

SPIRITUALITY AND VOWS

THE NATURE AND END OF THE CONGREGATION

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God loves each of us with a personal, unconditional love. His plan of salvation for each of us is fully revealed in the paschal mystery-the suffering, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus and the sending of the Holy Spirit. It is in the paschal mystery that we are reconciled to the Father, united in the one body of Christ and enlivened with the life of the Spirit.

Our personal participation in the paschal mystery begins with our conversion, the acceptance of the Lord Jesus as our personal savior, and our union with him in baptism, confirmation and the Holy Eucharist. But our conversion is a dynamic, lifelong process. We must constantly die to self (self-will, self-love, self-activity) in order to rise by the power of the Holy Spirit to a new life of love in Christ.

A similar life-long process is involved in our coming to know God's unconditional love for each of us as the most fundamental fact of our lives. We experience our nothingness without God. We know the misery of our inherited weakness and the corruption which results from our personal sins. But this knowledge leads to a new experience of God's love

because he is ready to forgive and to come to our aid. At the same time, our renewed experience of God's unconditional love leads to a recognition of our own unworthiness. This paschal dynamic continues throughout our whole life.

As Resurrectionists we will strive to witness to this transforming power of God's love, not only in our own personal lives, but also in community life. We will allow this love to overcome the fears and heal the wounds that keep us isolated from one another, so that we can become a true community of disciples united in mind and heart.

In our apostolic life, we will urge others to a renewal of their lives, which will lead eventually to the resurrection of society. We will proclaim the paschal mystery in our apostolates through preaching and teaching the certainty of God's love for each of us and his will to save us by uniting us to the death and resurrection of Jesus. Finally, we will proclaim the paschal mystery by carefully prepared celebrations of the Easter Triduum and every Sunday as the day of the Risen Lord.

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Salvation history is a continual manifestation of God's love for us. It was out of love that he created us.¹ It is also

¹ "For you love all things that are and loathe nothing that you have made; for what you hated, you would not have fashioned" (Ws 11: 24). NOTE: All scripture quotations are taken from

out of love that he has redeemed us² and made us his sons.³ In our own day God continues to manifest this love for us in the person of the Risen Christ, who is still present among us and sanctifying us through his church, especially in its liturgical celebrations. A very special manifestation of God's love was made to our founders and to all who have followed them in the Congregation of the Resurrection because we have received Christ's invitation to leave all and follow him.

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The work of the Holy Spirit is evident in these overwhelming manifestations of God's love and goodness. In response to his call, we have freely chosen to enter the Congregation of the Resurrection. In the Congregation, through the profession of vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, we propose to deepen our baptismal covenant by a life-long commitment to the love and service of our Risen Savior. The eternal "alleluia" of the Church's paschal season sums up our constant effort to praise the Lord.

The New American Bible, Catholic Publishers, Inc., 1971, Thomas Nelson edition.

² "Yes, God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him may not die but may have eternal life" (Jn 3: 16)

³ "See what love the Father has bestowed on us in letting us be called children of God: Yet that is what we are" (1 Jn 3: 1).

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The end of our life and work in the Congregation is to give glory to God because he is infinite goodness and love. In gratitude for his love and goodness to us, we desire to respond to God's invitation, by our life and vocation, offering him love for love. "We, for our part, love because he first loved us" (1 Jn 4: 19).

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As members of the Congregation of the Resurrection, we give glory to God by manifesting the presence of the Risen Christ to the world. To accomplish this end, we will strive for our own personal sanctification by accepting Christ as our model and by living a life of ever-greater union with him. This life of union with Christ expresses itself through our union with our brothers in community, and will overflow into our apostolic life, which strives to bring to completion the establishment of Christ's kingdom. Thus the goal of each of us who has been called to the Congregation of the Resurrection is to strive for his own personal resurrection with Christ in community and for the resurrection of society.

