly signed by all the Chapter members is to be preserved in the Archives of the Congregation.
- 175.** It is the right of the Superior General to promulgate officially, through a Circular Letter, the results of the elections and the practical norms decided by the Chapter for implementation in the whole Congregation.

The Superior General

- 176.** The Superior General rules and governs the whole Congregation with an authority which extends to each house, and to each Sister, in accordance with the Universal Law and our own norms, and in respect for the authority and the competence of the local Superiors. (*Canon 622*)
- 177.** The specific end of the government exercised by the Superior General should be that of guiding the Congregation to a better and deeper understanding of its own charism and of its own particular mission and at the same time remaining ever faithful to its own identity.
- 178.** Having always in mind the final goal to which she should lead the Congregation, the Superior General shall pay particular attention to form the members in intense union with God, the source from which their fraternal love is derived and the zeal characterizing their apostolate. (*Canon 619*)

- 179.** The Superior General shall make an effort to maintain with each community and Sisters, a vivid and attentive relationship, patterned after the tender love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This rapport should clearly manifest her desire of acting only for the good of the Institute and each one of its members. Consequently, she should be acquainted with the daily life the Sisters are living and if necessary she should not evade intervening firmly, so that by fraternally correcting their mistakes, they may seek to live more interiorly for the Lord. (*Canon 619*)
- 180.** Keeping in mind the exultation of the Lord which admonish that without Him we can do nothing, the Superior General will seek in prayer what God wants for the good of the Congregation, and through prayer lovingly cultivated, she will seek the strength to do what she ought to do.
- 181.** Among the most suitable means for a fruitful government of the Congregation we single out the importance of the periodical visit to all communities. At least every three years the Superior General shall make this visit herself or, if impeded, with the deliberate vote of her Council, through a delegated Sister. During the visit she shall concern herself of each sister, community and particularly with the faithful observance of religious discipline, fraternal community life and the apostolate the Sisters carry on. (*Canon 628*)
- 182.** The Superior General may dispense a particular Sister and, having heard her Council, even a whole community from the observance of a concrete disciplinary prescription of the Constitutions. Such dispensation may only be given for just cause for a definitive period of time.

The General Councilors

- 183.** The General Councilors are direct collaborators with the Superior General in the government of the Congregation. (*Canon 627 § 1*)
- 184.** The collaboration given by the Councilors should manifest a climate of esteem, trust and fraternal, communion, rooted in common points of reference and unity of points of view and intention.
- 185.** In Council meetings Councilors should express their points of view and give their vote without human respect and seeking the glory of God and the good of the Institute, and after a decision has been taken all shall actively cooperate, in its faithful implementation.
- 186.** The General Council makes its decision by secret vote and by absolute majority of votes of the members present.
For the validity of a decision at least three members of the Council should be in attendance. To dismiss a Sister, all the members of the Council must be present. Therefore if a member is absent she should be substituted for, by the President with the consent of her Council by another Sister of perpetual vows.
- 187.** Matters presented by the Superior General to her Council may require either consultative or deliberative vote of the Council.
- 188.** In cases in which the Universal Law or our own norms require only the consultative vote or opinion of the Council, the Superior General though she is obliged to consult in order to act validly, is not bound to follow the consultation. Nevertheless, unless she is personally convinced for a serious reason, it is advisable not to separate her self from

the opinion of her Council, especially when it is unanimous.
(*Canon 127 §2*)

189. In matters requiring the consent or deliberative vote of the Council, the Superior General must secure the consent of her Council and cannot act validly against its decision.
(*Canon 627 § 2*)

190. Among the matters requiring a deliberative vote of the Council are:

- a) the appointment of the Secretary General, of a local Superior, of the Mistress of Novices and other Mistresses in charge of Formation;
- b) the erection of a new house or the suppression of existing houses;
- c) the erection of a new Novitiate House, its suppression or transfer;
- d) the admission of candidates into the Novitiate, to first Religious profession or to Perpetual vows;
- e) the designation of the house where the General Chapter is to take place;
- f) the substitution of a General Councilor, whose position become vacant before her term ends;
- g) the transfer of the residence of the Superior General and her Council from one house to another, after having previously informed the Holy See;
- h) removal of a General Councilor, of a local Superior, of the Mistress of Novices or any other Mistress of Formation, for serious reasons;
- i) the approval of the accounts of the Congregations every six months and of the report to be submitted to the General Chapter, budgets and contracts of the Congregation, levying of taxes and debts, alienation of precious objects or any other case of extraordinary administration in accordance with the Universal Law

or proper laws and special norms issued by the General Chapter; (*Canon 638 § 2*)

- j) special important matters defined as such by the General Chapter;
- k) convoking a special intermediate assembly towards the middle of the six year term in which an elected representative for each house will take part. The purpose of this assembly shall be to examine the status of the Congregation and promote its good. This assembly has neither power to change the existing norms nor of introducing new ones;
- l) all other matters foreseen by universal or particular laws.

The Secretary General

191. The Secretary General is appointed by the Superior General with the deliberative vote of her Council from among the perpetually professed Sisters. She shall be gifted not only with the necessary cultural formation and that which is proper to the nature of her work but with a spirit of discretion and secrecy, of capacity and strength in working, of skillful and quick performance of the task assigned to her.

192. The Secretary General participates in the meetings of the General Council, but without right to vote, unless she is herself a Councilor.

The General Econome

193. Our Congregation, as a juridical person, has the capacity to possess, acquire, administer and alienate temporal goods according to the norm of universal and proper law, taking into account civil laws.

The General Treasurer, ELECTED BY THE SUPERIOR GENERAL and HER COUNCIL, and replaceable at their discretion, administers the goods of the Congregation, under the direction of the Superior General and her Council.

