

THE URSULINE SISTERS
OF THE AGONIZING HEART OF JESUS

CONSTITUTIONS

Rome, 1985

SACRA CONGREGATIO
PRO RELIGIOSIS
ET INSTITUTIS
SAECULARIBUS

File n. P.84-1/84

DECREE

Following the motu proprio "Ecclesiae Sanctae" (II, NR. 6), the Ursulines of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus revised at the General Chapter their Constitutions and presented the project to the Apostolic See.

The Sacred Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes, having thoroughly examined the document and making some changes, affirmed that the Constitutions are expressive of the sisters' desire to realize their religious vocation in the Ursuline family shaping their life according to the Gospel and imitating Christ in his surrender to the will of the Father and in his sacrifice for the salvation of the people. United in love, sisters try with the Church and in the Church to participate in fulfilling God's plan of salvation, especially in the field of education and teaching

of the children and youth through catechesis and paying special attention to the neglected, the most needy and to those who seek the truth, ready to go wherever they are sent. By this decree the Congregation grants the approval of the Constitutions that was asked for. This decision does not cancel any requirements of the general law.

It is the wish of the Congregation that the Ursulines of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus following the path set up by their Blessed Foundress be always generously faithful to their vocation under the protection of the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, who is completely devoted to her Son and his work.

Regardless of all contradictory laws.

Given in Rome, on November 21, 1985
The Feast of the Presentation of Mary

+ **J. Jerome Card. Hamer**
Prefect

+ **Vincentius Fagiolo**
Archbishop, Secretary

GENESIS OF THE CONGREGATION

The Congregation of the Ursuline Sisters of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus, founded by Mother Ursula Ledochowska (1865-1939), is one of the numerous branches of the Ursuline family established in the XVIth Century by Saint Angela Merici.

These are the words of Mother Ursula: "God has used wretched me to call to life this new branch on the old Ursuline stem, this youngest, weakest branch, but which is the exclusive possession of the Sweetest Heart of Jesus."¹

God prepared our Foundress for this charismatic mission in the Church through 21 years of life in the Ursuline Convent in Cracow (1886-1907), through her missionary and apostolic work in Russia and Finland, undertaken with permission and blessing of Pope Pius X and through the years of exile in the Scandinavian countries (1907-1920), where together with her fellow sisters growing in numbers, she devoted herself to apostolic work in the most varied environments in nationality, philosophy of life and religion.

The life of the sisters living in underground and missionary conditions, committed to hard work in poverty and uncertainty about the future, necessarily differed from the traditional forms of religious life. But this life deepened its real value: total devotion to

¹ Testament I

God and fellow men in love and sacrifice, as well as an unconditional trust in God's providence.

After World War I, Mother Ursula returned with her sisters to Poland. Here she was confronted with the dire needs of the Church and of the Resurrected Poland. In order to respond to the needs of the time, in 1920, she asked permission of the Apostolic See to transform the autonomous convent, where she was superior, into an apostolic Congregation of Ursuline Sisters which by the will of the Church was named: Ursulines of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus. On June 4, 1923, the Apostolic See approved the Constitutions of the Congregation temporarily for seven years. The Constitutions were definitely approved on November 21, 1930.

While preserving the essentials of religious life and the traditions of the Ursuline Order, she adapted the new Congregation to the needs of the contemporary Church and the world according to the charisma of St. Angela. In this "return to the sources" Mother Ursula displayed the dynamic spirit of Saint Angela Merici. In the concrete reality of the twentieth century she incorporated Saint Angela's teaching: "While adhering to the old way... live the new life."²

Mother Ursula Ledochowska died in Rome on May 29, 1939. After the Beatification Process, which started in 1949, Pope John Paul II beatified Mother Ursula on June 20, 1983, in Poznan, Poland.

PART I

² St. Angela Merici, Counsels

**SPIRITUALITY AND MISSION
OF THE CONGREGATION**

To the greater glory of God

1. God the Father, in His ineffable love, through the Holy Spirit has chosen us and called us to abandon everything and follow Jesus Christ on the way of the evangelical counsels professed in the Congregation of the Ursuline Sisters of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus.¹
2. The vocation of the Ursuline Sisters of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus unites them in a special way to the mystery of the Agony of Christ, who, sent by the Father, so loved his brothers and sisters that he suffered death for them upon the cross, so that all who share in his death and resurrection might attain the fullness of life.²
3. Attentive to Christ's words, "I thirst",³ the sisters will respond to the love of God's Heart by surrendering themselves to him wholly and without reserve so that he may extend in and through them his mission of salvation. They will desire to live ever more fully for Christ and his Body, the Church.⁴ They will devote all their efforts to the spread of the Kingdom of God on earth.

¹ Cf. P.C. 1

² Cf. Jn 3, 16

³ Cf. Test. XVI

⁴ Cf. Col. 1, 24; PC 1

4. The Congregation's special mission in the Church is to proclaim Christ - the love of his Heart through the educating and teaching of children and youth, as well as through service to their most needy and wronged brothers and sisters, and through any other work of evangelization.⁵ "The Ursuline of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus is willing and should dedicate her life to the poor".⁶
5. The sisters, striving for the greatest possible knowledge and love of God's Heart, will desire to form their lives after the Gospel by following Christ in his submission to the Father's will and in his sacrifice for the salvation of mankind.
6. Participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and adoration of Christ in the Eucharist will be the centre of the personal and community life of the sisters. Together with Christ in the Holy Spirit the sisters will worship the Father, drawing love from the Eucharist in order to share it with their brothers and sisters.⁷
7. Jesus Christ, obedient to the Father, meek and humble of heart, teaches us the life of truth, simplicity and service. In accordance with the will of Saint Ursula, our Foundress, humility will be the characteristic feature of our Congregation.⁸

⁵ CF. C 30, 2

⁶ C 30, 3

⁷ Cf. Dir I A III, IV

⁸ Cf. C 30, 142

8. The sisters, submissive to the Holy Spirit, alert to the signs of the times, following the path devised by Saint Mother Ursula, will be sensitive and open to the needs of the Church and all people. Courageously and wholeheartedly they will align the reality of the present moment in the spirit of the Gospel. They will try to meet the demands of Christ who is ever present in the world.
9. They will express their love for God through self-sacrifice and service to their brothers and sisters. "To work, sacrifice oneself and do good to others is a sign of the purest love of God and real penance."⁹
Let them remember that love does not feel the burden and if it does, is able to love it.¹⁰
10. The sisters will consider work as one of their main duties. They will accept every work as an indication of the will of God, an extension of prayer, a sign of love expressed in practice and of personal asceticism.¹¹ Through the work the sisters participate in God's plan of perfecting and sanctifying the people, thus changing the world.

⁹ Cf. Dir. I A II

¹⁰ Cf. C 30, 159, 2

¹¹ Cf. C 30, 173-177; Dir. I D III-IV

11. In a spirit of love and penance they will join their whole life with Christ dying for the world's salvation.

They will follow the most beloved Lord, "the poor in the footsteps of the poor Jesus, the overworked following the overworked, those carrying their cross following the One carrying his, the crucified following the Crucified Christ".¹²

12. Grateful for the grace of vocation, they will put their trust in God, the source of their joy and serenity. In this way, they will proclaim to the world the Good News that God is love and the source of the greatest happiness.

13. The Mother of Christ and of the Church, wholly devoted to the Person and work of her Son, is for each Ursuline sister of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus the model of devotion to God and the people. Under the direction and motherly protection of Our Lady, celebrated as the Star of the Sea, the Congregation seeks to fulfill its mission. The words of Mary: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word" are the motto of our Congregation.¹³

¹² Cf. Test VII

¹³ Lk 1, 38; Cf. C 30, 7

PART II

THE CONSECRATED LIFE

Be holy and the blessing of God will rest upon our Congregation.

Be holy and you will draw souls to God without difficulty.

Be holy and God's happiness will abide in you.

Be holy and you will be a comfort to the Heart of the Agonizing Jesus.

Be holy!

(Testament: My Last Words to My Dear Children)

1. THE PROFESSION OF THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS

*Jesus is "your treasure. Live for Him, work for Him, cling to Him in dark moments. Let Him be the source of your joy, your peace, and your happiness, both here through your whole life of a religious, and when you are there, in eternity."
(Test. XIII)*

"It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain."

(Jn 15, 16)

14. Responding to the gift of their call to religious life, the sisters through the public vows of chastity, poverty and obedience totally dedicate themselves to God, the beloved of their hearts, to his glory and his service.¹
15. The profession of the evangelical counsels unites the sisters in a special way to the Church, obliging them and enabling them to dedicate their lives to the good of the Church so that they may plant and build up the Kingdom of God and spread it to all nations.²
16. Religious profession incorporates the sisters into the Congregation of the Ursulines of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus with the rights and obligations defined by religious law.³ This profession unites them in the community, where, living together, they strive for the fullness of love and, true to the

¹ Cf. L. G. 44

² Cf. L. G. 44

³ Cf. Can. 654

charisma of the Foundress, they participate in the apostolic mission of the Congregation.⁴

17. Their religious profession is a special consecration rooted in their baptism, through which God takes possession of a person to fashion her in the image of his Son. Through continuous conversion of heart and ever deepening fidelity to the obligations undertaken on the day of their profession, the sisters will cooperate with grace so that love and devotion to the Lord's work may grow within them.

18. The sisters take vows according to the following formula:

"Almighty, merciful God, one in the Holy Trinity, in the presence of the Blessed Mother, the humble handmaid of the Lord, our Blessed Mother Ursula, the Patrons of the Congregation and all the Saints, in the presence of the religious community, and of God's people gathered here, in response to the call to the exclusive love of Christ and service to him in the Church, I, Sister of vow to You, Lord, into the hands of our Mother General (or her delegate), chastity, poverty and obedience (for one year, two years, forever) in the Congregation of the Ursuline Sisters of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus, in accordance with the Constitutions of the Congregation. Amen."

⁴ Cf. M. R 11

At perpetual profession it is added: "I desire in this way to join my whole life in the work of salvation of Jesus Christ and to follow him faithfully along the path of the evangelical counsels, in order to be united with him in perfect love, for now and for eternity. Amen."

*The Congregation will venerate as its Patrons: St. Ursula, St. Angela Merici, St. Joseph, St. Pius X and St. Ignatius of Loyola.*⁵

⁵ Cf. C 30, 4

2. THE CONSECRATED CHASTITY

"Grant us love, Lord, more and more love, and that for us is enough!" (Test. 1)

"Let them seek God in everything, and for His love let them reject an uncontrolled self-love and love of creatures in order to love God in His creatures and His creatures in Him, according to His holy will."(C 30, 84, 2)

*"For to me life is Christ."
(Phil 1, 21)*

19. The chastity vowed for the sake of the Kingdom of God, unites the sisters with Jesus Christ in a total and undivided love, leading them to freedom of heart, and making them capable of an ever fuller participation in his saving love of others.¹

20. Under the terms of the vow of chastity the sisters oblige themselves not to contract the bonds of marriage and to preserve perfect continence observed in celibacy, in order to grow in this way in the love of God, of human beings and of all creation.
 - 1) *The person desiring to take a vow of chastity should be well disposed by nature, reach a certain degree of mental and emotional maturity and be aware of the obligations concerning the vow.*²

21. Let the sisters develop and strengthen a personal friendship with Christ, who is always present among us, especially in the Eucharist. Confident of the transforming power of grace let them not count on their own efforts but let them humbly ask the Lord for the gift of complete union with him.

¹ Cf. P. C. 12

² Cf. Can. 599; C 30, 84 #1

22. Let them love the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Virgin Mother of Jesus. Let them ask her, the Bride of the Holy Spirit, who has given her Son to the world, to teach them her humble, joyous, and sacrificial love. Imitating her let them become more and more mothers and sisters to everybody.
- 1) *In relations with others, the sisters shall be a sign of a complete dedication to God and in him to all people. Let them take responsibility for others, look after them and be ready to serve them unselfishly and generously.*
- 2) *They should strive for gaining a deep knowledge of human nature in accordance with the faith and the teaching of the Church in order to fulfill better their mission and help out other people.*
23. Being aware that celibacy demands a conscious consent to a certain inner solitude, the sisters will constantly work to develop within them self-control and fortitude. Let them courageously and persistently undertake mortification, especially that which springs from the obligations of their life. Let them be watchful over the senses and reject all that endangers their exclusive love of Christ.³

³ Cf. P. C. 12; Dir. IC II

- 1) *In their relations with other people let their good manners and unobtrusive conduct be an indication of their composure and inner discipline.*
- 2) *Let them avoid any familiarity and control excessive emotions. Their cordiality and simplicity should go together with self-esteem, tact, discretion and respect for others.*
24. While using the mass media sisters should make mature choices appropriate for consecrated persons. Let them reject all that is harmful to their vocation and dangerous to the chastity of a consecrated person.⁴
25. Let them earnestly strive to have their religious communities animated with the spirit of friendship, mutual respect and good will, for these will help them to preserve their chastity.
26. Chastity, dedicated to God and lived joyfully with simplicity of heart, is for the world a sign of the most fulfilling love. It is a promise of heavenly blessings, as well as a source of special apostolic fruitfulness.⁵

⁴ Cf. Can. 666

⁵ Test. XII

3. THE EVANGELICAL POVERTY

"With poverty of life and poverty of desire it will be easy for you to direct your whole heart to God who will become the sole treasure of an entirely poor soul." (Test. IV)

"The sisters will love the holy poverty... as a beloved virtue of Jesus Christ which He uplifted by his experiences of the cradle and Crucifix, hunger and thirst that He endured while living on earth and having no place to rest. Therefore they will rejoice when they have an opportunity to experience the effects of holy poverty." (C 30, 74)

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."
(Mt 5, 3)*

27. Out of love for Jesus Christ, who devoted himself completely to the work of the Father, the sisters will leave everything and freely follow him, who being rich became poor for us in order to enrich us with his poverty.¹
28. Through the vow of poverty the sisters will obligate themselves to a poor and simple life, committed to work, and to dependence upon their legitimate superiors for the disposition and use of material goods.²
- 1) *If their duties require it, the sisters should get permission - specified in writing - to administer defined sums of money or goods. They will be accountable to their legitimate superiors.*
- 2) *They are able to give, lend and receive things of little value as defined at the sisters' conference in each country.*
- 3) *It is necessary to obtain the superior's permission to receive larger sums of money or gifts of greater*

¹ Cf. 2 Cor. 8, 9; Mt 8, 20; P. C. 13

² Cf. Can. 600; Test. IV; Dir. I C I

value, which do not enter the terms of agreement for work etc.