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Our religious profession calls us to perfect our Christian life by following Christ so intimately that we live, die,

and rise with him.⁴ Christ destroyed sin by dying and empowers us to remove sin and selfishness from our lives by dying to ourselves through the generous acceptance of the renunciation implied in the perfect observance of our vows and in the many difficulties and disappointments of daily life which constitute some of the crosses which Christ invites us to carry. In this way we will empty and wholly deny ourselves in order that Christ may dwell in us and act through us. Then we will be able to say with Saint Paul: "...the life I live now is not my own; Christ is living in me" (Gal 2: 20).

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In order to rise with Christ, we need to be open to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us and conforms us to Christ. We will thus begin to share in the new creation,⁵ the life of the Risen Savior. Just as Christ's primary concerns were to be completely dedicated to performing the will of his Father⁶ and loving service for his brothers and

⁴ "Through baptism into his death we were buried with him, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live a new life" (Rm 6: 4).

⁵ "This means that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old order has passed away; now all is new!" (2 Cor 5: 17).

⁶ "... it is not to do my own will that I have come down from heaven, but to do the will of him who sent me" (Jn 6 :38).

sisters ⁷ so also must these be the animating principles of our religious life. Through the exercise of perfect fraternal charity, we rise with Christ⁸ and give witness to the world that we are his disciples: “I give you a few commandments: Love one another. Such as my love has been for you, so must your love be for one another. This is how all will know you for my disciples: your love for one another” (Jn 13: 34-35).

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God has honored Mary by choosing her to be the mother of our savior. She is also the mother of the church, which is his body. In our tradition we have claimed her as the mother of our Congregation and have been dedicated to promoting her honor. She is the model of what salvation is for each of us. In her Immaculate Conception she was freed from sin. As the Mother of Sorrows she shared in the sufferings of her son. In her Assumption she was raised up to share in the risen life of Jesus. If we follow her as our model we learn to share in the passion, death and resurrection of her son and we, too, will be freed from sin and will share in his new life in the Spirit.

⁷ “Such is the case with the Son of Man who has come, not to be served by others, but to serve, to give his own life as a ransom for the many” (Mt 20 :28).

⁸ “That we have passed from death to life we know because we love the brothers. The man who does not love is among the living dead” (1 Jn 3:14).

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In its apostolic life, the Congregation shares Christ's own mission of teaching and sanctifying, establishing his kingdom in the hearts of people. In carrying out its mission, the members of the Congregation will always be open to the needs of the church and society in our times. True to the spirit of the founders, the Congregation strives for the resurrection of society, especially through the parish and educational apostolates. We zealously strive to overcome sin, ignorance, injustice, and misery. Our work should help people build community in which they experience the hope, peace, and joy which the Risen Christ desires to share with them. The Congregation carries out this mission in submission to the Holy Father, holding him in filial regard, and acknowledging him as its highest superior through the vow of obedience.

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We regard the Congregation as a mother who carefully guides the development of our religious life. With a constant sense of gratitude, we strive to promote the welfare of the Congregation by the conscientious fulfillment of our work and by our loyalty to one another, always remaining faithful to the ideals of the Community.

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As members of the Congregation, we are religious in the Church and for the Church. Even though explicit references have not been made to prevailing Church legislation in every instance, we consider pertinent ecclesiastical legislation and directives to be binding in our religious and apostolic lives.

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF VOWED
RELIGIOUS LIFE**

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As members of the Congregation of the Resurrection we regard as the supreme rule of our lives the following of Christ, whom the Gospel presents as poor, chaste and obedient.

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By our vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, we dedicate and consecrate ourselves totally to the Risen Christ in the religious life. This dedication entails an act of faith whereby we respond to God's call to give ourselves completely with all our talents, abilities, and powers to him, to the church, and to the Congregation.

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Life according to the vows helps us to develop as persons and to attain Christian maturity. The vows are the expression of the free and total gift of ourselves to God. We accept the detachment implied in the observance of our vows in order to become more firmly attached' to Christ.⁹ The practice of our vows contributes to the realization of our common life and to the fulfillment of our mission.

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The vows are a visible sign to the people of God. They point to the possibility of living according to the counsels of Jesus. They are a prophetic witness of the primacy of God and higher values: the supernatural and the eternal as contrasted with the natural and temporal. Our faithfulness in living the vows will serve as an inspiration to all, encouraging them to live their own Christian vocation more fully.

