

# RULE AND CONSTITUTIONS



CONGREGATION OF THE PASSION  
OF JESUS CHRIST



## CHAPTER I FUNDAMENTALS OF OUR LIFE

### The Passionist Vocation

1. Saint Paul of the Cross gathered companions to live together and to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to all.

The first name he gave his community was "The Poor of Jesus." This was to indicate that their lives were to be based on evangelical poverty, which he held to be so necessary if they were to observe the other evangelical counsels, to persevere in prayer, and to preach the Word of the Cross in season and out of season.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, he wanted them to live their lives like apostles. They were to foster and develop a deep spirit of prayer, penance, and solitude so that they could reach closer union with God and witness to His love.<sup>2</sup>

Keenly aware of the evils that afflicted the people of his time, he never tired of insisting that the most effective remedy is the Passion of Jesus, "the greatest and most overwhelming work of God's love."<sup>3</sup>

2. Recognizing in Saint Paul of the Cross the action of the Holy Spirit, the Church with her supreme authority approved our Congregation and its Rule, and entrusted us with a mission: to preach the Gospel of the Passion by our life and apostolate.<sup>4</sup>

This mission still retains all its force and authenticity.<sup>5</sup>

We come together therefore in apostolic communities so that we can fulfill this mission of ours by working for the coming of God's Kingdom.

Confident that God will help us to overcome our human limitations, we are determined to remain faithful to the patrimony and evangelical spirit of our Founder.

3. We are aware that the Passion of Christ continues in this world until He comes in glory; therefore, we share in the joys and sorrows of our contemporaries as we journey through life toward our Father. We wish to share in the distress of all, especially those who are poor and neglected; we seek to offer them comfort and to relieve the burden of their sorrow.

The power of the Cross, which is the wisdom of God, gives us strength to discern and remove the causes of human suffering.

For this reason, our mission aims at evangelizing others by means of the Word of the Cross. In this way, all may come to know Christ and the power of His resurrection, may share in His sufferings and, becoming like Him in His death, may be united with Him in glory.<sup>6</sup> Each of us takes part in this apostolate according to his gifts, resources, and ministries.

4. We accept the urgent demands made on each of us by the personal call of the Father to follow Jesus Crucified, namely:

- a personal and continual vigilance to make the Gospel the supreme rule and criterion of our life;
- a steadfast will to live and work joyfully as a community of brothers, observing these Constitutions in the spirit of Saint Paul of the Cross;
- a firm resolve to foster in ourselves the spirit of prayer, and to teach others to pray;
- a keen attention to the needs of others, as we strive to lead them to the fullness of their Christian calling through the message of the Cross.

### **Our Consecration to the Passion of Jesus**

5. We seek the unity of our lives and our apostolate in the Passion of Jesus. His Passion reveals the power of God which penetrates the world, destroying the power of evil and building up the Kingdom of God.

Since we have been called to unite ourselves to the life and mission of Him who "emptied Himself taking the form of a servant,"<sup>7</sup> we contemplate Christ through persevering prayer. By giving His life for us He reveals God's love for all people, and shows the path they must follow as they make their way towards the Father. Faithfulness to this contemplation enables us to show forth His love more fully, and to help others offer their lives in Christ to the Father.

6. We express our participation in the Passion by a special vow, which is at once personal, communitarian, and apostolic. Through this vow we bind ourselves to keep alive the memory of the Passion of Christ.<sup>8</sup> By word and deed we strive to foster awareness of its meaning and value for each person and for the life of the world.

By this vow our Congregation takes her place in the Church so as to dedicate herself fully to its mission.

In the light of this, we seek to incorporate this vow into our daily lives by living the evangelical counsels.

Then, as we relive the memory of the Passion of Christ today, our communities become a leaven of salvation in the Church and in the world.

### **The Evangelical Counsels**

7. Baptism immerses us in the flood of divine power welling up from the death and resurrection of Jesus, and consecrates us as members of the people of God.<sup>9</sup>

This consecration we reaffirm, and resolve to live a fuller life through our religious profession, faithful to these Constitutions. Each of us welcomes the invitation God gives us to be a sign and a constant reminder of the values of His Kingdom.

8. Impelled by the Spirit, we are brought together as a community of love to carry out the mission mandated to us by the Church. Together we undertake the arduous journey of faith, seeking to explore the depths of the mystery of God.

Together we share the same hope: that we shall contact in our lives the living God Who draws us to Himself. We want our journey through life to proclaim that hope to all.

In this we are inspired by the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the handmaid of the Lord;<sup>10</sup> like her we trust the Lord, joyfully confident that even our weakness can show forth to the world the saving ways of God.

9. We leave all things<sup>11</sup> to follow Christ in the spirit of the Gospel beatitudes. In the midst of the people of God we constantly endeavor to live out our commitment to poverty, chastity, and obedience as religious in community. Observing these evangelical counsels, both individually and as a community, enables us to contact Christ at a deep level of His Paschal Mystery.

If the message of the Cross has not first penetrated our own lives, we ought not presume to proclaim it to others.

### Poverty

10. Christ clearly showed His love for us by becoming poor for our sakes.<sup>12</sup>

We intend to respond to His love by bringing an authentic and evangelical poverty into our own lives. Accordingly we strive, both as individuals and as communities, to characterize our lifestyle by an attitude of genuine detachment and proper use of temporal goods.

We recognize that this may lead to insecurity, and at times even to the lack of necessities. Nevertheless, we place our full confidence in God and His supporting grace. We accept each day as it comes as a gift from the Father,<sup>13</sup> without worrying about amassing treasures for the morrow.<sup>14</sup>

This spirit of poverty, awakened in us by Christ's grace, makes us more ready to give service to all.

11. Like the first Christian community, one in heart and one in spirit, and holding all their goods in common,<sup>15</sup> we do not look upon our possessions as our own. Having chosen to live together, we wish to share what we have in a simple and modest lifestyle.

By renouncing the free disposition of our goods, we place ourselves, our talents, our work, and our achievements at the service of the community and its mission.

As individuals and as communities, we have to avoid whatever does not correspond with the real need for our life and our apostolate. We aim to share what we have with other communities of the Congregation and of the Church, and with the poor.

Each one of us willingly accepts that he is subject to the common law of labor, and contributes to the daily life of all according to his capacity.<sup>16</sup>

12. Whatever we acquire either by our own industry or because we are members of the Congregation, whatever is given under any title by benefactors, as well as grants, subsidies, pensions, and the like, whether awarded or received after profession, are all acquired by the Congregation. On the other hand, goods bequeathed to a religious by title of inheritance from parents or relatives become his own property.

13. In a world where the unjust distribution of goods is a major source of division, hatred, and suffering, we want our poverty to witness to the true value and purpose of these goods.

As far as possible we intend to share our life with others, and to use our possessions for the relief of suffering and for the increase of justice and peace in the world.<sup>17</sup>

Each religious must ask himself what he can do to implement such an intention; and indeed the whole Congregation, each Province, and every local Community must do the same in this way we shall all be showing our solidarity with the poor.

14. In this spirit of poverty, we renounce by vow the free disposition of our personal possessions.

In order to fulfill the demands of effective and evident poverty, we also promise by virtue of the vow to depend on the Superior with competent authority in our use and disposition of temporal goods.

By our willingness to share in the poverty of Christ who gave all, even His very life for us,<sup>18</sup> we try to be faithful to the motto of our Founder: "Poverty is the standard under which the whole Congregation fights."<sup>19</sup>

15. Religious in perpetual vows may renounce total ownership of personal property in accordance with appropriate norms of Provincial Authority, and with permission from the Superior General.

### **Chastity**

16. All human beings, created by God to love and to be loved, fulfill their vocations in different ways.

Following the example of Christ and for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven,<sup>20</sup> we choose celibacy with full freedom, giving all our love to God who is Supreme love and to our fellow human beings.

17. Furthermore, our choice also expresses our faith. Forming communities with brethren not chosen by us, but given to us by Christ, we desire to show the profound meaning of human love and its ultimate purpose, "that God may be all in all."<sup>21</sup>

Notwithstanding the views of many to the contrary, we testify that it is possible to realize in this world the prayer of Jesus, "that all may be one."<sup>22</sup>

18. As a gift from God to His Church,<sup>23</sup> celibacy enables us to share with the Church in the universal love of Christ, who came "to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many."<sup>24</sup>

The more we love others in Christ, the more sensitive we become to their joys, sorrows, and anxieties .

Our lives are thus consecrated by vow to the service of our neighbors in fidelity to Gospel values.

19. Evangelical celibacy does not deny the value of human affections; it transforms them, and tends to promote mature generosity and refinement of heart.<sup>25</sup>

Although we are aware of the radical renunciation celibacy requires of us, for the sake of the

kingdom of heaven>><sup>26</sup> we bind ourselves by vow to perfect continence in celibacy. To remain faithful to our commitment requires maturity of mind, self-mastery, and well balanced character. In all our efforts, we rely on the strength that comes from the grace of God and a close union with Christ. His Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is also our Mother, is our example and support.

