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RULE OF LIFE

Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament

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**SACRA CONGREGATIO
PRO RELIGIOSIS
ET INSTITUTIS SAECULARIBUS**

Prot. n. P.14 - 1/81

DECREE

The Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, whose general house is in Rome, has inherited from its Founder, Saint Peter Julian Eymard, a new form of consecrated life within the Church. Its mission is to place at the centre of its life and the life of the faithful, the Eucharist celebrated in the truth and internalized in a prayer of adoration and contemplation.

In conformity with the decrees of Vatican Council II and other ecclesiastical documents, the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament drew up a new text of Constitutions (Rule of Life) which the Superior General, subsequent to the vote of the Chapter, presented to the Holy See for approbation.

The Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, after having submitted the text to the study of the Consulters and taking into account the favorable vote of the Congress, approves and confirms the text, with the modifications requested by the same Congress, as contained in the French language copy kept in its archives, on condition that all the requirements of law be observed

This Congregation expresses the wish that, drawing upon their rich spiritual heritage and faithful to this Rule of Life, the Religious of the Blessed Sacrament will be authentic witnesses to the renewing power of the Eucharist for Church and society.

Given at Rome, August 1, 1984, on the feast of Saint Peter Julian Eymard.

+ V. FAGIOLO
Secr.

+ Fr. J. HAMER, O.P.
Pro-Préf.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Can.	Codes Iuris Canonici (1983)
Const.	Constitutiones Congregationis Sanctissimi Sacramenti (1962)
EM	Instruction "Eucharisticum Mysterium" (May 25, 1967)
ET	Apostolic Exhortation "Evangelica Testificatio" (June 29, 1971)
LG	Conciliar Constitution "Lumen Gentium" (November 21, 1964)
PC	Conciliar Decree "Perfectae Caritatis" (October 28, 1965)
RR	Roman Ritual: "De sacra communione et de cultu mysterii eucharistici extra Missam" (June 21, 1973)
SC	Conciliar Constitution "Sacrosanctum Concilium" (December 4, 1963)
S.2	General Archives, Series S., vol. 2, p. 244

PREFACE

The Rule of Life and Vatican II

The Second Vatican Council promoted the renewal of religious life and asked the religious Institutes to revise their Constitutions (cf. PC 2 & 3).

In response, the Renewal Chapter of 1969/1971 drew up the *Rule of Life*. After being tested within the Institute, then revised, amended and unanimously accepted by the 1981 General Chapter, it was submitted to the Holy See for approbation.

After some required modifications, it was approved by the Holy See on August 1, 1984, the feast of Saint Peter Julian Eymard.

From that date the *Rule of Life* replaces the Constitutions of our Congregation, interpreting for our times the fundamental inspiration of St. Peter Julian Eymard. The *General Statutes* which accompany it are drawn up and approved by General Chapters as the concrete application of the Rule.

The Rule of Life and the Constitutions

Our Founder left several drafts of the Constitutions, searching until his death for a better formulation of his charism. The 1864 edition of the Constitutions contains Father Eymard's attempt to codify the life of the Institute after the decree of approbation was given on June 3, 1863.

After his death in 1868, several changes were made to the Constitutions until they were definitively approved by the Holy See on May 8, 1895. Later on, further minor modifications were made at the request of the Church.

These texts, especially those composed by the Founder and approved by the Holy See, have a special place in the patrimony of the Congregation. Meditated and lived by generations of religious, they represent a spiritual tradition in the life of the Church. They therefore remain an important reference point for us and an abiding source of inspiration.

In accordance with the norms of Vatican II, the *Rule of Life* takes up this living tradition and reinterprets it in new texts. Rooted in the past, it is an authentic expression of our charism. It thus assures stability to our Institute, while remaining open to the future.

RULE OF LIFE

I.

CAPTIVATED BY THE LOVE OF GOD

1. The name of the Congregation

Gathered in the name of the Lord
we are called to live
in the Church as brothers.
Under the inspiration of our Founder,
Saint Peter Julian Eymard,
we form
the *Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament*,
a clerical religious Institute
of pontifical right,
composed of priests, deacons and brothers.
Our ideal is to live
the mystery of the Eucharist fully
and to make known its meaning,
so that Christ's reign may come
and the glory of God be revealed
to the world.

2. The Founder

Challenged by the religious ignorance
and indifference of his time,
Saint Peter Julian Eymard searched
for an answer to its needs.
He found it in the love of God
manifested in a special way
in the gift of Christ in his Eucharist.
Captivated by this love
he made it known to his contemporaries.

Cf Phil 3,12

For this purpose he traced out
for his companions
a new form of life in the Church,
to provide for Christ the Lord,
present in the Eucharist,
true and perpetual adorers
and zealous promoters of his love.

Cf. Const. 2

Convinced that a life cannot be fully eucharistic
unless it is consecrated
to both God and our fellow human beings,
he left us an example of contemplation
and apostolic activity.

His intense life of adoration,
 his apostolate centered on Mass and Communion,
 his efforts to lead people to adoration of the Lord
 in the setting of solemn exposition,
 his activity in the service of all,
 with a preference for priests and the poor,
 indeed his whole life
 witnesses to the gift of himself to Christ.

3. Our mission

Following in the footsteps of Father Eymard,
 our mission is to respond to the hungers of the human family
 with the riches of God's love,
 manifested in the Eucharist.

Drawing life from the bread
 given for life of the world, Cf. Jn 6,51
 we proclaim in the thanksgiving prayer
 the Passover of Christ,
 and we welcome the Lord Jesus
 in his eucharistic presence Cf. Jn 1,12
 by a prolonged prayer of adoration and contemplation.

Formed by the Sacrament
 of the New Covenant,
 which frees us from the domination of sin,
 we commit ourselves to building up
 the Body of Christ. Cf. Eph 4,12

By our life and activities
 we share in the mission of the Church,
 so that the Eucharist
 may be celebrated in truth,
 that the faithful may grow
 in their communion with the Lord
 through eucharistic adoration
 in the setting of exposition,
 that they may commit themselves
 to the renewal of their christian communities
 and collaborate in liberating
 individuals and society
 from the forces of evil.