194. The General Econome must be gifted with administrative gifts and profound religious spirit. So that in this spirit through caring in the best way possible for the material goods of the Congregation, she may excel in her administration according to the demands of evangelical poverty. (*Canon 636 § 1*)

195. The power of alienating goods of the Congregation or of entering into debts is reserved to the Superior General with the deliberative vote of her Council. Nevertheless, it is not possible to go beyond an amount determined by the Sacred Congregation, without a previous and explicit permission of said Congregation. (*Canon 638 § 3*)

Moreover, we must recur to the Sacred Congregation whenever we have to alienate precious objects of historic or artistic value.

196. Whenever the General Council deals with the matters related to administration of goods or problems which require financial budgets the General Econome is called to participate in the Council meeting, but she has no vote.

The Local Superior

197. 1) The erection of a house of the institute is promulgated, with the previous written consent of the Diocesan Bishop, by the Superior General with the consent of her Council, respecting in mind the real apostolic demands of various places and giving preference to the needs of the poorest and most marginalized. (*Canon 609 § 1*)

2) A house legitimately erected can be suppressed by the Superior General with the consent of her Council, after having consulted the Bishop of the Diocese. The Superior General will establish the beneficiaries of the goods of such a House, respecting the will of the founders or benefactors and the rights legitimately acquired. (*Canon 616 §1*)

3) In every house there shall be a Superior, who in an attitude of service, shall care for the community, shall animate and guide the religious life of the Sisters, shall coordinate the external and internal activities and shall represent the Community before of religious and civil authorities. (*Canon 608*)

198. The Superior is appointed by the Superior General with the consent of her Council for a term of three years after due consultation from among those Sisters who have been perpetually professed for more than three years. The Superior can be reconfirmed in her office for a second triennium, after which she must revert to being a simple religious for three years before being reelected to the office of Superior. (*Canon 622 §2*)

199. It is the role of the Superior to see to it that everything within her Community proceeds in an order, both from the point of view of religious discipline as well as that of apostolic work and community life. To this purpose she shall be vigilant that in the house there will be no disorder, indifference, or rivalry so detestful for whoever has consecrated herself to the Lord. Furthermore the Superior shall attempt to facilitate that all will tend towards a perfect union of heart in the bond of the love and peace. She shall be attentive not only to the spiritual needs of the Sisters but to their materials as well. Finally she will seek that Sisters entrusted to her feel supported, encouraged, guided and, if ever necessary, reprovved and corrected in their journey

towards the full intimacy with the Heart of Jesus. (*Canon 619*)

200. The Blessed Sacrament reserved in our houses, by providential will of the Church, should remind all, but most especially to the Superior, that the Eucharist is truly the center of the community who draws us to Him so that we may attain a more intimate union with the Father.

201. In houses with six or more Sisters, the local Superior is assisted in the government of the house by a Council of Sisters. Their appointment is made, after consulting the community itself, by the Superior General after consulting her council. In houses with less than six professed Sisters the council is composed of all the members of the Community. (*Canon 627 § 1*)

202. Except for reasons which might excuse this, we shall have an Econome in every house, which shall be different from the Superior and appointed by the Superior General. The Econome shall be charged with the administration of the goods of the house under the guidance of the Superior. (*Canon 636 § 1*)

203. The Econome should never forget that the goods she administered belong to the community. Consequently, she should not fail regularly to inform the community on the economic status in general and on financial progress. It is in this way that we foster the union of hearts and the spiritual growth of the Community. (*Canon 636 § 2*)

CHAPTER X

The Constitutions

- 204.** These Constitutions, duly approved by the Sacred Congregation, contain the necessary guidelines on which we have a clear conscience of the charism and ideals of our Institute and its spirit and mission. Furthermore, they show us the way to be followed to arrive with divine assistance to the fulfillment of our vocation. (*Canon 598 § 1*)
- 205.** The way to follow in the fulfillment of our vocation is the way of love, and it is for that love that our Constitutions continuously invite us to be faithful, whenever we look at our consecrated life either as a life of prayer or of fraternal communion and apostolate, or whenever we present the genuine character of our religious formation, or, finally, when we establish how and which criteria should govern our Congregation.
- 206.** Although the prescription of our Constitutions do not bind us under sin, unless they refer the law of God or of the Church or in matters related to our vows, nevertheless, we shall try to observe them all, without exception with equal force and generosity as demanded by the commitment we have made in our profession.
- 207.** Because the Constitutions derive their value and authority from the approval of the Sacred Congregation, only the said Congregation can change, abrogate, repeal or modify them. The Superior General has the power to dispense temporarily a Sister or a whole community from the disciplinary observance of a norm. The Local Superior has the right to dispense for a short time a Sister within her community whether assigned or residing as a guest.

208. The Constitutions are the fundamental code of the Congregation which we are asked to accept in spirit of faith as expression of divine will. Further we are invited to study them with great love in private and in community until we assimilate the richness of their content and the spirit which animates them. Moreover, we shall have them in mind when confronted with problems or in decisions to be taken. Finally, we shall try to integrate them into our own lives through their faithful and daily observance. This is what we intend to do in remembrance of our Foundress, Mother Clotilde Gigli, and trusting in the help of the Blessed Mother, so that through us the Heart of Jesus will be loved and known with greater intensity.

(Canon 578)

DIRECTORY

CHAPTER I

Nature, Charism and Spirit of the Congregation

In order to better understand and live the spirit that should animate the observance of these Constitutions, let us read with faith and love the following

“NORMS OF THE DIRECTORY”

as we try to follow its indications.

