

# THE HOLY RULE OF ST. BENEDICT



## in concordance with the Declaration

*The 1949 Edition : Translated by Rev. Boniface Verheyen, OSB of St. Benedict's Abbey, Atchison, Kansas*

*Declaration of the General Chapter of the Cistercian Order on the essential elements of cistercian life today (2000)*



# PROLOGUE

Pr 1-7

21 Mar.  
23 June  
25 Sept.  
28 Dec.

**L**isten, O my son, to the precepts of thy master, and incline the ear of thy heart, and cheerfully receive and faithfully execute the admonitions of thy loving Father, that by the toil of obedience thou mayest return to Him from whom by the sloth of disobedience thou hast gone away.

To thee, therefore, my speech is now directed, who, giving up thine own will, takest up the strong and most excellent arms of obedience, to do battle for Christ the Lord, the true King.

In the first place, beg of Him by most earnest prayer, that He perfect whatever good thou dost begin, in order that He who hath been pleased to count us in the number of His children, need never be grieved at our evil deeds. For we ought at all times so to serve Him with the good things which He hath given us, that He may not, like an angry father, disinherit his children, nor, like a dread lord, enraged at our evil deeds, hand us over to everlasting punishment as most wicked servants, who would not follow Him to glory.

## Declaration art.1-2

1. We, the members of the General Chapter gathered together for the appropriate renewal of our Order, after duly deliberating and seeking advice, and having also examined the reports from the consultation of all the members of our Order, have decided to set down above all the essential elements of our vocation and way of life so that we might in some manner establish the foundations for the entire work of renewal. In this Declaration, therefore, we wish to set forth sincerely and honestly what we propose for ourselves as appropriate renewal, what goals we wish to achieve, and how we will strive to achieve them.

2. In our Declaration, however, we do not wish to preclude further reflections or new solutions, for future generations of Cistercians will have the right and the duty to find apter and better forms of the monastic life, no less than the Cistercian Founding Fathers in the twelfth century or the subsequent generations. For we truly follow the Founding Fathers of "Novi

Monasterii" if we do not cease searching out the ways and means by which we can live our vocation ever more fully according to the will of God.

## **Pr 8-20**

**22 Mar.  
24 June  
26 Sept.  
29 Dec.**

**L**et us then rise at length, since the Scripture arouseth us, saying: "It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep" (Rom 13:11); and having opened our eyes to the deifying light, let us hear with awestruck ears what the divine voice, crying out daily, doth admonish us, saying: "Today, if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Ps 94[95]:8). And again: "He that hath ears to hear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches" (Rev 2:7). And what doth He say? -- "Come, children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord" (Ps 33[34]:12). "Run whilst you have the light of life, that the darkness of death overtake you not" (Jn 12:35).

And the Lord seeking His workman in the multitude of the people, to whom He proclaimeth these words, saith again: "Who is the man that desireth life and loveth to see good days" (Ps 33[34]:13)? If hearing this thou answerest, "I am he," God saith to thee: "If thou wilt have true and everlasting life, keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile; turn away from evil and do good; seek after peace and pursue it" (Ps 33[34]:14-15). And when you shall have done these things, my eyes shall be upon you, and my ears unto your prayers. And before you shall call upon me I will say: "Behold, I am here" (Is 58:9). What, dearest brethren, can be sweeter to us than this voice of the Lord inviting us? See, in His loving kindness, the Lord showeth us the way of life.

## **Declaration art.11**

**11.** Our goal is not to draw up theoretical ideals removed from our way of life in order to preserve or restore obsolete forms but to examine and perfect our modern, real life today and to apply principles for its renewal. We are striving to give form to Cistercian monastic life of the twentieth century, the life which follows upon a vocation given us concretely by God. For God calls us here and now, and He wants us to be saints in this age, in the circumstances of these times, and He wants us with the possibilities of man today to follow Christ and to serve men with charity.

Our efforts should always be rooted in the truth and reality of life. For this reason we want in this Declaration always to have before our eyes the facts,

possibilities, needs, and tasks of our confreres and communities, as well as the life of the Church and the world today.

This understanding of reality hardly means the acceptance or approval of the imperfections and vices of the present situation, as if, content with the common and banal reality, we did not want to reach toward better things. We rightly reject this as contrary to the essence itself of religious life, to the zeal for the life of perfect charity. On the other hand, we clearly understand that the ideals and goals, although sublime, are of no value if the men to whom they are proposed can not freely and, indeed, willingly adopt them and effectively carry them out.

### Pr 21-38

23 Mar.  
25 June  
27 Sept.  
30 Dec.

**T**herefore, having our loins girt with faith and the performance of good works, let us walk His ways under the guidance of the Gospel, that we may be found worthy of seeing Him who hath called us to

His kingdom (cf 1 Thes 2:12).

If we desire to dwell in the tabernacle of His kingdom, we cannot reach it in any way, unless we run thither by good works. But let us ask the Lord with the Prophet, saying to Him: "Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle, or who shall rest in Thy holy hill" (Ps 14[15]:1)?

After this question, brethren, let us listen to the Lord answering and showing us the way to this tabernacle, saying: "He that walketh without blemish and worketh justice; he that speaketh truth in his heart; who hath not used deceit in his tongue, nor hath done evil to his neighbor, nor hath taken up a reproach against his neighbor" (Ps 14[15]:2-3), who hath brought to naught the foul demon tempting him, casting him out of his heart with his temptation, and hath taken his evil thoughts whilst they were yet weak and hath dashed them against Christ (cf Ps 14[15]:4; Ps 136[137]:9); who fearing the Lord are not puffed up by their goodness of life, but holding that the actual good which is in them cannot be done by themselves, but by the Lord, they praise the Lord working in them (cf Ps 14[15]:4), saying with the Prophet: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us; by Thy name give glory" (Ps 113[115]:1:9). Thus also the Apostle Paul hath not taken to himself any credit for his preaching, saying: "By the grace of God, I am what I am" (1 Cor 15:10). And again he saith: "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (2 Cor 10:17).

Hence, the Lord also saith in the Gospel: "He that heareth these my words and doeth them, shall be likened to a wise man who built his house upon a rock; the floods came, the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded on a rock" (Mt 7:24-25). The Lord fulfilling these words waiteth for us from day to day, that we respond to His holy admonitions by our works. Therefore, our days are lengthened to a truce for the amendment of the misdeeds of our present life; as the Apostle saith: "Knowest thou not that the patience of God leadeth thee to penance" (Rom 2:4)? For the good Lord saith: "I will not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live" (Ezek 33:11).

### **Declaration art.12**

**12.** The renewal of our religious life should embrace the whole of our life. We should, therefore, consider all its constitutive elements and give each part its due weight. It would be altogether false to extol certain aspects of our life as if the essence of Cistercian life resided only in these and to neglect other parts as if they were only accretions or obstacles to true monastic life. For we are and should be Cistercians in each moment of our life, not only when we come together for prayer or carry out community observances but also in our studies, work, priestly ministry, private prayer, service to the needs of others, and similar activities.

For this reason we seek an integrated vision that unites harmoniously all the parts of our life into the one service of our Lord. If certain elements of Cistercian life today do not pertain to all members of the Order (such as the priesthood) or do not concern all monasteries (such as the education of youth and pastoral care), they should still be diligently considered and their importance and seriousness sincerely recognized. The elements of the monastic life which are only barely or not even at all found in the Rule or Cistercian beginnings should not for that reason be looked upon as secondary or suspect. For the monastic life, as with every living thing, evolves over the course of time, assimilating much that is new and rejecting not a little that is old.

### **Pr 39-50**

<p>24 Mar. 26 June 28 Sept. 31 Dec.</p>
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**N**ow, brethren, that we have asked the Lord who it is that shall dwell in His tabernacle, we have heard the conditions for dwelling there; and if we fulfil the duties of tenants, we shall be heirs

of the kingdom of heaven. Our hearts and our bodies must, therefore, be ready to do battle under the biddings of holy obedience; and let us ask the Lord that He supply by the help of His grace what is impossible to us by nature. And if, flying from the pains of hell, we desire to reach life everlasting, then, while there is yet time, and we are still in the flesh, and are able during the present life to fulfil all these things, we must make haste to do now what will profit us forever.

We are, therefore, about to found a school of the Lord's service, in which we hope to introduce nothing harsh or burdensome. But even if, to correct vices or to preserve charity, sound reason dictateth anything that turneth out somewhat stringent, do not at once fly in dismay from the way of salvation, the beginning of which cannot but be narrow. But as we advance in the religious life and faith, we shall run the way of God's commandments with expanded hearts and unspeakable sweetness of love; so that never departing from His guidance and persevering in the monastery in His doctrine till death, we may by patience share in the sufferings of Christ, and be found worthy to be coheirs with Him of His kingdom.

### **Declaration art.13-14**

**13.** The institutional forms in which the reality of Cistercian life manifests itself concretely today are the various living communities. It is clear that our communities have over the course of time adopted in diverse regions various forms of life and diverse kinds of service. This diversity is not in itself to be deplored as if it were some sort of perverse degeneration. It should rather be recognized not only as an indisputable fact but both as a sign of vitality and as God's invitation to action. For through the cooperation of the communities, the values and various tasks of the individual congregations and monasteries will be able to serve the good and the progress of the whole Order if mutual trust prevails. Of much greater importance is a harmonious diversity than a forced and discordant uniformity. For this reason the General Chapter recognizes and encourages the legitimate autonomy of the individual congregations and monasteries in working out the forms of their life, and it will strive to offer them its help in these efforts.

Therefore it is of the greatest importance in the work of renewal that the individual communities first of all recognize and reconsider their own goals and values, and suitably adapt their forms to their life. For the burden of labor lies primarily upon the individual communities. The General Chapter intends to offer them only its help when it encourages and coordinates the work of renewal; it can neither suppress the role of the monasteries and congregations nor take it upon itself.

14. Keeping all this before our eyes, we want to renew the reality of Cistercian life in such a way that it be a natural continuation and organic development, as it were, of the monastic and Cistercian tradition. Clearly, we desire to understand -- and, indeed, more accurately than before -- the monastic and Cistercian traditions, and we intend to draw from them as much as possible for our enrichment and inspiration. But we do not want to be restricted or hindered by them in solving today's problems. Our predecessors were very often able to know only a little or nothing at all about the problems we face, for the conditions of life have fundamentally changed. We may not shirk our own responsibility in shaping our religious life, nor may we shrink back in fear of new paths and solutions. History should be the teacher of our life, not its tyrant; it should teach and inspire, never hinder us.

## CHAPTER I. *Of the Kinds or the Life of Monks*

25 Mar.  
27 June  
29 Sept.  
1<sup>st</sup> Jan.

**I**t is well known that there are four kinds of monks. The first kind is that of Cenobites, that is, the monastic, who live under a rule and an Abbot.

