

# PRIESTS of the SACRED HEART

The PROVINCIALATE

BIBLIOTECA  
COLEGIO DE MEXICO  
P.  
V. C. J.  
M.

407 Glenview Avenue

Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53213



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28199

February 11, 1969

Dear Confreere:

Without any official proclamation on our part, it looks as though February has become "Community-dialogue" month in our Province, as we prepare with the help of the various questionnaires you have received, for the first General Conference this fall in Rome. As far as I know, this enclosed report and questionnaire on the revision of the Constitutions is the last one you will be receiving for a while.

As you read through it you will notice that it is more of a progress report than a questionnaire. This Committee is anxious to keep all the members of the Congregation fully informed about its work and plans. Realizing the need for communication and consultation, they have prepared some questions in the report to help us offer them our opinions and suggestions in this difficult but important task. We hope that through community discussions and/or individual study there will be a generous response from the members of the Province.

Our Province was honored when Father General and his Council asked Father Nitzki to be one of the three members of this Committee. He will be leaving at the end of March to meet with the Committee. Please mail your responses directly to him at Sacred Heart Monastery by March 15, 1969.

We deeply appreciate your efforts to make the coming General Conference a truly significant moment in the advancement of our Congregation.

Sincerely and gratefully in Christ,

Michael J. Noonan, S.C.J.  
Provincial Superior

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTIONS

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I. INTRODUCTORY REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTIONS.

1. The Nature and Scope of the Committee:

"The Preparatory Committee for the Revision of the Constitutions" was set up by the General Council on August 2, 1968 (cf. Informationem Nuntius, 1968-51.

This Committee of three members is not the "Post-Capitular Committee for the Revision of the Constitutions" which the 15th General Chapter called for (cf. Chap. Doc. 614). It is rather a temporary committee preparing for the other committee which will be definitively set up after the first General Conference. It is a consultative committee to make studies and an investigation at the mandate of the General Council.

2. The Competency of the Committee:

Three things have been entrusted to this Committee to prepare and investigate for the forthcoming General Conference of 1969 namely:

1. The general principles by which the revision of the Constitutions is to be directed.
2. General outline of the revised Constitutions in as much as it can be foreseen.
3. Draft of one or the other article or chapter to illustrate the method of procedure.

3. The Committee's Procedure

The committee held its first meeting in Rome from November 11 to 19, 1968. The members of the committee unanimously agreed on the necessity of making known to all the members of the Congregation the progress of the committee's work so that from the beginning of the work everyone may have something to say in the drafting of the Constitutions, which after their approval will intimately affect everyone.

The conclusions of the work of this first session are, therefore, published in the following pages so that all can communicate to the members of the committee their hopes, desires, and opinions. These reactions can be made by individuals and they will be happily received by the committee;

nonetheless it would please the committee if these questions were treated by each province either in the Provincial Conference or in some Provincial Committee set up especially for airing these questions.

The Second session of this committee is foreseen for April 1969. In this session, after a study of the wishes and desires of the confreres of the Congregation, a definitive report will be made concerning the three questions in the competency of the committee in immediate preparation for the General Conference. This report will again be presented to the judgment of the confreres of the Congregation in the General Conference. Thus the function given to this committee by the General Council will be concluded.

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## II. GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTIONS

In elaborating the following general principles the committee used especially these sources:

- a) the Council Documents of Vatican II, especially the Decree Perfectae Caritatis and the Apostolic Letter Ecclesiae Sanctae;
- b) the "Norms" of the Sacred Congregation of Religious concerning the approbation of new Institutes and Constitutions;
- c) the "Praxis Curiae" applied by the same Congregation of Religious in this matter; and
- d) the Documents of the 15th General Chapter.

For the time being we are omitting the particular principles which refer to authority and the governing of the Institute, e.g., decentralization, the principle of subsidiarity, the spirit of service, dialogue and communication, and shared responsibility. At present we are enumerating and describing only the more general principles which must be considered in the drafting of the new Constitutions.

### 1. Evangelical and Christological Principles (P. C. 1, 2a, 8; E. S. 12a,16)

The supreme norm for religious is "the following of Christ as proposed by the Gospel." Therefore, the Word of God with its depth and simplicity must inspire and direct the whole of religious life, including the text of the Constitutions. To the extent that it is agreeable to the members of the Congregation, the words of sacred scripture can be referred to or can be inserted into the text itself. There are examples of this in the Council Documents, especially in Chapters 5 and 6 of the Constitution Lumen Gentium and in the Decree Perfectae Caritatis.