1. A decree of the Holy See, dated 14 April 1950 declared our Congregation of Pontifical Right. To be of Pontifical Right implies that the Congregation is subjected, in an exclusive and immediate way, to the jurisdiction of the Holy See, in all those things that have to do with its internal government and discipline. (*Canon 593*)

Our renewed Constitutions were approved by the Holy See by the decree Prot. N. L. 91-1/83, on the 11th day of March 1985.

2. All the members are obliged to come to know the life, teachings and virtues of our Foundress: Sr. Ma. Clotilde Gigli: said knowledge will greatly help us to become deeply rooted in our charism and mission.
3. The cult and the spirituality of the Sacred Heart of Jesus are proper to the charism of our Institute, all those matters that refer to the above spirituality are dear to us. Thus Sisters are encouraged to read related published literature and to attend seminars and courses.

Superiors should be the animator and coordinator in actualizing the ongoing formation.

4. The Superior General with her Council are to decide, when circumstances arise, the convenience of assuming apostolic commitments that differ from our tradition, provided such commitments are in harmony with the charism of the Institute. (*Canon 677 §1*)

CHAPTER II

Consecration to God and Profession of the Evangelical Counsels

Consecrated Chastity

5. We know that it is not possible to live a life that conforms to the demands of consecrated chastity without evangelical vigilance and, above all, without prayer. As difficulties arise we humbly and confidently turn to God in the absolute certainty that He will not cease to help us to live for Him alone.
6. Because of the numerous and delicate problems attached to the observance of consecrated chastity, it is important to admit to religious profession only those candidates who have sufficiently proven themselves to be psychologically balanced, affectively mature and sufficiently responsible.
7. Religious who, due to their office or apostolate are exposed to situations of danger in matters of chastity, should be open with their Superior, who should use utmost charity, prudence and concern in extending the assistance needed to reassure, protect and bring peace to the Sisters.

Evangelical Poverty

8. The observance of evangelical poverty, aside from imposing dependence on the Superior in the use of material things, demands that we be truly poor, that is, both in spirit and in facts, with a personal and communitarian commitment so that our detachment from earthly things and the longing for the heavenly gifts be expressed and witnessed through a collective testimony of rejecting what is superfluous and by

living sparingly in such a fashion that the life of the Sisters be a witness to God's people as it brings us closer to the poorest and least regarded.

9. Religious may renounce their inheritance, but this renunciation can be effective only after the perpetual profession and when the Sister is already in possession of her inheritance. The written consent, for this act, is of the exclusive competence of the Superior General with deliberative consent of her Council. Furthermore this renunciation, if possible, must meet the requirement of civil law. (*Canon 668 § 1*)

10. In the Congregation material things are for the use of all its members: furniture, books, linens, food. Nevertheless, we hold it necessary that each Sister may have linens and clothes for her personal use, kept in a common drawer or cabinet, but in her assigned place and with personal marks. Furthermore, Sisters should feel responsible as regards the material things which belong to the community.

11. The Sisters should faithfully practice the virtue of poverty in their rooms, food, and clothing as well as in being detached from material things, offices, buildings or dwellings, but avoiding negligence in the care and use of things, and irresponsibility in fulfilling their duties. Let poverty ever shine as the evangelical pattern of religious life.

12. Sisters in the exercise of their office, whatever it may be, must be obedient to the general law of work and apply themselves to their tasks with care and diligence; nevertheless, they should never overlook, provided it is conveniently organized and distributed, the humble house chores that should be dear to all since they better assimilate us to Christ and bring us closer to workers of the more humble sort.

13. Poverty, when lived seriously, renders our communities more sensitive and ready to help the Institute in its economic needs and, thus, helps its growth and its apostolate; and likewise almsgiving and assistance to the needs of the Church will benefit from true observance of poverty.

Religious Obedience

14. The fact that God's will as concerns us is manifested primarily in more or less explicit orders and wishes of the Superior does not excuse us from diligently searching for God's will. Therefore, we must turn to the Word of God, to the teachings of the Church, to the genuine contents of our vocation, to the events of the world and remaining open to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit who does not cease to give and manifest Himself.
15. In order to collaborate with the Superior in searching for the will of God for us, let us be reminded of the importance of bringing to her attention those things which we deem she should know while leaving to her the final decision.
16. In difficult cases, when in conscience we cannot accept or follow, what in the Superior has decided to be done, we are allowed to appeal and present with absolute simplicity our views: but after so doing, we should be willing to accept that which will be commanded in spite of the renunciation and sacrifice it may impose upon us.
17. On their part Superiors should remember that the exercise of authority itself is a form of obedience in the sense that Superiors should not seek to fulfill their own will, but should seek the will of God in such a way that this may be known, and faithfully complied by all.

- 18.** We vividly recommend that Superior resort to the formal precept only in extreme and serious cases and only after having used other means without a positive result. To avoid misunderstandings and unwanted complaints, it is convenient that, when there is no other alternative, the precept be given in writing and in the presence of two witnesses.
- 19.** The Sisters are under the jurisdiction of the Superior of the community to which they are assigned in all matters; from the said Superior they should obtain the permissions they are in need of, exception being made in special and grave cases for which there is a need to go directly to the Superior General, though sisters have to inform her of the denial of the permission they requested.