4) *They are not to accept any valuable things in deposition. In exceptional situations their major superior's permission is required.*

29. They should be ready to undertake any work entrusted to them, joining their labour with the labour of the Son of God, who worked in Nazareth, healed the sick, taught and did good to everybody. Let them work eagerly, diligently and thoroughly, performing each task conscientiously. Let them not count only on a reward from other people realizing that "God alone will consider their each effort, each step, each bead of sweat."³

30. Whatever they acquire by personal labour, disability pension, annuity, fee, grant, insurance, and gift is placed at the disposal of the Congregation.⁴

31. As in the first Christian communities, in which "no one called what he possessed his own, but they had everything in common",⁵ the sisters will share their goods. Let their desires always be directed towards poverty, let them put limit to their needs and joyfully accept privation, discomfort and hardship.⁶

³ C 30, 177, 176; Test. IV

⁴ Can. 668 #3

⁵ Acts 4, 32

⁶ Cf. Test IV; C 30, 75, 76, 79, 81

- 1) *They should be concerned about the common good and take a good care of the property belonging to the Congregation or to their work place. Let them be thrifty, however not miserly.*
- 2) *Let the superiors provide for the sisters' real needs within the means of the Congregation. They are to present to their superiors the financial problems of their community and of the people around them.*
- 3) *While being transferred to another house the sisters will take their clothes, bedding and prayer books. As to the remaining things, especially used in the workplace, the decision will be made in consultation with the local superiors.*

32. As followers of the poor Christ, the sisters should especially develop a delicate sensitivity to the needs of others, to those who experience destitution, hunger and injustice. Poor in spirit and in the use of this world's goods, the sisters are to remain in evangelical solidarity with the poor, the victims of injustice and suffering and should hasten to help them. They will be ready to spend their time, strengths and abilities in the service of the common mission and share with the needy, even though they themselves might be in need.⁷

- 1) *Local communities should endeavour to see that individual sisters might participate in helping those in need.*

⁷ Cf. L.G. 8; E.T. 17; M. R. 11

33. Each sister, through her life style, participates in shaping the community spirit and should strive to become for others a witness to the life of poverty in the spirit of the Gospel and according to the charisma of the Congregation.

*1) The sisters' life style: accommodation, clothing, meals should be simple and ordinary. They are to avoid willingly any luxuries, collecting of material goods and seeking excessively security.*⁸

34. Obedient to the Lord's teachings, the sisters will not be overly concerned about material goods, but will seek first the kingdom of God. Let them put all their trust in God to be able to say in the truth, "My God and my all".⁹

35. The sisters retain the right to own and purchase property. They, however, require the superiors' permission for any legal acts concerning ownership and disposal of property.¹⁰

36. Before her first profession, the novice is free to dispose of her property, its use and income. She should commit their administration to a person designated by her. She is to draw up a will according to the civil law, disposing of the properties that she owns or may receive in the future. If after taking religious vows a need arises for any changes,

⁸ Cf. C 30, 77, 80

⁹ Cf. Test. IV

¹⁰ Cf. Can. 639

permission for this should be obtained from a major superior.¹¹

37. The Superior General in agreement with the General Council may permit a sister who requests it, to make a total renunciation of her property. The sisters may request such permission only after making their final profession.¹²

¹¹ Cf. Can. 668 #1, 2

¹² Cf. Can. 668 #3, 4

4. SAVING OBEDIENCE

"Love the will of God, then you will also love obedience, which is what makes it possible for you to continuously fulfill the will of God... Love obedience - it will change your whole life into a burnt offering of pure love of God.

Obey in small things, obey in great things and obey always and everywhere." (Test. V)

"Let them desire for the will of God to be thoroughly fulfilled in them and ask for it in their prayers." (C 30, 167, 4)

"My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work." (Jn 4, 34)

38. Through the vow of obedience taken under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, after the example of Christ, we make the total sacrifice of our will, submitting in faith and love to the will of the Father.¹
39. Living in an apostolic community, such as this Congregation, within the Church, through obedience we are joined more fully to Christ's work of salvation. "Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him."²
40. By taking the vow of obedience the sisters are obliged to submit to legitimate superiors in matters concerning their way of life and the mission of the Congregation in accordance with the Constitutions. Only the major superiors and only in serious matters will issue formal commands obliging under the vow of obedience.³
- 1) *Such an order will always be expressed in writing or in the presence of two witnesses and must explicitly invoke the vow. If a provincial* superior*

¹ Cf. P. C. 14

² Heb 5, 8-9

³ Cf. Can. 601; C 30, 85, 86, 87

* province = centre; provincial superior = central superior

has issued the formal command, she must inform the Superior General about it immediately.

41. The sisters will together seek the will of God, which is to be found in the Gospel, in the teachings of the Church, in the religious law, in the superiors' orders, and in the happenings of every day's life. In this way, they will strive to place at our Lord's disposal all the strength of their hearts and minds in order to carry out God's work.⁴ Dialogue conducted in an atmosphere of sincerity, mutual respect and trust will be helpful in accepting the superiors' decisions. Submission to the superiors' decisions is a guarantee of the reality of the gift offered voluntarily to God.

1) If after weighing the matter before God, a sister becomes convinced that she cannot carry out the order given to her, she will present her reasons to the superior and then will comply with her decision. If she still thinks in good conscience that she cannot accept this decision either, she will present the matter to major superiors.

2) Let the sisters be aware that by neglecting the religious laws and the superiors' orders, as well as by destructive criticism they weaken the spirit of faith in themselves and others and act against their obligations.

⁴ Cf. P. C. 14; E.T. 25

42. Directing all their intentions to Christ Jesus and in the spirit of inner freedom, which the conscious acceptance of God's will gives, the sisters should be ready to join in the life of any community, to undertake any assignment and to submit to any superior.⁵ "The sisters will see Jesus Christ in their superiors. They should have for them and their orders respectful love, which will induce them to immediate, humble and courageous obedience even in difficult situations."⁶

1) To deepen the spiritual bond with their superiors in order to get help in fulfilling their vocation and as an indication of their dependency, a few times a year (at least two) the sisters should discuss privately with the superior their religious obligations, the work entrusted to them, their prospective contacts, correspondence and others. If they desire so, the sisters may also talk about their inner life. Important regulations and permissions should be drawn up in writing and signed by the appropriate superior. The same applies to local superiors in relation to provincial superiors and the latter to the Superior General.

43. The superiors, themselves obedient to the Church, to the rules of religious life and to major superiors, are to perform their duties in the spirit of service and cooperation with the sisters. They will respect and love the sisters and, realizing their own imper-

⁵ Cf. C 30, 89, 90, 91

⁶ C 30, 89

fections, be tolerant towards the weaknesses of others. They should be conscious of their responsibility for the decisions made, the orders issued, as well as for the permissions they grant or deny.⁷

44. Permission from a major superior must be obtained for membership in an organization of a scholastic, social and professional nature, as well as for taking on any tasks or responsibilities outside the Congregation. The sisters neither become union leaders nor belong to parties or organizations of a political character.⁸

1) In granting permission in the situations mentioned above, the major superiors are to consider social and political circumstances of a country and follow the laws of the Church. The Superior General with her council should define the course of action in this matter.

45. Obedience of each sister realized in faith and love, directed in spite of various tasks to the same mission, linking creative initiative with willing submission, is a witness of unity, condition of peace and fruitful apostolate.⁹

46. The attitude of Our Lady, expressed in her words: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord", is to be the sisters' example of readiness to accept all that God demands.

⁷ Cf. P. C. 14; Cf. 618

⁸ Cf. Can. 285 #4; 287 #2; 671; 672

⁹ Cf. Test. V; Dir. I C III

47. At particularly difficult times when obedience demands sacrifice, self-denial and suffering, the prayer of the Agonizing Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemene should strengthen their faith and fidelity: "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done."¹⁰
48. Strengthened by voluntary, humble and courageous obedience, the sisters strive for the freedom of "the new creation" that God will lead "to the extent of the full stature of Christ".¹¹

¹⁰ Lk 22, 42

¹¹ Eph 4, 13

5. THE LIFE OF PRAYER.

"Prayer is a bridge linking temporality with eternity, the earth with heaven and man with God. And for this reason the life of a sister must be a life of prayer Without prayer there is no life for God, there is no service to God.

Pray, my children, unceasingly, as our Lord Jesus instructs, through offering Lord God all your acts, through frequent exclamatory prayers, through as frequent as possible directing the soul's vision toward the Tabernacle and the Cross."
(Test. VI)

"All sisters will strive to make the best use of the time designated for prayer in order to develop spiritually." (C 30, 107)

"Remain in me, as I remain in you"
(Jn 15, 4)

49. True to their vocation, the sisters desire above all to worship and love God. They follow Christ, attentive to his words and dedicated to his works, so that their whole life, in the harmonious union of contemplation and loving apostolic action be in abiding union with him.¹

50. As a religious community, rejoicing in the presence of the Lord and united in the Heart of Jesus, the sisters will be faithful to the teaching of the Apostles,² to the breaking of bread, and to prayer with Mary, the Mother of Jesus.³ Together they will worship God in union with the Church praying for the intentions of the whole world.

1) Together with the whole Church the sisters eagerly join in the celebration of the Mysteries of Jesus Christ's life through the different periods of the Liturgical Year according to the traditions and needs of the local Church.

2) Each community gets together for prayer basically twice a day. The time and method of prayer should be adapted to their conditions and needs. The sisters should cherish their right and duty of the community prayer and do not dispense themselves

¹ Cf. L. G. 17; P. C. 5

² Cf. Acts 2, 42

³ Cf. Acts 1, 14

of it without a valid reason.

3) *They offer fervent prayers, both making amendments and interceding for the Church, the world, the Holy Father and priests, for the Congregation and its apostolic work. Let them with loving concern pray for the dying and deceased.*

4) *As a Congregation the sisters solemnly celebrate the following holy days:*

- The Feast of the Sacred Heart, a titular holy day*
- The Annunciation*
- The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary*
- The Feast of St. Angela Merici (January 27)*
- The Feast of St. Ursula, the martyr (October 21)*
- The Feast of Saint Ursula, our Foundress (May 29)*

Before the Feast of the Sacred Heart, the Annunciation and the Feast of Saint Ursula they have a novena.

On these days they offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the intentions of the Congregation and together they renew their vows.

51. *The sisters focus their prayer life on the mysteries of the Heart of Jesus in Agony and on Our Lady,*

the Handmaid of the Lord.⁴ They try to dwell upon these mysteries, to draw to them the other people's attention and hearts in a manner proper to various times and locations.

- 1) *The Lenten season and the Easter Triduum should be for each Ursuline a time of conversion, of the renewal of the grace of Baptism and of the religious consecration, as well as a time of individual and communal penitence. Each community should decide on penitential practices in communion with the Church in its commitment to penitence and conversion.*

On each Friday of the Lent, the sisters make together the Stations of the Cross. They spend the Easter Triduum in prayerful silence. On Holy Thursday, the sisters participate in the Eucharist after apologizing to one another for any wrongdoing.

- 2) *Each Friday, which is the day of Our Savior's death, individually and as a community they join Christ crucified for the world's salvation and renew their sacrificial love expressed in prayer, voluntary mortification and service to others.*

52. Each day the sisters take part in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Formed by the Word of God and nour-

⁴ Cf. Test. VII, VIII

ished by the Body of Our Lord, they give praise to God and offer themselves in sacrifice.⁵

53. Christ in the Eucharist, who is present in every religious house,⁶ is the heart of their community and the source of an ever-growing friendship with him as well as of an apostolic zeal. The sisters worship the Eucharistic Jesus by often visiting him present in the Eucharist and by adoration.⁷

1) They participate in the Holy Hour before the Feast of the Sacred Heart, before first Fridays, on the Holy Thursday and on the last day of the year.