⁹ "For his sake I have forfeited everything; I have accounted all else rubbish so that Christ may be my wealth and I may be in him ...I wish to know Christ and the power flowing from his resurrection; likewise to know how to share in his sufferings by being formed into the pattern of his death. Thus do I hope that I may arrive at resurrection from the dead" (Phil 3: 8-11).

OUR CONSECRATION TO CHRIST THROUGH CHASTITY

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In order that we may achieve a complete union of our life with the Risen Christ, and to express our love for him, we freely oblige ourselves by the vow of chastity to perfect continence within the celibate life. By keeping this vow we die to the pursuit of inordinate self-love and choose to direct our lives in a spirit of love for the Risen Christ.¹⁰

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This consecration of ourselves to Christ manifests itself through the love and service, which we give to others, who are all Christ's brothers and sisters and through the exercise of a spiritual fatherhood.¹¹ Our consecration is also a prophetic sign of the resurrected life after death when people “neither marry nor are given in marriage” (Mt 22: 30), but when all will be directly united with Christ and with one

¹⁰ “Whoever loves father or mother, son or daughter, more than me is not worthy of me” (Mt 10:37). “Some men are incapable of sexual activity from birth; some have been deliberately made so; and some there are who have freely renounced sex for the sake of God’s reign. Let him accept this teaching who can” (Mt 19:12).

¹¹ “Granted that you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you have only one father. It was I who begot you in Christ Jesus through my preaching of the Gospel” (1 Cor 4:15).

another in complete love and peace.

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Since chastity is a gift of God, we pray that God grant it to us and assist us to grow in this virtue. Growing in affective maturity and the integration of our sexuality through our celibate love is a lifelong challenge for us. A chaste person not only avoids unchaste actions but also learns to use the gift of his sexuality in acts of celibate love. In addition to prayer, we must add the practice of mortification to help us to grow in the self-discipline, which enables us to avoid what endangers our observance of this vow. True fraternal charity realized in our community life is a strong aid to chastity.

**FOLLOWING CHRIST THROUGH
EVANGELICAL POVERTY**

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In loving response to Christ's invitation,¹² and recalling the example of his own personal life, we vow to live a life of evangelical poverty.¹³

¹² "If you seek perfection, go, sell your possessions, and give to the poor. You will then have treasure in heaven. Afterward, come back and follow me" (Mt 19 :21).

¹³ "You are well acquainted with the favor shown you by our Lord Jesus Christ; how for your sake he made himself poor

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The profession of poverty for the sake of following Christ implies a life of labor and moderation and, by force of the vow, a complete dependence on our superiors in the use and disposition of goods as well as the renouncing of at least administration of our own patrimony.

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By evangelical poverty we worship God by acknowledging our total dependence on him. We detach ourselves from material things so that we may give ourselves more fully to the imitation of the poor Christ and to the exercise of the apostolate. We give witness to the world of the supreme importance of storing up treasure in heaven.¹⁴

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Since Christ was a person who was poor both in fact and in spirit, our practice of evangelical poverty should be

though he was rich, so that you might become rich by his poverty” (2 Cor 8 :9).

¹⁴ “Do not lay up for yourselves an earthly treasure. Moths and rust corrode; thieves break in and steal. Make it your practice instead to store up heavenly treasure, which neither moths nor rust corrode nor thieves break in and steal. Remember, where your treasure is, there your heart is also” (Mt 6:19-21).

both external and internal. In our practice of external poverty, before we seek a permission from our superior we need to be convinced honestly that our request is in conformity with the spirit of our vow. In forming this conviction we will weigh our personal needs and the needs of our apostolate against the call of our vocation to imitate the poverty of Christ. Our imitation of Christ's poverty gives witness that we are indeed seeking God above all things and that we value spiritual goods above material goods.¹⁵

In our practice of interior poverty, which was commended so highly by Christ,¹⁶ we must grow ever more aware that our possessions, our talents, and our very being have been given to us by God and that we are completely dependent on him.¹⁷ We are stewards of all that God has given us and therefore we give of ourselves generously in service to the people of God.¹⁸

¹⁵ "Since you have been raised up in company with Christ, set your heart on what pertains to higher realms where Christ is seated at God's right hand. Be intent on things above rather than on things of earth. After all, you have died. Your life is hidden now with Christ in God" (Col 3 :1-3).

