

Rule of Life

**Congregation of the
Daughters of Mary Immaculate
(Marianists)
1984**

**Sacra Congregatio
Pro Religiosis et Institutis Saecularibus
Prot. N. A. 21-1/82**

Decree

According to the dispositions of the *motu proprio* “*Ecclesiae Sanctae*” (II, n. 6) the Daughters of Mary Immaculate, Marianists, have proceeded to revise their Constitutions during their General Chapter, after which they have presented the text to the Holy See.

After having attentively studied these documents, to which were made some modifications, the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes recognizes in these texts an expression of the desires of the Sisters to respond to the call of Christ through religious life, to be transformed into his likeness, to work in the Church for the coming of his kingdom, and thus to strive toward fullness of charity. Coming together in communities animated by faith, they cooperate in the work of evangelization, strive to form Christians and apostles, especially through education of youth, and in an attitude of availability, endeavor to respond to the needs of the Church throughout the world. By this decree, the Sacred Congregation gives its requested approbation. This measure does not detract, in any way, from the demands of Canon Law.

The Sacred Congregation ardently desires that the living out of these Constitutions become for the Marianist Sisters a precious aid in the accomplishment of their vocation, the imitation of Mary, special patroness of their Institute, whom they have taken as their model and educator of their spiritual and apostolic life, deepening their union with her as they contemplate her in the mysteries of her Son.

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary.

Given at Rome on the 25th of May, 1984, the anniversary of the Foundation of the Institute.

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Origins

William Joseph Chaminade (1761-1850), priest of the diocese of Bordeaux, carried out a faithful and often dangerous priestly ministry during the difficult years of the French Revolution. In the aftermath he faced a new apostolic challenge: ignorance of the faith, religious indifference, the abandonment of Christian life, and the structural ruin of the Church. Aiming to dedicate the rest of his life to the renewal of the Church, he sought and obtained the title of Missionary Apostolic. He realized, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that new means were required for his times: new institutions, new methods, and even a new kind of missionary.

Community life in the spirit of the Gospel has always been the best method for implanting personal faith and the best environment for fulfilling its demands. Such was the experience of the group of apostles, called together by Jesus, as they followed him closely and learned by his example and teaching. Such was the experience of the early Church, united with Mary in prayer and expectation of the Holy Spirit. Such was the experience of the first community of Jerusalem, which shared everything in common and had but one heart and one soul.

Inspired by God's Spirit, Father Chaminade understood the rich creative possibilities of a Christian community for apostolic service. Such a community could bear the witness of a people of saints, showing that the Gospel could still be lived in all the force of its letter and spirit. A Christian community could attract others by its very way of life and raise up new Christians and new missionaries, thus giving life in turn to still other communities. A community could thus become the great means to re-Christianize the world. It was this insight that gave rise to the first groups of men and women founded by Father Chaminade as Sodalities.

In his work the Founder always sought inspiration in Mary, having contemplated at Saragossa the faithful Virgin who received the Word of the Lord and pondered it in her heart, the Woman who gave Christ to the world, the Mother who forms all believers, Mary embodies all the attitudes of the Gospel, in opposition to the spirit of evil. It is she who gives the watchword to do whatever her Son commands. The commitment as a sodalist was for Father Chaminade equivalent to a consecration to Mary in order to assist her in her mission.

In 1808 Father Chaminade met Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon, who had been born at Feugarolles in 1789. An enthusiastic person with a strong sense of mission, Adèle was the leader of a "little society" inspiring its members to grow in the love of Christ and to reawaken the faith in the countryside around Agen. Impressed by the similarity between this "little society" and the sodality of Bordeaux, Father Chaminade invited Adèle and her associates to become affiliated to the latter. Both groups joyfully accepted this proposal. Father Chaminade met no difficulties in stimulating the sense of mission and commitment in the "little society" and introduced them to the benefits of Marian consecration.

So it was that, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the sodalists gradually grew in awareness of the demands of Marian consecration and sought to give themselves more

totally to God and Mary in religious life. Thus the Sodality gave birth to two religious Congregations: the Daughters of Mary Immaculate, founded jointly by Father Chaminade and Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon at Agen in 1816, and the Society of Mary (Marianists), founded at Bordeaux in 1817. Father Chaminade saw in these two Congregations a “person who would never die” to maintain, inspire and extend the network of communities and works founded under his inspiration.

As soon as Adèle was able to carry out “the dear plan” (as she called the foundation of the Congregation before 1816), she dedicated herself to it completely. Inspired from her youth by an intense personal love for Christ, she found in the Congregation the means to make known and loved the One to whom she was totally dedicated. This same love was the source of her creativity in motivating the sense of mission and commitment of her companions.

A woman of faith and of sensitive, attentive kindness toward each of her Sisters, she succeeded in instilling in them this sense of mission and commitment, urging them “to be ready to go to the ends of the earth to save a single soul.” Enthusiastic, never seeking to spare herself pain, keenly aware of time’s brevity, she worked unremittingly until her death in 1828. She welcomed her Lord with these final words: “Hosanna to the Son of David!”

The life of Father Chaminade reveals a deep sense of Providence. Filled with a compelling awareness of the Church’s mission, he was ready to adapt to ever-new situations, eager to respond to the Lord’s indications and deeply sensitive to the needs of the times. He was gifted with tenacity of purpose, a profound spirit of prayer, and a keen ability to patiently discern God’s will.

Today the varied groups which recognize their common link in the charism of Father Chaminade are usually designated by the generic name of “Family of Mary.”

I, the Lord, , have called you for the victory of justice. I have grasped you by the hand; I formed you and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations.

Isaiah 42:6

But what I look upon as characteristic of our Orders, and what appears to me to be without precedent among known institutions is, I repeat, that it is in the name of Mary and for her glory that we embrace the religious life; it is in order to consecrate ourselves, all that we have and are, to her to make her known, loved, and served in the intimate conviction that we shall not bring men back to Jesus except through his most holy Mother.

The Letters of Father Chaminade, August 24, 1839

We have hastened to offer Mary our feeble services in order to labor under her orders and combat at her side. . . . We have bound ourselves by a special vow, that of stability, to assist her with all our strength until the end of our life, in her noble struggle against the power of hell. . . . We have taken the name and standard of Mary and are ready to hasten wherever she calls us, in order to spread her cult, and through it the kingdom of God in souls.

The Letters of Father Chaminade, August 24, 1839

Well, then, let us multiply ourselves for the greater glory of God and may the name of the Lord be blessed from East to West, may he be known everywhere, loved by all hearts and served by all creatures!

The Letters of Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon, August 23, 1821

Chapter I

Spirit and End of the Congregation

- I.1 The Congregation of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate (Marianists) founded by Father William Joseph Chaminade and Mother Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon is a religious family especially dedicated to Mary. It is an Institute of pontifical right with simple vows.
- I.2 By the profession of the evangelical counsels we commit ourselves to follow Christ, to be transformed into His likeness, to work in the Church for the coming of His Kingdom, and thus to strive together for the fullness of charity.
- I.3 Our commitment is a response to the invitation of Christ Who loved us first. It finds its origin and its dynamism in Baptism, the wellspring of true life flowing within us.
- I.4 Coming together in communities inspired by faith, we seek to live the ideal of the first community of Jerusalem, aiming to have but one heart and one soul and to show that today, as in the early Church, it is possible to live the demands of the Gospel.
- I.5 Like our Founders, we desire to live by faith. Contemplating how God is at work in the world and in human hearts, we gradually become women of faith who see the realities of our times with the eyes of God.
- I.6 Sharing the joys and sorrows of humanity, we endeavor to announce to them the Good News that enlivens us. Faithful to the original inspiration, we receive from the Church any mission which leads us to work for formation in faith and Christian life, the “multiplication of Christians,” the development of vibrant communities, and the formation of apostles.
- I.7 By her faith, her openness to the Word, and her total willingness to serve God, Mary is the perfect response to the Lord’s calls. Jesus Christ, Son of God, become Son of Mary for the salvation of all, associated His Mother in all His mysteries and in His mission. Understanding her role in the history of salvation, our Founders wanted our religious profession to be an alliance with Mary sealed by the Marianist vow of stability.

The Vow of Stability

- I.8 By the vow of stability in the Congregation we commit ourselves permanently and irrevocably to the service of Mary, to whom the Congregation belongs. We promise to work to make Mary known, loved and served and to collaborate with all our strength in accomplishing the mission which the Church entrusts to the Congregation. Making an alliance with Mary, “our Mother in the order of grace, “we entrust ourselves to her maternal care so she may cooperate with the work by which the Holy Spirit forms us in the likeness of her first-born Son. We place ourselves at her service to assist her in her mission to the whole human race. Like

the servants at Cana, we are motivated by her words: “Do whatever He tells you.” When we live it in love, giving ourselves to the common mission, the vow of stability is a source of dynamism, strength, courage, and fidelity.

- I.9 In the thought of Father Chaminade, the “spirit of the Institute is the interior spirit,” “the spirit of Mary.” To live this spirit, we seek to grow constantly in the spirit of faith and of mental prayer, humility and simplicity, family spirit and “apostolic zeal” so important to our Mother Foundress. Since our foundation these attitudes have been considered as “our characteristic virtues.”
- II.1 Living the vow of Marianist stability leads us:
- to seek personally and as a community to grow in awareness of the role of Mary in the history of salvation,
 - to deepen our relationship with her,
 - to acquire her attitudes and to work to make her known, loved and served, especially in collaboration with other groups in the Family of Mary,
 - to take the concrete means to understand and penetrate our charism,
 - to work for the extension of the Family of Mary.
- II.2 The Family of Mary is composed of groups of committed Christians in various states of life. All are invited to live the alliance with Mary and to participate in her mission. The Congregation maintains with them, and in particular with the Society of Mary, bonds of family spirit and of collaboration in the service of the Church.
- II.3 Each day, in union with the Family of Mary, we renew our alliance with Mary by praying the Act of Consecration and the Three O’Clock Prayer. This prayer recalls the hour when Jesus, on Calvary, gave Mary as Mother to His beloved disciple and asked him to take her into his home. Traditionally this prayer reminds Marianists of the mystery of the spiritual maternity of Mary and the invitation addressed to all of us to live as a child of Mary and to take her into our hearts.

Whoever wishes to be my follower must deny his very self, take up his cross each day, and follow in my steps. Whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

Luke 9:23-24

Let us respond to the designs of God and become true religious by a life consecrated to God: offering ourselves to him as victims, we find only him. All for the Beloved of our hearts.

The Letters of Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon, August 25, 1826

By a free response to the call of the Holy Spirit you have decided to follow Christ, consecrating yourselves totally to him. It is precisely for the sake of the kingdom of heaven that you have vowed to Christ, generously and without reservation, that capacity to love, that need to possess and that freedom to regulate one's own life, which are so precious to humankind. Such is your consecration, made within the Church and through her ministry.

Evangelica testificatio, no. 7

Chapter II

Consecration

- I.10 Jesus Christ continues to call men and women to leave all in order to follow Him. Feeling the same call, and discerning it in the Holy Spirit, we welcome it with faith and humility as God's gift. By the profession of the evangelical counsels we intend to love our Baptism more fully. Thus we unite ourselves, freely and lovingly, to Christ's saving mission.
- I.11 By the profession of the simple vows of chastity, poverty, obedience and stability, we become members of the Congregation. We commit ourselves to live its spirit and to devote ourselves unreservedly to its mission. Accepting us in the name of the Church, the Congregation promises to help us to live our vocation and to provide us, in the same spirit of the Rule, with the spiritual and material assistance which is necessary.
- I.12 Accepted and lived in faith, hope, and love, religious consecration leads us to inner freedom and to an ever-increasing likeness with Jesus Christ, whom we love above all else.