We recognize at the same time that an environment in which sincere friendships can develop in our communities will also provide strong support to our affective life, and help to strengthen and develop personality.

## **Obedience**

20. God our Father has a loving purpose for the world<sup>27</sup> and for every person it contains.<sup>28</sup> In the Father's plan Christ freely accepted the role of servant, and becoming our brother was "obedient unto death."<sup>29</sup>

As followers of Christ we too accept our roles in this plan. Alert to hear the Father's voice and to do His will, we try daily to ascertain His loving purpose in an attentive and loving search. Day by day, we confront our lives with the Gospel values and the example of Christ, ponder the events of life so as to discern "the signs of the times," and endeavor to fulfill our mission by living these constitutions under lawful authority.

21. Evangelical obedience is the foundation of the entire Christian life and apostolic service.

The mediation of others, especially of Superiors and the community, helps us know God's will. Accepting this meditation in a spirit of faith, we become witnesses to the dynamic presence of Christ and His constant love of the Father.

To the extent we work with Christ in fulfilling His plan of Redemption, our obedience is missionary. By accepting and fulfilling our common mission, using our initiative and working responsibly together, we give evidence of our solidarity.

This collective responsibility is implicit in the commitment we freely make to work for "building up the body of Christ."<sup>30</sup>

22. We recognize that co-responsibility and mutual dependence open the way to freedom and fulfillment for each one of us.

The Gospel leads us to look at the human situation in the new light of obedience to the Father<sup>31</sup> and brotherly love.<sup>32</sup>

By living together in a spirit of cooperation and peaceful harmony,<sup>33</sup> we aim at overcoming in ourselves and in our world every form of self seeking and every abuse of power. In this way is clearly revealed the power of the Cross to set people free.

23. The Superior is brother to all. In their dealings with him, the religious are to be open and spontaneous, recognizing that the Lord has given him a duty of special responsibility which they are to accept in a spirit of faith. As guide to form his community at all times, the Superior seeks and listens to their views in a frank exchange marked by respect and charity, remembering that all together we are striving to ascertain and fulfill what the Father wants of us.

The Superior always has the responsibility of making the final decision, in conformity with

our Constitutions and for the common and individual good.

In exercising the authority belonging to his office, he animates and guides the community in an atmosphere of mutual confidence and collaboration.

24. Since we have promised to live according to the Gospel and our Constitutions, we oblige ourselves by the vow of obedience to carry out the orders of our lawful Superiors, when what they command is in accordance with these Constitutions. We are also obliged by our vow to obey the supreme Pontiff, who is the highest Superior of our Congregation.



## CHAPTER II COMMUNITY LIFE

25. Our Passionist vocation is a call to live the fullness of Christian love in an evangelical community.

We bear witness to our fidelity to Christ through the charity that makes us all one in mind and heart. "By this love you have for one another, everyone will know that you are my disciples."<sup>34</sup>

On his death-bed Saint Paul of the Cross urged us his followers to remember this saying of our Savior above everything else.<sup>35</sup>

26. The Christian community is founded on the love of Christ, who by His Cross, "tore down the wall of separation" and made all one people.<sup>36</sup>

Since we are united in Christ, each one of us acknowledges with respect the dignity and equality of every other member, whom we accept as a unique individual.

Considering others better than ourselves,<sup>37</sup> we intend to help each of our brethren to develop his individual personality and talents. We are aware that the Holy Spirit makes use of the brethren to manifest Himself, and distributes His gifts among them as He sees fit, working in all of them.<sup>38</sup> For this activity of the Holy Spirit, we give thanks with gladness.

27. Community life flourishes when its members are careful to maintain and foster fraternal personal relationships.

We therefore need to come together on a regular basis to discuss matters affecting our life in common. Through our exchange of views and ideas in such meetings, we can come to see more clearly what it is that God wants of us.

In the same atmosphere of sharing, we ought to examine both our community living and our own daily lives taking as our standard the Gospel, our Constitutions, and the signs of the times. By this means, we shall be able to help, encourage, and forgive each other.

Through these discussions, we can come to discover those forms and practices of community living that will help us best to reach the goal of our religious lives. Each of us must consider it his duty to take part in these discussions, and to accept the decisions that result and are confirmed by Superiors.

28. In our daily dealings with others, each must be treated as a brother in Christ, to whom thoughtful consideration is shown.<sup>39</sup>

Mutual esteem will encourage us to seek the companionship of our brethren, so that true and lasting friendships may be fostered.

Respectful consideration for our fellow religious will lead us to observe the Constitutions, to be well-mannered in speech and behavior, to respect the times and places of religious silence, and to seek forms of recreation helpful to the spirit of religious life.

Life in community will then be characterized by joy and peace.

29. All our communities are to show a special concern for the sick brethren,<sup>40</sup> who share in the



Passion of Christ at a deeper and more personal level. Our love for them must be shown by our understanding, attentiveness, and providing them with every possible care.

30. The community must show the same care for the aging,<sup>41</sup> whose religious lives at this time must be made rewarding and fruitful. Their special needs should be provided for, and less burdensome works of the ministry made available to them. It should be remembered that the experience and wisdom they have gained from years of community living offer encouragement to their brethren, especially the young.<sup>42</sup>

31. We shall always remember our deceased brethren with love and thankfulness. The acts of suffrage on their behalf that have been decided by General or Provincial Authority will be faithfully and lovingly observed.

32. Each local Community must strive to strengthen the bonds that unite it to the Congregation.

The whole Congregation is enriched by the lawful differences in lifestyle demanded by different cultures and apostolates. The fundamental character of our Passionist vocation however, must always be observed. Wider unity will be encouraged by frequent communication with other communities in the Province, and with the brethren living in other places.

Such an experience of greater unity will lead to all becoming more aware of the burdens and problems both of their own Province and of the Congregation in general.

Accordingly, by being better informed, we shall be more ready to supply personnel, material aid, and other forms of practical help for those areas of the Congregation where such needs exist. General and Provincial regulations, however, must always be observed.

33. Christ loved everyone without exception. He prayed for all,<sup>43</sup> and laid down His life in sacrifice for all.<sup>44</sup> This universal love should be the very breath of our community life. All our local communities are essentially related to the wider communities of the Church, which exists in this world, living and acting in it.<sup>45</sup> Our communities share in varying degrees in the life, aims, and problems of these other groups.

34. Each community forms part of the local Church where it is situated. We must therefore understand the problems of the local Church, cooperating on a practical level with the local Ordinary and those who are working for the People of God.

Zeal for the apostolate will lead the community to give a hearty welcome to those who may wish to share its life for a time.

With this in view, our houses should be made available to such guests, always preserving what makes for good order, in accordance with the directives of Provincial Authority.

The Major Superiors will designate those parts of the religious house that are subject to enclosure. This always includes the rooms of the religious and the adjoining corridors.

35. We form a part of human society, and cannot distance ourselves from the people among whom we live. Each community therefore must consider whether it is relating in a Christian manner to the wider community of the area.

In deciding the times for its various religious exercises, the community should take local practices into consideration, so that religious may be available for the service of the people.

To be the leaven and the salt of the earth, as our Savior requires,<sup>46</sup> the community must preserve its own Passionist identity.

36. The parents of our religious are the community's greatest benefactors. They should be treated with honor and warm-hearted consideration, and visited as circumstances permit and the rules of the Congregation allow. The same thoughtful courtesy should be extended in due measure to other relatives, friends, and benefactors.



### CHAPTER III OUR COMMUNITY AT PRAYER

37. As a man of great prayer, Paul of the Cross inculcated its importance most forcefully by word and example.

He wished his followers to pray without ceasing and desired our communities to become real schools of prayer, leading to a deep experience of God.<sup>47</sup>

From him we learn the value and practice of an inward and outward silence that gives depth to our lives. This silence fosters the inner peace and calm necessary for the spirit of prayer to grow; it frees us from harassing cares, and hushes the clamor of the demands made daily upon us.<sup>48</sup>

38. Living a life of prayer before God and among the people, each community shares the prayerful attitude of the Church. Moved by the Spirit of God, as adopted sons we cry out: "Abba, Father!"<sup>49</sup>

In union with Christ, we praise the wondrous works of God. We contemplate Christ's saving work for us,<sup>50</sup> and collaborate with Him in extending the scope of this mystery, while awaiting its final consummation.<sup>51</sup>

Our prayer thus takes on a hidden apostolic fruitfulness for the People of God,<sup>52</sup> and echoes our solidarity with our brothers and sisters, especially the poor and suffering.<sup>53</sup>

39. Our life of prayer, communal and individual, draws us to live in communion with the Most Holy Trinity.<sup>54</sup> In prayer, we respond to the loving initiative of the Father. Led by the Holy Spirit, we unite ourselves with the Person of Christ, especially in the Paschal Mystery of His suffering, death, and resurrection.