United in the Spirit
 with those who are poor and weak,
 we oppose everything which degrades human dignity
 and we proclaim a more just and brotherly world
 as we await the coming of the Lord.

4. The spirit of the Congregation

We cannot live the Eucharist
 unless we are animated by the spirit
 which led Christ
 to give his life for the world. Cf. Const. 3

When he proclaimed the New Covenant
 by the gift of his Body and Blood
 to his disciples,
 it was out of love
 that the Lord gave himself up. Cf. Jn 10,17; 1 Jn. 3,16

Sharing in this gift of himself to us,
 we place ourselves
 at the service of the Kingdom,
 fulfilling the words of the Apostle:
 “It is no longer I who live,
 but Christ who lives in me.” Cf. Eph 5,2

Cf. Gal 2,20

5. A religious community

The love of God and our vocation
 gather us, at the heart of the Church,
 into living communities,
 where all truly love one another.

Open to the summons of the Spirit
 and attentive to the needs of the human family,
 our communities become places of prayer,
 reconciliation and festive celebration,
 signs and leaven of the unity
 which the world seeks.

To realize this ideal
 we make profession of religious life
 according to this *Rule of Life*.

II.

THE CALL OF THE GOSPEL

6. A path traced out for our communities

The Word of God calls us
 and gathers us together;
 it accompanies us
 as a lamp for our steps. Cf. Ps 119,105

The *Rule of Life* traces out for us
 a particular way
 of living the Gospel in the Church.
 It unites us in a single project
 of life and mission.

7. A paschal community

Following the example of the disciples,
 who were of one heart and one mind,
 we put all our resources in common.
 Our availability
 and our concern for sharing and fellowship
 manifest the presence of the Risen Lord.
 We become witnesses of Christ
 by making ourselves servants
 of our brothers.
 The Lord calls us
 to live his Passover day by day in this way.

Cf. Acts 4,32

Cf. Jn 13,12-17

8. Unity and diversity

A community is made up of persons
 who differ in their capabilities,
 duties and circumstances.
 This diversity manifests the wealth
 of the gifts of the one Spirit.
 Christ breaks down all barriers
 and creates a unity
 in which each one is called to live
 as a brother among brothers.
 Each religious,
 whether young or old, sick or healthy,
 is fully a member of his community.

Cf. 1 Cor 12,4

Cf. Eph 2,14

9. Community and conversion

A religious community is called
 to renew itself continually
 through its trials and weaknesses,
 in the light of the Word of God
 and in a climate of listening to one another.
 The Spirit of God enables the community
 to discern in the circumstances of life
 whatever contributes to its renewal.
 A review of life fosters better understanding.
 Forgiveness transforms circumstances of sin
 into occasions of grace.
 Each one shall approach
 the sacrament of reconciliation frequently,
 and the community shall celebrate,
 from time to time, a penitential liturgy.
 In this way the community allows each one
 room to develop in a sharing of faith,
 friendship and life.

10. Community and mission

A community does not exist for its own sake,
but aims at being a setting for seeking God
in order to reveal his love to people.
It shares the life of the human family
and seeks to live the Gospel
in all its dimensions.
Its project gives concrete expression
to its role in the mission of the Church
and determines its way of life.

In each house,
the community reserves for itself
areas of silence, prayer and study.
We willingly welcome guests
in areas set aside for this purpose.

Concerned about the need
for objective information
regarding events of human life,
we make discerning and prudent use
of the communication media.
As regards attire,
we dress according to the norms
of the Church's common law for clerics.

11. Community meetings

The vitality of a community
depends to a large extent on its meetings
at which the brothers regularly share
their joys and problems.

Days of recollection and annual retreats
provide special occasions of renewal
for all the religious.

At our gatherings
we take stock of the community project
and evaluate our participation
in its realization.

12. Infirm or elderly religious

When one of our brothers is ill
the community shall unite itself with him
in his sufferings
and keep him company in his trial.
If he is hospitalized
we will visit him every day, if possible.

The superior shall make sure
 that our infirm or elderly religious
 are provided with all the care they need
 and that, depending on their condition,
 they receive the sacrament of the anointing of the sick,
 in the joy of the Lord
 and surrounded by their brothers.

13. Death, a paschal event

Comforted by the prayer of the community
 and by the Eucharist received as viaticum,
 our brothers will then be ready
 to die in the Lord.

The death of a brother
 shall be celebrated as a paschal event,
 in a prayer filled with hope.
 We will faithfully carry out
 the prescribed suffrages for our deceased.

14. With Mary

Mary, mother of Jesus,
 voice of the poor and the lowly, Cf. Lk 1,46-55
 welcomed the Word of God into her heart
 and put it into practice. Cf. Lk 8,21
 She shared her life and prayer
 with the disciples Cf. Acts 1,14: 2,42
 actively working with them
 for the coming of the Kingdom.

We will honor Mary
 as the poor one of Yahweh
 and the Servant of the Lord, Cf. Lk 1,38
 with a love like that of our Founder
 who also invoked her under the title of
 Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament.
 We will love to meditate
 the mysteries of the Rosary.

III.

A RADICAL RESPONSE

15. Religious profession

By our profession of religious life
 we respond to the call of the Lord
 who invites us to leave all things
 to follow him,
 and we publicly commit ourselves
 within the Church
 to live in chastity, poverty and obedience.

Religious profession incorporates us
into a community of brothers
and expresses our determination
to live the Gospel in a radical way.

Nourished by Christ,
who gives himself to us totally
in the Eucharist,
we express, in our form of life,
the gift of ourselves
as it was lived and taught
by our holy Founder.

Const. 94

Our vows express our consecration to God
in the service of our fellow human beings,
and witness to a world yet to come
in the spirit of the Beatitudes.

16. Chastity

During his life Jesus remained totally free
to devote himself to the Kingdom.

Following in his steps, we vow ourselves
to perfect chastity in the celibate state.

Undertaken in a spirit of interior poverty
and prayer, in self-mastery
and an openness to the realities of human life,
it disposes us
for the experience of a universal love.

Trusting in him who is faithful
and with hearts that are free,
we attach ourselves to Christ and his mission
and we become witnesses to his power
to free human relationships
from individual and collective selfishness.

Cf. 1 Cor 10,13

Community life is an invaluable support
for living this gift of the Spirit in joy.