Religious consecration is a sign that the Kingdom is already present and still to come and that only the spirit of the beatitudes can renew the world.

Formula of Profession

- I.13 In response to the call of Christ, for the glory of the Holy Trinity, the love of the Virgin Mary and the service of the Church, in the hands of _____ Superior General/Provincial (or their delegate), I, _____ (name and surname) freely vow to observe during _____ chastity, poverty, obedience and stability according to the Rule of the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate and in union of life with my Sisters.
- I.14 The Sisters wear the religious habit of the Congregation as a witness to poverty. When the Superior General judges that the needs of the apostolate require it, she may allow the Provincial Superior to authorize certain Sisters to wear secular dress, simple and modest, for as long as these circumstances last.

At the first profession, the Marianist insignia is given to the religious, a sign of her membership in the Congregation.

At perpetual profession a silver ring is given to her, a sign of her definitive consecration to God and of her alliance with Mary.

We have come to know and believe in the love God has for us.

1 John 4:16

This treasure we possess in earthen vessels, to make it clear that its surpassing power comes from God and not from us.

2 Corinthians 4:7

Only the love of God—it must be repeated—calls in a decisive way to religious chastity. . . . Chastity is decisively positive, it witnesses to preferential love for the Lord and symbolizes in the most eminent and absolute way the mystery of the union of the Mystical Body with its Head, the union of the Bride with her eternal Bridegroom. Finally, it reaches, transforms and imbues with a mysterious likeness to Christ humankind's being in its most hidden depths.

Evangelica testificatio, no. 13

We have renewed our vow of chastity: so that our heart loves no other than God, so that we desire only God, we look to please only that unique Spouse of our souls.

The Letters of Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon, October 18, 1824

Chapter III

Vow of Chastity

- I.15 The call of chastity for the sake of the Kingdom is a gift of God and a manifestation of His love. This call can only be heard by a heart that is poor, loving, and free.
- I.16 We respond in faith to the love of Christ and consecrate to Him all our capacity for love. By this total gift of ourselves to Jesus Christ we bear witness to God's absolute claim on our lives. This gift makes us free to love more and serve others better, proclaiming that the Kingdom to come, where God will be all in all, is already present among us.
- I.17 Totally giving ourselves to the God of Love, like Mary and with her, we enter into contemplation of the Mystery of God and His plan for the world. From this contemplation, in which the love of Christ for all is revealed to us, flows our apostolic dynamism in the service of mission.
- I.18 By the vow of consecrated chastity, we commit ourselves to live in celibacy for the Kingdom and to keep perfect chastity. In renouncing marriage and the foundation of a family, we make an offering of one of our basic vital drives.
- I.19 Our consecrated life can only be lived in intimacy with Christ, loved above all else. This intimacy grows through prayer and the Sacraments. Conscious of our weakness, we know that vigilance and self-control are necessary for us; thus we practice watchfulness over the senses and mortification. We find in community life, with its atmosphere of mutual trust, friendship, and self-giving, a loving support to help us grow in fidelity. During our entire lives, we count on Mary's motherly presence.
- I.20 Generously lived in the ordinary events of each day, consecrated chastity brings us to share in the Paschal Mystery in renunciation and solitude of heart. It opens us to freedom, joy and peace, manifests the power of the Spirit at work in our lives, and makes us a living and joyous presence of the love Christ and His Mother bear for every human person.
- II.4 In order to live our chastity and fidelity to Jesus Christ in an honest and joyous way, conscious of our need to love and to be loved, and of our limitations and weaknesses, each of us:
1. enlivens her love for Christ by being faithful to prayer, and by drawing her strength from the Sacraments, in particular the Eucharist and Reconciliation.
 2. receives Mary into her heart and learns from her how to live in openness to God and others.
 3. imposes on herself a personal discipline and remains constantly watchful in order to discern what could weaken her chastity (relationships, entertainments, etc.).

4. keeps in mind the importance of honesty with herself and openness, especially at difficult moments.
5. is careful to maintain a good physical and psychological balance, caring for health, and taking the necessary rest and relaxation.
6. contributes in the community to the creation of a climate of trust, simplicity, and family spirit, relying on the help and support of her Sisters in order to become constantly more faithful.
7. knows that community does not replace the family life she has foregone, that every life includes some solitude, and that only Christ is able to give her the strength to accept the solitude proper to the state of life she has chosen.
8. considers friendship an expression of the love of God and an important element of her well-being, when it makes her more welcoming toward the Sisters of her community, more available for mission, more open to the love of all without distinction.
9. gives herself to the mission of the Congregation without counting the cost.

The Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.

Matthew 8:20

Those who believed shared all things in common.

Acts 2:44

The cry of the poor . . . must, first of all, bar you from whatever would be a compromise with any form of social injustice. It obliges you also to awaken consciences to the drama of misery and to the demands of social justice made by the Gospel and the Church. It leads some of you to join the poor in their situation and to share their bitter cares. Furthermore, it calls many of your institutes to rededicate for the good of the poor some of their works.

Evangelica testificatio, no. 18

Long live holy poverty. . . . May all our daughters really love and practice this holy virtue, for it is a fundamental virtue of the religious life. It is the lack of it that has introduced so many abuses in the old medieval convents!

The Letters of Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon, end of August, 1827

Chapter IV

The Vow of Poverty

- I.21 In taking on our human condition, Jesus Christ became poor to enrich us. He had a predilection for the poor and made voluntary poverty a condition for following him.
- I.22 Through evangelical poverty chosen for love of Christ who was poor, we enter into His total dependence on the Father and we live in the midst of our brothers and sisters knowing how to receive and to give.
- I.23 Mary, the poor servant of the Lord, is the woman who received and gave to the world Jesus Christ, her Son and our Brothers. Enriched with blessings among all women, she teaches us to sing of the marvels which God works for the humble and little ones. She invites us to rely on God for everything and to give our all.
- I.24 By the vow of poverty we commit ourselves to neither use nor dispose of material goods without the permission of lawful Superiors. We keep the ownership of our patrimonial goods and the right to acquire others, foregoing the administration, the use, and the revenues of these goods. We commit ourselves to a simple way of life, detached from possessions and subject to work. Everything which we acquire by our work or which is given to us as pension, gift, etc. belongs to the Congregation. After the example of the first Christians we place all our goods in common.
- I.25 The love of Christ and the cry of the poor lead us to prayerful discernment of our true needs and to the choice of a simple lifestyle, both individually and in community. The community is careful to give a witness of poverty in its environment; by its hospitality and openness to all, it is eager to share with those less fortunate.
- I.26 Subject to the common law of work, we view all our activity as a service which we fulfill courageously and conscientiously, motivated not by self-interest but by love. Seeking to affirm the dignity of human labor, we collaborate in the human struggle to build a civilization that is more just and loving.
- I.27 Following Christ by evangelical poverty, we die to that need which everyone has to affirm oneself through possessions and we enter into a freedom which makes us available and open to all, bearing witness to the primacy of the Kingdom.
- I.28 Evangelical poverty teaches us to share spiritual, intellectual and material goods. It invites us also to be receptive to the values of those to whom we are sent. It leads us to live in an attitude of trust in Providence, to accept privations and insecurity, peacefully to acknowledge our limitations and our weaknesses, to wonder and to give thanks for creation, life and human activity, which give glory to God.

Patrimonial Goods

- I.29 Before their first profession, the Sisters who possess patrimonial goods convey their administration to a person of their choice or to the Congregation if it accepts, freely deciding to whom the use and the revenue from these same goods will revert. This is called “the act of cession.”

If a Sister did not make an “act of cession” because she did not have any patrimony at the time of her first profession and it happens that she does acquire some afterward, or, even if, having made the act of cession she wants to make a new one for additional goods which have come to her, she will make an act of cession” as indicated above.

Once these dispositions have been made regarding the administration and revenues of patrimonial goods, they cannot be modified by the Sister except with the permission of the Superior General.

If the Congregation agrees to administer the patrimonial goods of a Sister, the revenues from them are acquired by the Congregation.

- I.30 Before their perpetual profession, the Sisters freely make a will regarding the patrimonial goods which they possess. If they have none they do not have to make a will, but if they acquire anything afterward, they will then make a will. These wills are to be made according to the forms proper to each country so that they are legally binding. A will, once made, cannot be modified except with the authorization of the Superior General.
- I.31 The Sisters who feel called to renounce ownership of their patrimonial goods may do so after ten years of perpetual profession. This requires the authorization of the Superior General with the consent of her Council and the advice of the Provincial Superior concerned.

In order that such an act represent genuine detachment, this renunciation should include all the goods of which one is actually the owner.

If a Sister makes this renunciation, wholly or partially, in favor of the Congregation, and then leaves the Congregation, she cannot recover the goods conveyed to the Congregation. This clause will be included in the act of renunciation.

II.5 Personal Poverty

1. By contemplating the poverty of Jesus Christ, each Sister is constantly called to grow in poverty.
2. Each Sister is aware that she must act as a steward, not as an owner: consequently,
 - she gives an account to the Superior or to the community, as the case may be, of the money, of the time, of the goods placed at her disposal.

- she depends on the community for everything which is necessary; she has no other needs than those required for health, work or the mission. She gives to the community everything that she receives: salary pension, payments, donation, gifts . . . refraining from obtaining anything for herself from her family or friends,
 - she agrees to be questioned by her community or her superior concerning the manner in which she practices poverty.
3. Each Sister seeks to keep informed regarding the social and economic issues of her country and of the world.

II.6 Communal Poverty

1. When it is undertaken in the light of the Gospel, communal discernment helps Sisters and communities to become more conscious of their commitment and motivations, and inspires them to act accordingly.
2. Each community adopts a simple lifestyle in accord with the directives of the Provincial Chapter, remembering that it may not adopt the criteria of consumer society or disregard the demands of justice and sharing.
3. The Sisters aim to be in real solidarity with the poor not only in words but by sharing their friendship, their time, their money. Meeting the deprived in their cares, their sufferings and their hopes, the Sisters share the life of the poor.
4. The annual community budget is established and evaluated by the community. It always provides a portion for the poor. It is submitted for the approbation of the Provincial Superior.
5. It is appropriate to discern in community the motives for trips, workshops, etc., and to program them in a spirit of poverty, taking into consideration the guidelines given by the Provincial Chapter.
6. The Sisters remember that economic aid for other communities within the Province as well as for other Provinces is a consequence of the close bonds which unite all the members of the congregation.
7. Religious charged with administering the goods of a community, a province, or the Congregation should have a constant concern for justice. They should also be attentive to prudent planning, for good management is an integral part of the practice of poverty.
8. In properties belonging to the Congregation, whether there is question of sections reserved to the community or of those occupied by a work, every new construction or any renovation normally incumbent on the owner will not be undertaken without the written authorization of the Provincial Superior (Superior General) given with the consent of her Council, after the examination of the plans and estimates.

II.7 Poverty of the Congregation As a Social Body

1. Principles and guidelines for the financial policies of the Congregation and the provinces are determined by the General Chapters and Provincial Chapters, each according to its competence.
2. In the study of plans for new apostolic activities, a certain priority is given to those which are more directly concerned with youth and the poor.

In the study of plans for a new foundation or the expansion of an already existing work, the Sisters in charge should seriously consider if the costs are proportionate to the projected apostolic objective.

Doing the will of him who sent me and bringing his work to completion is my food.

