

CONSTITUTIONS and STATUTES

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Text of 1986 with the changes
of the 19th, 20th and 21st General Chapters

Marist Brothers of the Schools
or Little Brothers of Mary

FOREWORD

(edition of 2010)

Rome, January 2, 2011

Dear Brothers,

Six years from today we will celebrate the Bicentennial of the foundation of our beloved Institute. It will be an excellent opportunity not only to thank the Lord and our Good Mother for their constant blessings throughout those 200 years, but also to review our fidelity to our charism and mission, as well as to continue deepening the renewal and “aggiornamento” asked by Vatican Council II.

In this sense, our Constitutions can play an important role, as the members of the XXI General Chapter realized, that “for a new world, we need a conversion of heart. A thorough revision of the Constitutions and Statutes, with the full participation of the Brothers, can help to revitalize our vocation”. So this new edition of the Constitutions and Statutes will be our companion along the way of our journey towards the next General Chapter, which will take place, God willing, in 2017, coinciding with the Bicentennial.

The precapitular commission charged with revising the text of the Constitutions and Statutes, on presenting their report to the XXI General Chapter, pointed out that “the text is a well-knit document that appropriately inspires the living of our Marist life” and so during this Chapter “is not the time to make a new edition of the complete text of our Constitutions” since

“an in-depth study and revision of the Constitutions requires more time and more consultation”. Nevertheless, during the almost 25 years that have passed since the Holy See approved our post-conciliar Constitutions, the changes introduced by the General Chapters of 1993, 2001 and 2009 have been accumulating. These Chapters have approved a total of 89 changes in the Statutes and have presented to the Holy See changes to 3 articles of the Constitutions¹.

It did not seem opportune to present the changes introduced by the XXI General Chapter by means of a small pamphlet to be added to the book of our Constitutions and Statutes, as had been done after the Chapters of 1993 and 2001. In fact, the XXI General Chapter mandated that, with my Council, I would appoint “a Publication Team, which will integrate in a single text the various changes effected in the Constitutions and Statutes by this and previous Chapters. This text will be consistent in style, language, numbering and references”.

The text I now present to you is the fruit of the excellent work of the Publication Team that we appointed: Brothers Antonio Ramalho, Edward Clisby, Juan Miguel Anaya and Maurice Goutagny. I thank them for their patience and generosity. They revised the translations into our four official languages, keeping in mind the original language in which the articles of the Constitutions and Statutes were approved².

In their work the Publication Team sought to make the wording coherent in each of the languages and to make the different translations faithful to the originals. In addition they made

¹ Changes approved respectively on 26 January 2002 (Prot.n.L.35-1/2002) and 16 November 2009 (Prot.n.L.35-1/2002).

² The original language is French, except in 70 and 70.1-3, where the original language is Spanish, and in 123.1, 143.7, 155.1-2, 157.1, 158.2, 159.1-2, 160.1-3, 161.4, 161.6-7, 161.10, 161.16 and 162.7, where the original language is English.

certain that the changes approved by the various Chapters were inserted correctly into the text. They numbered the Statutes that referred to the General Conference, the Provincial Assembly and those in charge of institutions, which previously had no numbers. They changed the numeration of other Statutes so as to avoid duplications or gaps in the order. Finally, they corrected and adjusted to the new numbering all the references within the document, as well as the index.

My Council and I approved this work and made decisions on certain matters dealing with the layout and presentation of the text.

Dear Brothers, receive into your hands, and welcome affectionately into your heart, this new edition of the Constitutions, “the application of the Gospel to our life and a sure guide to carrying out God’s designs for us” (C 169). Remember what Br. Charles Howard told us when presenting the first edition: “On reading them, on praying with them privately or in community, we will discover their riches; at the same time we will acquire, or we will refine, the particular traits of our identity as Little Brothers of Mary – a unique identity among the People of God – and we will make it attractive, especially to the young people to whom our lives are dedicated”.

With brotherly affection,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Emili Turú", written in a cursive style. The signature is enclosed within a simple, hand-drawn arrow shape that points to the right.

Br. Emili Turú
Superior General

FOREWORD

(edition of 1986)

It gives me great pleasure to present to you our Constitutions and Statutes in the definitive form. The completion of this work is for us an ending and a beginning.

We come to the end of a period which began twenty years ago when the Church of Vatican II asked all Religious to revise their Constitutions and Rules. The content of our documents was to be brought into line with the spirit of the Council and that of our Founder in order to foster a spiritual renewal in all the members of the Institute. Guided by a sense of responsibility, we undertook this work, with an awareness that, while We must remain faithful to our traditions, we must also be open to discern the challenges of the present day. Having now presented our text to the Holy See, we are grateful for the approval received and are happy to have this reenewed affirmation of the charism of our Founder.

Our charism has been handed down by the early Brothers, has been enriched by the fidelity of thousands of Brothers who have gone before us, and is expressed in its present form by the Eighteenth General Chapter.

We now face a new beginning. if, in faith, we allow ourselves to be challenged each day by these Constitutions; we shall be imitating Mary and following Jesus more faithfully. This gradual conversion to Jesus is achieved by fidelity to the Gospel and to

the spirit of the Founder, and by discerning, in an ecclesial spirit, the signs of the times.

There is also another challenge: to live out the text in our daily lives and so become witnesses of the Kingdom. Our response to this challenge will be all the better if we recognise that the Constitutions and the Statutes are a uniform text. The very way they are presented underlines this point - ordinary type for the former, italics for the latter. Just as the Rule written by Champagnat and his early disciples was a way of life for the Brothers of 1837, so, too, the new Constitutions are a way of life for us to-day.

In reading the Constitutions, in praying them, both in private and in community, we shall discover their richness. At the same time, we shall acquire, or we shall refine, the special qualities of the Little Brothers of Mary. We have a unique character within the People of God, and it is for us to make it more attractive, especially for the young for whom we work. May Mary, our good Mother and our First Superior, be our inspiration and our resource in the practice of the Constitutions and Statutes, and may we rise above mere legalism to achieve the purpose of our lives: to love Jesus Christ and to make Him known and loved.

Fraternally yours in J.M.J.,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bro. Charles Howard".

Brother Charles HOWARD, fms
Superior General

DECREE

In accordance with the prescriptions of the Motu Proprio “Ecclesiae Sanctae” (11, 6), the Marist Brothers of the Schools have undertaken a revision of their Constitutions, and have presented to the Holy See the text prepared according to the directives of the General Chapter of 1985.

A careful examination of the document has been made by the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, which requested some modifications. The Congregation has seen the text as a call to the Brothers to look upon Mary, the perfect disciple of Christ, and to make her known and loved as one who will lead to Jesus.

The Brothers live their religious consecration in the manner of the family of Nazareth. They give themselves, for the sake of the Kingdom, to the evangelisation of the young in schools and in other forms of education.

By this decree, the Holy See grants the approval which has been requested. The granting of this decree in no way restricts the prescriptions of the Code of Canon Law.

May fidelity to these Constitutions, motivated by love and not by fear, inspire the Little Brothers of Mary throughout the world to follow Christ as His Mother did, and to confirm the relevance for to-day of that apostle of young people - Blessed Marcellin Champagnat.

All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at Rome, the seventh day of October, 1986,
Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary.

TABLE OF REFERENCES

HOLY SCRIPTURE:

The usual abbreviations are used. Quotations are from the *New Jerusalem Bible*, 1985.

DOCUMENTS OF THE CHURCH

- AA Apostolorum Actuositatem: Decree on the Lay Apostolate – Vatican II
- AG Ad Gentes: Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity – Vatican II
- C Code of Canon Law, with the number of the canon
- EN Evangelii Nuntiandi, Paul VI: Evangelisation of the People of our Times, 1975
- ES Ecclesiam Suam, Paul VI, 1964
- ET Evangelica Testificatio, Paul VI: Renewal and Adaptation of Religious Life, 1971
- GE Gravissimum Educationis Momentum: Declaration on Religious Education- Vatican II
- GS Gaudium et Spes: Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World – Vatican II
- LG Lumen Gentium: Constitution on the Church – Vatican II
- MC Marialis Cultus, Paul VI: Devotion to Mary Today, 1974
- MR Mutuae Relationes, 1978
- PC Perfectae Caritatis: Decree on Religious Life - Vatican II
- SC Sacrosanctum Concilium: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy – Vatican II
- VC Vita Consecrata, John Paul II, 25 March 1996

DOCUMENTS OF THE INSTITUTE:

- ALS Avis, Leçons, Sentences. Ed. Vitte. Lyons, 1927.
- CV Volume of the Circulars of the Superiors General
- Cf Reference to other numbers of the Constitutions and Statutes
- Cn Constitutions 1854
- CR Religious Consecration, XVI General Chapter
- DF Directives on Formation, 2 February 1990
- F Formation, XVII General Chapter
- L Lettres du Père Champagnat, Recueil, F. Paul Sester, Vol.1
- Life Life of Father Champagnat, Br Jean-Baptiste, Desclée, Tournai, 1947
- PJ Poverty and Justice, XVII General Chapter
- R 1837 Rule of 1837
- RC Common Rules
- ST Spiritual Testament

Constitutions and Statutes

Chapter 1

THE IDENTITY OF THE MARIST BROTHER IN THE CHURCH

The Origin of the Institute **1** On January 2nd, 1817, Marcellin Champagnat founded the lay religious Institute, or religious Institute of Brothers ¹, under the name of Little Brothers of Mary ². He saw it as forming a branch of the Society of Mary ³.

In 1863 the Holy See approved us as an autonomous Institute of pontifical right. While respecting our original name, it gave us the title of Marist Brothers of the Schools (*F.M.S.- Fratres Maristae a Scholis*)⁴.

¹ VC 60

³ ST

² *Life* 424

⁴ CV III, 494

Charism of the Founder **2** Led by the Spirit, Marcellin was seized by the love that Jesus and Mary had for him and for others. His experience of this, as well as his openness to events and to people, is the wellspring of his spirituality and of his apostolic zeal. It made him sensitive to the needs of his times, especially to the ignorance concerning religion among young people and the poor circumstances in which they were placed. His faith and eagerness to do God's will led him to realise that his mission was to "make Jesus Christ known and loved." ¹ He often said: "Every time I see a child, I long to teach him his catechism, to make him realise how much Jesus Christ has

loved him.”² It was this attitude that led him to found our Institute for the Christian education of the young, especially those most in need³.

¹ *Life* 353

³ *L* 28, 4-6;
L 59, 22-29;
Life 92, 568

² *Life* 537

**Marcellin
Champagnat's
Disciples**

3 The love which the Holy Spirit pours into our hearts¹ gives us a share in the charism of Marcellin Champagnat and directs all our energies to this one aim: TO FOLLOW CHRIST AS MARY DID, in His life of love for the Father and for people². We live out this ideal in community.

By profession of the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, we commit ourselves to live the evangelical counsels. This commitment makes us witnesses to, and servants of the Kingdom of God. Our vocation as *Brother* is a special call to live the brotherhood of Christ with everyone, especially with young people, loving them with a selfless love³.

Our Constitutions, approved by the Holy See, guide us in living out our consecration and in carrying out the intentions of the Founder.

¹ *Rm* 5,5

³ *GS* 32, 4

² *PC* 1, 15

Marial Spirit

4 In giving us Mary's name, Father Champagnat wished us to live her spirit. He was convinced that it was she who has done everything for us, and he called her our Ordinary Resource and our First Superior¹.

To make Mary's spirit our own, we contemplate the life of our Mother and Model. Our ways of being and acting draw their inspiration and guidance from the attitudes that made her the perfect disciple of Christ². Since God gave His Son to the world through Mary, we want to make her known and loved as one who will lead us to Jesus. In this way, we put into action our motto: "All to Jesus through Mary, all to Mary for Jesus."³

¹ RC 1852 VI, 1, 6;

³ Life 354, 107

² PC 25; RC 1852 VI, 13

**Humility,
Simplicity,
Modesty**

5 The three Marial virtues of humility, simplicity, and modesty come to us from Marcellin Champagnat¹. These virtues give a quality of authenticity and kindness to our relationships with our Brothers and with other people we meet. We willingly put our lives and our talents at the service of the Church and of the world, doing good quietly. We are aware of our limitations, yet, trusting in God and in Mary, we can undertake difficult tasks and carry them through to a successful completion, as the Founder did².

¹ RC 1852, second part V,1;

² Life 299

Cn 1854, I, 8 and 11; ST

Family Spirit

6 In calling ourselves *Brothers*, we proclaim that we belong to a family united in Christ's love¹. The home at Nazareth is the model for our family spirit, which consists of love and forgiveness, support and help, forgetfulness of self, openness to others, and joy². It draws its strength and warmth from the Lord's love for the Brothers whom He

himself has given us. It pervades our attitudes and behaviour to such an extent that it makes itself felt wherever we are.

This spirit finds expression and gains strength in a special way in love of work, which has always been one of our characteristic features³.

¹ RC 1852, I, 2

² Col 3, 12-15

³ RC 1852,
second part, XI, 2;
Life 446 ff

Spirituality

7 The spirituality bequeathed to us by Marcellin

Champagnat is marial and apostolic. It flows from God's love for us, gains strength as we give ourselves to others, and leads us to the Father. In this way, our apostolic life, our life of prayer, and our community life are blended into harmony.

Jesus was the whole focus of Mary's life; He is to be the focus of ours. In whatever we do, we act as she did, with her discretion, her sensitivity, and her respect for each person.

Following the Founder's example, we live in the presence of God¹, and we draw our dynamism from the mysteries of the Crib, the Cross, and the Altar². We are content to leave the results of our work entirely in God's hands, convinced that "if the Lord does not build the house, in vain do the builders labour."³

¹ ST

² ASL 63 ff

³ Ps 127; L 3, 28;
L 7, 45; L 169, 20, 36

Members and Structures of the Institute

8 The Institute is made up of Brothers with temporary vows or perpetual vows. We become members by our religious profession. Brothers of the same family, we are united by charity and by obedi-

ence to the Constitutions. The novices, who are beginning their life in the Institute, share in the spiritual benefits of our religious family.

Certain people can be affiliated to the Institute. In a similar way to the novices, they share in our spiritual benefits.

The Institute is made up of Provinces and Districts which, in turn, are made up of houses. Each Province or District is animated and governed by a Superior with his Council, under the authority of the Brother Superior General with his Council.

*Unity of
the Institute*

9 The Institute, having spread across the world and taken root in different cultures, bases its unity on the spiritual heritage received from Father Champagnat and handed on by his followers¹. This unity calls for a union of prayer, a life of brotherhood, co-ordinated apostolic action, and the service that authority renders at all levels.

We are drawn into unity around Mary, our Good Mother², as members of her family. We strive to be faithful to the Spirit of the risen Jesus, who gives to us, as to the believers in the early Church, the grace of living one in heart and soul³.

¹ c 578

³ Acts 4, 32

² L 23, 11

*Union with
the Church*

10 Religious consecration unites us in a special way to the Church and its mystery. In the midst of the People of God, we give prophetic and joyous witness of a life wholly dedicated to God and to people.¹

True to the charism of the Institute, we collaborate in the pastoral action of the local Church.

Like Marcellin Champagnat, we have a deep respect and love for the Pope, whom we recognise as our highest Superior². We express our faith, and contribute to the unity of Christ's Body by holding firmly to the teaching and directives of the Church. In keeping with our Founder's express wish, we extend our charity to all other Institutes³. There are, however, special bonds uniting us to the various groups that emerged from the Society of Mary. With them, we want to see the Church illuminated by the spirit of Mary that is common to us..

¹ LG 44

³ ST

² *Life* 374

Chapter 2

CONSECRATION

Consecration and Covenant **11** God chooses individual men and women and calls each of them by name. He leads them into the desert and there speaks to their hearts¹. Those who heed Him, He sets apart. By His Spirit, He transforms them constantly, leading them more deeply into His love in order to send them out on mission². Thus is born a covenant of love in which God gives Himself to the person, and the person to God - a covenant which the Scriptures speak of as a betrothal³. From the heart of this covenant flows the whole dynamic of consecration.

¹ Hos 2, 16

³ Hos 2,21; Jer 2, 2

² Exod 3, 10

Consecrated in Christ **12** God consecrated Jesus of Nazareth by the anointing of the Spirit¹ and sent Him out to give life to the world². By His Pascal Mystery, He consecrates the whole of humanity to the Father, thus establishing the New Covenant. Our commitment to this covenant is established by Baptism: we are drawn into Christ's death in order that we may share in His Resurrection³. We walk at His side and labour to build up the Kingdom of God. The imitation of Christ⁴ is the supreme law of our baptismal consecration, making possible our coming to fullness in the Trinity's love. This sharing in the mystery of

Jesus leads us on towards the perfection of our being, and makes our whole life a love-worship of God.

¹ Lk 4, 18

³ Rom 6, 3-5

² Jn 3, 16

⁴ Jn 13, 15

*Divine Call,
Response
in Love*

13 The call to live the evangelical counsels in a religious family comes from the Father¹, reaching down to us through the love that Christ has for each of us - "Jesus, looking at him, loved him."² His gaze, His choice, resting on each of us, invites us to live more intensely the grace given to us at Baptism³. Full of wonder and gratitude, we accept in all freedom and faith the call of the Lord: "Come, follow me."² We allow the Holy Spirit to guide us in the footsteps of Christ, chaste, poor, and obedient. As our superiors walk with us and discern with us, our response of love becomes more and more all-embracing. By our profession, we unite the whole-hearted offering of ourselves⁴ to the eucharistic sacrifice of the Son⁵.

¹ Jn 15, 16

⁴ Rom 12,1

² Mk 10, 21

⁵ LG 45,3

³ PC 5, 1

*Vocation
within
the Church*

14 Religious consecration opens to us a new and special way of sharing in the life, holiness, and mission of the Church, the spouse of Christ¹. Lived within an apostolic community of Brothers, this consecration gives new impetus to the grace of our Confirmation. We learn to love more ardently by continually striving to be faithful to the spirit of the Beatitudes.

¹ LG 44, 1, 2, 4

Profession in the Institute **15** We respond to God, who consecrates us through the ministry of the Church, by profession of the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience¹. This profession is expressed in public vows² made in the Church and accepted by the Superior. By it, we pledge ourselves to live according to the universal law and the law proper to the Institute³. The Institute, in turn, welcomes us as members and ensures for us whatever is needed to attain the aim of our vocation.

¹ c 654

² c 1192,1

³ cf 169;
explanatory Note I
on Proper Low

15.1 *We renew our religious profession in community once a year. This renewal is made at the annual retreat, on the feast of the Assumption, or on some other marial feastday.*

15.2 *The Province provides what is needed by the Brothers, such as the initial and on-going formation that promotes human, spiritual, and professional development. It also provides whatever is needed for health and social security. (c 670; cf 161.8)*

Proclaiming the World to come **16** In renouncing, by our vows, certain values cherished in this world, we manifest the presence of heavenly goods already possessed here below¹. We thus give witness to the power of grace, which enables us to set aside these values, and we take a stand against whatever in human

relationships runs counter to the fulfilment of God's plan.

In the world but not of the world ², our communities call people to liberality, to a freely given and universal love, to a new life in Christ.

¹ LG 44, 3

² Jn 17, 15-16

***Apostolic
Mission***

17 As consecrated men, we reach out to others, especially to young people, to make Jesus Christ known. Apostolic action is part of the very nature of our religious family¹.