CHAPTER III

Community Life

- 20.** Granted that silence must characterize the atmosphere of our houses during the whole day, a very strict silence should be observed from night prayer till the following day at worktime.
- 21.** So that intense and continuous activity will not be an obstacle for the physico-psychological balance of the Sisters, we must see to it that each sister have daily, some free time for herself that she may devote to reading, studying and praying or any other thing of her choice, and monthly she should have a free day for herself.
- 22.** In the same way that we prepare a timetable we should formulate certain community rules in which, in full respect of the norms of the Chapter, regulate journeys, mail, visits to the family, the use of the means of mass media (newspapers, magazine, radio, TV, internet, cellphone).
- 23.** During recreation time we may carry on manual work but not reading or writing without the permission of the Superior. We shall enjoy and relax together with kindness and modesty, we shall not resort to lukewarmness and displeasing forms or talk about the defects of others.
- 24.** We shall not speak about our homes, families or personal talents or praise our country at the expense of others. When we have to talk about other Congregations we shall point out the good things they are doing that they may be an example for us.

- 25.** It is prohibited to the Sisters to work hidden for their relatives or for other persons, but we remind all the obligation of working for the community. Superior should not easily grant any kind of permission to work for other to the Sisters.
- 26.** The annual vacation is fifteen (15) days not counting travel, and those who wish so can spend them with their parents/relatives. Every two years the Superior General with her Council shall determine, aside from the roundtrip ticket, the amount to be given for the personal expenses of the Sister who spends the annual vacation with her relatives; the Sister shall render a written report of her expenses when she returns.
- 27.** We shall try to arrive at any agreement and coordinate the schedule of vacation with the Sisters and Superior, so that the house will not be closed either during summer, when a fruitful apostolate involving the parish, family or individual can be made. After it is drawn up the local Superior shall inform the Superior General of the program agreed with the Sisters for its approval.
- 28.** Fraternal charity which recognizes the Lord in each Sister is nurtured by that humility capable of recognizing our personal limitations and the gifts that the Lord has given to each one. Thus, it enhances mutual esteem and confidence in a reciprocal service, following the example of the first Christian community in which Christians had one heart and one mind.
- 29.** Diligently we shall avoid disagreement, ill-humored, jealousy, envy, rivalry, criticism, backbiting, gossip, evil insinuations, arrogance and interference in others' business.
- We should not complain to the Superior about trifles things but rather insist on accepting one another. Let us

resort to fraternal correction in accordance with the teaching of the Gospel, to avoid blunt corrections, and avoid keeping bitterness or grudges in our heart till the point of manifesting resentment in our actions.

- 30.** We shall promote within the community those elements of silence and peace which enhance reflections, study, work, rest solace and, above all, prayer.
- 31.** Silence should be observed, aside from the dining room, in the Church, chapel, sacristy, dormitory and, in general, in the whole house; where it will be necessary to talk we shall avoid a loud voice.
- 32.** A stricter silence shall be observed from the evening-prayer until after the morning meditation of the following day. This deep silence should not be broken without serious need.
- 33.** All the sisters who are not impeded shall have an assignment given by the Superior which they will perform with joy and with spirit of initiative and responsibility, with zeal and accuracy. For some explicit tasks or responsibilities it is necessary to promulgate certain particular rules.
- 34.** To share at one table and to partake the same food is an act of true community life. Let us do it in silence and recollection, nourishing contemporaneously the spirit with a good reading or with a friendly dialogue on days when reading is dispense.
- 35.** As a sign of trust in their Sisters, Superiors shall not check their correspondence unless serious and grave reasons of conscience and prudence demand otherwise. Each sister must feel religiously responsible.

- 36.** The Sisters are free to send without inspection letters to the Holy See or its national representative to the Ordinary of the place to whom their juridically are subjected, to the Superior General and to the local Superior when she is absent; likewise the Sisters are entitle to receive any letter from the above referred authorities, and no one has the right either to open or read such a letter.
- 37.** We shall never leave the house without the permission of the Superior or her delegate, except when we have to carry on the duties of our office.
- 38.** While traveling, when we can not devote the proper time to meditation we shall spend some time on it, making an effort to substitute for it with inner recollection and by the prayer of the Holy Rosary. If we are two, we shall try to be together to give witness of our fraternal charity.
- 39.** Superiors will not allow the religious to live out of the religious house unless there is a grave reason and for a shortest possible time. In special cases, the Superior General with her Council and for just reasons may grant to a religious permission to live outside of the house of the Institute for a longer period of time, but not for more than one year, except when the permission is due to health reason or for reason of studies or an apostolate carried on in the name of the Institute. (*Canon 665*)
- 40.** When the chaplain or the confessor has their residence within the premises of the Sisters, the room should have a separate entrance and have no communication with the rooms of the Sisters.
- 41.** Without special permission a sick Sister should not approach her relatives or other outside persons to obtain medicines,

food or other things. When a Sister is seriously ill the Superior shall inform her family.

- 42.** The Superior, with motherly concern, shall care for the sick Sisters, provide what is necessary and supervise the implementation of medical prescriptions. In assisting the sick Sisters, the Superior may be helped by a nurse (Sister) that has the skill and experience and is animated by charity and empathy.
- 43.** Sick Sisters should not forget their religious status and the vows they have professed. They should accept from God with patience and peace their pain and suffering.
- 44.** Common life, when lived in faithful observance of its laws, in the joy of fraternal communion, in the generous collaboration of work, in the mutual encouragement and call to virtue, in the joy of praying together, transforms religious life into a true perfection of charity fitting to the house of our heavenly Father.

CHAPTER IV

Prayer Life

The Eucharist

45. Unless there are grave reasons we actively and daily participate in the celebration of the Eucharist and unite ourselves to the offering of Christ Himself, so that like Him, in Him, with Him and through Him, we may be a pleasing offering to the Father, for the glory of His name and for the salvation of the world. (*Canon 663 § 1*)

46. Because the Eucharist is not only sacrament-sacrifice but it is sacrament-communion, unless there is an impediment, we freely receive the Body and Blood of Christ daily, longing with all our strength that his Spirit will more and more overshadow us and produce in us abundant fruits of eternal life.