John 4:34

Authority and obedience are exercised in the service of the common good as two complementary aspects of the same participation in Christ's offering. For those in authority, it is a matter of serving in their brothers and sisters the design of the Father's love; while, in accepting their directives, the religious follow our Master's example and cooperate in the work of salvation. Thus, far from being in opposition to one another, authority and individual liberty go together in the fulfillment of God's will, which is sought fraternally. The presence of the Superior, accepted as such, is indispensable in every community.

Evangelica testificatio, no. 25

The subjects are rarely inferiors by that which they have to do, but because they have little faith, too much self-sufficiency, too much confidence in human talents, very little confidence in the grace which accompanies their works and all the acts of obedience

The Spirit of Our Foundation, vol. 1, no. 199

Chapter V

The Vow of Obedience

- I.32 Christ became obedient even to death on the cross to fulfill the Father's saving will. In order to unite ourselves more freely to the filial and redemptive obedience of Christ, we make the total gift of our will to God and become members of an apostolic community.
- I.33 By her "Yes" to God, Mary, under the action of the Holy Spirit, shared in the plan of the Father and cooperated in the mission of the Son. By our daily "Yes" we enter into the "Yes" of Mary pronounced in the name of all humanity on the day of the Annunciation, associating ourselves with her mission.
- I.34 By the vow of obedience we commit ourselves in faith to the orders of our legitimate Superior according to the Rule. This vow obliges us more seriously when in particular cases and for grave reasons the Superiors give us an order in virtue of the vow of obedience. By this vow we must also obey the Pope as our highest superior.
- I.35 Obedience commits us personally to seek the will of God in our life by listening to the Word of God, interpreting the signs of the times and dialoguing with our Superior. It also commits us to be open to accept the mission which the Congregation entrusts to us through our Superiors. In the fulfillment of this mission, we strive to put all our talents at the service of the common good and of the Church.
- I.36 We live our obedience in the midst of a community animated by the Spirit. In faith, we seek to discern together the will of God for the community and the mission. At the end of the discernment process the Superior makes the necessary decisions. These decisions commit all of us. We strive to implement them with initiative and responsibility.
- I.37 Following the example of Christ, the Superior exercises her authority in a spirit of service. Seeking unity among all, she draws forth responsibility and active obedience. Through dialogues she seeks to help each Sister discern what God expects of her. Authority and obedience are thus harmonized by mutual respect and trust.
- I.38 To make the sacrifices which obedience involves we rely on the strength of the Lord, mindful that we have committed our life to following Christ who, Son though He was, learned what it costs to obey through His suffering. Through obedience we die progressively to self-centeredness and open ourselves to interior freedom. Communing with the will of the Father, we grow as children of God.

Thus, like Mary, we will be able to follow Christ on paths which we would not have chosen, paths which open out to peace, love and joy,

II.8 The spirit of obedience requires of each one of us attitudes of listening, openness and ongoing conversion, manifested by:

1. active collaboration in searching for the will of God, making decisions and setting common objectives in community, applying and implementing them. All this requires co-responsibility, consisting in initiative, dialogue and participation.
2. sharing our plans and giving account of our activities.
3. accepting and implementing, personally and communally, the directives given by the Rule, the Chapters, the Council, the Superiors, in accord with their respective authority.

The spirit of obedience excludes personal ambition and excessive attachment to one's job or special task.

The manner in which obedience is lived will be the object of personal and community evaluation.

II.9 In dialogue, mutual charity and prayer, Superiors and Sisters seek to recognize the calls of God through:

- Scripture,
- the teachings of the Church,
- the Rule and the Directives of the Congregation,
- the events and the needs of the world,
- the call of the local Church.

II.10 As far as possible, what concerns community life is decided in community. However, when circumstance demand it, the Superior makes the decisions necessary for growth in community life and apostolic life.

Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst.

Matthew 18:20

Because you are God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with heartfelt mercy, with kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another; forgive whatever grievances you have against one another. Forgive as the Lord has forgiven you.

Colossians 3:12-13

To each person the manifestation of the spirit is given for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12:7

Let us not forget that charity must be as it were an active hope for what others can become with the help of our fraternal support.

Evangelica testificatio, no. 39

It is necessary that you promise to use all your strength to maintain and perpetuate union and charity in all the Institute; for the greatest pain that I would be able to endure would be to see charity weaken in the heart of one soul of our daughters.

Positio – Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon, p. 490

Chapter VI

Community Life

- I.39 Christ came to share our life and to reveal to us the mystery of the Trinity, a mystery of communion in mutual gift and respect for persons He asked the Father that “all may be one so that the world may believe.”
- I.40 It is the Lord who brings us together to live the same vocation. In the midst of a world divided by hatred and sin, our community reveals that Christ is the one who grounds our unity and helps us live in joy and love. Our community life, a sign of His presence, prepares for the presence of the world to come.
- I.41 As Mary was present in the early Church which lived by the Spirit, she is present in community. There she exercises her motherly role, making us open to the Holy Spirit and preparing us to be witnesses of the Good news.
- I.42 The first mission of the community is to be the life-giving environment that enables us to experience God and to share this experience.
- I.43 The Lord calls us to love as He loves. He trusts us and teaches us to have hope in our sisters and their potential for growth. He invites us to accept one another as we are, with our talents and our limitations. This presupposes an attitude of ongoing conversion by which we allow ourselves to be challenged by the Word, by persons and events.
- Through the joys of community life as well as through its inevitable tensions, the Lord shows us that He alone is our strength and our peace and that, through pardon given and received, He daily recreates the community.
- I.44 Convinced that each of us is responsible for the building of community, we actively participate in community life. Giving priority to the common good, we know how to renounce our tastes, our plans and our self-interest.
- I.45 In prayer and discernment, each community determines the major guidelines for its life: Prayer, community life and mission, with the approval of the Provincial Superior.
- I.46 We use communications media with discernment and prudence, respecting the demands of our religious vocation, apostolic work and common life.
- I.47 The practice of silence and the virtues, according to the method of Father Chaminade, helps us to give ourselves to God and others more completely. Prayer for one another, sharing in faith our daily realities and the insights we find in prayer and the apostolate, mutual help and charitable correction—all these support individual and common fidelity to our vocation.
- I.48 Family Spirit, cherished by our Founders, is expressed in the simplicity of our relationships, in the affection which we have for one another, in the care we have for aged or sick Sisters, in the attention we show to Sisters who are temporarily living outside of community, in the discreet support we give to those in difficulty. This same family spirit opens us to other communities, those of the Congregation,

the Church and the world. It makes us especially hospitable to the families of our Sisters and to the members of the Family of Mary.

- I.49 We live in community in legitimately established houses, except in cases of permission to be absent from community given in accord with common law. Each community determines some private places reserved for the Sisters, places which favor prayer and community life, and sees that hospitality is blended with respect for privacy and a well-balanced community life.
- II.11 Community is not uniformity. The unity which exists at the deepest level of community life demands acceptance of differences due to age, mentalities, experience and work. Such differences become a source of mutual enrichment.
- II.12 Silence is essential to establish an atmosphere of prayer, work and peace in our communities. It encourages the interior spirit and contributes to the creation of conditions for an authentic dialogue with God and with others.
- II.13 To live in an attitude of ongoing conversion, the Sisters offer the service of charitable correction in simplicity, gratitude and the spirit of the Gospel.
- II.14 Each community draws up its objectives annually following the Rule and the Provincial Directives, specifying its life of prayer, its community life and its mission. These objectives are submitted for the approval of the Provincial. They are regularly evaluated in community.
- II.15 According to our tradition, the weekly community meetings, held in an atmosphere of prayers, is a privileged means to constantly recreated community through study and sharing of ideas and values, discernment and evaluation.
- II.16 We use the media as an instrument of culture and as an opportunity for community and relaxation. Like correspondence, personal relationships and reading, they serve evangelization if they are permeated with the spirit of the Gospel. Communities periodically examine their use of these means.
- II.17 To establish in community the plan for vacation, study sessions, family visits, times of rest, etc., the Sisters take into account the balance of community life, the requirements of poverty, mutual help between communities, and provincial directives. This plan is always submitted to the Provincial Administration for approval.
- II.18 The religious remains united to her family by deep affection. She assures them of her spiritual help and continues to share their joys and their sorrows. Family visits are the response to a filial or familial duty.
- II.19 At every level, communities and provinces eagerly share news about one another. Whenever the Sisters have the opportunity to spend some time in another province, it is for them a source of mutual understanding, union and enrichment.

Again I tell you, if two of you join your voices on earth to pray for anything whatever, it shall be granted you by my father in heaven. Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst.

Matthew 18:19

Mary treasured all these things and reflected on them in her heart.

Luke 2:19

They should enact the sacred liturgy, especially the most holy mystery of the Eucharist, with hearts and voices attuned to the Church; here is a most copious source of nourishment for the spiritual life.

Perfectae caritatis, no. 6

The Holy Spirit also gives you the grace to discover the image of the Lord in the hearts of all, and teaches you to love them as brothers and sisters. Again, he helps you to see the manifestations of his love in events. If we are humbly attentive to persons and things, the Spirit of Jesus enlightens us and enriches us with his wisdom, provided that we are imbued with the spirit of prayer.

Evangelica testificatio, no. 44

The meditation of the presence of God, combined with that of faith is a calm attention to the presence of God, which prompts the soul to look upon him in the light of faith, with all the attention it can command, and to desire naught but him; it looks upon him unceasingly and never tires of looking upon him.

The light of faith leads us to consider him in all his attributes and in all their consequences.

Writings on Mental Prayer, no. 373

Chapter VII

Prayer Life

- I.50 Throughout His life Christ retired into silence and solitude to experience the love of His Father and His saving plan. He lived in communion with Him, gave thanks in the midst of daily events and joined His people to celebrate the Sabbath and the great liturgical feasts.
- I.51 By faith, Mary lived in intimate union with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. She praised and adored, she heard the Word and kept it. She is attentive to the needs of all people and presents them to her Son.
- I.52 Prayer, the heart of our religious, personal, community and apostolic life, allows us to enter into union with Jesus Christ and to experience His love for the Father and for all people. It enlivens us for mission. In a world thirsting for productivity, gratuitous prayer is the sign of the absolute priority of God in our lives.
- I.53 The community hears and keeps the Word of God which challenges us one and all, drawing us to an ongoing conversion. To live the Word and take on the likeness of Jesus Christ, we must unceasingly ask God for the gift of His Spirit.
- I.54 The liturgy, the source and summit of the life of the Church, occupies an essential place in the life of the community.
- I.55 The Eucharist, “Sacrament of love, sign of unity, bond of charity,” recreates the community each day so that it becomes but one body. The Eucharist is the center of the community’s prayer and life. Through it we participate in the Paschal Mystery of Christ, we become united with the whole Church and the whole human race, and we are renewed for mission.
- I.56 Each community has a chapel or an oratory. We strive to take some time each day to adore Christ present in the Eucharist.
- I.57 Sharing in the Liturgy of the Hours by the daily prayer of Lauds and Vespers, we enter into the hymn of praise which Christ addresses to His Father and in His intercession for all.
- I.58 In solidarity with a sinful world, we frequently receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which permits each Sister and each community to grow in love. In experiencing the forgiveness of God, which saves and reconciles, we learn in turn to forgive others, to be compassionate and grateful, and we receive new strength to follow Christ.
- I.59 When we experience infirmities due to age or sickness, aware of the healing power of the Sacrament of the Sick, we confidently request it for ourselves or generously suggest it to our Sisters. Supported by the love and prayer of her Sisters, she who receives this Sacrament finds in it the help needed to unite her suffering with Christ’s for the life of the world.