The second kind is that of Anchorites, or Hermits, that is, of those who, no longer in the first fervor of their conversion, but taught by long monastic practice and the help of many brethren, have already learned to fight against the devil; and going forth from the rank of their brethren well trained for single combat in the desert, they are able, with the help of God, to cope single-handed without the help of others, against the vices of the flesh and evil thoughts.

But a third and most vile class of monks is that of Sarabaites, who have been tried by no rule under the hand of a master, as gold is tried in the fire (cf Prov 27:21); but, soft as lead, and still keeping faith with the world by their works, they are known to belie God by their tonsure. Living in two's and three's, or even singly, without a shepherd, enclosed, not in the Lord's sheepfold, but in their own, the gratification of their desires is law unto them; because what they choose to do they call holy, but what they dislike they hold to be unlawful.

But the fourth class of monks is that called Landlopers, who keep going their whole life long from one province to another, staying three or four days at a time in different cells as guests. Always roving and never settled, they indulge their passions and the cravings of their appetite, and are in every way worse than the Sarabaites. It is better to pass all these over in silence than to speak of their most wretched life.



Therefore, passing these over, let us go on with the help of God to lay down a rule for that most valiant kind of monks, the Cenobites.

## **Declaration art.79-80**

**79.** Following our vocation, we have entered a Cistercian monastery that we have freely chosen so that we might receive the instruction of the Lord's school of service. Then, after we have made our profession, we have voluntarily taken up the tasks and the ideals of the life of our monastery. Our monastic life has, therefore, not been imposed on us, but we have voluntarily and with free commitment taken it upon ourselves. And so our communities consist of free agents who all strive for the same goal that has been made known to all and that is desired by all in such a way that we live harmoniously in a house and that we have one mind and one heart.

**80.** The foundation of the monastic community is, therefore, the free and voluntary commitment of the monks who esteem greatly the values and tasks of the monastery's life and look upon them as their own. This free dedication and cheerful attitude is the moving force of the observance of the laws and of obedience, and it is the foundation for the whole juridical structure. If this is lacking, the monastic community, like any voluntary society, is unable to maintain its true vitality. It is therefore of the greatest importance both that the monks preserve that lively and cheerful commitment by which they freely undertook the monastic life and that any arrangement or organization of community life respect as well as strive to promote and encourage that free will and effort.

## **CHAPTER II. *What Kind of Man the Abbot Ought to Be***

### **RB 2,1-10**

26 Mar.
28 June
30 Sept.
2 Jan.

**T**he Abbot who is worthy to be over a monastery, ought always to be mindful of what he is called, and make his works square with his name of Superior. For he is believed to hold the place of

Christ in the monastery, when he is called by his name, according to the saying of the Apostle: "You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry *Abba* (Father)" (Rom 8:15). Therefore, the Abbot should never teach, prescribe, or command (which God forbid) anything contrary

to the laws of the Lord; but his commands and teaching should be instilled like a leaven of divine justice into the minds of his disciples.

Let the Abbot always bear in mind that he must give an account in the dread judgment of God of both his own teaching and of the obedience of his disciples. And let the Abbot know that whatever lack of profit the master of the house shall find in the sheep, will be laid to the blame of the shepherd. On the other hand he will be blameless, if he gave all a shepherd's care to his restless and unruly flock, and took all pains to correct their corrupt manners; so that their shepherd, acquitted at the Lord's judgment seat, may say to the Lord with the Prophet: "I have not hid Thy justice within my heart. I have declared Thy truth and Thy salvation" (Ps 39[40]:11). "But they contemning have despised me" (Is 1:2; Ezek 20:27). Then at length eternal death will be the crushing doom of the rebellious sheep under his charge.

### **Declaration art.94-96**

**94.** The abbot is above all the shepherd of souls – that is, his task is before all else directed to spiritual matters and the good of souls. His authority is a ministry and has the character of humble service according to the teaching and example of Christ, whom he represents. Therefore it is fitting that he express and show toward his brothers that paternal love with which the Father loves the monks.

**95.** The abbot is, moreover, the mediator of the Word of God, fulfilling the office of interpreter of the Divine Scriptures in the manifold circumstances of daily life. The abbot can never overshadow the Divine Word. He should rather become more and more subject to it.

### **RB 2,11-22**

<b>27 Mar.</b>
<b>29 June</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Oct.</b>
<b>3 Jan.</b>

**W**hen, therefore, anyone taketh the name of Abbot he should govern his disciples by a twofold teaching; namely, he should show them all that is good and holy by his deeds

more than by his words; explain the commandments of God to intelligent disciples by words, but show the divine precepts to the dull and simple by his works. And let him show by his actions, that whatever he teacheth his disciples as being contrary to the law of God must not be done, "lest perhaps when he hath preached to others, he himself should become a

castaway" (1 Cor 9:27), and he himself committing sin, God one day say to him: "Why dost thou declare My justices, and take My covenant in thy mouth? But thou hast hated discipline, and hast cast My words behind thee" (Ps 49[50]:16-17). And: "Thou who sawest the mote in thy brother's eye, hast not seen the beam in thine own" (Mt 7:3).

Let him make no distinction of persons in the monastery. Let him not love one more than another, unless it be one whom he findeth more exemplary in good works and obedience. Let not a free-born be preferred to a freedman, unless there be some other reasonable cause. But if from a just reason the Abbot deemeth it proper to make such a distinction, he may do so in regard to the rank of anyone whomsoever; otherwise let everyone keep his own place; for whether bond or free, we are all one in Christ (cf Gal 3:28; Eph 6:8), and we all bear an equal burden of servitude under one Lord, "for there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom 2:11). We are distinguished with Him in this respect alone, if we are found to excel others in good works and in humility. Therefore, let him have equal charity for all, and impose a uniform discipline for all according to merit.

### **Declaration art.97-98**

**97.** The abbot is the community's center of unity, promoting the individuals' common efforts toward common goals, coordinating the efforts and work of all. The abbot should therefore highly prize, understand, and treat with due respect the personalities of all the members. Available and with an open heart to all, the abbot should concern himself not with just any kind of obedience but with active and responsible obedience and with the individuals' cordial cooperation so that the gifts of all might bear fruit in the service of God. He should seek to promote sincere and open dialogue. He should make all the members of the house participants in the concerns and plans for the monastery's life and in all its business, for it is indeed their business that is at issue. He should, nevertheless, accept the responsibility which belongs to him in virtue of his office if he must determine clearly what seems after careful examination to be the will of God.

**98.** As the promoter of unity the abbot should set aside all that tends to separate him from his confreres, such as an exaggerated use of pontifical insignia and antiquated signs of respect (These privileges are understood today only with difficulty.), in place of which today's customs of etiquette should be observed. He should lead a life in common with his brothers, offering himself to them as an example by his fidelity and zeal. He should restrict to the minimum, as much as possible, whatever demands his absence from the monastery. For even though he has been made an abbot, he remains a monk and a brother among brothers in such a way that he

gives his whole self for his brothers as the center of unity and love in the love of Christ.

**RB 2,23-29**

28 Mar.
30 June
2 Oct.
4 Jan.

**F**or in his teaching the Abbot should always observe that principle of the Apostle in which he saith: "Reprove, entreat, rebuke" (2 Tm 4:2), that is, mingling gentleness with severity, as the occasion may call for, let him show the severity of the master and the loving affection of a father. He must sternly rebuke the undisciplined and restless; but he must exhort the obedient, meek, and patient to advance in virtue. But we charge him to rebuke and punish the negligent and haughty. Let him not shut his eyes to the sins of evil-doers; but on their first appearance let him do his utmost to cut them out from the root at once, mindful of the fate of Heli, the priest of Silo (cf 1 Sam 2:11-4:18). The well-disposed and those of good understanding, let him correct at the first and second admonition only with words; but let him chastise the wicked and the hard of heart, and the proud and disobedient at the very first offense with stripes and other bodily punishments, knowing that it is written: "The fool is not corrected with words" (Prov 29:19). And again: "Strike thy son with the rod, and thou shalt deliver his soul from death" (Prov 23:14).

**Declaration art.115**

**115.** The Abbot President governs the congregation according to the intention of the congregational chapter and is a sign of the fraternal union by which the monasteries are joined among themselves. He offers his service so that in the monastic families life in the monastery might flourish, grow stronger, and increase according to the constitutions of the congregation.

It is his task to promote relations among monasteries for the good of the whole congregation. In this work the abbots and monks of the individual monasteries should help the Abbot President by cultivating fraternal exchanges among themselves, by receiving one another freely, by working together in studies, by coming together for conferences on spiritual and administrative matters, and by striving daily to know and appreciate one another better.

**29 Mar.**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Jul.**  
**3 Oct.**  
**5 Jan.**

**T**he Abbot ought always to remember what he is and what he is called, and to know that to whom much hath been entrusted, from him much will be required; and let him understand what a difficult and arduous task he assumeth in governing souls and accommodating himself to a variety of characters. Let him so adjust and adapt himself to everyone -- to one gentleness of speech, to another by reproofs, and to still another by entreaties, to each one according to his bent and understanding -- that he not only suffer no loss in his flock, but may rejoice in the increase of a worthy fold.

Above all things, that the Abbot may not neglect or undervalue the welfare of the souls entrusted to him, let him not have too great a concern about fleeting, earthly, perishable things; but let him always consider that he hath undertaken the government of souls, of which he must give an account. And that he may not perhaps complain of the want of earthly means, let him remember what is written: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt 6:33). And again: "There is no want to them that fear Him" (Ps 33[34]:10). And let him know that he who undertaketh the government of souls must prepare himself to give an account for them; and whatever the number of brethren he hath under his charge, let him be sure that on judgment day he will, without doubt, have to give an account to the Lord for all these souls, in addition to that of his own. And thus, whilst he is in constant fear of the Shepherd's future examination about the sheep entrusted to him, and is watchful of his account for others, he is made solicitous also on his own account; and whilst by his admonitions he had administered correction to others, he is freed from his own failings.

**Declaration art.123**

**123.** The Abbot General, elected by the General Chapter, governs the Order according to the intention of the General Chapter and the norms of the Constitutions, and promotes the goals of our union.

The Abbot General is:

- a) the promoter and center of fraternal unity in the Order, especially in that he is prepared to serve the customs of many, with just and impartial zeal embracing, promoting and representing all the Order's families. He makes his own the Order's values and common ideals

both in his personal way of life and in his official acts. He thinks and feels with the Order as it actually exists in our communities, perceiving with an open mind its concerns, tendencies, and opinions.