We keep alive the attitude of Father Champagnat, as did our first Brothers, by giving ourselves wholeheartedly to the task assigned to us by obedience - a task which must be consonant with the aim of the Institute and carried out in union with the Church. We take care to see that our apostolic action always flows out of our intimate union with God, and that it strengthens and promotes this union.

¹ PC 8, 2

***With Mary
and
the Founder***

18 The model of our consecration is Mary, chosen by God to be completely His. She welcomed in faith the Word of God at the Annunciation; she surrendered herself, in love and joy, to the workings of the Holy Spirit, giving herself totally to Him.

As woman and mother, she knew in her heart the joys and sorrows of life. In Jesus' company, she lived in utter trust in the Father, even to the foot of the Cross. In the glory of the risen Christ, she becomes, in a special way, the mother of all those consecrated to God¹.

As men dedicated to her, we offer heart-felt thanks

to her for the grace of our vocation, confident that her intercession will help us to persevere faithfully. Our Founder, who learnt so much from Mary, is always our model of complete self-gift to God and of devotedness to people. His life is a living witness to us of the ideal that he presented to his first followers: “To become a Brother is to take as your goal to become holy.”²

¹ LG 53, 58, 59

² Life 505

THE EVANGELICAL COUNSEL OF CHASTITY

*Following
the chaste
Christ*

19 It is Jesus who gives meaning and value to celibacy lived for the sake of the kingdom. He willed to be born of the Virgin Mary and to be consecrated to His Father’s affairs. In this way, He sets forth clearly His total self-gift to God and the universality of His redeeming love. In His relations with men and women, which broke through the traditional confines imposed by the society of His times¹, Jesus is seen as both perfectly chaste and totally human. We see in Him a sensitivity to every kind of distress, a respect for each person. We find in Him simplicity and goodness, and the ability to awaken what was most noble in the hearts of those He met.

¹ Jn 4, 27

*The Vow of
Chastity*

20 By the evangelical counsel of chastity, Jesus calls us to live, as He did, a life wholly given to God and to people. Our accepting to be celibate “for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven”¹ is our re-

sponse to His call, and a witness to this Kingdom. This acceptance brings into being a union with God that does not involve a human partner, and establishes us as brothers to all people². In professing the vow of chastity, we accept the gift of the Father³, and we give ourselves to a love relationship with Christ and with Him alone, holding nothing back. We set aside married love and fatherhood, and we live out perfect continence in celibacy⁴.

¹ Mt 19,12

³ ET 15

² ET 13

⁴ c 599

*In Mary's
Footsteps*

21 We look to Mary, as Father Champagnat did, as guide and support in our learning to live the chaste life¹. She is the woman who was the first to live a life of virginity because of Christ². She became life-giving through the power of the Holy Spirit. In making a place for her in our home³, we learn how people are to be loved, and we, in turn, become living signs of the Father's tenderness. We make young people welcome, our hearts open to receive them and ready to serve them. Mary inspires us to have constant concern for their welfare, and to respond with selfless love to their appeals for help.

¹ Life 438; L 259, 7-8

³ Jn 19, 27;

² Lk 1, 38

Mt 2,14 and 21

*Within
the Mystery
of the Church*

22 Our vow of chastity admits us to deeper levels of the mystery of the Church. Married Christians are signs of the spousal bond between Christ and His Church¹. By our celibacy, we testify to the reality of this espousal and proclaim the coming of a new world where everyone will find in God

their perfect love². The faithfulness shown by married couples is a stimulus to our loving the Lord with all our being; and our celibacy, joyously lived, encourages them to remain together until death. It can enlighten those who, by the circumstances of life, remain unmarried. Celibacy urges those whom the Lord has called to the consecrated life to give themselves to Him without reserve.

¹ LG 11, 2

² PC 12, 1

*In the
Community*

23 The members of our community are the first to share in that love of everyone to which we are committed. This love also finds expression in the welcome we give to those who visit us.

Our love for our Brothers should be simple and wholehearted. We should be sympathetic enough to sense their difficulties, humble enough to share their joys, and generous enough to give ourselves to each one of them. Living together as Brothers is of great assistance in the maturing of our chastity¹. In times when the loneliness of celibacy weighs heavily on us, each of us ought to feel that he can rely on the sympathetic support of his Brothers. Their friendship helps us to keep our balance amid tensions. Mutual trust and the spirit of faith help us to be open, to share, and, when need be, to challenge.

¹ PC 12, 2

23.1 *In community, we come to agreement on the manner of welcoming people in a simple and prudent way. Times must be reserved for prayer, work, and rest, as these are indispensable for community life. (cf 62)*

**Chastity and
Friendship**

24 Chastity that is lived truly, opens our hearts to friendship, which is a gift of God, who reveals His love in a human person ⁽¹⁾. As consecrated men, we love those whom we meet as brothers and sisters in Christ.

We gladly receive their love as an expression of the love of the Lord, always aware that He alone can fully satisfy the yearnings of our hearts.

Knowing our frailty, we recognise the need for reserve and prudence in our relationships with people. We avoid any friendship that is exclusive or possessive.

¹ Jn 11, 3-5

24.1 *In our life of chastity, we must avoid a double danger - forgetting that this vow, is a call to love, and losing sight of the special quality of consecrated love.*

On the one hand, therefore, we must resist the tendency to withdraw from friendship with others, and, especially, to withdraw from the friendship of our Brothers. On the other hand, we must exercise prudence, which must guide our relationships so that our friendships are consistent with our consecrated chastity, and do not distance us from prayer, from the apostolate, or from community. If the need arises, we notify the Superior of a situation that is becoming a problem for us.

**Chastity,
Prayer,
Sacraments**

25 To foster our love relationship with the Lord, we need to be faithful to meeting Him in prayer, especially in meditation. This makes it possible for us to be at peace with the solitude inherent in chastity.

Receiving the Body of the Lord gives us strength to go on our way through difficulties, which vary with each culture, each temperament, and the different stages of life.

In temptations and struggles, we open ourselves to the touch of Christ, who heals our wounds, delivers us from egoistic longings, and makes us children of the resurrection ⁽¹⁾. Moreover, we take advantage of spiritual direction and that source of revitalised love, the sacrament of Reconciliation.

¹ Lk 20, 36

Chastity and Asceticism **26** Christian asceticism, by the renunciation inherent in it¹, helps us to mature in love.

We are attentive to all that promotes physical and psychological well-being². We make an enlightened and prudent use of leisure activities and of the mass media³. We shape our conduct to the dictates of a delicate conscience. We accept life's trials, uniting ourselves to Christ in His Passion. So that we can be wholly His and free to love those sent to us, we work to purify our hearts.

¹ Lk 9, 23-24; Gal 5, 24

³ c 666

² PC 12, 2

26.1 *So that we can achieve a mastery of our senses and heart, and live our vow of chastity in a balanced way, we take the necessary means, especially:*

- *an education and formation in the psychology of sexuality, affectivity, and human relationships;*
- *an open and balanced community life.*

27 The chastity we live in consecrated celibacy is a sign of contradiction to the world. We proclaim gospel values in treating one another with respect, in living purely, and in compassionately loving those whom society refuses to accept.

A chastity that is generously lived leads us on towards self-fulfilment and acts as a special life-giving force for all people¹. It frees us to be of greater service and gives the widest possible dimension to our love.

Knowing that chastity is a gift of the Holy Spirit, we pray that all consecrated men and women may receive the grace to be faithful to it, so that they may experience the joy promised to the undivided heart².

¹ LG 42, 3

² 1 Cor 7, 32-35

27.1 *Each Saturday, or on some other day chosen by the Province, we fast or recite a special prayer, or perform an act of charity, so as to obtain, with Mary's help, the gift of chastity.*

We keep alive among us the practices dear to our Founder, such as devotion to the Immaculate Conception and Consecration to Mary.

THE EVANGELICAL COUNSEL OF POVERTY

Following the poor Christ **28** Christ, who, although rich, became poor for love of us¹, urges us to become one with Him in His poverty. He was born in deprivation², lived by the work of His hands, announced the good news to the poor³ and proclaimed them blessed. Knowing that He had received everything from the Father, He gave Himself freely into His hands and emptied Himself to the point of dying on a cross. Through love, we follow in the footsteps of Jesus to learn from Him how to live fully, in a spirit of detachment, our vow of poverty.

¹ 2 Cor 8, 9

³ Lk 4, 18

² Lk 2, 7

The Vow of Poverty **29** Implicit in the evangelical counsel of poverty is living poorly, in fact as well as in spirit¹. We renounce the use and disposal, without authorisation, of all money or of other material goods of value². We retain, nevertheless, the ownership of our goods, the right to acquire more, and to add to our possessions the profits accruing from them. We hand over the administration to others. With the Superior's permission, however, we may give away what we own³.

¹ PC 13, 2

³ c 668,4

² c 600

29.1 *The Brother is dependent on his immediate Superior in money matters, and gives a regular account of the money put at his disposal.*

29.2 *To make use of a gift, be it money or something of money value, the Brother needs the Superior's permission.*

29.3 *Before his profession, the novice must cede, once and for all, the administration of his goods to whomsoever he wills, and dispose freely of their use and enjoyment. (c 668, 1)*

29.4 *Before perpetual profession, the Brother must make a will that is valid in civil law. (c 668, 1)*

29.5 *To change these arrangements, the permission of the Brother Provincial is required, or, in urgent cases, that of the local Superior. (c 668, 2)*

29.6 *Everything that a Brother acquires by his work or by reason of his belonging to the Institute, and whatever he receives from pensions, grants, insurance, salary, or social benefits belong to the Institute. (c 668, 3)*

29.7 *Whatever comes to a Brother from royalties belongs to the Institute. The Norms of the Province fix, in a way that is consonant with the laws of the country, the ways of regulating whatever concerns these royalties.*

29.8 *After ten years of perpetual profession, a Brother may renounce his possessions.*

To do this, he applies to the Brother Provincial, who forwards the request, along with his own recommendations and those of his Council, to the Brother Superior General, with whom the final decision rests.(c 668, 4; cf 150.1.4)

29.9 *Brothers should not, unless authorised by the Brother Provincial, accept the administration of goods belonging to others, be they individuals or juridical persons. They are not to act as surety, even concerning their own goods. (c 672; c 285, 4)*

29.10 *A Brother should refuse to take advantage of opportunities offered to him personally - travel, holiday residence, valuable items. Even if these cost the community nothing, they can harm poverty and community life.*

29.11 *The Provincial Chapter should draw up Norms concerning those things which are allowed for personal use, as well as Norms relating to the money given to the Brothers for various purposes, such as studies, travel, holidays. (cf 151.1.3) Taking the local situation into account, the Chapter can also draw up other Norms which it deems necessary or useful concerning the practice of poverty. The Brother Provincial and his Council will then discuss these Norms with the Brother Superior General. (cf 150.2.10)*

*TIn Mary's
Footsteps*

30 The heart of Mary is revealed to us in her Magnificat¹, where, true to the tradition of the “poor of Israel”, she puts her trust in the Lord’s faithfulness². Together with Joseph the carpenter, she lives as one of the insignificant people of Nazareth³. From the Annunciation to Calvary, she gives her active consent to every kind of detachment asked of her by God⁴.

In her company, we gradually break loose from our earthly attachments, in accordance with the purifying purpose of the Lord, who fashions within us a heart that is poor.

¹ Lk 1, 46-55

³ Lk 2, 24

² LG 55

⁴ Lk 2, 48-50

*Dependence,
Self-
abandonment*

31 Spiritual poverty keeps us in a relationship of total dependence on the Father. It shows itself in our recourse to Superiors, in the acceptance of our limitations, and in our willingness to receive help from others.

Spiritual poverty leads us to make continual use of prayer, which re-kindles courage and trust. It creates in us the peace of the poor man who has abandoned himself to God’s care¹.

¹ Mt 6, 25-34

*Work,
simple
Life-style,
Sharing*

32 We live out the reality of personal and community poverty in adopting a life of work and frugality, and in seeking only what is truly necessary¹. Our poverty is evidenced also by the simplicity that is to characterise our approach to life, our style of living, and our apostolic action.

Poverty requires us to make good use of our talents, to share² what we are and whatever we have

at our disposal, especially the time we call our own.

¹ PC 13, 3, 6

² Is 58, 7;
Acts 4, 32;
GS 69, 1

32.1 *The community periodically evaluates the use it makes of its resources. It looks critically at its life-style and its accommodation in order to see how real is its witness to religious poverty. (cf PJ prop. 11)*

32.2 *Faithful to our Marist tradition and in a spirit of poverty and of solidarity with the poor, we perform the little manual tasks that arise in our houses.*

32.3 *In what we buy, as in what we build, we are careful to preserve simplicity.*

*Following
the Founder's
Example*

33 Father Champagnat's poverty of heart is seen most clearly in his trust in God's loving care¹. The foundation of our Institute is an ever-living proof that no daring is too great for a man of faith. Loving the poor as he did, our Founder wanted to send us more especially to them², without excluding others. His first followers, by their austere life-style, lived very much on the level of the people they were serving. Lavalla³ is for each of us a call to live in simplicity and detachment, both personally, and as communities and Provinces⁴.

¹ Life 313

³ Life 62

² Life 394

⁴ Life 229

33.1 *Following Father Champagnat's example, we accept without complaint situations of poverty, which give us the opportunity of having to trust in God. We should be on our guard against relying too much on human means.*

**Preferential
Love
for the Poor**

34 In being true to Christ and to our Founder, we love the poor¹. They are God's blessed ones; they draw down His gifts upon us and evangelize us. Attuned to the voice of the Church², and in touch with our own vocation, we stand in solidarity with the poor and their just causes. We give them first preference wherever we are and whatever be our task. We love the places and the houses which enable us to share their lot, and we take every opportunity to be in contact with the reality of their daily lives.

Concern for the poor impels us to search out the root causes of their wretchedness, and to free ourselves from prejudice or indifference towards them. It makes us become more responsible in the use of our resources, which we must share with those among them who are most destitute. We avoid giving them the scandal of living in a way that is too comfortable³.

Our mission as educators of youth commits us to work to promote justice.

¹ *Life* 568

³ *PJ*, prop. 10

² *ET* 17, 18

34.1 *At the beginning of his term of office, the Brother Provincial will draw up a plan that continues and, if possible, augments*

what the Province is doing to help the needy. He will make this plan known to the Brother Superior General. He will also evaluate how the Provincial Norms concerning poverty are being applied. (cf 150.2.6)

34.2 *In drawing up its annual budget, the community, in keeping with the steps taken by the Brother Provincial, will make provision for help to be given to the poor. The community looks for ways to increase this help by going without useful or even necessary things. (cf 58. 1; 162.3)*

**Witnesses
of a poor
and servant
Church**

35 Our following of Christ leads us to an inner divesting of self. Detachment from earthly goods frees us from needless worries¹. To be credible witnesses², we refuse to accept privileges that would stifle gospel freedom.

In walking the way of poverty, we become more compassionate towards our neighbour and more open to the marvellous ways of God. Our life, in its simplicity and self-giving, reveals the face of a Church that is poor and at the service of the people. We give witness to the joy promised to those who are poor in heart³.

¹ Lk 12, 13-21

³ Mt 5, 3

² ET 22

THE EVANGELICAL COUNSEL OF OBEDIENCE

Following the obedient Christ **36** Jesus knew He was the Well-beloved of the Father, and His whole existence was centred on being one with the Father's will¹. He responded to that love by putting Himself entirely at the service of the redeeming mission given to Him. His food was to do the will of the one who sent Him². He took on the condition of a slave³ and learnt, through suffering, the price of obedience⁴. Raised from the dead by God, He became the saviour of all people. Jesus is the perfect example that we try to follow. Prompted by the Holy Spirit, we seek to carry out the Father's will in all things, and, in this way, to enter into the Pascal Mystery of the Son⁵.

¹ Heb 10, 7

⁴ Heb 5, 8

² Jn 4, 34

⁵ PC 14, 1

³ Phil 2, 7

The Vow of Obedience **37** The evangelical counsel of obedience, undertaken in faith and love in following Christ, who was obedient even unto death, obliges us to submit to our lawful Superiors, who act in the place of God when they command in accordance with the Constitutions¹.

¹ c 601

37.1 *A formal order invoking the vow can be given only by a major Superior, and only in exceptional cases.*

37.2 *When dealing with a serious offence by a Brother, the Superior, in exercising his pastoral care, has the duty of warning him in writing.*

With Mary of the "Fiat" **38** Mary lived out her whole life in the spirit of her "Fiat"¹. By her obedience, she became the Mother of God and co-operated in her Son's redeeming mission. She is blessed because she listened to the word of God and carried it out². As Marist Brothers, we come to Mary, the Handmaid of the Lord, to be schooled by her, and we respond to her call: "Do whatever He tells you."³ It is from Mary that we learn responsiveness to the Spirit and an obedience that is courageous and clear-sighted.

¹ Lk 1, 38

³ Jn 2/5;

² Lk 1, 45; 11, 28

L 259, 10-13

The Founder's Obedience **39** In whatever he undertook, Father Champagnat was primarily concerned to do God's will. This he sought in prayer, in consultation, in the mediation of his superiors¹, and in heeding the signs of the times. No matter the circumstances, and despite all contradiction and opposition, he obeyed his superiors, seeing in them the person of Jesus Himself.

Following the Founder's example, we base our obedience on the spirit of faith². This makes us ready to serve in whatever task the Institute entrusts to us³.

¹ Life 368

³ L 36, 12-14

² ST

Obedience and Mediation **40** Our love for God's will and our desire to carry it out throughout the whole of our lives, lead us to accept a series of mediations.

Each of us is bound to obey the Pope by reason of our sacred bond of obedience¹. Among the other mediators are the hierarchy of the Church², and our religious family with its Constitutions, Chapters, and Superiors³. We make use of these, especially when important decisions have to be made. Whether we be Superiors or not, we are all heirs to the Founder's charism, and hence it follows that we must all be mediators for one another, according to the grace and the role given us.

¹ c 590, 2

³ PC 14, 2

² Lk 10, 16

40.1 *For the organisation of apostolic works, we are attentive to the voice of the pastors of the Church and act in harmony with the Bishop, in accordance with the Code of Canon Law. In this matter we respect our own charism and the proper law of the Institute. (c 678)*

40.2 *A Brother will not accept any work or position outside the Institute unless authorised by the Brother Provincial. (c 671)*

40.3 *If a Brother is working in an apostolate outside the Institute, he is still under the authority of his Superiors and must be faithful to the discipline of the Institute. (c 678, 2; cf 89.1).*

Obedience in Community **41** Obedience in community requires each man to work at developing the spirit of communion and an inner fidelity to the action of the Holy Spirit. Two important helps in coming to see things as the

Father sees them are spiritual discernment¹ and sincere, frank dialogue² with the Superior and with one another. Time and again in this searching, we shall have to abandon our own point of view to accept what the community, together with the Superior, believes to be the will of God.

¹ Rm 12, 2

² ES 66

**The
Obedience of
a Superior**

42 When, after dialogue with his major Superior, a Brother is called to assume a Superior's role, he should put his trust in the Lord, who confides this mission to him, and accept it with simplicity¹. He will carry out this responsibility as a service to be rendered². He should be foremost in living the Constitutions and should try to lead his Brothers along the path traced out by Christ. He will keep alert to the workings of the Holy Spirit by persevering prayer and by listening to his Brothers³. In his interviews, he helps each of them to discern the designs of the Lord.