- I.60 At the end of our days, we will be happy to have used our life and our energies in the service of Mary. We remain united in faith with the Sisters who have preceded us and we pray for them daily, waiting to join them in joy and light. We faithfully offer the prescribed prayers for them.
- I.61 From the time of our Foundation, meditation has held an important place in the life of the Congregation. We devote an hour to it each day.
- Faith and union with Mary are the characteristics of our prayer.
- “The more we give ourselves to it, the nearer we will approach our goal: conformity with Jesus Christ.” Prayer is the source of the vitality of our faith, which transforms our view of persons and events. Meditation and the spirit of prayer go together. This supposes that we renounce ourselves throughout the day and keep inner silence in order to listen attentively to the inspirations of the Lord. Permeating our life, meditation integrates our inner being and frees our energies for mission.
- I.62 In order to grow continually in prayer and allow faith to inform our entire life, we strive to use the different means which are offered to us, in particular spiritual reading, religious study, spiritual direction, examination of conscience, periodic days of recollection, the annual retreat, the asceticism and the mortification, according to the System of Virtues of Father Chaminade.
- I.63 Mary gave herself completely to the mystery of humanity’s salvation. We look to her as our model and as the educator of our spiritual and apostolic life. We seek to intensify our union with her in contemplating the mysteries of her Son, especially through the daily prayer of the Rosary, through the celebration of her feasts and the use of whatever is inspired by our filial love.
- II.20 Community prayer is marked by simplicity and reverence. We prepare it and take an active part in it.
- II.21 We participate in the Eucharist daily. Where it is not possible to have Mass celebrated daily in community, we take care to have it at least once a week.
- II.22 We seek to make the Lord’s day a day of spiritual renewal, relaxation and community life in the joy of the Resurrection. Whenever possible, we participate in the Eucharistic celebration of the local Christian community.
- II.23 We celebrate in community each day Morning Praise and Evensong. It is good to end the day with the prayer of Compline.
- II.24 Each of us, each community, is responsible to allow ourselves frequent renewal by the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- II.25 It is the responsibility of each of us to be faithful to daily meditation, and we consider as incompatible any occupation which habitually interferes with this

meeting with God. A common time and place may help the prayer life of the community.

II.26 In order to grow in conformity with Jesus Christ, we attach special importance to:

1. the Word of God. It is essential to our life. We read it, share it in community or with other groups of Christians, in such a way as to be transformed by it.
2. spiritual reading, the nourishment of our prayer, to which we aim to devote at least two hours weekly.
3. religious study and the sharing of our faith life.
4. the daily examination of conscience (general and particular), which helps us recognize the action of God in our life and discern His calls, in order to respond to them more freely.
5. spiritual direction, which helps in discernment and in habitual openness to the Holy Spirit.
6. more intense times of prayer, such as monthly days of recollection or several days quarterly and the annual retreat of at least eight days.
7. personal and community asceticism—fasts, voluntary privations with a view to sharing, acceptance of daily difficulties—is a way to share in the mystery of Christ the Redeemer.
8. the System of Virtues according to the method of Father Chaminade.

II.27 We give special attention to the celebration of feasts cherished by the Congregation: The Immaculate Conception, patronal feast of the congregation; Holy Name of Mary, patronal feast of the Society of Mary; Our Lady of the Pillar; Saint Joseph; Saint John the Evangelist; Saint Benedict; May 25th, the Anniversary of our Foundation; the 10th and the 22nd of January, anniversaries of the deaths of our Founders.

II.28 We pray for the living and the dead, in particulate for those with whom we are linked by affection, mission or work. We remember them each day in the celebration of the Eucharist.

In every house of the Congregation:

1. Twelve masses are celebrated every year for the intentions of the Congregation.
2. One Mass is celebrated:
 - for the intentions of the Superior General on her name day,
 - on September 12 for living affiliates and benefactors
 - on March 25 for vacations to the Congregation,
 - in the month of November for our deceased parents,
 - in the month of November for deceased affiliates and benefactors.

3. At the death of a Sister, a Mass is offered for her intention and her name is recalled for nine days during common prayer (Lauds or Vespers).

Daily the community recalls in prayer the Sisters whose anniversary of death falls on that day.

Every month a Mass is celebrated for our deceased Sisters.

4. At the death of a Superior General (or a former Superior General), each house of the Congregation will have at least three Masses celebrated for her.
5. At the death of a father or mother of a religious, the community of which she is a member has a mass celebrated for the parent.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; therefore, he has anointed me; he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind and release to the prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the Lord.”

Rolling up the scroll he gave it back to the assistant and sat down. All in the synagogue had their eyes fixed on him. Then he began by saying to them, “Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Luke 4:18-21

The Church has the duty to proclaim the liberation of millions of human beings, many of whom are her own children—the duty of assisting the birth of this liberation, of giving witness to it, of ensuring that it is complete. This is not foreign to evangelization.

Evangelii nuntiandi, no. 30

Ours is a great work, a magnificent work. If it is universal, it is because we are MISSIONARIES OF MARY, who has said to us, “Whatever He shall say to you, do it.” Yes, we are ALL MISSIONARIES: each one of us has received from the Blessed Virgin a commission to work at the salvation of his brothers in the world.

The Letters of Father Chaminade, August 24, 1839

O my God, my heart is too small to love thee, but it will have thee loved by so many hearts that the love of all of them will make up for the weakness of mine.

We have renewed our vow of teaching. Let us then burn with a holy zeal to make Jesus Christ known and loved. Let us be ready to go everywhere to have him loved, let us accept every employment, knowing how to sacrifice our tastes, our repugnances, our very life, so as to observe this amiable vow. Let us be true missionaries! Let us pray, mortify ourselves so as to obtain the salvation of souls.

The Letters of Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon, October 18, 1824

Chapter VIII

Apostolic Life

- I.64 By the will of our Founders we are essentially missionaries. Our vocation commits us to the mission of Jesus Christ received from his Father and entrusted to His Church: to proclaim the Good News to all people. The Congregation received its mission from the Church; no matter what the tasks of its members, it is always the Congregation which sends them on mission.
- I.65 Through our alliance with Mary we share in her mission as Mother of the Church. Like her, we wish to live in faith and openness; we seek to make her known and loved, for if Jesus Christ came to us through her, it is also through her that the human race will find him.
- I.66 We cooperate in the work of evangelization as a community. Each community is a “permanent mission” that acts and evangelizes through the diversity of gifts and tasks of its members. We form but one body united in the spirit, in which prayer, suffering and daily work all contribute to the realization of the common mission. In the accomplishment of this mission each one knows she is an apostle more by what she is than by what she does and that the community evangelizes to the extent that it allows itself to be evangelized.
- I.67 Basically, the Congregation is open to all forms of ministry. Faithful to the vision of our Founders we choose preferably those ministries which favor “the multiplication of Christians,” awaken faith, allow us to form communities of Christians and apostles, and are more particularly concerned with youth and the poor.
- Since our origins, education, especially through schools, holds a privileged place among the works of the Congregation, since its aim is the inner freedom of the individual and the unfolding of the best in each person, thus preparing hearts to accept the Good News.
- I.68 Work for the promotion of justice is a demand of the Gospel. In the midst of the realities in which we live, we seek, personally and communally, to eliminate all forms of injustice from our lives, to have concern for the less fortunate and to be in solidarity with those who join together to build a more just and loving world. The goal is to open to all people the path leading to dignity as a human being called to be a child of God and a brother and sister to all others.
- I.69 Missionary spirit should animate our entire life. It requires of each of us a profound respect for the other, and an openness to be always ready to respond in a new way to the new needs of the Church throughout the world.

- I.70 In the service of our mission, we maintain an attitude of humble gratitude knowing that if we have something to offer, we also have very much to learn and receive.
- I.71 With other members of the Family of Mary we are eager to spread our charism in the Church, because we are convinced of its richness.
- I.72 Effective participation in Mary's mission in the Church requires that we live by faith, a faith which is expressed through patience and hope, despite failures, because the Spirit acts in the heart of every person.

Animated by faith, hope and love, apostolic life becomes a source of spiritual life and a nourishment for unceasing prayer. Thus our life is unified in the service of God and neighbor

Vocations

- I.73 Happy to have been called to prolong Mary's apostolic mission and convinced that the Lord does not cease to call men and women whom the Church needs, we strive to pray and work so that others may come to know the joy which inspires us and commit themselves to the service of Mary.
- I.74 Through prayer, suffering and work, each of us may become the channel of the Spirit, source of all vocations. The more our communities radiate peace and joy, the more the young will desire to share in our work of "the multiplication of Christians." Through the witness of our personal and communal life, the Church invites workers for the mission of evangelization.
- II.29 In the accomplishment of their mission the Sisters are called
- to collaborate with the local Church giving special attention to those areas not yet served,
 - to participate in existing ministries and to further the success of ministries others have undertaken, and to manifest initiative and creativity.
- II.30 To make Mary known, loved and served is one of the elements of the Marianist vocation. That is why the Sisters collaborate with the various groups of the Family of Mary and participate in the Marian movements of the Church.
- II.31 Through personal and communal discernment, attentive to the signs of the times, the Sisters are aware of the demands of the mission which is entrusted to them and seek means to respond to it. The Provincial Administration supports and guides the communities and individual Sisters in the accomplishment of their mission. Each year, the provinces and the communities evaluate the manner in which they fulfill their plans.

- II.32 In the choice or the continuation of a work or an apostolic activity, it is essential to ensure the habitual participation of each Sister in community life.
- II.33 The proclamation of the Word and “education in faith and Christian morals,” may be realized in various ways such as: catechetical work, schools, guiding groups of reflection and prayer, retreats, youth and family programs, and personal contacts. All these activities should aim toward the formation and development of Christian communities.
- II.34 It is important to encounter youth in their own milieu, where they live, and to offer them the opportunity to join communities where, with adults, they may pray, share their faith and grow from the point where they begin.

The school remains a privileged meeting place for youth and adults. To serve the work of evangelization, it is important that the philosophy of education be inspired by Gospel values and that educators seek to form Christian communities.

- II.35 The Provincial Administrations encourage the communities and the individual Sisters to be attentive and open to the invitations coming from the Church where the need for developing Christian communities and forming apostles is particularly felt. The Provincial Administrations study concrete ways of responding to these calls.
- II.36 Each Sister recalls that evangelization implies walking alongside of people, sharing their sufferings, their joys, their aspirations, accepting the realities which make up their life, allowing oneself to be challenged by them, and that it is essential not first of all to speak but to live the Gospel in all its demands.

Vocations

- II.37 The concern for vocations for the Church is the responsibility of each Sister and each community. This requires us:
1. to give priority to personal and communal prayer for vocations in response to the invitation of Christ: “Pray to the Master of the Harvest.”
 2. to draw up a vocation program in each province taking into consideration the plans of the dioceses and of the Society of Mary. This program is evaluated by the Provincial Chapter. In each province a Sister is responsible for the work of the communities in this respect.
 3. to promote true community life, since the witness of a prayerful, joyful, hospitable and loving community is of primary importance.
 4. to develop and to accompany youth movements, prayer and faith groups, especially Family of Mary groups.
 5. to share in the life of the local Church. It is there, in a special way, that Christ calls men and women to serve Him in the complementarity of their vocation.

6. to foster personal contact with youth, to accompany them in their search and to invite them to share our life according to the directives of the province.
7. to make families aware of vocation ministry.

