

# FORMATION

## PRINCIPLES OF FORMATION

### [146]

The Congregation desires that the religious formation of its members should develop along the lines established by the Church. The directives of the Church include great concern for the suitable human, spiritual, doctrinal, pastoral and professional development of the religious. These directives place a strong emphasis on preserving the spirit of the Founders together with a better understanding of the charism and mission of the Congregation.

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The response of the individual to the call of Christ personally to imitate his life of chastity, poverty and obedience by a life lived in the Congregation marks the beginning of the process of formation. Just as Samuel, when he first heard the call of the Lord, did not know who was speaking to him or what was required of him, so a man, when he enters religious life, needs help to understand the nature, the dignity and the importance of his vocation. Since the reality of this call is the basis of all formation, directors, in the name of the Congregation, must identify and confirm its presence. Good will on the part of a candidate is not enough. The Congregation believes that the words of Christ addressed to all Christians through Baptism, "It was not you who chose me, it was

I who chose you" (Jn 15:16), are equally true of the call to religious life in the Congregation.

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Every call of Christ is first of all a call to personal holiness. Religious profession contributes to an intimate, personal union with the Triune God. Religious profession rooted in the sacrament of baptism, enables the religious to share in Christ's emptying of himself<sup>31</sup> and his life in the Spirit.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, formation aims primarily at fostering the participation of the religious in the paschal mystery whereby, guided by the Holy Spirit, he dies to self in order to live with Christ in God.

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This religious profession is effected in and through the Church. The religious binds himself in a special way to undertake the mission of the church and to spend his life in

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<sup>31</sup> "Rather, he emptied himself and took the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men" (Phil 2 :7).

<sup>32</sup> "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, then he who raised Christ from the dead will bring your mortal bodies to life also, through his Spirit dwelling in you. We are debtors, then, my brothers-but not to the flesh, so that we should live according to the flesh. If you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the evil deeds of the body, you will live" (Rm 8:11-13).

its service. Formation, therefore, is ecclesial, that is, it seeks to make the religious conscious of his participation in the mission of the church and to develop his talents, so that he is able to carry on the apostolate and spread the kingdom of God. Religious understand that apostolic activity, rooted in and joined to contemplation, belongs to the very nature of religious life; for it is a holy service and work of love entrusted to them by the church to be carried out in its name

**[150]**

In the formation of the religious, as is the tradition of the Congregation, Mary will be presented as a model. She is the perfect disciple of Jesus and is the model of all who are called to discipleship. Her faith enabled her to accept the gift of God's love and to trust that all the promises made to her would be fulfilled.<sup>33</sup> Her hope enabled her to rely upon the power of the Spirit to form Jesus within her. Her love enabled her to live a life of self-denial and joyful service. Her obedience enabled her to cooperate with all of God's plans for her. Her humility led her to accept her own lowliness even while she acknowledged and proclaimed the great things God was doing in her and through her. Our religious will become more perfect disciples of Jesus if they follow Mary, rely on Mary and tend to Christ through Mary.

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<sup>33</sup> "Blest is she who trusted that the Lord's words to her would be fulfilled" (Lk 1:45).

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Prayer is at the very heart of religious formation. Religious need to be versed in the various forms of prayer, and through time spent in prayer each day, need to experience a deep awareness of God in their lives. Their prayer is to be constant and persevering so that their studies, apostolate and indeed all their activities will flow from a prayerful heart, united at all times with God, our heavenly Father.

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Since prayer and spiritual growth in general take place primarily in the secret of one's heart, it is essential that each person in formation seek and receive proper and competent spiritual direction. This direction is distinct from the guidance one receives from directors in the external forum or from confessors. In regard to the latter, no constraint may be placed upon a religious in his choice of a confessor; he retains a basic freedom of choice.

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In the formation of an integrated and mature religious it is important that all aspects and talents of the religious be developed simultaneously: the physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and social.