### 2. Ecclesial Spirit (P. C. 1, 2, 5, 8; E. S. 12, 16)

Our Institute exists for the service of God and of the Church, and participates in the life of the Church with its own form of apostolate. Hence, the very laws and norms which regulate the S.C.J. life should manifest the way in which the mission and work of our religious are inserted

in the mission of the Church--both universal and particular--and the mutual relationships between them.

3. Dynamic Fidelity to the Original Spirit of the Institute (P. C. 2; E. S. 12a, 16 #3, 17)

The Constitutions should be so drawn up that they clearly show the heritage of our Institute, namely, its special features, characteristics and end; its original inspiration; the spirit and aims of Father Founder; and its sound traditions. Diligent consideration should be given to the aggiornamento demanded by the signs of the times, by the Council and by the contemporary evolution of theological knowledge.

Therefore, our fundamental characteristics should be included in the future Constitutions. From the present Constitutions certain elements which today seem to be foreign, obsolete or doubtful should be excluded.

4. Sound Theological Principles (E. S. 12)

The Council recommends that the general laws of each Institute include also the theological principles concerning religious life and its union with the Church. This norm refers both to the manner of formulating the text and to the content of the text; for the human mind has made great progress in the study of religious truths. However, theories and doctrines which are not yet mature should not be introduced into the text, nor should opinions still in discussion among theologians.

5. The Demands of the Apostolate (P. C. 3, 8; Doc. Cap. XV pp. 108-127)

The Church has urgently insisted on the need for all to collaborate in the mission which belongs to the universal Church. From the beginning of our Institute the Founder made special efforts to relieve the human needs of his times. Also, since our Institute is dedicated to a variety of apostolic works, it seems that our religious life by its very nature involves apostolic activity and social charity.

Hence, in the new Constitutions this idea of the apostolate being at the service of the Kingdom should have a real influence on the life of the Congregation, and should affect its structures, offices and practices. There should be a special chapter which indicates the doctrine of the Church in this matter.

The missionary apostolate will be incorporated into the text of the Constitutions, according to the instructions of the 15th General Chapter.

6. Basic Universal Laws (P.C. 3,4: E. S. 14)

The general principle should be adopted that only basic universal laws are to be incorporated into the Constitutions. These are the ones that pertain to all and are the least subject to change. More accidental norms, or those subject to change due to times and places, should rather be left to the Directory.

Hence, more detailed items, those that are local or changeable, should be excluded from the Constitutions and left to the individual provinces or houses. In this way the more general laws will preserve a certain stability, and it will not be necessary to uselessly multiply or repeat them.

7. Unity and Autonomy (P. C. 3; E. S. 14)

The text of the Constitutions should be so drafted that:

1. the necessary universality and unity of the Institute is safeguarded in fundamentals;
2. the autonomy and development of the person, as well as of local, provincial and national groups, is respected; and
3. a delicate balance is established between these two through reciprocal and structural communications.

This should be the operative procedure both in regard to forms of community life and in regard to the structures of government. In this way the control of the Institute, with the approval of legitimate authority, will actually be decentralized.

8. Updating and Adapting Our Laws (P. C. 1, 2, 3; E. S. 14)

Since the Church demands that the religious life be adapted to modern times, this adaptation necessarily extends also to the Constitutions according to the guidelines laid out in the Council and in our own Congregation.

Hence, in order that our Constitutions really meet modern demands, they have to be adapted;

1. to the conditions of our times and peoples;
2. to the physical and psychological conditions of religious;
3. to the needs of the apostolate;
4. to the demands of science and culture; and
5. to social and economic circumstances, e.g., in regard to poverty.

Also, whatever seems obsolete today or already abolished, and whatever no longer serves the religious life, should be abrogated. At the same time, however, we should not lose sight of the necessary renewal that the Church wishes.

9. The Spiritual and Juridical Elements (P. C. 3; E. S. 12, 13)

The new Constitutions, according to the mind of the Council, will include both the spiritual and juridical elements. There is a necessary union between these two aspects. On the one hand it is necessary to have precepts which inspire and vivify souls; on the other hand it is necessary that there be no uncertainty in the structures and functions of the Institute, but that these be clearly defined and so acquire a greater stability and soundness.

It does not seem opportune to divide the Constitutions into two parts: the spiritual and the juridical. Rather, these parts should be interwoven and complementary in such a way that the material elements be penetrated with spiritual vigor.