The suitable renewal of religious communities depends very largely on the training of their members. Therefore religious men other than clerics, and religious women as well, should not be assigned to apostolic works immediately after the novitiate. In suitable residences and in a fitting manner, let them continue their training in the religious life and the apostolate, in doctrine and technical matters, even to the extent of winning appropriate degrees. Lest the adaptations of religious life to the needs of our times be merely superficial, and lest those who by constitution pursue the external apostolate prove unequal to the fulfillment of their task, religious should be properly instructed, according to the intellectual gifts and personal endowments of each, in the prevailing manners of contemporary social life, and in its characteristic ways of feeling and thinking. If such training is harmoniously coordinated it will contribute to integrity of life on the part of religious.

Perfectae caritatis, no. 18

The prime purpose of the novitiate is to prepare the novices for the religious life, according to the aims of the Institute; therefore the novices must be trained, either simultaneously or successively, in the practice of the religious life and in the understanding of the aims of the Institute.

The Spirit of Our Foundation, vol. 4, chapter 3, no. 48

This young lady has courage and character. She understands easily. I hope that you will make of her a good religious, but take your time about it. In general, grace must not be forestalled, but seconded in each subject, just as one must do in one's own case.

The Letters of Father Chaminade, December 30, 1816

Chapter IX

Formation

- I.75 The Congregation is especially concerned with the formation of its members, and the General and Provincial Administrations make it one of their priorities.

The main purpose of this formation is to lead the person to respond in faith, to find integration in Jesus Christ, and to live in the spirit of the Congregation. Therefore, formation should be understood as a gradual, dynamic and unifying process of growth. It should foster the harmonious development of spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical faculties.

Moreover, the adaptation of our service to our mission presupposes an ongoing formation which takes evolution and change into account. We must live in a state of conversion which will enable us to meet the ever-new demands of the mission.

- I.76 Community is an important agent of formation, dynamism and fidelity. That is why we all feel responsible to create a community environment which will respect the personal journey of each Sister and foster the maturing and unfolding of persons growing constantly in faith and love for Christ.

- I.77 From its beginning formation is centered on three areas: the life of faith and of prayer, community life, and insertion into the Marianist mission.

- I.78 The General Administration establishes basic guidelines for initial formation programs. From these the provinces draw up their own programs which are submitted to the General Administration for approval.

- I.79 The formation of prenovices takes place under the direction of a Sister approved by the Provincial.

- I.80 The formation of the novices takes place under the direction of the Directress of Novices. She is appointed by the Provincial with the deliberate vote of her Council. Her appointment is ratified by the Superior General.

The Directress of Novices is chosen from the perpetually professed and must be at least thirty years old. She is helped in her task by other Sisters or by the formation community.

- I.81 The formation of the temporary professed is coordinated for the whole province by a Sister appointed by the Provincial. She works in conjunction with the Sisters responsible for the temporary professed in the communities.

Stages of Formation

- I.82 For admission to the novitiate, to the temporary and perpetual profession, all the prescriptions stipulated by the Church and the Congregation are observed.
- I.83 Entry into the novitiate, temporary and perpetual professions are preceded by a retreat of at least eight days.

Prenovitiate

I.84 The prenovitiate lasts from six months to two years. A part must be made in the novitiate house. The candidate to the prenovitiate presents, at the same time that she makes her written request for admission, the required documents for admission to the novitiate.

I.85 The prenovitiate is a time of orientation, of openness to a new lifestyle, of discernment and of mutual acquaintance.

It is important to welcome the candidate as she is, to ascertain that she is in good health, that her psychological maturity corresponds to her age, that she has good judgment, capacity for growth, the aptitudes necessary for community life and the freedom to respond to the call of the Lord. It is also important to make sure that the candidate has a good basic Christian formation.

I.86 Once the prenovitiate is completed, the candidate presents her request for admission to the novitiate to the Provincial. After consulting the Sisters responsible for formation, the Provincial decides on admission with the deliberate vote of her Council.

Novitiate

I.87 The novitiate takes place in a house approved in writing for this purpose, with the deliberate vote of her Council.

I.88 The novitiate begins with a simple private ceremony. It lasts two years. For just reasons it can be prolonged six months. Twelve months presence in the novitiate house are required for its validity.

During this year, absences from the novitiate house exceeding three months, continuous or not, invalidate the novitiate. Absences of more than fifteen days should be made up.

I.89 The novitiate is the most important stage of initial formation. It is a period of initiation to Marianist religious life. This time is essentially one of breaking away to facilitate an attachment of one's whole being to Jesus Christ, whom the novice learns to know more personally.

During this time she:

- grows in personal and community prayer and internalizes the Word of God,
- deepens her understanding of consecrated life,
- is initiated into the charism and the Marianist mission,
- gradually enters into the life of the community,
- experiences personal and spiritual direction,
- gradually learns personal discernment.

I.90 During the second year of novitiate some periods of apostolic activity are integrated into formation. The organization and implementation of these periods

are left to the judgment of the Directress of Novices with the approval of the Provincial. Their goal is:

- to bring about an integration of action and prayer,
- to deepen Marianist identity,
- to confront the convictions of faith with reality,
- to provide the experience of sharing life with another community,
- to be initiated into the mission,
- to help discern apostolic aptitudes.

- I.91 During the time of the novitiate all studies made with a view to obtaining a diploma or professional training are excluded, because this should be an intense time of initiation into Marianist religious life.
- I.92 At the end of the novitiate, the novice presents to the Provincial a written request, giving her reasons for admission to first profession. The Provincial answers the request after consultation with the Directress of Novices, the Sisters of the formation community, and with the deliberate vote of her Council.

Temporary Profession

- I.93 The novice concludes the novitiate by professing temporary vows of chastity, poverty, obedience and stability. These vows bind the Sister to the Congregation. The vows are renewed each year for five years and can be prolonged, but the total period of temporary vows should not exceed seven years. For a just reason the Superior General can permit this period to be reduced but not to less than three years. The novices take their first vows for a period which extends to the annual retreat which follows their leaving the novitiate. Thereafter the year of vows is counted from one annual retreat to the next.
- I.94 The period of temporary profession is a time of deepening in one's vocation, integration into the life and mission of the community and of apostolic, theological, and professional formation.
- I.95 By temporary profession the Sister becomes a member of the Congregation. She has the same obligations and the same rights as the perpetually professed. However, the temporary professed is not eligible for General or Provincial Chapters, but after two years of profession she has active voice and may be appointed an observer.
- I.96 Each year, in view of admission to the renewal of vows, the religious presents a written request giving her reasons to the Provincial.
- The Provincial consults the Directress and the Sisters of the community in which the Sister lives, then makes a decision about admission with the deliberate vote of her Council.

Perpetual Profession

- I.97 At the end of the period of temporary profession the religious sends the Superior General through the Provincial a written request giving her motives for requesting admission to perpetual profession.
- I.98 Before perpetual profession, the Sisters have an immediate preparation of not less than two months. This is a very special time of recollection, reflection and spiritual integration.
- I.99 By perpetual profession the Sister expresses her will to give herself definitely to God in the service of Mary in the Congregation.
- I.100 Formation is not completed with perpetual profession. Each Sister, regardless of her age or activities, seeks to pursue and to further her formation throughout her lifetime.
- II.38 Considering formation a high priority, Provincial Administrations:
1. see that each Sister receives an adequate formation for her life of faith, her profession or her pastoral task.
 2. are attentive to the demands of evangelization and seek the proper means to respond to them.
 3. have a special concern in the choice and preparation of those responsible for formation.
 4. stimulate ongoing formation within communities.
 5. encourage communities to keep informed regarding the social, economic, religious and cultural situation of the world in which they live.
 6. periodically update formation programs.
- II.39 In order to live our Marianist vocation in depth, each one of us should feel responsible throughout her life for her own formation. Toward this goal we seek to draw the greatest benefit from what is offered by the Church and the Congregation by means of professional updating and the realities of daily life.
- II.40 Specific Means Given by Father Chaminade
- The System of Virtues is a framework which may be a great help in guiding us toward greater conformity with Jesus Christ.
- a) Among the virtues of preparation, silence of words should be accompanied by that of sign, of the mind, the emotions and the imagination. The practice of these five silences, joined to the other preparatory virtues (recollection, preparatory obedience and support of mortifications), enables us to acquire the self-discipline necessary for continued growth in holiness and for the fulfillment of our apostolic mission.

- b) The virtues of purification extract the very roots of our faults and prepare us for fuller cooperation with God's grace. Confidence in God, distrust of self and recourse to guidance enable us to overcome the deep inner obstacles presented by our weakness, our natural faults and our uncertainties. Long-suffering patience, frequent recourse to prayer and the firm renewal of our intentions give us the courage to overcome external obstacles such as irritations, suggestions, and temptations which flow from an attraction to evil.
- c) The virtues of consummation (humility, modesty, self-denial and renunciation of the world) free us from selfishness so that our life can be centered in the Lord. These virtues prepare us to put on the "new man in a life wholly motivated by faith, hope and charity."

The Office System is a means of becoming personally and communally responsible in all aspects of religious life. In fact, through the areas of concern which it embraces (relationship to God, mission and formation, insertion into society through work), it contributes greatly to formation

- II.41 A formation commission composed of the Assistant for Zeal, the Directress of Novices, the Sister responsible for the temporary professed and other members if the Provincial Council judges them necessary, is responsible for adapting, revising and updating the initial formation programs in the province. This commission works under the authority of the Provincial.
- II.42 The Provincial Chapter regularly studies the formation programs and gives its recommendations.
- II.43 The Directress of Novices is directly responsible to the Provincial. She works in close collaboration with the formation community and seeks to maintain an attitude of openness to the action of the Lord in each of the persons who are confided to her, walking with them on their personal journey without anticipating the hour of God. She seeks to foster an ability to make responsible choices in an atmosphere of trust and freedom. The Directress of Novices' term of office is not to exceed ten years.
- II.44 Before admitting a Sister to any of the stages of initial formation it is essential to be assured through dialogue and discernment that there is growth in the following areas:
 - self-knowledge and self-acceptance,
 - human and emotional maturity,
 - strength of character,
 - life of prayer, fidelity to the vows,
 - aptitude for the common life: forgetfulness of self, openness to others, honesty in relation to the other Sisters and the Superiors, capacity for adaptation,
 - family spirit: love and esteem for the Congregation, devotion to the mission,
 - aptitude to relate to the contemporary world.

The most basic point is to be sure the candidate has sound judgment.

- II.45 Each year during the period of temporary vows each of the temporary professed with the Sister responsible for her formation makes an evaluation intended to permit her to discern the action of God in her life and her growth in the service of mission.
- II.46 Each Sister, during the period of temporary vows, should devote some time to the study of French, the official language of the Congregation, or for the French-speaking, one of the other languages spoken in the Congregation.
- II.47 After a certain number of years of religious life, the Sisters are granted a period of renewal, above all in the spiritual dimension. It belongs to the provincial chapters to make policies in this regard.

You address me as “Teacher” and “Lord” and fittingly enough for that is what I am. But if I washed your feet—I who am teacher and lord—then you must wash each other’s feet. What I just did was to give you an example: as I have done, so you must do.

John 13:13-15

As generous distributors of God’s manifold grace, put your gifts at the service of one another, each in the measure he has received.

1 Peter 4:10

All the means that tend to introduce and maintain souls in the ways of religious perfection, and all that they use to spread sentiments and faith, so as to keep one from contrary errors and laxity, all these means are under the jurisdiction of the Office of Zeal.