54. The ever-growing friendship with Christ requires the contrite heart, which is to be achieved by inner conversion through daily examination of conscience and in frequent use of the sacrament of reconciliation.⁸

1) Local superiors should arrange for the sisters a frequent access to the sacrament of reconciliation. For bigger communities and formative houses a local bishop should confirm the appointment of a regular confessor.⁹

⁵ Cf. L. G. 11

⁶ Cf. Can. 663 #2

⁷ Cf. Test XII; Dir. I A VI

⁸ Cf. Can. 664; 630 #1

⁹ Cf. Can 630 #2, 3

55. The Sacred Scriptures, especially the Gospel, should become for each sister the path to a fuller knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, as well as their rule of life and the daily food, which is the foundation of their prayer life.¹⁰

1) *The sisters are to try continually to deepen their knowledge of The Holy Scriptures, the truths of the faith and the principles of the interior and religious life in accordance with the official teachings of the Church. They should also study the writings of their Foundress as well as the books on her and on the Congregation.*

56. In union with the public worship of the Church, the sisters daily recite the Daily Prayer of the Church (morning, evening and night). At least one of these prayers should be recited together.¹¹

57. The love of Christ impels the sisters to seek him in personal prayer. It opens them through their attitude of vigilance, purity of heart, humility, simplicity and persevering self-discipline to the transforming action of the Holy Spirit, according to God's plan and measure.

58. The sisters' obligatory prayers are as follows:

¹⁰ Cf. D. V. 23, 25

¹¹ Cf. Can. 666 #3

Daily: they take part in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; they recite the Daily Prayer of the Church; they devote half an hour to meditation and half an hour to personal prayer; they recite five decades of the rosary; they make an examination of conscience; they set aside the time for spiritual reading (at least fifteen minutes or, if it is impossible, two hours a week).

Every month they devote one day or at least several hours to prayerful reflection on their inner life.

Every year each of the sisters makes a retreat lasting from five to eight days.

59. In personal, as well as in community life, the sisters cultivate the spirit of recollection and silence, which is the source of peace and the indispensable condition for prayer and union with God. Let them remember, "Inner peace is the foundation of spiritual growth as well as peace in the Congregation".¹²
60. The sisters take personal responsibility for their own and the community prayer life. Guided by the desire to grow constantly in the spirit of prayer, especially in community prayer, the sisters should be open to its newer forms.

¹² C 30, 167

61. Each Ursuline is to imitate St. Angela Merici and Saint Ursula Ledochowska in their perseverance in prayer and in living their lives in harmonious unity of contemplation and work in the service of God and people.

62. Anticipating the coming of the Lord and knowing that present afflictions cannot be compared with future glory,¹³ the sisters try to live more and more for him, who died and rose again for us, by trying to please him in all things in order to deserve entry into his Kingdom.¹⁴ They dutifully commend to God in prayer their departed sisters.

1) *After receiving the news of a sister's death the community will pray for her together. For each deceased sister five Masses will be celebrated in the house where she lived or in the provincial house; in addition one Mass will be offered in each house of the province, in the motherhouse and in the general house On the first anniversary of a sister's death, a Mass will be celebrated for her in the house where the deceased sister resided or in the provincial house.*

2) *For a superior general who died during her term of office or after its expiration, thirty Masses will be celebrated at the general house and one in each of the houses. The sisters will recite five decades of*

¹³ Cf. Rom 8, 18

¹⁴ Cf. 2 Cor 5, 9, 15

the rosary and for one month they will pray for her together.

- 3) *For a deceased member of a sister's family one Mass will be offered in the house where she resides.*
- 4) *Each year in all bigger communities, especially provincial houses, Masses will be celebrated for deceased sisters, the deceased members of the sisters' families, and for the deceased benefactors of the Congregation.*
- 5) *On Monday, the day designated to remember the deceased members of the community, the sisters will offer for them the rosary.*

6. COMMUNITY LIFE

"Look upon that wonderful model of love, which the Lord Jesus has given us. Just as He loved us, so you also love one another... Reflect on... the qualities of His love for us, which are kindness without limits and devotion unto the very death upon the cross. " (Test. III)

"Let them love one another in the Lord with perfect love in the atmosphere of unity and harmony in which they will find the best help in working for the glory of God and for souls' salvation." (C 30, 132)

"That they all may be one"
(Jn 17, 21)

63. The love of Christ has united the sisters in a community of faith, which grows and develops by imitating and drawing its strength from the Mystery of the Holy Trinity. Rooted in Christ, in union with the Father, strengthened by the gifts of the Holy Spirit and made one in the Eucharist, this community desires to make the world aware of the truth that God is love.¹
64. Participating in the same vocation and mission of the Congregation, the sisters help one another to grow in faith and love. Although they accomplish various duties, they are one in Christ. Therefore every sister should involve herself in the life of her community and the Congregation striving to attain an ever better understanding of the goals of the community and wholeheartedly take part in their realization.
65. Conscious of its responsibility for each sister, the community will provide the suitable environment to fulfill her vocation and to be able to grow in ever-deeper commitment to God and people. It will accept each one with an open heart, desiring her to find a home in the community along with love, understanding and support. Those sisters, who for different reasons need special care and the loving

¹ Cf. 1 Jn 4, 8

support of their fellow sisters, will be surrounded with sincere concern.

66. In fulfillment of Christ's request "that they may be one",² the sisters are to comply with the following instructions of the Mother Foundress:

- Let them be one in heart and mind as were the first Christians; in this way they will be more successful in their work for the glory of God and the salvation of people;³
- Let them sincerely love one another in the Lord in service and joyful sacrifice for one another;⁴
- Let them take to their hearts the words: "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me".⁵
- Let them submit to one another out of love for him who though he was God desired to be obedient to those whom he had created;⁶
- Let them be severe with themselves for in so doing they will become more understanding of the faults of others;⁷
- Let them settle as soon as possible by a sincere apology any misunderstanding, unpleasantness and harm;⁸

² Jn 17,22

³ Cf. C 30, 132

⁴ Cf. C 30, 131

⁵ Mt. 25, 40; Cf. C 30, 131

⁶ Cf. C 30, 133

⁷ Cf. C 30, 134

- Let them be mutually helpful in striving for perfection through communal self examination in order to deal with shortcomings evident in their community;⁹
- Let them not allow themselves to develop any selfish and exclusive relationship harmful to communal love. Let them not submit themselves to dislike, favourite attention and discrimination on account of nationality or any other differences.¹⁰
- Let them avoid insincerity, gossiping and indiscreetness;¹¹
- Let them treat one another with kindness, respect and courtesy living up to the code of good manners;¹²
- Let them earnestly strive for the spirit of peace, prayer and recollection to reign in their communities;¹³

67. The life-style of their communities should reflect the sacred nature of their calling coming from their vows and lived in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and joyful simplicity. The sisters will strive to create in our communities an atmosphere of hospitality.

⁸ Cf. Dir. I B

⁹ Cf. Dir. I B

¹⁰ Cf. C 30, 130

¹¹ Cf. Dir. I B

¹² Cf. Test. III; C 30, 159 #1

¹³ Cf. C 30, 167

1) *Each community will have a daily schedule approved by the provincial superior. This daily schedule will define the time of communal prayer, of meals and of other community meetings, as well as of bedtime. It will also be necessary to set up a schedule of weekly communal meetings, of monthly days of retreat and communal self-examination. In larger communities daily schedules may vary according to the needs of their work. The sisters will not excuse themselves from communal gatherings without a good reason.*

2) *Each community will establish the time and place of the day silence as well as the evening silence*

68. In every convent, in agreement with the provincial superior, a section will be set aside for the exclusive use of the sisters (enclosure).¹⁴

1) *For good reasons the local superior may make the enclosure available to seculars. She will clear the rules of procedure with the provincial superior and discuss it with the community.*

69. The sisters should live in a community house by maintaining communal life. They are not to be absent from the house without permission of the superior.¹⁵ The provincial superior may grant per-

¹⁴ Cf. Can. 667 #1

¹⁵ Cf. Can. 665 #1, 2

mission for an absence up to a month. For an absence of more than a month the permission of the Superior General should be obtained.

- 1) *The Congregation should try to make it possible for the sisters to have a two weeks' holiday annually. They will discuss the time, place and possible prolongation of holidays with the local superior who will clear the sisters' vacation plans with the provincial superior. The sisters will not ask for longer holidays without a good reason, being aware that any time free of regular duties should be devoted to the community and to the apostolic work. The choice of place and form of rest should be appropriate for a consecrated person.*
- 2) *The sisters who work outside their native country may visit it every four or five years.*

70. The Superior General, in agreement with her council and for legitimate reasons, may grant permission to a sister for living outside the community house only up to one year, unless it is required on the grounds of health, studies, or apostolic work of the Congregation.¹⁶

71. The sisters will wear a habit approved by the Congregation as a sign of their religious consecration and as a witness to poverty. For legitimate reasons, particularly for those pertaining to the apostolate, the Superior General may grant permis-

¹⁶ Cf. Can. 665 #1

sion to some sisters for using lay simple dress for a period of time required by circumstances.¹⁷

- 1) *Every Ursuline sister wears a simple grey habit, a head covering, an Ursuline cross and a silver ring.*
- 2) *The eventual adaptation of the habit to local circumstances is in hands of each national congress. Before deciding the sisters will ask the opinion of all the sisters and will present the project for approval to the Superior General.*
- 3) *Occasionally, for legitimate reasons especially pertaining to the apostolate, the local superior may grant permission to a sister for wearing a lay dress. She will clear the procedure with the provincial superior according to the directives of the Superior General.*

72. The sisters will love the whole Congregation as well as each of their sisters. They will do everything in their power to preserve unity in essentials, in spite of unavoidable differences in matters of secondary importance. In these matters the sisters will seek solutions through community discussions and friendly dialogue. They will look after common needs of the Congregation and will strive to render active help wherever it is required. They will show heartfelt kindness and love to those sisters who live in distant communities.

¹⁷Cf. Can. 669 #1

73. Following the call of Christ, the sisters forsake their homes and families in order to devote themselves to God and his works more freely and totally in their religious community. This break, however, does not sever the ties of affection with their dear ones but subordinating it to the Highest Love, it enlarges the heart to such a way that each sister's family becomes the spiritual family of the whole community.

- 1) *The sisters show their affection and concern for their families first of all in their loving thoughts and earnest prayer for the spiritual progress of their loved ones. Let them be convinced that the more generously they serve God, the more they can count on God's care and generosity towards their families.*
- 2) *Each year the sisters may visit their families who live in the same country. They should combine the visit in as far as possible with their established vacation time. The sisters who work outside their native country may visit their families on the occasion of a visit to that country. Beside the visits mentioned above, the local superior may grant permission for short family visits in special cases. The procedure should be cleared with the provincial superior.*
- 3) *If anyone in a sister's immediate family should require care, the Congregation will undertake this*

obligation in as far as possible, if none of the friends or relatives is able to do so.

74. The sisters will remember that by their behaviour in every situation they represent the Congregation and the Church.

7. THE APOSTOLATE

*"Let the sacred fire of love for souls glimmer unceasingly in your hearts. To save souls, to lead souls to Jesus, and to let them discover the infinite goodness of the Heart of Jesus - this is the ideal for which we are to dedicate ourselves."
(Test. XVI)*

"Imitating St. Paul let them weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice. Forgetting themselves, let them become all things to all in order to lead all to Christ, to the love of his Divine Heart." (C 30, 141)

*"As the Father has sent me,
so I send you." (Jn 20, 21)*

75. Religious consecration requires from the sisters to bear witness to Christ and his Gospel in their whole life. United in the apostolic community of the Ursulines of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus, they are to direct all their efforts to proclaim to the people the Good News in their daily living and apostolic work, participating with the Church and in the Church in fulfilling God's plan for the salvation of the world.¹
76. Since the apostolate is rooted in Christ, our work is effective in so far as he himself acts through us. From the contemplation of Jesus' Heart in Agony the sisters learn how to love all people and strive for their salvation. Christ's complaint, "I thirst", urges them to share with others their faith, hope and love.²
77. The Ursuline community living according to the Gospel is for others a sign of Christ's presence, a promise of future blessings, and an encouragement to seek God in their daily life. Each community starts the evangelization from itself with the sisters helping one another in deepening their faith, prac-

¹ CF. P. C. 43, 44; Can. 673

² Cf. Test. VII, XVII

tising love and building up unity, growing in this way spiritually in their apostolic work.³

78. The Congregation is open to the needs of contemporary people, of the universal and local Church. It follows carefully the teaching of the Church and the instructions of the Hierarchy. It undertakes definite apostolic assignments according to its charisma and in subordination to the Diocesan Bishop.⁴ When taking on new tasks the sisters should first of all consider the needs of the poor.⁵
79. The Congregation devotes itself mainly to the teaching and educating of children and youth. In loving concern for a full development of each person, it commits itself to the task of Christian education at all levels, thus contributing to the transformation of the world in the spirit of the civilization of love.⁶
80. Joining in the Church's mission of spreading the message of salvation, the Congregation zealously takes on the work of catechesis as the form of service of the Word, which leads to a mature faith. It devotes itself especially to the teaching of religion and supports anything, which promotes its development.

³ Cf. Can. 675 #1, 2; 676

⁴ Cf. Can. 678 #1

⁵ Cf. C 30, 3

⁶ Cf. C 30, 3

81. The sisters should see Christ in everyone, therefore they gladly go to those who have been deprived of the word of God, wronged, persecuted, gone astray and who seek the truth. They give assistance to emigrants and to those who are lonely and isolated. Being aware of special needs of the dying, the sisters earnestly entrust them to the Heart of Jesus.
82. The Congregation takes on the missionary works. Each sister should develop a missionary spirit and a readiness to go where Christ sends her through the Congregation. She should also make others aware of their responsibility for the Church's missionary work.
83. In response to Christ's desire "that they all may be one", joining the universal Church in its suffering caused by divisions among Christians, the sisters strive for the unity of Christians and of the world family through prayer, sacrifice and participation in ecumenical initiatives.
84. In their concern for the world's evangelization and human promotion, the sisters offer spiritual and material help to the most needy. In their attitude and work they are to respect the right of each person to freedom, truth, justice and to full personal development taking into consideration national, religious and cultural differences. They should be open to spiritual values of the people to whom they have been sent.