¹ L 197, 8-12

³ 1 Cor 2, 10-16

² Jn 13, 13-14; PC 14, 3

**The
Obedience of
the
Community**

43 The call to live evangelical obedience for the Kingdom involves communities, Provinces, and the Institute itself in a constant search to know God's will. It is not always easy to be sure of what He asks of us, especially in times of profound change and renewal. We discern it in prayer, so as to arrive at a decision in concert with our Superiors¹. This discernment in the Holy Spirit calls for a spirit of faith, attentiveness to the word of God, fidelity to the charism of the Institute, an accurate read-

ing of the signs of the times², and a putting aside of particular interests of individuals or groups.

¹ cf 122

² GS 4, 1

**Obedience
and
daily Life**

44 In submission to the Father, Christ came to serve.

By a similar submission, we learn to be of service to our Brothers. Whatever his employment may be, and according to his capabilities, each Brother takes part in community activities, putting his talents at the service of the community and of the apostolic mission¹.

We live out the mystery of obedience in the ordinary events and occupations of everyday life. It is a long road to walk, but we must not let the difficulties to be overcome discourage us. A humble fidelity will bring about the integration of our person in love, and lead us to spiritual maturity in the freedom that belongs to the sons of God². The acceptance of death will be our final act of filial obedience³.

¹ 1 Pet 4, 10-11

³ Lk 23, 46

² PC 14, 2

**The prophetic
Role of
Obedience**

45 The exercise of evangelical obedience gives expression to our freedom and to our readiness to serve in the Church's mission. It makes us strong, even in our weakness¹. By it, we denounce any seeking after power or any abuse of power², and any ideology that encroaches on the rights of the human person or that makes an absolute of individual freedom. In all this, we proclaim that Jesus is Lord³, the obedient Servant in whom God brought to realisation His plan of salvation.

¹ 2 Cor 12, 9-10

³ Acts 2, 36;

² Mt 20, 20-28

Phil 2, 9-11

OUR JOURNEY AS CONSECRATED MEN

46 Our life as consecrated men is a journey in faith, hope, and love.

Jesus has challenged each one of us¹. We have heard His words: “Do not be afraid”², and have set aside fears and hesitations in order to follow Him. With Father Champagnat as our guide, we go forward together day after day, hearts filled with gratitude, encouraged by the example of the fidelity of the Brothers who have walked this way before us. As we journey on, we may experience doubt, loss of enthusiasm, dryness of heart, or waywardness by pursuing false consolations. We shall fight our way through all this, especially by recourse to Mary, and with the help of our Brothers.

Secure in knowing that God is always faithful³, we do not harbour doubts about His call. Thus we come to know the happiness that springs from really living out the total gift of ourselves to God and to others.

¹ Mt 9, 9

² Lk 1, 30

³ Lam 3, 22-23;
Rom 11, 29

Chapter 3

MARIST COMMUNITY

Community Life arising from the Trinity **47** It is in the love of the Trinity that community life has its origin. The Father wants all people to form one single family in which all will be loved as brothers and sisters¹. Jesus established a community with the apostles and prayed that we might be one, as He and the Father are one².

We answer the call of Christ by wanting to live together in a community of consecrated persons. Our unity shows that God is Love, and that this love, poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit³, is stronger than our human limitations.

¹ GS 32

³ Rom 5, 5

² Jn 17, 20-23

Gathered around Mary **48** As was the case with the community of the apostles gathered together on Pentecost day, we are conscious of the presence among us of Mary, Mother of the Church¹. She helps us to live as brothers, bringing home to us the realisation that we make up one body in Christ².

Like Mary at the Visitation³ and at Cana⁴, we remain attentive to the needs of the community and of the world. Our life, like hers at Nazareth, is to be simple and hard-working.

¹ Acts 1/, 14

³ Lk 1, 39 and 56

² Rom 12, 5

⁴ Jn 2, 1-5

49 Father Champagnat formed the community of the first Brothers into a real family¹. He shared their life at La Valla² and at the Hermitage, and he spent himself on their behalf. “You know,” he told them, “that I live only for you, that every day I ask God to give you everything that is genuinely good for you, and that I would give anything, even at the cost of the greatest sacrifices, to procure that for you.”³ In their turn, the Brothers loved him as their father⁴. Living with him, living close to our Good Mother, they grew steadily in the sense of brotherhood, of devotedness, and of self-renunciation in the service of one another. Faithful to this heritage handed down by generations of Brothers, we live our community life in a great family spirit, thus fulfilling the wish of our Founder: “Love one another as Jesus Christ has loved you. May there be among you but one heart and one mind.”⁵.

¹ L 132, 14-22

² Life 75-76

³ Life 460; L 168, 34-37

⁴ Life 144;

L 238, 6-7

⁵ ST

49.1 *To keep this family spirit alive,*

- 1** *we live our brotherly relationship with joy, mutual respect, and warmth;*
- 2** *we offer a ready welcome to our confrères of the Province and of the whole Institute;*
- 3** *we express our sense of brotherhood especially on family celebration days – jubilees, birthdays,*

Province gatherings;

- 4 we willingly give time to the setting-up and to the maintenance of the house and property;*
- 5 we take part in community recreation and leisure activities.*

A Community of consecrated People **50** The vows, which are an expression of our love of the Lord, are a unifying force in the Marist community. Chastity, since it frees the heart from a possessive love, opens it to the breadth and dynamism of a love that encompasses everybody. Poverty puts all that we are and everything that we have at the service of others. Obedience directs the community to seeking and carrying out the will of God.

50.1 *An important way of building up Marist community is the plan for community life, which gives us the opportunity to exercise co-responsibility in the search for God's will. The Provincial Chapter decides whether the communities are obliged to draw up such a plan. This plan for community life deals with some points of the Constitutions in relation to the concrete situation of the community. It takes into account the priorities of the Province as proposed by the Chapter and made specific by the Brother Provincial. The plan is to be approved by the Brother Provincial. (cf 150.2.7)*

50.2 *Where the plan for community life is not obligatory, the Provincial Chapter will find some suitable way of replacing it.*

Community, where we share and grow **51** We accept one another, different in many ways, yet complementary. Each of us should take an interest in the life and work of his Brothers. We try to develop a finely-tuned awareness of others - a sensitivity of heart which is quick to see that a companion is troubled, and which finds a tactful way of helping him¹. Putting aside our egoism and touchiness, we accept with simplicity a Brother's admonition². We know how to ask pardon and to give it, trying to free our hearts from any resentment³. In this way, our community becomes a place of friendship, of life shared, where the human qualities and the spiritual gifts of each Brother can flourish⁴.

¹ Gal 6, 1

³ Mt 5, 23-24

² Mt 18, 15-17

⁴ Eph 4, 11-12

The Superior in the Community **52** Within the community the Superior represents Jesus Christ¹. By his presence, his care for the Brothers², and his availability, he helps build up a climate of understanding and harmony among them. He gives stimulus to the common effort, co-ordinates it, and provides continuity and cohesion.

The mediation and animation of the local Superior are the main factors in keeping the community united to the Province, so that it becomes a living cell of the Institute

¹ 1837 Rule, III, 1

² Lk 12, 42; c 618, 619

52.1 *The interview with the Superior makes for understanding and harmony in the community. It is a source of encouragement*

and spiritual growth. The Superior is to see each Brother regularly. (c 630, 5)

**The
Members
of the
Community**

53 Following the example and teaching of Father Champagnat, the community sees the young Brother as a gift from God and a sign of Mary's care for us¹. He brings to us the richness of a young man's heart and mind, with its enthusiasm and its quest for authenticity. In a community where he is welcomed and encouraged, he finds community life a setting that strengthens him in his vocation. A mature Brother, enriched as he is by the experience of his successes and failures, contributes his dynamism and balance to the community, and, in return, receives support and encouragement to enter ever more fully into his vocation. The perseverance of the elderly Brother is a living sign of the Lord's faithfulness. He does not see his life's work as finished, but tries to render whatever service he can, and takes a lively interest in the Brothers engaged in the active apostolate. By his prayer and the offering up of his sufferings, he carries on an effective apostolate. The community holds him in deep respect and affection.

¹ *Life 476-479; L 56, 9-10; ALS 27 ff*

**Brothers
who are sick
or suffering**

54 Following the Founder's example, the members of the community see the sick or suffering Brother as a source of blessings¹. They take care to see that he receives every care and spiritual help that his condition calls for. For his part, the Brother looks to the Lord and to Mary for strength, keeping in mind that by his sufferings,

united with the Redeemer's, he "makes up in his own body the hardships that still have to be undergone by Christ for the sake of His body, the Church."²

¹ Life 463

² Col 1, 24

54.1 *All Brothers, especially the Superiors, will show every kindness and patience towards their sick confrères. They visit them, encourage them, and pray for them. The Marist community sees to it that the sick and elderly have the help of the Sacrament of Anointing. These Brothers will welcome this grace in faith, abandoning themselves to God's will. (Jas 5, 14)*

**The Brother
at Death**

55 The community will show a great and loving care for a Brother who has come to life's end. Each of its members gives the dying man the support and comfort of his presence and prayers. The Eucharist, received as Viaticum, helps him to complete the consecration he has lived. In this way, the Brother can experience the happiness of dying as a member of Mary's family¹.

We frequently pray for our dead. In the communion of saints, we feel ourselves united to our Brothers who are already at home with the Father².

¹ Life 256

² LG 49

55.1 *On the death of the Brother Superior General or of a former Superior General, of a member or former member of the General Council, each community of the Institute will have a Mass celebrated and recite the Office of the Dead.*

55.2 *On the death of a novice or of a professed Brother, each community of the Province will have a Mass celebrated and recite the Office of the Dead.*

55.3 *On the death of a novice or of a professed Brother, his community will have thirty Masses celebrated and recite the Office of the Dead.*

55.4 *On the death of a parent of a Brother, his community will have a Mass celebrated and recite the Office of the Dead.*

55.5 *On the first Monday of the month, each community will have a Mass celebrated for the dead Brothers, parents of the Brothers, affiliated members, former pupils, helpers, and benefactors.*

55.6 *During the annual retreat, we celebrate a remembrance Mass and recite the Office of the Dead.*

55.7 *These suffrages for the dead may be added to by the Brother Provincial or the Brother Superior, according to local custom.*

**The Families
of
the Brothers**

56 The Brothers' love for one another extends also to their families. This is shown by a warm welcome into our communities and by prayer, especially in times of happiness or of sorrow¹. Our religious consecration deepens and makes more sensitive, our love for our parents.

¹ L 180

56.1 *Contact with the family, especially visits to the family, is defined by the Norms of the Province, account being taken of the differences in cultures and of the demands of Marist religious life. (cf 151.1.3)*

**The praying
Community**

57 Prayer in common¹ is an essential element in Marist community life. Since our faith in Jesus has brought us together, it is, above all, our prayer that builds up the community each day.

We are all jointly responsible for this prayer, which weaves together the threads of daily events in our lives. Each of us draws support from the presence and example of his confrères. It is especially in the Eucharist that our community prayer reaches its highest level².

¹ Acts 1, 14; 2, 42

² SC 10

**The apostolic
Community**

58 The very fact that it gives witness to the brotherly love of consecrated people makes the community an evangelising force in the local Church. Moreover, the community provides for its members suitable means for attaining the purpose of the Institute.

The openness the community has for pastoral action leads it to accept as its own the apostolic work of each of its Brothers. They, for their part, whatever may be their occupation, participate fully in the community so that love may be strengthened.

58.1 *At the beginning of each year, we examine the apostolic activities of our community to see whether we are true to our mission,*

and whether we take into account the priorities of the Province and the Founder's preference for those most in need.

**Community
Life and
Asceticism**

59 As Marist Brothers, we practise tolerance, courtesy, mutual support, and the other “little virtues”¹ recommended by the Founder to maintain union in the community.

In living out the demands of the vows and of our daily duties, in serving the Brothers, and in enduring the painful aspects of life together, - inevitably present because of our limitations, - each of us will find many opportunities to renounce himself and carry his cross in the footsteps of Jesus².

¹ ALS pp. 274 ff

² Lk 9, 23-24

**Communication
and Silence**

60 Community recreation and the sharing of our views help to build up family spirit. When we share in all honesty, we offer to our Brothers what is best within us.

The community meeting, by encouraging us to speak and to listen, is an effective way of helping community spirit to grow. We bring simplicity and good will to these meetings and take an active part in them. Realising that it takes time to create community, we do not allow ourselves to be discouraged when difficulties and tensions arise.

We value silence because it opens us to the mystery of others, thus preparing us for heart-to-heart communication and sustaining it ⁽¹⁾. It leads us, out of love for our Brothers, to respect times for prayer, for work, and for rest.

¹ ET 46

60.1 *The community decides how often it will hold community meetings. These provide opportunity for input or for exchange of ideas, based usually on the documents of the Institute. They likewise give the Brother a chance to reflect on his responsibilities to the community and to revitalise his apostolic spirit.*

60.2 *We take our meals together in simplicity and joy, as an expression of our friendship and union. The food is plain and ordinary. We avoid being too particular, as foreign to our spirit of poverty. At times, we go without, so that we can share what we have with the poor.*

60.3 *The times of silence are decided on by the community to encourage the interior life and to foster a spirit of charity. In the same way, we decide, after due reflection, how best to use the various forms of mass media.*

60.4 *Holidays are times to regain our strength and to draw closer together in our life as Brothers. Following what is laid down in the Norms of the Province, the community plans ahead for its holiday times, part of which is to be spent together. (cf 151.1.3)*

***Dwellings
and Dress***

61 *By the obligation of life in common, we are bound to live in our house and to leave it only with the Superior's permission. Our lodgings must meet the needs of community living. Whatever be the kind of house and wher-*

ever it may be located, the community premises should always be tidy, and furnished in a way that visibly reflects our poverty. Part of the premises is reserved to the community to provide the privacy needed for our life as Brothers¹.

As a sign of our consecration and as a witness to poverty and Marist simplicity, we wear the habit of our Institute, as described in the Statutes².

¹ c 667,1

² c 669

61.1 *For a just reason, the Brother Provincial, with the consent of his Council, can give permission for a prolonged absence. He will not give permission beyond a year, except for health reasons, for studies, or for an apostolate carried out in the Institute's name.*
(c 665, 1; cf 150.2.2)

61.2 *Each house has a chapel, which is the normal place for community prayer. Christ's eucharistic presence makes it the focal point of the community.*(c 608)

61.3 *Our habit is a soutane, with Roman collar or rabat, a cord, and, for the perpetually professed, a crucifix. Alternatively, it may be a type of attire, such as a suit, which is appropriate for a member of an Institute of Brothers.*

The Norms of the Province fix the details of dress. (cf 151.1.3).

Whatever way we are dressed, we are always careful to avoid vanity or negligence.

**Community
and
Hospitality**

62 The Marist community welcomes all who come, as if receiving Jesus in person ⁽¹⁾. In this way, we live out in a practical manner our brotherhood to all ⁽²⁾. Active in its own immediate neighbourhood like leaven in the dough, the community must also be open to all people in its prayer and in its apostolate. (cf 23.1)

¹ Heb 13, 2; Rom 12, 13 ² Mt 23, 8

**A Grace
which is con-
stantly of-
fered us**

63 Community is a grace of the Holy Spirit ¹. Brought together without having chosen our companions, we welcome one another as gifts of the Lord.

In our untiring and ever-renewed effort to be reconciled with one another and to live in communion, we become a sign of unity for those who see the way in which we live.²

We are, however, always aware of the gap between this grace that the Lord is constantly offering us and the reality of our life. Therefore, we pray that, despite the difficulties encountered, we may remain united in the name of the Lord Jesus ⁽³⁾.

¹ Ephs 4, 2-6

³ Jn 17, 11-12

² Mt 18, 21-22

Chapter 4

PRAYER LIFE

*In Union
with Christ's
Prayer*

64 Jesus, conversing with the Father¹, teaches us to listen to God and to respond to Him². Always attentive to the Father³ in accepting His condition as incarnate Son and in undertaking the plan of salvation given Him to accomplish, Jesus spoke to the Father of His longings and love, His praise and thanksgiving, His anguish, and His joy in the Spirit⁴. Our life of prayer is the grace of being drawn into Christ's own prayer.

¹ Mk 1, 35

³ Jn 1, 2

² Lk 11, 1-4

⁴ Lk 19, 21

*The Holy
Spirit prays
in us*

65 All Christian prayer wells up from a heart attuned to the Holy Spirit, who draws us into the intimate life of the Trinity, and enables us to cry out with the Son: "Abba, Father!"¹ Recollection and interior silence are essential if we are to live attentive to the Spirit who dwells in us² and prays in us³.

¹ Rom 8, 15

³ Rom 8, 26

² 1 Cor 3, 16

*Sources
of our Prayer*

66 The Word of God, meditated in sacred scripture and celebrated in our liturgies, is the enduring source of our prayer. Our daily prayer is also nourished by our work, the events of the day, the calls made on us by our Brothers, the Church, and the world¹.

¹ ET 44

*Praying
with Mary*

67 Mary is a model of prayer for us. Virgin of the Annunciation, she welcomes the Word of God¹. Woman blessed among all women, she rejoices in God her Saviour². Faithful handmaid, she lives out her YES even to the Cross³. Mother, she ponders in her heart what Jesus does, and relates His actions to the words of Scripture⁴. She intercedes at Cana⁵ and prays with the Church in the upper room⁶.

As Marist Brothers, we pray with Mary, joining in her praise, her thanksgiving, and her intercession.

¹ Lk 1, 38; 8, 21

⁴ Lk 2, 19, 51

² Lk 1, 47

⁵ Jn 2, 3

³ Jn 19, 25

⁶ Acts 1, 14

*With Father
Champagnat*

68 By living in the presence of God, Father Champagnat became a man of constant prayer, even when engaged in the most absorbing work¹. He was forever in contact with God. “I would never dare to undertake anything without having referred it for a long time to God”². When he celebrated the Eucharist and made his many visits to the Blessed Sacrament, his deep faith made Jesus almost tangibly present to him. He would turn to Mary with child-like confidence³.

In training his Brothers, the Founder frequently came back to the subject of prayer, which he called the “essential point”⁴. His example teaches us to make our whole life a prayer.

¹ Life 334

³ Life 95; L 196, 15-17

² Life 318

⁴ Life 322; L 102, 7-10

*Around
the Table of
the Lord*

69 The heart of our consecrated life is the Eucharist. In it the community finds its union strengthened¹, and from it, the community draws its dynamism and lives in union with the Church, visible and invisible.

Each day, as a community, we take part in the Eucharistic Sacrifice². We listen to the Word of God, receive the Body of Christ in communion³, and adore the Lord Himself present in the Blessed Sacrament⁴. Thus, we gradually become one with Jesus⁵, who offers Himself continually to the Father. Like Jesus, we offer our lives for others⁶.

¹ ET 48

⁴ c 663,2

² Life 350

⁵ Jn 6, 56

³ Acts 2, 42

⁶ Lk 22, 19; Rom 12, 1

69.1 *On those days when we cannot have Mass, we celebrate a liturgy of the Word during which we receive Holy Communion.*

69.2 *Attendance at a parish Mass on Sundays is strongly recommended in order to show our union with the People of God gathered around the Risen Christ.*

*Praying
with
the People
of God*

70 Christ promises that He will be in the midst of those gathered together in His name.¹

In celebrating the Liturgy of the Hours², we make our prayer one with that of Jesus, especially in the psalms³, which He Himself prayed. With the Church, we voice all creation's praise to God, and add our intercession to that which the Son presents to His Father⁴.