17. Poverty

Like Jesus,
we wish to live a life of poverty.
We work to earn our keep
and to share what we have with our brothers.
By putting all our resources in common
we free ourselves
from all attachment to riches
so that we may depend entirely upon God.

Our life is marked by simplicity and moderation.
As a sign of unity,
our communities shall assist one another
by sharing their resources.

Our personal and collective poverty,
 our solidarity with the poor,
 and our refusal to compromise
 with any form of social injustice
 express in this consumer-oriented society
 our attachment to the Kingdom of God
 and his justice.

Cf. ET 18

Cf. Mt 6,33

18.

By the vow of poverty, we give up the right
 to use and dispose of material goods
 without the authorization of our superiors.
 Whatever we receive as remunerations,
 pensions, insurance and gifts
 belong to the Institute.

Each religious retains the ownership
 of whatever goods he has inherited
 and the right to further inheritance.
 Before his first profession,
 the novice relinquishes the administration
 of his patrimony to whomsoever he chooses
 and freely disposes of its use and income.

Before perpetual profession,
 each religious makes a will
 which is to be valid also under civil law.
 He may not change its provisions
 without the authorization
 of the major superior.

19. Obedience

After the example of Christ
 who, out of love, completely fulfilled
 his Father's will
 even to the giving his life,
 we profess obedience,
 in order to serve our brothers better
 and share in the mission of the Congregation.

By the vow of obedience we commit ourselves,
 in docility to the Holy Spirit,
 to obey our legitimate superiors
 according to the *Rule of Life*
 as well as the Sovereign Pontiff,
 our highest superior.

20.

Choosing to live in community

Where, with our brothers, we search
for the will of God,
and attentive to the signs of the times
and the pressing demands of the Kingdom,
we take an active part
in drawing up and implementing
a community project,
which is to be approved
by the major superior.

We freely make our own

the options chosen in common
and the decisions taken by the superior
in the context of dialogue.

When lived in trust, faith and self-denial,

authority and obedience
complement each other
and foster true brotherhood.

In this way

we denounce the thirst for power
and the rule of might
and we announce to the world
the message of Jesus
who took among his own
the place of the One who serves.

Cf. Lk 22,27

IV.**“IN MEMORY OF ME”****21.**

Called to live as a eucharistic community,
we seek, by our vocation and way of life,
to give a more explicit witness
to the life of Christ
which springs from this sacrament.

The celebration of the Memorial of the Lord
is at the center

of our personal and communal life.

It is the starting point

for our understanding of the Eucharist
and inspires our prayer and ministry.

1. AROUND THE TABLE OF THE WORD AND THE BREAD

22. The Word of God

The community's faith
is nourished daily and its unity deepened
at the table of the Word of God.
The celebration of the Word in the liturgy
provides a special opportunity
for those who seek the Lord.
This Word,
which the Spirit causes to resonate
in our innermost being,
challenges us in ever new ways.
When shared fraternally,
and according to our capacity to receive it,
the Word enlightens us
and incorporates us into the mystery of Christ.

23. The liturgy of the Hours

The liturgy of the Hours,
the prayer of praise of the entire Church,
and particularly the Morning and Evening Prayer,
is an important moment
in the life of our communities.
Its celebration, by nature communitarian,
is the voice of the Church praying to Christ
and, through him, to the Father.

24. The celebration and salvation history

The celebration of the Eucharist
joyfully proclaims the marvels
God has accomplished in our history.
Daily, and in community if possible,
we give thanks for the New Covenant
which God has sealed once for all
in the blood of his Son,
and which he renews in his ever faithful love.
Fraternal life is thus sustained
and the community constantly renewed.

Cf. Heb 9,15

25. The work of salvation

Each time we celebrate
 the Memorial of Christ's Passover
 we enter into the work of salvation.
 Through sharing in his Body and Blood
 we are progressively wrenched
 from the forces of evil.
 The Lord reveals to us the presence of sin
 in our selfishness,
 in our apathy or complicity in injustice,
 while drawing us towards a new life.
 In this same movement,
 we offer to the Father our own lives
 along with the hopes and sufferings
 of all those with whom we are working
 to build a society based on justice and love.

26. Eschatological dimension

Thus the Spirit of the Risen Lord
 exerts an ever increasing influence
 over all who welcome him.
 By sowing in our mortal flesh
 the seeds of resurrection Cf. 1 Cor 15, 42
 he transforms us day by day in love.
 Our trials and afflictions
 are taken up
 into the mystery we celebrate
 and death is our definitive participation in it.
 Filled with hope,
 we journey on towards that new world Cf. Rv 21,1
 where God will be all in all. Cf. 1 Cor 15,28

27. Celebration and life

To celebrate the "Supper of the Lord" in truth Cf. 1 Cor 11,20
 is to place ourselves
 at the service of others,
 as the Lord Jesus showed
 by washing the feet of his disciples. Cf. Jn 13,1-17
 In this way we become, by our whole life,
 the adorers in spirit and in truth Cf. Jn 4,23
 whom the Father seeks.

2. IN A PROFOUND ATMOSPHERE OF PRAYER

28. Celebration and prayer

Jesus spent his whole life,
 and especially the mystery of his Passover,
 in a profound atmosphere of prayer.
 As his life drew to a close,
 he left us the Memorial
 of the gift of himself to his Father
 and to the human family.
 Risen from the dead, he sent us his Spirit *Cf. Acts 3,15; 2,4*
 that we might live our mission
 in that same spirit of love.
 We internalize the celebration of his Passover
 by a prayer
 that makes our whole life
 a prolongation of our Eucharists.

29. Response to the presence

The bread and wine become Eucharist
 ceaselessly remind us of the Supper of the Lord,
 the thanksgiving of the Church
 and the sacrifice of praise
 of the whole world.
 They reveal to us in a unique way
 the presence of Christ
 who pours out his life in us
 by the gift of his Spirit. *Cf. EM 50; cf. RR 80*
 For this reason,
 faithful to the tradition received from our Founder,
 we spend at least one hour each day
 in prayer before the Eucharist.
 This prayer forms part
 of the mission of the Congregation *Cf. Const. 2*
 and has priority in the life of each religious. *Cf. RR 90*

30. In the dynamism of the Eucharist

Our response to this presence of Christ
 is to enter into the dynamism of the Eucharist
 with a prayer of adoration,
 of praise and thanksgiving,
 of reconciliation and intercession,
 as Church and for the world. *Cf. Const. 15*
 Though our prayer finds its inspiration
 in the celebration,
 it is not limited to any one form.