¹⁶ "How blest are the poor in spirit; the reign of God is theirs" (Mt 5 :3).

¹⁷ "Name something you have that you have not received. If, then, you have received it, why are you boasting as if it were your own?" (1 Cor 4:7).

¹⁸ The parable of the talents (Mt 25: 14-30).

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After our profession of evangelical poverty, whatever we obtain through our work, our own personal efforts, or in the name of the Congregation becomes Community property. We should be convinced that the faithful observance or poverty is an important factor contributing to the joyful experience or common life.

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Although the Congregation has the right to possess goods, nevertheless, by its corporate poverty it will give evidence that it is poor in spirit and in fact. In the practice of poverty, the Congregation will be guided by the values of the Gospel as well as by the nature and needs of its apostolates. We will use temporal goods to benefit the people of God, especially the poor and needy.

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Jesus came to proclaim the good news to the poor, to feed the hungry, to heal the sick, to free the oppressed, to comfort the afflicted and to forgive the sinner. Since our Congregation shares in the mission of Jesus, we are called to respond to these same needs through our ministry and through the use of our material goods. We will assess regularly our apostolic commitments to determine whether our ministry is guided by the priorities that Jesus established for his ministry.

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As a Congregation, which is called to work for the resurrection of society, the issues of social justice are very important to us. We will strive to raise our own social consciousness and speak out against all forms of social injustice and through our practice of social justice to be a model and challenge for others.

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One manifestation of our poverty of spirit will be our zeal for work. We exclude undertaking any work merely for the sake of gain, keeping in mind Christ's words: "Seek first the Father's kingship over you, his way of holiness, and all these things will be given you besides" (Mt 6:33). We do not judge the worth of our brothers nor our own worth in terms of the financial remuneration we receive for our work. Also, we recognize that the waste of time, the lack of concern for community property or the incurring of unnecessary expenses is contrary to the spirit of poverty.

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Before pronouncing first vows, each candidate must dispose of the use and usufruct of his property in whatever way he pleases and even in favor of the Congregation. Likewise, before pronouncing first vows, he must cede the administration of his property to a person or persons agreeable to himself and, if he freely desires, even to the Congre-

gation, provided it has been informed of and consents to this arrangement. If this act of cession and disposition was not made before the profession of vows because of lack of property, he must make it after profession if property accrues to him. If an act of cession and disposition was made before profession, but only of the property already possessed, and then additional property is acquired after profession by any title whatsoever, a second act of cession and disposition governing the new acquisition must be made according to the norms mentioned above.

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The cession of the administration, use and usufruct, shall be void in the case of departure from the Congregation; in fact, the condition may be added that it can be revocable at any time.

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The revocation, however, as well as any change in these documents of cession cannot be made licitly during the time of vows without the permission of the superior general, unless he has delegated this power, with the consent of his council, to the provincial superior according to article 103.

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The disposition of the use and usufruct, as well as the appointment of an administrator, as mentioned above, can be

arranged by public or private document.

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Professed members retain the ownership of their property and require permission of the superior general to renounce this ownership: Permission for this renunciation should not be granted until ten years have elapsed from the time of first profession, except under unusual circumstances.

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The Congregation as a whole, and all its juridically recognized parts, have the capacity to possess, administer, acquire and alienate temporal goods. Houses may administer their surplus funds, but this is always with the permission of the major superior and the consent of his council who also has the right, after consultation, to transfer these funds to meet other needs of the Congregation. It is the superior general with the consent of the extended general council who has jurisdiction to transfer funds between provinces, regions and the generalate.

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Before pronouncing temporary vows, each candidate must dispose freely by will of any property he actually possesses or may subsequently possess. If the will is invalid because of age, it must be rewritten when he attains the age required by law.