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In order that the religious may realize his full potential in his vocation, a favorable environment is needed. The Congregation strives to provide an atmosphere of freedom in the context of well-defined personal responsibility. A young religious should be granted the freedom to show initiative and creativity and to develop his talents; moreover he should be urged to use this freedom for the good of the community in which he lives. Trust, dialogue and communication are of the utmost importance in exercising this freedom. Freedom exercised in this responsible manner will enhance the quality of obedience as the religious grows from a more external submission to authority to a healthier sense of co-responsibility for the work and well being of the Congregation. This exercise of freedom and responsibility should develop in gradual stages according to the age and maturity of the individual religious.

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Let there be unity of heart and mind between religious and those in authority. This union implies a common responsibility for the present and future good of the Congregation. Unity promotes the exercise of fraternal correction and prevents fear and human respect from deterring a religious from sharing with his brother and, if necessary, with the proper authorities his certain knowledge of serious defects in one of his confreres.

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A religious will make the greatest progress in personal growth where there is trust and respect among all the members. This trust and respect is strengthened by encouragement and acceptance and is motivated by truth and charity. Love flowing from truth must be the predominant force of the entire formation process.<sup>34</sup>

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Human development proceeds by gradual stages, and divine grace respects the human condition. Therefore, formation should emphasize a gradual and progressive development in learning the theory and practice of intense Christian living within religious life and in forming sound convictions leading to mature decisions and total dedication. For the cleric, this formation will take place in the environment of the pre-novitiate, novitiate and seminary; for the brother, in the pre-novitiate, novitiate and juniorate. The Constitutions and Provincial or Regional Statutes determine the nature and length of these stages of basic formation. Continuing formation for all members takes place in the local religious houses.

**NOVITIATE FORMATION**

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<sup>34</sup> “Love one another with the affection of brothers. Anticipate each other in showing respect” (Rm 12:10).

Although the candidate becomes familiar with certain aspects of religious life in the pre-novitiate program, formal introduction to the religious life begins with the novitiate. Under the guidance of a novice master, the novice becomes acquainted with the evangelical counsels and their practice, with the charism and mission of the Congregation, its history and life. He continues to discern whether he is being called by the Lord to the religious life and to the Congregation. Superiors must also discern whether the novice has a true vocation.

**[159]**

The novitiate is a time for the novice to prepare to deepen his commitment to the Risen Christ through the profession of vows in the Congregation of the Resurrection. This preparation requires growth in self-awareness and self-acceptance. It is also important that the novice gradually grow in his awareness of the demands of God's call so that, like Jesus, he can always do what is pleasing to the Father.<sup>35</sup>

**POST-NOVITIATE FORMATION**

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The goal of the post-novitiate formation is the per-

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<sup>35</sup> “The one who sent me is with me. He has not deserted me since I always do what pleases him” (Jn 8:29).

sonal development of the whole man: to help him grow in Christian maturity by becoming more aware of his sinfulness and God's merciful love, to help him deepen his vowed commitment to the Risen Christ, to help him adapt his personal life in order to strengthen common life and to help him develop his gifts and talents so that he may use them in the apostolic work of the Congregation.

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Spiritual formation continues along the lines laid out in the novitiate program: a deepening awareness of the life and works of the founders, a growing union with the Risen Christ through prayer and the exercise of fraternal charity in living the common life in simplicity and an increasingly self-disciplined life based on the Gospel which witnesses to the death and resurrection of Christ.

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Doctrinal formation continues through growth in the personal assimilation of the mysteries of faith and in the ability to communicate these mysteries in terms understandable to the culture and the times.

**[163]**

Apostolic involvement is an integral part of the program. Apostolic activities are chosen to enable the religious to experience the joy as well as the difficulty involved in

spreading the kingdom of God through the renewal of society.

**FORMATION FOR THE MINISTRY  
AS PRIESTS  
AND PERMANENT DEACONS**

**[164]**

The priest and permanent deacon require professional competence in many areas including philosophy, theology and counselling. They should be well-educated men whose learning is permeated with Christian values that they have integrated into their lives.