We will help one another
to develop this precious gift
“which the Holy Spirit inspires and fosters
in a humble and upright heart.”

Const. 17

31. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

By drawing our attention
to the signs of the Sacrament,
exposition of the Holy Eucharist
calls to mind the celebration
of the Memorial of the Lord.

It invites us
to recognize and adore the presence of Christ
in the gift of his body given up for us
and of his blood
poured out for a New Covenant.

Thus exposition
facilitates our communion with Christ
who offers himself to us
as the Bread of Life
nourishment shared
for a community of brothers.

Cf. EM 60; RR 82

We practice and encourage it,
mindful of the pastoral needs
of the local Church.

32. Participation of the people

We associate the people with our prayer
so that their lives may be enlightened
and penetrated by the paschal mystery.

We are attentive in promoting communal prayer;
it manifests the unity of the Church,
fruit of the Eucharist.

According to pastoral possibilities,
we encourage nocturnal prayer
in a spirit of watching and waiting
for the Lord.

3. AS CHURCH AT THE SERVICE OF THE WORLD

33. Inspired by our holy Founder

Saint Peter Julian Eymard
saw the Eucharist
as a powerful force of renewal
for Church and society.

His life and his mission as Founder
 awaken in us an echo
 of his ardent faith and love.
 His ability to translate
 his eucharistic grace
 into very diverse ministries
 stimulates us to be creative
 in our own mission.

34. The Eucharist, source of our mission

We seek to understand all human reality
 in the light of the Eucharist,
 source and summit of the life of the Church. Cf. SC 10

We discern in this sacrament
 a call to share
 in the life and mission of the Lord,
 and we give priority to activities
 that manifest the riches and demands
 of the Eucharistic mystery
 in all its dimensions.
 (cf. *General Statutes* 34.02)

Consequently, as Church,
 we combine “prayer and work
 in order that the entire world
 may be totally transformed
 into the people of God,
 the Body of the Lord
 and the temple of the Holy Spirit.” LG 17

35. In union with the Church

While our mission extends to the whole Church
 it is carried out
 within the pastoral program
 of a diocese or region.
 We work in close union
 with bishops, priests and laity,
 eager to offer our own particular contribution
 of spiritual life
 and apostolic initiative.

36. Prophetic mission

Like the mustard seed
 which never ceases to grow,
 the Church progresses
 in her understanding of the realities and words
 that have been given to her.

Likewise, we ourselves ought to deepen
our understanding of the Eucharist
and promote a fruitful celebration
of this mystery
with whatever demands it makes on us.

Cf. Can. 898

We wholeheartedly desire to hand on
the Tradition and teaching of the Church
on this sacrament.
We seek to further the progress
of eucharistic theology and practice.

37. Mission of social involvement

Attentive to the cry of the poor
and their distress,
we discover in every instance of injustice
a call of Christ to share in his mission
of announcing good news to the poor
and proclaiming liberty to captives.

Cf. Lk 4,18

Every community that celebrates the Eucharist
is called, through a radical conversion,
to challenge sin and its structures
and proclaim the hope of a new world.

In solidarity with those
who are working for genuine human advancement,
we are alert
to the social implications of our actions.

The most telling message of our communities
is the witness of their lives.

38. Mission of unity

Our celebration of the Eucharist,
sign of the Covenant
between God and the human race,
remains, in a sense, incomplete
as long as we who are baptized
are divided by hate
or separated from one another.

The celebration leads us
to promote unity in all our activities:
within our Christian communities,
among all confessions
that share the same baptism
and among all those
who are working to unify the world.

39. At the service of the Word

The disciples of Emmaus
 met Jesus along the road
 and after he had explained to them,
 in the light of the Scriptures,
 the meaning of their experiences,
 they recognized him
 in the breaking of the bread.

Cf. Lk 24,13-15

In the same way, we journey with those
 who are in search of meaning in their lives,
 and we help them recognize Christ,
 the living Word,
 so that, having been baptized and confirmed
 in the faith,
 they may become fully integrated
 into the Christian community
 through the Eucharist.

We give very much importance
 to the ministry of the Word:
 in the proclamation of the Gospel,
 in catechesis,
 and in the preaching of retreats.

40. Liturgy

Liturgical research and apostolate
 are of particular concern to us.
 We devote ourselves
 to liturgical animation and formation
 using every available resource,
 and, in line with the directives of the Church,
 we look for expressions
 better suited to the needs of the faithful
 so that every celebration may become
 an experience of faith
 and a source of commitment.

41. At the service of parishes and communities

We will make our parishes
 into authentic communities
 shaped by the Eucharist,
 source and centre of their life.

They shall be:
 places of proclamation
 and the living of the Gospel,
 places of prayer,
 eucharistic adoration and festive celebration,
 places of sharing and fellowship,
 places of freedom and human development.

United among themselves,
our religious engaged in parish ministry
shall collaborate in a special way
with committed lay people.
Under the action of the Spirit,
who ceaselessly renews
the life of the Church,
groups and communities are born,
grow and take on responsibilities.
We play our part
in their emergence and development.

42. Centers of prayer and retreat

Our communities are called
to become centers of prayer
which offer assistance to all
on their pilgrim way.
This ministry is particularly suited
to retreat houses and city-center churches.
These churches,
where the Blessed Sacrament is exposed,
are oases of silence and peace
in the heart of the city
and offer places of welcome and meeting,
prayer and adoration,
spiritual guidance
and sacramental reconciliation.
Attentive to the modern mentality,
we want to respond
to the expectations of our contemporaries
with appropriate catechesis,
an initiation into prayer,
and an awakening to their responsibilities.

43. Sharing our ideal

Following in the steps of Father Eymard,
we invite all those
whom the Spirit directs to the Eucharist,
both priests and lay people,
to become associated with our family
and share in its mission.
We offer them our continuing support
so that they may find in the Eucharist
the inspiration
for their whole life and commitments.