FMI Constitutions of 1839, article 16

All the means that one can use to instruct and to teach others, in whatever way this can be done, are under the jurisdiction of the Office of Instruction.

FMI Constitutions of 1839, article 226

All that concerns the maintenance of the house, of the life and health of the Sisters and training in manual work, is the concern of the Office of Temporalities.

FMI Constitutions of 1839, article 260

Chapter X

Government

Authority as Service

I.101 Christ transmitted his authority to the Church. From the moment the Church approves the Congregation, she recognizes its power to govern itself with a view to realizing its life and mission.

We respond to our vocation in community. This requires the collaboration of all the Sisters and the service of an authority which works to maintain unity, animates and directs the community toward its goal. In the service offered through the exercise of authority as well as in the practice of obedience, we live the commandment of love which is the summary of the whole law.

I.102 The Congregation is at the service of the Church. We manifest our attachment to the Holy Father by our fidelity to his directives and we recognize the authority of the local ordinary according to the norms of Canon Law.

Structures of Government

I.103 Father Chaminade founded our religious family and gave it the proper means to accomplish its mission. For this purpose he distributed the tasks of leadership in the Congregation according to the Three Offices: Zeal, Instruction and Temporalities.

I. 104 The Office of Zeal animates and seeks to foster the spirit of the Congregation, the life of prayer and union with God which is the source of all activity in the Family of Mary and in each of its members.

The Office of Instruction works to promote the Spirit of the Congregation in view of evangelization.

The Office of Temporalities has the mission of attending to the practice of poverty and administering material goods according to the spirit of the Gospel.

The Heads of the Offices coordinate their action under the direction of the General, Provincial, or local superior. These Superiors, each one at her own level, have final responsibility for the Three Offices.

I. 105 The Office structure fosters the sense of responsibility, facilitates the exercise of co-responsibility and requires mutual understanding and collaboration among all.

Each Sister assumes her responsibilities and the specific obligations flowing from them, while practicing the virtues recommended by our Founder, especially the spirit of faith and family spirit.

These structures are a means of leadership and adaptation to the needs of mission. They contribute at the same time to the liberation of the person, rendering her more and more in conformity with Jesus Christ.

- I. 106 The Congregation is divided into provinces. The foundation, modification or suppression of a province are the responsibility of the Superior General with the deliberate vote of her Council.
- I.107 The General, Provincial and Local Superior exercise ordinary personal authority. The assistants of these Superiors share with them their responsibilities in accordance with their functions as described in the Rule of Life and the statutes of the General Chapters.
- General Chapters exercise collegial authority.
- I. 108 Superiors and Chapters exercise their authority within the limits fixed by Church law and the Constitutions.
- I.109 Ordinary executive personal authority may be delegated to one religious or a group of religious for works or functions, according to the norms established by the Church for such delegation.
- I.110 At all levels the exercise of authority calls for participation, subsidiarity, and implies accountability.

The Congregation, an International Community

- I.111 At the international level the entire Congregation constitutes a single community in which each religious finds her identity as a Marianist.
- I.112 Our unity on the international level is founded on the following elements:
- a) a common spirituality inherited from our Founders,
 - b) a specific mission recognized by the Church,
 - c) family spirit, formed throughout a common history,
 - d) the same Rule of Life,
 - e) common leadership coming from the General Chapters and the General Administration,
 - f) interprovincial meetings which stimulate our awareness of the needs of the Church and the Congregation.
- I.113 Each Sister should take an active interest in the life of the congregation throughout the world; she should be ready to do whatever is necessary to foster unity and deepen mutual understanding; and she should be open to service in provinces other than her own when she is called there by legitimate authority.

Structures of Government

- II.48 The Three Offices are three areas of concern which cover the entire life of the congregation and of each of its members. Each Office has a specific role, but no single Office by itself can have a total vision of reality. The concerted action of the Three Offices at the level of the Council is the key to Marianist animation.
- II.49 Concerns of particular attention to the Office of Zeal are the following:

1. the means necessary for the spiritual growth of religious and communities: liturgy, sacramental life, life of prayer, retreats, conferences, spiritual direction.
2. concern to keep alive the missionary spirit of the Sisters and communities.
3. study in depth of the Marianist Charism and Marianist documents.
4. initial formation programs and their implementation.
5. religious studies and the formation of the Sisters in the fields of theology, religious education and liturgy, as well as in the field of pastoral work.
6. programs for vocation ministry.
7. relations with the Society of Mary and other Family of Mary groups.
8. relations and collaboration with the local and universal Church and their authorities.

II.50 Concerns of particular attention for the Office of Instruction are the following:

1. The professional formation of the Sisters in view of mission and of their ongoing formation.
2. the works and apostolic activities of the Congregation.
3. educational institutions, their insertion in the overall pastoral thrust of the Church, especially their human and Christian objectives.
4. education in the faith; catechetical and pastoral work, faith-sharing groups, formation of Christian communities.
5. formation of apostles, catechists and evangelizers.
6. development of new methods of evangelization and formation.
7. relations with the Society of Mary groups.
8. relations and collaboration with the local and universal Church and their authorities.

II.51 Concerns of particular attention for the Office of Temporalities are the following:

1. the spirit of poverty and our collective witness to it.
2. the promotion of justice.
3. sharing with the poor.
4. concern for justice toward all persons employed in the houses of the Congregation.
5. kindly attention to the physical and material well-being of the members of the Congregation.
6. economic planning, management, and stewardship of material goods with a concern to use them in the service of our mission.

7. the basic education of all religious in socioeconomic fields and information concerning major contemporary problems in economics and justice.
 8. professional formation of Sisters in charge of temporal matters.
 9. relations with the civil authorities, experts and organizations working in the fields of economics and social justice.
- II.52 Responsibility for each Office is usually assigned to a specific Assistant at the General, Provincial and Community levels.
- II.53 The Office of Zeal corresponds to the Assistant for Religious Life; the Office of Instruction to the Assistant for Education; and the Office of Temporalities to the Assistant for Temporal Goods.
- II.54 Participation consists in the active collaboration of all the members as far as possible in planning, implementing and evaluating decisions.

Subsidiarity means that the power of decision-making is placed at the level that it is at once most competent and closest to implementation.

A Sister in authority should therefore not make decisions in place of someone at a lower echelon who has the power to do it. Neither can a Sister in authority make decisions which belong by right to a higher authority, on whom rests final responsibility for the common good.

Accountability requires informing authorities about the way in which we seek to fulfill the objectives of the Congregation. Authority has the duty of responding with constructive evaluation.

This method of sharing authority requires attitudes of openness and mutual responsibility. It implies that great importance is given to communication, information, exchange and consultation at all levels and from one level to another.

Chapter XI

General Government

The General Chapter

I.114 The General Chapter is above all a spiritual event for the Congregation. It is God who assembles the Congregation, represented by delegates, to recreate it from within, through the action of His Spirit, renewing it and allowing it to verify its fidelity to the vision of the Founders.

I.115 The General Chapter is, according to the norms of the Constitutions, the highest authority in the Congregation. It elects the Superior General and her Assistants; it deals with the major business of the Congregation; it gives general directives; it updates the General Directory and proposes revisions affecting the Constitutions to the Holy See. Its decisions are binding on all members of the Congregation. The statutes of a General Chapter remain in force as long as they have not been modified or abolished by another General Chapter.

I.116 The Chapter meets every five years. It also meets when it is necessary to elect a Superior General for a reason other than the regular expiration of her term (death, resignation, deposition).

When serious and unforeseen circumstances arise, the Superior General can convoke an Extraordinary Chapter with the assent of her Council or of the provincials. However, the regular cycle of the ordinary Chapters is not interrupted by such an Extraordinary Chapter.

I.117 The General Chapter is convoked by the Superior General by a circular sent to each house of the Congregation at least six months before the date fixed for the opening of the Chapter. The Superior General and her Council fix the place and date of the opening of the Chapter.

I.118 In case of serious illness, death, resignation or deposition of the Superior General, the First Assistant (Head of Zeal) takes her place as Vicar General. Within two months following this event, the Vicar General should consult the other General Council members and the Provincials to decide if it is fitting or not to convoke a Chapter to elect a Superior General who will govern during the interim until the next ordinary General Chapter. If one-third of the members thus consulted so agree, the Chapter should be convoked as soon as possible. Otherwise the First Assistant becomes Superior General until the next ordinary General Chapter. In this case, if it will be more than a year before this Chapter, the General Council selects a new Assistant to complete the number of General Assistants for the interim.

I.119 The Chapter is composed of members by right and members elected by the different provinces. The members by right are:

- the members of the General Administration, even if they are not reelected in the course of the Chapter,
- the Provincials.

If the Chapter elects to the General Administration a religious who is not a capitulant, she attends the Chapter as soon as possible and enjoys the right to vote by the fact of her election. If the Superior General is elected under these conditions, the Chapter is suspended until her arrival.

The number of elected members in the General Chapter must exceed the number of members by right.

An elected member cannot resign from her elected position unless her reason is accepted by the Superior General with the consent of her Council. In this case she is replaced by an alternate delegate.

If a member by right is unable to attend the Chapter, a Sister designated by the Superior General with the consent of her Council replaces her.

Each province can send observers to the Chapter. Their restricted number is determined by the Superior General on the advice of her Council.

The General Council can also invite resource persons and Sisters who can fulfill the functions of auxiliary secretaries.

Only the capitulants have the right to vote.

- I.120 The General Chapter elects the Superior General. The Chapter then proceeds to the election of the Assistants General. These elections are by secret ballot. A two-thirds majority is required on the first two ballots and an absolute majority on two subsequent ballots. If a fifth ballot is necessary, only the two Sisters who have obtained the highest number of votes on the preceding ballots are eligible. If more than two Sisters have obtained the same number of votes, the two oldest in religious profession, then in age, are kept. In case both obtain the same number of votes on the last ballot, the oldest in profession, then in age, is declared elected.

Elections to the General Chapter

- I.121 Perpetually professed Sisters, as well as temporary professed who have been professed at least two years, can elect the delegates. Only perpetually professed are eligible.

The General Administration

- I.122 The General Administration is composed of the Superior General, the three Assistants General and the Secretary General. The Superior General and the three Assistants constitute the General Council.

- I.123 The principal functions of the General Administration are:

1. to maintain, strengthen and symbolize the unity of the Congregation
2. within the pluralism of the provinces.
3. to foster meetings (Extraordinary Councils or others) appropriate to stimulating and encouraging initiatives which aim to deepen the spirit of the

Congregation, to highlight Marianist life in the Church, and to ensure the development of the Congregation by fostering its continual adaptation to the needs of the Church and the world.

4. to facilitate communication among the provinces.
5. to be attentive to the implementations of the constitutions and the decisions of the General Chapter in each province.
6. to see that the archives of the Congregation are kept up to date.
7. to offer the service of arbitration for any religious, community or province when no solution for difficulties which concern them has been reached at a lower level.
8. to maintain communications with the Holy See, the Society of Mary, other religious Congregations and international organizations.

The Superior General

I.124 The Superior General stands before the Church and her Sisters in the primary position of responsibility for the Congregation. She is the visible sign of the unity of the Congregation and guarantor of its fidelity to its mission and the charism of the Founders. With the provinces and communities, she seeks means to insure growth, vitality, and cohesiveness.

She has direct authority over all the religious of the Congregation.

She is elected by the General Chapter for a term of five years. She can be reelected only once for a new term of office.

She must be at least forty years of age and perpetually professed at least ten years.

