

Discalced Carmelite Friars
Province of the Immaculate Heart of Mary



Office of the Provincial

November 29, 1991

Dear Mothers and Sisters,

Enclosed is a copy of the definitive text of the Constitutions of 1991. The Conference of English speaking Provincials met in Malta during the week of November 12th. At that meeting Father John Sullivan gave us a copy of these Constitutions. We, the Provincials of the United States, decided at that time to send you this copy because, by our estimation, it will take at least 6 to 8 more weeks for you to receive the printed text. The printed text will include the letters of promulgation, the Primitive Constitutions of Holy Mother (1567), the Constitutions of 1581, and a word study guide.

According to the Constitutions of the Discalced Carmelite Friars, number 103, "In accordance with our Holy Mother St Teresa's express wish, our apostolic mission in the Church obliges us to be available for the spiritual guidance and formation of the nuns of the Order. This should be a prime concern to all, and superiors, especially Major Superiors, should make adequate provision for this in an organized way within their respective jurisdictions." And in the Norms (219) it states: "It is the responsibility of the Provincial, in accordance with the universal law and the Constitutions of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns, to govern those convents of our nuns that are subject to him. Moreover, in a spirit of fraternal charity he should be solicitous toward those monasteries which are entrusted to the special supervision of the diocesan Bishop"

We take seriously the words of our Constitutions. And in accord with that, we are open to any invitation of any Carmel to assist in any way with regards to these Constitutions.

If there should be any further information from Rome, be assured that we will pass it on as soon as possible.

Your brothers in Carmel,

Phillip R. Thomas, OCD

Aloysius Deane, OCD

Gerald Werner, OCD

INITIALS AND ABBREVIATIONS

1. Documents of the Second Vatican Council

AG	Decree Ad Gentes
CD	Decree Christus Dominus
DV	Constitution Dei Verbum
GS	Constitution Gaudium et Spes
LG	Constitution Lumen Gentium
OT	Decree Optatum totius
PC	Decree Perfectae Caritatis
SC	Constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium

2. Documents of the Holy See

EM	Congregation of Rites, Instruction Eucharisticum Mysterium, 25 May, 1967
ES	Paul VI, Motu Proprio, Ecclesiae sanctae, 6 August, 1966.
ET	Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, Evangelica Testificatio, 29 June, 1971.
ILGH	Congregation for Divine Worship, General Instruction for the Liturgy of the Hours, 2 February, 1971.
MR	Congregation for Religious and for the Secular Institutes and Congregation for the Bishops, Mutuae relationes, 14 May, 1978.
PI	Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Potissimum institutioni, 2 February, 1990.
VS	Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutions, Venite

seorsum, 15 August, 1969.

3. *Works of Saint Teresa of Jesus*

Way	Way of Perfection
Way Esc.	Way of Perfection, Escorial MS.
Prim. Const.	"Primitive" Constitutions (1567)
Found.	Book of Foundations
Int. Castle	Interior Castle
Method	Method of Visiting the Monasteries
Med.Song	Meditation on the Song of Songs
Spir. Rel.	Spiritual Relations
Life	The Book of her Life

4. *Works approved by Saint Teresa*

Alcalá Const. Constitutions of Alcalá (1581).

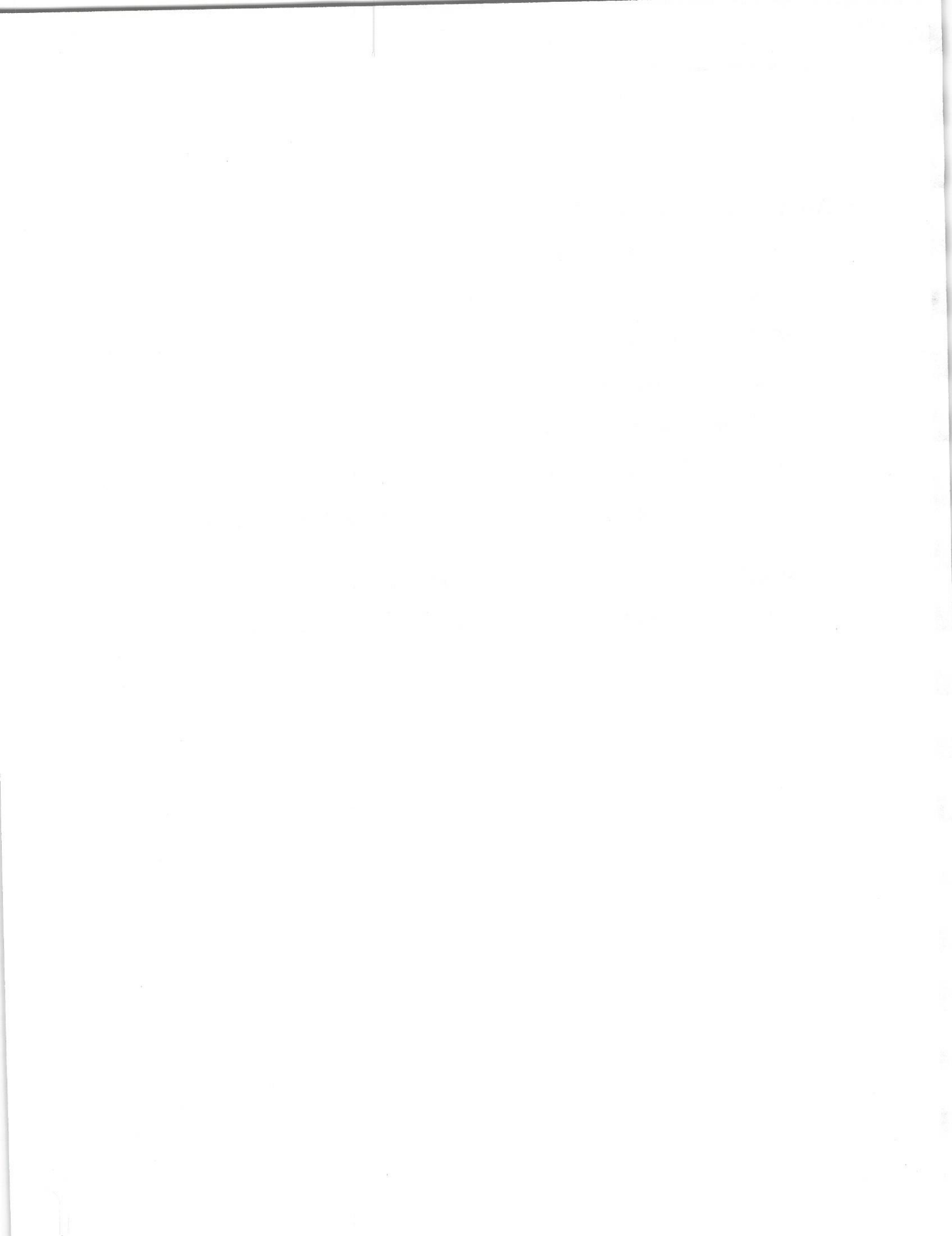
5. *Works of Saint John of the Cross*

Cant.	Spiritual Canticle
Caut.	Precautions
Flame	The Living Flame of Love
Night	The Dark Night of the Soul
Ascent	The Ascent of Carmel

N.B. The works of both St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross are cited according to the chapter and paragraph divisions found in the edition of the *Biblioteca Mistica Carmelitana*.

6. *Other works and documents collections of works*

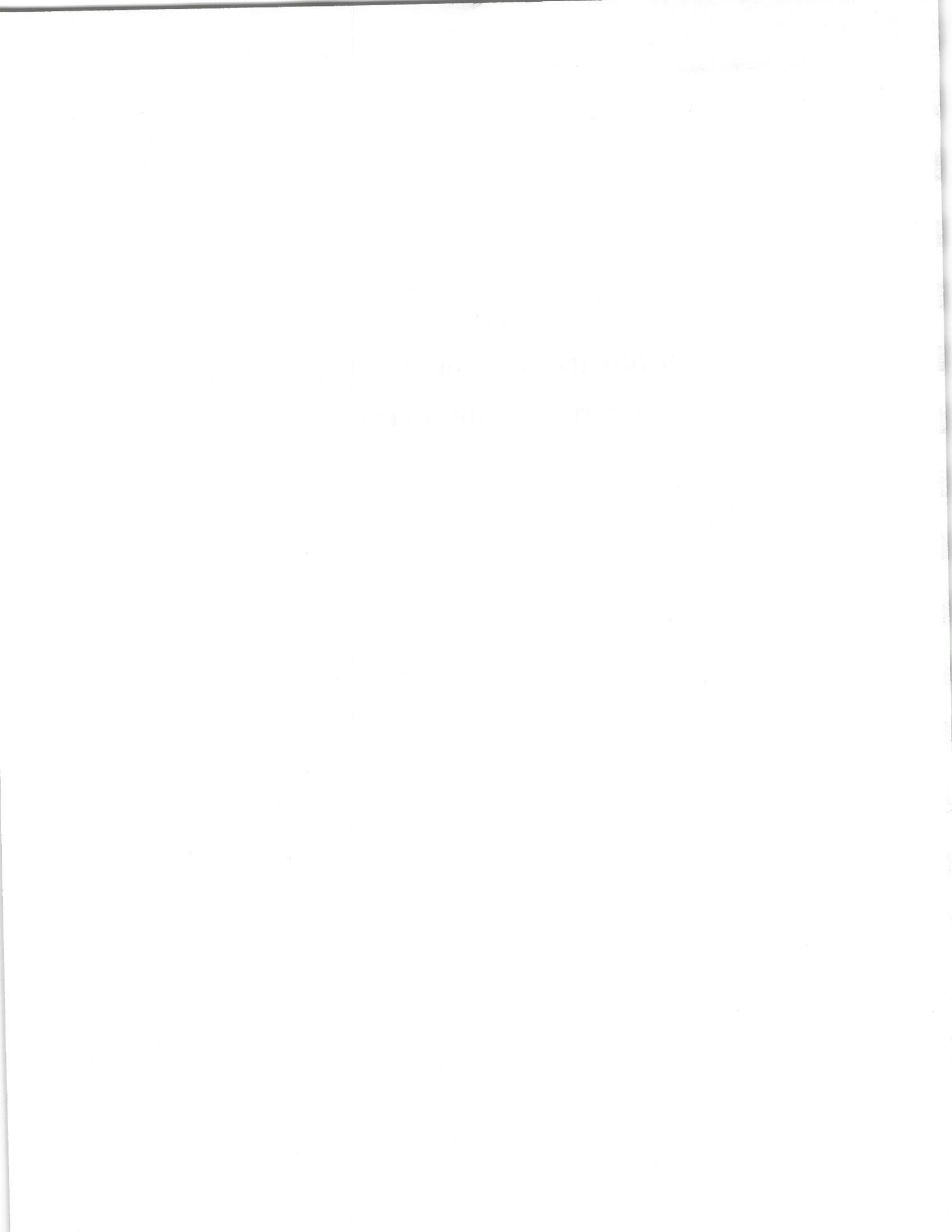
AAS	Acta Apostolicae Sedis
AnOC	Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum
AOCD	Acta O.C.D.
BMC	Biblioteca Mistica Carmelitana
Bull Carm	Bullarium Carmelitanum
Ceremonial	The 1935 "Ceremonial" for the Discalced Carmelite Nuns"
Const. 1926	Constitutions of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns approved by the Apostolic See in 1926.
MHCT	Monumenta Historica Carmeli Teresiani
Rule	Carmelite Rule of St. Albert, confirmed by Innocent IV.



Part I

THE DISCALCED CARMELITE NUNS'

VOCATION IN THE CHURCH



Chapter 1

THE SPIRIT OF THE ORDER

I. The origins of Carmel

1. The Discalced Nuns of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel belong to a religious family, endowed with its own proper charism for the purpose of fulfilling a special mission in the Mystical Body of Christ.

This religious family is a renewed form of the Carmelite Order. As such, it joins fidelity to the spirit and traditions of the Order with the will for constant renewal, in compliance with the words of our Holy Mother Teresa of Jesus: "For the love of God, I ask all of you to fix your eyes on the race of the Holy Prophets from whom we have descended."¹ She also says: "We are beginning now; but let those who come after us strive always to make a new start and to better themselves."²

2. The beginnings of the Order, its title of the "Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel," and its oldest spiritual traditions show clearly the Marian and biblical character of the Carmelite vocation.

By choosing the Blessed Virgin Mary as mother and patroness, the Order places itself under her protection; and it takes the mystery of her life and of her union with Christ as its ideal model of consecration.

In looking to the venerable fathers of old, especially to the Prophet Elijah, whom it regards as its inspirer,³ the Order becomes more fully aware of its contemplative vocation which makes it intent on hearing God's word, and on searching in great solitude and in total detachment from the world for the supreme treasure, the precious pearl of his kingdom.⁴

3. The first Carmelite "formula of life" is found expressed in the Rule of St. Albert of Jerusalem. The chief spiritual topics and prescriptions in it are:

a) To live in allegiance to Christ by serving him faithfully with a pure heart and an upright conscience, by placing our sole hope of salvation in him, and by paying him obedience, in the person of the prior, in a spirit of faith;

b) To remain in one's cell, meditating day and night on the law of the Lord, and fortifying the spirit with holy thoughts, so that the word of God may abound on our lips and in our hearts, and everything be done in the word of the Lord;

c) To celebrate every day in community the Eucharist and the Prayer of the Church;

d) To practice evangelical ascesis and to be clothed with the divine armor in order to live devotedly in Christ; to imitate the Apostle Paul in generous application to work; and to practice constant mortification with common sense which is the guide of the virtues;

e) To establish a communion of life that is sustained by familial relations, by the charity of mutual correction, by the common possession of goods and by mutual spiritual solicitude, under the guidance of the Prior who is placed at the head of the community to serve it;

f) Above all, to promote unceasing prayer in solitude, silence, and in a spirit of evangelical vigilance.



II. *The Teresian Charism*

4. The beginning of the Teresian family within Carmel, and the meaning of its vocation in the Church, are bound up closely with the development of the spiritual life of Saint Teresa and with her charism. In particular, it grew out of the mystical graces which compelled her to renew Carmel. Her intent was that it should be entirely directed toward prayer and contemplation of things of God and that all would observe the evangelical counsels, as set forth in the "primitive" Rule, in a small sisterly community that would be founded on solitude, prayer and strict poverty.⁵

5. St. Teresa's mystical experience led her gradually to fathom and, as it were, to interiorize the life of the Church -- with its sorrows, the rending of its unity and, above all, the profanation of the Eucharist and of the priesthood. This process contributed to the development and clarification of her initial project. Stirred by these events, she gave her life and that of the new family of Carmel an apostolic sense. She directed the prayer, retirement, and entire life of the Discalced Carmelites toward the service of the Church -- so much so that if their prayers, their sacrifices and their life are not at the service of Church, they do not fulfill the purpose for which God brought them together.⁶

6. The full measure of the vocation of the Teresian Carmel is the fruit of the experience by which the Holy Mother was successively enlightened about the mystery of the members still waiting to be united to the Mystical Body of Christ. This experience led her to turn her gaze on the immense field of the missions.⁷ In the light of these new prospects for the Church, the apostolic spirit of the Saint came to full flower,⁸ and her heart conceived the purpose of spreading the family of the first Discalced Carmelite Nuns and of extending her work by founding the Discalced Carmelite Friars. The friars were to be partakers in the same spirit so that they might help the Nuns to live their common vocation and themselves serve the Church through prayer and their apostolic action.⁹

7. As she carried out her work, she intended faithfully to secure the continuity of

Carmel. She renewed its filial devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel Carmel.¹⁰ She handed on to her family the heritage of the communion she lived¹¹ with those biblical forerunners, the prophets and the great fathers of Carmel. She gave new vigor to the observance of the "primitive" Rule,¹² and gave that observance a new apostolic ardor.

8. She wanted a particular style of life to characterize everything. She set forth asceticism and mortification as expressions of a deeper theological life at the service of the Church.¹³ She proposed a magnanimous observance and a cordial, sisterly lifestyle that made it a joy to live together as the family of God.¹⁴ She promoted the dignity of the person, friendship among the sisters, and communion among the various monasteries.¹⁵

9. Divine Providence gave St. Teresa St. John of the Cross as an associate and led him to share in her spirit.¹⁶ He, in turn, acknowledged Saint Teresa as the mother of the renewed Carmel¹⁷ and ascribed to her the charism God grants to Founders.¹⁸

Both "laid, as it were, the foundations of this Order."¹⁹ They recorded their doctrine and experience and shared them through their writings which speak especially about deepest communion with God and the way that leads there. Over and above being personal gifts given our saints, their experiences are graces granted to the Order and which form part of the charism which every Discalced Carmelite Nun ought to live.

10. The vocation of the Discalced Carmelites Nuns is a gift of the Spirit. Through it, they are called to a "hidden union with God"²⁰ in friendship with Christ, in familiarity with the Blessed Virgin Mary, and in an existence in which prayer and immolation blend into a great love for the Church.

Therefore, in virtue of their vocation, they are called to contemplation in prayer and in life.²¹ Their commitment to continuous prayer is sustained by faith, by hope, and above all, by divine charity. In that way they are enabled to reach the fullness of life in Christ with pure hearts.²² Through such prayer, they prepare themselves for ever more lavish gifts of the Spirit.

The very nature of the Teresian charism demands that the prayer of a Discalced Carmelite and the consecration of all her energies be directed toward the salvation of souls.²³

11. True to the ideal of their Holy Mother, the Discalced Carmelite Nuns live their contemplative ecclesial life in an atmosphere that integrates, on the one hand, solitude and silence,²⁴ with a sisterly communion of life, on the other, that is lived in a family which is set up like the little "college of Christ",²⁵ is centered on love for the Lord, and is ruled by sisterly charity²⁶ and generous evangelical self-denial.²⁷

III. Spirit and laws

12. In order to motivate and teach her first daughters of St. Joseph's of Avila their

"manner of living", Saint Teresa wrote the Way of Perfection, which summarises her doctrine on the contemplative life of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns and her method of teaching it. She later continued and completed this authoritative teaching in her other writings, especially the Interior Castle.

Meanwhile, she gradually drew up some laws "necessary for observing the Rule with greater perfection",²⁸ that is, the so-called Primitive Constitutions. In a preliminary form, they received the early approval of the Prior General of the Order in 1567.²⁹

The spread of her monasteries and the decrees of the Council of Trent made it necessary to update and perfect her Constitutions. The Chapter of Alcalá (1581) of the Discalced Carmelite Fathers, which had been organized into a separate Province, had received from the Apostolic See legislative powers both for the friars and for the nuns.³⁰ It based this work on the constitutions drawn up by the Holy Mother, and it followed her criteria and other pertinent recommendations made by her.³¹

13. In the course of the centuries, the Teresian constitutions were added to and modified. Finally, the Second Vatican Council proposed to all religious families that they renew their life, and it ordered them appropriately to renew their legislation. It did so in virtue of the power, given to the Church by the Lord, of discerning and interpreting charisms and of approving laws which give expression to them in the basic code of the Institutes.³²

14. The laws set forth by the Holy Mother in the Constitutions of 1567 and later confirmed in 1581, as well as other provisions found in the Constitutions of Alcalá, have been followed in the present Constitutions. They have been modified where necessary in order to apply in the right way the principles of the Second Vatican Council and the directives of canon law.³³ The Teresian charism and manner of life proposed by St. Teresa herself in her Constitutions and in her other writings remain unaltered.

15. The present Constitutions, duly adapted according to the laws of the Church, expound evangelical and theological principals governing religious life in the Church. They also set forth elements of the Order's own spiritual heritage and establish basic laws for regulating the life, for formation, for incorporating religious, and for the government of the monasteries.³⁴

16. The Rule of St. Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem, confirmed by Innocent IV,³⁵ which remain spiritually and juridically in force, and the present Constitutions, promulgated by the Apostolic See, are the basic code of life for the monasteries of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns, excepting those which, by a special decision of the Apostolic See, are governed by another basic code.

17. To the Holy See alone pertains the power of authentically interpreting the Rule and these Constitutions, of abrogating them or derogating from them, or of making any changes in them.³⁶

If the monasteries, after sufficient consultation, should request any modifications to the Constitutions, they may be proposed to the Holy See by the Superior General.