44. At the service of priests

We recognize the importance
of the mission of priests.
We seek to share with them
a life of faith, prayer and friendship
and exchange pastoral plans and experiences.

We place ourselves at their service
by offering hospitality, animation
and formation,
encouraged in this
by the example of Father Eymard
who used to say,
“I would leave everything for priests.”

S.2

45. The press and other means of social communication

The means of social communication
are bringing about a profound transformation
in our modern world
and can be powerful agents
for unification.

For the publication of any writing
dealing with religion and morality,
the permission of the provincial superior
is required.

Aware of the influence of these means,
we make use of them, particularly the press,
so that the entire Church may become
bread broken for a new world.

V.**A LIFE-LONG NEED: FORMATION****46.**

It is in the Christian life that the continuing growth of the human person attains its true dimensions.

Faith, which considers human realities in the light of the Word of God, leads us to a personal knowledge of Christ and to a life of ever deeper union with him and with one another. Formation is a life-long process and involves each and every one of us.

47. Vocation apostolate

It is the Lord who calls laborers to his harvest.

In our prayer and in all our pastoral activities we will be concerned to arouse the faithful, especially the youth, to take up their personal responsibility of service to the Gospel in the Church.

We work in coordination with the diocese to foster vocations to ministries and to religious life.

Always respecting the ways of God in individual lives, we should know how to discern the promptings of the Spirit and to welcome those who wish to share our way of life.

1. INITIAL FORMATION

48.

Initial formation is effected in three stages: the pre-novitiate, which emphasizes the personal discovery of Christ; the novitiate, which focuses on vocation, on initiation into religious life, especially as it is lived in our Congregation; the scholasticate, which aims at integrating three elements - religious life, studies and apostolic experience - into a unified whole.

49. Admission

In order to admit a candidate to any one of the three stages and to Orders:

1. It shall be carefully verified whether he possesses the necessary human and spiritual qualities and whatever is required in accord with common law and the particular law of the Institute.
2. The competent authority is the major superior in accord with common law and the particular law of the Institute.

50. Directors of formation

1. For each stage there shall be a director of formation and a team of assistants. The master of novices and the director of scholastics, who must be perpetually professed members of the Institute, are appointed by the superior general with the consent of his council, in accord with the *General Statutes*.
2. The directors of initial formation shall coordinate their work, so as to achieve a coherent and progressive formation from postulancy to perpetual profession or priesthood.

51. The role of the directors

It is the task of the directors of formation to help the young religious centre their lives on the love of God, to form them for evangelical and community living based on prayer and nourished by the Eucharist, to lead them to understand the human needs of their day so that they might discern in them the call of the Spirit, to have them discover that there can be no religious life without a free and real participation in the mystery of the cross and resurrection of the Lord and to initiate them into the charism of the Founder and the life of the Institute.

The pre-novitiate

52.

Candidates for our vocation are introduced by stages into the Congregation, under the guidance of a director or a formation team. In the beginning it is best that they

live outside our communities. Later on they become postulants and share the life of one or more of our communities.

It is the province which determines the duration of the pre-novitiate.

The novitiate

53.

The novitiate is a time to break from former patterns of living and to test one's vocation under the guidance of a novice master and his formation team.

The pedagogical approach for the novitiate is inspired by and prolongs the baptismal catechesis.

In this way the novice will be able to discern the demands of the Kingdom and the needs of the Church; he will be able to open himself to the riches of the Word of God and the Eucharist and be initiated into the prayer life of the Congregation.

In an atmosphere of serious reflection, the novice will discover the historical and living traditions of the Institute, the experience of our Founder and the spirit of the *Rule of Life*.

54. Place and duration

The novitiate must be done, for validity, in the house erected with the written authorization of the superior general. It must involve, moreover, twelve months spent in the novitiate community.

As regards absences, interruptions, delays, dismissals and such like, the common law shall be followed.

55. The formation program

The formation program of the novitiate must be approved by the provincial superior and submitted to review by the superior general who may, with the consent of his council, add further specifications. Provided that the twelve months required for validity is safeguarded, one or more periods outside of the novitiate community may be added to the program, with the consent of the provincial superior. These must include activities related to the nature of the Institute. In accordance with law, the novitiate must not exceed two years.

56. Admission to profession

At the conclusion of the novitiate, if there are sure and positive signs that a candidate is called to our way of life, he shall be admitted to temporary profession. If such signs are not evident, the provincial can prolong the time of novitiate by six months. At the end of this extension, the candidate either makes profession or leaves the Institute.

Religious profession

57.

1. The profession of temporary vows is annual and is renewed each year until perpetual profession.

2. The period under vows between the novitiate and perpetual profession is a minimum of three years and a maximum of six years. Nevertheless, in particular

cases, the superior general, with the consent of his council, can prolong this period up to nine years.

3. The following are qualified to receive vows: the superior general, the provincial or regional superior, the local superior, the master of novices, the director of scholastics, or any perpetually professed religious delegated by one of these.

The scholasticate

58.

By first profession, the religious, whether brother or cleric, enters the scholasticate. This is a time to integrate spiritual values, academic or professional activities and pastoral ministry.

Throughout his development the scholastic is under the guidance of the director and a formation team. Spiritual counseling is an essential part of his preparation for a definitive commitment.

59. The formation program

Care shall be taken that all receive a formation that will properly equip them to contribute to the mission of the Congregation in the Church.

The scholastic cleric continues his formation for diaconate and priesthood according to the requirements of canon law and the program of studies of the Institute. Depending on his talents, he will learn a specialized ministry.

The scholastic brother equally prepares himself, depending on the individual and with the permission of the provincial superior, to carry out the various tasks in the service of our communities, to take on a pastoral ministry or to exercise a particular profession.

60. Admission to perpetual profession

When there is moral certitude, based on prolonged experience, that a candidate can and wants to live according to the *Rule of Life*, he shall be admitted to perpetual profession.

The scholasticate extends at least until perpetual profession. For the religious who intends to go on to permanent diaconate or priesthood, it lasts until the completion of the formation prescribed for these ministries.

2. LIFE-LONG FORMATION

61.

Life-long formation is more than ever necessary in our rapidly changing world; it allows individuals and communities to renew themselves in their vocation.