This Liturgy, carried out in community, sustains

and renews our personal prayer⁵. When well celebrated, it has a witness value to those who pray with us.

¹ Mt 18, 19-20

⁴ Eph 5, 19-20

² SC 83

⁵ SC 90

³ Mt 26, 30

70.1 *The community organises its prayer life in a creative and responsible way. For morning and evening prayer they may use the Liturgy of the Hours or some other prayer form.*

70.2 *We invite to our prayer those who share life and mission with us.*

70.3 *In fidelity to our Marist tradition, we usually begin the day with the Salve Regina or another marial hymn. This is followed by the invocations in use in the Institute, and by the morning offering. (RC 1852, IX, 3. Life 364)*

**Prayer in
our apostolic
Life**

71 Our love relationship with Christ, who is Master and Lord of our lives, needs to be deepened each day. Likewise, the effectiveness of our apostolic work calls for us to be intimately united with the God who sends us out on mission¹.

In meditation, a personal encounter with the Lord², we learn gradually to see life, people, and events with the eyes of faith. This inspires and strengthens us to continue the work to which Jesus has called us. In its turn, the apostolate leads us back to prayer, which now embraces the

joys and sorrows, the anguish and hopes of those whom God has put on our path.

Knowing the tenderness of the Father, we persevere in meditation with faith and courage, despite the difficulties we may encounter there³. We give at least a half-hour each day to it and continue this meditation during the day by keeping our hearts alert to God's presence with us⁴.

¹ Jn 15, 5

³ Col 4, 2; Eph 6, 18

² Mt 6, 6

⁴ R 1837, II, 2

71.1 *It falls to each community to create the conditions that encourage its members to use well the time of meditation.*

71.2 *During the course of the day we take the opportunities that present themselves for recollection, preferably before the Blessed Sacrament, in order to rekindle our love for Christ and our intimacy with Him. (Life 344-346; R 1837, II, 19; VIII, 1, 7)*

Conversion of Heart

72 As prayer and self-discipline develop, they free our hearts from whatever holds us back from being entirely given to God.

Each evening we take time to look back over the day¹, thanking the Father for the ways in which His love has manifested itself, asking pardon for our failings and renewing our desire to be faithful by giving ourselves to Him as His sons.

This review of the day, as well as our community penitential celebrations, helps us to understand better the purpose of the Sacrament of Reconcili-

ation. We frequently receive this sacrament in faith, and make this encounter with Christ an experience of conversion².

¹ c 664

² 2 Cor 5, 18-21

72.1 Penitential celebrations, made from time to time in community, are moments when we acknowledge our sinfulness. Together, we express our yearning to be reconciled to the Lord and to our Brothers.

**Spiritual
Support**

73 Spiritual and religious study¹, carried out in a spirit of prayer, are indispensable means of deepening our faith. They also enable us to enrich our spiritual culture and to equip ourselves for our catechetical role. Just as each has the right to sufficient time for them, so, too, each has the duty of devoting sufficient time to them.

It is important for the growth of our spiritual life to be accompanied by another person. This is necessary to overcome the difficulties we encounter at certain stages of our life.

The annual retreat² offers each one the opportunity of renewing the spirit of his consecration. From time to time, days of recollection serve to renew the interior unity of our active life.

¹ Life 454

² Mk 6, 30-32

73.1 Part of the community planning is to ensure that the time and the means are provided for spiritual and religious study.

73.2 *Each year we make a week's spiritual retreat along the lines indicated by the Brother Provincial. The community or the Province decides on the days of recollection. (c 663, 5)*

73.3 *Traditionally in the Institute, Good Friday is a day of recollection and prayer. The last day of the year is devoted to asking pardon and to giving thanks. (Life 342; 320)*

**Devotion
to Mary**

74 Our devotion to Mary, like that of the Church¹, is expressed in love, confidence, and admiration, and by trying to make our own Mary's attitude towards God and people².

Like Father Champagnat, we go to Mary as a child to its mother³. By prayer, and by studying what the Church is saying about Mary, we seek to deepen our relationship with her. Her great feast-days, especially the Assumption, which is the patronal feast of the Institute, are special times for intensifying our devotion to this Good Mother.

Every day, we praise the Mother of God by reciting the Rosary, or by some other Marial prayer that reflects the mind of the Church⁴.

¹ MC 2-15

³ RC 1852, VI, 6

² Life 361

⁴ RC 1852, II, 9; c 663, 4

74.1 *We make every effort to celebrate fittingly the marial feastdays in the spirit of the liturgy.*

74.2 *We celebrate the month of May in community. If possible, we do so with the pupils or with other members of the faithful. (Life 356; R 1837, IV, 11)*

*Devotion to
the Founder*

75 Since we are his followers and his sons, we express our affectionate reverence for Father Champagnat by our love and by our confidence in his intercession¹. We study his life in order to understand his mind and heart, and to steep ourselves in his spirit². His feast day is to be celebrated with fervour throughout the Institute, in thanksgiving to God, who endowed the Church with this apostle of youth.

Our love for the Founder extends also to Brother François, to the Brothers who have gone before us, and to all the members and works of the Institute.

¹ CSG 2/261-263

² PC 2/2

75.1 Each day, by means of the religious calendar, we recall the memory of our deceased Brothers and the important dates of the Institute, and we read some quotations from Marist documents.

75.2 Marcellin Champagnat's feast day, June 6th, is an excellent occasion for making people more aware of the man and his work. If possible, we celebrate it with our pupils, with members of other Marist Institutes, and with the local Church.

75.3 On January 2nd we celebrate the founding of the Institute, in gratitude to God for the gift of our religious family to the Church and for the grace of our own vocation.

75.4 On 22nd January we commemorate Brother François.

*Communing
with
the Saints*

76 As the Founder wished, we honour St Joseph, the principal patron of the Institute¹. He teaches us forgetfulness of self in the service of others. We ask him to help us share his love for Jesus and Mary.

We also pay a “special homage of love, respect, and confidence” to the Guardian Angels².

We venerate the Saints³, each of whom reveals to us some aspect of the face of Jesus, the Model for all⁴.

¹ ASL 103; ST; CL 238, 15-21 ³ LG 50, 1

² ST

⁴ 2 Cor 3, 18

*Men
of Prayer*

77 Prayer is for us an absolute necessity¹. It cannot be thought of only as exercises of piety, nor is it to be identified with apostolic work. Prayer is being present to, and communing with God, who becomes more real to us as we show concern for others. Little by little, it unifies our whole life and tends to become continuous², affecting all that we do and influencing all those around us.

Each one of us has the principal responsibility for his own prayer life and shares responsibility for that of the community.

¹ ET 42-45

² 1 Thess 5, 17

77.1 The community organises its prayer in accordance with the directives of the Constitutions. From time to time the community evaluates its decisions to see whether it is promoting the spiritual growth of its members. It keeps an open mind towards other forms of prayer that may encourage this growth.

77.2 *For holidays and vacation periods we organise times for community prayer.*

77.3 *We take advantage of the holidays and of certain times in life, such as sickness and old age, to devote more time to personal prayer.*

Chapter 5

APOSTOLIC LIFE

Jesus, sent by the Father **78** Jesus, sent by the Father¹, is the source² and model of our apostolate. By His Incarnation, He makes Himself one in a special way with every human person³. Consecrated and led by the Holy Spirit, He announced the Good News of the Kingdom⁴. He made Himself the servant of His brethren even to laying down His life⁵. He died in order to bring God's family together in unity⁶. Now risen from the dead, He consecrates the whole of creation and leads it to its fulfilment⁷.

¹ Jn 17, 18

⁵ Jn 10, 11

² AA 4, 1

⁶ Jn 11, 52

³ GS 22, 2

⁷ Eph 1, 10

⁴ Lk 4, 18

The Church, sent by Christ **79** In His turn, Jesus, the image of the Father¹, sends the Church², in which He is ever-present by His Spirit, so that she may continue His work, which is to reveal to everyone the face of God, who is Love, and to make known the meaning of life.

By Baptism and Confirmation, we are all called to follow Christ and to continue His mission³.

¹ Jn 14, 9-10

³ LG 11; AA 3

² Mt 28, 19; AG 5; LG 17

Our Institute, sent by the Church **80** The Church sends forth our Institute, which draws its life from the Holy Spirit¹. Faithful to Father Champagnat, it works to evangelise people, es-

pecially by educating the young, particularly those most neglected.

Each of our communities, sent by the Institute, carries on its apostolate in union with the pastors of the local Church², and in collaboration with other religious and lay people dedicated to the same task. In situations where religion is persecuted or society is in crisis, we remain in the country, if at all possible, through a sense of fidelity to our mission.

¹ c 675,3

³ 1 Cor 3, 8-9;

² c 678,1

c 680

80.1 *To establish a house, or to close one, the Superiors require the previous consent, given in writing, or, in the latter case, the consultation, of the Bishop of the diocese. When making his visits to the local communities, the Brother Provincial will contact the leaders of the local Church. (c 609, 1;c 616,1; cf 137.3.1; 150.2.12).*

**Marcellin
Champagnat
as our Model**

81 Father Champagnat was alive with a zeal born of the Gospels and knew how to respond effectively to specific problems¹.

He felt himself called to form religious for the Christian education of little country children whom no one bothered about². He saw the mission of the Brother as helping children and young people to become good Christians and good citizens⁽³⁾. Being a man of faith, he believed that it was prayer above all that influenced the children to become gentle of heart. Good example and constant presence are other important elements of Marist pedagogy⁴,

which Father Champagnat summarised thus: “To bring up a child properly, you must love him.”⁵

As Marist Brothers, animated by the same zeal, we continue the charism of the Founder by responding to the expectations and needs of today’s young people.

¹ *Life* 536

⁴ *Life* 592; L 14, 5-9

² L 34; 59, 22-29

⁵ *Life* 589; L 63, 31-33

³ *Life* 589; ASL 367 ff; L 273, 8-9

*Within a
Community
of Apostles*

82 Ours is a community apostolate. It begins with the witness¹ of the consecrated life that we live together. The community stands closely knit as one, and, in this bond, sustains and encourages the apostolic work of each of its members. The more united and welcoming our community, and the more dynamic its spirit of prayer and zeal², the more effective our apostolic work will be³. When our life radiates Christian joy⁴ and hope, we awaken in young people the desire to give themselves to follow Christ.

¹ EN 21

³ PC 15, 1

² Phil 2, 2

⁴ ET 55

*Attentive
to the Spirit,
open
to Youth*

83 We are close to young people in their actual life-situations¹, taking the risk of going into what may be unexplored areas where those in material and spiritual poverty await the revelation of Christ. In dealing with young people, we show a concern that is humble, simple, and forgetful of self. We make Christ known to them as the Truth who sets them free ⁽²⁾, as He who calls everyone by name. We help them to discover their vocation in

the Church and in the world. We remain ready to respond to the Holy Spirit, who challenges us by the hard facts of the lives of young people, and who urges us on to courageous action.

¹ L 323, 7-11

² Jn 8, 32

*Mary
and our
Apostolate*

84 Our attitudes towards young people find their inspiration in Mary, bringing up Jesus at Nazareth¹. Our apostolic work is a sharing in her spiritual motherhood.

We contemplate her, hidden and unknown in the world, faithful to her mission of bringing God to us. With simplicity, enthusiasm, and love, she carries Christ to the Precursor, and presents Him to the shepherds and the Wise Men. Patiently she awaits God's hour, being prepared to take the initiative that results in the first "sign" which arouses faith in the disciples. She steps aside so that attention may focus on Jesus. But she is at His side in the suffering and humiliation of the cross, before assuming her role as Mother in the Church².

We attract young hearts to Mary³, Christ's perfect disciple, making her known and loved as one who will lead us to Jesus. We entrust those in our care to her⁴, and we invite them to pray often to this Good Mother⁵ and to make her their Model.

¹ Lk 2, 51-52

⁴ R 1837, II, 3

² LG 55-65

⁵ RC 1852 (2^a) VI, 11

³ L 14, 17-21; RC 1852, VI, 10

84.1 *Faithful to our Marist tradition, we see to it that the young people are well instructed about Mary. (Life 362; RC 1852, VI, 11).*

Our apostolic Activity **85** Open to any apostolate that is in harmony with its founding charism, the Institute sees the direct proclamation of the Word of God as an essential element of its mission ⁽¹⁾. Engaged in schools or in other forms of education ⁽²⁾, we put our heart and soul into serving the human person for the sake of the Kingdom. By the tasks they perform, Brothers employed in administration or in manual work co-operate in the apostolate of the Institute. Adaptation of our ministry to the needs of the Church and of society calls for discernment and evaluation at regular intervals.

¹ Life 538

² GE 8, 10

85.1 *In reviewing the needs of the local Church, the Provincial Chapter discerns those which the Province can meet. The Brother Provincial, with his Council, makes the necessary decisions. (c 677, 1; cf 151.2)*

85.2 *Each of us has the duty to acquire the theoretical and practical competence needed for the task given us by the Institute.*

Bearers of the Good News **86** The aim of our service of evangelisation is the formation of true disciples of Jesus Christ. We do this especially by the witness of our lives and by our ability to listen to, and to engage in dialogue with the people we meet¹. We give pride of place to catechesis². We devote ourselves whole-heartedly to this ministry, according to our capabilities, and we trust in the Lord's

help and in the care that Mary has for us. We show a special interest in apostolic youth movements, which are complementary to catechesis³. Because of the strong bonds that link evangelisation and human development ⁽⁴⁾, we help those who are in need and co-operate with those who work for justice and peace.

¹ EN 41, 46, 76

³ GE 4; AA 30, 4

² Life 92

⁴ EN 31

86.1 *The young people in our care are to receive a systematic and precise religious instruction. We initiate them into the sacramental life and we help them to find their place in the Church community.*

86.2 *The questions and hopes of those we catechise, their language, and the symbols of their culture provide openings for the message of the Gospel.*

86.3 *Brothers working in the mass media are to be alert to seize opportunities that will enable them to make known the Good News of Jesus Christ. In all that pertains to their work, they act in conformity with Canon Law. (c 831)*

86.4 *The Institute collaborates, as far as it can, in the formation of catechists and Christian teachers for meeting the needs of the local Church.*

87 The Marist school, as envisaged by Father Champagnat, offers families an approach to education which draws faith, culture, and life into harmony. It is an approach which stresses the values of self-forgetfulness and openness to others, which presents culture as a way of drawing people together, and proposes knowledge as a duty of service¹.

In our schools, which provide a particularly favourable setting for Christian education², we give priority to a pastoral care that is adapted to the needs of young people. While ready to serve them all, we give special attention to pupils who are in difficulty.

Our schools, which are open to any family that accepts our educational approach, encourage dialogue between persons of different cultures and different beliefs³.

¹ GE 8, 1

³ GE 9, 1

² c 801

87.1 *Each year, we set up a pastoral programme in our schools in concert with the local Church community. This programme provides especially for apostolic movements and for education in the Faith: catechesis, prayer, sacraments.*

87.2 *We teach the Church's social doctrine and awaken people's consciences to the problems that affect society. We involve our pupils in charitable works that bring them into contact with situations of poverty. (PJ prop 2).*

87.3 We educate our pupils in the use of the mass media, giving particular attention to developing their sense of critical judgement.

87.4 We maintain our contact with young people by means of activities associated with the school.

*Marist
School,
an educating
Community*

88 We share our spirituality and our educational approach with parents¹, lay teachers², and other members of the educating community. By the service they render, the non-teaching staff collaborate closely in our apostolic task.

We show our pupils that we are not only their teachers, but also their brothers. By trying to establish in the school a spirit of friendliness and collaboration, we help young people to become responsible for their own formation².

We keep in close contact with former students² by friendship and by prayer. We willingly accept their co-operation in the progress of the school. At appropriate times we help them with advice, and encourage them to devote themselves to serving the Church and people.

¹ GE 3, 1

² GE 8, 3

88.1 We promote associations of the parents of our students and seek their participation in apostolic activities. (GE 6, 3)

88.2 We invite and encourage the Christian involvement of our lay-teachers in the work

of catechising, in apostolic movements, in prayer groups, and in fostering vocations.

88.3 *In our schools, we must give the staff we employ a just wage and the means of improving their human situation. The Brother Provincial and his Council will draw up a plan to this effect, taking into account the circumstances of the people involved. (c 1286, 2; cf 150.2.6; 156.2)*

88.4 *Our schools are to be places which welcome cultural meetings, friendly gatherings, and discussion groups.*

88.5 *The Provincial Council stimulates interest in pastoral and educational initiatives, notably those dealing with the use of mass media in the service of education. (cf 151.2)*

Our Presence in School Situations where diverse Values are held

89 In schools directed by a team of lay teachers, where we are either alone or working with other consecrated people, we co-operate in the integral education of the human person. We respect the convictions and tasks of the other teachers, and we do our best to bring dialogue to such a stage that people can be attentive to the voice of God. Whatever may be our role there, we are Gospel witnesses in the school situation. We contribute to the building up of society and of the Kingdom of God by working to provide a human development illuminated by faith¹.

¹ GE 8, 1

89.1 *The Brother who is engaged in a work that is not controlled by the Institute is obliged to be a witness to Jesus Christ by the quality of his life and his service. In all such cases, his professional involvement must be in accord with his being a Marist religious. (cf 40, 3)*

**The
Institute's
missionary
Thrust**

90 God wishes that all people be saved by the Church, His sacrament of salvation for all¹. Our Institute, like the Church, is missionary, and we must have the heart of a missionary, as did Father Champagnat² who exclaimed: "All the dioceses in the world enter into our designs."³

The Institute has a deep and tender concern for countries not yet evangelised, and also for young Churches. Having come to an agreement with the local Church, we set up communities in places where the needs of the people call for a service that is in line with our charism⁴.

In de-christianised countries we lead young people and adults to discover the true face of Jesus Christ and of His Church.

¹ LG 48, 2

³ C 93, 22

² *Life* 210-211; c 783

⁴ AG 32, 4

**Marist
Missionaries**

91 The Brothers whom the Lord sends out to spread the Good News as missionaries must prepare themselves carefully for their task.

The Brothers are quick to recognise the gospel values already present in the diverse cultures¹, and, by their service and example², they help to purify whatever in these cultures is out of harmony

with the Gospels. By the way they work to promote these values, they attest to the quality of each culture. In so doing, they gain new vigour in their Marist missionary spirit. The style of life they lead helps their integration into the country to which they have been sent³. Like Mary, they withdraw as soon as their presence is no longer needed.

Local Brothers are to be given the training they need, and are to be encouraged to assume gradually the full responsibility for their Province or District. It is through them that the inculturation of Marist life is to be achieved.

¹ AG 25, 1

³ EN 41

² EN 20; c 787

91.1 *The Province has the duty of maintaining the missionary spirit of its members. When it has no mission area of its own, it frees some of its Brothers for work in the mission sectors of the Institute. The demanding nature of missionary life calls for a careful choice of the Brothers who are sent.*

91.2 *The Brothers see to it that the missionary spirit is aroused in young people. Each Marist aspirant must be told that he can become a missionary.*

91.3 *Major Superiors promote the establishment of regional Marist centres specifically designed for the formation of Brothers from the young Churches.*

91.4 *During the first years of their missionary experience, Brothers must have the time and the means of studying the local language.*

Chapter 6

FORMATION

PASTORAL CONCERN FOR VOCATIONS

God's Plan **92** God has a loving plan¹ for each human being, which He makes known in a series of calls². For each of us, Christ is always the way we must follow. Within the Church we come to learn the ideals of the Gospel and to bring them to life.