This mystery we contemplate through personal meditation, which leads us on to an ever-growing love; this mystery we share through the daily events in which our lives and work involve us; this mystery we make to live again in our celebration of the Liturgy.

In this way our whole lives are united in prayer with Christ as together we journey towards our Father.

40. A life of prayer demands that we compare our manner of living with what is required by the Gospel.

We should continually ask ourselves whether our prayer life effectively influences our personal life, our community life, and our apostolic service.

41. Our life of prayer finds its supreme expression in the prayer of the Church, the Sacred Liturgy.<sup>55</sup>

When we celebrate the liturgical year, we are drawn closer to the fullness of the Christian mystery, and are nourished with the bread of life from the table of both the Word of God and the Body of Christ.<sup>56</sup>

## **Holy Eucharist**

42. When we celebrate the Eucharist, the Father gathers us around His Son. Sending His Spirit into our hearts, Christ unites our personal sacrifice and that of all people with His own supreme Sacrifice of Redemption.

Coming to the table of the Lord, we listen to the Word of God with attentive minds and responsive hearts.

Renewing the Sacrifice of Christ and sharing His Body and Blood, we announce His death, and proclaim His resurrection; He forgives our sins, renews our strength, and pledges us a share in His risen life.

Together with all who trust in God, we praise and thank Him for all His mighty works we offer Him our community life and apostolic work, and we pray for the needs of ourselves and all others.

The Eucharist is thus the summit and supreme expression of our worship.<sup>57</sup>

43. The Eucharist is central to the life of each community. In so far as possible, we celebrate it together every day as the fundamental action of community life. Our common sharing in the same Body of Christ nourishes the life of our community, constitutes its norm and fosters union among ourselves.

For every community, and for each religious, the Eucharist is a divine reality that transforms their lives. In celebrating it with Joy, we respond whole-heartedly to the proclamation of the death of the Lord until He comes.

44. We should prepare for the celebration of this mystery in prayerful recollection and purity of heart.

With deep awareness of the riches of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, we can return thanks and adoration throughout the day.

## **Liturgy of the Hours**

45. The praise and thanksgiving of the Eucharistic celebration are continued throughout the day by means of various forms of communal prayer. Among these is especially pre-eminent the Liturgy of the Hours.<sup>58</sup> Our community, one with the whole Church at prayer, unites at this time with Christ the eternal High Priest in offering worship to the Father of us all.

It is to Him we speak through the inspired texts of the Liturgy of the Hours; it is to His voice we listen, drawing nourishment for our spiritual lives.<sup>59</sup>

46. We celebrate in common the Liturgy of the Hours. All the religious should endeavor to make this a worthy and fruitful experience of community prayer, uniting us with one another and with Christ in brotherly concord.

The Provincial Chapter shall ensure that as far as possible each community celebrates in common all the Hours of the Sacred Liturgy. At least Morning and Evening Prayer must be celebrated in common.

## **Lectio Divina and Spiritual Reading**

47. Our contact with the Word of God is not confined to liturgical celebrations. The practice of spiritual reading focuses the prayerful attention of the community and the individual alike on the Sacred Scriptures.

This reading deepens our awareness of the Person of Christ, and helps us grow in knowledge of Him; it supplies the well-springs of personal prayer, and sheds new light on the meaning of life.<sup>60</sup>

48. Further knowledge of divine truth is also provided in the teachings of the Church's Magisterium, the writings of the Fathers, the example of the Saints, especially of our own Founder, and other spiritual works.

## **Mental Prayer**

49. The following of Christ Crucified in personal prayer is our way to discover the true God.

In mental prayer, we personally respond to the apostle's exhortation to make our own the mind of Christ.<sup>61</sup> We thus become rooted and founded in grasping the height and the depth of God's love for us in Christ.<sup>62</sup>

Personal meditation is the indispensable complement of communal prayer, and both together give prayerful meaning to our daily round of work, worship, devotion, and recreation.

50. Our Founder learned from his own experience that to keep in continual memory the sufferings of Christ is the most powerfully effective means to turn from sin and to grow in grace.<sup>63</sup> Guided by his teaching, we frequently meditate on the Crucified Christ as we endeavor to become more fully conformed to His death and resurrection, and more zealous to announce to others what we ourselves have experienced.<sup>64</sup> In this way we hope to be faithful to our consecration to the Passion.

51. Aware of the value of personal prayer, our communities should encourage the growth of a prayerful spirit by devoting prolonged periods of time every day to meditation.

Each religious should give at least one hour of his time every day to mental prayer.

We encourage various forms of mental prayer in order to foster more effectively in the members of our communities an authentic union with God. Particular cultural circumstances and psychological needs of different regions and age groups should be taken into account.

52. Every religious recognizes that at times work seems all-absorbing, and the desire to pray is not spontaneous. On such occasions, our very presence at prayer bears witness to our determination to remain constant in our love of God.<sup>65</sup>

To persevere in prayer and never to lose heart<sup>66</sup> is a pressing responsibility on each religious. Here we must help one another by speaking among ourselves about this need, and by encouraging one another to persevere in our commitment to personal prayer.

53. The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Lord, is present in a special way in our life of prayer. Like her, we too ponder God's Word in our hearts.<sup>67</sup>

We revere Mary as our Mother, and seek to imitate her trustful persevering prayer. In our love for her, we endeavor compassionately to share her sorrow in the mystery of the Cross, chiefly by contemplating the Mysteries of the Holy Rosary. Invoking her help, we are confident that her motherly intercession will win us the graces we need as sons making our way to the Father.<sup>68</sup>

### **Solitude**

54. Christ often chose solitude for Himself,<sup>69</sup> and counselled his disciples to do likewise.<sup>70</sup> Even today, solitude retains its value for Passionist life.

Aspiring to be men of prayer and teachers of prayer, we must exert ourselves to provide an environment of solitude for our lives.<sup>71</sup> Withdrawing to some degree from the world, we can draw closer to the Father, understand His saving plan, and appraise more objectively secular trends and standards. With this in mind, therefore, the period of annual Retreat is to be faithfully observed.

55. The use of modern mass media of social communication in our communities must be regulated by the requirements of the spirit of recollection among our religious, by the esteem we have for our own consecrated life, and by the respect we have for the religious character of our houses. At the same time, we are helped to an awareness of world problems that is useful for our apostolic service of others, while needful and suitable relaxation is also provided.

### **Penance**

56. Contemplation of the mystery of Christ's Passion spurs us on to that continual conversion and penance implied in our Lord's challenge: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."<sup>72</sup>

57. We can manifest our conformity with Christ Crucified in our lives:

- through our readiness to spend ourselves and to be spent in apostolic labors;
- through our acceptance of the burdens inherent in the common life;
- through our patience in coping with human weaknesses in ourselves and in others;
- through our sharing in the lot of the poor.<sup>73</sup>

58. Our response to God's call to conversion requires outward expression. Mindful of the penitential spirit of our Founder,<sup>74</sup> we make our response to this call by integrating external acts of penance into our community life.

Such penitential practices must be genuine; they should therefore be in harmony with the prevalent culture and mentality, and arise from the concrete circumstances of ordinary daily life.

59. Our religious are to observe fast and abstinence on every Friday, and on at least two other days in the week. The Provincial Chapter, however, may decide other forms of penance in place

of abstinence, it may also decide the manner and other times or practices of penance, always having regard to those liturgical seasons which are especially penitential. The local Superior may dispense from these norms in particular cases.

### **Sacrament of Reconciliation**

60. As Christians seeking continual conversion to the Lord, we should have frequent recourse to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, through which we obtain God's pardon for the offenses committed against Him. At the same time, we are reconciled with both the Church and our community, which by their charity, example, and prayer have been working for our return to God.<sup>75</sup>

This social and ecclesial dimension of sin and reconciliation we seek to express, when opportune, by means of communal liturgical services.

### **Spiritual Direction**

61. Regular spiritual direction helps us to discern the will of God, providing a favorable setting for us to reflect on our lives in their totality. A foundation of trust and confidence in our director once established, we can come to understand ourselves better, and to deepen our relationship with the Lord in greater tranquillity of spirit.<sup>76</sup>

In all this, we are following the example of our Founder, who placed the highest value on spiritual direction. This may take place during the Sacrament of Reconciliation.<sup>77</sup>



## CHAPTER IV APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY

62. The Church was founded to spread the Kingdom of God, to make everyone sharers in redemption and salvation, and thus to establish the right relationship of the entire world to Christ.<sup>78</sup>

Religious, who are deeply involved in the Mystery of the Church, take part in her apostolate in a distinctive way by a total dedication of their lives for Christ and the People of God.

To our own Congregation the Church has entrusted a special share of her apostolate. She urges us to keep constantly alive in the hearts of the faithful the memory of the Passion, in which the love of our Savior is so eminently expressed; and she looks to us by our apostolic labors to render more and more fruitful that redemptive love.<sup>79</sup>

We have inherited from our Founder the precious legacy of his teachings and personal example. This is a source of inspiration to the entire Congregation, and challenges each member to play his part zealously in the apostolic endeavors demanded by our times.