This formation is to be encouraged in our communities by appropriate means, and provinces shall ensure that it is incorporated into their overall plan. At a higher level, the general council organizes or lends its support to inter-provincial meetings for all our religious for the purpose of study or spiritual renewal. It encourages theological and other forms of research and looks for ways of promoting studies on the Founder and on the history and spirituality of the Institute.

VI.

AT THE SERVICE OF OUR BROTHERS

1. PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT

62.

The government of the Congregation is assured, at various levels, by appropriate authorities: by chapters and by superiors with their councils. When exercised in a spirit of service and collegiality, it is of help to the religious in their search for God and it assures their unity in the fulfillment of their mission.

In chapters, authority is strictly collegial. In councils, authority is exercised by superiors who make decisions in union with their council. Common and particular law determine the cases in which the council's vote is consultative, deliberative or strictly collegial.

Superiors, at all levels, have a personal authority over persons and temporal goods.

63. The role of authority

Superiors shall be attentive to God's design as manifested in events and interpreted in the light of the Gospel and according to the spirit of the Congregation. By their discernment they assist their brothers to work together for God's plan. They strengthen them in faith, especially in their times of trial. At the beginning of their mandate, the superiors make the profession of faith (Canon 833).

64. Decentralization

In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, government is carried out through a just decentralization: each religious, community and level of government has full responsibility to take the decisions that fall within each one's competence, which are seen to be necessary for the accomplishment of their tasks.

65. Co-responsibility and participation

Co-responsibility is expressed through fraternal dialogue and participation in the decision-making process as it concerns the life and involvement of the community, whether local, provincial or general. In this way each one becomes aware of his duty to work and accept responsibility within the community and in relation to superiors. Where necessary, superiors shall exercise their authority when it comes to making a final decision.

All perpetually professed religious have active and passive voice, both for elections to chapters and to any office, unless the priesthood or other conditions are also required for passive voice.

66. Communication

The decentralization of government and the diversity of local Churches necessitate reliable and regular communication between the religious themselves and at the various levels of government, so as to assure effective coordination.

To achieve this, the provinces shall set up a system of communication between local communities and the central government. At the general level, a permanent secretariat shall circulate ample information throughout the Congregation in order to promote better understanding and mutual assistance among the provinces.

2. THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT

67.

The general government is the highest bond of unity in the Congregation, whether at the level of the spirit of the Congregation or that of its mission within the universal Church.

The general chapter

68.

The general chapter, the highest authority in the Congregation, is a deliberative assembly which represents the religious of the Institute as a whole. Its purpose is to promote the unity of the Congregation, to renew it in fidelity to its mission and to formulate a project in response to the demands of the Church and the world.

69. Frequency and convocation

The ordinary general chapter shall be held every six years. It is convoked by the superior general, in accordance with the norms of the *General Statutes* and the Directory for chapters.

For grave reasons, and with the agreement of his council, the superior general can also convoke an extraordinary chapter.

70. Composition

1. The general chapter is composed of members by right and elected members.

- a. By right: the superior general; his immediate predecessor, for the first ordinary chapter after the completion of his mandate; all the general consultors, and the treasurer general, whether leaving office or newly elected; the provincial and regional superiors.
- b. Elected: one delegate (or his substitute) from each province; one delegate from each region having at least thirty members (not counting novices); one supplementary delegate from each province having more than a hundred members (not counting novices).

2. To ensure a fair representation of brothers and scholastics, of certain geographical areas or remote houses, the general council may nominate several supplementary delegates, in conformity with the *General Statutes*.

71. Competence

The general chapter is competent, at both the legislative and executive level, in all that concerns the life and mission of the Congregation. In particular, it has the responsibility, in accordance with the provisions of the *General Statutes*:

1. to evaluate the state of the Institute and provide norms and guidelines for the promotion of the religious and apostolic life in keeping with the spirit of the Founder and the needs of the Church.
2. to elect the superior general, the general consultors, and the treasurer general.
3. normally, to establish, modify, unite and suppress provinces.
4. to make modifications to the *Rule of Life*. These changes, which require a two-thirds majority of votes, are to be submitted to the Holy See for approbation. Once such approbation has been obtained, they take effect “ad experimentum” from the moment of their promulgation. However, they are not to be introduced into the *Rule of Life* until they have been approved, with the same majority of votes, by the following general chapter and after authorization to do so has been obtained from the Holy See.
5. to determine the practical application of the *Rule of Life*, the authentic interpretation of which is always reserved to the Holy See.
6. to draw up, with an absolute majority of votes, new numbers of the *General Statutes* or modify the already existing ones.
7. to deal with all questions that concern the life and mission of the Institute and that, in accordance with common law and our own particular law, fall within the competence of the general chapter. To achieve this, it can make decisions binding on all.

The general council

72.

The general council, in addition to the superior general who presides over it, is composed of at least four consultors. It is the ordinary and permanent body responsible for assisting the superior general and participates with him in the overall government of the Congregation: it is at the service of its mission within the Church. It collaborates with the various bodies of the Institute to keep it constantly in a state of renewal and adaptation. In this work of animation it is guided by the orientations and decisions of the general chapter.

73. The superior general - Election

The superior general is the highest authority in the Institute after the general chapter and is president of the general council.

1. He is elected by the general chapter for a term of six years and, at the completion of his mandate, may be re-elected once. He must be a priest, at least thirty five years of age and ten years perpetually professed.
2. The election requires an absolute majority of the votes, according to a procedure that foresees three ballots.

On the first and second ballots, the one who receives the absolute majority of the electors present will be considered elected (cf. Can. 119 §1) or, in the case of a postulation admitted by the Apostolic See, the one who has obtained two-thirds of the votes.

After two inconclusive ballots, the only candidates considered will be the two who have received the most votes on the second ballot, or if there are several, the two oldest in profession, counting from the day on which each one made first profession in the Congregation.

If, on the third ballot, the two candidates obtain an equal number of votes, the oldest in profession will be considered elected. If they should have made profession on the same day, the oldest in age will be considered elected.

3. If the office of superior general should become vacant, then the amplified general council shall elect a successor for the period still remaining. If this should be less than two years, the vicar general shall complete the term.