¹ Rom 8, 28-30

² Mk 1, 16-20

*Helping
Vocations to
emerge* **93** Aware that each person is called to holiness¹, we help young people to develop the grace of their baptism² by a more radical commitment for the sake of the Kingdom - as lay people³, as consecrated persons, or as priests. We encourage them to be aware of the needs of others, to open their hearts⁴ to the will of the Father, and to make more and more their own Mary's readiness to be of service⁵.

¹ LG 40

⁴ 1 Sam 3, 1-10

² LG 33

⁵ Lk 1,38

³ AA 3

93.1 *The work of encouraging vocations needs to be organised in close liaison with the diocese and with an awareness of the Church's needs. Such work extends to families, who are invited to reflect on the different states of life and to pray that vocations may emerge.*

93.2 We give direction and life to apostolic movements in which young people may find a spirit that favours their response to the Lord.

*Everyone
is involved*

94 Every Brother in the Province should feel deeply the need to encourage vocations¹. The most persuasive invitation to follow Christ comes from the witness given by our consecration, and by our life of simplicity and joy lived in a community which is in solidarity with the poor. We call young people to discover our life of brotherhood and apostolic action, and we invite them to commit themselves to this life.

We pray the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to spread the Gospel². Mary is our inspiration in the work of encouraging vocations, as she was for Marcellin Champagnat. We ask her to sustain and develop what she has begun³.

¹ *Life 537-538*

³ *Life 95; ST*

² *Mt 9, 37-38*

94.1 *The Brother Provincial has the primary responsibility for the work of encouraging vocations in the Province. With the help of his Council, he sets up the necessary structures. (cf 150.2.6)*

94.2 *We willingly undertake to be the confidants and counsellors of young people who are searching for their vocation. We encourage them by inviting them to our communities and welcoming them in a warm brotherly spirit.*

THE GENERAL PURPOSE OF FORMATION

95 The vitality of our religious family and its fidelity to its mission depend, to a great extent, on the formation of its members¹. The Institute takes great care to provide a formation that is well-based and adapted to the personalities and the cultures of its members. The different stages of formation should all be characterised by a common goal - to form men capable of vowing their entire life to God in an apostolic Marist community. Each one, led by the Holy Spirit and helped by the formation personnel, is the principal artisan of his own formation.

¹ PC 18, 1

95.1 *Each Province examines the questions arising from the work of encouraging vocations and from that of initial and on-going formation. In accordance with the Formation Guide, the Brother Provincial and his Council draw up a plan of action and see that it is carried through. (c 659, 2; cf 150.2.6).*

95.2 *This plan will provide criteria for the admission of candidates.*

95.3 *If the work is to be truly effective, it is vital that there be close harmony between formation personnel and those engaged in the work of encouraging vocations.*

PRE-NOVITIATE

96 To the young men who show an interest in our way of life, we offer a deepening of their experience of human and Christian life. We help them to come to a knowledge of themselves, to accept themselves, to transcend themselves, and to be converted to the Gospel.

We accompany them and arrange suitable ways and means of making them more sensitive to the Lord's call. We make a discernment with them to see whether they have the qualities and dispositions needed to become Marist Brothers¹.

¹ c 597,1

96.1 *This pre-novitiate has two stages - a time of enquiry, and a time of postulancy.*

96.2 *The pre-novitiate is usually made in one's own country. This enables the candidate to remain in contact with his cultural environment, and to be in a position to adapt better to its apostolic needs.*

96.3 *The candidate must be assured of the conditions necessary for him to make a free and responsible decision.*

96.4 *The Brother Provincial and his Council can set up centres (juniorates, residences) to prepare aspirants for the postulancy. These will be organised with a view to developing Marist vocations.*

96.5 *During the postulancy the candidate prepares himself to separate from some aspects of his environment, and experiences some time of community living. At the same time, the Brother directing him helps the postulant's family to understand the Marist vocation.*

96.6 *The postulancy lasts at least six months.*

96.7 *The postulancy usually takes place in a house distinct from the novitiate. The Provincial plan determines how it will be organized.*

96.8 *When the postulancy is made in a community, the Brother Provincial appoints a perpetually-professed Brother to take a more direct charge of the postulants' formation. The other Brothers of the community take an active part in this formation work.*

96.9 *As the time of the postulancy draws to a close, the candidate writes to the Brother Provincial, giving the motivation for his application for entry into the novitiate. The formation personnel supplement this with a report on the suitability of the postulant. Once a favourable reply has been received from the Brother Provincial, the postulant can begin his novitiate. (cf 165.1).*

THE NOVITIATE

Initiation into the Religious Life **97** The novitiate is a time of initiation in the requirements of Marist religious life ⁽¹⁾. The novice, helped by the Master and his team, discerns God's will for him and tests his motivation and aptitudes in light of the commitment that he is contemplating. By living the evangelical counsels, he sets out to follow Christ ⁽²⁾ in the manner of Mary. He experiences the kind of life lived in the Institute and learns to live according to the Constitutions. The choice of topics in the study of Church doctrine is designed to deepen his faith and to bring him to a loving encounter with God. This time of formation prepares the novice for his religious profession, seen as a response to God's call.

¹ c 646

² Jn 1, 35-43

97.1 *The novice is not to be engaged in work or studies that do not contribute directly to his formation. (c 652, 5)*

Human and Christian Formation **98** The novice works at developing both human and Christian virtues. He schools himself to sacrifice¹ and to a complete self-giving to God and to people. He begins to live in intimacy with God, helped by spiritual reading, by meditation, and by sharing reflections on scripture. The celebration of the Eucharist, of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and of the Liturgy of the Hours gives him additional spiritual assistance. By having someone to accompany him on his journey to God, the novice is encouraged to open his

heart and to interiorise gospel values. He grows to be more sensitive to the action of the Holy Spirit in his life ⁽²⁾.

¹ Lk 9, 23-24

² c 652, 2, 3

**Marist
Formation**

99 In the person and work of Marcellin Champagnat, the Marist spirit is clearly revealed to the novice, who tries to make it his own and to give it his heart's allegiance.

He takes as model for his community living the simple life of the first Brothers. Manual work, carried out in the spirit of these first followers of Champagnat, adds its own contribution to a balanced formation¹.

A thorough study is made of the Constitutions, seen as the application of the Gospel to Marist life.

¹ Life 69

**The Novitiate
House**

100 The novitiate, under the direction of the Master of Novices, is made in a house established by a written decree of the Brother Superior General¹. The novitiate lasts at least eighteen months or, at the most, twenty-four months. For it to be valid², twelve months are to be spent in the novitiate community.

An absence that goes beyond three months, whether continuous or not, makes the novitiate invalid. An absence that goes beyond a fortnight has to be made good³.

¹ c 647, 1; cf 137.3.2

³ c 649,1

² c 648

100.1 *The novitiate house is to be set up in surroundings that are favourable to attaining the goal of this period of formation. It is to be a simple and hospitable place, suited to quiet reflection, to prayer, and to life in community.*

100.2 *The Brother Provincial can authorise the group of novices to live, for a certain period, in another specified house of the Institute. (c 647, 3)*

100.3 *In particular cases, the Brother Provincial can prolong the time of novitiate, but not for more than six months. (c 653, 2)*

100.4 *The way in which an inter-provincial novitiate is to be conducted is agreed on by the Brothers Provincial concerned.*

**Periods
of apostolic
Activity**

101 With the consent of the Brother Provincial, the Master of Novices can organize one or more periods of apostolic activity outside the novitiate house¹.

¹ c 648,2

101.1 *At least six months are to be spent in the novitiate before any apostolic activity is undertaken. This work must end at least three months before first profession.*

101.2 *To ensure the success of these periods, care must be taken to see to the following:*

- 1 - the kind of work engaged in is in harmony with the aim of the Institute, and is adapted to the age and maturity of the novice;
- 2 - the community receiving the novice understands the objectives of this stage of formation, and contributes to them;
- 3 - this stage is made under the direction of the Master of Novices.

Final Stages of the Novitiate **102** As the novitiate draws to a close, the novice writes to the Brother Provincial, asking to be admitted to profession. The novitiate ends with temporary profession¹ preceded by a retreat.

¹ c 653,2

102.1 *Three months before the end of the novitiate, the novice, in his request to be admitted to profession, gives an account of his life-experience. He sets out the reasons that lead him to give himself to God in the Institute. Along with this request, a report is submitted by the Brother Master of Novices and his team.*

102.2 *The Brother Provincial fixes the duration of the retreat and the place where the first profession is to be made.*

102.3 *The Brother Provincial can admit to profession a novice in danger of death. The juridical effects of this profession lapse if the novice recovers.*

POST-NOVITIATE

Aim of the Post-Novitiate Stage **103** Until perpetual profession ⁽¹⁾ the Brother's formation must be continued in a systematic and balanced way. It is organized with a view to the needs of the Church and of people; it is adapted to the personal capacities of the Brother; and it is in keeping with the charism of the Institute ⁽²⁾. Throughout this time the Brother steadily deepens his sense of consecration to the Lord.

¹ PC 18, 1

² c 659, 2

103.1 *After the novitiate the formation of the Brother in temporary profession is continued in two stages:*

- 1 - in a community specifically designed for this purpose, under the direction of a Brother named by the Brother Provincial;*
- 2 - in an apostolic community, for the period before perpetual profession.*

103.2 *The first stage lasts three years. It is made immediately after the novitiate. (PC 18, 1 and DF 60).*

103.3 *When circumstances are such that other arrangements have to be made, the Brother Provincial and his Council will examine what is the best way to achieve the objectives aimed at in each stage.*

*The First
Stage*

104 The first stage following the novitiate is directed towards formation for mission. To benefit from this stage, the young Brother has to be capable of harmonising both his studies and his apostolic activities with the life of prayer and with community life. When his life is integrated in this way, the ideal of religious consecration will become more and more a lived reality for him¹.

¹ PC 18, 2

104.1 *This stage must provide the Brother in temporary profession with courses of theological and professional studies designed to give him competence for the apostolic works of the Institute.*

104.2 *During this time the Brother is not to engage in any work nor accept any function that could interfere with his formation. The Superiors are to be attentive to this. (c 660, 2)*

104.3 *A Brother who is attending formation courses in a Province other than his own, follows the directives agreed on by the Brothers Provincial concerned.*

*The second
Stage*

105 The first years of apostolic activity are especially important for the Brother in temporary profession. Living in a suitable community and sharing fully in its life and mission, he continues the work of his own formation in a responsible way.

The Brother prepares earnestly for his perpetual profession. He must be assured of personal guidance throughout this stage.

105.1 *The Brother Provincial can appoint a Brother who is not the local Superior to accompany the young Brother during this stage. The community into which he is received must also feel responsible for his formation.*

105.2 *Before perpetual profession a suitable time should be given to a more intensive spiritual preparation.*

FORMATION PERSONNEL

Each Brother is involved **106** Each Brother of the Province should show concern for the young men in the formation houses, and for Brothers in temporary profession in the communities. Each gives evidence of his own fidelity by prayer and by an exemplary life. The primary responsibility for formation rests with the major Superiors.

Role of Formation Personnel **107** Since theirs is such a vital role, the Brothers engaged in formation must be competent men, gifted with a rich human and spiritual maturity. They need to be open, able to work as a team, and able to win the confidence of young people. In carrying out their task, they need to stay closely in touch with the Province and the Institute. They choose

Mary as the one who can inspire them in their mission. From her, they learn how to accompany those confided to their care - with love, perseverance, and discretion.

Preparing the Formation Personnel **108** Brothers engaged in formation, especially the Master of Novices, should be men of prayer, skilled in spiritual discernment, and gifted for the work of forming young men to Marist life. Major Superiors are to make sure that these men have suitable preparation and, from time to time, periods of renewal so that they can carry out their task well¹.

¹ PC 18, 4

108.1 *The Master of Novices and the Brother who has charge of the post-novitiate stage are to be free of any responsibility that would impede them in carrying out their task. They must be at least ten years perpetually professed. (c 651)*

ON-GOING FORMATION

The Responsibility of the Superiors **109** Marcellin Champagnat devoted himself to developing the gifts and talents of the first Brothers¹. Following his lead, the major Superiors must make available to each Brother the suitable means of furthering or updating his formation in spiritual, doctrinal, and professional fields².

¹ L 313; 318, 18-35

² PC 18, 4

109.1 *The Brother Provincial sees to it that each Brother has the opportunities needed for his on-going formation. The Formation plan provides for programmes suited to the different groups and adapted to local cultures. (c 661)*

109.2 *Major Superiors have a duty to provide the formation required by men who serve in a position of authority.*

109.3 *In a process of discernment with the Brother Provincial, and in accord with him, the Brother selects the area of specialization or study that best suits his talents and the apostolic mission of the Province.*

109.4 *Marist Centres of spirituality offer the Brothers the chance to re-discover their Marist vocation and to renew their apostolic enthusiasm. These Centres must respond to the needs of the times and the current hopes of the Church.*

109.5 *The Brother Superior General, with his Council, organizes periodically specific courses for certain functions and services.*

109.6 *Our Lady of the Hermitage is the shrine of our Marist origins. The Centre d'Accueil offers the Brothers and laity the opportunity of experiencing a renewal*

in the spirit of the Founder and of the first Brothers.

**Personal
Respon-
sibility**

110 In common with all baptised people, we grow towards adulthood in Christ¹. Because of this, our on-going formation needs to be lifelong and to cover all aspects of our life. We have, therefore, the serious responsibility of continuing the work of our formation in order to respond to the ever-renewed calls of God and to live our vocation more authentically with our Brothers².

To work at this, we make use of the ordinary means at our disposal - personal study, persevering prayer, and the review of our life in the light of the Gospels and of our own experience. In addition, we have recourse to dialogue with Superiors, spiritual direction, and the opportunities that community provides for mutual enrichment.

¹ Eph 4, 13

² PC 18, 3

110.1 *Community is the best setting for the exercise of co-responsibility in the on-going formation of each of its members. The mutual support given here encourages each Brother in his efforts to develop.*

110.2 *True to the Church's mission and to the mission of the Institute, we ensure that on-going formation stresses three priorities: catechesis, work for justice, and the cultural reality of the mass media in society today.*

Chapter 7

ADMISSION TO THE INSTITUTE AND TO RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

111 In admitting candidates to the Institute, we follow the prescriptions of the Code of Canon Law¹. The Brothers assigned to admit candidates use their prudent judgement in giving entry to those who give evidence of an authentic call from God and of a sincere desire to respond. Those who admit candidates do so in accordance with the criteria of the Formation Guide.

¹c 641-645

Admission to the Novitiate **112** Permission to enter the novitiate is given by the Brother Provincial. He needs to be satisfied that the postulant has good judgement, sufficient health, a feeling for religion, and the ability to live in community, as well as the other dispositions needed to become a Marist Brother.

112.1 *To enter the novitiate, the postulant must be a layman, and must be at least seventeen years of age.*

112.2 *The Master of novices decides on the practical details connected with the beginning of the novitiate. At this time the new novice is given a copy of the Constitutions.*

Admission to Profession **113** The Brother Provincial, with the consent of his Council, grants admission to temporary

or perpetual profession¹. This must be confirmed by the Brother Superior General.

Temporary profession is made for one or three years. The period of temporary profession must last at least four years¹. It terminates in perpetual profession.

¹ cc 656 and 658

² c 655

113.1 *Before profession the novice or Brother makes a written application to the Brother Provincial for admission, giving reasons for his request. If it is possible, the Brother Provincial makes known his reply in a personal interview.*

113.2 *For temporary profession to be valid:*

- 1 - the novice must be at least eighteen years old;*
- 2 - he must have made a valid novitiate;*
- 3 - the admission must have been made freely by the Brother Provincial and his Council;*
- 4 - the profession must be expressly stated and made without force, grave fear, or deceit;*
- 5 - it must be received by the Brother Provincial or his delegate in the name of the Brother Superior General.(c 656)*

113.3 *For perpetual profession to be valid, in addition to the requirements listed in the previous statute, the following are needed:*

- 1 - the Brother must have completed at least his twenty-fourth year;
- 2 - the Brother has been in temporary profession for at least four years. Perpetual profession may be anticipated by the Brother Provincial, but not by more than three months. (c 658)

113.4 *The Brother must spend at least two years of apostolic life in a Marist community before he is admitted to perpetual profession.*

113.5 *When a Brother in temporary vows asks to renew his profession or to make a life-long commitment, the Brothers who know him, especially those of his own community, give their impressions of him in writing, sending their report to the Brother Provincial at the appropriate time. They should comment on the external aspects of the personal life of the Brother, his life in community and in the apostolate. (cf 150.2.1;165.1)*

113.6 *A year of temporary profession is generally calculated as the time from one annual retreat to the next. For any other situation, the authorization of the Brother Provincial is required.*

113.7 *In exceptional cases, the Brother Superior General can prolong the period of temporary profession up to nine years. (c 657,2)*

113.8 *Records of admission to the novitiate and to the different professions must be sent to the Secretary General without delay. The Secretary General will supply the appropriate forms.*

113.9 *At the request of the Brother Provincial and his Council, the Brother Superior General can, without requiring that the novitiate be made over again, re-admit a member of the Institute who, at the end of his novitiate or after profession, has legitimately left us. The Brother Superior General will decide on the length of probation time needed before temporary profession is made, and also on the length of time to be spent in temporary vows before perpetual profession. (c 690; cf 137.3.8)*

114 The profession formula will contain the following elements:

I, Brother freely and voluntarily, make into your hands, Brother Superior General, (OR Brother, delegate of Brother Superior General) profession of the evangelical counsels by the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, for one year (OR for three years, OR for my whole life), according to the Constitutions of the Institute of the Little Brothers of Mary (OR the Marist Brothers of the Schools).

If the Brother wishes to add a personal introduction and/or conclusion to this formula, such addition must be approved beforehand by the Brother Provincial.

Chapter 8

SEPARATION FROM THE INSTITUTE

Difficulties, **115** Aware of the worth of our vocation, we give
Discernment ourselves to it without turning back. The difficulties and temptations that arise in the course of life are not in themselves a reason to doubt our vocation. The Brother who faces up to them with faith and generosity, and who makes use of suitable means to overcome them, can find in them a way of strengthening his vocation and of renewing his fidelity.

If his efforts do not succeed, however, the Brother should turn to discernment, helped by his Superiors and other competent people. This discernment is to be made with deep respect for the Brother's person and for the call of God. If, from the discernment, it emerges that there are good grounds for leaving the Institute, the Brother can make the request to do so in peace and in abandonment to the Lord.

Leaving **116** Once the time of his profession has expired, a
the Institute Brother in temporary vows is free to leave the Institute. He should do so only after due prayer and reflection¹.

If, during the time of his temporary profession, a Brother asks to leave the Institute for some serious reason, he can obtain an indult to leave from the Brother Superior General, with the consent of his Council². The Brother Provincial, after consulting his Council, can, for just reasons, exclude a Brother from making a

subsequent profession on the completion of a temporary profession³.

A Brother in perpetual profession must not ask for a dispensation except for very grave reasons that have been maturely thought over in the presence of the Lord. He then makes his request to the Brother Superior General, who passes it on to the Holy See⁴, with his advice and that of his council. (cf 137.2)

¹ c 688, 1

³ c 689, 1

² c 688, 2

⁴ c 691, 1, 2

116.1 *A Brother who has reached the point of wanting to leave the Institute will arrange matters through his Brother Provincial.*

116.2 *An indult to leave, legitimately granted and notified to the Brother, carries with it, by virtue of the law itself, the dispensation from vows and from all obligations arising from profession, unless it be rejected by the Brother at the time of notification. (c 692).*

Other Cases of Separation **117** In matters concerning separation from the Institute, we follow the prescriptions of Canon Law. The separation may be by transfer to another Institute¹, by exclaustation², by leaving, or by being sent away³.