63. Since the religious life by its very nature is apostolic, each of our religious takes part in the apostolate in whatever way best accords with his gifts and circumstances.

The ministry of the word we hold in the highest esteem. What we have to live and preach in all fidelity is the "Good News of salvation."<sup>80</sup> Christ Himself is the Word of truth, the "Word of Life."<sup>81</sup> Entrusted to the Church, this Word brings the light of truth and the life of grace to all believers, molds them into a true community of worship, and unites them intimately in their celebration of the Sacraments. While on this earth, Jesus our Savior made His own the joys and sorrows of those among whom He lived, and "went about doing good and healing all."<sup>82</sup>

Following his example, we Passionists, by our preaching and by our caring concern for those among whom we live, become "doers of the word,"<sup>83</sup> and true witnesses to the Word of God.

### **The Passion in our Apostolic Activity**

64. By virtue of the specific mission that the Church entrusts to us, we make our own the words of Saint Paul: "We preach Christ Crucified,"<sup>84</sup> of whom we proclaim: "He is risen."<sup>85</sup>

Joy in the resurrection of Christ inescapably involves accepting the crucial place in His life of the Mystery of the Passion.

Anyone wishing to share in the risen life of Christ, therefore, must also share in His death by dying to sin and selfishness: "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps."<sup>86</sup>



65. We Passionists make the Paschal Mystery the center of our lives.

This entails a loving commitment to follow Jesus Crucified, and a generous resolve to proclaim His Passion and death with faith and love. His Passion and death are no mere historical events. They are ever-present realities to people in the world of today, "crucified" as they are by injustice, by the lack of a deep respect for human life, and by a hungry yearning for peace, truth, and the fullness of human existence.

Our vocation, as Passionists prompts us to familiarize ourselves thoroughly with the Passion of Christ, both in history and in the lives of people today, for the Passion of Christ and the sufferings of His Mystical Body form one mystery of salvation. Then we may hope to guide the faithful to a deeper awareness and understanding of this mystery, and so bring them to a closer union with God, a greater knowledge of themselves, and a more sensitive response to the needs of their neighbors.

66. Our Founder urged us to be tireless in teaching others how to meditate in the best and easiest way upon the Passion of Christ.<sup>87</sup> We have therefore to be sensitive to the values inherent in the religious devotion of people today.<sup>88</sup> We should also use loving initiative to find new and creative ways of deepening the prayer life of others as well as our own. This was what Saint Paul of the Cross did in his own day, zealously undertaking the spiritual direction of individual persons; and this same fruitful ministry the faithful of Christ continue to seek from us today.

### **Community Dimension of our Apostolate**

67. Our involvement in the apostolate flows directly from our life in community. Since we have been called to serve the Church in and through community, we should have special concern for those forms of the apostolate that are enriched by, and in turn nourish, community life.

Our apostolic commitments must therefore allow us to belong to a community, and to be involved in its external ministry. This provides mutual fraternal support and contributes to effective pastoral activity.

68. The apostolic aims and initiatives of the Congregation must be pursued by all, according to the diverse talents with which God has enriched its members.<sup>89</sup> We have to be generous in recognizing the gifts of every member of the community, and esteem and encourage the apostolic service undertaken for the Church and for the benefit of others.

All the religious should be given suitable opportunities to make use of their various gifts in the many different apostolic works that the Congregation carries out for the welfare of the Church.

69. Conscious of being part of the wider world-community, we recognize the need to collaborate responsibly with people of good will everywhere in pursuing all that is true, noble and just,<sup>90</sup> bearing in mind the present needs of the Church and the world, our special mission in the Church, and the particular gifts of our religious.

## **Areas of our Apostolic Activity**

70. Like Saint Paul of the Cross our Founder, we dedicate ourselves to evangelizing, and where necessary re-evangelizing the faithful, especially the poor in more neglected areas.<sup>91</sup>

The Congregation will undertake all those forms of service of the Word that it judges effective for the realization of its evangelizing potential.

Among the many apostolates sanctioned by our Constitutions, the preaching of parish missions and spiritual exercises remains our special and central activity.

71. An increasingly important apostolic activity is the work that needs to be undertaken among de-christianized groups, that they may be led once again into the Christian community. This apostolate demands a deep sensitivity of understanding, that God may open to us a door to "declare the mystery of Christ."<sup>92</sup>

72. In a spirit of faith and brotherly love, we seek to discern the signs of the times, following the example of Saint Paul of the Cross, who saw "the name of Jesus written on the foreheads of the poor."<sup>93</sup>

Guided by the teaching of the Church and our own consecration to the Passion of Christ, we strive to make our lives and apostolate an authentic and credible witness on behalf of justice and human dignity.

Accordingly, our life-style must stand out as a prophetic condemnation of the injustices among which we live; it should be a continual witness against the abuses of a consumer society.

The hardships entailed by such an attitude demand that we embrace the Cross in a spirit of faithfulness to our mission.<sup>94</sup>

73. As part of the local Church, we share its pastoral needs, and cooperate by offering our ministries in well-planned apostolic activity. While we are open and available to the wishes and requests of diocesan authorities, we nevertheless maintain the specific character of our religious Congregation, and of its special mission in the Church.

Accordingly, we must never lose sight of our characteristic apostolate of preaching the message of the Cross; nor must we ever forget that our life in community is a necessary element of our religious life as well as being a most important witness for the whole Church.

Only after careful discernment at local and provincial level, and with the consent of the Superior General with his Council, can we accept the care of parishes.

74. Unity among all Christians is one of the chief concerns of the Church, since discord among Christians "openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages that most holy cause, the preaching of the Gospel to every creature."<sup>95</sup>

Accordingly, with due preparation both as individuals and as communities, we engage in ecumenical activities whenever possible.

75. Mindful of the Church's missionary nature and faithful to the Congregation's original spirit, we undertake the evangelical task of proclaiming and establishing the Kingdom of God among all peoples.

While "the special end of this missionary activity is the evangelization and implanting of the Church among people or groups in which it has not yet taken root,"<sup>96</sup> the complementary duty of social cooperation should never be neglected.

Every member of our Congregation should see our missionary apostolate as one of our primary and central activities, for which all accept a personal responsibility. Every Province should undertake this apostolate, with the encouragement and guidance of General Authority, to whom it belongs to co-ordinate such activities.

76. Each field of our apostolate, whether pastoral, ecumenical, or missionary, should be marked not only by the witness of our lives, but also by professional competence, experience and adaptation to the changing needs of time and place.

Each Province as a whole, as well as each local community, is responsible for making a mature appraisal of its apostolic activity, and for assessing current forms of collaboration in case these need to be adapted to new circumstances of time and place.



## CHAPTER V FORMATION FOR OUR LIFE

### **Formation in General**

**77.** Conscious that God is the primary source of all formation, the Congregation collaborates with the action of the Holy Spirit in each religious. He who has been called to the religious life must be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ, and a man of the Gospel.

Our Congregation thus undertakes to help each religious to a free, conscious offering of himself to God and to the service of the Church in Passionist community life. This undertaking extends to a continuing development of the formation imparted in the period of initiation.

**78.** We must continually have in mind the basic principles of a fully human and religious life, as lived in the Congregation, if we wish to achieve and safeguard the special ends of formation.

Hence we must:

- increase our knowledge and deepen our understanding of the nature, character, and aims of the Congregation;<sup>97</sup>
- have continual recourse to the foundation of these essentials in Scripture, theology, liturgy, and the Magisterium of the Church;
- be sensitively aware of the actual forms in which are embodied the life of prayer and apostolate in our Congregation.

**79.** Each of us is responsible for the vitality and continued growth of the Congregation. The most persuasive invitation to young people to come and share our Passionist life is given when they find us faithful to the charism of Saint Paul of the Cross. They should see us as employed in a life of meaningful service, which is characterized by joyfulness of spirit, and sustained by the wholehearted support of a community of brothers.<sup>98</sup>

**80.** All Passionist communities, especially in houses of formation, should be true schools of prayer and of fraternity. They should be thoroughly in harmony with the spirit of the Church, and profoundly aware of her mission to evangelize the world, whose genuine human values they sincerely appreciate.

Older religious should show younger members that they consider them to be called by God to the Congregation, whose life and apostolate they enrich.

It is only when this attitude of mind and heart prevails in the community that our candidates will experience how much brotherly help, especially from competent and trained religious,<sup>99</sup> will enable them to grow and persevere in their vocation.

**81.** The Major Superior with the consent of his Council appoints the Master of Novices, the Directors, and others responsible for formation, who should be both spiritually and psychologically mature. They should be solidly grounded in sound doctrine, and suitably experienced in pastoral work. Well-versed in the knowledge of the spirituality and history of our Congregation, they should work together harmoniously and conscientiously to educate our new

members to an authentic Passionist family spirit, and to inspire each one with enthusiasm for his vocation. They should help the young religious gradually to experience their membership in community at a deeper level, bringing home to them their responsibility to contribute to the vitality and apostolate of the Congregation.