47. The mystery of the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist leads us to a daily adoration at the times and following the forms established by the community schedule. During the time we spend in the presence of the Eucharist we rejoice in his proximity, open our hearts to Him and bring to his presence our and others needs. We pray for the salvation of the world and, together with Him, we offer ourselves to the Father in the Holy Spirit. This will increase our faith, hope, charity. It is also the best way to prepare ourselves to celebrate the memorial of the Lord with devotion and fruit and thus to receive properly that bread the Father has given us.

The Sacrament of Penance

- 48.** Following the law of the Church we must frequent the Sacrament of Penance and between one confession and the next not more than two weeks should pass. (*Canon 664*)
- 49.** Let us also take into account the Church's recommendation which states that Superiors should diligently provide the Sisters with a sufficient number of confessors, who, in as much as possible, not only should be gifted with prudence and doctrine but be well versed in religious life as well. (*Canon 630 § 2, § 3*)
- 50.** Superiors are bound to give freedom to the Sisters in matters related to the Sacrament of Penance and spiritual direction or guidance. On their part the Sisters should not make an unlawful use of the freedom granted to them for this purpose. (*Canon 630 § 1*)

Liturgy of the Hours and Mental Prayer

- 51.** If a Sister is unable to celebrate the liturgy of the hours with the community, she must consider herself bound to recite it in private, unless the Superior senses the need to dispense her from this obligation.
- 52.** Meditation which we hold in common during a given time and in given place shall be done by each one in a personal way.

Exercises of Piety

- 53.** The exercises of piety and vocal prayers in use in our Congregation are the following:

- the offering of the day to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in accordance with the form of the Apostleship of Prayer.
- the Angelus (or Regina Coeli, in accordance with the liturgical time) three times a day;
- the De Profundis;
- the Holy Rosary;
- on Wednesday, the prayer in honor of Saint Joseph;
- on Thursday, prayer for the priest;
- on Friday, the prayer of reparation;
- on Saturday, prayer in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary;
- on Sunday, prayer in honor of the Holy Family;
- every first Friday, the Holy Hour and prayer of reparation.

54. During the three days before the feast of the Congregation we should commit ourselves to practice with greater intensity the precept of charity as well as to make some particular acts of mortification such as observance of abstinence, more intensive interior recollection. We should try to perform our duties and obligations in a better way, so as to live more interiorly and concretely our love for the Lord and for one another.

On the feast of the Sacred Heart we shall renew the vows.

55. On the first Friday of March, faithful to the special vow of the Congregation, we shall have a Mass celebrated in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

56. Sisters must be more attentive at penance and mortification than the ordinary faithful, but such acts must be done with the intention of self purification so as better to dispose ourselves to union with God. At the same time, we should respect the weakness of human nature and generously

assume new forms proper to the modern and contemporary way of life.

- 57.** Concerning personal corporal penance and mortification, Sisters should follow the advice and judgment of their Confessors. But when such acts are external and public Sisters must secure the consent of their Superior.

The Sisters are free even if the consent of the Superior is required, to observe abstinence on the vigil of the three feasts of the Congregation (*Constitution 71*). Normally we keep abstinence on Fridays even though such abstinence may be locally dispensed. Superiors must be watchful that corporal penance affects the health or regular observance of the Sisters.

- 58.** The “Chapter of Faults” should be carried out in a new way, so as to be an act of spiritual fraternal assistance. In this chapter each Sister should be able to manifest her external faults, particularly those related to community life, in order to seek sincere renewal. This practice should be observed monthly at night prayer, as preparation for the first Friday of the month. During special liturgical periods the “Chapter of Fault” may be integrated into the community celebration of the sacrament of Penance.

Suffrages

- 59.** We remember here on earth our departed Sisters and those of the faithful who have in any way been connected with or have assisted our Congregation:
- on the death of the Pope, each community will offer and celebrate a Mass.
 - on the death of the Bishop of a diocese in which we have one or more houses, a Mass shall be offered and celebrated in each house.

- on the occasion of the death of a Superior General we shall offer and celebrate twenty Masses in each house of the Congregation.
- on the death of a local Superior her community shall offer and celebrate twenty Masses in the Community.
- on the death of a Sister or a Novice, we shall offer and celebrate ten Masses in the community where she died. One Mass shall be celebrated for her in each of the other houses of the Congregation.
- on the occasion of the death of the father or the mother of a Sister or Novice, we shall offer and celebrate a Mass in the community where the religious is assigned.
- once a year in all the communities of the Congregation we shall offer and celebrate three Masses respectively:
 - for all deceased Sisters;
 - for all our deceased parents;
 - for the benefactors of the Congregation.

CHAPTER V

Apostolic Life

- 60.** The profession of the Evangelical Counsels is an efficacious testimony of Christ's presence in the world and of the coming Kingdom of God, consequently the first and essential form of apostolic life is religious life in itself.

The more fervently a religious unites herself to Christ by the gift of herself the more the vitality of the Church grows and contributes to the fruits of her apostolate.

- 61.** Faithful to our own charism and to what has always been done we reserve a special place for our active parish work. We are happy to cooperate with parish priests and all other pastoral co-workers in catechesis, in proclaiming the word of God, in animating the liturgy, in the formation and guidance of ecclesial groups.

The form said collaboration takes should be established by each Community.

- 62.** Though the Congregation gives us ample liberty to exercise our apostolate, any apostolic commitment we assume must be within limits previously adopted and involve the explicit permission of the Superior (*Canon 671*).