18. As these Constitutions are a basic code for the monasteries of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns scattered throughout the world, they are naturally simple in structure, and the norms of life and of governance³⁷ contained in them are sober. That was, after all, the mind of St. Teresa herself.³⁸

In the framework of the supplementary codes, the monasteries, each according to the legitimate diverse traditions of Carmel, may regulate their religious life by drawing up local norms, on the condition that the directives of the Constitutions be kept in their entirety.

In order to guarantee greater stability, these norms are to be presented to the Holy See for approval through the Superior General.

19. The monasteries themselves may make other provisions for the ordinary course of events of their religious life. Such provisions are subject to approval by the chapter of the monastery, provided they are not contrary to common law or to our proper law, which has the approval of the Apostolic See but rather apply their norms in an adequate way by taking into consideration the monastery's own particular situation.

20. Let the Discalced Carmelite Nuns respond to Holy Mother's exhortation,³⁹ by knowing their Rule and Constitutions and observing them with the greatest fidelity. Let their progress toward evangelical perfection be guided by the spirit and the laws set forth in them. May they follow Christ more closely, for he is the supreme norm of life.⁴⁰ However, these provisions of proper law do not, oblige under sin. That obligation may derive from other sources: from a vow or from a divine or ecclesiastical law, or from a precept of the superiors given according to what is laid down in no. 44.⁴¹

1. Found. 29, 33.

2. Found. 29, 32. On the topics of fidelity and renewal see Found. 2, 3; 4, 6-7; 27, 11-12; 28, 20-21; 29, 32-33; Life 36, 32-33; letter, 4 Oct. 1578 to Fr. Pedro de los Angeles, para. 2 and 7-8.

3. 1 Kgs. 18, 15 and 36-37; 19, 12 and 14; cfr. Way 11,4.

4. On the Marian and biblical inspiration of the Carmelite vocation, see: Int. Castle 3, 1, 3-4 and 5, 1, 2; Way 13, 3; Found.29, 33.

5. For the connection between the mystical graces of St. Teresa and the charism of the Teresian Carmelite vocation, see chapters 32-36 of her Life. For the grace that led to the foundation of the monastery of St. Joseph: Life 32, 9 and 11-14; 35, 6 and 8 and 12; 36, 6 and 10 and 12. For the Blessed Virgin and the Saint see Life 33, 14 and Int. Castle 3, 1, 3-4. For the connection between St. Teresa's personal vocation and the graces that led her to found many houses see: Found. 1, 7-8; Spir. Rel. 34

- and 13-14: letter, 23 Dec. 1561 to Lorenzo de Cepeda, para.2- 3.
6. See Way 3. 10. See also Life 32. 6; Spir. Rel. 3. 8; 4. 3; 5 9; Way 1, 2; 3, 10; Found. 1. 6; letter, 13 Dec. 1576 to Fr. Gracian, para. 8.
 7. See Found. 1, 7.
 8. Cf. Ibid.
 9. See Found. 2. 4-5; letter, Oct. 1578, to Beas Nuns; letter, 13 Jan. 1580 to Ana de San Alberto on St. John of the Cross; letters, 13 Dec. 1576, para. 7 and 26 Oct. 1581, para 11, to Fr. Gracian; letter, 21 Dec. 1579, para. 9, to Fr. Doria; letter, 4 Oct. 1578, para. 3 and 9, to Fr. Pedro de los Angeles; Letter, 19 July, 1575, para 2, to Philip II.
 10. See Life 32, 11; 36, 6; 39, 26; Way, pre-prologue; 3, 5; 13, 3; Int. Castle 1, 2, 12; 3, 1, 3; Found. 14, 5; 16, 5.
 11. See Int. Castle 5, 1, 2; Found. 14,4; 29, 33.
 12. See Life 36, 26; Found. 14, 5; 27, 11; Way 3,5; 4,1-2.
 13. See Way 10, 5; Int. Castle 7,4,5.
 14. See Life 36,29; Way 41, 6-8; Found. 13,5; 18, 5-7.
 15. See Int. Castle 1, 1, 1; Way 4,7; letters 17 Jan. 1577 and 1 Feb. 1580 to María de San José.
 16. See Found. 3, 17; 10,4; 13, 1 and 4 and 5.
 17. See Canticle A 12, 6.
 18. See Flame A 2, 8-11.
 19. Paul VI, letter Carmeli Montis in Acta OCD 10 (1965), p. 98.
 20. See Const. Cong. S. Eliae 1599, Prol., Rome, 1973, p. 41
 21. See Life 8,5; Way 20, 5-6; 28, 2-3.
 22. See Int. Castle 5, 2, 4-6.
 23. See Way 1, 2 and 5; 3, 10; letter 13 Dec. 1576, para. 6, to Fr. Gracian.
 24. See Way 4, 9; 13, 6; Prim. Const. 8; Alcalá Const.x, 3; Method 15 and 42.
 25. See Way Esc. 20,1.
 26. See Way 4,7; Prim. Const. 28; Alcalá Const. iv, 6.
 27. See Way 10, 1 and 5.
 28. See Life 36, 27; Way Esc. 5, 1; 6, 1 and 6.
 29. See Found. 23, 13.
 30. See Bull, Pia consideratione, 22 June, 1580 in MHCT 2, p. 196.
 31. See letters to Fr. Gracian: 21 Feb 1581; 23 Feb. 1581, para. 2 and 5; 27 Feb. 1581. para. 3-8.
 32. See LG 12 and 45; PC 1-7 and 12 ff; canon 576.
 33. See canon 587.
 34. See ES 2, 12, a; canons 578 and 587.
 35. See Bull Quae honorem Conditoris, 1 Oct 1247; Life 36, 26.
 36. See Sixtus V, Salvatoris et Domini, 5 June, 1590, in MHCT vol. 4, p. 44; canon 587 2.
 37. See canon 587.
 38. See Method 20; letters of 19 Nov. 1576 and 22 May 1578 to Fr. Gracian.
 39. See Way 4, 1; Deposition of Juana del Espiritu Santo in the Alba Processes in BMC vol. 18, p. 101; Method 23.
 40. See PC 2,a; canon 662; Way 1,2; Life 35, 4; Int. Castle 7,4,4 and 8.
 41. See letter, Aug. 1570, p.2, to Diego Ortiz; Alcalá Const. Prol.

Chapter 2

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP AND RELIGIOUS CONSECRATION

21. The evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience are founded on the teaching and examples of Christ the Master. They are a gift of the Spirit to the Church.¹ When religious assume them by means of public vows, they follow more closely the form of life which the Son of God chose for himself and which his Mother embraced.² And so they live for God alone, they love him above all things,³ and they unite themselves in a special way to the Church and to its mystery.⁴

22. Called to live "in allegiance to Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 10, 5) and to serve him faithfully with a pure heart and a good conscience,"⁵ the Discalced Carmelite Nuns make it their purpose to follow the evangelical counsels with utmost perfection.⁶ For

that reason, their basic obligation is "to give themselves entirely and without reserve to him who is everything,"⁷ "to imitate Christ in everything by conforming their lives to his, while meditating on it in order to know how to imitate it".⁸ They "resolve from the very start to follow the way of the cross, since it is the way of perfection in which the Lord walked."⁹

23. By means of the public and solemn profession of the evangelical counsels, they are consecrated to God through the mediation of the Church. By a new and special title, they are dedicated to his honor, to building up of the Body of Christ, and to the salvation of the world.¹⁰

This consecration stems from that of baptism. It was established in order to give plentiful development to the graces of baptism.¹¹ It is a true wedding with Christ in a renewed covenant of love,¹² which shows forth the mystery of the Church as Bride and foretells the goods of the glory that is to come.¹³

24. As we put into practice the evangelical counsels, the love of God, poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5, 5), gives life to them and directs them¹⁴ toward achieving that fullness of love for God and for sisters and brothers toward which all of the rules and constitutions lead.¹⁵ Sustained by the obligation of evangelical self-denial, the consecrated life serves to purify the heart, to liberate the spirit, to inflame charity, and to assure the fruitfulness of contemplative life in the Church: "As they grow in perfection, their praises will prove more pleasing, and their prayer will benefit their neighbor."¹⁶

25. In order to give common witness to religious consecration in following Christ, every year the sisters will renew their religious profession during the Easter Vigil or the octave of Easter, and on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, using the formula given

in the Ritual. The communities may repeat this renewal on other occasions in order to strengthen their commitment to this way of life.

I. Consecrated chastity

26. The sisters imitate Christ in his virginity, in order to be holy in body and in soul (cf. 1, Cor. 7, 34). They will profess by vow the evangelical counsel of chastity, which involves the obligation of perfect continence in celibacy for the Kingdom of heaven (Mt. 19, 12).¹⁷

27. Through consecrated chastity, the Discalced Carmelite Nuns witness to that love which always gives first place to Christ¹⁸ their divine Spouse who gave his life for them.¹⁹ They must fix their hearts on him, for they are called to live with him and they receive every good thing from him.²⁰ Consecrated chastity is a joyous manifestation of divine charity that enlarges the heart's capacity to love, leaving it undivided and free, just as God wishes his brides to be free and attached only to him.²¹ It inclines the heart to contemplate the things of God, because "the person who already has a pure heart, finds in all things a joyful and pleasing, chaste and pure, spiritual, happy and loving knowledge of God."²²

28. Consecrated chastity, is a precious gift which the heavenly Father grants to some.²³ It ought to be lived with humility and without presumption. It requires trust in the grace of God and a bond of friendship with Jesus Christ and with Mary. She is the faithful Virgin and the model of virginal consecration.

The sisters, each of them mindful of her fragility, will practice mortification, and make it their business to watch over their hearts and master their senses. Nor will they overlook natural means which contribute to health of mind and body and to keeping the person balanced.

Constant application to their work, concord in community life, and by the cheer of sisterly love of the kind that unites all in Christ, without making distinctions,²⁴ will help the sisters very much to live in full measure their consecrated chastity.²⁵

29. In order that consecrated chastity may be lived with joy and as a good for the integral development of the person consecrated to God, sufficient positive formation on human nature and on its deepest inclinations and on the Christian vocation to celibacy and to matrimony must be given to the religious. In this way, too, all of them will be helped to reach due psychological and affective maturity, and to understand that the observance of perfect continence asks them to give themselves wholly to the Lord and to love their sisters genuinely.²⁶

II. Poverty

30. In order to share in the poverty of Christ, who "rich though he was made himself poor to make us rich" (2 Cor. 8, 9), the sisters will embrace by vow the evangelical

counsel of poverty. It demands a life that is poor in fact and in spirit, hardworking, sober, and detached from earthly goods. The vow of poverty also obliges them to depend on the superiors in using and disposing of goods, in accord with what is laid down in these Constitutions.²⁷

31. In the spirit of the evangelical beatitude, Holy Mother Teresa, contemplating Christ in his poverty, chose for herself and for her daughters "the treasures hidden in holy poverty," and the arms of holy poverty for fighting the good fight in a life of exemplary austerity.²⁸

The choice of poverty, as a basic element of the Teresian Carmel,²⁹ demands detachment from earthly goods, humility and sobriety in the use of things, diligence in work, and trustful abandonment to Providence.³⁰

The nuns are among the "Lord's poor" who, like Mary, look hopefully to God for everything. In the spontaneity and simplicity of their sisterly relations and in their life style, they will advance in that liberty from exterior things which does not seek human sources of security; they will progress in that self-despoilment which prepares them for contemplative encounter with God.³¹

32. By the profession of temporary vows, the religious retain both ownership of their goods and the capacity of acquiring others. But during the period which precedes the first profession, a religious who may have goods of her own will cede the administration of them to whomever she may prefer, and she will freely make provision for their use and revenue for the entire period of temporary vows.³²

In order, for a just cause, to change her dispositions regarding them and to place any act whatsoever in matters of temporal goods, she must have the permission of the prioress.³³

Before solemn profession, the religious must make a total renunciation of her goods, effective from the day of the profession itself, in a form that is valid in civil law, where that is possible.³⁴

33. By solemn profession the religious deprives herself also of the ownership of temporal goods and of the capacity of acquiring others and of possessing them. Consequently, every act contrary to the vow of poverty is invalid. The goods that come to her after solemn profession go to the monastery.³⁵

34. Whatever a religious acquires through personal work or by reason of the monastery is acquired for the monastery. Whatever accrues to her by way of pension, subsidy, insurance or in any other way are also acquired for the monastery.³⁶

35. Because of their poverty and simplicity, the monasteries will shine as places where poor people live so that, with due consideration for their surroundings, they may offer a public witness of sober living and detachment. They are to avoid every appearance of luxury and anything that is not necessary.

The cells and their furnishing must be poor and austere in character, just as Holy

Mother wanted.³⁷

36. Since the sisters are truly poor, sisterly sharing asks that they all take care of the things of the community so that everything may be available for the use of everyone. No one should consider anything as belonging to herself.

They will also be ready to spend their own time serving the community to take on the more difficult jobs of the house.³⁸

The prioress will be the first to set an example. She will make sure that everyone is given whatever her age and individual needs may require.³⁹

37. When the Lord provides them, alms are to be accepted gratefully in the spirit of Holy Mother as help in providing for life's necessities. All the same, they are to avoid begging for anything unless the sisters are forced to by great need, for they know that that "if they try to please the Lord with all their strength, His Majesty will see to it that that they do not lack anything they need."⁴⁰

In imitation of Christ who willed to work with his own hands in Nazareth, and in obedience to the prescriptions of the Rule,⁴¹ the nuns will submit themselves gladly to the common law of work. They will share the condition of the poor and earn by toil the necessities of life. They will place at the service of the sisters their energies and talents and keep in mind that labor is also a way to associate themselves with the redemptive work of Christ.⁴² However, they must avoid every form of excessive gain.⁴³ "Let them not insist on the price of the work, but let them receive simply whatever is given them, and if they should see that it is not worthwhile, let them not do that work."⁴⁴

38. In organizing work assignments, they will be most careful about safeguarding the requirements of contemplative life; and they will take into consideration each one's skills and talents in such a way as to make their work not only an expression of poverty and of mutual service in charity,⁴⁵ but also a help in maintaining a fitting atmosphere for a Teresian community and in sustaining the interior serenity of the sisters.⁴⁶

39. If it should be necessary, monasteries may avail themselves of a moderate revenue. They should also generously share their temporal goods with one another so that those who have more may come to the assistance of the poorer ones, in the spirit of St. Teresa.⁴⁷ They should joyfully (Rom 12, 8) set aside part of their income for the necessities of the Church and Order and for the needs of the poor, whom they will love in the heart of Christ.⁴⁸

III. Obedience

40. By professing with a vow the evangelical counsel of obedience, religious imitate Christ who came into the world in order to do the will of the Father (Jn 4, 34; 5, 30) and who made himself obedient unto death on a cross (Phil. 2, 8).⁴⁹

Following his example, they offer to God the full dedication of their will as a self-sacrifice. They thereby unite themselves more intently to the salvific will of the

Father.⁵⁰

41. The foundation of the consecrated life is obedience, the sure way for clinging to the will of God and reaching perfection.⁵¹

The nuns will imitate their Spouse, Yahweh's Servant, by making themselves slaves of God, branded with the mark of the cross, so that they may be spiritually at the service of all their sisters and brothers in Christ, and more specifically, at the disposition of the entire community and of each one of the sisters.⁵²

The sisters should regard the superiors as God's representatives,⁵³ and place all their resources of mind and will and all their gifts of nature and grace under the superiors' guidance and at the service of others. In that way they will do their part in building up together the Body of Christ according to God's designs.⁵⁴

The practice of obedience conforms a subject more and more to the mind of Christ. It becomes a stable theological bond to the will of God.⁵⁵ It finds its perfect model in Mary. For as God's handmaid, "She was never moved to act by a creature, but she did everything under the motion of the Holy Spirit."⁵⁶

42. All who, according to the norm of the Constitutions, are called upon to exercise the power they have received from God through the Church, must do so in a spirit of service--especially the prioress, for it pertains to her to guide and direct the Teresian community.⁵⁷

In carrying out their office, those in authority will help the sisters to work together harmoniously so that one and all may endeavour to build a sisterly community in Christ.⁵⁸

43. While obedience limits the scope of one's individual choices, freely accepted, it leads to the total freedom of the children of God.⁵⁹ Obedience is meant to be active and responsible. It asks the individual and her community to seek God's will through frank dialogue, conducted in a spirit of charity between the prioress and the community.⁶⁰ Dialogue does not limit the authority of the prioress to decide and command what is to be done, nor may it diminish the character of immolation and sacrifice which distinguish obedience founded on the paschal mystery of Christ.⁶¹

44. The evangelical counsel of obedience obliges a religious to submit her will to the legitimate superiors, when they command according to the Rule and the Constitutions.⁶²

The vow of obedience obliges in a grave manner when it is imposed by a formal precept. Such a precept, however, is to be imposed but very rarely and only for very serious reasons. It is to be given in the presence of two witnesses or in writing.

The prioress may impose it on individual nuns, but she cannot impose it on all the community. She may do so only after she has heard the opinion of the council.

The precept may be imposed on a nun or also on an entire community by the regular superior in monasteries under the authority of our Order.

45. As true "daughters of the Church" the Discalced Carmelite Nuns will willingly

receive everything that the Church proposes to them through the Magisterium and legitimate authority,⁶³ for they are happy to be bound to obey the Supreme Pontiff as their highest superior because they are also obliged to do so by the holy bond of obedience.⁶⁴

IV. Evangelical Self-denial and Penitence

46. The Discalced Carmelite Nuns who follow the gospel path of Christ must conform themselves to his example and share in his mission of salvation. This means that they must renounce their very selves. Because Jesus has invited them to join his group of disciples, they accept his call to take up their cross daily (Lk. 9, 23).⁶⁵ Since they are aware of their sinfulness, they acknowledge their need for repentance which, to be true, requires that external practices be closely united to the conversion of the heart.⁶⁶

47. In order to practice evangelical self-denial, the Discalced Carmelite Nuns will take as their standard of life the exhortations on spiritual combat which are contained in the Rule⁶⁷ and the doctrine of our Holy Parents on renunciation and mortification. These are not to be understood as ends in themselves. Rather they are means which are necessary for expressing and sustaining a deeply theological life at the service of the Church.⁶⁸

They should never forget that the reason Holy Mother organized the life of the new Carmels with "great rigor"⁶⁹ was to help the Church in its great needs. And so, individually and as a community, they will lead a life of austerity and mortification. They will take courage from the example of Christ himself: "Fix your gaze on the Crucified, and everything will become easy for you."⁷⁰

48. The Discalced Carmelite Nuns are called to prayer and contemplation,⁷¹ and they should keep in mind that "prayer and delicate treatment do not go together."⁷² The generous practice of penitence is an integral part of the contemplative life. Nevertheless, in their penitential practices, they should stress the interior spirit and the exercise of virtues more than the rigors of corporal mortification,⁷³ keeping in mind that the Lord is more concerned "with love than with the magnificence with which works are done."⁷⁴

For this reason their first concern will be to acquire the sovereign virtues of sisterly love, detachment, and humility.⁷⁵

49. The first penitential practice which the Discalced Carmelite Nuns ought generously to renew every day and the one that is most fruitful for the Church and for themselves is what flows from their vocation: The self-denial and detachment imposed by living the evangelical counsels; the radical demands of a wholly contemplative life; the sacrifices imposed by always living, as a community, within the confines of the same monastery; the monotony of the regular observance and of monastic activities; and the burden of work. United and strengthened by sisterly love, they will carry one another's burdens (Gal. 6,2) and everything will become sweeter, lighter and refreshing.⁷⁶ They should also give an example of patience and proven virtue⁷⁷ in the afflictions, like illness and old

age, which are our common lot on earth. In this way they will conform themselves to Christ in his passion, for the sake of his Mystical Body (Col. 1, 24).⁷⁸

50. The Discalced Carmelite Nuns will hold to what the Church prescribes for penitential days and the observance of fast and abstinence.⁷⁹

In conformity with Carmel's spirit of penitence and austerity, from the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross until the Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord, the fast prescribed by the Rule will be observed, except on Sundays, solemnities, the three days after the Nativity of the Lord and on other major feasts. In implementing the fast, the spirit of the Rule, the traditions of the Order, and the norms of local statutes are to be respected.⁸⁰

Equally, they will faithfully observe the norm of the Rule, restored by Holy Mother, by abstaining from meat, except in cases of need.⁸¹