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A professed religious requires the permission of the superior general to change his will unless, with the consent of his council, the superior general has delegated this power to the provincial superior according to article 103. However, in urgent cases, the permission of the local superior suffices. This permission will not be denied without a reasonable cause or in any way that would infringe on the legitimate freedom of the religious.

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A professed religious may exercise any acts ownership prescribed by law with the permission the provincial superior or, if the case be urgent, that of the local superior.

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Money received by religious as pension, insurance benefits, social security or other benefits belongs to the Congregation.

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The religious will not use poverty as an excuse to neglect his obligation to pay a just wage and to observe just practices with those whom he employs.

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The practice of social justice includes the observance of civil law when it is just. The religious considers that the use of the privileges of class and status in order to be exempted from the observance of laws is an abuse.

**SHARING CHRIST'S SALVIFIC MISSION
THROUGH OBEDIENCE AND SERVICE**

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By the vow obedience we unite ourselves in spirit with Christ who came into this world to fulfill the will of his Father, to whom he was obedient unto death.¹⁹ Christ, therefore, is our most perfect model of obedience. Inspired by his example and by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we offer our own will to God the Father and, in a spirit of faith, to our superior, whom we consider his representative on earth.

¹⁹ “Though he was in the form of God, he did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at. Rather he emptied himself and took the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men. He was known to be of human estate and it was thus that he humbled himself, obediently accepting even death, death on a cross!” (Phil 2: 6-8).

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By the vow of obedience we are obliged to obey the commands of our proper superiors in matters that refer either directly or indirectly to the life of the Congregation, that is, to the observance of the vows Constitutions and Statutes.

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By our profession of obedience we make ourselves totally available to the church through the Congregation for bringing to completion the salvific mission of Christ, which he has entrusted to his church.²⁰ By bringing about a unity of purpose and action, this vow renders our apostolic life more fruitful. In the same way it strengthens the bonds of our common life. It is also a response to Christ's invitation to share in his paschal mystery because when we sacrifice our will to the Father we die to self and rise to a new life in which we accept him as Lord and Master. Our dedication through this vow serves as a prophetic sign of the resurrected life where the will of every person will be united to the will of God. It also challenges the individualism and abuses of freedom in our world.

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We strive for that perfect obedience in which we seek

²⁰ “ ‘Peace be with you’ he said again. ‘As the Father has sent me so I send you.’ ”(Jn 20:21).

to do God's will in everything. As our faith grows we will come to recognize that the Holy Spirit speaks to us in many different ways: Sacred Scripture, the Magisterium, the prescriptions of our Constitutions and Statutes, ecclesiastical and religious superiors, personal inspirations, the consensus we arrive at when we collectively seek God's will through dialogue and house meetings, the demands of common life and the apostolate and the events of daily life.

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Perfect obedience is supernatural and internal, as well as external. We look upon our superiors as God's representatives. Besides obeying their commands we strive to see these commands as wise and good. In conscience we consider as the will of God that we fulfill whatever the superior may have commanded or forbidden, unless it is evidently sinful.

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If we have views about a matter, or about the way it should be done, contrary to the orders we have received, we ought to consider the matter seriously before God and then present our views to the superior, who may never have considered the issue from this point of view. If our proposals are rejected, we should willingly fulfill the command for the love of God. However, even in such circumstances we should obey with the full knowledge and the deep conviction that not only superiors but we too can be wrong and that we do what is best when, through obedience,

we lovingly fulfill even what is contrary to our views and inclinations. For when we obey our leaders and submit to them ²¹in this way, we give clear evidence of dying to self, offer God a most pleasing sacrifice, and imitate Christ "who learned obedience from what he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8).

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Our relationship with our superior is built on love. We strive to be honest, sincere and completely open with him, sharing with him our needs, problems and concerns, both physical and spiritual. This openness and sincerity also manifests itself in our willingness to keep our superior informed about the tasks in which we are involved.