¹ c 684-685

³ c 694-703

² c 686-687

117.1 *An exclaustated Brother provides for his own needs. If difficulties arise, he should make his situation known to the Brother Provincial, who, with his Council, decides on how the Province can help.*

117.2 *The Institute should not overlook its duty of charity towards those who have left us. Although such Brothers cannot ask for any recompense for the services they have given, the Institute will help them, materially and spiritually, to establish themselves in some other way of life. We should maintain bonds of friendship with former members of the Institute. (c 702)*

Chapter 9

GOVERNMENT OF THE INSTITUTE

*Authority
as Service*

118 Christ, our principle of unity and peace, received all authority from the Father ⁽¹⁾, yet He chose to take the form of a slave ⁽²⁾. He, in turn, transmitted His authority to the Church through the Apostles ⁽³⁾. From the ranks of the People of God, some are chosen for the role of teaching, sanctifying, and governing, so that everyone may be helped to fulfil the plan of God.

Our Superiors share in this role in the Church by exercising the service of authority ⁽⁴⁾, which draws the efforts of the Brothers into unity, and which inspires, directs, and sometimes corrects these efforts to make them accord with the purpose of the Institute.

¹ Mt 28, 18

³ Mt 16, 19

² Phil 2, 7

⁴ 1 Peter 4, 10-11;
PC 14, 3; MR 13

*Co-responsi-
bility and
Subsidiarity*

119 By our religious profession, we become co-responsible for the Institute. This co-responsibility finds expression in the different tasks entrusted to us, and develops within the structures¹ set up by our proper law.²

By the principle of subsidiarity, the limits of the powers proper to each level are defined and respected. The governing body makes the decisions that lie within its competence, as defined by the Constitutions. Only when a situation demands it, will a higher level of authority intervene.

In this way, the rights and duties of people and of communities are respected. Such a way of acting encourages our participation in carrying out the mission of the Institute.

¹ c 633

² Explanatory Note I, on Proper Law (see Appendix)

*Mary,
our First
Superior*

120 In calling her our First Superior¹, we acknowledge that the Institute belongs to Mary, who has done everything for us². We obey God in His representatives, as Mary did, with a total readiness, which is not merely a passive attitude but an attentive listening to the Spirit, in order to arrive at a responsible commitment.

Those who govern us let themselves be guided by the spirit of the Handmaid of the Lord³. Like her, they listen, ponder, and act⁴, having in mind the spiritual growth of the Brothers. With confidence, they have recourse to her in every situation.

¹ L 23, 12; 260, 12

³ Lk 1, 38

² Life 95; L 30, 23-25

⁴ Jn 2, 3-5

*Father
Champagnat
and
Authority*

121 In his service of authority to the Brothers, our Founder gave us the example of prudence, dynamism, and understanding. Like a father, he was a close companion of each of them and made himself all things to all¹. He consulted them frequently², seeking with them the will of God. Before making a decision, he would spend a long time in prayer³. With kindness and firmness, he helped the Brothers to whom he had entrusted responsible positions.

¹ Life 460; L 63, 11-18

³ Life 345

² Life 490; L 38, 6; 39, 13-14

122 Superiors are to see their task as a service¹. Brothers among Brothers², they encourage active and responsible obedience by their respect for the person, by their readiness to listen, and by developing a united effort for the good of the Institute and of the Church. They retain, however, the right to command when it is necessary to do so³.

They provide suitably for the needs of each Brother and treat everyone with patience⁴. They strive to build up a brotherly community in Christ, in which God may be loved before all else.

¹ PC 14, 3

³ c 618

² 1 Peter 5, 3

⁴ Jn 10, 11; c 619

123 The major Superiors are the Brother Superior General, the Brother Vicar General, and the Brothers Provincial¹.

¹ c 620

123.1 *In those Provinces that have received the explicit approval of the Brother Superior General, (cf 143.7) the Brothers Vicar provincial and District Superiors with ordinary vicarial jurisdiction are also Major Superiors (c 620).*

124 The Superiors have a Council which they must convene at regular intervals. With the help of their Council, they govern according to Canon Law and the law proper to the Institute¹. The Statutes indicate the cases where they act collegially with their Council, and those where they

cannot act without the consent or advice of this Council².

¹ c 627

² Explanatory Note II
on the Superior and
his Council
(see Appendix)

ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

125 Our Institute is divided into Provinces and Districts set up by the Brother Superior General and his Council¹.

¹ cf 137.4.1

125.1 *Provinces and Districts which have common interests are free to work together. This may require the drawing up of Statutes, which, if necessary, will be approved by the Brother Superior General in the case of aspects which are not clearly in accord with the Constitutions and the Statutes (cf 137.4.13)*

125.2 *If the number of Brothers in an administrative unit becomes too small, the Brother Superior General, after having consulted those in charge, may take the initiative of joining it to another, or of bringing it under the General Administration. (cf 137.4.1)*

126 The Province is an administrative unit composed of a number of houses whose personnel and material resources are sufficient to assure an autonomous existence. It is governed by a Provincial Superior¹.

¹ c 621

127 The District is an administrative unit comprising a group of houses bound by common interests, but not having the requirements necessary to become a Province. It depends directly on the Superior General or on the Provincial Superior, and is governed by a District Superior.

127.1 *The District Superior governs according to the Statute approved by the Brother Superior General. (cf 137.4.13; 150.2.19).*

128 In addition to its function as a structure of government, an administrative unit constitutes a broad community of life, of prayer, and of apostolic work. It brings the presence of the Institute into local Churches, and remains united to the Brother Superior General who links it to the universal Church.

129 The community is the basic cell of the Institute. It lives in a house lawfully established by the Brother Provincial with the written consent of the Bishop of the diocese¹. The community is directed by a Superior. The closing of a house requires the assent of the Brother Superior General, after consultation with the Bishop².

¹ c 609,1;

cf 150.2.12

² c 616,1;

cf 137.3.1; 150.2.13

129.1 *Whenever a house is established, a contract will be drawn up between the Province, or the District dependent on the Brother Superior General, and the other authorities responsible for the foundation. (cf 150.2.14)*

129.2 *Certain houses depend directly on the General Administration and do not form part of any Province. Their immediate major Superior is the Brother Superior General. They have a special Statute approved by the Brother Superior General. (cf 137.4.13)*

129.3 *In agreement with the Brother Provincial concerned, the Brother Superior General chooses, each for a specified time, the Brothers who make up the communities of these houses. Such Brothers remain members of their Provinces, retaining active and passive voice in elections for the General Chapter and for the consultation for the nomination of the Brother Provincial. During the time that they are at the service of the General Administration, they forego their passive voice for any other election made in their Province. The Brother Provincial can request an exception, which will be left to the decision of the Brother Superior General. (cf 137)*

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

**Brother
Superior
General**

130 As successor to the Founder, the Brother Superior General gathers all the Brothers of the Institute around Christ. He guides them and accompanies them in their fidelity to their commitment. He discerns with them the best way to adapt their apostolate to the needs of the times, according to the charism of the Institute. He has direct authority over all Brothers, houses, Districts, and Provinces¹. He can, for a time, dispense a Brother, a community, or a Province from particular points of discipline of the Constitutions.

¹ c 622

130.1 *The Brother Superior General must visit the Provinces and Districts at least once during his term of office, either in person or by his Vicar, his Councillors, or other delegated Brothers (c 628).*

131 He is elected by the General Chapter in accordance with Canon Law, by a secret ballot, and by an absolute majority of the Brothers present¹. At the time of his election he must be perpetually professed for at least ten years². The term of his mandate is eight years. He can be re-elected consecutively only once³. His resignation or his deposition is reserved to the Holy See. The election is carried out in the following manner: After three ballots have not given a result, only the two candidates who have the highest number of votes are eligible. If there are more than two with

the same number of votes, the oldest two are taken. If, after a fourth ballot, there is still an equality, the older Brother will be considered elected.

¹ c 625,1

³ c 164 ff; c 624,1

² c 623

Brother Vicar General **132** The Brother Vicar General is the closest collaborator of the Brother Superior General, replacing him in his absence, and when the Superior finds himself unable to carry out his task in whole or in part.

132.1 *The Brother Vicar General cannot be, at the same time, Econome General.*

133 He is elected or re-elected by the General Chapter under the same conditions and in the same way as the Brother Superior General.

134 If it becomes impossible for him to fulfil his role during his term of office, a new Vicar General will be elected by the Brother Superior General and his Council¹.

¹ cf 137.4.2

135 If it becomes impossible for the Brother Superior General to fulfil his role during his term of office, the Brother Vicar General becomes Superior General and continues to govern the Institute until the following General Chapter. If he has been elected by the Brother Superior General and his Council, he must convoke the Chapter within a year.

135.1 *The Brother Superior General and the Brother Vicar General normally reside at the General House. If both have to be absent at the same time, the Brother Superior General or his Vicar, according to circumstances, will appoint the Councillor who is to take his place. (c 629)*

The General Council

136 The General Council is made up of the Brother Vicar General and of Brothers called Councillors General, who, with the Brother Superior General, form a community.

The General Chapter decides on the number of General Councillors (at least four) whom it is to elect, and on the way they are to be elected. At the time of their election, they must be at least ten years perpetually professed. Their term of office lasts from one ordinary General Chapter to the next.

136.1 *Should circumstances call for it, the Brother Superior General and his Council can elect one or two other Councillors. (cf 137.4.2)*

Brother Superior General and his Council

137 The Brother Vicar General and the Councillors General are the direct collaborators of the Brother Superior General in governing the Institute. They are available to the Brother Superior General for any task that he may entrust to them. He consults them on the important matters concerning the Provinces and the Districts.

137.1 *The Brother Superior General will convoke his entire Council at least once a year, to assess the situation of the Institute, to define the overall policy of his administration, and to examine questions of pressing urgency. (cf 137.4) For decisions taken to be valid, the presence of at least 4 members of the Council is required*

137.2 *When a perpetually professed Brother asks for an indult to leave the Institute, the Brother Superior General will forward the request to the Holy See, together with his advice and that of his Council (c 691,1)*

137.3 *The Brother Superior General cannot act without the consent of his Council for:*

- 1 - closing a house, on the request of the Brother Provincial (c 616, 1; cf 150.2.13);*
- 2 - setting up, transferring, or closing a novitiate house (c 647, 1);*
- 3 - permission to establish several novitiates in the same Province or District;*
- 4 - authorising a candidate, in a particular case and by way of exception, to make his novitiate in a community of the Institute other than that of the novitiate, under the care of an experienced Brother, who takes the place of the Master of Novices (c 647, 2);*

- 5 - *the transfer of a perpetually professed Brother to another Institute, and the admission of a perpetually professed religious coming from another Institute (c 684);*
- 6 - *granting an indult of exclaustation to a perpetually professed Brother, the maximum length of time being three years (c 686);*
- 7 - *granting to a Brother in temporary profession an indult to leave the Institute (c 688, 2);*
- 8 - *re-admission into the Institute (c 690, 1; cf 113.9);*
- 9 - *affiliating someone to the Institute;*
- 10 - *authorising the appointment of a local Superior for a third term;*
- 11 - *authorising construction work, borrowings, loans, purchases, the disposing of property or of objects of special value, - beyond the limit fixed for the Provinces, - with the permission of the Holy See, if this is needed (c 638, 3; cf 161. 11 and 14 and 15);*
- 12 - *approving the Norms established by the Provincial Chapter (cf 151.1.3);*
- 13 - *the convocation of an extraordinary Chapter, cf 138*
- 14 - *other cases which, because of the universal law of the Church or the proper law, require the consent of the Council.*

137.4 *The Brother Superior General acts collegially with his Council in certain matters. Decisions are taken by an absolute majority of those present. The matters are:*

- 1 - the setting up, modifying, or suppressing of Provinces and Districts (c 581; c 585);*
- 2 - electing the Brother Vicar General and Councillors General outside the time of a General Chapter;*
- 3 - the resignation or the removal from office of the Brother Vicar General or of a Councillor General;*
- 4 - appointing the Brother Secretary General, the Brother Econome General, the Brother Procurator General, the Brother Postulator General, and the other Brothers chosen to work in the general services*
- 5 - appointing the members of the International Council for Economic Affairs and of the Finance Committee of the Institute (c 1280; cf 160.4, 160.5);*
- 6 - fixing the date of the General Chapter;*
- 7 - appointing the members of the Preparatory Committee of the General Chapter;*
- 8 - appointing the members of the Committee to verify the credentials of the capitulants;*

- 9 - *appointing the members of the Provisional Committee of the General Chapter;*
- 10 - *fixing the maximum amount that a Province or District can dispose of without authorisation, and the raising of that limit;*
- 11 - *approving the financial report of the General Administration, presented each year by the Brother Econome General (cf 160.1);*
- 12 - *approving the legal statutes of Provinces and Districts;*
- 13 - *approving the Statutes of Districts, of groups of Provinces or Districts, and of houses dependent on the General Administration;*
- 14 - *interpreting the decisions of the General Chapter;*
- 15 - *appointing Brothers Provincial and the Superiors dependent on the Brother Superior General;*
- 16 - *the resignation or the removal from office of the Brothers referred to above;*
- 17 - *extending the term of office, for not more than six months, of a Provincial Superior or a Superior of a District dependent on the Brother Superior General.*

137.5 *The Brother Superior General acts collegially with his Council when there*

is question of dismissing a Brother from the Institute, in accordance with procedures of Canon Law (c 699).

**General
Services**

137.6 *The Brother Procurator General is the Institute's representative accredited to the Holy See. He provides the Brother Superior General and his Council with information from the Church and with material concerning Canon Law for Religious.*

137.7 *The Brother Postulator General is the official in charge of the Institute's causes of beatification and canonisation. He prepares the documents dealing with these causes, and works to make known whatever could bring them to a successful conclusion.*

137.8 *The Brother Secretary General has charge of the Secretariate of the General Council. He is responsible for the minutes of the General Council meetings, and handles the official correspondence in the name of the Institute.*

137.9 *The Brother Econome General administers the finances and goods of the General Administration. If he is not a General Councillor, he is called in when the Council treats of financial matters.*

137.10 *Other persons provide services connected with the General Administration, in particular, commissions, secretariates, formation courses, archives, statistical information, research into the history of the Institute, and communications.*

**The General
Conference**

137.11 *The General Conference is a consultative assembly, made up of the Brother Superior General, the Brother Vicar General, the Councillors General, the Brothers Provincial and, if the Statutes of the Districts provide for it, the Superiors of Districts. The aim of the General Conference is,*

- 1 - to strengthen the unity of the Institute, and to enable the Superiors to have direct contact with the Brother Superior General, the members of his Council, and with one another,*
- 2 - to study questions of general concern and to propose ways of answering them.*

The Brother Superior General convokes the General Conference in the period between two General Chapters. If he judges it opportune, he can invite other persons to attend.

**The General
Chapter**

138 *The General Chapter is an assembly representative of the whole Institute. It is an expression of the participation of all Brothers in the life and mission of the Institute, as well as of their co-responsibility in its government¹.*

It exercises the highest extraordinary authority². The Brother Superior General convokes it and presides over it. He convokes the ordinary General Chapter every eight years. For grave reasons and with the consent of his Council, he can also convoke an extraordinary General Chapter³.

¹ PC 14, 4

³ cf 137.3.13

² c 631, 1

138.1 *Not only Provinces and local communities, but also any Brother or group of Brothers, are free to make their wishes and suggestions known to the General Chapter. These contributions are signed and sent to the Preparatory Committee, which passes them on to the capitulants.(c 631, 3)*

The Functions of the Chapter **139** The ordinary General Chapter has the following functions¹:

- 1 - to elect the Brother Superior General, the Brother Vicar General, and the members of the General Council, as prescribed in the proper law of the Institute;
- 2 - to deal with major issues concerning the nature, aim, and spirit of the Institute, and to further their renewal and adaptation, preserving all the while the spiritual heritage of the Institute;
- 3 - to draw up Statutes for the whole Institute;
- 4 - to put before the Holy See the modifications that may be needed on some points of the Constitutions.

¹ c 631, 1

Composition of the Chapter **140** The General Chapter is made up¹ of members by right and of members elected by the Provinces and Districts. The number of those elected must be greater than the number of those who are members by right. The Institute's proper law determines who are members by right, and lays down the way in which the elections are carried out.

¹c 631, 2

140.1 *Members by right in the General Chapter are:*

- 1 - the Brother Superior General;*
- 2 - the former Brother Superior General;*
- 3 - the Brother Vicar General and the Councillors General who are in office at the time the Chapter opens;*
- 4 - the Brothers Provincial.*

140.2 *The total number of Brothers elected as delegates to the General Chapter will be fifteen more than the total number of members by right.*

Among the elected delegates, there will be:

- 1 - One elected from each administrative unit. In a District dependent on a Province, the number of professed Brothers in the District is subtracted from that of the Province in calculating the number of delegates the Province is entitled to.*

2 - *Other Brothers elected from the units with the highest number of Brothers. This is how these elections will be carried out:*

For each administrative unit, the coefficient of representation, that is, the ratio of the number of capitulants already determined to the total number of Brothers in that unit, will be calculated. For this calculation, only the Brothers Provincial will be counted among the members by right. All the administrative units will then be arranged according to their coefficient, in ascending order. One delegate will be added to the number of elected delegates in the first unit on the list. The list will be rearranged, and the process repeated, until the stated number of elected delegates has been reached.

140.3 *Brothers who, in the course of the Chapter, are elected Superior General, Vicar General, or Councillors General become members of the Chapter if they are not already present. If the elected Brother Superior General is not present, the Chapter must await his arrival before continuing its work.*

Brothers eligible for Election **141** All Brothers perpetually professed, except those exclaustrated or those in the process of joining another Institute, are eligible as delegates to the General Chapter.

Brothers with the Right to Vote **142** Those with the right of electing delegates to the General Chapter are: all Brothers, whether in temporary or perpetual profession, except those exclaustrated or those in the process of transferring to another Institute.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

Provincial Superior **143** The Brother Provincial governs with the help of his Council. He has the primary responsibility for the spiritual and apostolic animation of the Province and for the administration of provincial resources. He keeps the spirit of union alive among the Brothers and co-ordinates their work. He has direct authority over all the Brothers and all the houses of the Province.

143.1 *To carry out his mission, the Brother Provincial calls on others to work with him. As the need arises, he sets up commissions to animate and co-ordinate the various activities of the Province.*

143.2 *The Brother Provincial gives each Brother of the Province his mission. He arranges the communities, taking into account, as much as possible, the apti-*

tudes of each Brother and also the circumstances that may be important to a Brother.