51. Without detriment to what is laid down in no. 50, the local norms of the monastery or, in their absence, the chapter will take care to review local traditional penitential practices, where they may have fallen into disuse, and replace them with new forms of communal penitence that fit better the different situations or conditions of times or places.⁸²

In the common penitential act which is to be done every Friday, the ecclesial intentions expressed by the Holy Mother are to be kept specially in mind.⁸³

52. A nun who feels inspired to carry out other acts of mortification and penitence should respond with generosity, but always with the authorization of the prioress.⁸⁴

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1. See LG 43; canon 575.
 2. See LG 46.
 3. See PC 5; LG 44.
 4. See LG 44.
 5. See Rule, 2.
 6. See Way 1, 2; Life 35, 2 and 3 and 4; 36, 5.
 7. See Way 8,1.
 8. See Ascent 1, 13, 3; Prim. Const. 28; Alcalá Const. iv, 6; Life 22, 7.
 9. See Life 15, 13; 11, 5; Way 26, 6.
 10. See LG 44-45; canon 573; canon 1192, 2.
 11. See PC 5; canon 607; Cant. B 23, 6.
 12. See Life 4, 3; Way Esc. 38,1; Way 22, 7-8.
 13. See LG 44; canon 573.
 14. See PC 6.
 15. See Int. Castle 1, 2, 17.
 16. See Int. Castle 7, 4, 15; LG 46; canon 674.
 17. See PC 5; canon 599.
 18. See ET 13.
 19. See Prim. Const. 28; Alcalá Const. iv, 6.
 20. See Way 2, 2; 8, 1; 22, 8; Life 22, 7. On consecrated chastity as an expression of spousal love for

- Christ in the religious life, see: Way 13, 2-5; 22, 7-8; 23, 2; 28, 3 (and also 4, 8; and 7, 8); Prim. Const. 28; Alcalá Const. iv, 6; Med. on Song 2, 5; Found. 31, 47. See also various poems of St. Teresa: e.g. n. 3 on "Dilectus meus mihi" ["Yo toda me entregué y di"]. On the spousal meaning of religious profession, see: n. 10 "On the Way to Heaven" ["Hacia la patria"]; n. 20 "Embracing the Cross" ["Abrazadas a la cruz"]; n. 25 For the Veiling of Sister Isabel de los Angeles ["Hermana, porque veléis"]; n. 27 To a Professed Nun, "O blessed this shepherdess" ["O dichosa tal zagala"]; n. 29 For a Profession, "All you serve in the army." ["Todos los que militáis"]. See also the doctrine of St. John of the Cross in the Spiritual Canticle on the sponsal relationship of Christ and the soul.
21. See letter, 30 May, 1582, para, 16, to Ana de Jesús.
 22. See Ascent 3, 26, 6.
 23. See LG 42.
 24. See Prim. Const. 28; Alcalá Const. iv, 6; Way 4,7.
 25. See PC 12..
 26. PC 12, Way 6-7.
 27. See PC 13; canon 600.
 28. See Life 35, 3; Way 2, 5-8.
 29. See Life 35, 4-6.
 30. See Prim. Const. 9; Alcalá Const. ii, 3 and 7,2; Found. 31, 49.
 31. See LG 55; Spir. Rel. 2, 3-4; Ascent 2, 7, 5; Way 2, 5; 16, 2.
 32. See canon 668, 1.
 33. See canon 668, 2.
 34. See canon 668, 4. If civil law does not recognize the value of the total renunciation of goods, the religious may make, before her solemn profession, a testament valid in civil law, with due regard always for the juridical and spiritual effects of the renunciation which she must make of her own goods.
 35. See canon 668, 5.
 36. See canon 668, 3.
 37. See Way 2 and 9; Prim. Const. 13 and 32; Alcalá Const. xi, 3 and 8, 3-4; Method 14.
 38. See Way 7, 9; Prim. Const. 9; Alcalá Const. vii, 2.
 39. See Prim. Const. 22; Alcalá Const. xi, 1.
 40. See Prim. Const. 9; Alcalá Const. vii, 2; Found. 31, 49.
 41. See Rule, 17; Prim. Const. 9 and 24; Alcalá Const. vii, 2.
 42. See PC 13; GS 67.
 43. See canon 634, 2.
 44. See Prim. Const. 9; Alcalá Const. ix, 1.
 45. See Prim. Const. 9, 24; Alcalá Const. vii, 2 and 9, 2; Life 10, 7.
 46. See Prim. Const. 9; Alcalá Const. ix, 1; Found. 7, 9.
 47. The sharing of goods among the monasteries is a fact well documented in the letters of St. Teresa. See letter, 11 July, 1577, para. 8, to María de San José; and, especially, letter, 31 May, 1579, para. 4, to the Monastery of Valladolid.
 48. See PC 13.
 49. See LG 44, PC 14; Found. 5, 3.
 50. See PC 14.
 51. See Found. 5, 3-10 and 17; 18, 13; Way 12, 1-4; 18, 7-8.
 52. See Int. Castle 7, 4, 8.
 53. See Rule, 20; Int. Castle Epilogue, 2; Med. on Song 2, 2; "Cautions" 2, 2.
 54. See PC 14.
 55. See Way 32, 2 and 9-13; Int. Castle 5, 3, 4-6; 7, 3, 4; Canticle B 38, 3.
 56. See Ascent 3, 2, 10; Med. on Song 6, 7-8.
 57. See Prim. Const. 34; and especially numbers 221-224 of these Constitutions; Alcalá Const. xiv, on the prioress, 1.

58. See PC 14; canon 618.
59. See PC 14.
60. See PC 14. On the dialogue between the prioress and the religious, according to St. Teresa, see María de San José, "Avisos" 31-32.
61. See ET 24, 27-29.
62. See canon 601.
63. See Life 25, 12; Way 30, 4; Spir. Rel. 4, 7; canon 590, 1. 64. See canon 590, 2.
65. See Life 11, 15; 15, 13.
66. See Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution Paenitemini, 17, Feb., 1966, in AAS 58 (1966) 180-183; Way 12,1.
67. See "Rule" 16.
68. See Way 10, 5; Ascent 2, 7, 5-11.
69. See Way 1, 2.
70. See Int. Castle 7, 4, 8; Way 12, 1.
71. See Int. Castle 5, 1, 2.
72. See Way 4, 2.
73. See Prim. Const. 40; Alcalá Const. viv, on the mistress, 1.
74. See Int. Castle 7, 4, 15; 5, 1, 3.
75. See Way 10, 3; 18, 7-10; letter, 28 Dec. 1581, para. 6, to the nuns of Soria.
76. See Life 11, 16 and 36, 29; Int. Castle 5, 3, 11-12; Way 10, 6.
77. See Prim. Const. 23; Alcalá Const. xii, 2; Int. Castle 5, 3, 7.
78. Int. Castle 7, 4, 4.
79. See canons 1249-1253.
80. See Rule 14; Prim. Const. 11; Alcalá Const. viii,1.
81. See Rule 15; Prim. Const. 11; Alcalá Const. viii,1.
82. See ES 2, 22; Paenitemini 3,c.
83. See Prim. Const. 59; Alcalá Const. xi, 6.
84. See Prim. Const. 26 and 59; Alcalá Const. iv,2 and xi, 6; Dark Night 1, 6, 2.



Chapter 3

THE MARIAN LIFE OF CARMEL

The Virgin Mary in the spiritual tradition of Carmel

53. The Discalced Carmelite Nuns are, by calling, part of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. They belong to a family consecrated in a special way to loving and venerating the Holy Mother of God;¹ and they seek to attain evangelical perfection in union with her.

Mary's presence among her daughters and sisters pervades the entire Carmelite vocation. It imparts a special Marian tone to their contemplation, sisterhood evangelical self-denial, and apostolic spirit.²

54. The history of the Order overflows with the presence of the Virgin Mary. It began on Mount Carmel where the first hermits dedicated to her a little chapel. Later, with the approval of the Church,³ they undertook the obligation of living the evangelical counsels in allegiance to Christ and his Virgin Mother.⁴

Saint Teresa of Jesus and Saint John of the Cross confirmed and renewed Carmel's devotion to Mary. In fact, they acknowledged Mary as Mother and Patron of the Order.⁵ They present her as a model of prayer and self-denial in faith's pilgrimage⁶ She humbly and wisely welcomed the Lord's word and pondered it in her heart.⁷ She was wholly responsive to the impulses of the Holy Spirit⁸ She is the valiant woman who follows Christ faithfully and shares in the joys and sorrows of his paschal mystery.⁹

Contemplating Mary with filial devotion

55. In Our Lady we contemplate the ideal of the Order lived to perfection. Her example inspires us to follow in her footsteps. She takes the lead among the Lord's poor and little ones. She best exemplifies contemplative life in the Church.¹⁰

Every sister will find in Mary a mother and teacher in the ways of the Spirit who will conform her to Christ and lead her to the heights of holiness.¹¹

Because of their profession, the sisters belong to the Virgin Mary in a special way. They wear her scapular to show that they are members of her Order and are determined to clothe themselves with her virtues.¹²

The study of Mariology and devotion to Mary in the liturgy

56. God's plan has closely associated Mary with the mystery of Christ and of the Church. In order to respond to this plan, the sisters will not fail to study deeply her life

and mission and make use of the Sacred Scriptures, the church fathers, and the Church's liturgy and Magisterium.¹³

The sisters will honor the Mother of God with the veneration that is due her, in the light of Christ's paschal mystery, and in compliance with the directives of the Church.¹⁴ In fact, when the Church venerates the Virgin Mary in the liturgy, it regards her as inseparably joined to her Son in his saving work,¹⁵ and it sees in her a model of the spiritual attitude with which all should celebrate and live the divine mysteries.¹⁶

57. When the communities regulate their liturgical life, they will give prominence to the Marian character of the Order:

- a) The Solemn Commemoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel will be celebrated as the chief feast among the proper feasts of the Order.
- b) The other solemnities, feasts, and memorials of Mary will be celebrated with special emphasis.
- c) On Saturdays during the year, as the liturgical rubrics permit, the memorial of Our Lady will be celebrated in the Mass and the divine office.
- d) On Saturdays, on the solemnities and feasts of the Virgin Mary, or on their vigils, the Salve Regina will be solemnly sung, as required by the tradition of the Order.

Devotions in honor of the Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph, and the Saints of Carmel

58. In order to express their veneration for Our Lady, and entrust to her the needs of the Church and the human family, each monastery, in keeping with its traditions, will choose some Marian devotions - like the Angelus and litanies - to be performed in common.

Every nun will express her true filial love for the Mother of the Lord by her personal devotion, especially by the recitation of the rosary.¹⁷

59. The Teresian Carmel, faithful to the example and the teaching of Holy Mother, lovingly venerates St. Joseph, spouse of the Virgin Mary and teacher of prayer.¹⁸ The sisters will recommend themselves to him and invoke his intercession as provident Protector of the Church and the Order.

Our monasteries will remember the saints of the family of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel who are now in the glory of heaven,¹⁹ especially our Holy Parents Teresa of Jesus and John of the Cross. They are life models and protectors. Each monastery will decide how they are to be honored in liturgical worship and through the practice of traditional devotions.

1. See Bull. Carm. I, 606-607: Words of Prior General de Millaud in 1282.

2. See John Paul II, letter to the Discalced Carmelite Nuns, "Con vivissima gioia," 31 May, 1982, in AAS 74 (1982) 836-841.

3. See Innocent IV, "Ex parte dilectorum" of 13 Jan. 1252, in AnOC 2 (1911-1913) 128; Urban IV, "Quoniam ut ait" of 20 Feb. 1263, in Bull. Carm. 1, 28.

4. See Acts of the General Chapter of Montpellier, 1287, in Wessels-Zimmerman Acta Capitularum Generalium 1, Rome, 1912, p. 7; Life 33, 14; 36, 24.
5. See Found. 29, 23 and 31; Int. Castle 3, 1, 3-4.
6. See Int. Castle 6, 7, 13-14; Cant. A 2, 8.
7. See Med. on Song 5, 2; 6, 7; Way 16, 2.
8. See Ascent 3, 2, 10.
9. See Way Esc. 4, 2; Int. Castle 7, 4, 5; Spir. Relat. 15, 6; Med. on Song 3, 11; Cant A 29, 7.
10. See LG 55; VS iv.
11. See prayer for the Mass of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in the Carmelite Missal.
12. See Int. Castle 3, 1, 3; Pius XII, "Neminem profecto" of 11Feb. 1950 in AAS 42 (1950) 390-391.
13. See LG 67.
14. See LG 66 and Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation "Marialis cultus," of 11 February, 1974, in AAS 66 (1974) 113-168.
15. See SC 103; and also Int. Castle 6, 7, heading and 13-14.
16. See "Marialis cultus" 16, and 17-23.
17. See Life 1, 6; Way 22, 3; canon 663, 4.
18. See Life 6, 6-8.
19. See Found. 29, 33.

Chapter 4

COMMUNION WITH GOD

Prayer, the vocation of the Teresian Carmel

60. Discalced Carmelite Nuns are obliged by their vocation "to live in allegiance to Christ Jesus" and to "meditate day and night on the law of the Lord and watch in prayer." Holy Mother was faithful to this principle of the "primitive" Rule. She renewed the call to contemplation of Mt. Carmel's fathers of old,¹ She made prayer the foundation of her daughters' life and their primary activity.²

For this reason, the Church expectantly asks all Teresian monasteries to enter deeply into the mystery of contemplative prayer and to offer an exemplary witness to it among God's People.³

61. The obligation of praying and of contemplating cannot be confined to participating in prayer at stated times. On the contrary, in the spirit of the Rule, it must permeate the entire existence of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns. In that way they will walk in the presence of the living God (cf. 1 Kings 18, 24), put faith, hope and love unceasingly into practice and make their entire life a prayerful quest for union with God.⁴

As a consequence, prayer must be the first priority in organizing the life of the community and in the personal commitment of every nun.⁵

Christ, teacher, model, and mediator of prayer

62. Christ raised the prayer of his disciples to the dignity of a share in his own filial converse with his Father in the Holy Spirit (cf. Lk 11, 2-4; Rom 8, 15-17). Model, teacher, and mediator of Christian prayer, he taught his friends the Our Father. This evangelical prayer expresses the intentions which the Christian holds dearest; and, as Holy Mother Teresa of Jesus noted, it contains a program of life that follows the way of perfection.⁶

Liturgy and Prayer Life

63. The sacred liturgy is the highest expression of our sharing in the prayer of Christ. This participation is prolonged during the day in personal prayer. The liturgy enriches personal prayer which, in turn, enables us to bring a truly contemplative spirit to a worthy celebration of the divine mysteries.⁷

The sisters are to be suitably trained in liturgy, in accord with what the Church

asks,⁸ so that they may participate in the sacred liturgy with full understanding and in an active and fruitful manner.

I. The celebration of the liturgy

Theological meaning and style of the liturgical celebrations

64. When it celebrates the liturgy, the assembled religious community realizes the mystery of the Church⁹ and shares in the Paschal mystery of Christ and in his priestly office. In fact, by word, sacraments and prayer, he nourishes and sanctifies his Church, and through the gift of the Holy Spirit joins the Church to himself so that it may worship the Father's glory and obtain the well-being of the entire human family.¹⁰

Therefore, by celebrating the Eucharist and the sacraments, and by proclaiming the word and singing the divine praises, a community builds and renews itself, expresses its union with the universal Church, and does its part for the coming of the Kingdom.

65. The spirit of the Rule and the example of our founders stress the importance in the life of Carmel of a full and attentive participation in the holy liturgical mysteries.¹¹ The liturgical celebrations shall be characterized by a tempered dignity. Sacred silence is to be duly observed.¹² The community's awareness of God's presence should be evident. In this way, even the faithful who participate in the liturgy will feel it.¹³

The celebration of the Eucharist and eucharistic worship

66. In the celebration of the Eucharist, Christ renews his covenant with the Church and makes his paschal sacrifice sacramentally present. The eucharistic banquet is a sign of unity and bond of charity. Through its participation in the one bread and a single chalice (cf. 1 Cor. 10, 17), the community is united as one body and one spirit.¹⁴

All the religious shall take part every day in the celebration of the Eucharist, which is the source and summit of the life of the Church.¹⁵ They will linger in prayer for a suitable period of time after the Mass in order to give thanks to the Lord.¹⁶

If something unexpected prevents the community from participating in the eucharist sacrifice, they should celebrate a liturgy of the word, during which the nuns may receive communion in accord with the dispositions of the Church.¹⁷

67. At the heart of community life is the abiding eucharistic presence of Christ,¹⁸ whom Holy Mother Teresa calls, "our Companion in the Most Holy Sacrament." It fosters union with him and sustains Teresian prayer for the Church.¹⁹

All the sisters will be sure to make a daily visit to the Lord present in the tabernacle. They will adore him and offer him other expressions of eucharistic worship in keeping with the norms of the Church and with traditions of their own monastery.²⁰

The celebration of the liturgy of the hours

68. The eucharistic praise and thanksgiving, the memorial of the mysteries of salvation, and the foretaste of heavenly glory that are celebrated in the Mass, are prolonged and renewed all day long by the Liturgy of the Hours. Through this liturgical prayer, each community, in union with the Church in heaven and on earth, joins itself to the unceasing praise and supplications which Christ offers to the Father for the salvation of the whole world.²¹

69. Each community represents in a special way the Church at prayer and exercises its ministry of prayer on behalf of both the entire mystical Body of Christ and the local churches. Mindful of this, every community will celebrate in common every day all the hours of the Liturgy of the Hours²² - which comprises Morning Prayer, the Office of Readings, the three middle hours of Terce, Sext and None, Evening Prayer, and Night Prayer - in accord with the norms of the Church.²³

70. In compliance with Holy Mother's desire, the Office of Readings is to maintain its nocturnal character²⁴ unless, in special circumstances, the prioress decides that it is more suitable to celebrate it at some other time.

It pertains to the Chapter to determine the days on which, in accordance with liturgical laws,²⁵ the community will prolong the Office of Readings by celebrating a Vigil.

71. So that every moment of the day may be truly sanctified and the divine office celebrated with spiritual advantage, each hour, whether recited individually or in common, should be prayed at the time of day which most closely corresponds to the canonical hour.²⁶

72. The solemnly professed nuns have the obligation of reciting every day all the hours of the Liturgy of the Hours, even when they cannot take part in the common celebration.²⁷

The prioress, for a just cause, can dispense individual nuns from reciting in common or individually the divine office; or she may commute the obligation to the recitation of other prayers.

In case of need the prioress may also dispense the community from the common recitation of part of the divine office.

Celebrating the liturgical year

73. In communion with the Church and following the example of Holy Mother, every monastery shall gratefully celebrate with joy the Paschal mystery of Christ on Sunday, during the various times and on the different feasts of the liturgical year- -especially during the seasons of advent, christmastide, lent and eastertide--in the spirit of the liturgy and according to their own traditions.²⁸

Liturgical singing and the proper calendar

74. The chapter of each community or its local statutes will regulate liturgical singing. In doing so, they will take into consideration the directives of the universal Church, the usage of the local Church, the tradition of the Order, and the capabilities of the community.

In all the monasteries, on solemnities and on Sundays, the Mass, and morning and evening prayer will normally be celebrated with singing.²⁹

75. With regard to the liturgical calendar and the proper liturgical celebrations of our Order, the dispositions of the Church and the texts approved by the Apostolic See will be followed. For other ceremonies proper to the Order, the respective books or directories, and the indications of the local statutes,³⁰ will be followed.

The sacrament of reconciliation

76. We obtain pardon from sins, peace with God, and reconciliation with the Church through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Penitential celebrations are recommended especially at various times in the liturgical year and of the life the community. They promote a community atmosphere of reconciliation and are a good preparation for sacramental confession.³¹

All the religious will approach the Sacrament of reconciliation frequently--at least every two weeks. In that way, they will grow as they strive to attain to that continuous conversion and purity of heart which prepare them to meet God in prayer.³²

77. Let the prioress respect and carefully safeguard the liberty of the nuns as far as the sacrament of reconciliation and the direction of consciences is concerned. She should take pains to see that all the religious have suitable confessors available to them.³³

Every community is to have an ordinary confessor who is to be proposed to the local ordinary for his approval after the community is consulted. However, each nun is free to make her confession to any approved priest, but the law of enclosure must be observed.³⁴

II. The life of continual prayer

Continual prayer and the practice of prayer

78. The life of "Christ who contemplates on the mountain"³⁵ was always nourished by filial conversation with his Father.³⁶ Imitating him, the Discalced Carmelite Nuns should give witness in the Church to a life of unceasing prayer.