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A superior should remember that he represents Christ "who has come not to be served by others, but to serve" (Mt 20:28) and will, therefore, exercise his authority in a spirit of service. He will strive to imitate Christ's kindness and availability and to offer the support of his own example, prayer, counsel, trust and encouragement. Even the difficult task of administering correction can be a service of love if the superior strives to show the patience, understanding,

²¹ "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over you as men who must render an account. So act that they may fulfill their task with joy, not with sorrow, for that would be harmful to you" (Hebrews 13:17).

hesitancy to condemn, and the forgiveness, which Christ showed to Peter after the denial.²²

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A superior is concerned not only with the material needs of his brothers, but above all he is responsible for their spiritual needs. He will strive to see that all observe the Constitutions and Statutes.

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A superior so regulates matters that he can effectively encourage his religious brothers to active and responsible obedience in every area of their work. He strives to recognize and to utilize wisely the God-given talents of his confreres, and gives them a reasonable amount of freedom in determining the details involved in accomplishing the apostolic works assigned to them.

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A superior must also practice obedience. He seeks out the Lord's will for himself, for his brothers and for the community entrusted to his care, and leads the community to the acceptance of the Lord's will. In order to treat his con-

²² "A third time Jesus asked him, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' ...So he said to him: 'Lord, you know everything. You know well that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep.'" (Jn 21 :17).

freres as befits the children of God and with respect for the human person, the superior listens willingly to them and encourages them to make a personal contribution to the welfare of the Community and the church. He should strive to arrive at a consensus with the local community in matters pertaining to common life and apostolic work. In those cases in which no consensus can be reached, the superior decides and commands what must be done, after having considered the matter prayerfully and carefully before God.

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By his conduct and his direction of the religious, the superior shall make a special effort to introduce and to strengthen the rule of love among them. Whether or not love becomes the genuine foundation of our entire lives and the essential characteristic of our Congregation depends especially on his efforts.

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As religious we live our entire life under the vow of obedience. However, in cases where the superior intends specifically to oblige a religious in conscience and under grave obligation in a serious matter, he must clearly command in the name of holy obedience. The command must be given in writing or be attested by two witnesses. Such commands should be used only rarely, cautiously and prudently.

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Each religious has the right to appeal the decision of his immediate superior to a higher superior. The higher superior must be informed of the decision of the immediate superior. Higher superiors will always advise the more immediate superiors of commands and privileges they have extended to members of local houses.

PERSONAL ENCOUNTER WITH CHRIST IN PRAYER

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The Scriptures reveal Christ to us as a man of prayer who frequently offered praise and thanks to his Father.²³ He interceded on our behalf.²⁴ Christ taught his disciples how

²³ “Father, Lord of heaven and earth, to you I offer praise; for what you have hidden from the learned and the clever you have revealed to the merest children” (Mt 11:25).

“Father, I thank you for having heard me. I know that you always hear me but I have said this for the sake of the crowd, that they may believe that you sent me”(Jn 11: 41-42).

²⁴ “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing” (Lk 23:34).

“But I have prayed for you (Simon) that your faith may never fail. You in turn must strengthen your brothers” (Lk 22:32).

“For these I pray-not for the world but for these you have given me, for they are really yours” (Jn 17:9).

they were to pray and to call God their Father. Through the grace of baptism we have received the gift of the Spirit, who makes us God's sons: "... a spirit of adoption through which we cry out, 'Abba!' (that is, 'Father!')" (Rm 8:15). It is because we have received the Spirit that we can worship the Father in spirit and truth: "Indeed, it is just such worshippers the Father seeks" (Jn 4: 23). Mindful that today the Risen Christ continues to offer praise and thanksgiving to his Father and to intercede and offer propitiation on behalf of all through his church, and also mindful that our own personal sanctification and effective apostolic work flow from a vital union with him,²⁵ we too strive to become men of prayer. In this way we will be like Christ's first apostles, who devoted themselves to "prayer and the ministry of the word" (Acts 6: 4).

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Mary's life of prayer is a model for our life of prayer. She teaches us how to hear God's word, ponder it in our hearts and act upon it. She teaches us how to intercede for the needs of others and to pray for the outpouring of the Spirit upon the church. As mother of our Congregation we honor her by imitating her life of prayer, by praying to her and by observing her feasts in the liturgy.