- b) the promoter and coordinator of common projects and plans, which go beyond the resources of individual communities and congregations but which benefit all, or many. In conceiving and working out such projects, he both has an active part himself and encourages others' initiatives. With his advice and actions, he then moves the projects forward to completion.
- c) Using his authority established in the Constitutions for the service of all, he is a father, indeed a confrere among brothers, according to the intention of Christ, desiring to be of service more than to be over. In his letters, sermons and other communications with the Order, he speaks as a confrere, a fellow disciple and servant of the Lord, who together with the other brothers seeks the truth and will of God. Filled with conviction and a vision of the values of the religious vocation, he also strives to show to the members and communities new perspectives and possibilities, and to infuse into them hope for the future.

### **CHAPTER III. *Of Calling the Brethren for Counsel***

30 Mar.
2 Jul.
4 Oct.
6 Jan.

**W**henver weighty matters are to be transacted in the monastery, let the Abbot call together the whole community, and make known the matter which is to be considered. Having

heard the brethren's views, let him weigh the matter with himself and do what he thinketh best. It is for this reason, however, we said that all should be called for counsel, because the Lord often revealeth to the younger what is best. Let the brethren, however, give their advice with humble submission, and let them not presume stubbornly to defend what seemeth right to them, for it must depend rather on the Abbot's will, so that all obey him in what he considereth best. But as it becometh disciples to obey their master, so also it becometh the master to dispose all things with prudence and justice. Therefore, let all follow the Rule as their guide in everything, and let no one rashly depart from it.

Let no one in the monastery follow the bent of his own heart, and let no one dare to dispute insolently with his Abbot, either inside or outside the monastery. If any one dare to do so, let him be placed under the correction of the Rule. Let the Abbot himself, however, do everything in the fear of

the Lord and out of reverence for the Rule, knowing that, beyond a doubt, he will have to give an account to God, the most just Judge, for all his rulings. If, however, matters of less importance, having to do with the welfare of the monastery, are to be treated of, let him use the counsel of the Seniors only, as it is written: "Do all things with counsel, and thou shalt not repent when thou hast done" (Sir 32:24).

### **Declaration art.102-107**

**102.** Whenever more important matters of the monastery are concerned, especially in the cases prescribed in the congregational constitutions and common law, the conventual chapter participates in the governance of the house. In a truly collegial act the election of the Abbot takes place there, and in a collegial manner decisions are taken regarding the activity of the monastery, the admission and formation of new members, and the administration of the property.

**103.** But the task of the Chapter should not be restricted solely to those cases in which the members of the chapter should give their deliberative or consultative votes according to common or particular law. The members should be brought together frequently for discussion, for truly fraternal dialogue, so that the participation and concern of the confreres for the good of the monastery might be exercised effectively. Therefore the conventual chapter should also be a forum for information on matters of the monastery, the congregation, and the Order, and at the same time the place where the officials of the monastery and specialists report on events and current issues.

**104.** Topics to be treated in the Chapter should be selected with the cooperation of the more restricted council of the abbot and with respect to the desires and problems brought forth by any of the brothers. The community should be notified in a timely and appropriate manner of the topics so that they have time to study the questions and reflect. In certain matters responses will be given more suitably in writing. The obligation of secrecy should be restricted to those matters that absolutely demand discretion. To people outside the monastery, however, the members should use the greatest discretion about matters dealing with the family of the monastery.

**105.** In individual communities, moreover, the appropriate means should be provided so that all members, even those living outside the house, are informed in a timely and accurate manner about the matters of the monastery, congregation, and Order.

**106.** The Council of the Abbot, more restricted in the number of its members and often called the council of "seniors," is convened

appropriately for any necessity and need of the family and for matters which must be treated as a secret. The community usually elects about half of this council, while the abbot appoints the other half.

**107.** If these principles and counsels are put into effect, communities will be able to acquire new vitality, and they will be families living through charity in the house of God. They will be well-ordered ranks of brothers rejoicing in their firm unity, where each fulfills his task, serves all and is strengthened by all.

## **CHAPTER IV. *The Instruments of Good Works***

**31 Mar.**  
**3 Jul.**  
**5 Oct.**  
**7 Jan.**

**I**n the first place to love the Lord God with the whole heart, the whole soul, the whole strength...  
(2) Then, one's neighbor as one's self (cf Mt 22:37-39; Mk 12:30-31; Lk 10:27).

- (3) Then, not to kill...
- (4) Not to commit adultery...
- (5) Not to steal...
- (6) Not to covet (cf Rom 13:9).
- (7) Not to bear false witness (cf Mt 19:18; Mk 10:19; Lk 18:20).
- (8) To honor all men (cf 1 Pt 2:17).
- (9) And what one would not have done to himself, not to do to another (cf Tob 4:16; Mt 7:12; Lk 6:31).
- (10) To deny one's self in order to follow Christ (cf Mt 16:24; Lk 9:23).
- (11) To chastise the body (cf 1 Cor 9:27).
- (12) Not to seek after pleasures.
- (13) To love fasting.
- (14) To relieve the poor.
- (15) To clothe the naked...
- (16) To visit the sick (cf Mt 25:36).
- (17) To bury the dead.
- (18) To help in trouble.
- (19) To console the sorrowing.
- (20) To hold one's self aloof from worldly ways.
- (21) To prefer nothing to the love of Christ.
- (22) Not to give way to anger.
- (23) Not to foster a desire for revenge.
- (24) Not to entertain deceit in the heart.
- (25) Not to make a false peace.



- (26) Not to forsake charity.
- (27) Not to swear, lest perchance one swear falsely.
- (28) To speak the truth with heart and tongue.
- (29) Not to return evil for evil (cf 1 Thes 5:15; 1 Pt 3:9).
- (30) To do no injury, yea, even patiently to bear the injury done us.
- (31) To love one's enemies (cf Mt 5:44; Lk 6:27).
- (32) Not to curse them that curse us, but rather to bless them.
- (33) To bear persecution for justice sake (cf Mt 5:10).
- (34) Not to be proud...
- (35) Not to be given to wine (cf Ti 1:7; 1 Tm 3:3).
- (36) Not to be a great eater.
- (37) Not to be drowsy.
- (38) Not to be slothful (cf Rom 12:11).
- (39) Not to be a murmurer.
- (40) Not to be a detractor.
- (41) To put one's trust in God.
- (42) To refer what good one sees in himself, not to self, but to God.
- (43) But as to any evil in himself, let him be convinced that it is his own and charge it to himself.
- (44) To fear the day of judgment.
- (45) To be in dread of hell.
- (46) To desire eternal life with all spiritual longing.
- (47) To keep death before one's eyes daily.
- (48) To keep a constant watch over the actions of our life.
- (49) To hold as certain that God sees us everywhere.
- (50) To dash at once against Christ the evil thoughts which rise in one's heart.
- (51) And to disclose them to our spiritual father.
- (52) To guard one's tongue against bad and wicked speech.
- (53) Not to love much speaking.
- (54) Not to speak useless words and such as provoke laughter.
- (55) Not to love much or boisterous laughter.
- (56) To listen willingly to holy reading.
- (57) To apply one's self often to prayer.
- (58) To confess one's past sins to God daily in prayer with sighs and tears, and to amend them for the future.
- (59) Not to fulfil the desires of the flesh (cf Gal 5:16).
- (60) To hate one's own will.
- (61) To obey the commands of the Abbot in all things, even though he himself (which Heaven forbid) act otherwise, mindful of that precept of the

- Lord: "What they say, do ye; what they do, do ye not" (Mt 23:3).
- (62) Not to desire to be called holy before one is; but to be holy first, that one may be truly so called.
  - (63) To fulfil daily the commandments of God by works.
  - (64) To love chastity.
  - (65) To hate no one.
  - (66) Not to be jealous; not to entertain envy.
  - (67) Not to love strife.
  - (68) Not to love pride.
  - (69) To honor the aged.
  - (70) To love the younger.
  - (71) To pray for one's enemies in the love of Christ.
  - (72) To make peace with an adversary before the setting of the sun.
  - (73) And never to despair of God's mercy.

Behold, these are the instruments of the spiritual art, which, if they have been applied without ceasing day and night and approved on judgment day, will merit for us from the Lord that reward which He hath promised: "The eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor 2:9). But the workshop in which we perform all these works with diligence is the enclosure of the monastery, and stability in the community.

**Declaration art.46-47**

**46.** God not only calls us to the goal explained above, but also urges us to use the means He has determined for us. These are mainly the evangelical counsels, life in a Cistercian community, prayer, the love of the cross and the service of mankind by our work.

**47.** The purpose of keeping the evangelical counsels is to follow Christ the Master as His disciples in a special way. We want to be united to Him more and more through the monastic way of life and follow Him always more closely and intimately.

**CHAPTER V. Of Obedience**

1 <sup>st</sup> April
4 Jul.
6 Oct.
8 Jan.

**T**he first degree of humility is obedience without delay. This becometh those who, on account of the holy subjection which they have promised, or of the fear of hell, or the glory of life everlasting,

hold nothing dearer than Christ. As soon as anything hath been commanded by the Superior they permit no delay in the execution, as if the matter had been commanded by God Himself. Of these the Lord saith: "At the hearing of the ear he hath obeyed Me" (Ps 17[18]:45). And again He saith to the teachers: "He that heareth you heareth Me" (Lk 10:16).

Such as these, therefore, instantly quitting their own work and giving up their own will, with hands disengaged, and leaving unfinished what they were doing, follow up, with the ready step of obedience, the work of command with deeds; and thus, as if in the same moment, both matters -- the master's command and the disciple's finished work -- are, in the swiftness of the fear of God, speedily finished together, whereunto the desire of advancing to eternal life urgeth them. They, therefore, seize upon the narrow way whereof the Lord saith: "Narrow is the way which leadeth to life" (Mt 7:14), so that, not living according to their own desires and pleasures but walking according to the judgment and will of another, they live in monasteries, and desire an Abbot to be over them. Such as these truly live up to the maxim of the Lord in which He saith: "I came not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (Jn 6:38).

This obedience, however, will be acceptable to God and agreeable to men then only, if what is commanded is done without hesitation, delay, lukewarmness, grumbling or complaint, because the obedience which is rendered to Superiors is rendered to God. For He Himself hath said: "He that heareth you heareth Me" (Lk 10:16). And it must be rendered by the disciples with a good will, "for the Lord loveth a cheerful giver (2 Cor 9:7). " For if the disciple obeyeth with an ill will, and murmureth, not only with lips but also in his heart, even though he fulfil the command, yet it will not be acceptable to God, who regardeth the heart of the murmurer. And for such an action he acquireth no reward; rather he incurreth the penalty of murmurers, unless he maketh satisfactory amendment.

### **Declaration art.52-53**

**52.** Obedience means, above all, a heart open to receive the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, for He blows where He wills and makes known to us the will of God in many ways. Just as Christ's food was to do the will of the One who sent Him; and assuming the form of a slave, He became obedient unto death, death even on a Cross, so wishing to follow Christ more closely we should also, like Him, look for the will of the Father so that we might fulfill it promptly

Most often the Church's voice transmits to us the voice of God by the teaching and exhortations of the Pope, by the Holy See, the Bishops and

the Abbot. These should not only regulate externals, but should shape our spirituality. Also, the charismatic movements of today's Church express in an ever relevant way the intentions of the Holy Spirit. Constantly renewing the Church's youth, He also renews our monastic life.