**82.** Those engaged in the task of formation are responsible for examining the genuineness of vocation in candidates and working with them towards an authentic discernment. In this process, they will take into account the human moral, and spiritual gifts of those they are directing, as well as their physical and psychic health.<sup>100</sup>

Candidates should be helped to mature as steady and self-controlled personalities, balanced in judgment and responsible in behavior. Their advisers will aid them to become more and more aware of the demands of their Passionist vocation, and to see it in the wider context of the saving mystery of Christ Crucified. Further, these younger religious should be guided to an ever-increasing knowledge of the currents of thought that underlie contemporary events, and should be helped to judge these in the light of the Gospel.

**83.** Each candidate must take care to develop those human and spiritual gifts that render him fit for religious life.

In an atmosphere of dialogue and mutual respect, he must be ready to accept the necessary direction of activity that those in lawful authority may consider it prudent to require of him. In this way he will benefit from the guidance of those in charge of formation, and will be co-operating freely and generously with the grace of vocation he has received from God.

The main responsibility for all this rests squarely on the candidate himself. He must also take the lead in showing positive charity and loyal cooperation with his brethren, and in developing team-spirit and adaptability.

**84.** We recognize that every apostolate calls for a high degree of competence. While specialized knowledge is needed to begin with, no less necessary is continual adaptation to the demands that arise in one's field of ministry.

Through study and other suitable means, each one of us should continually aim at deepening his faith, nourishing his prayer life, and preparing himself to be an effective apostle.<sup>101</sup>

**85.** The Congregation should have a plan of education and training, covering every stage of development of its members, for whose human, intellectual, religious, and apostolic formation it provides. The relevant documents of the Holy See and our own particular law must be taken into account in drawing up this plan.<sup>102</sup>

Every Province, Vice-Province, and Regional Vicariate will adapt this plan according to its own particular circumstances and the directives of the National Episcopal Conference, and will provide competent personnel for its necessary implementation.

The adapted plan must be presented to the Superior General for approval.

**86.** Instruction on the whole range of the mystery of Christ's Passion and the spirituality of our Founder and our Congregation must be included in the plan of formation for all our religious, always mindful of our special character and distinctive vow. This instruction should be given through specialized courses or seminars.

## **Pre-Novitiate and Novitiate Formation**

**87.** Each of us has a serious obligation to promote vocations to the Passionist life.

Those who apply to us must be helped to respond to their call, either in seminaries or in other ways judged more suitable and effective.<sup>103</sup>

Both in encouraging and fostering vocations, we must all bear in mind the need to provide personnel for the apostolate, both at home and abroad.<sup>104</sup>

**88.** Candidates will have a postulancy that will give them some experience of life in community. They will have the time to reflect on what their vocation means and demands, and to prepare adequately for their novitiate. Besides getting to know one another better, they will have the opportunity for human and emotional growth, and for clarifying their ideas about the objectives of religious life.<sup>105</sup>

**89.** The purpose of the novitiate is to help candidates:

- understand more thoroughly the meaning of our Passionist vocation;
- experience living in the Congregation;
- acquire and make their own our spirit and apostolic dedication.

At the same time, the novitiate enables the Congregation to come to know candidates better, and to evaluate their good will and particular gifts.<sup>106</sup>

**90.** Following the norms of common and particular law, the Provincial Chapter determines:

- (a) what is required for entry into the novitiate;
- (b) how the novitiate course of instruction should be approved;
- (c) how long the novitiate should last (not less than one year and not more than two years).

**91.** The novitiate is common to clerics and brothers. The Provincial Superior, having listened to his Council and others whose advice he considers prudent, authorizes admission of the candidate as cleric or brother whether before, during, or after the novitiate. The Secretary General should be informed of the decisions made.

**92.** For validity, the novitiate must be made in a house designated as such by the Superior General with the consent of his Council. Major Superiors, however, may allow all the novices to go for a certain time to another house designated by those Superiors.

In order to improve the formation of the novices, the Master may with the consent of the Major Superior permit them to be engaged in apostolic activity outside the novitiate community for a certain period of time, though not beyond one month. The norms of common and particular law, however, must always be observed.

**93.** Having listened to his Council, the Provincial Superior has the right to admit candidates to the novitiate, to dismiss novices for a just cause, and to admit candidates to renewal of vows, and ecclesiastical ministries.

The Provincial Superior with the consent of his Council has the right to admit candidates to temporary and perpetual vows, and to diaconate and priesthood.

Each Province determines with what other body the Provincial Superior and his Council must consult in these matters.

**94.** Perpetually professed religious may receive the permanent diaconate, according to the norms of the National Conference of Bishops. The following norms of the Congregation are also required, as well as those matters that may be determined by the Provincial Chapter:

- (a) the Candidate must be admitted by the Provincial Superior with the consent of his Council;
- (b) he should be the same age as is required for a candidate for priestly ordination;
- (c) he must have received a fitting intellectual apostolic preparation.

**95.** Provincial legislation determines the exact length of time for which temporary vows may be taken. This may not be less than three years, nor more than six.

The Major Superior, with the consent of his Council, may extend the period of temporary profession in particular cases, but not beyond three years more than what is decreed by the Provincial Chapter.

**96.** The competent Major Superior or his delegate receives the candidate's profession, which is celebrated in accordance with the Ritual proper to our Congregation.

The formula for profession is as follows:

*For the honor and glory of God, I, N.N., declare my firm intention to consecrate myself to God more intimately, and to follow Christ Crucified more closely. In the presence of my brothers, therefore, and into your hands, N.N., I vow (for three years / for the rest of my life) to recall to mind with greater love the Passion of our Lord and to promote its memory by word and deed, and I vow chastity, poverty, and obedience, according to the Rule and Constitutions of the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ. I commit myself wholeheartedly to this religious family, so that by the grace of the Holy Spirit, the help of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Sorrows, and the prayers of our Holy Father Paul of the Cross, I may obtain fullness of love in the service of God and the Church.*

### **Departure and Dismissal of Members**

**97.** In a spirit of thankfulness, each of our religious should carefully foster the vocation he has been given; he ought to strive earnestly to overcome the difficulties he encounters, chiefly by means of prayer, watchfulness, and with the help and advice of Superiors and spiritual directors.

**98.** Every Superior should prudently help our religious with special care and personal kindness when they are distressed by difficulties and uncertainties. Should anyone decide, however, for just and grave reasons, carefully examined before God, to leave the Congregation (for those in perpetual vows, for most grave reasons), or if Superiors have to dismiss a religious, everything is to be done in accordance with the norms of common and particular law.



## CHAPTER VI CONSTITUTION OF THE CONGREGATION

**99.** Our Congregation has been established by the Church as an authentic and distinctive form of religious life. Its title is <<The Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ>>, for which the initials are <<C.P.>>, and its members are known as <<Passionists>>. It is a clerical Religious Institute of pontifical right.

**100.** Whether clerics or brothers, all of us share the same Passionist vocation, and are called to live in community as equal sons of the same Father. Together we strive to keep alive in our minds and hearts the memory of the Passion, each according to his particular role of service in the Church and in the Congregation. In our continual efforts to follow Jesus Crucified, we are supported and guided by our Constitutions.

101. Incorporation into the Congregation is made by the profession of religious vows.

Each religious is a member of the Province or General Regional Vicariate that accepted him into the Congregation.

All the members of the Congregation have the same rights and duties in accordance with the Constitutions.

Active voice is possessed by all members of the Congregation, according to the norms of particular law; passive voice is possessed by members that are perpetually professed, unless the contrary is evident from the nature of the case, or from common or particular law.

102. The distinctive habit of religious of the Congregation is a black tunic, a belt, and the sign of the Passion. Religious wear the habit as a sign of their consecration and as a witness to poverty.

Its use will be regulated by norms decided by the Provincial Chapter, which must take into account local circumstances and customs as well as the directives of the National Conference of Bishops.

103. The Congregation is made up of Provinces, Vice-Provinces, Regional Vicariates, and local Communities, each of which is regulated by the norms of common and particular law.

(a) A Province is a union of several local Communities under one Superior who governs with ordinary and proper jurisdiction.

(b) A Vice-Province is a union of several local Communities under one Superior who governs with ordinary and vicarious jurisdiction in the name of the Superior General.

(c) A Regional Vicariate is a group of several religious under one Superior who governs with ordinary and vicarious jurisdiction. It can be General or Provincial according to its dependence on the Superior General or Provincial Superior.

(d) A local Community consists of at least three religious who live under the authority of a Superior in a religious house established according to the norms of common and particular law. Thus, dwelling in their own house, the religious do not live elsewhere without permission of the Superior and in accordance with common law. If there is to be an absence of long duration, permission of the Major Superior



104. The establishment, suppression, and joining of Provinces are reserved to the General Chapter, or to the Superior General with the consent of the General Synod.