²⁵ "Live on in me, as I do in you. No more than a branch can bear fruit of itself apart from the vine, can you bear fruit apart from me" (Jn 15: 4).

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Liturgical prayer, which is offered to God in union with Christ and in his name, is given the primary place in our life of prayer because it is in this prayer especially that we offer the Father perfect praise and also that we experience our oneness with all the people of God.

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The Eucharist must be the central act of our daily life because it is here, through our participation in Christ's paschal mystery by dying and rising with him that we encounter the deepest meaning of the Resurrection. In the Eucharist we also experience reconciliation with our brothers and sisters and unity of heart and soul as we, together with Christ, offer ourselves to the Father. It is in the Eucharist that Christ, our spiritual food, enables us to strengthen our baptismal and religious commitments. A natural outcome of our participation in the Eucharist is our devotion to Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

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A frequent encounter with the Risen Christ in the sacrament of reconciliation forms an essential part of our liturgical prayer because it is here that we acknowledge our complete dependence upon him and receive the power to die

to sin and to become conformed to him.²⁶ This sacrament also effects reconciliation between ourselves and the church.

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We hold the Liturgy of Hours in special esteem because in it Christ and his church pour out unending praise to the Father and intercede for the salvation of the whole world.

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In his priestly prayer Christ asked his Father to make his disciples one; their unity of mind and action is to serve as a special sign to the world of Christ's divine mission.²⁷ Common prayer is one of the ways in which we can give expression to this unity. Through it we support and encourage one another to remain faithful to the Community and to a life of prayer. This type of prayer is efficacious because Christ is in our midst when we pray together.²⁸ Moreover, the Holy Spirit can speak to us through others when we are united in spontaneous prayer.

²⁶ “. . . You must consider yourselves dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus” (Rm 6:11).

²⁷ “. . .that they may be one as you, Father, are in me, and I in you; I pray that they may be one in us, that the world may believe you sent me” (Jn 17: 21).

²⁸ “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst” (Mt 18: 20).

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The Apostle Paul exhorts us to “never cease praying, render constant thanks; such is God’s will in Christ Jesus” (1 Thes 5:17-18). Christ himself told us: “Whenever you pray, go to your room, close your door and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees what no mans sees, will repay you” (Mt 6: 6). Personal prayer is our most intimate conversation with God. In it we see his great love for us and our total dependence on him. Personal prayer is our best preparation for common and liturgical prayer.

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It is through a reflective and prayerful reading of the Sacred Scriptures that the Holy Spirit inspires us to grow in our knowledge and appreciation of Christ and to strive earnestly to become more like him; for the Scriptures are of God and are saving all “the power of God saving all who have faith” (Rm 1:16).

[63]

We should not neglect other forms of spiritual reading. All forms of spiritual reading, especially our Constitutions, will serve to strengthen our prayer life. We should read our Constitutions frequently and reflectively.

[64]

Since no friendship can exist or grow where interpersonal communication does not exist, mental prayer and contemplation have a vital role to play in the development of our union with Christ. We know that God will speak to us within the depths of our hearts, but in order to hear his voice, we frequently need to set aside our activities, to listen to him and converse with him.

[65]

Recalling that Christ “would always go off to some place where he could be alone and pray” (Lk 5: 16), we, too, must withdraw from time to time from our apostolic labors in order to devote some time exclusively to reflection and prayer. This withdrawal for prayer will serve to render our apostolate more fruitful by strengthening our union with Christ, who assures us that “cut off from me you can do nothing” (Jn 15: 5). Thus, we see the importance of our monthly days of recollection and of our annual retreat.

[66]

To grow in our surrender to Christ, reflection on our fidelity to his grace is necessary. For this reason our examen must be recognized as one of our indispensable spiritual exercises.

[67]

Wherever local circumstances permit, the religious will come together each day for common prayer. Each local house, according to its own particular needs and circumstances, will determine which prayers will be said in common, safeguarding the prescriptions of Provincial and Regional Statutes.