**53.** In a spirit of faith and love, and out of the desire to do God's will, monks want an abbot to be over them and represent Christ for them. They offer the abbot humble obedience according to the norms of the *Rule* and the *Constitutions*. They apply their powers of intellect and will as well as the gifts of grace they have received to carrying out the commands and fulfilling the tasks entrusted to them. In doing this they know that they help build up the Body of Christ according to the will of God. In this way religious obedience does not lessen the dignity of the human person but enriches it with the freedom of the children of God, and thus leads it to maturity.

## **CHAPTER VI. Of Silence**

<b>2 April</b>
<b>5 Jul.</b>
<b>7 Oct.</b>
<b>9 Jan.</b>

**L**et us do what the Prophet saith: "I said, I will take heed of my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I have set a guard to my mouth, I was dumb, and was humbled, and kept silence even from good things" (Ps 38[39]:2-3). Here the prophet showeth that, if at times we ought to refrain from useful speech for the sake of silence, how much more ought we to abstain from evil words on account of the punishment due to sin.

Therefore, because of the importance of silence, let permission to speak be seldom given to perfect disciples even for good and holy and edifying discourse, for it is written: "In much talk thou shalt not escape sin" (Prov 10:19). And elsewhere: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Prov 18:21). For it belongeth to the master to speak and to teach; it becometh the disciple to be silent and to listen. If, therefore, anything must be asked of the Superior, let it be asked with all humility and respectful submission. But coarse jests, and idle words or speech provoking laughter, we condemn everywhere to eternal exclusion; and for such speech we do not permit the disciple to open his lips.

### **Declaration art.48-49**

**48.** Celibacy freely chosen for the sake of God's Kingdom consists not only of renouncing marriage and the joys of a natural family. It should free us to attend with care to God's affairs and those of the Church with all the strength of mind and soul. By our religious profession we want to bear

witness in a more direct and personal way to the Christian expectation of the future age in which people will "neither marry nor be given in marriage." For this reason celibacy is the outstanding eschatological sign of our life.

**49.** This total consecration of the self to God is the foundation on which the monastic family is built. In this family of God, the common love of God and the same vocation form the basis for our loving and helping each other. On the one hand, we should faithfully carry one another's burdens; on the other, we all receive a share of the graces and virtues in which each one excels. Consequently, we find a definite access to the communitarian path of salvation which God has prepared for all mankind in the Church. God opens our heart so that we might love all our neighbors, especially our brothers and sisters in the monastery, with sincere and active love.

## CHAPTER VII. *Of Humility*

### RB 7,1-9

3 April
6 Jul.
8 Oct.
10 Jan.

**B**rethren, the Holy Scripture crieth to us saying: "Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Lk 14:11; 18:14). Since, therefore, it saith this, it showeth us that every exaltation is a kind of pride. The Prophet declareth that he guardeth himself against this, saying: "Lord, my heart is not puffed up; nor are my eyes haughty. Neither have I walked in great matters nor in wonderful things above me" (Ps 130[131]:1). What then? "If I was not humbly minded, but exalted my soul; as a child that is weaned is towards his mother so shalt Thou reward my soul" (Ps 130[131]:2).

Hence, brethren, if we wish to reach the greatest height of humility, and speedily to arrive at that heavenly exaltation to which ascent is made in the present life by humility, then, mounting by our actions, we must erect the ladder which appeared to Jacob in his dream, by means of which angels were shown to him ascending and descending (cf Gen 28:12). Without a doubt, we understand this ascending and descending to be nothing else but that we descend by pride and ascend by humility. The erected ladder, however, is our life in the present world, which, if the heart is humble, is by the Lord lifted up to heaven. For we say that our body and our soul are the two sides of this ladder; and into these sides the divine calling hath inserted various degrees of humility or discipline which we must mount.

## Declaration art.65

**65.** The life of the monk should be a following of the humble Christ. Sincerely penitent for our sins and aware of our limitations yet uplifted at the same time by divine mercy, we should seek the glory of God, not our own. Out of this spirit of humility we should accept sufferings and privations patiently, and we should be content with even a modest income and living standard.

The monastic life can only exist under the sign of the cross. For as we follow the love of Christ, greater than which there is none, we set out on the path of renunciation, and we mortify our bodies in order to serve the living God. For just as He called the disciples, Christ has called us also to carry His cross daily.

### RB 7,10-30

<b>4 April</b>
<b>7 Jul.</b>
<b>9 Oct.</b>
<b>11 Jan.</b>

**T**he first degree of humility, then, is that a man always have the fear of God before his eyes (cf Ps 35[36]:2), shunning all forgetfulness and that he be ever mindful of all that God hath commanded, that he always considereth in his mind how those who despise God will burn in hell for their sins, and that life everlasting is prepared for those who fear God. And whilst he guardeth himself evermore against sin and vices of thought, word, deed, and self-will, let him also hasten to cut off the desires of the flesh.

Let a man consider that God always seeth him from Heaven, that the eye of God beholdeth his works everywhere, and that the angels report them to Him every hour. The Prophet telleth us this when he showeth God thus ever present in our thoughts, saying: "The searcher of hearts and reins is God" (Ps 7:10). And again: "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men" (Ps 93[94]:11) And he saith: "Thou hast understood my thoughts afar off" (Ps 138[139]:3). And: "The thoughts of man shall give praise to Thee" (Ps 75[76]:11). Therefore, in order that he may always be on his guard against evil thoughts, let the humble brother always say in his heart: "Then I shall be spotless before Him, if I shall keep myself from iniquity" (Ps 17[18]:24). We are thus forbidden to do our own will, since the Scripture saith to us: "And turn away from thy evil will" (Sir 18:30). And thus, too, we ask God in prayer that His will may be done in us (cf Mt 6:10). We are, therefore, rightly taught not to do our own will, when we guard against what Scripture saith: "There are ways that to men seem right, the end whereof plungeth

into the depths of hell" (Prov 16:25). And also when we are filled with dread at what is said of the negligent: "They are corrupted and become abominable in their pleasure" (Ps 13[14]:1). But as regards desires of the flesh, let us believe that God is thus ever present to us, since the Prophet saith to the Lord: "Before Thee is all my desire" (Ps 37[38]:10).

We must, therefore, guard thus against evil desires, because death hath his station near the entrance of pleasure. Whence the Scripture commandeth, saying: "Go no after thy lusts" (Sir 18:30). If, therefore, the eyes of the Lord observe the good and the bad (cf Prov 15:3) and the Lord always looketh down from heaven on the children of men, to see whether there be anyone that understandeth or seeketh God (cf Ps 13[14]:2); and if our actions are reported to the Lord day and night by the angels who are appointed to watch over us daily, we must ever be on our guard, brethren, as the Prophet saith in the psalm, that God may at no time see us "gone aside to evil and become unprofitable" (Ps 13[14]:3), and having spared us in the present time, because He is kind and waiteth for us to be changed for the better, say to us in the future: "These things thou hast done and I was silent" (Ps 49[50]:21).

### **RB 7,31-33**

<b>5 April</b>
<b>8 Jul.</b>
<b>10 Oct.</b>
<b>12 Jan.</b>

**T**he second degree of humility is, when a man loveth not his own will, nor is pleased to fulfill his own desires but by his deeds carrieth our that word of the Lord which saith: "I came not to do

My own will but the will of Him that sent Me" (Jn 6:38). It is likewise said: "Self-will hath its punishment, but necessity winneth the crown."

### **Declaration art.66**

**66.** We have been called to share in the cross of Christ, which consists for us most often in the following:

- a) to humble oneself, fleeing vain glory and egotistical ambitions;
- b) to perform our daily work well, which today often demands of us such sacrifices that we are right to compare it with the austerities of ancient monastic life;
- c) to exercise patience, by which we endure with a good spirit the infirmities of body and soul, the inadequacies of our abilities, and the burdens of common life;

- d) to love our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers;
- e) to accept old age and death in such a way that we profess as much as possible our faith and hope in eternal life.

**RB 7,34**

<p><b>6 April</b>  <b>9 Jul.</b>  <b>11 Oct.</b>  <b>13 Jan.</b></p>
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**T**he third degree of humility is, that for the love of God a man subject himself to a Superior in all obedience, imitating the Lord, of whom the Apostle saith: "He became obedient unto death" (Phil 2:8).

**Declaration art.67**

**67.** As we have promised in baptism to resist and renounce Satan with all his attractions, in monastic life we also want to flee the world insofar as it is subject to the devil, the desires of the eyes, the concupiscence of the flesh and the pride of life. Fleeing the world consists, above all, in an inward separation of ourselves from the mentality of this world that expects nothing beyond the grave and values nothing in this life more than the pleasures of body and soul. External separation from the "world," practiced differently and to various degrees in our communities, serves as both sign and instrument for this inward renunciation.

**RB 7,35-43**

<p><b>7 April</b>  <b>10 Jul.</b>  <b>12 Oct.</b>  <b>14 Jan.</b></p>
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**T**he fourth degree of humility is, that, if hard and distasteful things are commanded, nay, even though injuries are inflicted, he accept them with patience and even temper, and not grow weary or give up, but hold out, as the Scripture saith: "He that shall persevere unto the end shall be saved" (Mt 10:22). And again: "Let thy heart take courage, and wait thou for the Lord" (Ps 26[27]:14). And showing that a faithful man ought even to bear every disagreeable thing for the Lord, it saith in the person of the suffering: "For Thy sake we suffer death all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter" (Rom 8:36; Ps 43[44]:22). And secure in the hope of the divine reward, they go on joyfully, saying: "But in all these things we overcome because of Him that hath loved us" (Rom 8:37). And likewise in another place the Scripture saith: "Thou, O God, hast



proved us; Thou hast tried us by fire as silver is tried; Thou hast brought us into a net, Thou hast laid afflictions on our back" (Ps 65[66]:10-11). And to show us that we ought to be under a Superior, it continueth, saying: "Thou hast set men over our heads" (Ps 65[66]:12). And fulfilling the command of the Lord by patience also in adversities and injuries, when struck on the one cheek they turn also the other; the despoiler of their coat they give their cloak also; and when forced to go one mile they go two (cf Mt 5:39-41); with the Apostle Paul they bear with false brethren and "bless those who curse them" (2 Cor 11:26; 1 Cor 4:12).

### **Declaration art.68**

**68.** Our love of the cross and resolute resistance to the spirit of this world should not leave us indifferent to the true values of this age, which should be used in the service of God's Kingdom. Values offered by technology, economics, social and cultural life are by no means foreign to us. Their use and promotion both enrich our life and make us part of the human family.