143.3 *To make the governing of a Province easier, the Brother Provincial can, if need be, combine some houses and apostolic activities to form a Sector, with its own Statute, if necessary.*

143.4 *The temporary transfer of a Brother from one Province to another is made by a written agreement between the Provincials concerned. The permanent transfer of a Brother must be confirmed by the Brother Superior General.*

143.5 *Exceptionally, and in cases of urgency, the Brother Provincial can himself give permission for an outlay of less than 10% of the amount authorised for the Province.*

143.6 *The Brother Provincial will have the help of a Provincial Secretariate, for the management and conservation of the documents of the Province (cf 138.2, 149.2, 151.1.3, 151.6, 155.2...). This office maintains regular relations with the Brother Secretary General. It assures the proper care of the archives and sees to the sending, at the times required, of the various documents requested by the General Administration.*

143.7 *At the request of the Brother Provincial of Provinces where the animation and government needs the assistance of other major Superiors, the Brother Superior General, with the consent of his Council (cf 137.3.14), may authorise their naming and the process by which they will be designated.*

144 The Brother Provincial is appointed for three years by the Brother Superior General and his Council¹, after consultation with all the Brothers of the Province². At the time of his appointment, he must have at least ten years of perpetual profession³. He may be re-appointed. Only in exceptional circumstances may he be appointed for a third term⁴.

¹ cf 137.4.15

³ c 623

² c 625, 3

⁴ c 624, 2

144.1 *The way in which the consultation for the appointment is to be carried out is determined by the Brother Superior General after he has come to an understanding with the Brother Provincial and his Council. (cf 137.4.15).*

144.2 *Exceptionally, and for good reasons, a Province, with the approval of the Brother Superior General, may elect the Brother Provincial. For this election to be valid, it must be confirmed by the Brother Superior General. (c 625, 3).*

145 The Brother Provincial, either in person or by delegate, visits the Brothers and houses of the Province at least once a year¹.

¹ c 628, 1

145.1 *When making his annual visit to the communities, the Brother Provincial (or his delegate) evaluates with the Brothers the quality of their religious and apostolic life. He arranges to have a time of personal interview with each Brother.*

145.2 *The Brother Provincial can dispense a Brother or a community, for a given period, from certain disciplinary points of the Constitutions.*

146 In the name of the Brother Superior General, he receives, either in person or by delegate, the vows of the Brothers of the Province¹.

¹ c 656, 5

147 He authorises those who preach in our houses¹, and gives permission for any publications of the Brothers concerning religion or morals².

¹ c 765

² c 832

**The
Provincial
Council**

148 The Provincial Council is composed of Brothers who, with the Brother Provincial, form the group for the purpose of reflection, consultation, and decision-making for the Province. It helps the Brother Provincial in government, in the spiri-

tual and apostolic animation of the Brothers, and in the administration of the Province resources.

149 Provincial Councillors are elected by the Provincial Chapter. They must be perpetually professed. Their term of office ceases with that of the Superior whose Council they form.

149.1 *The Provincial Council is made up of at least four Brothers. From them, the Brother Provincial chooses the Deputy Provincial, who acts in his stead as the need arises.*

149.2 *The Brother Provincial convokes his Council as a rule once a month, but at least six times a year. As far as possible, the agenda is sent to the council members some days before the meeting. The minutes are recorded and are approved, and signed by all. For decisions to be valid, the number of Councillors present must be at least an absolute majority of the members of the Council.*

149.3 *If he is not a Councillor, the Brother Provincial Econome is called in when the Council treats of financial matters. Occasionally, other Brothers also may be invited to the Council. These Brothers do not have the right to vote.*

149.4 *The provinces may have organisations composed of Brothers and lay people responsible for reflecting on, consulting about, and taking decisions on matters relating to the works. The Brother Provincial and his Council determine how to set up these organizations and the extent of their powers to make decisions.*

Brother Provincial and his Council **150** *The Brother Provincial consults his Council on matters that are important to the Province, to the communities, and to the works undertaken.*

150.1 *The Brother Provincial must consult his Council when there is question of:*

- 1 - authorising a Brother to make the vow of stability- an authorisation that must be confirmed by the Brother Superior General;*
- 2 - refusing to accept a candidate for profession (c 689, 1);*
- 3 - prolonging the time of probation for a novice (c 653, 2);*
- 4 - beginning the process for authorising a Brother to renounce his possessions (c 668, 4);*
- 5 - convoking the Provincial Assembly;*
- 6 - to begin the process of dismissal of a Brother in accordance with Canon Law (c 697).*

150.2 *The Brother Provincial cannot act without the consent of his Council when there is question of:*

- 1 - admitting Brothers to temporary or perpetual profession, with the approbation of the Brother Superior General (c 656, 3);*
- 2 - giving a Brother permission to live outside a house of the Institute for a long period (c 665, 1; cf 61.1);*
- 3 - request the Brother Superior General for the dismissal of a Brother in accordance with Canon Law (c 697);*
- 4 - submitting the affiliation of a person to the Institute for the approval of the Brother Superior General;*
- 5 - appointing the members of the Provincial Financial Affairs Committee (cf 161, 2);*
- 6 - developing plans for the Province and defining priorities, according to the orientations given by the Provincial Chapter (cf 34.1; 85.1; 88.3; 94.1; 95.1);*
- 7 - approving the plans for community life;*
- 8 - disposing of or acquiring property, authorising any building or repair work, borrowings, loans - where the total amount does not go beyond that authorised for the*

Province. If the total amount exceeds the sum authorised, the approval of the Brother Superior General is required. (cf 152.6.5; 161.14; 161.15);

- 9 - approving the budgets and the financial statements of the Province, the houses, and the works undertaken (cf 161.3, 161.4), as well as the controls, methods, and procedures to be utilized in financial transactions (cf 157.1);*
- 10 - applying, after consultation with the Brother Superior General, those Norms of the Province that deal with the manner of living poverty as befits the cultural practices of the country (cf 29.11);*
- 11 - authorising long journeys and time spent outside the country, in keeping with the Norms of the Province (cf 29.11);*
- 12 - establishing a house, with the written consent of the bishop of the diocese (c 609,1);*
- 13 - proposing to the Brother Superior General the closing of a house, after consultation with the Bishop of the diocese (c 616,1);*
- 14 - drawing up or making changes to a contract between the Province and those responsible for setting up some apostolic work (cf 162.5);*

- 15 - *drawing up a Statute, should the situation require it, when several communities are living together in the same house;*
- 16 - *determining, if necessary, the area of control proper to the Director of a work, of his/her Council, and others with responsibility;*
- 17 - *engaging a lay professional to administer some work of the Institute or to audit the financial statements of the work;*
- 18 - *fixing the date for the opening of the Provincial Chapter;*
- 19 - *drawing up the Statute for a District (cf 127.1);*
- 20 - *approving, if necessary, the Statute of a Sector, or the civil statute of a work or group of works (cf 143.3; 155.1).*

150.3 *The Brother Provincial acts collegially with his Council when there is a question of:*

- 1 - *electing Provincial Councillors outside the time of the Provincial Chapter in order to make up the number fixed for the latter (cf 151.1.2);*
- 2 - *the resignation of Provincial Councillors, or of their deposition for grave reasons;*
- 3 - *appointing, after consultation with the Brothers, a District Superior or a Brother to be in charge of a Sector;*

- 4 - *appointing local Superiors, the Master of Novices, the Directors of formation centres, the Provincial Econome, the Directors and Economes of works undertaken, and the local Economes;*
- 5 - *the resignation of the Brothers mentioned above, or their deposition for grave reasons.*

**The
Provincial
Chapter**

151 The Provincial Chapter¹ is an assembly which represents the entire Province and expresses the participation of all the Brothers in the governing of the Province.

It must meet at the time of the installation of the Brother Provincial.

It is convoked and presided over by the Brother Provincial.

It constitutes an extraordinary authority at the provincial level. The Statutes indicate the situations in which its role is deliberative and those in which its role is consultative.

¹ c 632; 633, 1

151.1 *The Provincial Chapter has a deliberative role when there is question of:*

- 1 - *drawing up its own rules of procedure;*
- 2 - *deciding on the number of Provincial Councillors and electing them;*
- 3 - *drawing up the Norms of the Province, which must be approved by the Brother Superior General, with the consent of his Council (cf 29.7;*

29.11; 50.1; 56.1; 60.4; 61.3);

4 - deciding how deputy Superiors and local Councillors are to be appointed;

5 - defining the situations, not already covered by Statute 152.6, where the local Superior must have the consent of his Council in order to act.

151.2 *The Provincial Chapter has a consultative role when it examines general matters concerning the Province. Taking into account the Province situation, the calls of the local Church, and the directives of the General Chapter, the Provincial Chapter suggests the main orientations to be followed. (cf 85.1; 88.5)*

151.3 *The composition of the Provincial Chapter is decided by its rules of procedure.*

151.4 *The Provincial Chapter is made up of members by right and of elected members. The out-going Brother Provincial and his successor are members by right. There may be other members by right, but the total number of such members must be fewer than the number of elected members. If they are not so already, those newly elected to the Council become capitulants.*

151.5 *The out-going Brother Provincial, with his Council, organises the election of the Chapter members. He convokes the*

Chapter and presides at the opening. After the installation of the new Brother Provincial, the members of his Council are elected, and the topics listed in due form on the agenda are dealt with.

151.6 *The reports of the Provincial Chapter are sent to the Brother Superior General.*

151.7 *A summary of the Provincial Chapter is sent to the Brothers of the Province. Its decisions take effect on the date set by the Chapter itself.*

151.8 *If, for a time, it is impossible for the Province to meet in Chapter, the Brother Provincial will inform the Brother Superior General, who will give directives as to how the Provincial Councillors are to be elected. During this time the powers proper to the Provincial Chapter are vested in the Brother Provincial and his Council.*

**The Province
Assembly**

151.9 *The Brother Provincial can convoke a Provincial Assembly. This is a meeting open to all the Brothers in order to bring the Brothers and the communities into closer contact, and to arouse the interest of all by a study of the important questions concerning the Province. This consultative assembly does not replace the Provincial Chapter. The Brother Provincial may also invite other persons (c 632 ; c 633.1 ; cf 150.1.5*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Superior of the Community **152** The Superior of a community ⁽¹⁾ is at the service of his Brothers in the accomplishing of their personal, community, and apostolic vocation. He offers to each Brother the support of his collaboration, advice, and authority. He governs with the help of a Council. In the communities where there are at least six Brothers, this Council is made up of the number of Brothers determined by the Brother Provincial, with the consent of his Council. Where no Council exists, its place is taken by the whole community.

¹ c 608

152.1 *The Superior takes an interest in each of his Brothers, and together they seek what is for the good of all. He shows that he is available to spend time with them and to listen to them. He should take the initiative, when necessary, to confirm a decision made in community, or to take action himself when something cannot be put off till later. (c 619)*

152.2 *He authorises the personal expenditure of the Brothers, within the limits of his power.*

152.3 *He is responsible for having the community meet at regular intervals.*

152.4 *He sees to it that the Brothers have access to an appropriate library. He*

provides for the safe keeping and the classifying of archive documents, and he sees to the upkeep of buildings and furniture.

152.5 *He can dispense, for a time, a Brother or the whole community from some particular point of discipline of the Constitutions.*

152.6 *The local Superior cannot act without the consent of his Council when there is question of:*

- 1 - taking decisions that flow from the plan for community life;*
- 2 - apportioning tasks and responsibilities not specified by the Brother Provincial;*
- 3 - preparing the annual budget, and the financial report as at the end of the financial year, and submitting them to the Brother Provincial for approval (cf 150.2.9);*
- 4 - deciding on expenditure and on important alterations, within the limits of the approved budget;*
- 5 - drawing up plans that call for the approval of the major Superiors (cf 150.2.8);*
- 6 - attending to matters arising from the Provincial Chapter (cf 151.1).*

152.7 *The Brother Superior convokes his Council at least once a month.*

152.8 *Whenever it seems useful, the Brothers involved in the matters under discussion are invited to the Council session. This invitation can be extended to the whole community. None of these invited Brothers has the right to vote.*

152.9 *The Minutes of the Council sessions are approved and signed by the Brother Superior and the Councillors. The book of these minutes is made available to the major Superiors when they are making the canonical visit. The community is informed of Council deliberations by receiving a summary of proceedings.*

153 The local Superior is appointed by the Brother Provincial¹ for three years, after a suitable consultation². He must be perpetually professed for at least one year³. He can be re-appointed. For a third term of office, the approval of the Brother Superior General is required. For serious reasons, and with service to the Province in mind, the Brother Provincial can shorten a local Superior's term of office⁴.

¹ cf 150.3.4

³ c 623

² c 625.3

⁴ c 624, 3

153.1 *It is desirable that, after several consecutive terms of office, a Brother has an interval of time before once more being entrusted with responsibility for a community. (c 624, 2).*

*Those in charge
of apostolic
works*

153.2 *The Director of an apostolic work is a person at the service of the mission and the members of the educational community, who offers to each his/her collaboration, advice and the support of his/her authority.*

The Director governs with the aid of a Council and other leaders. All are the principal animators of the apostolic spirit of the work and of Marist values.

The Brother Provincial decides on the manner of appointment, the term of the mandate, and the powers to be allocated. The same holds true for other posts of responsibility, such as economer, councillor, and others (cf 150.2.16).

These persons take care that the work functions well, avoid ostentation, and see to it that Marist simplicity is in evidence.

They keep in mind that their decisions may involve the responsibility of the Institute. They act with all necessary prudence and within the strict limits of the powers given them.

Those of them who are Brothers are subordinate to the Superior of their community in everything that concerns their state as religious.

154 *The community has a deputy Superior, who takes the place of the Superior when he is absent or prevented from fulfilling his role. The deputy Superior is the first Councillor. He is chosen according to the regulations laid down by the Provincial Chapter. (151.1.4)¹.*

¹ cf 151.1.4

Chapter 10

THE ADMINISTRATION OF TEMPORAL GOODS

The Temporal Goods of the Institute **155** The Institute, the Provinces, and the Districts have the right to acquire, possess, alienate, and administer material goods, according to their respective powers¹.
Houses cannot own nor alienate property.

¹ c 634, 1

155.1 *In order to safeguard better the interests of the Institute, it may be advisable for the Institute, the Provinces, and the Districts, as well as their works, to be set up as juridic persons in civil law. Approval must be sought from the next level of competent authority. (cf. 137.4.12, 150.2.20) In setting up these juridic persons, no alienation of patrimony nor transactions, whereby the patrimonial condition of the Institute may be adversely affected, may take place. (c.1295; 638 §3)*

155.2 *The assets of the Institute include short term assets, investments and fixed assets.*

The Brother Econome administers the short term assets and investments according to the policies adopted by Brother Superior General or Brother Provincial, as may be the case. This is what is known as ordinary administration.

It is Brother Provincial's responsibility to administer the stable patrimony of the Institute within the limits set by Canon Law and the ceiling authorised for the Province. The General Administration will request from the Holy See whatever permissions may be needed. This is known as extraordinary administration. A record of this stable patrimony must be on file in the Province offices. (c. 638; cf. 137.3.11; 150.2.8)

155.3 *When several Provinces together take responsibility for an apostolic work, they must, by common agreement, draw up Statutes concerning it.*

**The Brother
Econome**

156 Brothers appointed to administer the assets of the Institute are administrators, not owners, of the goods of the Church. In their management, they show great concern for the common good, for justice, for poverty and charity, and they keep in close touch with the apostolic ministry of the Brothers. Their method of management will respect the Canon Law¹.

¹ c 635

156.1 *To allow the Brother Econome to fulfil his function properly, it is essential that there be close collaboration between the Brother Econome and the Brother Provincial in all their workings.*

156.2 *As a matter of justice, Brothers who are responsible for administering the goods of the Institute should see to it that all our employees receive a salary that at least meets the requirements of the laws of the country and that they are also covered by standard social benefits. (c.1286,2; cf. 88.3)*

157 Brothers Econome have the power to make their own decisions in the day-to-day matters of their administration ⁽¹⁾. They refer extraordinary matters to their respective Superiors.

¹ c 638, 2

157.1 *Internal controls, in accord with good banking and accounting practices, should apply to all financial transactions. These controls are to be established and reviewed regularly by the respective finance commissions. Final approval lies with the competent authority.*

The exact methods and procedures of these transactions are approved by the competent authority.

All bank accounts, whether cheque or savings, must be able to be accessed by more than one person.

The Use and Management of Goods

158 The General Chapter gives directives for the administration of the goods of the Institute. It makes an examination of the financial operations of the General Administration.

At each level of government, it is the Superior who,

following the general directives and taking into account any special circumstances, decides how the assets are to be used and how they are to be administered. He also supervises the financial operations.

158.1 *The Brother Superior General determines the maximum amount that a Province or a District dependent on him can dispose of without authorisation. At the request of the Brother Provincial or of the Brother Superior of a District, and after an examination of the financial situation of the administrative unit concerned, this amount may be changed. (cf 137.4.10).*

158.2 *Surpluses that a community may have, and the returns from the Brothers' works belong to the Institute. The surpluses from apostolic works are also returned to the Institute unless contractual arrangements specify otherwise. (c. 681,2)*

158.3 *A person, a house or a Province may not open a bank account without the permission of the competent authority. It is also necessary to have authorization to divert any amount from the common fund, whatever be its source.*

The Increase of Capital **159** Only the Institute and the Provinces can augment capital. Capitalisation should be in keeping with social and economic responsibilities and should be carried out prudently¹.

The Brothers responsible, aware of their commitment to poverty and sensitive to the needs of the world, will direct some of the surplus funds to help poorer Provinces, missions, and works for the poor².

¹ PC 13, 6

² c 640

159.1 *Every three years, the Brother Provincial and Council shall examine the state of the Province's short term assets, investments and fixed assets. The Brother Provincial and Council will discern whether the sources of these, the manner of producing revenue from them and the use of the revenue are in accord with the call of the Institute to Solidarity and with its witness to evangelical poverty.*

159.2 *If this examination reveals that the short term assets, the investments and the fixed assets are able to generate an excess of revenue over and above the discerned present and future needs of the Province, the Brother Provincial and Council shall, in consultation with the Brother Econome General determine where and how to direct their surplus funds or to alienate some of the assets in favour of more needy Provinces. This consultation is strongly recommended, but it is not obligatory.*

**Brother
Econome
General**

160 The Brother Econome General ⁽¹⁾ has charge of the finances of the General Administration. While respecting the limits of the powers

given him, he arranges the use of the Institute's resources so that they give a reasonable return. He exercises his mandate under the direction of the Brother Superior General and under the control of his Council.

He asks the Brother Provincial Econome to send him whatever documents he may need for the management of the Institute's assets.

¹ c 636, 1

160.1 *Each year the Brother Econome General presents the financial statement of the General Administration to the Brother Superior General for approval.*

At the same time, he presents information concerning the financial position of Provinces and Districts. (c. 636, 2; cf. 137.4.11).

160.2 *The Brother Econome General has the right to audit the accounts of the Provinces, Districts, communities, and works.*

160.3 *If in the opinion of the Brother Econome General circumstances in Provinces or Districts warrant it, he may require from the Province or District certified copies of title deeds of properties of the Institute. (cf. 161.6)*

160.4 *The Brother Superior General names an International Council for*

Economic Affairs, composed of at least four experts, to help the Brother Econome General in the application of the financial policies of the Institute. The mandate of the members of this Council will follow a mandate of the Brother Econome General. Brother Econome General is its president. This Council will meet as often as necessary, but at least once a year (c 1280; cf 137.4.5).

160.5 *The Brother Superior General appoints three experts, or more, to constitute with the Brother Econome General, a Finance Committee. This Committee helps the Brother Econome General in his tasks, and studies requests involving finance that are submitted to the Brother Superior General for approval. Before making a decision, the Brother Superior General takes heed of the Committee's recommendations (c 1280; cf 137.4.5).*

160.6 *Before the beginning of the financial year, the Brother Econome General, with the help of the Finance Committee, draws up the provisional budget of the General Administration. He submits it to the Brother Superior General and his Council for approval.*

**The
Provincial
Econome**

161 The Brother Provincial Econome¹ is appointed by the Brother Provincial for a set term. He must be perpetually professed. He administers the assets of the Province and carries out his role under the authority of the Brother

Provincial and his Council. He gives directives to the local Economes and other administrators so that there may be a coordinated management throughout the Province.