[68]

A community Mass, preferably concelebrated, should be held wherever and whenever feasible.

[69]

Community recitation of *Lauds* and *Vespers* may be substituted for the traditional and evening prayers. When this substitution occurs community intentions could be included in the prayer of the faithful at the community Mass or be taken care of in some other way, which meets with the approval of the local house. These intentions are prayers for the following:

- a) the Church,
- b) the Holy Father,
- c) our country,
- d) our Congregation and superiors,
- e) the glorification of our Founders and fidelity to their spirit,

- f) our ecclesiastical superiors,
- g) our brothers in the missions,
- h) vocations to our Congregation,
- i) parents, relatives, friends, benefactors, and all those who have recommended themselves to our prayers,
- j) those in affliction, temptation and agony,
- k) the conversion of sinners,
- l) him who will die first among us,
- m) increased fidelity to our religious vows,
- n) the deceased.

A few of these intentions could be named specifically each day.

[70]

Besides daily participation in morning prayers and evening prayers, each religious will spend at least one hour each day in private prayer and reflection which will include the following: mental prayer, reading of Sacred Scripture and/or other spiritual reading, a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, examen, and a Marian devotion, for example, the rosary.

[71]

The length of the annual retreat is determined by each province or region.

[72]

At least once a month, the religious come together for either a conference, study session or discussion period that is theological or ascetical in orientation. This exercise may be part of the monthly day of recollection.

[73]

The community shall offer Mass once a month in each house for the following intentions:

- a) for the Holy Father,
- b) for blessings for our Congregation,
- c) for living benefactors and parents of members of the Congregation,
- d) for deceased benefactors and parents of members of the Congregation,
- e) for the deceased members of the Congregation.

[74]

One hundred Masses will be celebrated for each deceased member or novice of the Congregation.

[75]

Mass shall be offered in each house for the ordinary of the diocese on the anniversary of his ordination as bishop.

[76]

Mass shall be offered in each house for the superior general and for the provincial or regional superior on the anniversary of his election.

[77]

Every priest each month may offer two non-stipend Masses each month for his own intention. The brothers have the right to request that two Masses be offered for their own intentions each month.

[78]

The feasts of the Resurrection, the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption and our Lady of Sorrows are considered Community feasts and are to be celebrated in a solemn manner. On the vigil of these feasts each religious should offer some form of mortification.

[79]

Each house of the Community shall celebrate Founders' Day on February 17th, with a Mass of thanksgiving to God for blessings received and to ask for his continued blessings on the Congregation. The entire Community is also encouraged to offer special thanks to God on either Easter Monday or March 27th.

DYING WITH CHRIST THROUGH MORTIFICATION

[80]

For the perfect fulfillment of our vows and in order to truly die together with Christ, the spirit of mortification is necessary. It consists in this, that we make our own the spirit of Saint Paul: "It makes me happy to suffer for you, as I am suffering now, and in my own body to do what I can to make up all that has still to be undergone by Christ for the sake of his body, the Church" (Col: 24). Therefore, we will carry out everything properly and faithfully, courageously face all adversities and lovingly and eagerly conquer all difficulties and anything that can turn us away from God.

[81]

Above all we strive to acquire internal mortification, which includes recollection, silence and the awareness of God's presence. These forms mortification are all the more necessary the fact that we are called to the apostolic life.

[82]

Inspired by the words of the Apostle Paul who tells us: "What I do is discipline my own body and master it" (I Cor 9: 27), we regard the practice of external mortification as a necessary means to give our wills more perfect control over our other faculties. Mortification will help us to attain the freedom of the sons of God and will make us more

receptive to God's graces. The Congregation desires that one of our principal external mortifications will be that we carry out our apostolic labors faithfully and zealously. Also we will be ready to accept sickness, other human limitations and the demands of a common life with patience and submission to the will of God.²⁹

²⁹ “Therefore, I am content with weakness, with mistreatment, with distress, with persecutions, and difficulties for the sake of Christ; for when I am powerless, it is then that I am strong” (2 Cor 12:10).