**FORMATION FOR THE MINISTRY AS BROTHERS**

**[165]**

The ministry of a brother embraces all the areas of the apostolic work of the Congregation except those which require holy orders. The brother's specific role in the apostolate will be determined according to the needs of the Congregation and his personal abilities and interests. He should acquire competence in his field of endeavor so that he may appreciate better his talents and his ability to contribute to the Community in which he is engaged.

**DIRECTORS OF FORMATION**

**[166]**

Those responsible for formation (masters of novices, rectors of studies, directors of brother formation, spiritual directors and their assistants) should be mature religious adequately prepared for these offices and filled with the spirit of the church and the charism of our Congregation. They have the responsibility of knowing and following ecclesial laws and decrees in regard to the admission of candidates to the novitiate and the promotion to vows and holy orders. A collaborative effort by the directors at the various levels is necessary in order to bring about an integrated and complete program of formation. However, each is responsible directly to the provincial or regional superior to whom reports are to be submitted on request.

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Directors of formation should be careful to respect the human dignity and the special divine vocation of persons entrusted to their care. In guiding the growth and development of the individual, directors will take into account his natural and supernatural endowments, as well as his interests and inclinations, so as to enable the individual with these special God-given talents to make the greatest possible contribution to the work and progress of the Congregation. The directors shall supply the provincial or regional superior with information concerning the individual's special talents and interests. This information should influence the assignment

of the individual, as far as this is compatible with the apostolate and the needs of the Congregation, in order to provide all atmosphere of joy in which the individual can work and fulfill his call in the plan of salvation, “in roles of service for the faithful to build up the body of Christ” (Eph 4: 12).

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A permanent Formation Commission shall aid the provincial or regional authorities and serve the directors of formation in their tasks.

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Each member is charged with the serious obligation and responsibility of fostering and developing vocations for the Congregation. The vocation director will lead and animate these efforts. If any other duties are assigned to him, they should be so arranged that they would not be an obstacle to this important work. The Congregation has the right to make itself known in order to foster vocations and seek candidates.

**CONTINUING FORMATION**

**[170]**

The Congregation has the responsibility to provide opportunities necessary for the continuing formation of its members after they have completed their formal period of training. This need is obvious from the complexity and increased demands of contemporary ministry. In order

to meet these demands, the religious have an obligation to foster their own spiritual and professional growth by spiritual direction, personal reading, private study and by attendance at seminars, workshops and other study programs. It is highly recommended that the religious who have been trained professionally in an area that can be beneficial to all share the results of their training with other members of the Congregation.

### **CANDIDATES, NOVICES AND PROFESSED**

#### **[171]**

Before admission to novitiate there should be a period of orientation. It is preferable that this orientation should not take place in the novitiate house.

#### **[172]**

Before any candidate is admitted to the novitiate, he should be evaluated carefully by a board of examiners so that a judgment can be made of his physical, moral and intellectual qualities. It is recommended that the services of a prudent and qualified psychologist be employed to assist in judging the human and emotional maturity of the candidates. The board of examiners report concerning a candidate's suitability for admission should be sent to the major superior who, with the consent of his council, accepts or rejects the candidate according to the norms of common law.

**[173]**

The board of examiners is composed of religious perpetually professed and qualified for their task. They are appointed by the major superior and his council for a period of three years and may be reappointed. One of the members, appointed as a delegate of the major superior, acts as the chairman of the board of examiners.

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In order that the novitiate be valid it must include twelve months spent in the community of the novitiate itself. The major superior can permit a group of novices to live in another house of the Community designated by him for a stated period of time.

To complete the formation of novices, in addition to the time mentioned above, the Provincial/Regional Statutes may determine one or several periods of apostolic experiences to be spent outside the novitiate community according to local needs and customs. However, the novitiate is not to extend beyond two years.

With due regard for all that was mentioned earlier, absence from the novitiate which lasts more than three months, either continuous or interrupted, renders the novitiate invalid. An absence of more than 15 days must be made up.

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The Congregation's religious garb for priests consists

of clerical garb according to the requirements of common law and legitimate local custom. For brothers, deacons and seminarians the habit is an adaptation of the clerical garb according to approved provincial or regional practice.