- 63.** Our apostolic life inevitably exposes us to different obstacles in our life of union with God, our sensibility and even our vocation. Should this occur as soon as we are aware of it let us readily adapt all the means which prudence suggests. This should involve consultation of spiritual directors or Superiors, and a reanalysis of our own line of action. We should avoid whatever aggravates the obstacle. We should

study a new motive for acting. We should intensify our life of prayer. And we must remember that the Lord will not allow us to suffer dangers derived from our apostolic work if we trust in his grace and remain firmly united to Him.

- 64.** Every six years the General Chapter shall determine the apostolic projects of the Congregation and draw up essential priorities in accordance with the needs of the Church and society.
- 65.** The type of preparation of the members of the Institute, the discipline of religious life, schedule and duties of community life should be in perfect harmony with our apostolate and conform to the needs of the different places and times where we work.
- 66.** Superiors should try to establish harmony between apostolic activities of the Institute and the attitudes and capabilities of each Sister, which on their part, should be generous and ready to accept the will of God. Let Sisters and Superiors bear in mind that an essential condition for effective apostolate is fraternal union. Whatever a Sister does in the name and with the support of the community this activity becomes a sign and leaven of Christ's love.
- 67.** In our schools, we should accept as students anyone regardless of their origins or religious beliefs, provided we adopt the precautions required by circumstance and abide by the norms established by ecclesiastical authority.
- 68.** Sisters in their apostolate should maintain a dignified, gentle friendly and serious attitude, full of charity, zeal, self-denial and prudence, bearing in mind only the spiritual good of the persons and the improvement in their studies or in their work.

- 69.** In the houses entrusted to our care we may accept as guests those whose morality and state of health are known. We should treat them with the greatest kindness, seriousness and prudence. However, we should avoid establishing a close familiarity with them, and we should not share with them the confidential affairs of the Congregation.
- 70.** By the very essence of our mission Sisters of the Congregation are exposed to the world. Consequently, they should show forth a good example by their external conduct. We should not concern ourselves with matters which occur to the people among whom we find ourselves, except in as much as it is necessary in order to carry out our duties. Moreover, we should try to avoid the temptation of meddling in other people's business.
- Even when visiting benefactors we must not prolong our stay unduly. We should adopt a gentle, prudent and edifying stance.
- 71.** With sick people we must be unselfish, charitable and prudent thus avoiding all kind of familiarity.

CHAPTER VI

Admission to the Congregation

- 72.** To foster better knowledge let us open the doors of our convent and welcome young women, who feel attracted to our way of life as consecrated religious and wish to have an experience of religious life in our midst.
- 73.** It is the responsibility of the Superior General and her Council to establish the concrete ways and means by which the vocation promotion shall be organized.
- 74.** Prudence demands that we ascertain the state of health, character and psychological maturity of those who wish to enter in our Congregation. Let us therefore, seek the advice of experts.

CHAPTER VII

Formation: General Criteria and Periods

Postulancy

75. The time of Postulancy begins as soon as the candidates, after having received the favorable reply to her petition of admission, are accepted into a specified house determined by the Superior General.
76. Postulancy last for one year. During this period the candidates shall have the opportunity to become directly acquainted with the various works and activities of the Congregation.
77. Candidates shall spend the three last months of the year of Postulancy in the novitiate house.
78. Keeping in mind individual personalities and realizing that we should not impose on the postulants burdens they cannot bear, during the year of Postulancy the Sister-in-charge of formation should not hesitate to assign the candidates to even the lowliest and more hardest tasks of the community. Doing so is necessary so that candidates will understand from the beginning that religious life, which is truly the following of Christ, implies total self-denial.

Novitiate

79. In special cases and by way of exception, the Superior General with the consent of her Council may allow a candidate to have her Novitiate in a house of the Congregation other than that normally designated under the guidance of a Sister explicitly delegated, who shall act as Mistress of Novices. (*Canon 647 § 2*)

- 80.** It is reserved to the Superior General with the consultative vote of her Council to anticipate the first profession of a Sister by fifteen days.
- 81.** In the exercise of her office the Mistress of Novices should faithfully follow the program of formation drawn up, compiled and approved for use during the Novitiate.
- 82.** A novice can not be accepted for religious profession unless she undergoes a special exam in which she will manifest a sufficient knowledge of the history, Rule and Constitutions of the Congregation.
- 83.** To the Mistress of Novices there may be assigned an assistance who, when needed, shall collaborate in matters of formation and in the implementation of the rules of the Novitiate under the jurisdiction of the Mistress.
- 84.** From time to time and in accordance with norms of the novitiate the Mistress shall send the Superior General an individual report of each novice. This report should be as comprehensive as possible and state the novice's conduct in every aspect of formation they undergone.

Temporary Profession

- 85.** The formula of the Temporary Vows duly signed by the newly professed Sister and the Superior, who accepts the profession, should be kept in the archives of the Congregation.
- 86.** With the consent of the Superior General the religious profession may be made out of the Novitiate House.
- 87.** If a Novice is in danger of death, the Superior General (and in her absence the local Superior) can allow her to make

religious profession following the ordinary formula but for indefinite period of time. This religious profession should be considered as not having been made if the novice recovers her health. In this case profession will be made at its proper time at the end of the novitiate.

Religious Habit

- 88.** The professed Sisters in our Congregation shall wear a black pleated habit with a cloth belt. On the breast they wear silver plated cross with the medal of the Sacred Heart. After perpetual profession they wear on the right finger a golden ring with a crucifix in relief. The head should be covered by a circular veil falling to the waist. In winter they may wear a cape.
- 89.** At home and during house-chores Sisters are allowed to wear a gown over the prescribed habit, but only during work hours.
- 90.** During the first period of formation there is no prescribed dress for postulants, but they should dress modestly. During the second half of the time spend in the community they should wear uniform.
- 91.** Novices should wear a simple black habit of light veil and on the breast a medal with the figure of the Sacred Heart.
- 92.** The Superior General with the Council may establish concrete norms concerning the economic contribution of the postulants during the Postulancy and Novitiate.