### **RB 7,44-48**

8 April
11 Jul.
13 Oct.
15 Jan.

**T**he fifth degree of humility is, when one hideth from his Abbot none of the evil thoughts which rise in his heart or the evils committed by him in secret, but humbly confesseth them. Concerning this the Scripture exhorts us, saying: "Reveal thy way to the Lord and trust in Him" (Ps 36[37]:5). And it saith further: "Confess to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth forever" (Ps 105[106]:1; Ps 117[118]:1). And the Prophet likewise saith: "I have acknowledged my sin to Thee and my injustice I have not concealed. I said I will confess against myself my injustice to the Lord; and Thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my sins" (Ps 31[32]:5).

### **Declaration art.116**

**116.** The *Charta Caritatis* established an annual visitation that the abbot of the founding monastery or his delegate according to the law of filiation was to carry out. The goal was to encourage fervor and, if necessary, to serve as fraternal correction in charity. The annual visitation was the central element of the juridical structure of the Order. It was very highly regarded

by all, even those outside the Order, and certainly contributed greatly to strengthening and promoting life in the monastery.

After completing his investigation, the visitorator can often give the local abbot very good advice, direct his attention to those questions and problems which the abbot has perhaps not perceived or whose interconnections or personal aspects he has not seen clearly. However, if the visitorator sees that the precepts of our Order are being broken in the monastery, he should strive with the advice of the local abbot to make corrections in charity.

In a few places the law of filiation is still in effect. In place of the ancient and almost natural relationship which filiation established, there is very often today a union of monasteries in congregations so that the ordinary visitorator is in general the Abbot President of the congregation, except in those cases in which the law of filiation is in effect and the constitutions of the respective congregation organize the matter differently.

### **RB 7,49-50**

<p>9 April 12 Jul. 14 Oct. 16 Jan.</p>
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**T**he sixth degree of humility is, when a monk is content with the meanest and worst of everything, and in all that is enjoined him holdeth himself as a bad and worthless workman, saying with the

Prophet: "I am brought to nothing and I knew it not; I am become as a beast before Thee, and I am always with Thee" (Ps 72[73]:22-23).

### **Declaration art.117**

**117.** The goal of visitations still remains the same now as before, even if certain forms for carrying out the visitation must be adapted to new conditions. Even in our times visitations should take place frequently, even if they do not have to be always canonical so that the needs of the monasteries are taken care of in a timely manner. The visitorator is certainly neither a legislator nor a "reformer," but he should promote an examination of conscience by everyone. For the solution of problems will hardly be imposed from above but will only come from internal persuasion. This, however, demands much both of the visitorator and of those visited. The visitorator, whose task is before all else a service of charity, should strive first of all to understand the psychological state of the community. He should also respect the legitimate autonomy of the monastery and its proper and legitimately approved goals so that the visitation will bring true increase to the monastery.

Those visited should, however, humbly and sincerely open their hearts, truly seeking the good of their souls and the progress of the community in the service of God. They should also keep in view the various limitations of the visitation, namely the limited range of the matters in which the visitor can act and the real possibilities of his actions. Not infrequently the visitation is deprived of fruit because of an unthoughtful and unfounded expectation of many members of the community who demand unreal things from the visitor and quickly say that they have been deceived.

### **RB 7,51-54**

**10 April  
13 Jul.  
15 Oct.  
17 Jan.**

**T**he seventh degree of humility is, when, not only with his tongue he declareth, but also in his inmost soul believeth, that he is the lowest and vilest of men, humbling himself and saying with the Prophet: "But I am a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people" (Ps 21[22]:7). "I have been exalted and humbled and confounded" (Ps 87[88]:16). And also: "It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me, that I may learn Thy commandments" (Ps 118[119]:71,73).

### **RB 7,55**

**11  
April  
14 Jul.  
16 Oct.**

**T**he eighth degree of humility is, when a monk doeth nothing but what is sanctioned by the common rule of the monastery and the example of his elders.

### **RB 7,56-58**

**12 April  
15 Jul.  
17 Oct.  
19 Jan.**

**T**he ninth degree of humility is, when a monk withholdeth his tongue from speaking, and keeping silence doth not speak until he is asked; for the Scripture showeth that "in a multitude of words there shall not want sin" (Prov 10:19); and that "a man full of tongue is not established in the earth" (Ps 139[140]:12).

**13 April  
16 Jul.  
18 Oct.  
20 Jan.**

**T**he tenth degree of humility is, when a monk is not easily moved and quick for laughter, for it is written: "The fool exalteth his voice in laughter" (Sir 21:23).

**RB 7,60-61**

**14 April  
17 Jul.  
19 Oct.  
21 Jan.**

**T**he eleventh degree of humility is, that, when a monk speaketh, he speak gently and without laughter, humbly and with gravity, with few and sensible words, and that he be not loud of voice, as it is written: "The wise man is known by the fewness of his words."

**RB 7,62-70**

**15 April  
18 Jul.  
20 Oct.  
22 Jan.**

**T**he twelfth degree of humility is, when a monk is not only humble of heart, but always letteth it appear also in his whole exterior to all that see him; namely, at the Work of God, in the garden, on a journey, in the field, or wherever he may be, sitting, walking, or standing, let him always have his head bowed down, his eyes fixed on the ground, ever holding himself guilty of his sins, thinking that he is already standing before the dread judgment seat of God, and always saying to himself in his heart what the publican in the Gospel said, with his eyes fixed on the ground: "Lord, I am a sinner and not worthy to lift up mine eyes to heaven" (Lk 18:13); and again with the Prophet: "I am bowed down and humbled exceedingly" (Ps 37[38]:7-9; Ps 118[119]:107).

Having, therefore, ascended all these degrees of humility, the monk will presently arrive at that love of God, which being perfect, casteth out fear (1 Jn 4:18). In virtue of this love all things which at first he observed not without fear, he will now begin to keep without any effort, and as it were, naturally by force of habit, no longer from the fear of hell, but from the love of Christ, from the very habit of good and the pleasure in virtue. May the Lord be pleased to manifest all this by His Holy Spirit in His laborer now cleansed from vice and sin.

## Declaration art.10

**10.** The most important and fruitful source for our life is the action and inspiration of the Holy Spirit in us. For we firmly believe that the Spirit of God is at work also in us, that He enkindles our hearts to recognize the will of God better and to follow it more promptly. There is nothing so important for us as to look carefully at our vocation with a sincere heart in the light of the Holy Spirit and to respond without hesitation to His promptings. His working, even if mysterious, is without a doubt especially evident in the fraternal communion of confreres sincerely searching out the will of God and seeking appropriate and worthy forms for the service of God. Honest and open dialogue, sincere deliberations in common, the responsible cooperation of all members -- these above all are the means through which the Spirit's leading and prompting become manifest.

## CHAPTER VIII. *Of the Divine Office* *during the Night*

<p><b>16 April</b> <b>19 Jul.</b> <b>21 Oct.</b></p>
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**M**aking due allowance for circumstances, the brethren will rise during the winter season, that is, from the calends of November till Easter, at the eighth hour of the night; so that, having rested till a little after midnight, they may rise refreshed. The time, however, which remains over after the night office (Matins) will be employed in study by those of the brethren who still have some parts of the psalms and the lessons to learn.

But from Easter to the aforesaid calends, let the hour for celebrating the night office (Matins) be so arranged, that after a very short interval, during which the brethren may go out for the necessities of nature, the morning office (Lauds), which is to be said at the break of day, may follow presently.

## Declaration art.18-21

**18.** Our Order -- just as the individual human being and any particular society -- preserves in itself its past, carries the inheritance and the weight not only of its own history from the beginnings of Citeaux but also of the general history of monasticism, whose roots reach back to the first centuries of Christianity. For this reason it is useful to recall briefly the principal parts of the history of monasticism and their importance.

19. Primitive forms of monastic life have been present in the Church from the beginnings (confessors, virgins, whose life some call a "domestic monasticism" [*monachismum domesticum*]). In the third century, the anchorites and coenobites make their appearance in the universal Church. Thus beginning in the fourth century, rules were composed to regulate the new monastic institutions and to pass on the experiences of the "spiritual fathers." The Gospel, however, remained the "Rule that is not regulated" (*Regula non regulata*), which all rules serve.

20. Among these rules a place of preeminence is held by the Rule of St. Benedict, in which our holy Patriarch has condensed from the other rules his "very little rule for beginners." According to it the monastery is "a school for the Lord's service," and in this school the community under the paternity of Christ, whom the Abbot represents in the service of the brothers, follows the guidance of the Gospel and through the balanced harmony of the *Opus Dei, lectio divina*, work and other exercises runs along the path of the commandments of God.

21. In addition to the regulation of affairs within the monastery, the Rule receives a sort of supplement in "The Life of St. Benedict," as composed for us by St. Gregory. Although it is not perfectly historical in all details, it does show us how according to the tradition our Holy Father himself received those who came to his monastery and how he acted outside the monastery. For St. Gregory teaches that St. Benedict "dwelt there and called from all sides a multitude to the faith by his unceasing preaching," and indeed that he even sent frequently his confreres to the neighboring village "to exhort the souls."

## **CHAPTER IX. How Many Psalms Are to Be Said at the Night Office**

17 April  
20 Jul.  
22 Oct.

**D**uring the winter season, having in the first place said the verse: *Deus, in adiutorium meum intende; Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina*, there is next to be said three times, *Domine, labia mea aperies, et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam* (Ps 50[51]:17). To this the third psalm and the *Gloria* are to be added. After this the 94th psalm with its antiphon is to be said or chanted. Hereupon let a hymn follow, and after that six psalms with antiphons. When these and the verse have been said, let the Abbot give the blessing. All being seated on the benches, let three lessons be read alternately by the brethren from the book on the reading stand, between which let three responsories be said. Let two

of the responsories be said without the *Gloria*, but after the third lesson, let him who is chanting say the *Gloria*. When the cantor beginneth to sing it, let all rise at once from their seats in honor and reverence of the Blessed Trinity.

Let the inspired books of both the Old and the New Testaments be read at the night offices, as also the expositions of them which have been made by the most eminent orthodox and Catholic Fathers.

After these three lessons with their responsories, let six other psalms follow, to be sung with *Alleluia*. After these let the lessons from the Apostle follow, to be said by heart, then the verse, the invocation of the litany, that is, *Kyrie eleison*. And thus let the night office come to an end.

### **Declaration art.22**

**22.** The Rule of St. Benedict was neither the sole rule, nor did it enjoy universal acceptance up to the times of St. Benedict of Aniane. (This was the period of the "mixed rule.") At that time it was, however, slowly introduced in almost all the monasteries of the Carolingian Empire. From then on a certain uniformity of life appeared in Western monasticism which can be called Benedictine.