85. The sisters undertake the apostolic work in the name of the Congregation in agreement with their superiors⁷, in harmony with one another, with priests and persons from other congregations, and with lay people. Regardless of her function in the community, each sister shares in the apostolate by her intention through which her prayer, suffering and daily work or physical weakness takes on an apostolic dimension.

- 1) *In their apostolic service the sisters are to take into account the conditions and needs of the local community, parish and Church.*
- 2) *Cooperating with one another and with the people outside the Congregation, the sisters strive to exchange ideas and to harmonize their methods of action in order to promote the common good. Whether in charge of the work or taking a secondary role, the sisters should try to create an atmosphere of unity and peace through mutual understanding and good cooperation.*
- 3) *A sister who is transferred to another responsibility should share with kindness her experience and working tools with her successor. The latter, on the other hand, is to respect the work of her predecessor and the good accomplished by her.*
- 4) *The sisters should involve lay people in the apostolate. They should also willingly join in apostolic*

⁷ Cf. Can. 678 #2, 3

works conducted by them. They should try to encourage children and young people to work in the active apostolate helping them to participate consciously in the life of the Church and the parish community.

- 5) In their contacts with priests they should show the proper respect and help them in the task of building the Kingdom of God through prayer and harmonious co-operation. They are to combine zeal with a submissive spirit in matters for which priests are responsible. When a local Church suffers from a shortage of priests, the sisters perform any possible pastoral duties.*
 - 6) Since every apostolate requires the proper doctrinal and professional foundation, each sister should regularly deepen and supplement it.*
 - 7) The sisters will remember that the effectiveness of their apostolic work largely depends upon good organization. In order to facilitate the work and make it more efficient, they are to make use of available scientific and technological achievements, as well as of mass media.*
86. For printing and publication of any written work especially concerning the faith and ethics, for participating in any radio, TV programs etc. the sis-

ters should get permission from the Superior General.⁸

1) *The sisters will not print their works in magazines or publishing firms opposed to religion and Catholic morality. In case of necessity, they should get permission also from the Diocesan Bishop.*⁹

87. The sisters should bring to the apostolate their creativity and initiative, seeking new solutions in the spirit of Saint Angela and their Saint Foundress.

88. The sisters should remember that the apostolic work through which they take part in the mystery of Redemption marks their lives with suffering and with joy of Resurrection. Let them dedicate their apostolic service in prayer to Mary who was the first One to present Jesus to the world and to suffer with her Son dying for the world's salvation.

⁸ Cf. Can. 832

⁹ Cf. Can. 831 #1

8. HUMILITY

"Look at the humility of the Divine Heart and imitate it... You should want to be little not only in feeling...but also in life and deed, for in the deeds is truth.

Be silent and humble, and God will be with you. The Heart of God will surely bless your works, and holy love will unite you. Be silent and humble - humility is the characteristic, the basic virtue of an Ursuline Sister of the Heart of Jesus." (Test. II)

"Let them not desire to be something, on the contrary, let them desire to be nothing so that they can easier get in everywhere and work everywhere for the spread of the Kingdom of the Heart of Jesus." (C 30, 142)

"Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart." (Mt 11, 29)

89. Humility is the virtue upon which the life of the Congregation and of each sister will be founded.¹ The sisters keep their eyes on Jesus Christ, both in his hidden life and in his hard work of teaching amid obstacles and adversity, and finally in his rejection and death upon the cross for our redemption.

90. Convinced that the humble person lives truthfully² before God, herself and others, the sisters will faithfully try to fulfill the following instructions of Saint Mother Ursula:

- Let their whole life be simple and ordinary;³
- Let them acknowledge their inadequacy and dependence on others; therefore let them know how to give, receive, ask, and give thanks for the good done to them;⁴
- Let them be respectful of others, of their ideas and opinions, avoiding obstinacy and arrogance; let them respond to the good they see in others and let them sincerely rejoice in it;⁵

¹ Cf. C 30, 142

² Cf. Test I

³ Cf. Test I

⁴ Cf. Test I

⁵ Cf. Test I

- Let them acknowledge their own faults and shortcomings sincerely and courageously asking for forgiveness; let them quickly and gladly forgive any unpleasantness they encounter;⁶
- Let them accept calmly and gratefully any remarks made to them and try to benefit from them;⁷
- Let them realize that the last place is the safest; therefore let them overcome unhealthy ambition; let them not attribute to themselves anything they have accomplished with God's help;⁸
- Let them not try to exalt themselves but rather let them seek occasions of serving others, in this way following the Divine Master, who said of himself, "I came to serve and not to be served."⁹
- Let them submissively accept and transfer to another sister every responsibility and task knowing that in the eyes of God only love makes human activity valuable.¹⁰
- Mindful of the words: "I can do all things in him who strengthens me", let them be ready to undertake difficult tasks if God so demands, struggling courageously against indecision and fear of the opinions of others and of failure.¹¹

⁶ Cf. Test I

⁷ Cf. C 30, 144

⁸ Cf. C 30, 144

⁹ Cf. Mt 20, 28; C 30, 143

¹⁰ Cf. C 30, 146

¹¹ Cf. Test I

91. Humility is the fruit and persevering cooperation with grace. The sisters should therefore continuously ask the Lord for this gift. Humility will be a frequent subject of examination in their personal and community exercises. Let the sisters remember that the spiritual development and the effectiveness of the apostolate of the Congregation depend on the degree in which they allow Christ to extend in them and through them, in the Church, the humility of his Heart.¹²

¹² Cf. C 30, 142

PART III

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE GRACE OF VOCATION

"Prayer, penance and love - in broad outline this is the religious life. As God wills it, as God wills it. With these words on your lips you will go through life calm in life's turmoil, sunny in the gloom of darkness, strong in the struggle, loving amidst hatred, holy amidst sins and divine, although on earth. As God wills it." (Test. XI)

1. VOCATION

"Taste and see how good the Lord is."(Psalm 34, 9)

92. The response to Christ's call: "Follow me", must be a conscious and free decision confirmed by the test of life. For this reason those persons entering the Congregation will go through a period of preparation and trial so that the act of consecration, especially full membership in the community through perpetual vows, will be a mature decision.
93. Those desiring to join the Congregation should possess a true religious vocation, that is, the desire of total dedication to God through humble service and wholehearted work for the poor. They should also possess basic qualities for living in the community, a serene and straightforward character, predilection and readiness for any work, at least average health, emotional balance and maturity, which will ensure an understanding of the demands of the religious life and development in it.¹ They should have at least elementary education and ability to complete it. They should be free of any impediments mentioned in paragraph 100.

¹ Cf. Can. 642; C 30, 11

2. RELIGIOUS FORMATION

94. Those entering the Congregation will go through three basic stages of formation: pre-novitiate, novitiate and juniorate. The purpose of these stages is a gradual introduction into the essence and the requirements of religious life and testing the applicants' vocation. A separate document defines the principles of this formation, the programs and the organization of each stage.
95. The pre-novitiate, a period of preparation for the novitiate, serves to discern bilaterally the candidate's vocation and her disposition for life in the Congregation, supplementing her general and Christian formation, deepening of her inner life, getting somewhat acquainted with the life and work of the Congregation.
- 1) *The pre-novitiate period consists of two stages: candidacy and postulancy.*
 - 2) *The Superior General can accept candidates for the whole Congregation, the provincial superior in her province. She will inform the Superior General about accepting a candidate.*
 - 3) *To accept a person of more than thirty-five years of age, it is necessary to obtain the approval of the Superior General.*
 - 4) *The candidacy must not exceed two years.*

- 5) *After a probationary period a candidate can be accepted into the postulancy by the decision of the provincial superior based on the opinion of the sister responsible for her religious formation and the opinion of the provincial council.*

The candidate should make a written request to be accepted into the postulancy. The provincial superior will inform the Superior General about the candidate's acceptance.

- 6) *Candidates and postulants remain in local communities under the care of a perpetually professed sister responsible for their religious formation. In exceptional circumstances, by the decision of the provincial superior and her council the candidacy and postulancy may be spent outside the religious community.*
- 7) *A candidate should present the following documents: certificates of birth, baptism, confirmation, free status; school certificates and diplomas; religion, work and doctor' s certificates; a well documented parish priest' s opinion, a request for acceptance with a biography and photographs. She will fill out a candidacy application form and will sign a declaration about not claiming a right to any material goods if she decides to leave the Congregation.¹*

¹ Cf. Can. 645 # 1, 3, 4

- 8) *If it seems that a candidate or a postulant cannot or should not remain in the Congregation, her return to secular life will be arranged.*
- 9) *Two months before the postulant's acceptance to the novitiate, the provincial superior will send to the Superior General her opinion of the postulant, a well-motivated request of the postulant and the opinion of the sister responsible for the postulant's formation.*
- 10) *Before commencing the novitiate, the postulant will make an eight-day retreat.*
96. To accept a person who was formerly in another institute of religious life, it is necessary to obtain the approval of the Superior General, and ask an opinion from a major superior of the other institute.²
97. A person who lawfully leaves the institute after completing the novitiate or after profession can be re-admitted by the Superior General, with the consent of her council, without the obligation of repeating the novitiate. The Superior General will determine an appropriate probation prior to temporary profession, and the length of time in vows before making perpetual profession.³

² Cf. Can. 645 #2

³ Cf. Can. 690 #1

98. The postulancy lasts from six months to two years. The Superior General can make it shorter if there is a good reason.

99. After reviewing the postulant's written request and the opinions of competent persons, the Superior General with the consent of her council will decide on her acceptance into the novitiate.

1) The novitiate will begin with the acceptance of the postulants by the Superior General or her delegate, according to the ceremonial.

2) Non-Catholics and Eastern Rite Catholics, unless the latter get permission in writing from the Sacred Congregation for Eastern Churches, must not be admitted to the Congregation.

3) A person willing to enter religious life will not be admitted if:

- she is unable to pay off her debts;
- has to solve financial problems or has been entangled in business matters which could involve the Congregation in legal procedures or bring difficulties;
- she has to look after her close family: father, mother, grandfather or grandmother;
- she has to raise and give financial support to her children;

In individual cases the Superior General can dispense a candidate from the impediments mentioned in # 3.

100. The following are invalidly admitted to the novitiate:

- one who has not yet completed the seventeenth year of age;
- a spouse while the marriage lasts;
- one who is currently bound by a sacred bond to some institute of consecrated life;
- one who enters the Congregation through physical or moral force or whom the Superior accepts under the same influences;
- one who has concealed her incorporation in another institute of consecrated life;
- one who has not revealed an illness or any other impediments for the validity of admission;⁴

101. The purpose of the novitiate is to give the novices a greater understanding of their divine vocation, and of their vocation to the Congregation.

At that time, the novices, submissive to the Holy Spirit, should strive for deepening their experience of God, for opening to his grace and for harmonious growth of Christian life. They are to study the Holy Scriptures and the teaching of the Church.

⁴ Cf. Can. 645

They are to get acquainted with principles of the evangelical counsels and learn how to lead a life consecrated to God in our apostolic community. They should form their minds and hearts in the spirit of the Saint Mother Ursula studying religious law, as well as the charisma, history and tradition of the Congregation.

- 1) *Novices, conscious of their own responsibility for their life and vocation, are to cooperate earnestly with God in this special time of grace and work together with the mistress of novices on their formation.*⁵
- 2) *The nature of the novitiate demands that the novices lead their life in a manner proper to their formation. The mistress of novices is to coordinate the program and organization of the novitiate with the Superior General.*
- 3) *Novices are not to be engaged in studies or duties, which do not directly serve this formation.*⁶

102. The novitiate lasts one year. For valid reasons the Superior General may extend it to two years.⁷

- 1) *For legitimate reasons concerning formation, the Superior General with the consent of her council can allow particular countries to extend the novi-*

⁵ Cf. Can. 652 #3

⁶ Cf. Can. 652 #5

⁷ Cf. Can. 648 #1

tiate up to two years. National conferences can ask for such permission.