Since prayer is "an intimate sharing between friends, a frequent lingering in solitude, with him whom we know loves us,"³⁷ it involves every aspect of the nuns' being. It informs their life with faith, hope and love that marks out the path leading to

evangelical sanctity.³⁸

79. In compliance with the tradition established by Holy Mother Teresa, every community will spend two hours daily praying in common. One of these hours will be in the morning and the other in the evening, as shall be laid down in the horarium.³⁹ The choir is to be the place for this prayer, unless in special circumstances the chapter of the monastery decides that some other place is more suitable. A religious who for some good reason is prevented from participating in common prayer, should set aside some other time to it, with the agreement of the Prioress.⁴⁰

Spiritual reading

80. Since prayer is a friendly conversation with God "who speaks to men and women as to friends and who remains with them in order to draw them and admit them to communion with himself,"⁴¹ progress in the life of prayer is not possible without sufficient knowledge of God's word.

For that reason the Rule lays down that the nuns must continuously keep the word of the Lord in their minds and hearts. And so they will study all of the scriptures with special care--and especially the gospel--and meditate on them so that they may come to the pre-eminent knowledge of Jesus Christ (Cf. Phil. 3, 8).⁴²

Besides using the scriptures for their spiritual readings, the religious must nourish themselves with the works of the church fathers, with the documents of the magisterium, with the writings of the saints and other authors of our Order, especially Saint Teresa of Jesus and Saint John of the Cross, and with other theological and spiritual books. In that way, they will renew their spiritual formation.

They will dedicate about an hour each day to spiritual reading.⁴³

Asceticism and the examination of conscience

81. The life of prayer which leads to union with God requires purity of heart and a commitment to seeking perfection.⁴⁴ In order to keep turning their hearts to God, the nuns will examine their consciences twice each day: before dinner and in the evening at Night Prayer.⁴⁵

Silence and solitude, in the cell and in work

82. In order to foster the prayerful and solitary atmosphere that is the hallmark of Carmel, all the sisters shall carefully keep silence,⁴⁶ except when they are required to talk by necessity or by reason of their duties, or when they have the permission of the prioress to speak with sisters in response to some need.⁴⁷ All the same, work and every other occupation must be reconciled with silence so that the monastery truly becomes a house of prayer.⁴⁸ The silence prescribed by the Rule will be faithfully observed from after night prayer until the end of morning prayer the next day.

22. See ILGH 24 and 31b. See canons 663, 3; 1174, 1; Prim. Const. 1-2 and 7; Alcalá Const. v, 1 and 3-4 and 7-8.
23. See ILGH and notice "Universi qui," 6 Aug. 1972.
24. Prim. Const. 1; Alcalá Const v, 1; ILGH 57 and 72.
25. See ILGH 70-73.
26. See SC 94; canon 1175.
27. See canon 1174, 1.
28. See SC 102-106.
29. See Prim. Const. 2; Alcalá Const. v, 4; ILGH 267 ff.
30. See Alcalá Const., epilogue.
31. See canon 959; "Rite of Penance," 36-37.
32. See canon 664.
33. See PC 14, canon 630, 1-2; Way 5, 1-6; (Way Esc. 8, 1-6).
34. See canon 630, 3.
35. See LG 46.
36. See IGLH 4.
37. See Life 8,5.
38. See Way, 21, 1-2 and 6-7.
39. See Prim. Const. 2 and 7; Alcalá Const. v, 3.
40. See Prim. Const. 42, Alcalá Const. xiv, on the mistress, 5.
41. See DV 2 and 21; Life 8, 5.
42. See DV 24; PC 6; Way 21, 4; Ascent 2, 22, 5-8.
43. See Prim. Const. 6 and 8; Alcalá Const. v, 7.
44. See Way 5,3; 21,2.
45. See Prim. Const. 1 and 6; Alcalá Const. v, 1 and 7; canon 664.
46. See Way 4, 9.
47. See Prim. Const. 7; Alcalá Const x, 1.
48. See Way 13, 6; 21, 10.
49. See Prim. Const. 8; Alcalá Const. x, 3 and 4.
50. See Prim. Const. 8; Alcalá Const. x; Way, 4, 9.
51. See Prim. Const. 32; Alcalá Const. xi, 3; Way 2,9; letter of 5 December, 1563, to the Council of Avila.
52. See Canon 663, 5.

83. For all of the time in which the sisters are not with the community or are occupied in the house duties, they will keep each to her own cell, as the Rule prescribes; they will remain in God's presence in solitude and give themselves to prayer, study or work. No sister may enter the cell of another without the permission of the Prioress.⁴⁹

84. The monasteries are not have a common workroom.⁵⁰ That does not, however, exclude the possibility of having different sisters work successively on a piece of work or of having several sisters together attend to tasks that require teamwork. Even in these cases silence and recollection are to be safeguarded.

85. The layout and internal arrangement of the entire monastery should breathe a climate of peace and prayer. Insofar as it is possible, they will keep the custom of allowing sisters, with the consent of the Prioress, to spend short desert periods of solitude in hermitages so that they may more intensively apply themselves to contemplation "just like our Holy Fathers did."⁵¹

Retreats and regular days of recollection

86. In order to foster spiritual renewal of the community, the Prioress is to take care that all of the sisters make an annual retreat in common.⁵²

With regard to other periodic retreats for the community or for the individual nuns, each monastery is to follow its customary practice.

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1. See Way 21, 10; Int. Castle 5, 1, 2.
 2. See Way 4, 2 and 9; 17, 1.
 3. See John Paul II, Homily given at Avila, 1 Nov. 1982, "Oré y me fue dada," para. 4, in AAS 75 (1983) 254.
 4. See Life 8,5; Ascent 2, 6, 1; canon 662 1.
 5. See Prim. Const. 1-2, 6-7; Alcalá Const. v, 1-8; Way 4, 2.
 6. See Way 24-27; Ascent 3, 44, 4.
 7. See Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution *Laudis Canticum*, of 1 Nov. 1970, in AAS 63 (1971) 527-535, n.8.
 8. See SC 11 and 14.
 9. See SC 42; IGLH 24.
 10. See SC 7.
 11. See Declaration by Ana de Jesús in BMC 18, 473-474; Prim. Const. 1-7; Alcalá Const. v, 1-8.
 12. See SC 34 and 30.
 13. See Life 36, 25; Method 30.
 14. See SC 47; EM 7.
 15. See LG 11; canon 663, 2; Prim. Const. 2; Alcalá Const. v, 4.
 16. Prim. Const. 4-5; Alcalá Const. v, 4; Way 33-35; EM 38.
 17. See canon 1248, 2.
 18. See Canon 608.
 19. See Life 22, 6; Way 33-35; Found. 18, 5; María de San José, *Instrucción de novicias*, ch. 15.
 20. See EM 50.
 21. See IGLH 12-17.

Chapter 5

COMMUNITY LIFE

Teresian community lifestyle and awareness

87. The life of the community, as set forth in the Rule of Carmel and renewed by St. Teresa, follows the example of the primitive Church. It requires that the sisters who have been called to form the little "College of Christ"¹ should mutually help one another advance toward sanctity.² Their supreme law must be the love which the Master enjoined on his disciples, the very love which he proved in giving his life for us (Cf. Jn. 15. 12-13).³

When this mutual love is expressed in works,⁴ it makes the sisters' life of prayer real.⁵ It secures for them the presence of the Lord in the midst of the community. It maintains peace and concord.⁶ This love should make every monastery an example of mutual concern, a witness to unity, a sign of universal reconciliation in Christ, and a beacon of the gospel of justice and peace.⁷

88. St. Teresa taught a community lifestyle which is that of a small family in which all are evangelically equal, relations are openly sincere,⁸ joys and sorrows are shared,⁹ and the members are committed to one another as sisters for their entire lives. "All must be friends, all must love one another, all must be cherished, and all must help one another"¹⁰ to create a joyful atmosphere that sets everyone at ease, an atmosphere that accords with "the sisterly style of life and recreation that [they] have in common."¹¹

89. The Eucharist is the source and summit of community life and the sign of unity and bond of union in Christ.¹² When a community celebrates in common the Liturgy of the Hours, it perseveres in prayer with Mary, the Mother of Jesus (Acts 1, 14).¹³

Single category of nuns and their number

90. In order to promote a full and effective communion of life, the monasteries will have but one category of nuns, with equal rights and duties, saving those which derive from religious profession and from the differences in tasks, in accord with the norm of these Constitutions.¹⁴

Communion in the same vocation requires that all of the nuns participate in the life of the community through dialogue, example, and personal effort.

91. So that the Teresian community may keep its character as a little "College of Christ" and not lose the aspect that Holy Mother wished for it, no monastery will have more than twenty one sisters.¹⁵

In the case of preparations for a new foundation or for other special reasons, the Superior General, through a special concession of the Apostolic See, may dispense from this law, so that they may admit other religious.

The community chapter

92. Each week the community will hold chapter. During this meeting, the sisters, under the guidance of the prioress, will discuss, as the Rule requires, everything that has to do with safeguarding the spirit of the Order, the salvation of souls, and sisterly correction in charity.¹⁶ Norms can be enacted in the local statutes on how the chapter is to be run, on what prayers are to be said at the beginning and the end and of it, and on the various forms that it may take, so that it may more effectively foster sisterly communion and the vitality that comes from ongoing spiritual renewal.

The task of breathing unity into the community and preserving it is entrusted to the Prioress who must guide it in truth and in love. She will duly inform the sisters about everything affecting the life of the monastery, especially during chapter.¹⁷

The common table and recreation

93. The common table is the symbol of family unity. The sisters' food is both a gift of Providence and the fruit of their labors. The religious will joyfully take their meals together with gratitude to God who is the giver of gifts and who blesses the work of their hands.¹⁸

Care is to be taken so that the food is well prepared and the needs of the sisters are met. But no one is to complain about what is given her. Nor may anyone eat or drink outside of the common meal times unless she has permission to do so.¹⁹

During meals, in keeping with the Rule, the sisters will listen to a reading from the Bible, or other useful readings, unless the prioress, on certain festive occasions, should dispense from the usual silence.

Formulas for blessings at meals in accord with the Church's guidelines and the tradition of the Order will be chosen by the community.²⁰

94. So that the sisters may joyfully and spontaneously communicate with one another, recreation will be held in common, according to the mind of Holy Mother, twice a day--after dinner and after supper.²¹ All the religious will faithfully take part in it. They will charitably collaborate with mutual respect and affability in building up the community.²²

The nuns' habit

95. Since the nuns are called to be a part of the family of the Blessed Virgin Mary, they will wear the habit of her Order. For it is a sign of their consecration and a witness to poverty.²³

As St. Teresa indicated, the habit is to be poor and austere, and made from brown cloth. It is made up of the habit in the strict sense [the tunic], which is worn with the cincture, of the scapular, which is worn over the toque, and of a black veil. The veil is white for novices and those temporarily professed. On certain occasions, the white mantle is added.²⁴

Where local circumstances require it, the Chapter of the monastery may suitably adapt the toque. The Chapter is also entrusted with deciding when the white mantle is to be worn.

As befits a Discalced Carmelite, footwear and other items of dress should be simple and inexpensive, and adapted to the climate, needs and customs of the different communities and regions.²⁵ For the sake of self-forgetfulness, the sisters are not to use any fashionable object or anything that would encourage vanity.²⁶

The horarium and common life

96. Community life requires an established order of common acts. In them, the sisters express their communion with God and with one another; and they diligently help one another to be faithful to their vocation.

The Chapter of each monastery will draw up its daily horarium. In doing so, it will respect the prescriptions of Holy Mother and the circumstances of the climate and customs of the diverse regions. In any case, the horarium will keep the faithful balance, which St. Teresa wanted, among the hours of prayer, work, and rest, as well as harmony between times of solitude and of sisterly gatherings.²⁷ They should see to it that about seven hours be given to rest at night, in accord with the Teresian tradition.

The following are to be clearly indicated in the horarium: the time of rising in the morning; the time for the celebration of the Eucharist and of the Liturgy of the Hours, the two hours of prayer; the time for spiritual reading; for retirement in the cell and for work; the times for meals and the two recreations; and the time for rest. Once the horarium of the monastery is established, it may not be modified except by a two-thirds majority vote of the Chapter.

97. All of the nuns will diligently observe the obligations of common life and carefully avoid differences in everything that has to do with food, clothing and furnishings.

However, in the spirit of the Rule, each sister is charitably to receive whatever she needs because of her age, her health, or the requirements of the work she carries out.²⁸

The sick sisters

98. The sick, elderly and weak sisters are to be treated with all the love that is necessary, with largesse and with compassion, in the spirit of the poverty of the Order. The other sisters should visit them and console them. The sick should be entrusted to an infirmarian who has the charity and the skills required for this office. The Prioress will attentively make sure that the nuns do not lack the treatments and remedies they need.

The sick sisters should praise the Lord when they are well provided for, and they should not be disturbed when some relief is lacking. Let them show the perfection acquired in the time of health, by having patience and seeking to cause as little disturbance as possible. In that way, they will derive advantage from their sickness and edify the community in the time of trial.²⁹

The help of priestly ministry and of the sacraments of the Church are to be provided to the sick without fail.

99. The sacrament of the anointing of the sick and Viaticum are to be given in good time to the sisters whose health has been seriously diminished by illness or old age.³⁰

The community will sustain up until the last moment with its sisterly affection and prayers those who are seriously ill; and they will invoke upon them the protection of St. Joseph and the maternal presence of the Virgin Mary. Suffrages for the dead

100. The Office for the Dead, the Eucharist, and the rites of burial are to be solemnly celebrated for all the sisters of the monastery who have left this world to go to the Father. The monastery will also generously offer other prayers for them, according to its custom.³¹

101. Every monastery shall keep a book in which the names of the deceased religious of the house, and a biographical sketch of each, are to be written.

When a religious dies, the Superior General, the local ordinary of the monastery, and the other monasteries which have close ties with the community, are to be notified.

102. Prayer unites the Church with all our deceased brothers and sisters as we await the blessed hope and the coming of Christ (Tit. 2, 13). In this spirit of charity:

- a) In every monastery a Eucharist and Office for the Dead for all the brothers and sisters of the Order and for deceased relatives and for benefactors shall be offered in the place of the liturgy for the day, once each month outside of the times of Advent, Christmas, Lent and Eastertide, when the rubrics allow it.³²
- b) Every monastery, in the spirit of the liturgical norms, will decide what suffrages are to offered on the occasion of the death of the Pope, of its bishop, and of the superiors of the Order and the relatives of the nuns.
- c) For the deceased nuns of other monasteries and for the deceased friars of the Order, they will apply suffrages, in the spirit of the liturgy, according to each community's custom.

Perseverance in the life of communion

103. Charity does not seek its own advantage but that of the others (cf. 1 Cor. 13, 5; Phil. 2, 4); and the communities are founded on our ties that make all brothers and sisters one in Christ. Therefore, they should not turn in upon themselves. On the contrary, in the spirit of the Holy Mother, the monasteries will be sure to take practical steps to foster communion with one another and with the rest of the Order.

All the brothers and sisters of the Teresian Carmel belong to one single family of the Virgin Mary. By virtue of their union in charity, they will help one another by their prayers, by their example, and by mutual collaboration. In this practical way, all will work together for the good of the Church and of the Order.³³

Furthermore, all the monasteries, while free to offer their own suggestions to competent authorities, will strive to support the initiatives of the Teresian family, especially those proposed by the Superior General of the Order.

104. The sisters should keep in mind that they were called by the Lord³⁴ to the same community in order to live their vocation together. They will make every effort to grow in unity, for that is God's gift to them and their task. This means that they must strive daily to persevere in esteeming and cherishing one another, in showing practical love for their community, and in their efforts to renew its vitality in the Church.

Following the truth in charity (cf. Eph. 4, 15), they will make every effort mutually to help one other to reach the perfection to which they have been called as individual persons and as a community.³⁵

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1. See PC 15, Rule 10, Way Esc. 20,1.
 2. See Life 7, 20-22; Int. Castle 7, 4, 14.
 3. See Prim. Const 28; Alcalá Const. iv, 6; Way 4, 4 & 10-11; Int. Castle 1, 2, 17 and 5, 3, 12.
 4. See Int. Castle 5, 3, 11.
 5. See Int. Castle 5, 3, 6-12; Way 36,6.
 6. See Way 17, 5-6; 7, 9-11; Way 4, 4.
 7. See canon 602; ET 52.
 8. See Way 27, 6; 20,4; Prim. Const. 22; Alcalá Const. xi, 1.
 9. See Way 7, 5-9.
 10. See Way 4, 7.
 11. See Found. 13, 5; Way 7, 7; 41, 7; Life 36,29; Prim. Const. 26-27; Alcalá Const. iv, 4-5.
 12. See LG 7 and 11; canon 608; canon 663, 2.
 13. See ILGH 8-9.
 14. See PC 15.
 15. See Prim. Const. 28; Alcalá Const. ii, 8; Way 4,7; Method 28; letter of 21 December, 1579, to María de San José, para. 10.
 16. See Prim. Const. 43-48; Alcalá Const. xv, 1-10; Life 16,7. On the correction of the sisters see numbers 182-186.
 17. See Prim. Const. 34; Alcalá Const. xiv, on the prioress, 1; canon 619.
 18. See Prim. Const. 26; Alcalá Const. iv,1.
 19. See Prim. Const. 22 & 26; Alcalá Const. iv, 3; and xii, 3.
 20. See De benedictionibus, nn. 782-827.
 21. See Prim. Const. 26-28; Alcalá Const. iv, 4-6; María de San José, Avisos 28.
 22. See Way 7,7; 41,7; Found. 13,5.
 23. See Life 36,6; Found. 16,5; canon 669.
 24. See Prim. Const. 12; Alcalá Const. viii, 3.
 25. See PC 17; ET 22.
 26. See Prim. Const. 14; Alcalá Const viii, 6.
 27. See Prim. Const. 1-7; Alcalá Const. v, 1-8.

28. See Prim. Const. 22; Alcalá Const. xiv, on the prioress, 1.
29. See Prim. Const. 23; Alcalá Const. xii, 1-2; Method 11; Spir. Relation 9.
30. See Prim. Const. 33; Alcalá Const. xiii, 1; canon 1004.
31. See Prim. Const. 33; Alcalá Const. xiii, 1-2.
32. IGLH 245.
33. See letter of 31 May, 1579, to Valladolid Monastery, para. 4; PC 13.
34. See Way 3,1.
35. See letter of 30 May, 1582 to Ana de Jesús, para. 3.

Chapter 6

THE ENCLOSURE OF THE MONASTERIES

Claustral solitude

105. The ceaseless quest for God in solitude can be likened to an exodus into the desert. God draws and guides us there in order to speak to our heart (cf. Hos. 2, 16).¹ Under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, many have responded to Christ's invitation to his disciples (cf. Mk. 6, 31) and retired to solitude where they adore the Father in spirit and in truth (cf. John 4, 23). They stay close by the Master and listen to his word. They have chosen the one thing necessary, the better part, and it will not be taken from them (cf. Lk. 10, 39-42).²

106. The institutes which are wholly consecrated to the contemplative life of cloistered solitude, hold a distinguished place in the mystical Body of Christ; for they offer an extraordinary sacrifice of praise to God, they enrich God's people with the richest fruits of their sanctity, they encourage it by example, and they extend it by their mysterious apostolic fruitfulness.³

This kind of life imitates Christ "in contemplation on the mountain."⁴ It shares in his paschal mystery, because it is a dying for the sake of rising again.⁵ Furthermore, in a special way, it fulfills the contemplative vocation of the Church as Bride which it reveals for all to see. For the Bride, hidden with Christ in God, always seeks the things of above, while she keeps watch for the final manifestation of the Lord (cf. Col. 1, 1-4).⁶

Meaning and characteristics of Teresian enclosure

107. Holy Mother Teresa, from the beginning of her reform, chose claustral retirement as both an expression and a means of following Christ, according to the evangelical counsels, in the original contemplative vocation of Carmel. She did this in order spiritually to combat for the glory of the Lord on behalf of his Church.⁷

According to St. Teresa, the freely-chosen life of enclosure brings about a radical detachment from exterior things that leads to interior detachment,⁸ and it involves a life of silence and solitude ordered toward finding in the Spouse the living water of contemplation.⁹ It is also a great aid for reaching holy liberty of spirit¹⁰ in a joyful experience of sisterly union in Christ of those who are "alone with him alone."¹¹

108. Teresian enclosure's purpose and requirements¹² maintain perennial validity. They are consistent with radical Christian discipleship and with evangelical self-denial. They safeguard the freedom and harmony of community life and so foster full gift of self to

God in contemplative life for the Church. Without detriment to those values which always oblige the community and the individual nuns in their observance of Teresian enclosure, and with due regard for the nature and special requirements of Teresian enclosure, the norms which regulate it have been duly updated in accord with principles and provisions which the Church has established for the contemplative life of nuns.¹³

General norm on enclosure

109. In conformity with their contemplative vocation, the Discalced Carmelite Nuns are obliged to observe papal enclosure, that is, enclosure according to the laws established by the Apostolic See¹⁴ and by the present Constitutions which contain the fundamental norms of their proper law.¹⁵ More detailed norms may be established in the local statutes.