**[176]**

The daily program of the novitiate: spiritual exercises, studies, apostolic work to be undertaken, and other activities pertaining to the novitiate are to be decided by the master of novices in conjunction with the formation commission according to Provincial and Regional Statutes.

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Novices enjoy all the privileges and spiritual favors granted to members of the Congregation. If they die as novices, they have a right to the same suffrages as those prescribed for professed members. Novices shall not be promoted to holy orders during the novitiate.

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Novices retain not only ownership of their property but also its administration, use and usufruct, but in such a way that they may not dispose of anything without consulting the master of novices. The master of novices, furthermore, must guard against any violation of the spirit of poverty. If during the novitiate the novices should renounce his benefices or property or encumber the same, such renunciation or encum-

brance is not only illicit but *ipso jure* invalid.

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Before the profession of vows, the novices must present to the major superior a written petition in which they explicitly testify *to* their vocation to the religious state. This petition is to be kept in the archives of the Congregation. The delegate of the major superior shall diligently ascertain the intention of the novices two months before the end of the novitiate. He shall seek confidential information regarding the things that concern the admission of the novices to the vows from the master of novices, from the novices, and also from the religious residing in the novitiate. Thereupon, he shall assemble all the perpetually professed of that place with the exception of those who will afterwards vote in council, in order that they may declare by a secret ballot whether the novices should be admitted to vows. The delegate shall then write and sign a report of all that has been done and ascertained, using great discretion when noting material received in confidence. The same procedure is to be followed for promotion to perpetual vows.

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It pertains to the respective directors of formation to recommend candidates for vows, ministries and orders.

**[181]**

Before admitting a novice to first vows or a religious to final vows, the board of examiners follows the same procedure in regard to evaluation and investigation as was followed in regard to the admission of novices. The major superior, with the consent of his council, accepts or rejects the candidate.

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Before their first profession, members are to cede the administration of their goods to whomsoever they wish, and freely make dispositions concerning the use and enjoyment of these goods. At least before perpetual profession, they are to make a will that is valid also in civil law. Before pronouncing vows, all must make a spiritual retreat for a period of at least five full days.

**[183]**

Two months before his first year of vows has elapsed, the religious shall make a formal petition in writing to the major superior to renew these vows for another year. The period of temporary vows shall last for no less than three years and no more than six years, counting the time continuously, after which time perpetual profession is made. In the case of clerics, perpetual profession is required before the reception of holy orders.

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Vows, temporary or perpetual, are pronounced during Mass, in the presence of the religious community, according to the following formula:

*I, NN, in the presence of Almighty God, of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, and of all the saints of the Lord and before you, Father (General, Provincial, Delegate of the Major Superior), vow to God, (for one year or perpetual) chastity, poverty and obedience in this Congregation of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ according to its Constitutions. May God help me to keep faithfully this commitment.*

The major superior or his delegate presides at the Mass and receives the vows. If the one making his profession is a priest, it is appropriate that he concelebrate at this ceremony.

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The document of profession, written and signed by the religious who has made it and attested to by the major superior or the priest delegated to receive it and by two other witnesses, shall be preserved in the Congregation's files.

**[186]**

Procedures concerning the acceptance of members from other religious communities are governed by the law of the

Church with the addition of the following specific regulations:

- a) for a temporarily professed member of another religious community who transfers to the Congregation, the time spent in probation in the other community and in the Congregation should not exceed nine years, safeguarding however, a necessary four-year probation period in the Congregation which would include novitiate;
- b) for a perpetually professed member of another religious community who transfers to the Congregation, the time spent in probation in the Congregation will be three years including the novitiate.

**[187]**

With regard to departure or separation from the Congregation, the norms of common law will be followed. Dismissal of a religious whether of temporary or perpetual vows requires a collegial vote of the Superior General and Council in accordance with Canon 699.

**[188]**

If a religious is dismissed from the Congregation or if he leaves of his own accord, he may not make any demands of the Congregation in return for the work done.