The modification of a Province belongs to the Superior General with the consent of his Council, having heard the opinion of the Provincial Authorities concerned.

The establishment, modification, and suppression of a Vice-Province pertain to the Superior General with the consent of his Council, after having consulted with the others concerned.

The establishment and suppression of a General Regional Vicariate are reserved to the Superior General with the consent of his Council.

The establishment and suppression of a Provincial Regional Vicariate are reserved to the Provincial Chapter or to another body determined according to the Regulations of the Province, with the previous approval of the Superior General having obtained the consent of his Council.

The establishment and suppression of a religious house are effected by the Superior General with the consent of his Council, after complying with the requirements of common law, and after having consulted the Provincial Authority concerned.

In order to observe the requirements of law, a petition for the establishment or suppression of a religious house must be made to the Superior General by the Provincial Superior with the consent of his Council, and with the consent or advice of those who according to provincial legislation also have a voice in the matter.

105. Each local Community must belong to a Province, a Vice-Province, or a Regional Vicariate. If the good of the Congregation demands it, however, the Superior General with the consent of his Council, and after having consulted the Provincial or Vice-Provincial Superior and his Council, may place some individual houses under his own immediate Jurisdiction.



## CHAPTER VII GOVERNMENT OF THE CONGREGATION

### **Function of Authority**

108. Authority in the Church is given so that those who hold it may render brotherly service in the name of God. In our Congregation, those who have the responsibility of government ought to be sensitive to the workings of the Holy Spirit. In carrying out the duties of their office, they are to lead the community in a way that fosters the wholesome development of each individual religious no less than the common good of the whole Congregation.

109. Collegial authority and jurisdiction rest with the General and Provincial Chapters, in accordance with common law, the Constitutions and General Regulations.

The General Council, the Provincial Council, the Local Chapter, and other bodies of government do not have collegial power, not even in those cases where a vote is deliberative, except where it is otherwise evident from common or particular law, or where it treats of an election.

The Superior General, Provincial Superior, and local Superior, observing the prescriptions of law, act in virtue of their own power, after they have obtained the advice or consent of their Council or local Chapter.

When dealing with matters in accordance with the law, Superiors constitute one body with their Council and enjoy the right to vote.

110. The term Major Superiors includes the Superior General, Provincial Superiors, Vice Provincial Superiors, Regional Vicars, their substitutes in office, and those who exercise power similar to that of Provincial Superiors.

No one takes office as Major Superior unless he is at least seven years perpetually professed; and in the case of the Superior General, unless he is forty years of age.

111. Major Superiors are obliged to make a personal profession of Faith using a formula approved by the Holy See:

- (a) The Superior General in the presence of the General Chapter that elected him;
- (b) The other Major Superiors in the presence of whomsoever appointed or confirmed them or before the appropriate delegate.

112. In elections, that religious is regarded as elected who has obtained the required majority of votes and has been proclaimed as such by the president of the assembly, according to the norms of common and particular law, invalid votes always being discounted.

In other matters, the required majority is also computed from the valid votes.

113. Dynamic leadership and vital communities are not produced by laws written down on paper. All our brethren should cooperate to ensure that vigorous leadership is provided at every level of the Congregation. When this co-responsibility is accepted by everyone, the exercise of authority

within the Community will benefit each individual member. In this way will be realized the goals set before us by our mission from the Church: the honor and glory of God, and the salvation of the world.

114. In order to petition the Holy See either to modify some existing point of the Constitutions or to introduce some new point, a two thirds majority of votes in favor is necessary in two successive General Chapters.

After the first vote, the Superior General will request the Holy See for a temporary rescript that would allow the modification or new point to be introduced. The petition for a definitive change or for the definitive in

Introduction of the new point would be forwarded to the Holy See if the next General Chapter ratifies the decision of its predecessor.

115. The faculty of interpreting the Constitutions belongs to the General Chapter; outside Chapter it belongs to the Superior General with the consent of his Council, provided interpretation is neither extensive nor restrictive, since this is reserved to the Holy See. Nevertheless, the faculty of interpreting the General Regulations of the Congregation, as well as the particular legislation of Provinces and Vice-Provinces, belongs to the above-named authority of the Congregation.

Each Provincial Superior with the consent of his Council enjoys the faculty of interpreting the particular law of his province, with the exception of those norms that directly concern the Provincial Superior and his Council. Every one of our religious has the right to appeal to the Superior General and his Council.

116. The Superior General may dispense individual religious. With the consent of his Council, he may dispense individual houses, Vicariates, and Provinces from any disciplinary norms of the Constitutions or from any norm of our General Regulations. With the consent of his Council, he may also dispense from the decisions and decrees of Congresses and of Provincial Chapters.

Other Major Superiors have the faculty of dispensing their own individual religious and those who are in their territory from the disciplinary norms of our legislation. With the consent of their Councils and in particular cases, they enjoy the same faculty with regard to individual houses.

The local Superior may in disciplinary matters dispense individual religious; in particular cases, he may dispense even the whole community.

117. Permission to preach to the religious in our churches or oratories is required from the Major or Local Superior.

118. Members of our Congregation who write on religious or moral matters need, in order to publish, the permission of the Superior General or Provincial Superior, as well as permission from ecclesiastical authority if this is required.

## **The Local Community**

119. The local Community is the living cell on which depends the vitality of the entire Congregation. Here each Passionist lives in a group united in brotherhood, each aware of his human dignity as a son of God, and each ready to respond to the lawful demands of corresponsibility. Each individual member has the right and duty to take part in all the steps involved in making decisions; his role should never be one of merely passive acquiescence.

The Superior must give the kind of leadership that will encourage his brethren to bring an active and responsible obedience to the offices they shoulder and the activities they undertake. Therefore, a Superior should listen willingly to the religious and encourage them to make a personal contribution to the welfare of the community and of the Church. Not to be weakened, however, is the Superior's authority to decide what must be done and to require the doing of it.<sup>107</sup>

120. The religious who has been designated as Superior is not thereby set above or apart from his community. He is one with his brethren. He has to realize that on the Superior depends to a large extent the well being of the local Community, among whom he ought to see himself as one who serves. He therefore exercises his authority in a spirit of service for the brethren and manifests thereby the charity with which God loves them.<sup>108</sup>

The Superior must guide and direct his brethren with genuine respect for their human personality, so that each may feel he is regarded with kindly consideration. He should unite gentleness with firmness and consistency.

In his service to the brethren, he has to be both pastor and animator. As pastor, he must always take pains to gather together God's family in one living brotherhood, and to lead them through Christ and in the Holy Spirit towards our Father in heaven. As animator, he must foster those projects and courses of action that will bring his brethren to become an even closer community of life, prayer, and apostolate.<sup>109</sup>

121. The local Community has the freedom it needs to develop its life and mission in its own area in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. It is closely linked in brotherly communion and dialogue with other local communities; with them it contributes to the development of the whole Province, in whose continuing well-being it finds help, strength, and inspiration.

The resources of the Province are in fact at the service of all, just as its goals are common to all.

## **The Province**

122. The highest authority and guide within the Province is the Provincial Chapter.

In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, the power to take many important decisions has been fittingly mandated to Provincial Authority so that it can face problems in its own area. A healthy measure of self determination is thus secured within the authorized mission of the Congregation.

123. The Provincial Chapter is convoked to examine the life of the Province, to face up to the problems of the time, to plan the course for the future, to make norms and decrees, and to exercise its power of election.

While the Provincial Chapter may not assume executive duties of government, it nevertheless has the responsibility to re-assess past performance in the light of clearly defined policies.

124. The Provincial Superior should guide and inspire the local Communities and bind them together in genuine brotherly unity.

He should be alert to the workings of the Holy Spirit, and sensitive to differences between various situations.

His Council and other established groups will help him to judge responsibly and rightly concerning the life-style and faithfulness of the local Communities.

125. The Provincial Superior should have at heart a deep care for all the religious in his Province. He must encourage them to use their talents and to realize the full potential of their gifts, aware that this promotes the welfare of each individual and of the entire Province.

His role as leader means that he must point out goals, clearly explain values, and propose motives that will inspire genuine Passionist living.

He has the prime responsibility for ensuring that the life of the Province remains healthy and runs smoothly. He therefore has to settle disputes, organize for effective action, and supervise the carrying out of projects authorized by General or Provincial Authority. Finally, he has to promote a closer union between his own Province and the Congregation as a whole.

### **The General Chapter**

126. The General Chapter is the supreme authority in the Congregation, and possesses full jurisdiction according to the norms of law.