The boundaries of papal enclosure

110. The law of papal enclosure extends to all the residential spaces of the nuns, including the gardens and orchards reserved to them. The boundaries of the areas subject to the law of enclosure will be fixed in a way that constitutes a material separation that protects the privacy and recollection proper to a Teresian community. Apart from the safety exits which may be prescribed by civil law, this fixed separation must prevent people from coming in or going out.

The doors for entering and leaving the enclosure are to be locked with a key.¹⁶

111. The material separation between the choir reserved to the nuns and the Church will be made by means of a grille of solid material. It is to be arranged in such a way that the nuns can see the altar, the tabernacle and the ambo, so that they may participate better in liturgical celebrations. An opening is to be made in the grille, or in some other place in the sanctuary, which is large enough for distributing communion to the nuns.¹⁷ A suitable place must be chosen for confessions. It must be provided with a fixed grille.¹⁸

112. In the parlours, the separation will be made by means of a fixed grille of solid material.¹⁹ Holy Mother wished them to be an expressive sign of separation from the world and of renunciation of the most cherished human things.

113. When establishing a Carmel in a new culture calls for carrying out the separation in the choir and in the parlour in some other way, it will be submitted, together with the opinion of the Superior General for the approval of the Apostolic See.²⁰

114. In order to pass necessary things from the enclosure to the outside and viceversa, turns will be installed according to the tradition of the Order. Where the particular needs of the monastery require it, the Superior General, by a special concession of the Apostolic See, may authorize the use of another means that is more functional.

Visits to the parlour and the use of means of communication

119. Care will be taken to make sure that the visits to the parlour serve for mutual edification in truth and in charity so that the persons who go there may derive benefit for their life. However visits must not be allowed to disturb community life or harm the recollection proper to a contemplative life. Nor must they take place at the time that should be spent in prayer and work.²⁶

It pertains to the Prioress to authorize the nuns to go to the parlour, at the time and in the manner determined by the individual monasteries or by local statutes. As far as possible, long or too-frequent visits are to be avoided.²⁷

120. In making use of means of communication, due discretion and sobriety will be observed. Everything that can harm the contemplative life and sisterly union is to be avoided.²⁸

The use of the telephone will be regulated by the Prioress, who will take into consideration the demands of poverty and of recollection. The use of radio or television is prohibited, except in special circumstances of a religious character. The Prioress holds grave responsibility for their use.²⁹

121. Participation in conventions, courses and conferences will be avoided. Instead ongoing formation is to be fostered. It must be given in the monastery and all the nuns must participate.³⁰ However, in the case of courses organized within the Order, and according to the directives of the General Superior, or of meetings promoted by legitimate Church authority which truly foster enclosed life, the Prioress, with the previous consent of the regular superior or of the diocesan bishop, in the case of a monastery entrusted to his care, may, if she sees fit, let a few nuns attend.³¹

Responsibility for safeguarding the enclosure

122. The regular superior or the diocesan bishop, if it is a monastery entrusted to his care, must endeavor to make sure that the norms that regulate the enclosure of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns are observed faithfully. He is to assist the Prioress to do so, for she bears immediate responsibility for caring for the enclosure.³² When he makes his pastoral visitation, the visitor must make sure that enclosure is exactly observed in conformity with the prescriptions of universal law, of the present Constitutions, and of the local statutes. The nuns, on their part, should make known to the visitor any failings in this regard. The Prioress will also show him the book in which all the entrances and exits are faithfully noted.³³

123. The Prioress will do her utmost to make sure that the nuns have a high regard for the enclosure and observe faithfully the norms for it established by the legitimate authority so as to safeguard the monasteries' right to solitude as recognized by the Church³⁴ All the nuns, for their part, will cooperate in taking joint responsibility for safeguarding the requirements of enclosed life. That way, they will be able more

Entering and leaving enclosure

115. In virtue of the law of enclosure, the nuns, the novices and the postulants must live within the boundaries of the monastery set apart by enclosure. It is not licit for them to go out except in the cases foreseen in universal law and in the present Constitutions.²¹

This law also prohibits anyone else from entering within the bounds of the monastery's enclosure, except in the cases listed in universal law and in these Constitutions.²²

Nuns who leave the enclosure and other persons who enter it will spend only as much time there as is necessary. They will not allow themselves to become involved in other things besides that for which they left or entered the enclosure.

116. In addition to the cases foreseen by universal law,²³ leaving the enclosure is permitted in the following circumstances:

- a) With the previous authorization of the regular superior or of the diocesan bishop if the monastery is entrusted to his vigilance, the prioress, with the consent of the Chapter, may permit a few nuns, designated by her--who must be solemnly professed and freely consent to it--to go out for errands which cannot in any way be attended to by means of other persons.
- b) Once permission for making a new foundation or for transferring a monastery has been obtained, with the previous permission of the regular superior or the diocesan bishop, if the monastery is entrusted to his care, the Prioress may go out with one or two nuns to visit the place or inspect the work on the new edifice, whenever that is necessary.

117. Besides the cases foreseen by universal law,²⁴ the following may enter the enclosure, in accord with our proper law:

- a) The Superior General of our Order, or his representative.²⁵
- b) Nuns of our Order who are legitimately traveling or who are sick. They should be received with a true spirit of sisterly hospitality.
- c) The candidates who, in accord with the norm of number 134 of the present Constitutions, wish to discern their vocation to the Order, but not for a period longer than three months.

No one may be allowed to enter the enclosure for retreats, spiritual exercises or other kinds of experience.

118. When the competent authority can grant, according to the norm of canon 667,4, permission to enter the enclosure or leave it, it pertains to the Prioress to verify the case and to give, if she sees fit, her consent. However, she should exercise due discretion and responsibility, so that permissions to enter or go out are granted only for truly serious reasons.

effectively to achieve the joy of contemplative life in union with Christ, the Spouse. It is "for him alone" that they have freely chosen this vocation in the Church.³⁵

1. See VS i; Cant B, 35, 1-7.
2. See VS iv; Way 17, 5-6; Int. Castle 7, 4, 12-13; Med.Song 7,3.
3. See PC 7; canon 674.
4. See LG 46; canon 577; Way 24, 4; Ascent 3, 39, 2.
5. See VS i.
6. See VS iv; Int. Castle 5, 2, 3-4.
7. See letter of 23 Dec., 1561, to Lorenzo de Cepeda, paragraphs 2 and 4; Life 35,5; 36, 9; Way 1, 1-2; 3, 5-10.
8. See Way 8, 8-12; 10,1.
9. See Found. 31, 46; Way 19, 2; 42, 5.
10. See Way 10, 1; 19,4.
11. See Life 36, 29; Found. 1,6; 31, 46-47.
12. See Prim. Const. 15-20; Alcalá Const. iii, 1-7.
13. See PC 7 and 16; VS, passim.
14. See VS vii, 1 and 9; canon 667, 2 and 3.
15. See VS vii, 9.
16. See VS vii, 2-3; Prim. Const. 32; Alcalá Const. xi, 3.
17. See VS vii, 4.
18. See canon 964, 2.
19. See VS vii, 2 and 3; Method 15.
20. See VS vii, 1 and 4; AG 40.
21. See VS vii, 5.
22. See VS vii, 6.
23. See VS vii, 7 (in appendix) and canon 667, 4.
24. See VS vii, 8 (in appendix) and canon 667, 4.
25. See autograph concession of Pius X, 24 May, 1914.
26. See Prim. Const. 15-20; Alcalá Const. iii, 1-7.
27. See Prim. Const. 15; Alcalá Const. iii, 1-2.
28. See VS vii, 11; canon 666.
29. See VS vii, 10.
30. See PI 81.
31. See VS vii, 12.
32. See VS vii, 12 and 15.
33. See VS vii, 14.
34. See VS vii, 15; canon 674.
35. See Found. 31, 46-47.

Chapter 7

THE ECCLESIAL AND APOSTOLIC IDEAL OF CARMEL

The contemplative and apostolic charism of the Teresian Carmel

124. Holy Mother Teresa was filled with zeal for the glory of God. Christ gradually led her to an understanding of the Church of her time in which she interiorly experienced the labours of its reform, the wounds that tore at its unity, and its concern for evangelizing new lands.¹

She wanted to help her Lord and to contribute to the welfare of souls. She expressed, with undoubted charismatic originality, the value of gospel holiness and of prayer in building up the Body of Christ and helping it to grow.² She founded for this purpose the monastery of St. Joseph, in order to live out, together with her daughters, a strong commitment to Christian perfection. They wanted to "be such" as to obtain from God everything they asked for in their passionate intercession for the Church.³

125. Holy Mother transmitted to her daughters her own apostolic spirit. She longed to see them take the good of souls and the increase of the Church to heart, for she considered that an evident sign of true perfection.⁴ For this reason, she designated as their service in the Church prayer and of immolation. It was the reason why the Lord himself had brought them together in Carmel.⁵

Every community is a living cell of the Mystical Body, and it should have that faithful feeling for the Church which animates Teresian contemplative life. In that way, renewed by the Holy Spirit, it can become love in the heart of the Church.⁶

The Discalced Carmelite Nuns' own apostolate

126. The vocation of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns is essentially ecclesial and apostolic. The apostolate to which Saint Teresa wished to dedicate her daughters is the purely contemplative one. It consists in prayer and immolation with the Church and for the Church, and it excludes every form of active apostolate.⁷

The Discalced Carmelite Nuns are joined to Christ who intercedes for us and offers himself for us. Together, they all offer themselves to God,⁸ and complete what is lacking in the passion of the Lord in favor of his Mystical Body (cf. Col. 1, 24). In this way, they open themselves to the action of the Holy Spirit who guides the Church and gives it life; and they move toward achieving that pure and solitary love which is more precious in God's sight and of greater profit for the Church than a great many other works taken together.⁹

Missionary dimension of the contemplative life

127. Taught by the shining example of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, Patroness of the Missions, all the Carmels will carefully foster the missionary spirit which should animate their contemplative life. They will pray, in particular, for the workers of the Gospel, for an increase of vocations, for the unity of Christians, and for the evangelization of the peoples, so that all may be open to the message of Christ.¹⁰

The monasteries which are present in the young churches have the special vocation of planting in new soil the purely contemplative life which belongs to the very fullness of the Church, and of giving witness among non-Christians to the majesty of God, to God's love for them, and to the vocation of everyone to unity in Christ.¹¹

Becoming part of the local church

128. Every monastery will seek to belong fully to its own local church. The sisters should remember that they are part of the diocesan family and ought to offer in it the special witness of the contemplative life of the Teresian Carmel.¹²

They will show their communion with the local church, first of all, by their esteem and filial obedience toward their bishop, by their concern for the problems of the diocese and its undertakings, and by their prayer for all its members, especially for its priests.¹³

In the style of the Teresian Carmel, the sisters will make all welcome as brothers and sisters; and they will give the joyful witness of their life and spread love for prayer.¹⁴

129. While holding faithfully to the contemplative spirit and observing the requirements of community life, and with due regard for the norms of enclosure, the monasteries may give to persons who ask for it space and assistance for prayer, so as to help them to find God and deepen their faith through an experience of solitude in which they may meditate and participate in the liturgy.¹⁵ However, every form of active apostolate is excluded.¹⁶

Appropriate news and awareness of the Church.

130. The Prioress must keep the community vividly aware of the Church and in communion with the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff and the Bishops. For that reason, she is to keep the nuns adequately informed about the Magisterium of the Pope and of the Apostolic See, about the teaching of the Bishops, and about everything that has to do with the life of the Church and with the great problems of society, especially questions touching on justice and peace.¹⁷

In that way the religious will embrace in Christ the heavens and the earth,¹⁸ and be involved in the universal mission of the Church. They will present to the Father in prayer the joys and the hopes, the sorrows and the anguish of the human family in their times, especially those of the poor and the suffering.¹⁹

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1. See Life 32, 6-9; Way 1, 1-6; Found. 1, 6-8.
 2. See Way 1, 1-6.
 3. See Way 3,1 and 7-10; 1, 2 and 5; 35, 5.
 4. See Found. 1, 6; declaration by Ana de San Bartolomeo in BMC vol. 19, 557; Int. Castle 4, 1, 7.
 5. See Way 1 and 3; letter of 13 Dec., 1576, to Fr. Jerome Gracian, para 6. On the ecclesial purpose of the Teresian Carmel, see the declarations by María de San José (BMC 18, 489). Ana de Jesús (BMC 19, 463-464), and Isabel de Santo Domingo (BMC 19, 470).
 6. See St. Therese of the Child Jesus, Ms. B, 3, ro; Found. 18,5; VS iii.
 7. See Way 3, 5 and 10; PC 7; canon 674.
 8. See Int. Castle 7, 4, 15; Life 39, 10.
 9. See Cant. B, 29, 2-3; VS iii.
 10. See AG 18; Int. Castle 7, 2, 7; Found. 1, 7-8.
 11. See AG 18 and 40; VS iii.
 12. See MR 18; CD 34; canon 673.
 13. See Way Esc. 5,1; Way 1,2; 3, 2-3.
 14. See Way 20, 3-4; 41, 5-7.
 15. See MR 25, VS v.
 16. See n. 125 of these Constitutions.
 17. See letter of 22 July, 1579, to Don Teutonio de Braganza, nn. 4-7.
 18. See St. John of the Cross, "Prayer of a soul taken with love" in Sayings of light and love, 25.
 19. See GS 1; VS iii.

PART II
FORMATION AND MEMBERSHIP
OF THE SISTERS

Chapter 1

DISCERNMENT OF VOCATIONS

AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF FORMATION

I. *Vocational discernment*

131. The vocation of Carmel in the Church, and the particular form of life which St. Teresa began and gave witness to,¹ require of all those, who in response to God's call² wish to embrace it, that they pledge themselves to follow with firm determination³ and "with every possible perfection" the evangelical counsels. They do this for the Church in its needs⁴ in a little community which is rooted in solitude, prayer, and self-denial.⁵

132. Candidates to the Order should be persons of prayer who aspire to to the perfection of charity and to detachment from the world,⁶ so that they may be able to assume the Discalced Carmelite Nuns' own way of life,⁷ in which a deeply solitary communion with God is strictly united to sisterly life together in community.

Candidates should be intelligent,⁸ that is, endowed with the ability to understand the things of the spirit; and they should have the good common sense needed for community responsibilities and offices.

They should be physically and psychologically healthy⁹ and have the poise and strength of spirit needed for living according to our monasteries' typical form of consecration and strict enclosure.

133. Much attention should be paid¹⁰ to discerning vocations and examining well the intentions of those who present themselves.¹¹ Those who come for reasons which are not sufficiently supernatural or clear, and which could later get in the way of their full spiritual and human development,¹² should be suitably put off, even though they may have good will.

134. In order to make this task of discerning a vocation easier and to help those who show true signs of having a vocation to the contemplative life to come to a better understanding of our way of life, the prioress, if she sees fit, with the consent of the chapter, may allow them to live inside the monastery for a period of time not exceeding three months.

II. Formation

135. The purpose of formation is gradually to bring candidates who are docile to the action of the Holy Spirit and who respond with love to the gratuitous and loving call of the Lord (Dt. 7, 7-10; Eph. 1, 4) to know and live the Discalced Carmelite Nuns' vocation. Guided by skilled teachers, the candidates learn the values and requirements of the model of life proposed by Holy Mother through her example and writings, which is expressed in these Constitutions, and come to identify themselves with it.

136. All the natural and supernatural elements of formation ought to work progressively and harmoniously together and tend to conform to Christ, the model of consecration to the Father, those who are called to live "in allegiance to him." They do so in union with Mary, whose example they follow, in order that they may live the Gospel in full and so belong exclusively to God.¹³

137. In order that the candidates may be prepared to consecrate their lives, they will undergo a long period of formation and trial.¹⁴ Its purpose is to enable them to have practical experience of our life and to interiorize its spirit while also giving the community a chance to evaluate their vocation, their attitudes, and intentions.

This process of formation and trial includes, in addition to the postulancy period, two fundamental stages: the novitiate and the time in temporary vows.

138. Each of these stages should be provided with suitable formation which follow the criteria of unity and gradualness. And so each candidate should be carefully led according to her abilities and condition¹⁵ and prepared to dedicate herself wholly to God in accord with the requirements of the contemplative life of Carmel.¹⁶

139. In order to form candidates well for our contemplative way of life, it is important that they be given both practical experience of the religious life and sufficient instruction, for these serve to develop insightful knowledge of the truths which they must contemplate and live.¹⁷

140. A community environment of religious fervour and sisterly good relations is an indispensable condition for formation. It alone enables the candidates to experience the value of mutual help as a factor in their growth and perseverance in their vocation.

With that end in view, all the members of the community, without detriment for the special tasks of those entrusted with formation,¹⁸ should hold themselves responsible for the education of the candidates. Above all, they should contribute through their good example and through prayer.

1. See Way 1,2; Life 35,4; 36, 26-29; Found. 18, 5.

2. See PC 1, LG 43.

3. See Found. 27, 12.
4. See Way 1, 2 and 5; 3, 6 and 10.
5. See letter of 23 Dec. 1561 to Lorenzo de Cepeda, para. 2.
6. See Prim. Const. 21; Alcalá Const.ii, 1-3.
7. See *ibid.*
8. See *ibid.*
9. See *ibid.*
10. See Prim. Const. 21; Alcalá Const.ii, 1-2.
11. See Way 14, 1; Method 25-26.
12. See VS vi.
13. See PC 2, a; Rule 2; Life 15, 13; Int. Castle 6, 7, 13.
14. See Way 14,2; Method 25-26.
15. See Prim. Const. 40; Alcalá Const. xiv, on the mistress, 1.
16. See PC 18, canon 652, 1; canon 659.
17. See Pius XI, *Unigenitus Dei Filius* in AAS 16 (1924) p. 137.
18. See canon 652, 4; Found. 4, 5-7; 27, 11-12.

Chapter 2

POSTULANCY AND NOVITIATE

*I. Postulancy**Admission*

141. The candidate who, after mature examination, shall have given signs of vocation to our Order, may be admitted to the postulancy. It is the preliminary trial whose purpose is both to allow the sisters to evaluate the candidate's attitudes and vocation and also to allow the candidate to reach a certain level of culture --especially religious culture-- and to move gradually from the life of the world to that of the novitiate.¹

It pertains to the Prioress, with the consent of the Chapter, to admit candidates to the postulancy.

142. Before admission, the aspirants must present:

- a) Certificates of baptism, confirmation, and free state;
- b) The attestation of the major superior of the institute or society concerned, or the Prioress of the monastery, in the case of a candidate who had previously been admitted to another institute of consecrated life or to a society of apostolic life, or to another monastery of our Order.

In addition, the Prioress should be careful to ask, in writing as far as possible, for other information regarding the candidate's conduct, physical and psychological health, and academic background. This information is to be regarded as confidential. The prioress will also be sure to make discreet inquiries about the family of the aspirant.²

143. The duration of the postulancy may vary, with the candidates, from a minimum of six months to a maximum of a year and a half, to be determined by the chapter of the monastery. As to the age of the candidate, the monasteries will govern themselves by taking into consideration the age required for the beginning of the novitiate and the length of the postulancy.