The synods of the 9th - 11th centuries then attempted to distinguish the monks from the canons regular more clearly, but without any great success. For the number of monks receiving Holy Orders and thus passing into clerical status was steadily increasing, while the canon regulars were organizing their life according to monastic practices. Moreover, monasticism in the 10th - 11th centuries was abandoning the simple life and constantly increasing the role and significance played by the liturgy in monastic life so that the balance between prayer and work was completely lost.

## **CHAPTER X. How the Office Is to Be Said during the Summer Season**

**18 April**  
**21 Jul.**  
**23 Oct.**

**F**rom Easter till the calends of November let the whole psalmody, as explained above, be said, except that on account of the shortness of the nights, no lessons are read from the book; but instead of these three lessons, let one from the Old Testament be said from memory. Let a short responsory follow this, and let all the rest be performed

as was said; namely, that never fewer than twelve psalms be said at the night office, exclusive of the third and the 94th psalm.

### **Declaration art.23**

**23.** In the 11th century new spiritual movements were arising among the monks (and canon regulars) with the goal of returning to the true poverty of the Gospel, to manual labor, to the "purity of the Rule," and to the authentic sources of ancient monasticism.

Citeaux was founded with such a goal. The founders of "the New Monastery" restored a balance between liturgical life and work even though they did not return to the letter of the Rule in all matters. For they retained many liturgical rites unknown to St. Benedict and introduced later (as, for example, daily conventual mass) and thus changed the daily schedule. Moreover, they admitted lay brothers (*conversi*) because they said that without them they could not "observe the precepts of the Rule day and night." As in many ages, they understood the Rule, therefore, not according to its 6th-century meaning but according to later interpretations.

The monasteries founded by Citeaux and its daughter houses were from the beginning abbeys *sui juris* united among themselves according to the regulations of the *Charta Caritatis*. Their abbots met annually in Citeaux for a general chapter in order to further the spiritual care of the monks entrusted to them. From the first decades of the 12th century, abbots of our Order promoted the foundation of monasteries for nuns and helped them in organizing their lives. Convents, just as monasteries of men, were under the jurisdiction of bishops up until 1184. After exemption was received, very many monasteries of nuns were incorporated into our Order. Initially, founding abbesses made regular visitations of their daughter abbeys, and these monasteries related by filiation even held chapters. But because of the law of clausura, which became ever stricter for nuns in the Middle Ages, the visitation passed over to the *pater immediatus*, and the chapters of abbesses were no longer held.

## **CHAPTER XI. How the Night Office Is to Be Said on Sundays**

<p><b>19 April</b> <b>22 Jul.</b> <b>24 Oct.</b></p>
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**F**or the night office on Sunday the monks should rise earlier. At this office let the following regulations be observed, namely: after six psalms and the verse have been sung, as we arranged



above, and all have been properly seated on the benches in their order, let four lessons with their responsories be read from the book, as we said above. In the fourth responsory only, let the *Gloria* be said by the chanter, and as soon as he beginneth it let all presently rise with reverence.

After these lessons let six other psalms with antiphons and the verse follow in order as before. After these let there be said three canticles from the Prophets, selected by the Abbot, and chanted with *Alleluia*. When the verse also hath been said and the Abbot hath given the blessing, let four other lessons from the New Testament be read in the order above mentioned. But after the fourth responsory let the Abbot intone the hymn *Te Deum laudamus*. When this hath been said, let the Abbot read the lesson from the Gospel, all standing with reverence and awe. When the Gospel hath been read let all answer *Amen*, and immediately the Abbot will follow up with the hymn *Te decet laus*, and when he hath given the blessing Lauds will begin.

Let this order of the night office be observed on Sunday the same way in all seasons, in summer as well as in winter, unless perchance (which God forbid) the brethren should rise too late and part of the lessons or the responsories would have to be shortened. Let every precaution be taken that this does not occur. If it should happen, let him through whose neglect it came about make due satisfaction for it to God in the oratory.

## **Declaration art.24**

**24.** As the Order grew with the very rapid foundation of hundreds of abbeys as well as with the incorporation of diverse congregations (the Congregation of Savigny and Obazine already at the time of St. Bernard), "the similarity of customs" that existed at the beginning slowly but surely became diversified without reason. The transformation of the social, intellectual, and political life also influenced the evolution of the Order. The General Chapter, therefore, strove to adapt the Order's legislation to ever new circumstances, not fearing in the twelfth century even to make several, significant changes in the *Charta Caritatis*.

## **CHAPTER XII. How Lauds Are to Be Said**

20 April 23 Jul. 25 Oct.
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**A**t Lauds on Sunday, let the 66th psalm be said first simply, without an antiphon. After that let the 50th psalm be said with *Alleluia*; after this let the 117th and the 62d be said; then the

blessing and the praises, one lesson from the Apocalypse, said by heart, a responsory, the Ambrosian hymn, the verse and the canticle from the Gospel, the litany, and it is finished.

### **Declaration art.25**

25. The large number of abbots in the General Chapter then led to the creation of the Definitorium, which received its form in 1265 and retained it up until the French Revolution. Because of the abbots' great number and on account of wars and other difficulties, abbots began to attend the General Chapter ever more rarely. At that same time Cistercian life assumed new aspects in various regions, especially in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in Portugal.

## **CHAPTER XIII. How Lauds Are to Be Said on Week Days**

**21 April**  
**24 Jul.**  
**26 Oct.**

**O**n week days let Lauds be celebrated in the following manner, to wit: Let the 66th psalm be said without an antiphon, drawing it out a little as on Sunday, that all may arrive for the 50th, which is to be said with an antiphon. After this let two other psalms be said according to custom; namely, the 5th and the 35th on the second day, the 42d and the 56th on the third day, the 63rd and the 64th on the fourth day, the 87th and the 89th on the fifth day, the 75th and the 91st on the sixth day, and on Saturday the 142d and the canticle of Deuteronomy, which should be divided into two *Glorias*. On the other days, however, let the canticle from the Prophets, each for its proper day, be said as the Roman Church singeth it. After these let the psalms of praise follow; then one lesson from the Apostle, to be said from memory, the responsory, the Ambrosian hymn, the verse, the canticle from the Gospel, the litany, and it is finished. Owing to the sandals which are wont to spring up, the morning and the evening office should, plainly, never end unless the Lord's Prayer is said in the hearing of all by the Superior in its place at the end; so that in virtue of the promise which the brethren make when they say, "Forgive us as we forgive" (Mt 6:12), they may cleanse themselves of failings of this kind. At the other hours which are to be said, however, let only the last part of this prayer be said aloud, so that all may answer, "But deliver us from evil" (Mt 6:13).

## Declaration art.26-28

**26.** Over the course of time other political and ecclesiastical circumstances were added, such as the institution of *commendae*, which called for new solutions in various regions. In this way various congregations arose: the Congregation of Castile in 1425, the Congregation of St. Bernard in Italy in 1497, the Congregation of Portugal in 1567, all by pontifical decree; in the 17th century the General Chapter also cooperated in the formation of the Congregation of Calabro-Lucana, the Roman Congregation, the Congregation of Aragona, and the Congregation of Northern Germany.

**27.** The instruction of youth in schools has deep and strong roots in ancient monastic tradition. Although the first Cistercians renounced educational work because of the circumstances of their times, nevertheless even among our forefathers this work later became important. Many monasteries have assumed the task of teaching in publicly recognized schools, especially since the 18th century, when the modern system of education originated.

**28.** The Order suffered grave damage in the 16th century because of the Lutheran Reformation and its consequences, but in the 17th century it began again to flourish in many regions. At this time abbeys which had come to participate in the tasks and concerns of the local churches through their assumption of pastoral care and schools largely tried to adapt their life to these new tasks. However, the French Revolution, Josephinism, and the secularizations that arrived in other places not only destroyed a very great number of the monasteries but also fundamentally destroyed the organization of the Order.

With the suppression of Citeaux, since there were no constitutions for the Order capable of overcoming the difficulties and it was impossible to convoke the General Chapter, the ancient constitutional law of the Order was substantially changed. After the death of the Abbot of Citeaux, the Holy See, itself in grave difficulties, was able to provide for the Order only in a provisory manner. When he returned to Rome from captivity at the hands of Napoleon, Pius VII immediately appointed a head for the Order, who was from that point up until 1880 the Abbot President of the Congregation of St. Bernard in Italy. The jurisdiction of this Abbot President General was restricted almost exclusively to the confirmation of newly elected abbots of the Stricter Observance. In this way, however, the unity of the Order was preserved.

When the Congregation of the Blessed Virgin Mary of La Trappe was first erected by the Pope in 1834, it was clearly said that the congregation was subject to the jurisdiction of the Abbot General. Since the efforts to convoke a general chapter of all the abbots were not successful, the first general

chapter after the French Revolution was held only in 1880. Its members were determined by the Holy See. In a chapter in 1892 bringing together three congregations of the Stricter Observance, the capitular fathers freely established the autonomous Order of Reformed Cistercians of the Blessed Virgin Mary of la Trappe. When he realized the impossibility of reuniting the two Orders, Pope Leo XIII spoke in 1902 of the “Cistercian Family,” and attributed to the Order of Reformed Cistercians all the privileges of the Cistercian Order.

## **CHAPTER XIV. *How the Night Office Is to Be Said on the Feasts of the Saints***

**22 April**  
**25 Jul.**  
**27 Oct.**

**O**n the feasts of the saints and on all solemn festivals let the night office be performed as we said it should be done on Sunday; except that the psalms, the antiphons, and the lessons proper for that day be said; but let the number above mentioned be maintained.

### **Declaration art.29**

**29.** Abbots of the other monasteries came together at general chapters several times already in the last century. Three times in this century they have even composed constitutions on the highest government of the Order. Also at this time several monasteries that had arisen outside the Order (Phuoc-Son, Boquen) as well as the Congregation of Casamari have joined the Order. Similarly, many new foundations have been made, even in mission territories. After the Second World War the monasteries of nuns in Spain and Italy formed federations of pontifical right. These federations of nuns have great merit in both spiritual and material matters, and they should continue to follow their work for their monasteries and the Order.

In this way our Order today has come about, encompassing a very complex reality. From this it is also clear that it is especially necessary in the work of appropriate renewal first of all for individual monasteries to recognize their tasks and goals, and clearly and sincerely to define them. Such clarification will promote vitality and mutual understanding also in the Order.

## CHAPTER XV. At What Times the Alleluia Is to Be Said

23 April  
26 Jul.  
28 Oct.

**F**rom holy Easter until Pentecost let the *Alleluia* be said without intermission, both with the psalms and with the responsories; but from Pentecost until the beginning of Lent let it be said every night at the nocturns with the six latter psalms only. However, on all Sundays outside of Lent, let the canticles, Lauds, Prime, Tierce, Sext, and None be said with *Alleluia*. Let Vespers, however, be said with the antiphon; but let the responsories never be said with *Alleluia*, except from Easter to Pentecost.