74. The superior general - Competence

The authority of the superior general extends, in accordance with law, to every province, region and house and to every member of the Institute.

1. He exercises his authority at the service of the Congregation's unity and its mission in the world, in conformity with the norms of the *Rule of Life*.

2. In union with his council, he animates and coordinates the life and mission of the Institute as a whole by, among other things, visits to the provinces and meetings with individual religious.

3. He is the permanent and official representative of the Congregation to the highest authorities of the Church and to international organizations, a function which he may delegate to one of his consultors.

His duties are defined more precisely in the *General Statutes*.

75. The general consultors

The general consultors are elected by the general chapter, according to the procedure set down in the *General Statutes* for chapter elections. Their term is for six years and they are eligible for re-election. They must be at least thirty years of age and five years perpetually professed. The consultors likewise exercise a role of coordination and animation within the Institute.

If a consultor is unable to complete his term, the ordinary general council shall elect his successor, after consultation with the members of the amplified general council.

76. The vicar general

The vicar general is chosen by the superior general from among the elected consultors. Besides possessing the qualities required for consultors, he must also be a priest.

He deputizes for the superior general when the latter is absent or is otherwise unable to carry out his duties; at such times he enjoys the same powers as the superior general.

77. Other general collaborators

Besides the general consultors, there are other permanent collaborators with the superior general in the government of the Institute.

1. The general procurator will be named by the general superior with the consent of his council and after consultation with his provincial superior. He handles matters of ordinary administration with the Holy See, in conformity with the directives of the general council. He may be chosen from among the consultants.

2. The treasurer general is elected by the general chapter in the same way as the general consultants. He administers the temporal goods of the Congregation under the direction of the superior general and his council, in accordance with common law and the particular law of the Institute. He may be chosen from among the consultants, but he may not be vicar general.

3 If either of the above is unable to complete his term, the ordinary general council shall elect his successor, after consultation with the members of the amplified general council.

The amplified general council

78. The amplified general council

The amplified general council is an extraordinary body of government. Its main function is to ensure a more effective collaboration between the provinces and the general government by providing precise information on the general state of the provinces and their particular problems. It is composed of the superior general and his council, the treasurer general, the provincial and regional superiors. If a provincial or regional superior is unable to attend, his vicar shall take his place. The manner of its convocation and its competence are determined by the *General Statutes*.

3. THE PROVINCE

79.

The province is an organic unity within the Congregation. It comprises a number of houses taken as a whole, where the religious carry out their mission within a given area and in cooperation with the local Church. It is equipped with the means and structures necessary for its mission, and it enjoys the autonomy that belongs to it to collaborate in building up the Body of Christ in the area where it is established. The province creates personal bonds between all its members whom it unites in the sharing of the same concerns and the realization of common objectives.

Each province lives in fellowship with the whole Congregation, especially through the intermediary of the general government.

The provincial chapter

80. Convocation

The provincial chapter is the highest authority in the province. It is held in order to study the state of the province as a whole and to update the provincial project in line with changing conditions.

The ordinary provincial chapter is convoked periodically by the provincial superior, in accordance with the norms of the *General* and *Provincial Statutes*. It is composed of members by right and elected members.

For grave reasons, the provincial superior may convoke an extraordinary provincial chapter, with the consent of his council and the approval of the superior general.

81. Composition

The provincial chapter is composed of members by right and elected members:

- a. by right: the provincial superior and the regional superiors, whether leaving office or newly elected; the provincial consultors and the provincial treasurer, whether leaving office or newly elected.

The Statutes may determine a greater number of capitulars by right.

- b. elected: delegates chosen according to the criteria determined by the province. Their number must be at least equal to that of capitulars by right.

82. Competence

The provincial chapter is competent:

1. to elect the provincial superior, from a list of three names presented by the superior general after an appropriate consultation with the province;
2. to elect the provincial consultors and the provincial treasurer, as well as the delegates to the general chapter and their substitutes, according to the procedures determined in our own laws governing chapter elections;
3. to request the general council to establish a region;
4. to draw up and revise provincial and regional statutes with the approval of the general council;
5. to deal with any problem that, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, is not reserved to the general administration.

The provincial council

83.

The ordinary provincial council, in addition to the provincial superior, who presides over it, is composed of the provincial consultors. It is the permanent body which assists the provincial superior and participates with him in the government of the province. At its own level and in liaison with the central government, it exercises a role analogous to that of the general council and enjoys corresponding rights.

84. The provincial superior

The provincial superior has authority over the whole province and is president of the provincial council. In union with the other members of the council, he exercises his authority in order to animate and coordinate the life and activity of the communities of the province.

He is elected by the provincial chapter, in accordance with the norms of the *General Statutes*. He must be a priest, at least eight years professed and thirty years of age. His mandate is for four years and is renewable once.

85. The provincial consultors

The number of provincial consultors and their mode of election are determined in the *General* and *Provincial Statutes*. They exercise their mandate as collaborators with the provincial superior, constantly attentive to their duty of coresponsibility.

They enjoy the right of consultative, deliberative and collegial vote, in accordance with common law and the particular law of the Institute.

86. The provincial vicar

The provincial vicar must be a priest and at least eight years perpetually professed. He is chosen, in accordance with the provincial statutes, from among the consultors. He deputizes for the provincial superior if the latter is absent or is unable to carry out his duties and succeeds him until the next provincial chapter if the office of provincial superior should become vacant.

87. The provincial treasurer

The provincial treasurer is elected by the provincial chapter in the same way as the provincial consultors. He may be chosen from among the elected consultors, but he may not be provincial vicar. He administers the temporal goods of the province under the direction of the provincial superior and his council, in accordance with common law and the particular law of the Institute.

The amplified provincial council

88.

The amplified provincial council, an optional governing body, assures a broader representation in the government and animation of the province.

Recourse to it is had especially when it is a question of making decisions that are normally the responsibility of the provincial chapter but which, for reasons of urgency, have to be made, as a provisional measure, before the chapter.

It is composed of the provincial superior, the provincial consultors, the provincial treasurer and several representatives of the province, particularly those in charge of various tasks and activities.

The norms to be followed in choosing the representatives of the province, as well as the further areas of competence of the amplified provincial council, are determined in the *General Statutes* and the statutes of each province.