The direction of the postulants and the evaluation of their suitability

144. During the postulancy, the candidates will be entrusted to the mistress of novices, unless the Prioress, after hearing the opinion of her council, decides it better to entrust her to another suitable religious who must collaborate closely with the mistress so as to assure continuity in formation.

145. The evaluation of the candidate must include whether she has the right intention and whether she possesses, over and above an adequate preparation, the health, a suitable temperament, and sufficient human and spiritual maturity to give grounds for hoping that she will be able to assume the obligations of our vocation. If necessary, the requirements of health, of suitable temperament and of maturity will be evaluated with the help of experts who are entirely trustworthy, with due regard for the right of the person to her good name and to confidentiality, according to the norm of canon 220.³

Departure or dismissal of a postulant

146. During the postulancy, the candidate may freely leave the monastery. For her part, the Prioress may for a just motive, after hearing the opinion of the Mistress and the council, send the postulant away.

Retreat before novitiate

147. Before beginning the novitiate, the postulant will make an eight-day retreat.

II. The novitiate

Admission and requirements

148. The postulant judged suitable for our life may be admitted to the novitiate by the Prioress with the consent of the chapter. The age for the novitiate must be at least 18 years. The other conditions required by universal law for validity of admission must be fulfilled.⁴

Place, duration, and absences

149. The novitiate begins with the right of initiation to religious life,⁵ in which the candidate is given the habit of the Order with the white veil. In order for the novitiate to be valid, it must last twelve months, and these must be spent in the monastery.⁶ Absences which last more than three months, either continuous or interrupted, render the novitiate invalid. An absence of more than fifteen days must be made up.⁷

150. If special circumstances advise it, the Chapter of the monastery may establish as a norm for all the candidates that the novitiate must last two years, one of which will be considered the canonical year.

151. In monasteries where the novitiate lasts 12 months, the Prioress may, in individual cases and with the consent of the Chapter, prolong its duration, but not beyond another year.⁸

Purpose of the novitiate

152. The novitiate, by which life in our Order is begun, has for its chief purpose the interiorization by the novice of our spirit in following Christ in the form specific to the contemplative Teresian Carmel. She comes to know its demands and experience them. At the same time, the novitiate gives the community a chance to evaluate the candidate's suitability and intentions.⁹

The mistress of novices

153. The formation and immediate guidance of the novices is entrusted to the Mistress, who will carry out her task under the supervision of the Prioress and according to our Order's own formation regulations.¹⁰

The prioress, with the consent of her council, will appoint to the office of Mistress of Novices a religious "of great prudence, prayer and spirit."¹¹ She must have completed at least thirty years of age and three years since her solemn profession in our Order.

If it should happen in exceptional cases that there is not a suitable religious for the office of Mistress of Novices, the prioress may, with the consent of her council, assume this office with the help of a suitable sister.¹²

154. The Mistress of Novices will dedicate herself fully to her office, since she "forms souls in which the Lord must dwell"¹³ and which are called to be "spouses of the Crucified."¹⁴ She should treat them with compassion and love and not marvel at the faults which they may commit, because they must progress little by little. She will follow them closely and make it easy for them to open themselves spontaneously in the things of the spirit by listening to them regularly, accompanying them in the way of prayer, and teaching them how to meditate and what to do in times of dryness.¹⁵

She should train the novices in mortification, especially of the will, even in small things, according to the capacity of each one. But she should always pay more attention to virtue than to the rigour of penitence.¹⁶ She will do her utmost so that they may learn to live in the presence of the Lord and seek him in everything--both in silence and in solitude, and also in the midst of the occupations proper to community life.¹⁷

She will teach them a serene attitude of openness to the community and readiness to serve. She will make every effort to keep the novices suitably in contact with the community, given the family character of our monasteries,¹⁸ while, at the same time providing for times in which they may live apart in the novitiate.

The Mistress will show special concern in imparting to the novices a sense of esteem and of love for the Prioress who is responsible for the unity of direction and for the communion of the entire little "college of Christ."

155. In the formation of the novices, the Mistress will carefully do her best to bring them to a knowledge of the Rule and the Constitutions, the Marian spirit of the Order, and the kind of life begun in Carmel by Holy Mother Teresa of Jesus.¹⁹ She will teach them about the nature of the Order and its spirit, about its purpose and its discipline,

about its life, about its history and about our saints. In that way, they will be made aware of the gift of God to the Teresian Carmel and enabled to understand better their vocation.²⁰

The novices should be taught how to understand Sacred Scripture, especially the New Testament and the Psalms, which should provide them with an introduction to the study and contemplation of the mysteries of salvation.²¹

They should be given a theological and spiritual introduction to the liturgy, for that will not only enable them to participate fully in the celebrations of the mysteries of our faith but also animate their prayers with the great intentions of Christ and of the Church, of which they ought to be the voice.²² They should be taught about the mystery of the life of the Church. That way, from the very beginning, they will be aware of the ecclesial and apostolic spirit of the Teresian Carmel and learn to love the Church and its pastors.²³

They should be well formed in theology and trained in the practice of the evangelical counsels. By means of them, they are guided toward self-knowledge,²⁴ in order that through self-denial and the practice of human and Christian virtues, they may be prepared to consecrate themselves to Christ in truth and in love.

156. In order that the candidates may become true Discalced Carmelites according to the spirit of Holy Mother, in their spiritual formation, especially as regards the life of prayer, they will follow her teaching and take, as a kind of formation manual, the Way of Perfection, which was "addressed by Teresa of Jesus to her sisters and daughters."²⁵

157. For the sake of a fittingly complete formation of the novices, the Mistress may have the help of other suitable and skilled sisters. They are to be designated by the Prioress after consulting the Mistress, and they will depend on the mistress in everything that has to do with formation.²⁶

The end of the novitiate

158. During the novitiate, the candidate may freely leave the Order. For her part, the Prioress may for a just motive, after hearing from the Mistress of Novices and the council, dismiss a novice.²⁷

159. At three different times--which are to be suitably spaced out--the prioress will convoke the chapter for its vote on the suitability of the novice and her comportment.

If the first and second time the majority of the chapter approves the novice, or if the votes are at least equal, the candidate may continue the novitiate. If, on the other hand, the absolute majority of the votes should be contrary, the novice will be dismissed.

If on the third votation, it turns out that the novice has not received the approval of an absolute majority of the votes, she is to be dismissed, unless, in a case of tie vote, the Prioress, after consulting the council and the mistress, sees fit to extend the time of the novitiate. At the end of the extension, which in the case of a two-year novitiate cannot exceed six months, the novice will again be submitted to the chapter.

And if she does not obtain an absolute majority of favorable votes, she is to be dismissed. The last balloting will have the value of a deliberative vote for admission to profession.

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1. See the Instruction *Renovationis causam*, 11, 1.
 2. See canon 645.
 3. See VS vi; canons 597 and 642.
 4. See canon 643, 1.
 5. See Rite of profession, O.C.D. II, nn. 1 and 31.
 6. See canon 648, 1.
 7. See canon 649, 1.
 8. See canon 648, 3.
 9. See canon 646.
 10. See canon 650 and PI 85.
 11. See Prim. Const. 40; Alcalá Const. xiv, on the mistress, 1.
 12. See Prim. Const. 41; Alcalá Const. xiv, on the mistress, 2; letter of 21 Dec., 1579, to Fr. Doria, paragraph 18.
 13. See Prim. Const. 40; Alcalá Const. xiv, on the mistress, 1.
 14. See letter of 30 May, 1582, to Ana de Jesús, para. 18.
 15. See Prim. Const. 40; Alcalá Const. xiv, on the mistress, 1.
 16. See *ibidem*.
 17. See Way 29,5.
 18. See María de San José, *Instrucción de novicias*, introductory dialogue, pp. 555-556; Ana de San Bartolomeo, "Formación de novicias" 12, from *Obras completas*, vol. 2, Rome, 1981, p. 649; letter of the end of 1619, from *Obras completas*, vol. 2, p. 537.
 19. See Prim. Const. 40; Alcalá Const. xiv, on the mistress, 1.
 20. See canon 652, 2; Way 8, 2.
 21. See PC 6; DV 25.
 22. See SC 11 and 14; IGLH 17.
 23. See canon 652, 2; Way 3, 10; Life 32,6; Found. 1,6.
 24. See Life 13, 15.
 25. See Way, pre-prologue (dedication-protestation of faith).
 26. See canon 651, 2; See Prim. Const. 40; Alcalá Const. xiv, on the mistress, 2.
 27. See canon 653, 1.

Chapter 3

RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

160. By religious profession, the candidate assumes by public vow the obligation of the three evangelical counsels. She is consecrated to God through the ministry of the Church. She becomes a member of the Order and is incorporated into her own monastery with the rights and duties defined by universal law and by these Constitutions.¹

Admission to profession and the duration of temporary vows

161. It pertains to the Prioress, with the consent of the Chapter, to admit to the profession of temporary vows a novice who, after completing the novitiate, voluntarily requests it in writing and has been judged suitable.

In addition to the conditions laid down by universal law for the validity of profession,² no candidate may be licitly admitted unless she is at least nineteen years of age.

The Prioress may, for a just cause, allow the profession to be anticipated, but not by more than fifteen days.³

162. The duration of the temporary vows shall be at least three years. A longer period may eventually be determined in the local statutes, with due regard for the norm of universal law.⁴

Unless it is determined by the local statutes, it pertains to the chapter of the monastery to establish, as a general norm, whether the candidates must make a single profession for the entire period of temporary vows or if, instead, they must make it for a year with successive renewals.

It pertains to the Prioress, with the consent of the chapter, to admit a sister to the renewal of temporary vows.

163. The profession will be preceded by an eight-days retreat. Profession will be made in the hands of the Prioress or of her delegate, according to the formula and the Rite of the Order, approved by the Apostolic See.

The profession document, signed by the professed sister and by the Prioress, will be kept in the archives of the monastery. This will be done likewise after renewal of temporary vows.

Formation of the young professed

164. During the period of temporary vows, formation is to be continued so that in such a way that the simply-professed sisters may perfect the practical understanding and

knowledge of the doctrine which they began to learn during the novitiate in order to interiorize it more completely and prepare themselves in an adequate way for the definitive consecration of solemn vows.

This further training is to be made under the guidance of the Mistress of Novices for at least the first two years of temporary profession. She will help the newly-professed sisters, to receive biblical, liturgical, theological and Carmelite-Teresian formation. And if it is the case, she may be helped by other sisters.

They will be carefully brought into the life of the community, but they are not to be given tasks or work which would get in the way of their effective application to formation.⁵

Solemn profession

165. At the end of the period of temporary vows, the religious who voluntarily requests it in writing, if she is held suitable and meets the conditions required by law, will be admitted to solemn profession. In the contrary case she will have to leave the Order. However, if in an individual case it seems right to do so, the Prioress, with the consent of the chapter, may prolong the period of temporary vows for another period which must not exceed three years.⁶

Solemn profession may be anticipated for a just cause, but not by more than three months.⁷

166. It pertains to the prioress, with the consent of the chapter, to admit to solemn profession.

In addition to the conditions required by universal law for the validity of perpetual profession,⁸ the candidate should be at least 22 years of age, excepting for further provisions of local statutes.

167. The candidate will spend a period of time in preparing herself for solemn vows. Its duration will be fixed by the Chapter of the monastery. She will diligently give attentive thought to her calling to follow Christ by professing the evangelical counsels; and she will likewise reflect on the obligation of living them with a constantly renewed fidelity according to the Carmelite ideal set forth by St. Teresa.

Before profession, the candidate will make a retreat that will last at least eight days.

168. Solemn profession will be made in the hands of the Prioress or her delegate according to the formula of the Rite of the Order, approved by the Apostolic See. The profession document, signed by the professed sister and by the prioress, will be kept in the archives of the monastery. The Prioress will then send notice of the profession to the parish priest of the place where the professed sister was baptized. She will likewise inform him in the event that vows should be dispensed.⁹

Ongoing formation

169. Holy Mother Teresa always wanted to enrich and deepen her knowledge of God so that she could respond more generously to the gift of his presence in the soul and to his action.¹⁰ Following her example, and in response to the wishes of the Church and to its laws,¹¹ all the sisters will pursue their own spiritual, doctrinal and practical formation without interruption for their entire lives.

170. Ongoing formation, directed toward the service of our Order's own charism, is an indispensable instrument for the constant personal and community renewal which is recommended by the Church¹² and inculcated by Holy Mother Teresa. It is also an inherent requirement of her reform and of the life of every Teresian community.¹³

And so the purpose of ongoing formation should be to enable the individual Discalced Carmelite Nun to live more fully her vocation and her theological life. And it should enable communities to adapt faithfully the requirements of the contemplative Teresian charism to the differing circumstances of time and place.

And as it has the further purpose of helping the community to grow in unity, formation will be given to all the sisters, and normally within the same monastery.¹⁴

171. In compliance with the directives of the Church, the Prioress will take care to secure for the religious the time necessary for ongoing formation.¹⁵ For this reason, she will see to it that the horarium of the community will establish a suitable period of time for personal reading in the cell. She will be particularly careful to make sure that the nuns devote themselves to good reading, for it is "necessary for the life of the soul, as is food for the body."¹⁶ She will do her utmost to furnish the library of the monastery with enough suitable books; and she will provide the religious with a chance for acquiring suitable learning, for it will help them to live their contemplative vocation more and more in the truth,¹⁷ as befits the daughters of St. Teresa.

Every community will strive to have its own program of ongoing formation, as circumstances allow. For this reason, the communities may make use of the help of qualified persons. They should especially take advantage of the resources provided by the central administration of the Order.

172. In order to preach to the religious of the community, the authorization of the Prioress is required, according to the norm of canon 765.

It pertains to her also to grant the permission which canon 832 requires for the publication of writings relating to the questions of religion or morals.

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1. See canon 654.
 2. See canon 656.
 3. See canon 649, 2.
 4. See canon 655.
 5. See canons 659-660.

6. See 657, 1-2.
7. See canon 657, 3.
8. See canon 658.
9. See canon 535, 2.
10. See Found. 3, 5; Life 37, 2.
11. See canon 661.
12. See PC 2 and 18.
13. See Found. 29, 32.
14. See PI 81.
15. See canon 661.
16. See Prim. Const. 8; Alcalá Const. x, 2.
17. See Way 13, 16; Int. Castle 6, 10, 6.

Chapter 4

INCORPORATION AND TRANSFERS

Incorporation into the monastery and active and passive voice

173. By first profession, the religious is incorporated into the monastery that admitted her, with the rights and obligations that derive from that according to the norms of these Constitutions.¹

By solemn profession, that incorporation becomes full and definitive and the nun acquires the exercise of active and passive voice.

174. For that reason every religious should hold in esteem the grace which the Spirit gives to individuals for the use of all (cf. 1 Cor. 12, 7 and 11) and do her part to contribute to the good of the community and the fulfillment of her own mission in the Church by collaborating in common undertakings and sharing responsibly in the decisions of the monastery by casting her vote.

Only in exceptional cases, where there are truly grave reasons, may the Chapter allow a nun to renounce the exercise of active voice.

If it should happen that the mental condition of a sister does not allow her to exercise suitably her active voice, the Prioress, after consulting her council and suitably obtaining a medical opinion, may, with the consent of the regular superior or of the diocesan bishop, if the monastery is entrusted to his vigilance, declare her unfit to cast her vote.²

175. An exclaustated nun lacks active and passive voice during the time of exclaustation.³ Those who have already sent to the competent authority a request for an indult either to leave the Order or for secularization likewise lack active and passive voice. Similarly, when a religious has an indult of absence from her monastery, the exercise of active and passive voice remains suspended during the time of her absence.

Also those who leave the monastery without legitimate authorization, will lack active and passive voice during their absence and after their return for a period of time, not less than a year long, to be determined by the regular superior or by the diocesan bishop, if the monastery is entrusted to his vigilance, after hearing the council of the monastery.

Transfer from one monastery to another

176. Since both temporary and solemn profession bind a religious in a stable manner to

her own monastery, she cannot be transferred to another monastery, except in the case of a new foundation, or in order to assist another community that finds itself in special need, or for another serious reason.

177. For the transfer of a nun from one monastery to another of the Order, it is necessary and sufficient to meet the following conditions:

- a) The request or free consent of the religious involved.
- b) The authorization of the Prioress of the two monasteries, with the consent of the respective chapters.
- c) The notification sent to the Superior General of the Order, in the case of a definitive transfer.⁴

178. A temporary transfer is not to be granted for a period longer than three years. However, if the reasons for it continue to exist, the transfer may be prolonged under the same conditions.

For the good of the community and of the religious herself, normally one does not proceed to a definitive transfer without first spending a suitable period on temporary transfer, except for legitimate dispositions of higher authority.

179. Unless another provision is made in the local statutes, the exercise of active voice in her own monastery is suspended when a religious is transferred temporarily to another.

If she is transferred in order to assume an office or render some service to the monastery that receives her, the nun will enjoy in the latter monastery active and passive voice. However she will not be able to accept an office there which binds her for a period longer than that for which she was transferred, except with the consent of the Chapter of her own monastery.

In the case of a temporary transfer for other reasons, the nun may have active voice in the monastery which accepts her only if it is granted her by that monastery's chapter.

The two monasteries involved may make agreements regarding the economic condition of the transferred religious.

180. In the case of a non-definitive transfer of a religious in temporary vows, it pertains to the Prioress of her own monastery with the consent of her Chapter, after hearing the opinion of the prioress of the monastery in which the religious is staying, to admit her to the renewal of her vows.

181. In virtue of a definitive transfer, a religious acquires every right and duty in the new monastery from the day in which she effectively transfers to it or, if she already was there, from the moment in which she is notified of the definitive transfer.

Extern sisters

182. By judgement of the Chapter, a monastery may have some extern sisters aggregated

to it. These are religious employed in the extern service of the monastery in order to allow the nuns to maintain an entirely contemplative way of life.

Extern sisters are called by God to a special vocation. By the profession of public simple vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, they consecrate themselves totally to the Lord and join the family of the Teresian Carmel, whose charism they share, by means of incorporation into the monastery in whose service they pledge themselves.

Everything having to do with their admission and formation, their condition in law, and their rights and obligations will be set down in a special statute, approved by the Apostolic See,⁵ with due regard for the norms established by universal law.

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1. See canon 654.
 2. See canon 171, 1,1.
 3. See canon 687.
 4. See canon 684, 3.
 5. See the preamble, n. 3, to the Instruction De sororibus externo monasterium servitio adictis, 1961.

Chapter 5

THE CORRECTION OF THE SISTERS

183. All the religious, especially the Prioress, will be concerned about the welfare of the sisters; and, in the spirit of the Gospel, if a sister has committed a fault, they will help her by praying for her, by exhorting her, and by correcting her in a sisterly way (cf. Mt. 18, 15-17), if need be, in community.¹

The religious should be motivated by humility and true love and avoid meddling.² They will leave to the Prioress the task of reprovng the sisters for the failings that they may commit. They will not interfere with someone who does not fulfill her duties. They will look on the failings of others with sisterly understanding and concern themselves rather more with their own failings (cf. Mt. 7, 3 ff.).³ All the same, if a sister sees another commit a notable failing, she will charitably call her attention to it in private. And if her words of disapproval should prove ineffective, she will advise the Mother Prioress. But she will not say anything about it to any other sister.⁴ The Prioress, for her part, with all magnanimity and doctrine, will exhort, admonish and reprove her (cf. 2 Tim. 4, 2).

If it should prove necessary, the Prioress, in the spirit of Holy Mother,⁵ with love toward the sister who has committed a failing and with concern for the good of the community, will have recourse to imposing a penance as a remedy. And if it is necessary, in order to prevent her bad example from causing the others harm, she will impose penal sanctions.⁶

184. In the application of the penalties of universal law, its prescriptions will be observed.

The sanctions established by either universal or proper law ought normally to be applied. However, it is left to the conscience and the prudence of the competent authority, in conformity with canons 1343 ff to put off the application of the penalty until a more suitable time, to mitigate it, or even, if it is permitted by the law, to abstain from inflicting it, or to make use of some remedial penance.⁷

The sister who committed the fault should be allowed to explain herself. She has the right to defend herself and to avail herself of the law's stipulations. Still, she should take care not to excuse herself, unless necessary. She will benefit by this.⁸

185. In the case of a violation of our laws which does not have the character of a crime in the canonical sense, the Prioress can impose a remedial penance if sisterly correction proves ineffective and the fault is repeated.⁹ This is especially so if the faults are against the climate of sisterly caring and prayer of the community, against charity and obedience, against silence and solitude in the cells and in the offices, or against fidelity to the horarium and to the particular obligations assumed by the community. Remedial

penances could be: periods or acts of prayer, a day of solitude, fasts, or some other corporal mortification.