I.125 The principal responsibilities of the Superior General are:

1. to see that the Rule and the statutes of the General Chapters are observed.
2. to provide for good functioning of the Three Offices.
3. to support and stimulate the Provincial Administrations in the fulfillment of their responsibilities.
4. to exercise direct and immediate authority over all the members of the congregation (however, the definite transfer of a religious from one province to another requires the consent of her Council).
5. to ratify the choice of Directresses of Novices.
6. to represent the Congregation with authorities and to sign, or have signed, all transactions made in the name of the congregation.
7. to visit the provinces and communities of the Congregation (either personally or through delegates) at least twice during her term.

I.126 If the Superior General wishes to resign, she should present her resignation to the Holy See. She can also be deposed only by the authority of the Holy See.

If it appears necessary to remove an Assistant from her position, the Superior General first requests the advice of the other members of the Council through a deliberate vote. She then submits the matter to the Holy See and awaits its decision.

The Assistants General

I.127 The three Assistants General are elected by the General Chapter for a five-year term. They can be reelected for a second term. They must be perpetually professed for at least five years.

As collaborators with the Superior General for the administration of the congregation, they carry out their roles under her authority.

They assume responsibility for the Offices of Zeal, Instruction and Temporalities (Treasurer General).

I.128 The First Assistant replaces the Superior General in the event of absence or sickness. She maintains the continuity of the Administration in case of the death, resignation or deposition of the Superior General and, in this case, convokes the General Chapter.

I.129 The Secretary General is appointed by the Superior General with the advice of her Council and after consultation with the Provincial Superior concerned.

The Councils

I.130 The Ordinary Council is composed of the Superior General and three Assistants General.

The Council meets at least once a month or more often if the Superior General judges it necessary.

The Superior General may authorize a Council meeting without assisting at it. However, the decisions made do not go into effect until she has approved them.

I.131 The following matters require a deliberate vote of the Council:

1. foundation, modification or suppression of a province.
2. appointment of Provincials and approval of their Councils; resignation, change or deposition of these same Provincials before the end of their term.
3. the appointment of the Secretary General.
4. general ordinances and regulations.
5. temporary dispensations from certain regulations of a disciplinary nature in the Rule or Chapter statutes.
6. publication of official writings addressed to the members of the congregation by the superior General and her Assistants.
7. admission to perpetual vows.

8. approval of decisions of Provincial Chapters.
 9. approval of formation programs of the provinces.
 10. arbitration of inter-provincial difficulties or even of difficulties within a province, when ordinary internal arbitration within the province has not solved them.
 11. definite transfer of a religious from one province to another.
 12. important transactions with the Holy See, the use of the powers granted to the Superior General by the Holy See, the subdelegation of these powers to Provincials.
 13. approval of periodic reports to the Sacred Congregation.
 14. sales, acquisitions of properties, loans, expenditures for construction which exceed the amount established by the National Bishops Conference in view of request for an indult from the Holy See.
 15. establishment of a novitiate house.
 16. foundation, change in nature or suppression of a house or a work according to the norms of Canon Law.
 17. measures to be taken to assist a province or a house, if the Provincial Administration is unable to provide for it.
 18. final approval of the General Administration budget in accordance with the directives of the General Chapter.
 19. resignation of an Assistant and—in case of deposition or death—the designation, by secret ballot and an absolute majority, after consultations with the Provincials, of a replacement who will fill the vacant position until the next General Chapter.
 20. authorization for a temporary professed to leave the Congregation before the expiration of her vows.
 21. other cases foreseen by Canon Law and the decrees of the Holy See.
- I.132 Ordinary matters for the Council, requiring a consultative vote, are current affairs and particular cases which may arise.
- I.133 If in ordinary matters requiring a deliberate vote, the Council, in its majority, refuses its consent, the Superior General may call for new deliberations in a second and third meeting. After the third meeting, the Superior General cannot act on a matter if the majority of the Council continues to disagree. Nevertheless, the same Council majority cannot force the Superior General to make a decision against her will.

If in ordinary matters submitted to the Council for consultative vote, the opinion of the Council is contrary to that of the Superior General, she has the right to disregard it. Nevertheless, she will not do so without serious reasons.

I.134 The Extraordinary Council is composed of the Superior General, the Assistants General, the Provincials and other religious whom the Superior General may invite as experts if she judges it appropriate. The Extraordinary Council has a consultative role.

The General Chapter

- II.55 As an expression of its legislative function, the General Chapter:
1. determines the means to be taken so that the Congregation may most effectively realize its mission; it engages in long-term planning.
 2. updates the General Director of the Congregation.
 3. studies and acts upon proposals submitted.
 4. formulates statutes and makes specific decisions.
 5. establishes major policies for the General Administration budget and sets the contribution of each province.
 6. formulates and proposes to the Holy See revisions to be made in the Constitutions.
- II.56 As an expression of its evaluative function, the General Chapter:
1. basing itself on reports of the General Administration, studies the life of the congregation since the preceding General Chapter and the role that the General Administration has played in the Congregation.
 2. reviews the implementation of decisions of the preceding Chapter.
 3. analyzes the financial policies of the General Administration and gives directives on this matter.
- II.57 From the day the Chapter is convoked, religious who are members by right cannot be removed from their office. In the case of a Chapter convoked by the First Assistant, these changes are forbidden from the very day on which the Generalate becomes vacant.
- II.58 As soon as the Provincial receives notice of the convocation of the General Chapter, she gives all the indications necessary for election of delegates. The Superior General promulgates the names of the members of the General Chapter in all houses of the Congregation.
- II.59 In order to prepare for the Chapter, the capitulants elect from their membership a commission of three members, one of whom is a member of the General Administration. This commission takes the means necessary so that every community and each Sister of the congregation may take an active part in the preparation of the General Chapter.
- II.60 To maintain good order during Chapter proceedings, the capitulants follow the rules of order established for General Chapters. Nevertheless, the Chapter may modify these rules of order.
- II. 61 Unless the Chapter decides to the contrary, statutes and regulations that are adopted become effective as soon as the Superior General promulgates them.

Election to the General Chapter

II.62 The purpose of the elections is to choose delegates to the General Chapter. The number of elected members must exceed by one-half the number of members by right.

Each province has at least two elected members.

The remaining number of delegates is calculated in proportion to the number of perpetually professed Sisters in the Congregation. As long as the number of members in the Congregation is between three and five hundred, there will be one delegate for every forty perpetually professed. Any remainder of twenty or more gives the right to one more delegate.

The Chapter retains the possibility of changing the election procedures and the manner of determining the number of delegates.

II.63 Delegates are elected by an absolute majority of votes on the first and second ballot and by a relative majority if a third ballot is necessary. But on the second and third ballots only those who have received votes on the first ballot are eligible.

II.64 Once the delegates have been elected, a new vote takes place to elect alternates. These are elected by a relative majority on the first ballot. Only Sisters who have received at least two votes on the first ballot for the election of delegates are eligible. The number of alternates is half the number of delegates.

II.65 Observers to the General Chapter are named by the Provincial Superior with the consent of her council.

The Assistants General The Secretary General

II.66 The Office of Assistant General is incompatible with any other responsibility which would prevent a Sister from fulfilling her task as Assistant.

The Secretary General is present at the General Council meetings when the matters treated require a collegial vote.

Regular Visitations

II.67 Regular visitations are means of special contact between the General Administrations and the provinces. The problems of the provinces and the communities are discussed with the Provincial Administrations, but this does not exclude meetings with communities and with individual Sisters.

Visitations allow the General Administration:

1. to work with the Provincial Administrations.
2. to become aware of the concrete situations of the provinces.

3. to encourage communities and Sisters to fulfill their mission in the Church in a concrete way.
4. to maintain and strengthen bonds of unity and family spirit in communities.
5. to share the life of the Congregation more closely.

The Extraordinary Council

II.68 The Extraordinary Council is convoked by the Superior General at least once between every two General Chapters. As an organism for communication and exchange of experience, its mission is:

1. to promote unity among the provinces.
2. to discern the calls which Church and world address to the Congregation.
3. to evaluate how Chapter decisions are being implemented and how the life of the congregation is proceeding.
4. to foresee preparations for the General Chapter.
5. to study the budget of the General Administration.

Chapter XII

Provincial Government

The Province

- I.135 A province is a unit to which are permanently attached religious who live in community and work at the common mission under the leadership of a provincial within a defined geographical territory.
- I.136 The province forms a broad community of life, prayer and apostolate. Important steps in the life of each religious and the determination of her field of apostolate are decided at the Provincial level. Thus, for the religious, the province is normally the community to which she belongs for life.

The Provincial Chapter

I.137 The Provincial Chapter has as its purpose to maintain the vitality of the province, to concretize norms and directives of the Rule and General Chapters. The provincial Chapter keeps its attention fixed both on the life of the Church and on the Marianist vocation.

I.138 The Provincial Chapter is convoked by the Provincial Superior and meets three times between two General Chapters. It is composed of the Provincial, her Assistants and a number of delegates which surpasses by one-half that of the members by right. The delegates are elected for each Chapter.

The Provincial is president of the Chapter by right.

I.139 Perpetually professed and also temporary professed with two years of profession are electors. Only perpetually professed can be elected.

An elected member cannot resign from her elected position unless her reason is approved by the Provincial with the consent of her Council. In this case she is replaced by the alternate delegate.

If a member by right is unable to attend the Chapter, she is replaced by a Sister designated by the Provincial with the consent of her Council.

I.140 The main functions of the Chapter are:

1. to evaluate the development of the province by studying the reports of the Provincial and her Assistants.
2. to determine the guidelines for the province in order to best fulfill its mission.
3. to review the implementation of previous Chapter decisions (Provincial and General Chapters).
4. to evaluate the vocation ministry.
5. to examine the financial situation of the province.
6. to update the province Directory.

7. to study proposals that are submitted.
 8. to keep informed about initial formation programs.
- I.141 Decisions taken by the Provincial Chapter become obligatory for the entire province as soon as they are approved by the Superior General with the consent of her Council and promulgated by the Provincial.

The Provincial Administration

- I.142 The government of each province is organized on the same model as that of the General Government of the Congregation.
- I.143 The Provincial Administration is the permanent executive unit of the province. On the basis of broad policy outlines set by the Rule, General and Provincial Chapters, the Provincial Administration determines operating norms for the province.

The Provincial

- I.144 As a visible symbol of unity, the Provincial has as her mission to keep the spirit of the Congregation alive in the province, to animate and direct it in a spirit of service.

As a major Superior, she has ordinary personal authority over the religious of the province. Her authority remains subordinate to that of the Superior General, according to the laws of the Church and the Rule of the Congregation.

- I.145 She is appointed for five years by the Superior General, with the consent of her Council, after consultation of the Sisters of the province. She may be reappointed for another term of three years, after a new consultation.

She must be at least thirty-five years old and have five years of perpetual profession.

- I.146 The Provincial cannot be removed from office during her term except for reasons which the Superior General, with the consent of the General and Provincial Councils, considers serious and urgent.

- I.147 The Provincial has the following principal duties:

1. to encourage fidelity to the Charism, the Rule, the Chapter documents, and the directives of the General Administration.
2. to strive to develop a true team spirit among the members of the Council.
3. to retain close communication with and to report regularly to the General Administration.
4. to coordinate the activities of the Three Offices.
5. to receive temporary vows and, as the representative of the Superior General, perpetual vows.