### Declaration art.59

59. Seeking God by following Christ and desiring to serve Him, the monk prays often. Both by meditation on the Word of God who reveals himself to us and by common and private prayer that responds to the Word of God, our minds and hearts are raised to the things of God. In this way we can also find a source of inspiration for all our activities. At the same time we can more clearly discern the direction our lives are taking and quite often straighten it out.

## CHAPTER XVI. How the Work of God Is to Be Performed during the Day

24 April  
27 Jul.  
29 Oct.

**A**s the Prophet saith: "Seven times a day I have given praise to Thee" (Ps 118[119]:164), this sacred sevenfold number will be fulfilled by us in this wise if we perform the duties of our service at the time of Lauds, Prime, Tierce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Complin; because it was of these day hours that he hath said: "Seven times a day I have given praise to Thee" (Ps 118[119]:164). For the same Prophet saith of the night watches: "At midnight I arose to confess to Thee" (Ps 118[119]:62). At these times, therefore, let us offer praise to our Creator "for the judgments of His justice," namely, at Lauds, Prime, Tierce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Complin; and let us rise at night to praise Him (cf Ps 118[119]:164, 62).

**60.** Just as the religious vocation is a grace of God, so also our ability to pray does not come from ourselves but from the Holy Spirit, in whom we cry out: "Abba, Father." In the reception of the sacraments and particularly in the daily celebration of the Eucharist, this life of grace is constantly nourished in us, and our prayer is sacramentally united with the saving acts of Christ.

As it is clear from the whole monastic tradition and the directives of the Church, monks are, however, called in a special way to continue Christ's prayer in the Church by the celebration of the Mass and the Divine Office, the two of which should hold primacy in their lives, as well as by other forms of prayer which in their own way should penetrate their whole lives.

## **CHAPTER XVII. How Many Psalms Are to Be Sung at These Hours**

**25 April**  
**28 Jul.**  
**30 Oct.**

**W**e have now arranged the order of the psalmody for the night and the morning office; let us next arrange for the succeeding Hours. At the first Hour let three psalms be said separately, and not under one *Gloria*. Let the hymn for the same Hour be said after the verse *Deus, in adjutorium* (Ps 69[70]:2), before the psalms are begun. Then, after the completion of three psalms, let one lesson be said, a verse, the *Kyrie eleison*, and the collects.

At the third, the sixth, and the ninth Hours, the prayer will be said in the same order; namely, the verse, the hymn proper to each Hour, the three psalms, the lesson, the verse, the *Kyrie eleison*, and the collects. If the brotherhood is large, let these Hours be sung with antiphons; but if small, let them be said without a break.

Let the office of Vespers be ended with four psalms and antiphons; after these psalms a lesson is to be recited, next a responsory, the Ambrosian hymn, a verse, the canticle from the Gospel, the litany, the Lord's Prayer, and the collects.

Let Complin end with the saying of three psalms, which are to be said straight on without an antiphon, and after these the hymn for the same Hour, one lesson, the verse, *Kyrie eleison*, the blessing, and the collects.

**61.** In the Eucharistic celebration the sacrifice of Christ offered once on the cross for us is rendered present for us daily, and human acts of divine worship become the effective sign of Christ's acts in such a way that God's gift and word and man's response through thanksgiving and praise are united as much as possible for the glory of God and the sanctification of man. For all the Church's ministries are directed to the celebration of the Eucharist, which is truly the center not only of the entire liturgy but of all Christian life. Therefore, the leading role in our lives should also played by the sacrament of piety, the sign of unity, the bond of charity, the paschal meal, in which Christ is received, the mind is filled with grace and a pledge of future glory is given us.

Adoration of Christ present in the Eucharist provides an outstanding aid for extending more effectively the active participation in the sacrifice of Christ throughout the whole day.

## **CHAPTER XVIII. In What Order the Psalms Are to Be Said**

**26 April  
29 Jul.  
31 Oct.**

**I**n the beginning let there be said the verse, *Deus, in adiutorium meum intende; Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina* (Ps 69[70]:2), and the *Gloria*, followed by the hymn for each Hour. At Prime on Sunday, then, there are to be said four sections of the 118th psalm. At the other Hours, however, namely Tierce, Sext, and None, let three sections of the same psalm be said. But at Prime on Monday let three psalms be said, namely, the first, the second, and the sixth; and thus each day at Prime until Sunday, let three psalms be said each time in consecutive order up to the 19th psalm, yet so that the ninth psalm and the 17th be each divided into two *Glorias*; and thus it will come about that at the night office on Sundays we always begin with the 20th psalm.

At Tierce, Sext, and None, on Monday, however, let the nine sections which remain over the 118th psalm be said, three sections at each of these Hours. The 118th psalm having thus been parceled out for two days, namely, Sunday and Monday, let there be sung on Tuesday for Tierce, Sext, and None, three psalms each, from the 119th to the 127th, that is, nine psalms. These psalms will always be repeated at the same Hours in just the same way until Sunday, observing also for all these days a regular

succession of the hymns, the lessons, and the verses, so, namely, that on Sunday the beginning is always made with the 118th psalm.

Let Vespers be sung daily with the singing of four psalms. Let these psalms begin with the 109th to the 147th, excepting those which are set aside for the other Hours; namely, from the 117th to the 127th, and the 133d, and the 142d. All the rest are to be said at Vespers; and as the psalms fall three short, those of the aforesaid psalms which are found to be longer, are to be divided; namely, the 138th, the 143d, and the 144th. But because the 116th is short, let it be joined to the 115th. The order of the psalms for Vespers having thus been arranged let the rest, namely, the lessons, the responsories, the hymns, the verses, and the canticles, be said as we have directed above.

At Complin, however, let the same psalms be repeated every day; namely, the 4th, the 90th, and the 133d.

Having arranged the order of the office, let all the rest of the psalms which remain over, be divided equally into seven night offices, by so dividing such of them as are of greater length that twelve fall to each night. We especially impress this, that, if this distribution of the psalms should perchance displease anyone, he arrange them if he thinketh another better, by all means seeing to it that the whole Psalter of one hundred and fifty psalms be said every week, and that it always start again from the beginning at Matins on Sunday; because those monks show too lax a service in their devotion who in the course of a week chant less than the whole Psalter with its customary canticles; since we read, that our holy forefathers promptly fulfilled in one day what we lukewarm monks should, please God, perform at least in a week.

## **Declaration art.62**

**62.** In the reform of the Divine Office, which is to be continued and completed, we should pay attention above all to the unity and harmony between the liturgy and the other parts of our religious life. For although the liturgy is “the summit toward which the activity of the Church tends and at the same time the spring from which all her power flows,” it does not exhaust all the activity of the Church or the monastery. Consequently, both our daily life should be suited to celebrating the liturgy fruitfully, and the structure and forms of the liturgy should be such that they can nourish and animate our daily life. The day’s labor should not suffocate the liturgy, nor should those liturgical forms be retained that are foreign to today’s mentality and render the celebration sterile.



## CHAPTER XIX. Of the Manner of Reciting the Psalter

27 April  
30 Jul.  
1<sup>st</sup> Nov.  
23 Jan.

**W**e believe that God is present everywhere and that the eyes of the Lord behold the good and the bad in every place (cf Prov 15:3). Let us firmly believe this, especially when we take part in the Work of God. Let us, therefore, always be mindful of what the Prophet saith, "Serve ye the Lord with fear" (Ps 2:11). And again, "Sing ye wisely" (Ps 46[47]:8). And, "I will sing praise to Thee in the sight of the angels" (Ps 137[138]:1). Therefore, let us consider how it becometh us to behave in the sight of God and His angels, and let us so stand to sing, that our mind may be in harmony with our voice.

### Declaration art.63

**63.** Spiritual reading (*lectio divina*) belongs necessarily as well to the life of prayer. It calls for an appropriate education and certain conditions that aid it in becoming a truly prayerful, quiet and continuous reading. Enriched with these qualities, spiritual reading helps the monk to become ever more a man of God and to perceive clearly the presence and the will of the Lord. The observance of silence should help us greatly to foster the spirit of prayer. For by faithfully observing periods of silence, our hearts are prepared to hear the Word of God better and to pay heed to Him more openly.

## CHAPTER XX. Of Reverence at Prayer

28 April  
31 Jul.  
2 Nov.  
24 Jan.

**I**f we do not venture to approach men who are in power, except with humility and reverence, when we wish to ask a favor, how much must we beseech the Lord God of all things with all humility and purity of devotion? And let us be assured that it is not in many words, but in the purity of heart and tears of compunction that we are heard. For this reason prayer ought to be short and pure, unless, perhaps it is lengthened by the inspiration of divine grace. At the community exercises, however, let the prayer always be short, and the sign having been given by the Superior, let all rise together.

## **Declaration art.64**

**64.** The unity of our life should manifest itself in the harmonious integration of its elements. Above all, the liturgical activity of our monasteries should be a light enkindled and enlightening that sheds its rays on the entire local Church. Our liturgical celebrations should invite the local Christian faithful to active participation and should offer the Christian people an abundant resource for their spiritual life.

## **CHAPTER XXI. Of the Deans of the Monastery**

**29 April**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Aug.**  
**3 Nov.**  
**25 Jan.**

**I**f the brotherhood is large, let brethren of good repute and holy life be chosen from among them and be appointed Deans; and let them take care of their deaneries in everything according to the commandments of God and the directions of their Abbot. Let such be chosen Deans as the Abbot may safely trust to share his burden. Let them not be chosen for their rank, but for the merit of their life and their wisdom and knowledge; and if any of them, puffed up with pride, should be found blameworthy and, after having been corrected once and again and even a third time, refuseth to amend, let him be deposed, and one who is worthy be placed in his stead. We make the same regulation with reference to the Prior.

## **Declaration art.77**

**77.** Having sketched the image of our Order in its concrete existence and briefly explained the fundamental values of Cistercian life, we must still consider the practical organization of our life and the fitting juridical structure of both the individual communities and congregations, and of the Order. For it is not sufficient only to propose a doctrine on our goals and values. The practical and juridical structures must also be sought out that will organize and direct the life of our communities to reach those goals.

We believe that in the following only those elements or principles should be presented that seem clearly necessary to resolve correctly the problems of today. We leave the more precise arrangement of daily life to the constitutions of the Order and of the congregations and to local legislation. We will, therefore, first present the fundamental aspects of any juridical organization or of the exercise of any authority. We will then speak specifically of the systems of governance for monasteries, for a congregation, and for the Order. We will add at the end a few remarks

about the relationship of our Order to other monastic orders and to the offices of the Church.

## **CHAPTER XXII. *How the Monks Are to Sleep***

**30 April**  
**2 Aug.**  
**4 Nov.**  
**26 Jan.**

**L**et the brethren sleep singly, each in a separate bed. Let them receive the bedding befitting their mode of life, according to the direction of their Abbot. If it can be done, let all sleep in one apartment; but if the number doth not allow it, let them sleep in tens or twenties with the seniors who have charge of them. Let a light be kept burning constantly in the cell till morning.