All the same, grave external penances will not be imposed without the consent of the council or, if it is a question of a novice, of the mistress.

186. The following cases will be punished by the competent authority with a penalty proportionate to the gravity of the guilt, up to an including the loss of active and passive voice or of office:

- a) A sister who has openly and gravely violated a religious vow.
- b) A sister who has slandered or seriously damaged the good name of her neighbor or has fomented divisions which seriously harm the unity of the community.
- c) A sister who has assumed an attitude of evident and sustained rebellion toward the superiors.
- d) A sister who has knowingly delayed, opened, or destroyed letters coming from or directed to a superior.
- e) A sister who has deliberately violated the law of enclosure.

187. The authority competent for depriving a nun of active and passive voice or a Prioress or a councilor of office, in accord with number 186, is the regular superior or the diocesan bishop, if the monastery is entrusted to his care.

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1. See Prim. Const. 43; Alcalá Const. xiv, 1.
 2. See Int. Castle 1, 2, 16-17.
 3. See Prim. Const. 29; Alcalá Const. xi, 4.
 4. See Ibid.
 5. See Prim. Const. 49-50; Alcalá Const. xvi-xx.
 6. See Prim. Const. 46; Alcalá Const. xv, 7; Method 5.
 7. See Prim. Const. 47; Alcalá Const. xv, 8.
 8. See Prim. Const. 29; Alcalá Const. xi, 4; Way 15, 1. 9. See canon 1344.

Chapter 6

TRANSFERRING FROM ONE INSTITUTE TO ANOTHER
AND LEAVING THE ORDER

Transferring from one institute to another

188. For a religious of another institute in perpetual vows, even if they are solemn, to transfer to one of our monasteries, the following are required:

- a) The concession of the general superior of the institute to which the religious belongs, with the consent of her council.
- b) The concession of the Prioress of the monastery which receives her, with the consent of the Chapter.
- c) Notification of the Superior General of our Order.¹

The same conditions will be observed for a religious in solemn vows of one of our monasteries who asks to transfer to another religious institute.

189. With due regard for the other provisions of canons 684 and 685, four years of probation must precede the admission to profession in the monastery of a religious who transfers from another institute. During this time, the candidate will learn about our way of life, experience it, and give evidence of her suitability for embracing it definitively. During the first two years, she will receive her formation and introduction to our life under the guidance of the novice mistress. After that, the religious will be integrated with the community, where she will remain under the special guidance of the prioress.²

190. Our monasteries are not to accept a religious in temporary vows from another institute, while those vows remain in force.

191. In order to transfer from a secular institute or a society of apostolic life to one of our monasteries, or vice versa, over and above the requirements indicated above in numbers 188 and 189, the permission of the Apostolic See is necessary; and its mandates are to be observed.³

Exclaustration

192. It pertains exclusively to the Apostolic See to grant to the nuns an indult of exclaustration.⁴

While her basic religious commitment remains unchanged, the exclaustrated

religious is free from obligations which are not compatible with her new condition of life. She continues to be dependent on and subject to her superiors and also the local ordinary. However, she lacks active and passive voice in her monastery.⁵

Leaving at the expiration of temporary vows

193. When temporary vows expire, the religious may freely leave the Order.⁶ For her part, the Prioress, for just reasons, after listening to her council, may exclude a religious from the renewal of temporary vows and from solemn profession.⁷

A physical or psychological infirmity, even if it was contracted after profession, if in the judgement of experts it renders a sister not suitable for the proper religious life of our monasteries, constitutes a motive for not admitting her to the renewal of temporary vows or to solemn profession, unless the infirmity was incurred through the monastery's negligence or through work performed in the monastery. However, if a religious becomes insane during temporary vows, she cannot be dismissed, even if she is not in a condition to make a new profession.⁸

Indult to leave the monastery

194. If a sister professed in temporary vows should, for a grave reason, voluntarily ask to leave the Order before her vows expire, the Superior General, with the consent of the Definitory, in virtue of the apostolic privilege granted to the Order,⁹ may grant an indult to leave. The monasteries mentioned in canon 615 may have recourse not only to the Superior General but also to the diocesan bishop according to the norm of canon 688 2, for the confirmation of the indult issued by the prioress.

195. A religious in solemn vows, or at least perpetual vows, should not ask for an indult to leave the Order except for very serious reasons, duly weighed before God. In such a case the request of the sister concerned, together with the judgement of the Prioress and of her council, will be forwarded to the Apostolic See through the Superior General or the bishop, if the monastery is entrusted to his vigilance.¹⁰

196. An indult to leave the Order, once given and notified to the religious, if it is not rejected by her in the very act of notification, brings with it, by the law itself, a dispensation from religious vows and from the other obligations arising from religious profession.¹¹ It is recommended, however, that the document granting the leave be signed by the sister concerned and kept in the monastery archives.

Dismissal of a professed sister

197. If it is necessary to dismiss a sister professed of temporary or solemn vows, the norms of universal law will be followed in everything.¹²

The decree of dismissal pertains to the Superior General if the monastery is under the authority of our Order, or to the diocesan bishop if the monastery is entrusted to his

vigilance.¹³ The Prioress must submit the acts, which must be drawn up in all respects according to the norm of law and approved by the council, to either of them. The decree of dismissal does not have effect if it is not confirmed by the Apostolic See, to which the religious concerned has the right to appeal, according to the norm of the Code of Canon Law, within ten days of receiving notification.¹⁴

Relations with sisters who have left

198. Insofar as possible, sisterly relations are to be maintained with those who have left the Order. Those who leave or who are dismissed cannot demand anything of the monastery for any activity whatsoever carried out in it. The monastery, however, according to its possibilities, will meet their needs with equity and charity, and even help them spiritually to follow their Christian calling.¹⁵

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1. See canon 684, 1.
 2. See canon 684, 2 and 4.
 3. See canon 684, 5.
 4. See canon 686, 2.
 5. See canon 687.
 6. See canon 688, 1.
 7. See canon 689, 1.
 8. See canon 689, 2-3.
 9. See autographed concession of Pius X, 3 May, 1914.
 10. See canon 691.
 11. See canon 692.
 12. See canons 694-703.
 13. See canon 699, 2.
 14. See canon 700.
 15. See canon 702.

PART III

THE ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNMENT
OF THE MONASTERIES

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY

Chapter 1

THE CANONICAL STATUS OF THE MONASTERIES AND THEIR ERECTION AND SUPPRESSION

The canonical status of the monasteries

199. The Discalced Nuns of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel and the Discalced Carmelite Friars together constitute a single religious family in the Church.

200. The Discalced Carmelite Nuns, who are governed by these Constitutions, profess an entirely contemplative life. They observe papal enclosure in monasteries sui juris which are governed by and subject to a prioress, who is a major superior, according the norm of law.¹

The Superior General of the Order is the head of this family. To him pertains, in his service to the nuns, the task of promoting their unity in fidelity to the contemplative-ecclesial ideal begun by St. Teresa of Jesus, and of fostering union among all the monasteries and with the rest of the Order as well as with the Apostolic See, without detriment to the autonomy which universal law and these Constitutions grant to the monasteries.²

201. Since they are of pontifical right, every monastery depends on the Apostolic See in what pertains to internal government and discipline.³ For the exercise of immediate responsibility over the monasteries, the same Apostolic See entrusts them to the regular superior of the Order, according to the Constitutions, or to the diocesan bishop, according to the norm of law.

For that reason, as far as the canonical condition of the monasteries is concerned:

- a) Some remain, according to the age-old norm,⁴ under the jurisdiction of our Order, and have as their regular superior the Superior General or their respective provincial, who have over the monastery the jurisdiction determined by these Constitutions.⁵
- b) Others, by the Apostolic See's special decision, are entrusted to the special vigilance of the diocesan bishop, according to the norm of law.⁶

202. The canonical condition of the individual monasteries, to which reference is made in the preceding number, must be determined in the act of foundation.

For a monastery entrusted to the special vigilance of the bishop according to the norm of canon 615 to pass under the jurisdiction of our Order, the following are necessary:

- a) The deliberative vote of the monastery.
- b) The beneplacitum of the diocesan bishop.
- c) The Superior General's acceptance with the consent of the Definitory.
- d) The authorization of the Apostolic See.

For a monastery placed under the authority of our Order to be entrusted to the special vigilance of the diocesan bishop, the following is required:

- a) The deliberative vote of the monastery.
- b) The beneplacitum of the Superior General with the consent of the Definitory.
- c) The diocesan bishop's acceptance.
- d) The authorization of the Apostolic See.

203. The juridical autonomy mentioned in the foregoing numbers, must be accompanied by autonomy of life. Therefore every monastery must have everything it needs to lead an autonomous life, including enough resources and personnel for a faithful Teresian Carmelite observance and formation and government, so as to give assurances for the vitality of the monastery, its development, and its future needs, according to the norm of the present Constitutions. This must be kept in mind especially when new foundations are being planned.

The erection and suppression of monasteries

204. No steps will be taken toward a new foundation without the deliberative vote of the Chapter of the monastery or the monasteries which intend to bring about the foundation and without the consent of the Superior General of the Order, without detriment to the right to submit the case to the Apostolic See.

In promoting new foundations, the needs of the Church and of our Order will be kept in mind. Special consideration will be given to the young churches⁷ and other local churches which have need for the witness given by the Teresian contemplative life, when those churches can give assurance of meeting the conditions necessary so that a community may lead the regular religious and contemplative life proper to our monasteries, and when they have prudently ascertained the possibility of providing in an adequate way for the needs of the nuns.⁸

205. The monastery or the monasteries which undertake a new foundation must have a sufficient number of nuns to provide for the new house without undermining their own strength and compromising their future.

In order to proceed to erect a new monastery, there must be at least eight religious, not counting the postulants and extern sisters, of whom six must be chapter sisters. They must have freely accepted the transfer to the new monastery and must be endowed with appropriate spiritual qualities⁹ and sufficiently prepared for the environmental and cultural conditions of the new foundation.

206. For the canonical erection of a monastery the authorization of the Apostolic See is required, with the previous written consent of the diocesan bishop¹⁰ and of the

Superior General of the Order in the case of a monastery under the jurisdiction of the Order, or after hearing his opinion in the matter, if the monastery is entrusted to the care of the diocesan bishop, with due regard for other provisions of law.¹¹

207. The nuns destined for the new foundation are definitively incorporated to the new monastery from the day of its erection. As soon as possible after it is erected and the community takes up residence, papal enclosure will be established and full regular observance begun. Within three months of the erection, they will proceed to elect the Prioress and the councilors, according to the norm of these Constitutions.

Before the canonical erection, a Vicareess will be in charge of the monastery. She is a nun nominated by the regular superior, if it is the case of a community placed under the jurisdiction of our Order, or by the diocesan bishop if it is entrusted to his special care.

208. The suppression of a monastery, and amalgamation of one monastery with another, pertains to the Apostolic See, after having consulted the diocesan bishop.¹² Unless the Apostolic See itself decides otherwise, the goods of the suppressed monastery are to be divided proportionately among the monasteries which receive the nuns of the suppressed monastery, without detriment to the intentions of the benefactors and pious foundations, as well as the legitimate provisions of the local statutes.

209. In order better to foster communion and mutual help among various monasteries of a region, federations or other forms of association are recommended by the Apostolic See,¹³ without detriment to their autonomy of government.

Establishing federations and associations is reserved to the Apostolic See, which also approves their statutes.¹⁴

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1. See canons 613, 620, and 667, 3.
 2. See Gregory XIII, Pia considerationis of 22 June, 1580, in MHCT vol. 2, p. 196; Sixtus V, Salvatoris et Domini of 5 June, 1590, in *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 46; Alcalá Const. i, 1.
 3. See canon 693.
 4. See Gregory XIII, Pia consideratione of 22 June, 1580, in MHCT, vol. 2, p. 196; Sixtus V, Salvatoris et Domini of 5 June, 1590, *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 46; Gregory XIV, Quoniam non ignoramus of 25 April, 1591, in MHCT vol. 4, pp. 464-465; Clement VIII, Pastoralis officii of 20 Dec., 1593, in *ibid.*, pp. 542-543; Alcalá Const. i, 1; Const. of 1926, art.1-4; St. Teresa, letter of 4 Oct. 1578 to Pedro delos Angeles, para. 9; Found. 29, 30-33, and the conclusion of the book.
 5. See canon 614.
 6. See canon 615.
 7. See AG 18 and 40.
 8. See canon 610.
 9. See St. John of the Cross, letter of 28 July, 1589, to Magdalena del Espíritu Santo.
 10. See canon 609.
 11. See canons 1215, 3; 1223.
 12. See canon 616, 1 and 4.
 13. See Pius XII, Apostolic Constitution, Sponsa Christi, art. 7, in AAS 43 (1951); PC 22.
 14. See can. 582.

Chapter 2

THE INTERNAL GOVERNMENT OF THE MONASTERIES

I. The Prioress and her councilors

210. The Prioress is placed at the head of the Teresian community, and she governs the monastery as a major superior.¹

By serving in the sisters the design of love of the Father² the Prioress is a bond of union and of charity among them; and she precedes them, guides them, and accompanies them in the path of their vocation, and does all that she can to see that the Rule and Constitutions are faithfully observed.³

211. The Chapter of the monastery will elect to the office a suitable religious who is 35 years old and five years since her solemn profession.

She will remain in office for three years, after which new elections will be held. The outgoing Prioress cannot be re-elected for an immediately successive triennium except by a two-thirds majority of votes. After that time, she cannot be re-elected again until three years have passed since she left office.⁴

212. The Prioress must give an account of the souls entrusted to her (cf. Heb. 13, 17). And so she must be docile to God's will in the fulfillment of her office. She should exercise authority in a spirit of service toward the sisters in a way that expresses God's love for them.⁵ She must attend "with a mother's love" to their spiritual and material needs, and "to make herself obeyed, will seek to make herself loved."⁶

St. Teresa called herself a "mother with the office of prioress."⁷ The prioress will faithfully follow her example. She will promote the doctrinal and spiritual formation of the community.⁸ She will foster communication among the sisters for the sake of their common vocation of praise and love for their Spouse.⁹ She will defend the unity of all against any eventual discord.¹⁰

213. Governing the community within the limits of the Rule and Constitutions and according to their spirit, she will apply laws with prudence and wisdom and take into account how people differ and how circumstances vary.¹¹

She will listen to her councilors,¹² especially in the more important questions, and she will not be prone to disregard their opinion.¹³

214. In guiding the individual sisters, the Prioress will keep in mind that they are daughters of God,¹⁴ and treat them with respect. Her aim will be to help them "to follow the path in which God leads them."¹⁵ Although her authority to decide and to command

what is to be done remains unchanged, she will willingly listen to them, respect their freedom, and so elicit their voluntary submission and foster an active and responsible obedience.¹⁶

The Prioress will respect that freedom even with regard to letters. But she still has the duty, when particular reasons should make it advisable, to see the letters; but she is obliged to secrecy and to observe the right of the religious to privacy.¹⁷ However correspondence with the Apostolic See and the Pontifical Legate in the country, with the Superior General of the Order and the regular superior and local ordinary, and also with the Prioress, if she should be absent from the monastery, is exempt from all inspection.

215. It is the prioress' duty to entrust to suitable religious the internal offices of the monastery for as long as she decides.¹⁸ She will see to it that the sisters, in carrying out their duties, cooperate with active and responsible obedience.¹⁹ She will try to create an open atmosphere, as St. Teresa recommended, of active collaboration, detachment, and interior freedom.²⁰

216. In special cases and for a good reason, the Prioress may dispense the sisters and herself from matters pertaining to the horarium of the monastery and the acts of common life, as well as from the norm of abstinence and fast.

217. In order to help the Prioress in her office, three councilors will be elected by the Chapter. They must be religious with solemn vows. With the Prioress they form the council.²¹ They remain in office for the triennium, with respect for the provisions of no. 236.

Where the chapter sisters are more than twelve, they may elect, if the Chapter so desires, four councilors.

218. The Prioress who just left office may not be elected to the office of first councilor, except in the case of real need; and then she must have two-thirds of the votes.

219. The councilors will assist the Prioress in carrying out her office of guiding the entire monastery toward the attainment of the Teresian ideal. They will act in full communion with her, and set an example of unity for the community.

The councilors will give their consent or their counsel in the cases foreseen by law.²² They will express their opinion with truth and charity and have only the good of the community in view.

220. The first councilor, or Subprioress, will collaborate more closely with the Prioress in the government of the monastery. She will fill in for her when she is impeded or absent, but she may not decide anything contrary to the prioress' will. If the first councilor is also absent or impeded, the other councilors will fill in, by order of election.

The first councilor is responsible for making sure that the liturgical celebrations are carried out with dignity and with pauses.²³ However the prioress, after consulting the council, may entrust that duty to another sister who is particularly suited to it.

221. When, according to universal or proper law:

- 1) The Prioress, in order to place determined acts, needs the consent or opinion of the council or of the chapter, as a body, she must convoke them according to the norm of canon 166 of the code of canon law. In order for the act to be valid, the consent of the absolute majority of those present must be given; or, if only their opinion is asked for, it must be effectively asked of all of them.
- 2) If on the other hand it is laid down that the Prioress, in order to act, needs the consent or the opinion of one or more individual persons: a) if consent is required, the act of the superior is invalid if she does not ask for the consent of those persons, even if it is of only one of them, or if she acts contrary to their opinion; b) if their counsel or opinion is required, the act of the superior is invalid if she does not ask the opinion of such persons, even though she is not bound to hold to their opinion, even if they all agree. All the same, she is not to act contrary to the opinion expressed by them, especially if they are in agreement, unless there is a reason, which in her judgement, is overriding.²⁴

222. All the sisters, whose consent or opinion is requested by the norm of law, are bound to express their opinion frankly, and if the seriousness of the question requires it, they must diligently observe secrecy. The Prioress may impose the obligation of secrecy.²⁵

II. The chapter and elections

The chapter and its competency

223. The Chapter of the monastery expresses in an eminent way the group participation and corresponsibility of the sisters in the life and the well-being of the community. It should be a sign of unity in charity.²⁶ It is composed of the nuns in solemn vows who have active voice, under the presidency of the Prioress, except for that which is laid down in nos. 227 and 234.

224. It pertains to the Chapter, in strict collaboration with the prioress:

- a) To promote the vitality, especially the spiritual vitality, of the community and to preserve the heritage of the Order expressed in these Constitutions²⁷ by doing its part to make that heritage reality in the life of the monastery.
- b) To treat and resolve by secret ballot the questions and the affairs that pertain to it according to the norms of these Constitutions.

225. Unless laid down otherwise in some cases, an absolute majority of valid votes is sufficient to decide a question. The Prioress casts her vote like the other chapter sisters. Apart from elections and the admission of a candidate to postulancy, to the novitiate and to profession,²⁸ in the case of a tie vote she can decide the question if it is a matter

that requires a decision. This is also to be applied, according to the proper law of the Order, to the deliberations of the council.

226. It pertains also to the chapter to elect the Prioress and the councilors according to the norms that follows.

Election of the prioress

227. The Prioress, or if the office is vacant, the first councilor, will set a date in agreement with the person who is to preside over the election; and then she will convoke the Chapter for the elections.

At the election of the Prioress the diocesan bishop or his delegate will preside, if the monastery is entrusted to his vigilance.²⁹ On the other hand, if the monastery is under the jurisdiction of our Order, the regular superior or his delegate will preside over the election.

If there is a good reason for it, after consulting both the council and with the agreement of the person who will preside, the election may be anticipated or postponed for the time necessary, provided it is not more than three months, with due regard for the provisions of no. 245 of these Constitutions.

Before commencing the election, two nuns of the Chapter will be named to act as scrutators.³⁰

228. In the election of the Prioress, in addition to the chapter nuns, by judgement of the Chapter of the monastery, the extern sisters in perpetual vows may have active voice.