103. A novitiate is invalidated by an absence from the novitiate house of more than three months, continuous or broken. Any absence of more than fifteen days must be supplemented.⁸
104. The novitiate, under the supervision of the mistress of novices, must take place in a house, which is duly designated for this purpose.⁹
105. The establishment, transfer and suppression of a novitiate house are to be determined in writing by the Superior General with the consent of her council.¹⁰
106. In exceptional cases, the Superior General with the consent of the council can give permission to a novice to make the novitiate in another house of the Congregation under the direction of an approved perpetually professed religious who takes the place of the mistress of novices.¹¹
107. The Superior General can allow the novices to reside, for a certain period of time, in another specified house of the Congregation.¹²

⁸ Cf. Can. 649 #1

⁹ Cf. Can. 650 #1; 647 #2

¹⁰ Cf. Can. 647 #1

¹¹ Cf. Can. 647 #2

¹² Cf. Can. 647 #3

108. Towards the end of the novitiate the novice makes a written request to the Superior General to be admitted to temporary profession. After reviewing this request as well as the opinions of competent persons, the Superior General with the consent of her council will allow the novice to take her vows, if she finds her mature enough for this step. In making this decision she should keep in mind the novice's ability to make constant inner effort and progress; her understanding of spirituality and her acceptance of the requirements of religious life, according to the spirit of the Congregation; her humility and her ability to live in community, her self-sacrifice and apostolic zeal.¹³

- 1) *Two months before the end of the novitiate, the mistress of novices is to submit to the Superior General a written report on the novices.*
- 2) *Before temporary profession a novice is to make an eight-day retreat.*

109. If a serious doubt exists concerning a novice's maturity and suitability to religious life, the time of probation may be prolonged by the Superior General together with her council in accordance with the article 102, or a decision has to be made with prudence and love about her leaving and returning to secular life.¹⁴

¹³ Cf. C 30, 35

¹⁴ Cf. Can. 653 #1, 2

110. Temporary profession is to be made for five years. The Superior General with the consent of her council may shorten this to three years or extend it according to the regulations of canon law.¹⁵

1) *The novice takes first vows for one year. The temporarily professed sisters take their subsequent vows twice for two years or with the consent of the Superior General and her council for one year.*

2) *The religious profession will be made according to the ceremonial approved by the Congregation. The certificate of profession, signed by the religious making profession and by the Superior General, is to be kept in the archives of the Congregation.*

111. The validity of temporary profession requires:

- that the person making it has completed at least the eighteenth year of age;
- that the novitiate has been made validly;
- that permission for taking vows has been granted by the Superior General with the consent of her council and in accordance with the norms of law;
- that the profession, made according to the approved formula, be explicit and made without force, strong fear or deceit;

¹⁵ Cf. Can. 655, 657 #2

- that the profession be received by the Superior General, personally or through her representative;¹⁶

112. The purpose of the juniorate is to deepen further the general and religious formation, to learn to live the consecrated life in the union of work and prayer, combining initiative and dependence and committing oneself to the apostolic mission of the Congregation.

During this period, the religious should become strengthened in her vocation and prepare herself for a mature decision of offering herself completely to God through perpetual profession, as well as for responsible participation in the mission of the Congregation. At that time, it is very important to discern the abilities of the temporarily professed religious and to further her doctrinal and professional education.

1) During the period of temporary vows the sisters should remain in communities suitable for completing and deepening their formation necessary to undertake their future tasks. They are to be put under the care of a religious responsible for their formation according to the guidelines approved in the Congregation. The persons responsible for the juniorate are to cooperate among themselves to preserve the unity of formation and to help each

¹⁶ Cf. Can. 656

temporarily professed religious in her development.

- 2) *During the period of juniorate the sisters are not to be given offices or responsibilities which could hinder their proper formation.*
- 3) *Every year, the sister responsible for the temporarily professed religious is to submit a report about each of them to the Superior General through the provincial superior.*
- 4) *It is recommended that a meeting of temporarily professed sisters be held from time to time and of a national group once a year. The Superior General or her representative should conduct the meeting.*
- 5) *After three years of temporary profession the sisters will have an active voice.*

113. After the period of temporary vows and reviewing the sister's written request as well as the opinions of competent persons, the Superior General with the consent of her council can permit her, if she finds her mature enough, to take the perpetual vows. If it seems opportune, the period of temporary profession can be extended or the sister is to leave the Congregation.¹⁷

114. When making a decision on giving permission to a temporarily professed sister for taking perpetual

¹⁷ Cf. Can. 657

profession, it is necessary to consider her commitment to the requirements of consecrated life, her mental stability and consistency in undertakings, as well as understanding the mission of the Congregation and responsible participation in it.

115. The perpetual profession is an act of definite incorporation into the Congregation.

- 1) *The last year of juniorate should be especially devoted to preparation for the perpetual profession. The person responsible for the formation is to make plans for the sister for her final year making time for deepening her theological knowledge of consecrated life and of the Congregation's spirituality.*
- 2) *Before perpetual profession the sister should spend at least a month in certain solitude withdrawing from her usual occupations in order to prepare for this step through deep prayer and reflection. She is also to make an eight-day retreat.*
- 3) *The general secretary is to notify in writing the parish where the newly professed religious was baptized about her perpetual profession in order to make a proper notification on her baptismal certificate. Perpetual profession of chastity invalidates attempted marriage.¹⁸*

¹⁸ Cf. Can. 1088

116. Perpetually professed religious cannot transfer from their own religious institute to another, except by permission of the General Superiors of both institutions, given with the decisive voice of their respective councils.¹⁹

- 1) *The probationary period before perpetual profession should be at least three years and no longer than five years. It is necessary to complete the novitiate. A person coming from another institute is bound to observe the vowed life in accordance with the laws of the Congregation.*
- 2) *In case of unsuccessful probation, the religious is to return to the original institute, unless an indult of secularization has been obtained.*²⁰

¹⁹ Cf. Can. 684 #1

²⁰ Cf. Can. 684 #2

3. SISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR RELIGIOUS FORMATION

117. First of all the Holy Spirit is responsible for religious formation, which requires continuous cooperation on the part of the religious, and Jesus Christ is the only Master. However the process itself and its success depends considerably, at that time, on the persons assisting candidates to religious life. Therefore the sisters to whom the Congregation directly entrusts the responsibility of religious formation should possess natural and spiritual qualities, adequate preparation and abilities necessary for fulfilling this important assignment. They should be full of love for the spirit and tradition of the Congregation and of apostolic zeal. It is the responsibility of the Congregation to prepare them for that task.

- 1) *The sisters responsible for religious formation are to obey the principles left by the Foundress in the Directory, in the chapter "On the Mistress of Novices". Being aware of their responsibility they should faithfully fulfill their duties in the manner of formation defined by the Congregation and under the authority of the Superior General.*
- 2) *They are to work constantly at their spiritual, doctrinal and general development.*

- 3) *Formation programs and its organization at different levels should be well arranged in order to help the persons that are being formed in broad and harmonious development. They are also to preserve in the Congregation unity in principles and continuity in training process in spite of necessary adaptation to conditions proper for particular localities and countries. The religious responsible for formation are to cooperate among themselves. In bigger communities they should set up formation teams.*
- 4) *At least once a year the sisters responsible for formation in a particular country are to meet, under supervision of the Superior General or her representative, in order to set up formation programs and common procedure. It is advisable to organize from time to time formation assemblies for the whole Congregation. Similar provincial meetings could take place once a year.*
- 5) *A commission to take responsibility for programming and coordinating the work of formation should be established at the generalate of the Congregation. The Superior General or her delegate heads it. The Superior General also appoints a sister to be the vocation directress.*

118. The mistress of novices should be a perpetually professed sister, at least 30 years old. The Superior

General with the consent of her council appoints her for three years. The appointment can be renewed. She is directly subordinate to the Superior General and works under her personal supervision.¹

119. The sister in charge of the juniorate should be a perpetually professed member of the Congregation. The provincial superior with her council is to present to the Superior General for approval a list of possible candidates to take on the responsibility of looking after the juniorate in the province.

120. Each community where young religious reside should be aware of its responsibility for those entrusted to it. The sisters are to remember that the first and most effective educational method is the example of a personal, generous devotion to God and his people in a community inspired by the spirit of evangelical love. The Congregation should assist its members, both those responsible for formation and the persons going through the process of formation, with fervent prayer.

¹ Cf. Can. 651, 650 #2

4. PERMANENT FORMATION

121. The grace of religious vocation is a continuing call of God demanding a constantly renewed response on the part of human being. Therefore the religious formation does not terminate with the perpetual vows but continues until the encounter with Christ for eternity. The sisters are to strive to be faithful and generously cooperate with this gift in order to fulfill their goal of increasing sanctity of the Church for the greater glory of God.
122. They are to observe faithfully the Constitutions of the Congregation, seeing in them an aid to perseverance and growth in the love of God and people. They should be open to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit in order to preserve a youthful spirit and the readiness to change ordinary ways of thinking and acting, for this is necessary to fulfill God's plans in the reality of their daily life.
123. Feeling responsible for their own religious life and for that of the whole community, they are to use all the opportunities the Congregation gives them to renew their zeal in God's service, to stimulate new fervor for the apostolate, and continually enrich their spiritual, apostolic, professional and general culture.
124. Growing to maturity and conversion in the spirit of Christ take place first of all in everyday life.

Therefore the sisters, cooperating with the grace of God, are to be responsible in making plans concerning their prayer life, harmonizing prayer and work, as well as their inner transformation in the spirit of penance and conversion.

125. They should strive to expand their knowledge of the spiritual legacy left by the Foundress and of the charisma of the Congregation in order to increase their love for their religious community and responsibility for its mission in the Church.

126. They are to be eager in making use of the prayer time guaranteed by the Constitutions, as well as of other means of deepening their closeness with God.

They should look upon monthly and annual retreats as a special "time of grace" and prayerful reflection on their own lives.

The time for spiritual reading should be systematically planned in order to deepen their spirituality and theology of religious life.

127. Communal meetings are of great importance in the religious formation. They should take place regularly, be well prepared and involve actively all sisters.

In order to sustain the same character of formation, the Congregation follows the same program of spiritual training. Superiors and all other members

of the Congregation should make an effort to put that program into practice and use it for the spiritual development of individual sisters and the community

128. Superiors are to ensure that the sisters have the assistance and the time for their spiritual, doctrinal and practical formation.¹ The sisters themselves should be diligent in broadening their knowledge and getting ready to fulfill their mission.
129. National meetings of the sisters involved in similar apostolic activities serve to exchange their experiences and to expand their professional and spiritual knowledge. Renewals for different groups of members are to renovate and deepen their religious formation in accordance with the directives of the Church and in the spirit of the tradition of the Congregation.
130. The Congregation should show a loving care to the sick and elderly members in order to help them to achieve, in that period of time, deep spiritual and apostolic maturity and to get ready, with serenity, for the encounter with the Lord.
131. The sisters are to pray daily for the grace of perseverance to the end of their lives. In times of difficulty, they should remember the words of our Lord that the road to the Kingdom is narrow and steep, that the violent will conquer it, that the dis-

¹ Cf. Can. 661

ciple of our Lord must carry his cross daily, and that victory is promised to those who persevere.

132. Inspired by the love for the Church and responding joyfully to their own vocation, each sister and all communities are to make every effort to prevent the shortage of workers in the Lord's vineyard and to make sure that as many persons as possible receive the gift of being called to the exclusive service to God.

Therefore the sisters should fervently pray for new vocations and help the young people, by any possible means, especially by the witness of their own life, to follow Christ generously.

PART IV

ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE CONGREGATION

*"Most of all love your Congregation because Jesus has intended it just for you. It should be your family. In it you are to be sanctified. It is to show you the path to Heaven. Through you, through its poverty and work, the Congregation wants to lead you to holy humility."
(Test.XVII)*

*"I implore you, my children, to live in unity and harmony and in heartfelt love, becoming like the first Christians one heart and one soul."
(Test. "My Last Words to My Children")*

1. THE CONGREGATION

"For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same functions, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them." (Rom. 12, 4-6)

133. The Congregation formed by the spirit of Saint Ursula, our Foundress, and faithful to her charisma, is a living part of the Church, where the sisters tend toward the common goal - the spread of the Kingdom of the Heart of Jesus on earth. Organization and administration of the Congregation is to be subordinate to this goal.

134. Through its approval of the Congregation and its Constitutions the Church has validated its existence, confirmed its charisma, and recognized it as an apostolic Congregation of pontifical right.

135. The Congregation is to manifest its love and submission to the Holy Father, to whom every sister owes obedience also under the terms of her vows. It is to show respect and submission to Bishops in accordance with the Church law.¹

¹ Cf. Can. 590 #1, 2; 678 #1

136. The guiding principle of the life and organization of the Congregation should be the principle of unity. This is to express itself in unity of spirit, oneness of purpose, and faithfulness to the charisma and tradition of the Congregation, as stated in the Constitutions. The Superior General, with whom all communities and all sisters should be united, is to be the visible sign and guarantee of this unity.
137. The concern for unity in spirit, purpose and charisma of the Congregation is to be combined with respect for diversity of people, nationalities, lifestyles and activities, depending on the needs of the times, the country and the surrounding community.
138. The basic unit of the Congregation is the local community, living in a legally established house. Its members are to strive for a fully consecrated life and according to assignments given to them, participate in the apostolic activity of the Congregation. The community is to be headed by the local superior.²
- 1) For important reasons, especially apostolic, non-established communities may also exist. Sisters delegated by the Superior General will govern them. They will not hold a title of local superior generally accepted in the Congregation.*

² Cf. Can. 608

2) *According to the law, a sister responsible for the community is not the local superior, but a person endowed with delegated authority. The domain of her authority and length of her mandate will be defined by the Superior General with the consent of her council.*

139. A new religious house is established by the decision of the Superior General with the consent of her council, with the prior written consent of the Diocesan Bishop.³

1) *In making decision about the establishment of a house (established or non-established) it is necessary to consider the needs of the Church, possibilities of the Congregation and the norms of the Canon Law.*⁴

2) *An established community should consist at least of three professed members.*

3) *A decree on the establishment of a new house should be signed by the Superior General and the Secretary General.*

140. Each house is to have a chapel or at least an oratory in which the Eucharist is kept.⁵

³ Cf. Can. 609 #1

⁴ Cf. Can. 610 #1, 2

⁵ Cf. Can. 608

141. The Superior General with the consent of her council makes a decision about closing of a house, after consultation with the Diocesan Bishop.

1) *The Superior General, in consultation with the provincial superior, is to make provisions for the disposal of the goods of the suppressed house.*⁶

142. A group of communities designated by the Superior General with the consent of her council makes up a province directed by a provincial superior. There may also exist communities directly under the Superior General.