¹ c 636, 1

² cf 150.3.4

161.1 *The Brother Provincial Econome is appointed for three years. He may be reappointed consecutively twice.*

161.2 *The Brother Provincial appoints a Provincial Councillor and at least two other competent persons who, with the Brother Provincial Econome, constitute the Provincial Finance Committee. The Brother Provincial pays attention to the remarks or recommendations of this Committee. (c 1280; cf 150.2.5)*

161.3 *Before the beginning of the financial year, the Brother Provincial Econome, aided by the Finance Committee, draws up the provisional budget of the Province and submits it to the Brother Provincial for his approval. (cf 150.2.9)*

161.4 *Each year the Brother Provincial Econome presents for the approval of the Brother Provincial, the financial report of the Province. This will include information about the financial situation of the houses, the apostolic works, loans and insurance policies.*

The Financial Report is forwarded to Brother Econome General in a format recommended by him. (c. 636,2; cf. 150.2.9)

161.5 *In consultation with the Brother Provincial, Brother Provincial Econome will decide the system of accounting and the format to be used in the houses and specifies the date when reports are to be sent to his office.*

Brother Provincial and Brother Provincial Econome have the right of access to the accounts and any other related documents of the houses, and of every work for which the Province is responsible.

161.6 *Brother Provincial Econome will see that the following items are kept in a safe place:*

- 1 - all title deeds to property and any related documents, such as mortgages, proxies, powers of attorney, wills, leases, insurance policies. (cf. 160.3)*
- 2 - the documents concerning the establishment of the houses which are not the property of the Institute. (c. 68,2)*

161.7 *The financial resources of the Province should be used primarily to maintain the houses of formation, the houses of study, infirmaries and retirement houses; to establish and develop educa-*

tional works and other apostolic activities, and also to set up reserve funds where appropriate.

161.8 *The Brother Provincial should see that the Brothers are covered by insurance, according to their needs and to the circumstances of the country.*

161.9 *Engaging a lay professional to administer an undertaking of the Institute or to audit financial reports, is the responsibility of the Brother Provincial. He does this in due legal form. (cf 150.2.17)*

161.10 *If the Province manages some particular undertaking, the Brother Provincial Econome monitors its accounts.*

161.11 *To borrow or to lend a sum of money that exceeds the authorised amount, the Brother Provincial must present a request for authorisation to the Brother Superior General. This request will detail the conditions under which the borrowing or the loan is to be made, and the conditions of repayment. (c 638, 3; cf 137.3.11)*

161.12 *A Province that has contracted debts or other financial obligations, even with the permission of Superiors, is responsible for their repayment. (c 639, 1) A Brother who contracts debts or other financial obli-*

gations without valid permission is solely responsible for them. The Institute, the Province, or the house cannot be held liable for the repayment. (c 639, 2 and 3)

161.13 *Before permitting any new construction, the Brother Provincial should make a detailed study to make sure that it is needed, to see the impact it would have in the social milieu, and to see whether it meets the requirements of evangelical poverty. Any project for building or for modifying an existing building is to be submitted to those concerned with the project, whether the religious community, or the directors of the work, or both, if this is the case. As a rule, construction work is supervised by the Brother Provincial Econome.*

161.14 *Before beginning a project that involves a large sum of money, those responsible will examine the financial situation of the Province and the means of funding. The project will not be begun until it has been studied by the Finance Committee and approved by the Brother Provincial, or, if necessary, by the Brother Superior General. (cf 137.3.11; 150.2.8)*

161.15 *Modifications that considerably change an existing building may be undertaken only with the authorisation of the Brother Provincial, even if the expendi-*

ture involved lies within the limits of the local Superior's powers. (cf 150.2.8; 152.6.4-5)

161.16 *External professionals may be appointed to assist the Brother Provincial Econome in performing his work.*

It is essential for the proper functioning of the office of the Provincial Econome, that the role and expectations of all involved are clearly defined to ensure close collaboration between the Brother Provincial and the office of the Provincial Econome.

It is the responsibility of the Brother Provincial to appoint an outside auditor for the accounts of the Province. (cf 150.2.17).

The Brother Provincial

162 The Brother Provincial appoints, for a set time, a Brother Econome¹ to manage the assets of the community. He must be perpetually professed. He administers the assets of the community, under the control of the Brother Superior and his Council. He is attentive to the needs of each Brother. If the community is small, the local Superior can undertake the administration himself.

¹ c 636, 1; cf 150.3.4

162.1 *The term of office of the local Brother Econome is three years. He may be re-appointed consecutively twice.*

162.2 *At the local level, the accounts of the apostolic work and those of the community should be kept separate.*

162.3 *Each community, house, and apostolic work draws up its annual budget and, at least one month before putting it into operation, presents it to the Brother Provincial for his approval. (cf 34.2; 150.2.9)*

162.4 *When the ordinary administration has been provided for, the houses send their surplus to the Provincial Fund, in the manner indicated by the Brother Provincial.*

162.5 *When a contract has been signed between the people responsible for an apostolic work and the Province, the Brother Provincial alone can modify its provisions, with the approval of the Brother Superior General, when this is required. (cf 150.2.14)*

162.6 *On the local level, the account books will be set out in the way approved by the Brother Provincial Econome.*

162.7 *The Financial Report is drawn up as indicated by the Brother Provincial Econome along the lines of the model that he has supplied. The annual Financial Report is sent to him after being checked and signed by the Brother Superior and the members of his Council. When no Council exists, all members of the community sign instead. (C. 152.6.3)*

Chapter 11

THE VITALITY OF THE INSTITUTE

Experiencing God's Fidelity **163** In our individual lives and in the life of the Institute, we experience the love and fidelity of God¹, as well as the motherly care of Mary². From this experience springs the vitality of the Institute, which manifests itself in our personal fidelity, in our apostolic fruitfulness, in the awakening of vocations.

¹ Deut 32, 4; Life 302 ff ² Life 364; L 30, 23-25, 41-44; 194, 51-55; 67-71

Relevance of the Marist Charism Today **164** Our Institute, a gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church, is a grace forever relevant to the world¹. Our simple and fraternal communities are a call to live according to the spirit of the Beatitudes². The witness of our dedicated lives and our apostolic commitment reveal to everyone the meaning of human existence³, and encourage those around us, particularly young people, to build a more just society.⁴

¹ c 575

³ GS 12 and 22

² Mt 5, 3-12

⁴ LG 46, 2

164.1 *To promote a better knowledge of our origins and of our spirituality, the Brother Superior General and his Council promote and co-ordinate research into the life, work, and times of the Founder, and into the history of the Institute. (PC 2, 1; cf 137.10).*

164.2 *In the different countries and cultures where we are active in the apostolate, we keep up to date our knowledge of the Founder, of the first Brothers, and of the history of the Institute, so that we can maintain, deepen, and develop our spiritual heritage. The Brothers Provincial and the Superiors of Districts have a special responsibility in this regard. (c 578).*

164.3 *Personally, or in community, we read the publications and documents of the Institute, especially the Circulars of the Superiors. Such reading helps us to know and love our religious family better.*

164.4 *The Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family is an extension of our Institute; it is a movement for people who wish to share more fully the spirituality and sense of mission inherited from Marcellin Champagnat. In this movement, affiliated members, young people, parents, helpers, former students, and friends deepen within themselves the spirit of our Founder so that they can live it and let it shine forth. The Institute animates and co-ordinates the activities of this movement by setting up suitable structures.*

**Committed
and
Responsible**

165 *The present-day relevance of Marcellin Champagnat's charism is a challenge to our personal and community commitment to incarnate it in different situations and in different cultures.*

We all have responsibility for this task. Together with our Superiors, we work to build communities which radiate the presence of Jesus.

In a religious family, an expression of Christ's love for His Church, the stronger members take care of those who are weaker ⁽¹⁾. That is why the vitality of each Province and District is a matter of concern for the whole Institute.

¹ Rom 15, 1

165.1 *Writing reports about those who are making profession in the Institute is one way for us to exercise our responsibility. We fulfil this duty in a spirit of faith and charity, having the good of the Institute at heart. (cf 96.9; 113.5).*

**Conversion
of Heart**

166 Conscious of the gap that lies between the calls of God and our responses, we repeatedly feel the need to be converted anew¹.

We entreat the Holy Spirit to free us from all that hampers our welcoming Him whole-heartedly², and we co-operate in His work of liberation. Thus, little by little, Christ becomes the Lord of our lives, making it possible for us to bear fruit, fruit that will last³.

¹ Phil 3, 13-14

³ Jn 15, 16

² Gal 5, 16 and 25; 2 Cor 12, 9

**Poverty
in Practice**

167 Experience teaches us that the vitality of a religious family is closely linked to the way in which it practises gospel poverty.

Aware of our natural tendency towards comfort and wealth, we take care to safeguard simplicity

in our personal and community life-style and in our apostolic work¹. Our preference is directed towards the poor, with whom we share our lives and our work.

In this way, we comply with the Founder's recommendation: "Remain true to the spirit of poverty and detachment."²

¹ V 234

² TE 8

*Discerning
the Calls*

168 Fidelity to our mission requires us to be constantly alert to the signs of the times, to the calls of the Church, and to the needs of youth¹. Such alertness makes it easier for us to adapt structures and to take courageous, even unprecedented decisions.

The choice of our apostolic options² is made in community discernment and with the mediation of Superiors.

¹ GS 4, 1

² PC 20

*Living the
Constitutions*

169 As Marist Brothers, we look upon our Constitutions as the Gospel interpreted for us and as a sure guide¹ in accomplishing God's will. They are a matter of obligation since, by our religious profession, we have pledged ourselves to live them². We read them frequently in a spirit of prayer, and we live by them with a deep inner freedom, docile to the Lord.

Approved by the Holy See, which is their authentic interpreter, the Constitutions cannot be changed without its authorisation, and only after a two-thirds majority vote of the General Chapter.³

The Statutes may be changed by an absolute ma-

jority vote of the Chapter Assembly, with the exception of those which express the obligations of Canon Law ⁴.

¹ L 89

³ c 587, 2

² c 598

⁴ c 587, 4

169.1 *At least once a year we read the Constitutions in their entirety. If possible, this is done in community, in the manner which the community decides.*

*The Vow
of Stability*

170 When we arrive at an age when we see more clearly the harmony between our personal vocation and our belonging to the religious family that has nourished us with its life, we may ask, when the Holy Spirit so moves us, to make the vow of stability. This step expresses our longing to reproduce in our own lives the fidelity that God shows towards us, and to express our gratitude to the Virgin Mary and to the Institute. We also wish to re-affirm, in the presence of our Brothers, our desire to live the Marist ideal with generosity.

By this vow, we commit ourselves to mark our fidelity to the Lord by an even closer attachment to Him, and to do all that we can to make our communities more fraternal, more fervent, more favourable to the spiritual growth of our Brothers and to the awakening of vocations. We also commit ourselves to do all that we can to lead the Institute to follow the direction of the Founder's charism. In addition, we undertake to persevere, even in circumstances of greatest difficulty for ourselves and our religious family¹.

¹ CR 123-125

170.1 *We may take the vow of stability after ten years of perpetual profession. We ask permission of the Brother Provincial, who informs the Brother Superior General so that he may confirm it.*
(cf 150.1.1)

170.2 *The Superiors encourage the Brothers to ask permission to make the vow of stability. At times they may invite them to do so.*

170.3 *The vow of stability is made during a Eucharist attended by all the community. Before receiving Holy Communion, the Brother pronounces the following formula, or one like it:*

“Lord Jesus, I adore you here present in the Eucharist. I wish to mark my perseverance by an ever-deepening attachment to the Father; to work to create communities that encourage the spiritual growth of my Brothers and serve to awaken vocations; to make your Mother known and loved; to uphold the aim and spirit of my religious family, according to its Constitutions. In this spirit, I MAKE THE VOW OF STABILITY IN THE INSTITUTE OF THE LITTLE BROTHERS OF MARY (or THE MARIST BROTHERS OF THE SCHOOLS). Lord Jesus, by your Body and Blood, which I am about to receive, be pleased to accept the vow I have just made.”

*Workers for
the Kingdom*

171 The vitality of the Institute is measured by the quality of our response to God.

In making present today the charism of Marcellin Champagnat, we keep alive the dynamism of our vocation. Our life becomes, for all those to whom we are sent, and especially for the young, an invitation to live the Gospel in the manner of Mary.

Our Founder can then recognise, in each of his sons, one who works for the Kingdom, one who is chosen by the Father and inspired by the Spirit to “make Jesus Christ known and loved.”¹

¹ *Life* 353

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Explanatory Note I on the proper law of the Institute (cf 119) *In the Institute, the legislative bodies are the General Chapter and the Provincial Chapter. They establish the law, either directly or through a major Superior. The proper law is made up of the Constitutions approved by the Holy See, and the Statutes, Norms, and Rules of Procedure approved by the authorities of the Institute.*

Explanatory Note II on the Superior and his Council (cf 124) *It is always the Superior who performs the juridical act. He can do this in several ways:*

- 1 - He can act alone, if the act lies within the limits of his own powers.*
- 2 - If the Law requires the advice of his Council, the Superior must seek this advice. Although he is not obliged to follow such advice, nevertheless, except for serious reasons, he must not act against advice unanimously agreed on by his Council.
Except when important matters are treated, he does not need to convoke the Council, but he must consult every member.*
- 3 - When the Law requires that the Superior needs the consent of his Council, he must convoke it. When the question has been examined, the Council's decision is normally taken by an absolute majority of the votes of the Councillors present.
The Superior does not vote, since it is understood that he is asking for the Council's consent.*

4 - *When the Law prescribes that the Superior act collegially with his Council, he must convoke it. The act is collegial when the Superior and the Councillors act together with equal right. The decision is taken by an absolute majority of the votes of those present. In matters other than elections, if, after two ballots, the votes remain equally divided, the Superior, as president of the college, can break the tie with a casting vote. (c 113-128; c 617-631)*

**SPIRITUAL TESTAMENT OF
JOSEPH BENEDICT MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT**

**priest, superior and
founder of the Little Brothers of Mary**

*Deceased at Notre Dame de L'Hermitage,
Saturday, 6th June, 1840*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Here, in the presence of God, with the Blessed Virgin and St Joseph as heavenly witnesses, desirous of recording for all the Brothers of Mary, the last and dearest wishes of my heart, I summon all my strength to make my Spiritual Testament, in terms of what I believe most in accordance with the will of God, and most conducive to the good of the Society.

In the first place, I humbly beseech all those whom I may have offended or disedified in any way, albeit I am not conscious of any wilful offence on my part towards anybody, graciously to grant me pardon, pressed by the boundless charity of Christ, and to add their prayers to mine, as king of God in his goodness to overlook the sins of my past life, and admit my soul to the embrace of his all-loving mercy. I die with sentiments of grateful and respectful submission to the Superior General of the Society of Mary, and in the closest bonds of union with all its members, especially the Brothers, who in the designs of Providence were to come under my care, and who have always had a special claim on my affection.

I desire that absolute and perfect obedience should always prevail among the Brothers of Mary: that those under authority see in their Superiors the representatives of Jesus Christ, and render them willing and implicit obedience, being ever ready to sacrifice at need their own will and judgment. Let them remember that *the obedient religious will speak of victories*, and that it is mainly obedience that forms the base and buttress of a community. With hearts thus disposed, the Little Brothers of Mary will submit blindly to the guidance, not only of the Major Superiors, but also to all those whose duty it is to lead

and direct them. They will let this truth of faith sink deep into their minds, that the Superior takes the place of Jesus Christ, and that when he commands, he should be obeyed as if it were Christ himself commanding.

Also, dear Brothers, I beg of you with all the love of my heart, and by all the love you bear me, keep ever alive among you the charity of Christ. Love one another as Jesus Christ has loved you. Be of one heart and one mind. Have the world say of the Little Brothers of Mary, what they said of the first Christians: '*See how they love one another!*' That is the desire of my heart and my burning wish, at this last moment of my life. Yes, my dearest Brothers, hear these last words of your Father, which are those of our Blessed Saviour: '*Love one another!*'

It is my wish also, dear Brothers, that the same charity that must bind you to one another as members of a single body, should embrace all the other congregations. Oh, I implore you by the boundless love of Jesus Christ, cast out of your hearts all envy of everyone, and especially of those whom God calls like yourselves to the religious state, to labour for the education of youth. Be the first to rejoice at their success and grieve at their misfortunes. Commend them often in your prayers to God and to Mary, the Mother of God. Give way to them readily. Turn away from any talk that would seek to discredit them. Let the glory of God alone and the honor of Mary be your one aim and total ambition.

Just as your wills are to be united with those of the Fathers of the Society of Mary, in the will of one and the same Superior, I desire that your hearts and feelings mingle with theirs, in Jesus and Mary. Let their interests be yours; let it be a pleasure for you to spring to their help, as often as required. May the

same spirit and the same love unite you to them as branches to the same trunk and as children of one family to a good Mother, blessed Mary. The Superior of the Fathers, being responsible for the branch of the Brothers, must be the centre of unity for both. I had nothing but praise for the submission and obedience accorded me at all times by the Brothers of Mary, and my wish and expectation is that the Superior General experience the same. His spirit is mine; his will is mine. I regard this perfect harmony and entire submission as the foundation and support of the Brothers of Mary.

I ask also of God, and I desire with all my soul, that you be constantly faithful to the devout practice of the presence of God, which is the soul of prayer, of meditation, and of all the virtues; that humility and simplicity may ever be the distinguishing mark of the Little Brothers of Mary; that a tender and filial love for our good Mother never fail you in all the changes of time and circumstance. Proclaim her love in every place, as far as lies in your power. She is the first Superior of the whole Society.

With devotion to Mary couple devotion to her noble spouse, glorious St Joseph. He is, as you know, one of our leading patrons. You act as guardian angels of the children entrusted to your care, so, to these pure spirits also, pay a special homage of love, respect and confidence.

Dear Brothers, love your vocation, be faithful and steadfast to the end, with manly courage. Remain true to the spirit of poverty and detachment, and let the daily observance of your holy Rule preserve you from ever violating the sacred vow by which you are bound to the fairest of all the virtues, and the frailest. There are difficulties in leading the life of a good religious, but grace sweetens all their bitterness. Jesus and Mary

will come to your aid, and besides, life is soon over and eternity never ends. Oh, what consolation we have, when about to appear before God, to remember that we have lived in the favour of Mary, and in her own Society. May it please that good Mother to preserve you, give you increase and bring you to holiness.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the imparting of the Holy Spirit be with you always. I leave you trustfully within the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, until we all meet again in eternal bliss.

This is my full and final will for the glory of Jesus and Mary.

The present Spiritual Testament shall be delivered into the hands of Father Colin, Superior General of the Society of Mary.

Declared at
Notre-Dame de l'Hermitage,
the eighteenth of May,
eighteen hundred and forty.

Joseph Benedict Marcellin Champagnat,
“Priest of the Society of Mary
and Superior of the Brothers”.

Br. François
Br. Louis

Br. Louis-Marie
Br. Stanislas

Br. Jean-Marie
Br. Bonaventure

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