6. to authorize the first profession of vows to take place outside the novitiate house.
7. to give assignments and to entrust her mission to each Sister.
8. to maintain close communications with the superiors of communities and the Sisters in charge of apostolic works, giving them directives and support.
9. to require from local superiors any reports she considers necessary concerning the accomplishment of their duties.
10. to visit the communities personally or through a delegate at least once a year and to have an interview with each Sister.
11. to convoke the Provincial Chapter and the meeting of the Extraordinary Council.
12. to represent the province with authorities and to sign or have signed all legal acts done in the name of the province.
13. to maintain communication with the other provinces and to collaborate with other religious groups, notable the Society of Mary and other Family of Mary groups.
14. to see that the archives are kept up to date.

The Provincial Assistants

- I.148 There are three Provincial Assistants. They are chosen from among the perpetually professed. They collaborate with the Provincial in the animation and administration of the province.

After consultation with the Sisters of the province, the Provincial submits their names to the Superior General for approval. They can serve as Assistants for two consecutive terms. Each term ceases with that of the Provincial.

If for serious reasons it seems advisable to replace an Assistant, the Provincial consults the other Council members and, after a deliberative vote, submits the matter to the Superior General.

Councils

- I.149 The Ordinary Council is composed of the Provincial and the three Assistants.

The Ordinary Council meets at least every three months and at any time the business of the province requires it. Matters presented by the Assistants are discussed by the Council according to an agenda established by the Provincial. A copy of the minutes is sent to the General Administration as soon as possible.

- I.150 The following obligatory matters require deliberate vote of the members of the Council:

1. admission of candidates to the novitiate.

2. admission of novices to temporary profession.
3. the general direction for the work of the Sisters after the novitiate.
4. admission to the renewal of temporary vows.
5. appointment of Superiors and their confirmation in office for a second term of three years, and the approval of their House councils.
6. appointment of the Directress of Novices after the approval of the Superior General.
7. appointment of other Sisters responsible for formation.
8. temporary replacement of a Provincial Assistant.
9. use of discretionary power (in this event the Provincial communicates this decision to the Superior General as soon as possible).
10. formation programs.
11. approval of the Provincial Administration budget and the budgets of each community.
12. The following points, concerning which final decision belongs to the General Administration:
 - a) foundation, change of purpose, or suppression of a house or a work,
 - b) expenditures and sales for which the authorization of the General Administration is required,
 - c) admission of Sisters to perpetual profession.

I.151 Ordinary business of the council with consultative vote includes:

1. current affairs of the Provincial Administration and in general anything that could improve and contribute to the development of the works and apostolic activities of the province.
2. admission to prenovitiate.
3. change of personnel.
4. temporary exceptions from the Rule or Chapter statutes granted to a community of the province.
5. directives intended to help the Provincial Assistants in the exercise of their duties.

I.152 If in the ordinary matters requiring a deliberate vote, the Council in its majority refuses its consent, the Provincial may call for new deliberations in a second and third meeting. After the third meeting, the Provincial cannot act on the matter if the majority of the council continues to disagree. Nevertheless, the same Council majority cannot force the Provincial to make a decision against her will.

If in ordinary matters submitted to the Council with consultative vote, the opinion of the council is contrary to that of the Provincial, she has the right to disregard it. Nevertheless, she will not do so without serious reason.

- I.153 The Extraordinary Council is composed of the Provincial, the three Provincial Assistants, the Local Superiors, and those responsible for formation. Other Sisters may be added by the Provincial.

The Provincial Chapter

- II.69 To inform the capitulants and make Chapter work more efficient, the Provincial and her Assistants prepare reports on the state of the province since the last Chapter.

- II.70 To prepare for the Chapter, the Provincial may ask the capitulants to elect from their membership a commission of three members, one of whom is a member of the Provincial Council.

The Provincial may appoint a limited number of observers.

- II.71 Each religious of the province has the right to present proposals to the Chapter.

- II.72 Elections to the Provincial Chapter follow the norms given in the Province Directory.

The Provincial Administration

- II.73 Requests for special authorizations are addressed to the Provincial through the Local Superior.

- II.74 Each Assistant is a special advisor to the Provincial in her area of competence. Each is subordinate to the Provincial in her responsibility for her Office, and must be accountable to her.

- II.75 The First Assistant replaces the Provincial Superior in case of absence, sickness or death. She handles current business of the province with the other Assistants and submits all her decisions to them.

The Extraordinary Council

- II.76 The Extraordinary Council meets each year. It is a means of communication and of mutual understanding and has a consultative role. Its mission is to facilitate the smooth functioning of the province:

1. promoting unity among the communities together with respect for their differences.
2. evaluating implementation of the Rule and Chapter decisions and the dynamism of the province.
3. assisting Local Superiors to grow in awareness of their mission and to respond to it better.

Regular Visitations

II.77 The Provincial visits the communities regularly. This is a time for sharing the life and mission of each community, a time of communication and exchange which enables all to evaluate together the objectives of the community, and to better understand its concrete situation.

These visits also offer each Sister an opportunity for personal dialogue with province leaders.

Chapter XIII

Local Government

The Local Community

I.154 The local community is the basic cell of the Congregation, where the Sisters live their response to God.

Together with the Superior the Sisters organize community life with concern for each member, in a view of pursuing the common good and fulfilling the mission.

The Local Superior

I.155 Every community has a Superior appointed by the Provincial.

The Superior is chosen from among perpetually professed Sisters. She is appointed for three years by deliberate vote of the Provincial Council, after consultation of the community.

Following the same procedure, the Superior may be confirmed in her office for a second term of three years. For a third term, the Provincial must refer the matter to the Superior General.

I.156 The Superior has primary responsibility for the life and mission of the community. She has ordinary personal authority over the Sisters of her community. Her authority is subordinate to that of the Provincial, to whom she is accountable.

I.157 The mission of the Superior is:

1. to animate the community.
2. to be at the service of cohesive unity.
3. to coordinate activities of the Three Offices.
4. to make necessary decisions.
5. to meet with the local Council regularly, to direct the weekly community meeting, to facilitate information, communication and dialogue.
6. to keep the Provincial informed about the life and mission of the community, and to send regularly any information that is requested.
7. to see that house archives are kept up to date.
8. to promote collaboration with various authorities, Congregations, and local ministries.
9. to respect the community.

The Local Council

- I.158 The Local Council is composed of the Superior and the three Assistants.
The Superior appoints her Assistants after consultation with the community and ratification of the Provincial.
- I.159 The Superior share the responsibility of the Three Offices with her Assistants or with the whole community, according to circumstances. The Superior coordinates the different responsibilities and facilitates the participation of all the Sisters. The Sisters in turn collaborate with the Superior constantly and effectively.
The First Assistant replaces the Superior in case of absence or illness.

The Local Superior

- II.78 The Superior animates the community, walking alongside of her Sisters. She stimulates dialogue, encourages each Sister to express herself freely, fosters and coordinates initiative. Open to the action of the Spirit, she helps the community in the discernment of different concerns and in becoming open to the needs of the other communities of the Congregation and of the Church.
- II.79 The Superior is chosen among the Sisters having at least one year of perpetual profession.
- II.80 After a second three-year term in office, the Local Superior should be freed from her responsibility, except for special circumstances.

The Local Council

- II.81 The Council meets every month and whenever the business of the house requires it. After each meeting the Superior sends a copy of the minutes to the Provincial.
- II.82 Matters which should be treated in Council or in community meetings, include:
1. the religious life of the community, its mission, and the means for ongoing personal and community growth.
 2. fidelity to the Rule and to General and Provincial directives.
 3. evaluation and updating of community objectives.
 4. improvements needed for the animation of the community.
 5. participation in the life of the local Church.
 6. vocation ministry.
 7. annual budget of the community and extraordinary expenses not foreseen in the budget.
 8. issues for which the final decision is reserved to the Provincial Administration.

II.83 In communities of less than seven Sisters, or in larger communities with the consent of the Provincial, the Council is composed of all the Sisters who share the duties of the Three Offices.

The Provincial designates a Sister to replace the superior in case of absence or illness.

II.84 In ordinary circumstances, members of the Council have a consultative voice. The Superior willingly listens to their opinions, tries to reach consensus, and generally follows the opinion of the majority.

II.85 When circumstances seem to require an urgent decision on a question reserved to the Provincial, the local Superior consults the local Council. She makes a decision only if the majority of the members agree about the urgency of the matter. In this case, without delay, she informs the Provincial of the decision taken.

Chapter XIV

Administration of Property

- I.160 The Congregation possesses goods for the needs of its members and the fulfillment of its mission. It does not allow itself to accumulate extra goods.
- The Congregation and each province have the right to own, acquire, administer, and dispose of goods according to the norms of Canon Law. Communities do not have this right without the consent of the Superior General.
- I.161 The administration of the property of the Congregation is the responsibility of the Superior General and the Provincials, who are assisted in this task by the Officers of Temporalities (General and Provincial Treasurers). Decisions are made with the consent of the respective council according to the norms of Canon Law and our Rule of Life.
- I.162 In the administration of common property, our purpose is to provide for the needs of the Sisters and communities, and to support and develop our apostolic mission in accord with the spirit of the Rule of Life.

Chapter XV

Separation from the Congregation

- I.163 During the prenovitiate and the novitiate, the Sister is free to leave the Congregation. The Congregation, for serious reasons, may refuse to admit a Sister to the novitiate or to first profession.
- I.164 At the end of each period of temporary commitment, the Sister is free to leave the Congregation. The Provincial, on her part, with the deliberate vote of the Council and for just reasons, may refuse to allow the Sister to renew her vows.
- I.165 During the period of temporary profession, the Superior General, with the consent of her Council, has the power to authorize the withdrawal of a Sister who asks to leave the Congregation.
- I.166 Even if it is contracted after profession, a physical or mental illness which, in the opinion of doctors or other experts, makes a temporary professed unsuitable for religious life in the Congregation constitutes a reason for the competent Superior, with the consent of her Council, not to admit this religious to the renewal of vows or to perpetual profession, unless the illness has been contracted because of negligence on the part of the Congregation or because of work accomplished in the Congregation.
- I.167 Only the Holy See has the power to dispense from perpetual vows. For very grave reasons, however, the Superior General can dismiss a perpetually professed, according to the prescriptions of Canon Law. (Canon #699 and #700).
- I.168 When a Sister with temporary or perpetual vows leaves the Congregation, freely or because of dismissal, she can claim nothing for services given to the Congregation. Nevertheless, the province seeks to facilitate her adaptation to a new way of life.
- I.169 Permission to live outside community, exclaustation, dispensation from vows, and transfer to another Congregation are regulated by Canon Law.

Chapter XVI

Authority of the Rule

- I.170 The Rule of the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate is composed of two parts: the Constitutions and the General Directory. Both have the force of law and oblige all religious, communities, and provinces.
- I.171 The authority of the Constitutions is confirmed by approval of the Holy See. Any amendment to the Constitutions must be ratified by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast during a General Chapter; it must be approved by the Holy See before taking effect.
- I.172 The General Directory supplements the Constitutions and specifies its application. It also contains elements of the Rule which may vary in expression according to the circumstances. It derives its authority from the General Chapter which has the power to establish it, modify it, or abrogate certain norms. Any amendment to the Directory must be ratified by a majority of two-thirds of the votes cast.
- I.173 Authentic interpretation of the Constitutions belongs to the Holy See. Authentic interpretation of the General Directory belongs to the General Chapter, and to the Superior General between Chapters. The Superior General has the power to grant temporary dispensations from specific disciplinary points.
- I.174 The goal of our Rule is to guide us toward fulfillment of our Marianist vocation: to live in faith and love, as a community, our alliance with Mary in the service of our mission.