143. When the development of the Congregation requires it, some provinces can be united into regions. The Superior General with the consent of her council makes decision about establishing, defining boundaries, uniting and suppressing provinces and regions.⁷

1) *The Superior General can put one of her councilors or another perpetually professed sister in charge of a number of houses, provinces or a region of the Congregation. She is a representative of the Superior General. She is to act in accordance with the universal law, which defines her delegated authority according to the instructions of the Superior General.*

⁶ Cf. Can. 616 #1

⁷ Cf. Can. 581, 585

144. The aggregation of another institute of consecrated life to the Congregation requires the decision of the Superior General with the consent of her council and previous consultation with all major superiors in the Congregation. The conditions of the aggregation should be established in agreement with the aggregating institute.⁸

145. § 1 In accordance with the permission of the Apostolic See that had been granted to Mother Ursula Ledochowska in 1925, the Congregation can accept associates who participate in its life, spirituality and mission following their own statutes authorized by the Apostolic See.

§ 2 According to cann. 299 and 303, the Congregation can interact with Christian groups or associations which desire to follow St. Ursula Ledochowska's spirituality and participate by possible for them means in the mission of the Congregation and under its direction.

These groups or associations are to have their own statutes or regulations approved by the Superior General of the Congregation with the consent of her council.

1) In their statutes, their goals and organizational principles, lasting foundation, kinds of promises, as well as their association with the Congregation should be clearly stated.

⁸ Cf. Can. 580

2) *If any of the groups or associations mentioned in # 2 would like to take before the Church an obligation to lead permanently the consecrated life in the world, it should present to the Apostolic See, after consultation with the superiors of the Congregation, their statutes and submit to its decision.*

146. The supreme authority in the Congregation is ordinarily exercised by the Superior General and her council; and extraordinarily, in legislative matters - by the general chapter.

147. Superiors at all levels possess personal authority, the scope of which is determined by general law and the law of the Congregation. They are to exercise authority in a spirit of evangelical service to the sisters in love, in dependence to the Church and to their major superiors, in cooperation with the sisters, and faithful to the charisma of the Congregation.

The Superior General and the general council are elected by the general chapter. Provincial and local superiors are nominated by the Superior General with the consent of her council and after proper consultations.

148. Superiors at all levels are to strive together with the sisters entrusted to them to build in Christ the evangelical community in which God is sought and loved above all. They should look after the sisters' spiritual progress, their needs, the apostolic

zeal and the growth of the Congregation. They themselves are to be an example in observing the laws, charisma and traditions of the Congregation.⁹

To fulfill their duties they are to follow our St. Mother's instructions left by her in part IV of the Directory, trying to get familiar with them and putting them into practice.

149. They are to work together in harmony to promote love in the communities entrusted to them and in the whole Congregation.

150. Superiors at all levels are to govern the communities and groups of communities with the help of their councils approved by proper authorities.¹⁰ The elected members of the councils should be spiritually mature and experienced in community life; they should be highly regarded by others so that they can be intermediaries between superiors and communities entrusted to them.

1) In case of need, meetings of extended councils at all levels can be called as an instrument of cooperation and common responsibility.

151. National congresses of superiors are to be held at least every two years. They may make decisions and adopt resolutions in accordance with the law of the Congregation concerning the life and apos-

⁹ Cf. Can. 618, 619

¹⁰ Cf. Can. 627

tolic work of the sisters in a given country. These resolutions require the approval of the Superior General.

- 1) *National conferences of the superiors are headed by the Superior General or by a member of the general council who has been delegated by her.*

Superiors from outside the country or other sisters can be invited to a national conference, as long as their presence is desirable.

- 2) *Decisions and resolutions adopted at the conferences may concern religious observance, life style and activity of the communities defined by the Constitutions.*
- 3) *Special committees from the general or provincial levels, whether permanent or for specific assignments, may be convened according to the needs.*

152. In the spirit of responsibility for the Congregation, all professed sisters may send in proposals and remarks regarding the life and activity of the Congregation.

- 1) *Proposals concerning the whole Congregation or particular communities should be submitted to major superiors.*
- 2) *Motivated proposals regarding the names of sisters for positions of authority in the Congrega-*

*tion should be sent to the General Council up to
January of each year.*

2. THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

153. The Superior General directs the life of the Congregation in accordance with the Church Law and the law of the Congregation. She holds authority over all provinces, communities, and individual sisters.

154. The Superior General is elected by the general chapter. A sister may be elected to the office if she has taken perpetual vows, possesses the qualities necessary for fulfilling the duties of Superior General, is at least thirty-five years of age and has five years of religious profession. The Superior General's term of office lasts for six years. She may be re-elected according to the regulations listed in article 200.

155. The Superior General is to take care that all communities are faithful to the Gospel, that they fulfill the requirements of religious life and their apostolic mission in accordance with the religious law in the spirit of the Congregation. She should look after the development of the Congregation.

156. She should learn about recent teachings and instructions of the Apostolic See and be watchful that the Congregation remain faithful in all its works to the Church and open to its needs.

1) She promotes in the Congregation knowledge of the documents and teachings of the Apostolic

See and ensures that the recent instructions of the Church be observed.

2) She submits to the Apostolic See in the specific time periods required reports defined by the law.

157. Submissive to the Holy Spirit, having prudent courage and an open heart she is to inspire continual renewal in the Congregation so that, vital and full of apostolic favour, it will better answer the call of Christ.

158. She should look after the unity between the provinces and communities of the Congregation, promoting cooperation among them, while respecting the spirit and customs of each nationality. She should watch over the work of provincial superiors, direct the religious formation of the sisters and the work of the mistresses of novices. She should keep the Congregation informed of necessary matters, this being a constituent of unity and permanent religious formation.

1) At least once in two months she is to call a meeting of the general council and chair it. She may also call the meetings of the extended general council.

2) She works closely with provincial superiors and coordinates their tasks.

- 3) *At the suggestion of the provincial superior she appoints the provincial council.*
- 4) *She approves formation programs and directs the sisters' religious formation, their doctrinal and professional education.*
- 5) *She transfers the sisters from one province to another in agreement with the superiors in question.*
- 6) *She enlists the sisters in the work needed in the Congregation.*
- 7) *The Superior General holds the title of Our Mother.*

159. The Superior General may not change the Constitutions, interpret them authentically, nor grant permanent dispensation from them. She may, however, grant temporary dispensations, both to individual sisters and to communities, regarding certain articles of the Constitutions concerning religious discipline.

160. The Superior General is responsible for the material goods of the Congregation and administers them by a treasurer general. She represents the Congregation before the Church and civil authorities.

161. She is to visit all communities of the Congregation at least every six years. The purpose of the

visitation is to become acquainted with the spiritual and material state as well as with the apostolic work of the community in order to check its involvement in the mission of the Congregation. The visitation strengthens the ties binding the sisters to the whole Congregation and to the Superior General.

- 1) *During the visitation she will interview each sister. The sisters are to tell her sincerely and openly everything that they consider necessary for their own good and for the good of the Congregation.*
- 2) *She will examine the spiritual state of the community, its work, its finances and its documentation.*
- 3) *At the end of the visitation the Superior General will sum up the results of her visit in the presence of the whole community. She will impart advice and give instructions, and in case of necessity will indicate the ways of righting every wrong. She will enter her remarks and recommendations in a visitation book of the community. She will draw up a record of the visitation, which will be kept in the general archives.*
- 4) *The Superior General will do everything in her power to strengthen the peace and harmony in the community, to correct what is wrong and to inspire the sisters with a new fervor for their*

vocation and for the spread of the Kingdom of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

5) If the Superior General is unable to conduct the visitation herself, she will delegate one of the general assistants or a perpetually professed sister to do so, in accordance with the regulations for the visitations by the Superior General. The visiting sister will report on the outcome of the visitation to the Superior General.

162. While the Superior General is in office she may not hold another office in the Congregation.

163. If the Superior General has committed such a serious offence that she could not effectively govern the Congregation, the general council will make a collective decision by secret ballot, present the matter to the Apostolic See and will comply with its decision. If the Superior General considers in her conscience that she is not able any more to exercise her office, she will present the matter to the Apostolic See and will comply with its decision.

3. THE GENERAL COUNCIL

164. The general council is made of four general assistants, a secretary general and a treasurer general. The Superior General heads the council. Sisters elected to the council must be perpetually professed and at least thirty years old. The term of their office lasts until the next general chapter. They may be always re-elected.

165. The members of the council take part in the decision-making in matters provided by law. They state what they regard as necessary for the good of the Congregation. They counsel and assist the Superior General in administering the Congregation, and share the responsibility for its life and development.

- 1) *The councilors are obliged to participate in the meetings of the council and take a stand - when necessary - following their conscience, by expressing their opinion, counseling or having the deciding vote. To be excused from the council's meeting it is necessary to get previous permission from the Superior General.*
- 2) *The participation of the Superior General and at least two-thirds of the council is necessary to make a valid decision when a deciding vote of the council is required. Voting should be secret if requested even by one person.*

- 3) *The members of the council should live at least in the vicinity of the Superior General's residence so that they may easily attend the council's meetings.*
- 4) *The secretary general writes a report of every meeting to be signed by the Superior General and the members of the council.*
- 5) *Major superiors participate in the meetings of an extended council. The Superior General may also invite some other sisters. An extended council acts in an advisory capacity.*

166. The general council has the deciding vote in the matters defined in the Constitutions and Norms as requiring the consent of the council to make the Superior General's decision valid. Also, the council's consent is required for the transfer of the generalate house (it is necessary to inform the Apostolic See about it), for calling up specialized commissions, for returning of the rights of religious life to the sisters who have lost them because of desertion or apostasy.

167. The first assistant, elected by the general chapter, is the vicar of the Superior General. In case of death, resignation or dismissal of the Superior General, she directs the Congregation as the Vicar General. Then she convenes the electoral chapter to be held no later than six months since taking on her duties. The Vicar General should not make de-

cisions influencing the basic life and activity of the Congregation.

168. The secretary general is responsible for the official correspondence of the Congregation, for the archives, which contain legal papers and documentation concerning the life, administration and history of the Congregation.

1) The secretary general may not, without the authorization of the Superior General, make the documents accessible to persons not belonging to the general council.

169. The members of the general council are bound to secrecy in all matters entrusted to them by right of their office.

170. The members of the general council may not simultaneously be local superiors, provincial superiors or novitiate mistresses.

171. Regarding the dismissal from office of a member of a general council, the Superior General with her council will jointly make the decision.

172. In case of death, resignation or dismissal of a member of the council, the Superior General with her council will elect her successor by majority vote.

4. THE PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR

173. The provincial superior directs the group of houses entrusted to her care according to the authority given her by the Constitutions. She governs the sisters and the communities in her province. She is a major superior.¹

174. A provincial superior has to be a sister who has been perpetually professed for three years and is at least thirty years old. She is appointed by the Superior General with the consent of her council after proper consultations. Her term of office is three years and may be extended for the second three-year period, or only for the third three-year period if there is a well-founded reason.

175. The provincial superior, in cooperation with the provincial council, with local superiors and the sisters, is to see that each community fulfill faithfully its tasks in accordance with the law, the spirit and the charisma of the Congregation. She assists in advancing its present activities and developing new ones. She looks after the financial state of the communities.

1) The provincial superior closely cooperates with the provincial council consulting it in the matters of importance pertaining to the life and ac-

¹ Cf. Can. 620

tivities of the province, especially to the programming the work and formation of the sisters.

- 2) She maintains close contact with the local superiors and offers them advice and help. She organizes meetings of the local superiors in order to discuss current matters of the province and planning the spiritual, formative and apostolic work.*
 - 3) She calls up meetings in the province for the sisters primarily involved in the main streams of the apostolate.*
 - 4) She transfers sisters within her province after consulting with their local superiors.*
 - 5) She looks after financial situation of the sisters and contracts work agreements on behalf of the Congregation.*
 - 6) She approves a local council suggested by a local superior.*
 - 7) She gives permission to a sister for being absent from the house up to one month.*
176. She looks after the spiritual matters and the formation of the sisters and the communities. She should strive to recognize the sisters' talents and capabilities and help them to make the most of their gifts of nature and grace. She should be con-

cerned especially for the sick sisters and for those who need help the most.

- 1) *She directs the permanent formation in the province, the implementation of the Congregation's programs and the professional training of the sisters.*
- 2) *She coordinates the work of the sisters responsible for the formation and - in agreement with the Superior General - looks after the implementation of the formation programs and on the doctrinal and professional formation of the young sisters.*
- 3) *During the year, she organizes meetings for the juniorate of the province.*
- 4) *She accepts candidates to religious life and to the postulancy.*
- 5) *In agreement with her council, she dismisses candidates and postulants from the Congregation.*

177. The provincial superior maintains close contact with the Superior General. She answers to her for the state of her province, for their apostolic mission, for the spiritual and professional training of the sisters, and for the legal and financial state. She coordinates with the Superior General the more important moves and procedures.

In the spirit of unity, she cooperates with other major superiors.

- 1) *When summoned by the Superior General, she participates in the meetings of the extended general council. She also takes part in the national conferences and in the meetings of the sisters responsible for the formation.*
- 2) *Once a year, she reports to the Superior General on the activities of particular communities. At least once a year she reports on her own work to the Superior General. The Superior General gives her consent in writing to more important settlements and permissions.*
- 3) *She answers to the Superior General for the implementation in her province of the Congregation's programs and the formation programs. She is also responsible for the legality of the reporting done in her province.*

178. The provincial superior visits all communities of the province. At that time she is to comply with the instructions on visitations for the Superior General.