127. The General Chapter meets to carry out its task of making laws and holding elections.

It has to promote the faithfulness of the Congregation to the ideals of community and service of the Church. Its primary responsibilities, therefore, are as follows:

- (a) to discern the workings of the Holy Spirit in the events of life, and thus to be a powerful force in the task of continual adaptation and renewal;
- (b) to nourish the growth and development of the authentic Passionist spirit, so that it will be manifestly embodied in every member of the Congregation, no matter where he lives;
- (c) to consider closely the state of the Congregation, and to clarify its common goals of community life and apostolic activity;
- (d) to foster solidarity, and to maintain unity without insisting on uniformity;
- (e) to evaluate how the General Government has operated, and the extent to which the planning of the previous Chapter and of the General Synods has been implemented. It will avoid, however, specifying administrative procedures that depend on the Superior General and his staff;
- (f) to elect the Superior General and his Council.

128. As the supreme legislative body of an international community, the General Chapter will normally give directives and instructions in general terms, which each Province is obliged to carry out in harmony with its own particular culture and circumstances.

129. The General Chapter meets every six years.

Its ex officio members are: the Superior General, who will also preside at the Chapter, previous Superiors General, the General Consultors, the Procurator General, the Secretary General, the Secretary General of the Missions, the General Econome, Provincial Superiors, and Vice-Provincial Superiors.

If a Provincial or Vice-Provincial Superior is prevented from attending the Chapter, his place will be taken by his first Consultor; if he in turn is unable to attend, another shall be chosen by the Provincial Council.

130. In accordance with the norms of the General Regulations, one or more delegates elected by each Province will attend the General Chapter. The General Regulations may establish norms providing for delegates from different groups, regions, or organizations within the Congregation. If a delegate cannot be present at the Chapter, his place will be taken by a substitute.

### **The Superior General and his Council**

131. The head of the entire Congregation is called the Superior General. He has ordinary and proper jurisdiction over all the Provinces, Vice-Provinces, Regional Vicariates, houses, members, and goods of the Congregation. This jurisdiction of his is to be exercised according to the norms of common and particular law.

He is elected for six years, and may be immediately re-elected only once.

132. Having weighed everything maturely in the Lord, the electors shall strive in all earnestness to elect the one whom they consider most worthy to govern the Congregation.

133. The Superior General is held to be canonically elected when he receives two-thirds of the votes cast in a ballot. If there is no election in the fifth ballot, however, the one who receives an absolute majority in a subsequent ballot shall be considered elected.

134. Since he has jurisdiction over the whole Congregation, the Superior General enjoys the right to vote in every Provincial and local Chapter, Congress, and Assembly in the Congregation.

An extraordinary case may arise when the Superior General intends to exercise his authority directly in a Province. In such a situation, he must request the advice or consent of the General Council if in comparable circumstances the Provincial Superior is obliged to ask the same of his own Council.

135. The General Chapter elects at least four Consultors according to the norms of the General Regulations. They constitute the General Council and assist the Superior General in dealing with the affairs of the Congregation.

The Superior General must keep his Council informed about the state of the Congregation, and frequently discuss with them the problems and progress of the Congregation.

He asks for the deliberative or consultative vote of his Council whenever this is required by common or particular law.

136. Each General Consultor is held to be canonically elected when he receives an absolute majority of votes cast in a ballot. If there is no absolute majority in the fifth ballot, however, the election will take place between the candidates who obtained the two highest numbers of votes in the fifth ballot. In the sixth ballot, the candidate who obtains an absolute majority of votes shall be considered elected. If there is a tie he shall be considered elected who is senior by profession, or in the event of parity of profession, senior by age.

All Consultors hold office for six years, and may be immediately re-elected only once.

137. The Superior General and General Consultors assume office by the very fact that they have been elected and have accepted election.

After the designated number of Consultors has been chosen, the Chapter proceeds to elect one of them as first Consultor, following the same norms as for the election of a Consultor. Whenever for any reason the Superior General may be absent, the first Consultor acts in his stead.

When the office of Superior General becomes vacant, the first Consultor assumes this office until the next General Chapter, which must begin within one year.

138. The Superior General with the consent of his Council will appoint the Procurator General, the Secretary General, the General Econome, the Secretary General of the Missions, and the Postulator General.

The Superior General with the consent of his Council will also appoint local Superiors in those houses over which he exercises immediate jurisdiction.

139. If a General Consultor leaves office, his place will be filled until the next General Chapter by another religious elected by the Superior General, the General Consultors, and the Procurator General acting collegially.

140. The General Regulations shall determine how many members form the quorum required to act validly in the General Council. The same Regulations shall further specify which officials of the Curia should substitute for the absent Consultors, when this becomes necessary to achieve the required quorum.

141. As part of his pastoral service to the Congregation, the Superior General shall personally conduct canonical visitations at least once during his term of office. Nevertheless, he may delegate this task to a General Consultor or someone else, who will submit to the Superior General and his Council an accurate, written report of the visitation he has made.

142. The chief duty of the Superior General is to ensure that the universal law of the Church, and the Constitutions and the directives of the General Chapter are being carried out by our religious, in a spirit of faithfulness to our Passionist charism and in response to requests from Church Authority.

He should foster and safeguard by suitable measures the spiritual, doctrinal, and cultural growth of the Congregation.

Attentive to the more urgent problems of our times, he should coordinate the various apostolic activities of our Congregation, and encourage continual renewal, not only of our

activities, but also of our religious, individually and in community. He will thus strengthen the bonds of spiritual unity created between Provinces by our common vocation.

143. The Superior General should maintain good communication with each Province. He should know their problems and difficulties, their failures and successes. Through all eventualities, he should support them with brotherly understanding and loving encouragement.

This overall view of the whole Congregation will help him to give greater service to the Provinces. He should direct them clearly concerning the goals of the Congregation, and should not hesitate to be firm when the need arises.

### **The General Synod**

144. The General Synod is primarily an assembly that acts as a consultative body to help the Superior General.

It will examine the programmes proposed by the General Chapter and evaluate their implementation. Further, it will suggest initiatives to keep the Congregation continually up to date; it will propose means of settling problems in a spirit of brotherly harmony, and will call the attention of the various Provinces to their duties towards one another.

145. The Superior General requires the consent of the Synod in the following matters of major concern to the Congregation:

- (a) to convoke an extraordinary General Chapter;
- (b) to grant a general dispensation from the General Regulations;
- (c) to approve the establishment, suppression, or union of Provinces.

146. The Superior General convokes the Synod every two years. With the consent of his Council he may summon it at other times, when he judges it opportune, or at the request of the majority of Provincial Superiors.

The members of the Synod must be consulted about the agenda proposed for the meetings, and are free to put forward other topics for discussion.

147. The Superior General is ex officio president of the Synod. The other members are those who have the right ex officio to take part in the General Chapter.

If a Provincial or Vice-Provincial Superior cannot be present at the Synod, he will be represented by his first Consultor. If the first Consultor is also unable to take part, the Provincial Council chooses another religious to take his place.

### **Provincial Government**

148. The Provincial Chapter is the supreme authority in each Province. It is a collegial body enjoying jurisdiction in accordance with common and particular law.

Whenever the Constitutions entrusts a matter to Provincial Authority or to the Province without specifying further, it is understood as pertaining primarily and by pre-eminent right to the Provincial Chapter. Outside the Provincial Chapter, these decisions should be made by the



Provincial Superior with the consent of his Council. The Provincial Chapter may further require the advice or consent of others.

149. The Provincial Chapter is to be convened and its proceedings regulated according to the following norms:

- (a) each Province will decide how often a Provincial Chapter should be called. It should meet after a period of time not less than three years and not more than six;
- (b) the Chapter is convened by the Provincial Superior by means of a circular letter sent in good time to every house in the Province. The date fixed, however, must have been agreed beforehand with the Superior General;
- (c) the Provincial Superior and Provincial Consultors participate ex officio at the Provincial Chapter. The Chapter will decide who else may take part, either by reason of office or for some other reason. The number of delegates, however, must not be less than the number of those attending the Chapter ex officio;
- (d) no Provincial Chapter may effect a change in its own membership while it is in progress;
- (e) the President of the Provincial Chapter, with the right to vote, is the Superior General or his delegate;
- (f) norms and decrees made by the Provincial Chapter need to be approved by the Superior General with the consent of his Council.

150. Each Province will decide its own method of electing delegates and their substitutes for the Provincial Chapter.

All the members of the Province have an active voice in the election of delegates; a passive voice is enjoyed by religious in perpetual vows.

151. Each Province is governed by a Provincial Superior elected in a manner determined by the Provincial Chapter and confirmed in office by the Superior General. He has ordinary and proper ecclesiastical jurisdiction over all the houses, persons, and goods of the province.

His term of office must be not less than three years and not more than six; he may, however, be re-elected according to the norms established by the Provincial Chapter. To be elected for a third and final term, he must receive at least two-thirds of the votes in one or other of the first three scrutinies; otherwise he cannot be elected.

152. The Provincial Superior makes a yearly visit to every house in the Province, either personally or through a delegate. After the visit he submits an accurate, written report to the Superior General.