10. Fraternal Life (P. C. 15; E. S. 27)

All our religious are united in their fraternal life and in their co-operative efforts in the works of the Congregation. For the community, in a sense, is a true family gathered in the name of the Lord.

The Council recommends that the bond of fraternity among the members be intensified. Only that distinction of persons is to be retained which is demanded by the different kinds of works. All enjoy the same rights and duties, excepting those which result from ordination.

The Constitutions will follow the norms established by the 15th General Chapter and by other competent organs of the Institute. They will also follow the directions coming from consultations of the provinces.

11. Help and Service (P. C. 4)

The new general legislation, both in its formulation and in its content, should be considered as a service and help to the confreres. It should be offered in a spirit of trust and should not neglect the legitimate needs of the individual personality.

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QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Concerning the sources, can you indicate other sources which would be helpful in inspiring our efforts? Which?
2. Pertaining to the principles themselves,
  - a) Are the principles acceptable as presented?
  - b) Which principles, in your opinion, should be omitted? Why?
  - c) Which principles, in your opinion, should be changed or amplified?
  - d) Do you wish to add other principles to those already presented? Why?

III. GENERAL OUTLINES OF THE CONSTITUTIONS

Introduction:

Three outlines were presented, which differ:

- as to division of the parts;
- as to the subdivision of the parts by titles;
- as to the explicitly indicated themes.

Since three outlines are proposed, it shows that nothing is definitive up to this point. Observations and objections can be brought forth or even new outlines produced.

A definitive outline, the fruit of study undertaken by the Provinces on these three outlines will be presented to the General Conference 1969.

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## Outline A

### I. Nature and end of the Congregation

1. Religious vocation: in service of the Kingdom
2. Internal end: life of the members ("Sint Unum," common life)
3. External end: apostolate ("Ecce Venio," service)

### II. Life of the Congregation

#### 1. Principles

- a. Evangelical counsels (vows):
  - vow of chastity (religious celibacy)
  - vow of poverty
  - vow of obedience
- b. Common life: in relation to the vows, consequences of the vows
- c. Life of prayer: liturgy

#### 2. Admission and formation of members

- a. Postulancy and novitiate
- b. Religious profession
- c. Apostolic formation
- d. Formation for the priesthood

#### 3. Government of the Congregation

- a. Principles of government: service, fraternity, subsidiarity, unity and decentralization, balance between the common good and personal good, shared responsibility
- b. The General Chapter
- c. The superior general, general council, other general officials
- d. The general conference and general committees
- e. The provinces
  - Territorial division of the Congregation
  - The provincial chapter
  - The provincial superior, the provincial council, other provincial officials
  - The provincial conference and committees.
- f. The houses and their government

4. Property and administration of temporal goods
5. The deceased: funerals, prayers for the dead
6. Departure and dismissal of members
7. The significance of the constitutions

### III. Apostolate of the Congregation

1. Principles
  - a. The religious life itself as a sign of the Kingdom, its apostolic fecundity
  - b. The preferred works of the apostolate
2. Means and organization of the apostolate
3. Relations with the hierarchy and other apostolic institutes.

### Outline B

#### Preliminary observations:

1. The following outline intends to gather and coordinate all that is contained either in the 1956 Constitutions or in the Documents of the 15th General Chapter.
2. Not everything is to be inserted in the revised Constitutions. Only those elements, whether theological and spiritual or juridical, which more permanently define the character, ends and the basic means of the Congregation, are to be inserted. Other elements, more particular and changeable, are either to be inserted in a "Chapter Directory," or are to be left to the decisions of the provinces, or are to be abolished.
3. The division of part V is taken from the 15th General Chapter (Doc. VII, 520).

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#### I. The character and spirit of the Congregation

Cst. 1-13; 14-16  
Doc. 1-22; 77-119

#### II. The Life of the members

##### A. A life consecrated by the evangelical Counsels

Cst. 65-82  
Doc. 34-76

##### B. Community life: fraternal and liturgical

Cst. 17-21; 83-108; 109-124 (passim)  
Doc. 23-33; 172-199; 130-171

- C., Apostolic Life
  - Cst. 22; 109-124 (passim)
  - Doc. 120-129; 200-286; 287-317

### III. Admission and rights of persons

- A. Candidates
  - Doc. 415-478 (passim)
- B. Postulants
  - Cst. 23-31
  - Doc. 345-346; 355
- C. Novices
  - Cst. 32-53; 55
  - Doc. 318-351 (passim)
- D. Professed in temporal vows
  - Cst. 54-64; 155; 162-163
- E. Professed in perpetual vows
  - Cst. 54-64 (passim); 131-137; 156-167
- F. The deceased
  - Cst. 145-154