- 1) *The provincial superior visits all communities in the province at least once in her term of office (once in a three-year period). After visitation she sends a report to the Superior General.*
- 2) *She maintains close and cordial contact with the sisters and often visits them.*

179. The provincial superior may not simultaneously be a member of the general council, mistress of novices and local superior.

1) If a provincial superior has fewer than one hundred sisters under her, she may also be a local superior of a provincial house.

180. The provincial superior may be recalled from office in the middle of a term by the Superior General with the consent of her council for serious reasons, which should be communicated to her in writing. If the needs of the Congregation require it, she may be assigned, if she consents, to another position.

181. The provincial superior may grant dispensations from certain articles of the Constitutions relating to religious discipline for a period of time to individual sisters and communities of her province. Dispensations granted for a longer period of time have to be reported to the Superior General.

5. THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

182. The provincial council assists the provincial superior. It also shares the responsibility of administering the province and of vitalizing its activities. It consists of at least two assistants, permanently professed sisters, appointed by the Superior General at the suggestion of the provincial superior. The provincial superior heads the council.

- 1) *The provincial superior, after consultation with the sisters in the province, will present to the Superior General the names of the members of her council and of a candidate for the office of general treasurer. The Superior General may accept the entire proposal or, after consultation with the provincial superior, make some changes.*
- 2) *The appointment is valid for three years and expires in conjunction with the expiration of the term of the office of the provincial superior.*
- 3) *The first assistant is the vicar of the provincial superior. Especially in bigger provinces she should be free of responsibilities that could prevent her from performing her duties in the province.*
- 4) *The second assistant may also be a provincial treasurer.*

- 5) *The provincial superior is obliged to consider the council's advice in the matter of proposing candidates to fill the office of local superiors and to take responsibility for formation; accepting candidates to postulancy, dismissing candidates and postulants from the Congregation and setting up specialized commissions.*
 - 6) *The provincial superior should convene the council's meetings at least every two months. Minutes of the meetings are to be kept in the provincial archives*
 - 7) *The provincial superior should convene meetings of the extended provincial council. The makeup of the extended council will depend on the matters to be discussed.*
183. The members of the provincial council are bound to secrecy in all matters entrusted to them by virtue of their office.

6. THE LOCAL SUPERIOR

184. The local superior governs the community entrusted to her in accordance with the Constitutions of the Congregation. She must be a professed sister of one year of perpetual vows. She is appointed by the Superior General with the consent of the general council and after proper previous consultations. The term of office of a local superior is three years. It may be extended for a second three-year period and for one more term only, if there is a valid reason.

185. In cooperation with the sisters, the local superior organizes and stimulates the life of the community, so that it may more fully correspond to the evangelical ideal of a community united in the Heart of Jesus and zealous in serving their brothers and sisters. She directs the apostolic work of the community. She looks after the spiritual and material needs of the sisters, their formation, and the furthering of their religious, general and professional education. She manages the material goods of the community.

She willingly accepts the sisters' initiatives pertaining to the community life and development of the apostolate.

1) She closely cooperates with the local council and consults it in the matters of greater im-

portance concerning the community. At least once a month she calls a meeting of the local council.

- 2) According to the needs, from time to time she calls a meeting of the extended council, inviting representatives of various work groups or the whole community for the purpose of discussing plans for life and work or other current matters concerning the community.*
- 3) She is responsible for the implementation of the spiritual programs concerning the whole Congregation and the formation of the sisters.*
- 4) She is in charge of the community's finances in accordance with the preliminary budget approved by the provincial superior. She designates the remainder for the general needs of the Congregation.*

In case of larger investments and repairs the local superior makes her proposals to the general council through the provincial superior.

- 5) She informs the provincial superior of the new initiatives of work and new forms of the apostolate. The consent of the provincial superior is necessary for undertaking new forms of work or abandoning existing ones. She informs the provincial superior of the need of adding new members to the community and of necessary changes, three months before the end of the*

year (end of June), and includes these proposals in a written report.

- 6) *The local superior may grant the sisters a dispensation from some articles of the Constitutions relating to religious discipline for a certain period of time. Dispensations for a longer period of time will be reported to the provincial superior.*

186. The local superior answers to the major superiors for the spiritual state of the community, for the apostolic work, for the faithfulness to the Constitutions, for carrying out the orders and directives of major superiors, for the administration and financial affairs of the community. She clears with the superiors more important decisions.

- 1) *Once a year she submits to the Superior General through the provincial superior a written report on the state of the community. Every six months she submits through the provincial superior a financial report.*
- 2) *She has a record of major permissions granted to the sisters, her own and the sisters' trips, and other important matters. She clears her own trips with the provincial superior.¹*

At least once a year she submits to the provincial superior a report on her work. The provin-

¹ Cf. Can. 629

cial superior signs major settlements and permissions.

3) *It is her responsibility to ensure that the documentation of the sisters and the house, as well as chronicles and archives, are kept according to the required regulations.*

4) *She participates in national and provincial meetings of the superiors.*

187. To preach the Word of God to the sisters in their churches and chapels, it is necessary to get permission from the local superior. The provincial superior approves the names of the persons invited to give regularly a spiritual talk to the sisters or to conduct a retreat and follows directives, which are obligatory in the Congregation.²

188. The local superior may be recalled from office in the middle of a term by the Superior General with the consent of her council for serious reasons, which should be communicated to her in writing. If the needs of the Congregation require it, she may be assigned, if she consents, to another position.

² Cf. Can. 765

7. THE LOCAL COUNCIL

189. The local council shares with the local superior the responsibility of administering the community and of inspiring its life according to the spirit and mission of the Congregation. The local superior heads the council.

- 1) *The provincial superior approves the members of the council after properly conducted previous consultations.*

The term of office is one year and may be renewed. The local council should meet at least once a month.

- 2) *In the communities consisting of more than ten sisters there should be two assistants, perpetually professed sisters. One of them is the representative of the local superior.*

In smaller communities one of the sisters is the superior's assistant and the whole community takes place of the council.

190. The local council should express its opinion on the following: the acceptance of candidates, postulants and junior sisters to appropriate stages of religious formation; the setting up of the daily schedule and organizing the community life after consulting with the members of the community; the planning of the community budget as well as of

investments and repairs; the approval of the descriptive and financial report of the community; the projected changes of the community personnel.

1) When undertaking more important new tasks affecting the work of the community, it is necessary to ask the opinions of the sisters and present the proposal to the provincial superior.

191. Members of the local council are bound to secrecy in matters entrusted to them by reason of their office.

8. THE GENERAL CHAPTER

192. The general chapter is the representative, collegial and legislative body of the Congregation. It constitutes an expression of joint responsibility of all the sisters for the life, work and development of the Congregation.

193. A general chapter is held for the purpose of checking the state of the Congregation concerning its spiritual legacy and mission entrusted to it by the Church, fostering its renewal, electing the Superior General and her council.¹

The chapter may also review the law of the Congregation and make appropriate decisions.

194. An ordinary general chapter is called when the term of office of Superior General ends, that is every six years.

A general chapter is also called in the case of the death, resignation or deposition of the Superior General when it is necessary to elect a new Superior General and general council.

An extraordinary general chapter is called when the Superior General with the consent of her council finds it necessary for the life and work of the Congregation.

¹ Cf. Can. 631

195. The Superior General, or in case of her absence, the vicar general, announces the coming chapter to the Congregation by means of a letter posted six months before the date. Included in the letter should be a statement concerning the election of the delegates, according to the regulations stated in the charter on the chapter.

1) The Superior General with the consent of her council may form suitable pre-chapter committees depending on the tasks facing the chapter.

2) Each sister has the right to send in suggestions to the general council or to the chapter on matters she considers essential for the Congregation.

3) From the announcement of the chapter, the Superior General may not undertake changes in personnel, which might influence the membership of the chapter.

4) The date of an ordinary general chapter may be moved forward or delayed for no more than three months.

196. The following sisters will take part in the chapter by right of their office: the Superior General, members of the general council, former superiors general, provincial superiors, mistresses of novices and delegates elected according to the charter. The

elected delegates should constitute at least one half of the participants.²

- 1) *Perpetually professed sisters have both active and passive voice in the election of delegates.*

The sisters participating in the chapter by right of their office and the sisters after three years of temporary profession have only an active voice. The exclaustrated sisters and those who are in the process of dismissal and departure from the Congregation have neither an active nor passive voice.

- 2) *The Superior General with the consent of her council defines the voting districts in accordance with the charter.*

- 3) *The Superior General with the consent of her council, depending on the tasks facing the chapter, may invite to the chapter some other members of the Congregation or persons from outside with the approval of the chapter. The chapter may also extend an invitation to experts or some other persons and define their sphere of work. They will make a consultative body and will be excluded from voting.*

197. The chapter may carry out its duties with at least two-third participation of its members.

² Cf. Can. 631 #1, 2

- 1) *The Superior General presides over the chapter. She directs the work of the chapter and coordinates the work of the committees.*
- 2) *During the ordinary chapter the Superior General makes a report on the condition of the Congregation regarding spiritual matters, personnel, apostolic works, administration of property, as well as carrying out of the resolutions made by the previous general chapter.*

A committee elected by the members of the chapter will examine the financial report to be approved by the chapter before the elections.

198. The sister elected to the office of the Superior General should receive by a secret ballot an absolute majority, that is more than half of the votes of the sisters participating in the chapter. If on the first, second and third ballot no one receives an absolute majority, on the fourth vote only those two sisters who on the third ballot receive the greatest number of votes, may be voted for, according to the proper article of the charter.³

199. The participants of the chapter may discuss possible candidates, share their views and personal opinions; however they are not allowed to use moral pressure or lobby for votes either for themselves or others. The sisters should vote for the person whom, in their conscience, they know to be

³ Cf. Canon Law 1983, IX, I, 3

worthy and fitting to hold the office of the Superior General.⁴

200. The Superior General is elected for six years. She may be re-elected for the second six-year term. To be elected for the third term she should receive at least the two-thirds of the votes in the first or second ballot. After the second ballot, she loses the passive vote.

1) The election of the Superior General should be presided over by the local Ordinary or by the secretary of the chapter.

The chairperson is to announce the results of the election to the Congregation.

2) The members of the chapter will pledge obedience to the newly elected Superior General.

3) In the spirit of responsibility for the common good of the Congregation, the outgoing administration will submit to the newly elected Superior General all the matters pertaining to the rule and management of the Congregation within a month.

201. After the election of the Superior General, four general assistants, the secretary general and the treasurer general will be elected by an absolute majority in separate secret ballots. If in the fourth

⁴ Cf. Can. 626

ballot none of the sisters receives the required majority, in the fifth and the last ballot the sister who receives most of the votes will be elected.

202. If a greater number of the members of the Congregation were from different nationalities, it would be desirable to have also their representation in the general council.

203. To make the election valid, the person who has been elected should express her consent.

204. The chapter may not change the Constitutions approved by the Apostolic See nor interpret them authentically without the approval of the Apostolic See.

9. MATERIAL GOODS AND THEIR ADMINISTRATION

205. Material goods of the Congregation are to be used to attain its goals: sustenance and formation of its members, apostolic works and sharing with the needy. Making use of the material goods and their administration should correspond with the requirements of the evangelical poverty and give witness to putting the greatest value upon human beings and spiritual goods.

The Superior General with her council is responsible for the material goods and administers them.¹

206. The sisters who are directly involved in administering the property of the Congregation should realize that as the servants in the Gospel they are to give account of their stewardship and are responsible for the temporal goods of the Church and of the Congregation.

207. The Congregation as the juridical person represented by the Superior General may acquire, possess, administer and alienate material goods in accordance with the canon law, civil law and the regulations required in the Congregation. Neither

¹ Cf. Can. Law 1983; 634-640

provinces nor particular communities are allowed to acquire, possess and alienate material goods.²

- 1) *The generalate should endeavor to make it possible for the communities of sisters living in various countries to be juridical persons in accordance with the local law.*
- 2) *The Superior General may then appoint a representative of the Congregation to perform juridical acts in a particular country. She will work under a close supervision of the Superior General who has to authorize all major decisions.*
- 3) *The Superior General may not, without consent of her council, perform juridical acts or financial transactions, which would adversely affect the property of the Congregation.*
- 4) *Juridical acts or financial transactions (purchase, sale, donation, loan), which could in a great measure adversely affect the property of the Congregation, may be performed only with the written consent of the Superior General and her council.³*
- 5) *Provincial superiors in accordance with the regulations of the Conference of Bishops may sign collective work contracts and others per-*

² Cf. Can. 634, 118

³ Cf. Can. 638 #3

taining to the sisters' employment on behalf of the Congregation.

- 6) *Duplicates of juridical acts, work contracts and other important documents should be submitted to the secretary general of the Congregation. All juridical acts should be drawn in accordance with the canon law and the civil law.*⁴

208. The material goods are administered by the treasurer general under the direction and submission to the Superior General.