229. If on the first ballot a religious obtains an absolute majority of votes, that is more than half of the votes cast after the blank votes have been taken away, that religious is canonically elected.

If, on the other hand, such a majority is not reached, they will cast a second ballot. If this time no one obtains more votes than all the others taken together, they will proceed to a third ballot in which passive voice will be enjoyed only by the two nuns who received more votes than the others on the second ballot. And, if there is a tie of votes, the older by profession and, among equals by profession, the older in age has passive voice. These two religious will not have active voice in the third ballot. The one who received the larger number of votes on the third ballot will be declared elected. If they each receive an equal number of votes, the older by profession is elected, and if they made profession on the same day, the older by age.

230. For the re-election of the Prioress, when the required two-thirds majority of votes on the second ballot is not reached, she will thereupon remain without passive voice, and the voting procedure will start from the beginning.³¹

231. Once she has accepted election, the one elected is proclaimed prioress by the person who presides over the election, and she immediately takes possession of office.³²

If the elected person does not want to accept the office, the Chapter, at the proposal of its president, may oblige her to accept it by an absolute majority of valid votes.

Postulation

232. Postulation cannot be made except for serious reasons. In order for it to have value, at least two-thirds of the votes are required.³³

If the majority of two thirds is not reached on the first or second ballot, the postulation is excluded and the election begins from the beginning.

233. By a special concession of the Apostolic See, the Superior General may admit the postulation of the Prioress, but only for a third triennium. He may also admit other postulations, when it is a question of impediments established in our proper law.

234. While the Prioress is being postulated, the Chapter does not proceed with the election of the councilors. But it is suspended until the reply of the competent authority arrives. During the waiting period, the outgoing Prioress will continue to govern as Vicarress.

Election of the councilors

235. As soon as the Prioress has taken office, the Chapter will proceed to elect the councilors one by one, by separate elections, according to the norm of number 229. The Prioress herself will preside, and the first two councilors of the preceding triennium will act as scrutators.

Elections in the case of a vacancy in the office of the Prioress

236. If the office of the Prioress should fall vacant, the first councilor will assume the government of the monastery until the new Prioress is elected. According to the norm of She article 227, she has a month to convoke the chapter, in which the councilors will also leave office.

In the chapter they will proceed regularly to the election of the Prioress and of the councilors for a triennium.

237. If during the triennium, for any reason whatsoever, the monastery should be deprived of a counselor, the Chapter will elect another. She will hold the last place among the councilors and will remain in office until the end of the triennium in course.

Obligations and rights of the chapter sisters

238. All of the professed nuns with active voice must be convoked for the elections and cast their vote, unless the Chapter, for just reasons, has accepted the renunciation of voice on the part of someone.

If a chapter sister present in the monastery, because of an infirmity, is not able to be present in the place of the elections, the scrutators will go to the sick sister to receive her vote, and the ballot will be brought closed to the place of the elections.³⁴

239. So that authority may continue to signify humble service, as God wills, all the religious are strictly forbidden to seek votes, either directly or indirectly, for themselves or for others.³⁵

Resignation from office

240. It pertains to the regular superior, if the monastery is under the authority of our Order, or to the diocesan bishop, if it is entrusted to his vigilance, after consulting the chapter of the monastery, to accept a Prioress' renunciation from office during her triennium.

It pertains to the Chapter to accept the resignation of a councilor.

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1. See canon 613, 2.
 2. See ET 25.
 3. See canons 617-619; Prim. Const. 34; Alcalá Const. xiv, on the prioress, 1; Found. 18, 6; Method 20-22.
 4. See canon 624; Alcalá Const. i, 5.
 5. See PC 14; canon 618.
 6. See Prim. Const. 34, Alcalá Const. xiv, on the prioress, 1.
 7. See Way 24, 2.
 8. See Prim. Const. 8; Alcalá Const. x, 2.
 9. See Prim. Const. 7; Alcalá Const. x, 1; Int. Castle 6, 6, 12.
 10. See Way 7, 11; Method 19-20.
 11. See canon 617; Letter of 21 Dec., 1579 to Fr. Doria, para. 8; letter of 4 October, 1579, to Fr. Gracian, para. 7.
 12. See canon 627, 1.
 13. See canon 127, 2.
 14. See the Valladolid process, deposition given by Francisca de Jesús in BMC, vol. 19, p. 35; Letter of 3 May, 1579, to Mothers Isabel de San Jerónimo and María de San José, para. 9.
 15. See Found. 18, 9; Prim. Const. 41; Alcalá Const. xiv, on the mistress, 3.
 16. See PC 14; canons 618 and 630, 1.
 17. See canon 220.
 18. See Prim. Const. 34; Alcalá Const. xiv, on the prioress, 1.
 19. See PC 14.
 20. See Prim. Const. 34; Alcalá Const. xiv, on the prioress. 2.
 21. See canon 627, 1.
 22. See canon 627, 2.
 23. See Prim. Const. 35; Alcalá Const. xiv, on the subprioress, 1-2.
 24. See canon 127, 1-2.
 25. See canon 127, 3.
 26. See canon 631, 1.
 27. See canons 578 and 587, 1.
 28. See canon 119; Ceremonial 413.

29. See canon 625, 2.
30. See canon 173, 1.
31. See Ceremonial 289; canon 624, 2.
32. See canon 178.
33. See canon 181.
34. See canon 167, 2.
35. See canon 626.

Chapter 3

RELATIONS WITH THE SUPERIORS OF THE ORDER AND WITH THE DIOCESAN BISHOPS

241. The peculiar canonical conditions of the Teresian communities and of their autonomous government require, according to the will of Holy Mother herself,¹ the help of the superiors of the Order who share her heritage, and that of the diocesan bishops according to the norm of law.² They have the responsibility of solicitously supporting the development of the life of the community in its various aspects, while respecting at all times the autonomy of the monasteries.

242. The Superior General has the obligation of being at the service of all the monasteries of the Order, either directly or through his collaborators.

He will try to make a fraternal visit to the communities in order to help them on their path. All the nuns may freely communicate with him. As needed, he may personally, or through his delegate, make a pastoral visitation of the monasteries,³ giving advance notice to the diocesan bishop in the case of a monastery entrusted to his special vigilance, and with due regard for the rights of the bishop.⁴ When making this kind of visitation, he will listen with greater attention and be ready to spend more time with the nuns. He will review the various dimensions of the Teresian life of the community; he will help the sisters by offering advice and directions to them and, if it should be necessary, proposing to the competent authority needed measures. The visitor must, in due course, inform the bishop of the results of the visitation.

The General Superior may address himself to all the monasteries in order to promote in them the unity of the Order, fidelity to the Teresian charism, and the fulfillment of their mission in the Church.

He will be especially attentive to the faithful renewal of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns and promote, in dialogue with them, projects and undertakings in the fields of spiritual development and formation.

In conformity with the mind of the Apostolic See, he will favor the creation of federations and associations. He will keep himself informed about their life and the direction they take and will maintain contact with their religious assistants.

243. In particular, he will take care to present to all the communities the documents of the Apostolic See on the religious life and especially those which refer to the contemplative life.⁵ He can furthermore resolve by a practical declaration doubts that may arise on some point of the Constitutions or of other norms,⁶ with due regard for the exclusive right of the Apostolic See to interpret authentically the Constitutions.⁷

By a special concession of the Apostolic See, the Superior General can, in individual cases, grant dispensations involving disciplinary prescriptions of the Constitutions and of the complementary code of proper law.⁸

244. The Superior General and the provincials concerned will very carefully carry out their task as regular superiors in the monasteries entrusted to their jurisdiction by the norm of no. 201,a, according to the faculties and the obligations laid down by these Constitutions.

They will visit the monasteries frequently and carry out a pastoral visitation⁹ at least once during the triennium, and they will make sure that the community is being given adequate assistance and formation.

245. The monasteries entrusted to the special vigilance of the bishop by the norm of no. 201,b, are subject to him according to the provisions of universal law¹⁰ and these Constitutions, especially as regards the pastoral visitation of the monasteries. The prioress will notify the diocesan bishop about that in good time at least once very triennium.¹¹

Furthermore, all the monasteries will profess devoted allegiance to the bishops and filial reverence for them. They will lovingly submit themselves to their authority according to the norm of law.¹²

246. When Holy Mother Teresa renewed the friars of the Order, she clearly intended that they should offer guidance and formation to the Discalced Nuns.¹³ Accordingly, the major superiors will seek with every care to make such assistance available and to coordinate it suitably and effectively. They will also do this for the monasteries in their circumscriptions which are entrusted to the vigilance of the diocesan bishop, with due regard for the provisions of law.¹⁴

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1. See Found. 29, 30-33; Method 4-5 and 21-23 and passim.
 2. See canons 614 and 615.
 3. See Alcalá Const. i, 1; Sixtus V, Salvatoris et Domini, cited in MHCT, vol 4, p. 46.
 4. See canon 628, 2, 1.
 5. See canon 592, 2.
 6. See Alcalá Const., conclusion; Const. of 1926, 3 and 220.
 7. See canon 587, 2.
 8. See Const. 1926, 3-4; Ceremonial 455.
 9. Sixtus V, Salvatoris et Domini in MHCT, vol. 4, p. 46; Alcalá Const. i, 1; canon 628, 1.
 10. See canon 615.
 11. See canon 628, 2, 1.
 12. See canons 678, 1, and 683.
 13. Found. 2, 4-5; letter of 19 July, 1575, to Philip 11, para. 2. letter of October 1578 to the Beas Monastery; letters of 13Dec., 1576, and 26 Oct., 1581, to Fr. Gracian; letter of 4Oct., 1578, to Pedro de los Angeles, paragraphs 3-4 and 9-11.
 14. See Constitutions of the Discalced Carmelite Friars, 1986, n. 103.

Chapter 4

THE ADMINISTRATION OF TEMPORAL GOODS

247. Temporal goods are a gift of Providence and fruit of the labor of the religious.¹ Their purpose is to support the monastery and the sisters in their needs. Nor will the sisters forget the Church and the poor in theirs.²

Temporal goods are to be administered diligently in conformity with the requirements of the religious poverty proper to our Order. The monasteries will, however, avoid all anxiety or immoderate concern, and every form of excessive gain or accumulation of goods.³ Their trust in the Lord will remain constant, for he will never let them lack what is necessary.⁴

248. Our monasteries have, by law, a juridical personality and have the capacity of acquiring, possessing, administering and alienating temporal goods, mobile and imobile, and also of entering into contracts and assuming debts, according to the norm of universal law and these Constitutions.⁵

When civil law does not recognize that juridical capacity, the monasteries, in order to safeguard their possessions, will hold to the norms given by the competent ecclesiastical authority. If need be, the local statutes may make provisions for this.

249. Every monastery will have an up-to-date inventory of its goods, which will be diligently conserved in the archives, together with all related documents and deeds. Titles to property will also be kept in the archives, and they must be carefully drawn up in a way that is valid in civil law.⁶

Ordinary and extraordinary administration

250. Acts of ordinary administration may be validly carried out by the Prioress and, under her authority, by the bursar, with due regard for the obligation of seeking the consent of the council in the cases foreseen by law.⁷

The bursar will be nominated by the Prioress after consulting the council. A councilor can be named to that office. By contrast, the bursar does not form part of the council.

Ordinary administration includes all expenditures for food, lodging, ordinary maintenance of the monastery and buildings attached to it, fees and taxes, wages for employees, payment for ministry, and the usual offerings for the needs of the poor.

251. It pertains to the council of the monastery to determine how much the Prioress

may spend by herself for ordinary expenses and the sum over and above which she has to have the consent of the councilors. The Prioress will render an account of the use of money according to the norm of no. 255.

252. For extraordinary administration, the consent of the Chapter of the monastery is required, except for whatever is granted to the Prioress, with the consent of her council, by the local statutes, with due regard for the obligation of having recourse to higher authorities according to the norm of law.

253. In order to alienate goods, assume debts, and for any operation whatever which could be detrimental to the patrimonial situation of the monastery, over and above the consent of the Chapter, the written permission of the regular superior or of the local ordinary, if the monastery is entrusted to the vigilance of the bishop, is necessary for a contract's validity, with due regard for the obligation of asking for the permission of the Apostolic See when that is required by the norm of universal law.⁸

254. In order to help the communities in the right application of the norms on the administration of goods, and without detriment to other legitimate provisions of local statutes, the General Definitory of the Order may prepare for use in the various regions a listing of amounts allowed for the expenditures of the monasteries. This listing will be updated as local economic conditions change and in the light of the decisions of the Apostolic See.

255. Receipts and expenditures will be carefully entered in a special ledger which must be examined every month by the Prioress and the council.

Moreover, once a year the prescribed statement of administration of the monastery will be presented to the regular superior or to the local ordinary if the monastery is entrusted to the care of the bishop.⁹

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1. See Prim. Const. 9; Alcalá Const. vii, 2.
 2. See PC 13
 3. See PC 13; canons 634, 2 and 635, 2.
 4. See Prim. Const. 9; Alcalá Const. vii, 2.
 5. See canon 634, 1.
 6. See canons 1283 and 1284.
 7. See canon 638, 2.
 8. See canon 638, 3-4.
 9. See canon 637.

EPILOGUE

256. The doctrine and the norms of the Rule and of these Constitutions of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns, approved by Holy Mother Church, authentically interpret requirements of the Teresian charism. A generous observance of them guarantees fidelity and unity around the spiritual heritage of the Order which the Holy Spirit has enriched throughout history with countless fruits of holiness.

So that they be known, esteemed, and observed, the Rule and Constitutions will be read by the nuns. The Prioress and the Novice Mistress will explain and illustrate them, especially during chapters and periods dedicated to formation.¹

Under the action of the Holy Spirit, loving efforts to live according to our charism's requirements gradually uproot self-love and bestow that liberty of the children of God which finds its perfection in the love for God and for neighbor to which the Rule and Constitutions lead.²

As they progress along this path of personal and community perfection at the service of the Church, the Discalced Carmelite Nuns will give living and fruitful witness to God's people on pilgrimage toward its homeland. And since the religious have been conquered by Christ, each one should consider everything as rubbish compared with the surpassing knowledge of Jesus the Lord (cf. Phil. 3, 7-9).³ Forgetful of self and of what they have left behind, they will press on eagerly toward their goal in order to win the prize to which God calls them in Christ Jesus (cf. Phil 3, 13-14), when at the evening (of life) they will be examined in love.⁴

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1. See Prim. Const. 57; Alcalá Const. xiv, on the mistress, 1, and appendix.
 2. See Int. Castle 1, 2, 17.
 3. See Int. Castle 6, 4, 10.
 4. See St. John of the Cross, Sayings of light and love, 57: "When evening falls, they will examine you in love. Learn to love as God wishes to be loved, and leave behind your own ways of acting."

FORMULAS FOR RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

I. FROM THE RITE OF RELIGIOUS PROFESSION, O.C.D.

A. For Temporary Profession

I, Sister N.N.
wish to spend my life
in following Jesus Christ faithfully,
in union with the Virgin Mary.
In the presence of these my sisters,
and in your hands, Sister N.N.
I vow to almighty God
for a period of three years,
chastity, poverty, and obedience,
according to the Rule and Constitutions
of the Discalced Nuns of the Order
of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel.

With all my heart,
I give myself to this family begun by St. Teresa.
Through the grace of the Holy Spirit
and the help of the Mother of God,
may I serve our holy mother the church
through continual prayer and evangelical self-denial.
Thus may I reach the fullness of mutual love
and glorify the Most Blessed Trinity
for all eternity.

B. For Solemn Profession

I, Sister N.N.
wish to spend my life
in following Jesus Christ faithfully,
in union with the Virgin Mary.
In the presence of these my sisters,
and through your hands, Sister N.N.
I vow to almighty God for ever,
chastity, poverty, and obedience,
according to the Rule and Constitutions
of the Discalced Nuns of the Order
of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel.

With all my heart, I give myself
to this family begun by Saint Teresa.
Through the grace of the Holy Spirit
and the help of the Mother of God,
may I serve our holy mother the Church,
through continual prayer and evangelical self-denial.
Thus may I reach the fullness of mutual love
and glorify the Most Blessed Trinity
for all eternity.

II. OTHER ANCIENT TRADITIONAL FORMULAS OF PROFESSION, O.C.D.

1. In monasteries under the jurisdiction of the Superior of the Order

A. For Temporary Profession

I, Sister N. of N.
make my profession of temporary vows
for three years
and promise obedience, chastity and poverty
to the Lord our God,
to the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel,
to the Superior General
of the Order of Discalced Carmelites
and to you, Reverend Mother Prioress,
and to your successors,
according to the primitive Rule of the same Order
and our Constitutions.

B. For Solemn Profession

I, Sister N. of N.
make my solemn profession
and promise obedience, chastity and poverty
to the Lord our God,
to the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mt. Carmel,
to the Superior General
of the Order of Discalced Carmelites
and to you, Reverend Mother Prioress,
and to your successors,
according to the primitive Rule of the same Order
and our Constitutions
until death.

2. In monasteries not under the jurisdiction of the Superior of the Order.

A. For Temporary Profession

I, Sister N of N.
make my profession of temporary vows
for three years,
and promise obedience, chastity and poverty
to the Lord our God,
to the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel,
and to you, Reverend Mother Prioress,
and to your successors,
according to the primitive Rule
and our Constitutions.

B. For Solemn Profession

I, Sister N. of N.
make my solemn profession,
and promise obedience, chastity and poverty
to the Lord our God,
to the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel,
and to you Reverend Mother Prioress,
and to your successors,
according to the primitive Rule
and our Constitutions,
until death.

3. For the devotional renewal of profession

For use in all monasteries. [Cf. Constitutions n. 26]

I, Sister N. of N.
renew my profession
and promise obedience, chastity, and poverty
to the Lord our God,
to the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel
and to our Superiors,
according to the primitive Rule
and our Constitutions.

N.B. According to n. 162 of these Constitutions, when temporary profession is made for one year only, this period is specified in the individual formula. When the time comes for canonical renewal of the temporary vows, in place of the words "I make my profession of temporary vows," the words "I renew my profession of temporary vows" are read.

APPENDIX



NORMS FROM "VENITE SEORSUM"
CONCERNING
ENTERING AND LEAVING THE CLOISTER

[Cf. Constitutions nn. 115 and 116]

n. 7. Excepting particular indults of the Holy See, it is permitted to those about whom we have spoken in n. 5 to leave the cloister:

a) in cases of very serious and imminent danger;

b) with the previous consent of the superior of the monastery, with the consent, at least habitual, of the local ordinary and, if there be one, of the regular superior: 1. To go to the doctor or seek health care, when one is dealing with a proper place of residence, or some place nearby; 2. To accompany a sick nun, when true necessity demands it; 3. To do manual work, or carry out necessary surveillance of places outside the cloister but within the confines of the monastery; 4. To carry out civil duties; 5. To carry out administrative acts, that are not otherwise able to be done. Excepting cases concerning health care, if the absence from the monastery is to be more than one week, the superior of the monastery must have the previous consent of the local ordinary, and should there be one, of the regular superior.

c) Outside of the cases listed under b), the superior of the monastery must have the consent of the local ordinary and, should there be one, of the regular superior, for those exits that are truly serious, and for a strictly necessary duration;

d) All the exits permitted under a), b) and c), of this number, must not be lengthened beyond three months without the special permission of the Holy See.

N.8. Excepting particular indults of the Holy See, entrance to the cloister is permitted:

a) To cardinals, who are able to bring someone to accompany them; to Nuncios and Apostolic Delegates, in places under their jurisdiction;

b) To those who actually hold the supreme government of the nation, with

their spouses and their companions;

- c) To the local ordinary and the regular superior, for a just cause;
- d) To canonical visitators, during the time of visitation, but only for the purpose of inspection, and when accompanied by a socius;
- e) To the priest, with servers, for the purpose of giving the sacraments of the sick, and for funerals. It is also permitted to the priest, in order to minister to those who are seriously ill, or sick for a long time.
- f) To the priest with servers, for the purpose of liturgical processions, should the superior of the monastery request it.
- g) To doctors and those whose work or competence is necessary to provide for the needs of the monastery, with the permission of the superior of the monastery, under the vigilance of the local ordinary and, should there be one, of the regular superior.
- h) To extern sisters, according to their own statutes.

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