153. To help the Provincial Superior, Consultors are elected who are immediately subject to him.

They have a deliberative or consultative vote in accordance with common law and the particular law of the Congregation or Province.

154. The Provincial Chapter will decide the following points:

- (a) the number of Consultors, their duties governing the Province, the manner of their election, the order of precedence among them, and the length of their term of office;
- (b) how a Consultor is to be replaced should he leave office before his term is completed;

(c) who is to replace the Provincial Superior should he leave office or be prevented in any way from exercising office.

155. It pertains to the Superior General or his delegate to confirm in office the Provincial Superior and his Consultors.

156. The Provincial Chapter decides what other main offices are necessary for the smooth running of the Province, and how the holders of these offices are to be chosen.

157. When for grave reasons he judges it necessary, the President of the Chapter has the right either to reserve some particular matter to himself and his Council, or to close the Chapter and reserve the rest of the business to himself and his Council. The prescription laid down in No. 159, however, is always to be preserved.

158. In a particular case, if grave reasons require it, the Superior General may reserve to himself and his Council the election of a Provincial Superior and all other elections and nominations in a Province. To do this, the Superior General must first obtain the consent of his Council, expressed by two-thirds of the votes. The prescription laid down in No. 159, however, is always to be preserved

If a member of the Council is absent or prevented from attending the Council meeting, he sends his vote in writing.

159. The Provincial Chapter determines the manner of electing delegates and their substitutes for both ordinary and extraordinary General Chapters.

## **Vice Provinces and Regional Vicariates**

160. A Vice-Province is governed by a Vice Provincial Superior, and a Vicariate by a Regional Vicar. They each enjoy ordinary vicarious jurisdiction over the persons, houses, and goods of the Vice-Province or Regional Vicariate. They have the same rights and faculties as a Provincial Superior in the government of his Province, with the exception of those which the Major Superior has reserved to himself. A Vice-Provincial Superior and a Regional Vicar will each have at least two Consultors.

161. The Congress of a Vice-Province is convened by the Vice-Provincial Superior with the consent of the Superior General, and takes place at the time appointed.

The Vice-Provincial Superior and his Consultors have ex officio the right to vote. The Superior General or his delegate presides over the Congress with the right to vote; he also confirms the elections made.

162. The Congress of a Regional Vicariate is convened by the Regional Vicar with the consent of the Superior General or Provincial Superior on whom he is dependent and takes place at the time appointed.

Those who have the right to vote ex officio are the Regional Vicar and his Consultors, the Superior General or Provincial Superior on whom the Vicariate depends or his delegate.

In General Regional Vicariates, the Superior General or his delegate presides at the Congress with the right to vote; he also confirms the elections made.

In Provincial Regional Vicariates the Provincial Superior or his delegate presides at the Congress with the right to vote; he also confirms the elections made. When the Superior General is also present, he presides at the Congress with the right to vote, without depriving the Provincial Superior or his delegate or the right to vote.

163. The Vice-Province determines norms, which must be approved by the Superior General with his Council, about the following points:

- (a) who should be present at the Congress, how often it should be held, what its duties should be, and how delegates and their substitutes should be elected;
- (b) how the Vice-Provincial Superior and his Consultors should be elected, how long their terms of office should be (not less than three years and not more than six), and whether they may be re-elected;
- (c) the order of precedence among the Consultors, and the manner of substituting for or succeeding the Vice-Provincial Superior.

In Regional Vicariates these norms are to be decided or approved either by the Superior General or by the Provincial Authority on which the Vicariate is dependent.

A Regional Vicariate must also observe the prescriptions in force in the Province on which it is dependent, unless the contrary is explicitly stated.

164. In all other matters concerning the government of Provinces or houses the prescriptions of common and particular law must be observed.

## **Local Community**

165. Each local Community has as its head a Superior, who has jurisdiction over the members of the community and the property of the house.

The Provincial Chapter prescribes the norms to be followed for the election or nomination of a Superior, and for the length of his term of office, which cannot be more than four years.

Local Superiors, if elected, need confirmation in office by the Provincial Superior; if they are appointed by the Provincial Superior, there should be a suitable consultation beforehand.

Local Superiors may be re-elected to the same house only once. For a just cause, the Superior General may dispense from this norm only twice.

In every local Community there should ordinarily be a Vicar and Econome distinct from the Superior.

166. For grave reasons and after having examined carefully the conduct of a local Superior, the Superior General with the consent of his Council, or the Provincial Superior with the consent of his Council and the approval of the Superior General, may remove him from office.

167. The local Chapter acts as a Council for the Superior of the house.

For local Chapters, Provincial Authority determines the norms which will refer to their frequency, membership, and matters on which a deliberative or consultative vote is required.

For serious reasons, which must be made known to the community, the Provincial Superior with the consent of his Council can act otherwise than has been decided by the local Chapter.



## CHAPTER VIII TEMPORAL GOODS

168. Our practice of poverty must be both sincere and authentic; it should shine forth in every Community, in every Province, and in the whole Congregation. Accumulation of goods must be avoided, and every form of luxury and greed shunned. We should each be content with what is necessary in a life-style that is simple and frugal.

169. The right of acquiring and possessing, of alienating and administering temporal goods in conformity with common and particular law belongs to the Congregation, Provinces, Vice Provinces, Regional Vicariates, and houses endowed with the title of juridical persons. A Province may possess permanent property and stable income when the Provincial Chapter judges these to be necessary for the support of the religious and the development of the apostolate. Such an arrangement must always be in harmony with poverty.

What is said above of a Province applies also in due measure to a Vice-Province and a Regional Vicariate.

170. The chief source of our economic support is the unremitting labor of all our religious. We accept payment for our work as one way of living out our poverty, but as far as possible, we try and maintain detachment from whatever is given us for our ministries to others. We aim at sharing with them the message of the Cross in a disinterested attitude of generous service.

171. We receive with thankfulness the help offered by benefactors, to whom we show our appreciation by making them feel that they are linked spiritually with our Congregation, and that they share in its good works.

172. Those who have the responsibility of administering the goods of the Congregation must concern themselves with securing and safeguarding the resources necessary to support our religious and to develop our apostolate.

They should always be sensitive to the social implications of any investments they may make.

Besides budgeting for ordinary outlay, they should make prudent provision for the extraordinary expenses that inevitably accompany the healthy growth of the Congregation.

173. Those entrusted with the administration of the goods of the Congregation should have the expertise necessary to fulfill their task. At every level (general, provincial, and local) they have the necessary powers for effectively carrying out their charge, without prejudice to common or particular law.

174. In accordance with the prescriptions of common law, and within the limits fixed by the Superior General and his Council, the Provincial Superior with the deliberative vote of his Council, or the one whom he delegates, may purchase and alienate real property; he may also receive and make loans, alter and carry through whatever negotiations are necessary. In all these activities, he represents the Congregation within his own Province.

175. In its use of management of temporal goods, each of our houses must try to give outstanding witness of poverty.

This demands especially the efficient use and care of all the material and financial resources available. Wastefulness and irresponsible use of material goods are not only bad economy, but are also totally contrary to the poverty we have vowed as religious.

In each Province, those who administer its temporal resources should foster among all our religious a spirit of co-responsibility with regard to the finances of their own house in particular and of the Province in general.

176. All the houses in our Congregation are united in the bond of mutual charity.

With the consent of his Council, and after discussion with the chief parties concerned, the Superior General may dispose of the goods possessed by any part of the Congregation for the assistance of some other part, as prudence, necessity, or charity may suggest. In a similar manner, the Provincial Superior enjoys the same right with regard to his own Province.

177. Each of our houses is responsible for contributing financial support to the Provincial Administration, according to the norms determined by competent authority.

Similarly, each of our Provinces is responsible for contributing financial support to the General Administration.



## CONCLUSION

178. These are the Constitutions of the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ. They interpret the Rule of Saint Paul of the Cross, and have been written to accord with the spirit of the Second Vatican Council.

Approved by the authority of the Church, they are the norm and sure guide for our life of consecration in the Passionist Congregation. At the conclusion of these Constitutions, we remind ourselves of what our Holy Founder on his death-bed urged us to maintain: above everything else the spirit of brotherly love, of prayer, of poverty and of solitude, of filial love for our Holy Mother the Church, that the Congregation may shine forth in the sight of God and all peoples.<sup>110</sup>

May the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ be always in our hearts. Amen.

106. Each religious house has the same rights and the same responsibilities as another, unless the Superior General, or the Provincial Chapter, or the Congress of the Vice-Province decides otherwise.

107. The Superior General with the consent of his Council has the right to accept Mission Territories, or to negotiate with the Holy See about dividing or giving them up.

Likewise, with the advice of his Council, he has the right to entrust these Missions to one or more Provinces, taking into account the ability of the latter to provide the necessary personnel and resources.

Missions that Provincial Authority has accepted from the Superior General are the immediate responsibility of the Province or Provinces to which they belong.

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