The Juniors

- 93.** The first two years after the first Profession, Juniors should live in the house designated by the Superior General with the

consent of her council. In this house and under the guidance of the Mistress they should devote themselves first and foremost to their doctrinal and spiritual formation and should enroll in schools and courses organized for this purpose.

94. The insertion of the Juniors in our particular apostolic activity will take place during the three final years of Juniorate and it is fitting that it will be in other houses of the Congregation.
95. Juniors living outside of the formation house are totally under the jurisdiction of the local Superior in all matters concerning regular observance. Nevertheless, it should be understood that the Mistress of Juniors, in matters of her competence, will keep in constant contact with them. She should visit them and shall have the right to recall them to the Juniorate so that she can follow the Juniors in the process of their formation.
96. In particular cases, with the deliberate vote of the Council, the Superior General may prolong the period of temporary Profession, provided that the whole period of temporary vows shall not exceed nine years. (*Canon 657 § 2*)

Perpetual Profession and Permanent Formation

97. Though perpetual Profession marks the end of initial formation it sets the beginning of “Permanent Formation.” This period covers the whole life of a Sister.
98. The permanent formation of the Sisters should harmoniously cover all the important aspects of religious life such as the theoretical and practical, the spiritual and the apostolic, that which is personal and that which refers to community life. (*Canon 661*)

- 99.** The first responsibility concerning permanent formation falls upon the Congregation. Consequently, as representing the Congregation the Superior General and her Council have the urgent responsibility not only for the means and types of programs to implement, but to encourage and persuade the Sister to accept the need and willingly welcome programs and directives for their permanent formation.
- 100.** The local Superiors are also responsible for permanent formation. It is largely with their support that our communities may strive for a true renewal, if they search for deepening in the doctrinal and practical actualization of our vocation. Further, it is only thus that we shall manage to update ourselves in matters concerning our apostolate.
- 101.** So that directives emanating from the Congregation be not fruitless we ask each Sister actively to cooperate through a willing participation in their cultural, spiritual and apostolic updating, so as to be able to proclaim Christ's message according to the needs of the times, places and situations of the countries where we work.
- 102.** The promotion of vocations is to be fostered mainly by a fervent and joyful witnessing of living religious consecrated life. Nevertheless, all other available means should be used. Each community of the Congregation should promote initiatives for encounters with the young, and we shall try to assist them with prayers and sacrifices willingly accepted and chosen by the community. On the eleventh day of each month we shall hold a day of vocations in which we shall offer prayers and sacrifices for this purpose in fraternal unity.
- 103.** The progressive commitment to improve our character, of development of the virtues and natural gifts, the

acceptance of our common living, making responsible use of our freedom, will contribute to harmonize action and contemplation so that our apostolic activity will derive from our intimate union with God.

104. In order that permanent formation at all levels be one of our first commitments, we should bear in mind that the interior vitality and the fruitful apostolate of a religious Congregation are in direct proportion to the generous effort that move us to walk with our times while remaining faithful to the spiritual tradition and values of the Institute.

CHAPTER VIII

Government of the Congregation

The General Chapter – its Nature, Purpose and Celebration

- 105.** Every Chapter shall establish the number of delegates who will be elected to attend the next Chapter. The number of delegates will be determined following the criteria proportional to the number of members of the Congregation. Furthermore, each Chapter shall determine the proportion of the delegates chosen from among the Superiors.
- 106.** Both the norms to be observed during the election of delegates and the practical orientations to govern the process of election will be elaborated by the Superior General with the consent of her Council to which she shall present these guidelines six months before the celebration of the Chapter.
- 107.** During the month which precedes the Chapter and during its celebration our communities shall offer prayers for the success of this great event in the life of the Congregation.
- 108.** In the first session of the Chapter, as soon as it has been declared open, the General Council will proceed to verify the Chapter members and the title under which they are attending. The Secretary of the Chapter and two Scrutineers will also be elected during this session by absolute majority of votes for this election shall act as Scrutineers the two youngest delegates in profession one of whom should be a delegate from among the Superiors.
- 109.** The Scrutineers of the Chapter will commit themselves under oath to faithfully perform their office and to observe

secrecy concerning whatever they may come to know during the Chapter, even after the elections are over.

- 110.** Among the first acts of the Chapter is the reading of the report of the Superior General, previously approved by the General Council, informing in detail the Capitulars on the spiritual state, personnel, discipline, apostolate and economy of the Congregation. The General Econome is responsible for the preparation of the economic report.
- 111.** It is the duty of the Chapter to name three Sisters who shall accurately examine the report of the Superior General. These Sisters shall be elected, by relative majority, from among those delegates who took part neither in the preparation nor in the approval of said report.
- 112.** The Commission charged with the examination of the report of the Superior General will inform the Chapter on the findings of their study decided by the Chapter itself and before the election of a new Superior General takes place.
- 113.** Before the election of the new Superior General the members of the Chapter will spend three days in spiritual retreat.

Elections

- 114.** The Chairmanship of the Diocesan Bishop or his delegate priest ceases with the proclamation of the Superior General.
- 115.** The election of the General Council's members and the General Econome, as well as all other acts and sessions of the General Chapter until its conclusion are presided over by the new Superior General who shall bind herself under oath in the presence of the Chapter members faithfully to carry

out her office as President. All those attending the Chapter are duly bound to observe secrecy in matters dealt with in the Chapter, even after its conclusion.