### IV. Formation of persons

- A. In preparatory schools
  - Doc. 415-478 (passim)
- B. In the postulancy
  - Doc. 318-478 (passim)
- C. In the Novitiate
  - Doc. 318-351
- D. In the scholasticate
  - Cst. 125-127 Doc. 352-414
- E. In apostolic life
  - Cst. 128-130
- F. In sickness and old age
  - Cst. 138-144

### V. Government of the Congregation

- Cst. 168-292
- Doc. 479-519; 520-625
- A. Authority in the Congregation
- B. Collegial action
- C. The General Chapter
  - 1. Convocation and members of the General Chapter
  - 2. Method of procedure in the General Chapter
  - 3. Election of the Superior General
  - 4. Election of the General Officials
  - 5. Election of the members of the general Committees
  - 6. The business to be treated in a General Chapter
- D. The Superior General
- E. The General Council
- F. Other General officials

- G. The General Conference and General Committees
- H. The Provinces
  - 1. The Territorial Division of the Congregation
  - 2. The Provincial Chapter
  - 3. The Provincial Council and Treasurer
  - 4. The Provincial Conference and Committees
  - 5. The Provincial Superior
- I. Houses and their government
- J. Administration of goods

VI. The Constitutions and the Chapter Directory  
Cst. 293-295

Outline C

- 1. This outline corresponds to the Praxis of the Congregation of Religious, established by years of experience and is still in use.
- 2. It contains only the general order.
- 3. The content of the Constitutions is to be decided by others in the Congregation.
- 4. This ordering and content follows the mind of both the Church and of the General Chapter.

I Part: The Nature and Life of the Priests of the Sacred Heart

1. SCJ Vocation

- 1° Special end of the Priests of the Sacred Heart
- 2° Their spiritual life
  - a) Liturgical life (Holy Mass, divine office)
  - b) Eucharistic life (adoration) and life of piety
- 3° Their apostolic life (in general--by preference--missionary)
- 4° The connection and integration in the Christian, ecclesial, religious life and in the contemporary world
- 5° Formation to this end.

2. SCJ Life

- 1° The evangelical counsels in general
- 2° The evangelical counsels in particular: chastity, poverty, obedience
- 3° Common Life
  - a) Charity and union: among members - with the sick - with the aged and deceased
  - b) Apostolate within and without the community
  - c) Some helps to observance and fervor: exercises of piety, internal and external relations. . .

II Part : Admission and Formation of Members

- 1. Admission and Postulancy
- 2. Novitiate and Religious Profession
- 3. Formation and Studies
- 4. Orders

III Part : Government of the Congregation

1. Principles or Criteria of Government
2. The General Chapter

Collegiality; convocation and members; norms to be observed in elections; the order to be observed in the Chapter; preliminary sessions; election of superior general, general officials and members of the general committees; the business to be treated in the Chapter.
3. The Superior General

His office and authority in general; qualifications for election; term of office; obligations or duties related to his own sanctification and that of others; residence; power in particular: what he can do alone, with consultative vote, with deliberative vote; the superior general and administration of goods; replacement and resignation.
4. The General Council

Composition and office of Councilors; incompatibility with certain offices, qualities for election; permanence in office and designation outside of the chapter; residence and how often they meet; nature of council intervention and what to do in the event of the absence of some councilors; the business to be treated; cessation of office.
5. General Officials

the General Vicar - the General Procurator - the General Secretary - the General Treasurer and administration of goods
6. Provinces, Vice-provinces and Regions

Constitution and authority, internal organization and relations with higher authority

  - 1° the provincial chapter
  - 2° the provincial superior
  - 3° the provincial council
  - 4° provincial officials
  - 5° provincial conference and committees
  - 6° vice-provinces and regions
7. General Provincial Canonical Visitation

1° Nature, purpose and method - The visitor and those visited.
8. Houses, Local Council, Local Superior and other officials

1° The life in a religious community
9. Departure
10. Constitutions

Questionnaire on the Outlines

1. Which outline do you prefer as to its general structure? Why?
2. Which outline do you prefer as to its internal subdivision of parts? Why?
3. Can you propose a general structure other than what has been proposed? As to the numbering or titles of parts?
4. Which titles of the subdivision of the present outlines should be kept unchanged in the final outline?