Every six months, she submits to the Superior General and her council a report on the legal and financial state of the Congregation. This report must be checked and approved by the council.⁵

- 1) *The treasurer general looks after the documents concerning the administration of the material goods and the legal and material state of the Congregation.*
- 2) *She uses her expertise to help the provincial and local superiors.*
- 3) *The Superior General, at the suggestion of the provincial superior, appoints a provincial treasurer who will work under the direction of the provincial superior.*

⁴ Cf. Can. 1286, 1290

⁵ Cf. Can. 636

*In bigger local communities, the provincial superior, at the suggestion of the local superior, appoints a treasurer who will work under supervision of the local superior.*⁶

209. Local communities use material goods, entrusted to them, in a manner defined in the norms above and in the spirit of the vowed poverty. In the spirit of unity and responsibility for the Congregation, each community is to contribute for the general needs of the Congregation. The Congregation on its part will look after the sisters and the communities; especially those who need help and are poorer.

- 1) The local superior is responsible for the property of the community. She is also responsible for the legal and financial documentation of the house. Every six months, she submits a financial report to the Superior General through the provincial superior. She encloses a list of possible expenses in the next term and projected investments*
- 2) Each local community keeps from its income as much as necessary for the living and for the apostolic and charitable activities. The remainder should be placed at the disposal of the Congregation, according to the regulations.*

⁶ Cf. Can. 636

- 3) *The communities, which cannot fulfill this obligation, should ask for a written permission to be excused from it permanently or for a certain period of time.*
- 4) *According to article 286 of the Canon Law, the sisters are forbidden to practise commerce or trade.*

210. A written permission of the Superior General is required for the acts, which exceed the ordinary administration of property, as well as for the alienation of temporal goods (sale, donation) of a greater value. She will act according to the law and directives of the Apostolic See.⁷

- 1) *The Superior General with her council should issue special instructions pertaining to the administration of material goods, the contribution of particular communities to common treasury and the method of planning projected expanses.*
- 2) *She will also define for each country the spending limits, which exceed the manner of ordinary administration, as well as regulations concerning loans based on the articles of the Canon Law.*
- 3) *If there are precious objects of historical or artistic value (works of art, furniture, books) in a community house, it is necessary to make an in-*

⁷ Cf. Can. 638, 1291-1296

*ventory and send a duplicate to the generalate. Local superiors are not allowed to dispose of them without permission of the Superior General.*⁸

⁸ Cf. Can. 638 #3

10. DEPARTURE FROM THE CONGREGATION. EXCLAUSTRATION

211. A person who, on completion of the time of temporary profession, wishes to leave the Congregation is free to do so.¹
212. The Superior General after consultation with her council may prohibit a professed sister from renewing her vows or from making her final profession. This is equivalent to dismissal from the Congregation. The sister in question will be given the reasons for such a decision. A serious reason could be physical or mental illness even though contracted after profession, which, in the judgment of experts, renders her unsuited to lead a life in the Congregation, unless the infirmity has been contracted through the negligence of the Congregation or because of work, performed in the convent. The superiors will make a decision with prudence and love.²
213. The Superior General with the consent of her council may, for grave reasons, grant permission to a professed sister of temporary vows to leave the Congregation, before the termination of her vows.

¹ Cf. Can. 688 #1

² Cf. Can. 688 #2, 3

Obtaining such permission gives the sister a dispensation from the vows.³

214. A perpetually professed sister who seeks an indult to leave the Congregation for very grave reasons, weighed before the Lord, is to present her petition to the Superior General. The Superior General, after unsuccessfully employing all possible means of confirming the sister in her vocation, will forward the petition to the Apostolic See with her own opinion and that of at least four members of her council.⁴

215. The Superior General with the consent of her council can for grave reasons grant an indult of exclaustation to a perpetually professed sister for a period not exceeding three years. An extension of this indult for more than three years is reserved to the Apostolic See.⁵

At the request of the Superior General acting with the consent of her council, the Apostolic See can impose exclaustation on a perpetually professed sister for grave reasons. It should be done in the spirit of observing equity and charity.⁶

³ Cf. Can. 688 #2

⁴ Cf. Can. 691

⁵ Cf. Can. 686 #1

⁶ Cf. Can. 686 #2

216. An exclaustated sister lacks active and passive voice. She remains dependent on the superiors of the Congregation and on the local Ordinary.⁷

1) The Superior General will define her dependence considering the exclaustated sister's condition of life as well as her religious obligations in the new situation.

217. If any of the perpetually or temporarily professed sisters has committed a serious offence or habitually and visibly neglected the obligations of her vows, she runs the risk of a dismissal from the Congregation. The dismissal will proceed in accordance with the canon law.⁸

218. In a case of grave external scandal, or of extremely grave and imminent harm to the Congregation, a sister can be expelled immediately by the Superior General or the provincial superior can expel a sister immediately. If there is no time for making contact with the major superior, this can be done by the local superior with the consent of her council. The Apostolic See should be notified about the occurrence immediately.⁹

219. The rights and duties deriving from profession of the perpetually or temporarily professed sister, who was granted a decree of dismissal, automatically cease. The Congregation is also free from

⁷ Cf. Can. 687

⁸ Cf. Can. 694-700

⁹ Cf. Can. 703

any obligations towards her,¹⁰ except for the matters defined in the norms under article 220.

220. The sisters should remember that by dedicating themselves to serve Christ in His Church through the profession of the evangelical counsels, they voluntarily renounced any right to material security. Whoever leaves the Congregation or is dismissed from it cannot claim anything from it.¹¹

1) The dowry, which these sisters brought upon their entry into the Congregation, will be returned to them in its entirety but without interest.

2) The Congregation, feeling responsible for its members, will show equity and love to the departing sisters.¹²

221. The sisters should feel obligated to pray for the sisters who left the Congregation.

¹⁰ Cf. Can. 701

¹¹ Cf. Can. 702

¹² Cf. Can. 702 #2

V. THE BINDING FORCE OF THE CONSTITUTIONS

"And the Holy Rule will lead us most surely to this unity with the will of God, because it points to us at every step where the will of God lies for us and because it gives us the possibility of fulfilling the will of God at every step.

Let us fervently love our Holy Rule, let us earnestly try to fulfill it, let us study it and let us contemplate it. The Holy Rule is our strength, our happiness, our guidepost to heaven, and our light." (Test. X)

222. The law of the Congregation is for the sisters a rule of life, based on the Gospel and on the Church law, which expresses the spirituality and charisma of the Congregation. Through the religious profession each sister obligates herself to live according to the Constitutions considering them to be the way to attain perfection and an aid to growing in the love of God and people.
223. The Constitutions and Norms do not oblige under pain of sin except for the matters that pertain to God's law, the precepts of the Church and the essential elements of the vows. Those, however, who do not attach importance to the observance of the Constitutions, should fear losing the graces, which the Holy Spirit grants to souls who faithfully follow the call of their vocation.¹
224. Superiors are authorized to grant dispensations from the articles of the Constitutions and Norms relating to religious discipline. The sisters, however, are not to excuse themselves from observing them, without a valid reason.
225. The Constitutions of the Congregation have been approved by the Church and only the Apostolic See can change them. The resolutions of the general chapter of the Congregation pertaining to the changes made in the Constitutions should be voted

¹ C 30, 392

for by at least two-thirds of the sisters present and then sent to the Apostolic See for approval.

226. The Norms, which make a particular part of the Congregation's law, are its integral components. The general chapter can make possible changes to the Norms by an absolute vote of its participants. The changes are obligatory in accordance with the chapter's decisions.

The chapter cannot change those Norms, which are based on the universal law of the Church. It can only accommodate them to the needs of the Congregation.

227. Decisions and resolutions made at the national conferences of the superiors and authorized by the Superior General are mandatory in a particular country for the time indicated at the conference.

228. On entering the novitiate each sister will receive a copy of the Constitutions, so that she may read them often, gain a better understanding of their spirit and obligations and faithfully fulfill them. The Constitutions will be read aloud in every community twice a year.

229. The law of the Congregation, the Testament and the Directory of our Saint Foundress should be for every sister an obligatory rule of life.

DECREE

The religious Congregation of the Sisters that have been called the Ursuline Sisters of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus, whose main house is located in Pniewy, in the Archdiocese of Gniezno and Poznan, has originated from the Ursuline Convent in Petersburg. The Congregation was founded in Pniewy about the year of 1920 by Sister Maria Ursula Ledochowska, its Superior. Her achievement has been honoured by the approval of His Eminence Cardinal and Archbishop of Gniezno and Poznan and of the Bishops of Wloclawek, Kalisz and Lodz.

The goals of the sisters are: 1) to strive for their own sanctification by observing the religious vows and directing their lives according to the Constitutions; 2) to engage in educating and teaching Christian values to the youth, especially among the poor, the working class and peasants; 3) to get involved in the works of piety and charity in spiritual and worldly matters pertaining to education and teaching.

All sisters should lead a strict communal life under the authority of the Superior General, elected for six years. After a proper novitiate, the sisters will take simple vows of poverty, chastity and obedience at first temporary, then perpetual. In hope of the new religious Congregation's fruitful activity, with God's help, for the Church and the Country, the Apostolic Nuntio in Poland and the Bishops, as it was men-

tioned above, earnestly pleaded for it in their letters. The Holy Father Pius XI, the Pope by the grace of God, complying with the request of the Superior and her Council and taking into consideration the letters of recommendation and first of all the opinions of Their Eminences the Cardinals, Superiors of the Holy Congregation, who carefully examined the matter at the plenary meeting in Vatican held on the first day of this month in this year - most graciously praised and recommended the religious Congregation of simple vows governed by the Superior General which, as a former religious institute, if improperly established would have to be reformed, at the audience given to the most Reverend Secretary of the Sacred Congregation for Religious, on June 4, 1923. Moreover, having postponed the approval of the Institute, he graciously authorized and approved the Constitutions, which were written in the French language, officially corrected, as it is evident in the present copy, for seven years of a trial period. The autographic copy of the Constitutions is kept in the Tabularium of the Sacred Congregation.

By the power of this decree, the Holy Father praises and recommends this religious Congregation, approves and authorizes its Constitutions, as it has been already mentioned, not putting any limits on the juridical power of the Ordinaries in accordance with the norm of The Holy Canons.

Given in Rome, in the Secretariate of the Sacred
Congregation which is in charge of the matters con-
cerning the consecrated persons, on June 4, 1923

C. Card. Laurenti
Prefectus
Mennas M. Serafini Ab. OB
Secretari

DECREE

The religious Congregation in which the members profess simple vows, known as the Ursuline Sisters of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus, which has its motherhouse now located in Rome, was granted by the Apostolic See, in June, 1923, a Laudatory Decree and the approval of its Constitutions for a trial period of seven years. Moreover the Holy Father Pius XI deigned in 1925 the authorization of the Statutes of the Coadiutory Sisters for five years.

Presently the Superior General with her Council submitted a humble petition asking for the definite approval of the Congregation, the Constitutions and the Statutes for the Coadiutory Sisters. The Sacred Congregation for Religious, having carefully examined it and introducing some changes in accordance with the Canon Law, taking into consideration the most abundant, by the grace of God, spiritual benefits, following the Pope's, Pius XI, recommendation, definitely approved and authorized the Congregation, the content of the Constitutions and the Statutes for the Coadiutory Sisters, which has been approved and confirmed by this decree. The original approval is kept in the archives of the Sacred Congregation for Religious.

The publication of this decree cancels any contrary decrees.

Given in Rome by the Secretariate of the Sacred Congregation for Religious.

November 21, 1930

(m.p.) **Alexius Henricus
M.
Card. Lepicier O.S.M.**
Prefectus

(m.p.) **Vince La Puma**
Secretari.

l. s.

ABBREVIATIONS

- L.G. Lumen gentium: The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Vat. II)
- G.S. Gaudium et spes: The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World
- D.V. Dei Verbum: The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation
- P.C. Perfectae caritatis: The Decree on the Up-to-date Renewal of Religious Life
- Paen. Paenitemini: The Apostolic Constitution on Penance (1966)
- E.N. Evangelii nuntiandi: The Apostolic Exhortation of Paul VI on the Evangelization in the Modern World
- E.T. Evangelica testificatio: The Exhortation of Paul VI- Instructions on the Renewal of Religious Life
- M.R. Mutuae Relationis: Instructions on Mutual Relations between Bishops and Consecrated Men (Scris 1978)
- C 30 The Constitutions of the Congregation, 1930
- Dir. The Directory for the Ursuline Sisters, 1932
- Test. Testament of the Foundress
- C.L. Canon Law, 1983
- Can. An article from the Canon Law

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENESIS OF THE CONGREGATION -----	5
Part I	
Spirituality and Mission of the Congregation -----	7
Part II	
The Consecrated Life -----	13
1. The Profession of Evangelical Counsels -----	15
2. The Consecrated Chastity -----	21
3. The Evangelical Poverty -----	27
4. The Saving Obedience -----	35
5. The Life of Prayer -----	43
6. Community Life -----	53
7. The Apostolate -----	63
8. Humility -----	71
Part III	
Responsibility for the Grace of Vocation -----	77
1. Vocation -----	79
2. Religious Formation -----	81
3. Sisters Responsible for Religious Formation -----	95
4. Permanent Formation -----	99
Part IV	
Organization and Administration of the Congregation-----	103
1. The Congregation -----	105
2. The Superior General -----	113
3. The General Council -----	119
4. The Provincial Superior -----	123
5. The Provincial Council -----	129
6. The Local Superior -----	131

7. The Local Council -----	135
8. The General Chapter -----	137
9. Material Goods and their Administration-----	143
10. Departure from the Congregation -----	149
Exclaustation.	

Part V

Binding Force of the Constitutions -----	153
Decree of 1923 -----	157
Decree of 1930 -----	161
Abbreviations -----	163
Contents -----	165