- 116.** The General Councilors and the General Econome are to be elected for a term ending with the following elective Chapter. They may be re-elected for the succeeding six years but not for a third time. At least one member should remain if the Superior General and the other Councilors are new.
- 117.** If one of the Councilors or the General Econome are not present in the Chapter, she shall immediately notified after her election without interrupting the works the Chapter while awaiting her arrival.
- 118.** After the election of the Councilors and the General Econome, and once they have been declared elected by the Superior General, the verbal process of their election should be committed to writing and must be kept in the Archives of the Congregation duly signed by the President, the Scrutineers and the Secretary of the Chapter.

Business to be taken up in the Chapter

- 119.** The following are the matters to be taken up in the Chapter:
- to study the best means to restore or improve religious discipline in each house.
 - determining the basis, principles and criteria for the revision (or new preparation) of the program of formation of the Congregation.
 - giving concrete orientations for the different apostolate to be undertaken, after due consideration is given to the problems encountered by the Congregation in a particular local Church.

- making decisions concerning constitutional additions, changes, suppressions of the Constitution to be presented to the Sacred Congregation, after the Chapter has endorsed them by a majority of 2/3 of the votes.
- determining the yearly contribution each house shall send to the General House of the Congregation.
- fixing the amount of money which the Superior General can manage with or without the consultative or deliberate vote of her Council.
- deciding cases in which the local Superior should have recourse too the Superior General or to the Council for extraordinary expenses.
- issuing concrete norms to be observed in buying, alienating properties or other obligations, besides, those already determined by Canon Law.

The General Councilors

120. Normally the Councilors should reside at the General House. When necessary one or two of them, but neither the Vicaress nor the Secretary, may reside at a nearby house, so that they may attend to the regular sessions of the Council.

121. The General Council is convoked by the Superior General at least once a month. In extraordinary cases it may hold as many meetings as necessary, when in the judgment of the Superior General, is required by concrete and important matters affecting the interest of the Congregation.

The Secretary General

122. These are the duties of the Secretary General:

- to register and record any document concerning the day-to-day administration of the Congregation, except documents related to economic matters.

- to care for the General Archives, keeping letters received and documents compiled in order.
- to compile and keep personal records, updated and accurate information related to Postulants, Novices and professed Sisters.
- to answer official correspondence following the suggestion and indications of the Superior General.

General Econome

123. With the intention to faithfully comply with the duties of her office, the General Econome shall have and continue to update a fitting and accurate knowledge of what is established by ecclesiastical or civil law in administrative matters.

124. It is incumbent to the General Econome to note down scrupulously and with accuracy, in the designated register, the income and expenses related to the general administration of the resources of the Congregation. Likewise, she shall prepare every semester a detail administrative statement to be presented to the Council General for its study and approval.

125. When requesting from the Sacred Congregation authority to enter into debts and obligations there is a need to name present outstanding obligations contracted by the moral person which request the permission, the Congregation or House shall be mentioned, otherwise the permission given is deemed to be invalid.

126. In the house where the Superior General resides there must be a locked safe fitted with three different keys one of which is to be kept by the Superior General, another by the first Councilor and the third by the Econome.

127. Should the Superior General, after hearing the Council, not judge, is fitting to keep the titles of properties in a public bank, these are to be kept in the safe mentioned above. Likewise certificates of deposit, contracts, letters of obligations, precious stones, jewelry and cash needed for day-to-day expenses are to be kept under lock in the safe.

128. If among the goods administered by the general or local economy there be funds belonging to foundations, donations entrusted to a house to be used for worship or charitable purposes, there is a need to request the permission of the Ordinary of the place to invest or lend these funds or donations at interest. Moreover he has the right to supervise the administration of said funds.

Local Superiors

129. Concerned with the good of the community the local Superior has the following duties:

- to assist each Sister, through a fraternal, personal and simple relationship, to know and value the natural and spiritual gifts which the Lord has given her for her own sanctification and the good of the Institute and the Church.
- to handle meetings at least two times a month for the updating in catechesis, liturgy, spirituality and pastoral work.
- to care for the right interpretation of the Constitutions and directives promulgated by the General Chapter or by the General Council.
- to maintain and sustain in the community the sense of belonging to the Community and to the Congregation.

- 130.** The local Superior shall not bring about changes in the disciplinary rules. She shall frequently write to the Superior General keeping her well informed of the progress of the house and its works.
- 131.** When the local Superior is absent or incapacitated her first Councilor should substitute for the Superior but only in matters of ordinary administration.
- 132.** The Councilors are to be convoked by the Superior General once a month.

CHAPTER IX

Nature and Importance of the Directory

- 133.** The Directory is the complement of the Constitution and constitutes one part of the laws of the Congregation. Its obligation is equal to that of the Constitutions. We shall read it in faith and love as we commit ourselves to follow its directives so as to better observe the Constitutions and live in their spirit.
- 134.** For just cause and temporarily the Superior General has the right to dispense from a particular disciplinary prescription either a Sister or a whole community within the Congregation.
The local Superior enjoys a similar right in her community.
- 135.** Any modification of the dispositions of the Directory or its abrogation is reserved to the General Chapter and has to be approved by two thirds votes.
- 136.** Likewise, the authentic interpretation of the Directory is reserved to the General Chapter. Outside the General Chapter the Superior General, with the consent of her Council, may give certain practical interpretations in case of doubt concerning a concrete disposition of the Directory.
- 137.** Sisters shall have a complete copy of the Rule, Constitutions and Directory for their personal use, so that they may read it often and, thus, be able to understand its spirit better.

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