5. Which should or can be omitted?
- Which should or can be added?
- Which should or can be changed?
- Which should or can be amplified?

#### IV: THREE OUTLINES ON CHASTITY

##### Introduction:

Three outlines are presented which differ:

- as to the division and subdivision of parts
- as to the themes explicitly indicated

Since three outlines are proposed, it shows that nothing is definite up to this point. Observations and objections can be brought forth or even a new outline produced.

A definitive outline, the fruit of study undertaken by the Provinces on these three outlines, will be presented to the 1969 General Conference.

##### Outline A:

This is the one presently found in the Constitutions.

##### Outline B:

##### Prefatory remarks:

1. This text takes its inspiration from:

The documents of the Council, the Encyclicals Sacra Virginitas and De Sacerdotali Caelibatu, the present Constitutions, the Documents of the 15th General Chapter.

2. It includes a greater spiritual element than juridical, so that members can take greater inspiration from the text.

3. The chapter develops thus:

- a) The sense of chastity under an aspect which is Christological, eschatological, ecclesial, apostolic, human, SCJ;
- b) The difficulty and aids for preserving chastity are proposed.

4. The outline:

#### CHASTITY

Gift and sign 1 - Chastity for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven (Mt. 19,12), "Blessed are the clean of heart"-Mt. 5,8 which religious profess, is to be esteemed as a great gift of grace. For it frees the heart of man in a singular way (cf. I Cor. 7, 32-35) that it may burn with greater love for God and all mankind, and thus is an outstanding sign of heavenly gifts (P.C. 12; cf. L.G. 42,44; O.T. 10; De Sac. Caelibatu 33,34).

Christological sense

- 2- Since the ultimate norm of religious life is the "following of Christ" (P.C. 2), members strive to imitate Christ who through the course of his life lived in a state of virginity (De Sac. Cael. 21).

Ecclesial and apostolic sense

- 3- Chastity makes the religious more like Christ, even in the love with which Christ loved the Church, His Body, and gave himself up totally for it (cf. Ephes. 5, 25-27; De Sac. Cael. 26). And thus with an undivided heart, he readily dedicates himself to divine service and to the works of the apostolate (P.C. 12; L.G. 42).

Personal good

- 4- Celibacy consecrated to God also greatly benefits the good of the whole person. For, it fosters to no small degree purification of heart and spiritual liberty and availability. It excites unfailingly the fervor of charity (L.G. 46; P.C. 12). It requires attentive moderation of soul. Finally, it makes religious more effective since they can experience a broader paternity in Christ. (Presb. Ordinis 16; De Sac. Cael. 55, 56).

SCJ chastity

- 5- Our Lord expects love from all men but especially from those who are called to the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. But, unless they possess chastity, religious are not able to give the love to God which is expected as the basis of reparation (Gengler. Catechism of the vows).

Means

- 6- In order that this outstanding gift of God may be received and preserved:
- all should employ the divine and human aids proposed by the Church;
  - candidates should not approach nor be admitted to the profession of chastity except after a truly sufficient probation and with the necessary psychological and emotional maturity;
  - all moderators should remember that chastity is more safely preserved when true fraternal love between members flourishes in common life (P.C. 12; De Sac. Cael. 60f.; O.T. 10).

### Outline C;

#### Prefatory remarks:

This text is taken from the Constitutions and Rules of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, with some modification. Only some articles are cited here for the sake of brevity.

### RELIGIOUS CELIBACY

1. Among the baptized, some in the Church serve God by a conjugal life. But the religious responds by celibacy to the special invitation of Christ and devotes himself immediately to Him and to men, his brothers.
2. By this vow he binds himself to observe celibacy and, under a new title, the virtue of chastity.
3. With an open, truly human, pure and sincere love, he will encourage those who, whether celibate or joined in matrimony struggle for fidelity.
4. He will more intimately cultivate love for God and men in apostolic labor. He will find by serving Christ in his members the means by which his whole person will unfold and by which celibacy will be effectively guarded.
5. A truly fraternal community, apostolic work reaching out to all men, and constant prayer sustain this virtue.

### QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE OUTLINES

1. Which outline do you prefer as to general structure? Why?
2. Can you propose an outline other than one proposed by us?
3. Which elements should or can be omitted, added, changed, amplified? Why?
4. Do you find it acceptable or not to include Biblical and Conciliar texts in the Constitutions? Why?

28199

Bro. V. Peter Liorio, F.C.C.  
College of Santa Fe  
April 10, 1968