89. Provincial commissions

The provincial chapter and the provincial council may set up commissions for research and animation. These are at the service of the government of the province.

90. Expansion of a province

New communities manifest the apostolic dynamism of a province.

Those founded outside a country constitute the nucleus of future provinces. They are to have the autonomy required for their development. The province shall encourage and assist communities that are remote or facing difficulties.

The region

91. Nature

A region comprises a number of communities to which the province has granted a certain autonomy.

When a group of communities constitutes a kind of unit, whether culturally or otherwise, but does not have sufficient personnel at its disposal to form a province, it can be set up as a region, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. While linked with its province of origin, a region tends toward becoming an autonomous province.

The right and power to set up a region and to approve its statutes belong to the general council, acting on the recommendation of a provincial chapter.

92. Powers

The region is administered and animated by a regional superior and his council.

The provincial superior, as determined by the Statutes, grants to the region, to a greater or less extent, the powers enjoyed by the province.

In exercising these powers, the regional superior remains dependent on the provincial superior and his council, especially in matters regarding admission to religious life and to sacred orders.

Inter-provincial conferences

93.

When several provinces in the same geographical area are living under similar conditions and closer collaboration is considered advisable, an inter-provincial conference comprising the provinces and regions concerned may be set up, with the consent of the superior general.

The statutes of these conferences are to be approved by the superior general and his council. They shall indicate the conference's competence, composition and manner of operating.

4. THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

94.

The local community, basic unit of the province, brings a number of religious together in order to live the Gospel according to the mission of the Congregation within a particular Church.

The needs both of the province and of the dioceses demand a healthy diversity in the type of communities. Each community, according to its particular objectives, assumes its full responsibilities and is integrated organically into the province.

Our communities live in religious houses, canonically erected by the superior general with the consent of his council. Each religious lives there, except in cases authorized in accordance with law.

The permission of the superior is required in order to preach to the religious in our churches or oratories.

95. The local superior

Each local community shall have a superior appointed by the provincial superior with the consent of his council, after an appropriate consultation with the community, in accordance with the norms set down in common law and the particular law of the Institute. He must be a priest and at least three years perpetually professed. His appointment is for a term of four years, renewable in accordance with the *General Statutes*.

The local superior exercises his authority at the service of his brothers and the community. He ensures the unity of the community by seeing that its common project is carried out with the collaboration of all. He maintains a fraternal relationship with each one, while animating the communal life of his house in such a way that it becomes a true family, united in the name of the Lord.

96. The local council

To ensure the animation and administration of the house, each local superior shall have a council. It shall be composed of the superior and his vicar, as well as one or more members of the community.

Each community shall have a treasurer, distinct if possible from the superior, to administer the temporal goods of the house and provide for the material needs of the community, under the authority of the superior.

The vicar and the treasurer are appointed by the provincial superior in accordance with the norms of the *General and Provincial Statutes*.

97. Community meetings

Regular community meetings make it possible for all to participate in the life and activity of the house. They afford the opportunity for a community, under the direction of the superior, to reach agreement on the drawing up of a common project, to implement it and to evaluate it.

This project concretizes that of the province, adapting it to particular situations. It is to be submitted to the provincial superior for approval.

5. THE ADMINISTRATION OF TEMPORAL GOODS

98. Principles

The institute, the provinces, the regions and the houses have the legal right to acquire, possess, administer and dispose of temporal goods, in conformity with common law and the particular law of the Institute.

Goods are owned in common and each one is responsible for whatever part is in his possession. They are for the service of people and of our mission.

99. Administration

The administration of temporal goods, while being a juridical act, is also an act of poverty. Administrators shall find their supreme norm on the nature of these goods, their purpose and their use in the Gospel and the *Rule of Life*. They shall observe the established laws, both ecclesiastical and civil.

Extraordinary acts of administration are subject to the authorization of the provincial or general council, depending on which is competent, and, in certain cases specified in canon law, to the approbation of the Holy See.

6. SEPARATION FROM THE INSTITUTE

100.

In cases of exlaustration, leaving, dismissal, readmission or transfer to another Institute, the norms of common law are to be observed. The major superiors who, by law, are competent in the matter, shall proceed with patience, discernment and charity as pastors caring for their brothers.

When a novice or a professed leaves the Institute, he cannot demand any compensation for work done during his stay in the Congregation. We shall give him moral support and, according to circumstances, materially help him to find his place again in life.

VII.

THE VALUE TO BE ACCORDED TO THE RULE OF LIFE

101.

This *Rule of Life* expresses the original inspiration of our Holy Founder adapted to the continual growth of the Body of Christ and attentive to the needs and challenges of the world.

The *General Statutes* express its principles more concretely and give practical applications which hold good for the entire Institute.

By accepting it as a gift from the Lord and by conforming our lives to it, as our profession commitment requires, we are strengthened in fidelity to our eucharistic mission in the Church for the world.

102. Formula of religious profession

Summoned by the love of God
manifested in Jesus Christ
and celebrated in the Eucharist,

I intend to respond to God's gift
with the gift of myself.

I wish to live the Paschal Mystery,
to internalize it in prayer
before the Blessed Sacrament,
and to share with others the life
that springs from it.

For this reason, in order to follow Christ
in the way he is calling me,
before you, Reverend Father Provincial
(or superior...)
and in the presence of my brothers,
I, ...
make to God the annual (perpetual) vows
of chastity in the celibate state,
evangelical poverty
and obedience,
according to the *Rule of Life* of the
Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament.

By the grace of the Holy Spirit,
I commit myself to seek God
with a community of brothers.
I intend to take the Gospel
as my source of inspiration
in all that I do,
and to enter into the life of the Congregation,
which welcomes me as one of its members.

Trusting in the intercession
of the Virgin Mary
and Saint Peter Julian Eymard,
I ask you, Lord, in your ever faithful love,
to grant that I may commit my whole life
to the service of Christ
and my fellow human beings.

Grant that I may work at building a world
founded on justice and love,
so that the Reign of Christ may come
and your glory be revealed to the world.

* * *

Acclamation by all present:

For the Kingdom, the power and the glory
are yours, now and for ever.

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AD USUM PRIVATUM

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