Let them sleep clothed and girded with cinctures or cords, that they may be always ready; but let them not have knives at their sides whilst they sleep, lest perchance the sleeping be wounded in their dreams; and the sign having been given, rising without delay, let them hasten to outstrip each other to the Work of God, yet with all gravity and decorum. Let the younger brethren not have their beds beside each other, but intermingled with the older ones; and rising to the Work of God, let them gently encourage one another on account of the excuses of the drowsy.

## **CHAPTER XXIII. *Of Excommunication for Faults***

**1<sup>er</sup> May**  
**3 Aug.**  
**5 Nov.**  
**27 Jan.**

**I**f a brother is found stubborn or disobedient or proud or murmuring, or opposed to anything in the Holy Rule and a contemner of the commandments of his Superiors, let him be admonished by his Superiors once and again in secret, according to the command of our Lord (cf Mt 18:15-16). If he doth not amend let him be taken to task publicly before all. But if he doth not reform even then, and he understandeth what a penalty it is, let him be placed under excommunication; but if even then he remaineth obstinate let him undergo corporal punishment.

### **Declaration art.78**

**78.** The following is valid in all respects also for the monasteries of our nuns unless the contrary is clear from the nature of the matter. For the nuns of our Order do not constitute a “second order” next to the “first order”

(of men), but they belong fully to the Cistercian Order. Their monasteries are truly *sui juris* even if they depend on a *Pater Immediatus* or a bishop in certain matters of jurisdiction. Moreover, there are very many members of our congregations who observe the same legislation as the monks. Therefore, one must certainly promote effectively and constantly, even if slowly, the participation of the nuns in decisions that concern their life as well as their congregation and the whole Order.

## **CHAPTER XXIV. What the Manner of Excommunication Should Be**

2 May
4 Aug.
6 Nov.
28 Jan.

**T**he degree of excommunication or punishment ought to be meted out according to the gravity of the offense, and to determine that is left to the judgment of the Abbot. If, however, anyone of the brethren is detected in smaller faults, let him be debarred from eating at the common table.

The following shall be the practice respecting one who is excluded from the common table: that he does not intone a psalm or an antiphon nor read a lesson in the oratory until he hath made satisfaction; let him take his meal alone, after the refectio of the brethren; thus: if, for instance, the brethren take their meal at the sixth hour that brother will take his at the ninth, and if the brethren take theirs at the ninth, he will take his in the evening, until by due satisfaction he obtaineth pardon.

### **Declaration art.81**

**81.** Even if a monastic community should be based first of all on the love of Christ and the brothers and on the voluntary undertaking of the goals and tasks of one's own monastery, nevertheless as a stable union of human beings directed to a definite and constituted end it also needs a firm structure, that is, the correct organization through laws and the commands of superiors. For in this way stability and continuity of life are made firm, the individuals' strengths are directed more efficiently to the common goal, and the life and activity of the members is coordinated in peace. Beside the laws and other written statutes by which the more permanent aspects of life are regulated, there is need for the personal authority of the abbot and his officials so that the concrete ways of acting, which cannot be determined by minute laws among such varied and changeable conditions of modern life, might be responsibly and promptly determined. The chapters, the councils,

and other representative organs play a large role in passing laws and norms. In some cases determined by law they also have a determinative vote. These same organs should also aid the superiors or other officials in concrete decisions that by law belong to the abbot alone or some definite official of the monastery. They should, however, not take away or reduce their responsibility and right to decide.

## **CHAPTER XXV. Of Graver Faults**

<b>3</b>	<b>May</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Aug.</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Nov.</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>Jan.</b>

**B**ut let the brother who is found guilty of a graver fault be excluded from both the table and the oratory. Let none of the brethren join his company or speak with him. Let him be alone at the work enjoined on him, persevering in penitential sorrow, mindful of the terrible sentence of the Apostle who saith, that "such a man is delivered over for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord" (1 Cor 5:5). Let him get his food alone in such quantity and at such a time as the Abbot shall deem fit; and let him not be blessed by anyone passing by, nor the food that is given him.

### **Declaration art.82**

**82.** Although the authority of the laws and superiors in a monastery has indeed much in common with the legitimate authority of civil society, they are nevertheless not to be simply equated. For, in the first place, authority exercised in a monastery always has an ecclesial character deriving both from the Holy See's approval of the Rule and the Constitutions and from the Church's acceptance of our profession. Hence, love of a monastery springs from love of the Church. By our profession we are bound more closely to the Church, and that bond is increased the more we love her. Secondly, it has also a deeply religious character, for the root of monastic obedience is not necessity or human opportunity but our vocation itself and our voluntary dedication to the service of God's will. Those in the community who possess the power to pass laws and to give commands are, as it were, the means of knowing what the concrete will of God is for that community. Although one may not simply identify obedience to God with obedience to a human being, nevertheless in monastic life we obey in a real sense Christ's representatives, and the obedience shown superiors is a part of the Lord's service.

Authority in a monastic community has deeper roots indeed than authority in merely civil societies. Nevertheless, one must not neglect or reject their

experiences and new methods of exercising authority; one must rather examine them with an open mind. For very often in various social movements or in new forms of governance one finds something useful that can also be of benefit to us in the proper organization of monastic life today.

## **CHAPTER XXVI. Of Those Who without the Command of the Abbot Associate with the Excommunicated**

4 May
6 Aug.
8 Nov.
30 Jan.

**I**f any brother presume to associate with an excommunicated brother in any way, or to speak with him, or to send him a message, without the command of the Abbot, let him incur the same penalty of excommunication.

### **Declaration art.83**

**83.** In the organization and legislation of monastic life as well as in the exercise of personal authority one must carefully respect those sociological principles based in natural law that have been perceived more clearly in recent times and are proclaimed with great insistence by the Magisterium of the Church. The most important of these for us are the correlative principles of personalism and solidarity as well as subsidiarity and a legitimate pluralism within a necessary unity.

## **CHAPTER XXVII. How Concerned the Abbot Should Be about the Excommunicated**

5 May
7 Aug.
9 Nov.
31 Jan.

**L**et the Abbot show all care and concern towards offending brethren because "they that are in health need not a physician, but they that are sick" (Mt 9:12). Therefore, like a prudent physician he ought to use every opportunity to send consolers, namely, discreet elderly brethren, to console the wavering brother, as it were, in secret, and induce him to make humble satisfaction; and let them cheer him up "lest he be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow" (2 Cor 2:7); but, as the same Apostle

saith, "confirm your charity towards him" (2 Cor 2:8); and let prayer be said for him by all.

The Abbot must take the utmost pains, and strive with all prudence and zeal, that none of the flock entrusted to him perish. For the Abbot must know that he has taken upon himself the care of infirm souls, not a despotism over the strong; and let him fear the threat of the Prophet wherein the Lord saith: "What ye saw to be fat, that ye took to yourselves, and what was diseased you threw away" (Ezek 34:3-4). And let him follow the loving example of the Good Shepherd, who, leaving the ninety-nine sheep on the mountains, went to seek the one that had gone astray, on whose weakness He had such pity, that He was pleased to lay it on His sacred shoulders and thus carry it back to the fold (cf Lk 15:5).

### **Declaration art.84**

**84.** *The principle of personalism*, the fundamental teaching of Catholic social doctrine, states that the subject and the end of all social institutions is and should be the human person. Therefore, all our juridical structures should above all serve the purpose that all our confreres can obtain more fully and more easily their own perfection, and carry out the duties of their vocation more easily and better. The sacred dignity of the human person, which is rooted in the nature of the human being and still more in his supernatural vocation, and the inalienable rights deriving from that dignity must be recognized and respected also in the legislation and governance of the monastery and the Order.

From this it also follows that the precepts of the laws and the commands of the superiors should not confine the monks in puerile dependence but should lead them to mature Christian freedom and responsible participation in governance for the good of the whole community. They should also respect the monks' personal competence and allow ample space for their prudent initiatives.

## **CHAPTER XXVIII. Of Those Who Having Often Been Corrected Do Not Amend**

6 May
8 Aug.
10 Nov.
1 <sup>st</sup> Feb.

**I**f a brother hath often been corrected and hath even been excommunicated for a fault and doth not amend, let a more severe correction be applied to him, namely, proceed against him with corporal punishment.

But if even then he doth not reform, or puffed up with pride, should perhaps,

which God forbid, even defend his actions, then let the Abbot act like a prudent physician. After he hath applied soothing lotions, ointments of admonitions, medicaments of the Holy Scriptures, and if, as a last resource, he hath employed the caustic of excommunication and the blows of the lash, and seeth that even then his pains are of no avail, let him apply for that brother also what is more potent than all these measures: his own prayer and that of the brethren, that the Lord who is all-powerful may work a cure in that brother.

But if he is not healed even in this way, then finally let the Abbot dismiss him from the community, as the Apostle saith: "Put away the evil one from among you" (1 Cor 5:13); and again: "If the faithless depart, let him depart" (1 Cor 7:15); lest one diseased sheep infect the whole flock.

### **Declaration art.85**

**85.** From the principle of personalism, however, it hardly follows that we can indulge the vice of individualism. For the correlative of this principle is *the principle of solidarity*. By his nature the human person needs the life of society and, what is more, has a supernatural vocation that is essentially communitarian. For it has pleased God to sanctify and save human beings not singly, as if any sort of mutual connection had been precluded, but to establish them as His people so that united by the bond of the Spirit they might be gathered into the Body of Christ. In a special way our cenobitic life ought to express and manifest to the world the communitarian nature of salvation and the Christian life.

Appropriate legislation and the governance of the monastery play an important role in forming and confirming this union based on a life of solidarity if they especially promote the consensus of everyone with regard to goals and values, if they effectively coordinate the community's strengths for those goals, and if they aim at bringing about the appropriate forms to encourage a familial life. In the spirit of solidarity each of the members should gladly and promptly take up the tasks assigned to him, even though sometimes unpleasant, as service to the community and the common good.

## **CHAPTER XXIX. Whether Brethren Who Leave the Monastery Ought to Be Received Again**

7	May
9	Aug.
11	Nov.
2	Feb.

**I**f a brother, who through his own fault leaveth the monastery or is expelled, desireth to return, let him first promise full amendment of the fault for which he left; and thus let him be received in the last place, that



by this means his humility may be tried. If he should leave again, let him be received even a third time, knowing that after this every means of return will be denied him.

### **Declaration art.86**

**86.** *The principle of subsidiarity* orders the relations between individuals and the community as well as between narrower and wider communities. It states that the higher authority of the broader community should leave those things to the subordinates themselves which they can accomplish well, and indeed very often better, but that when the subordinates are of themselves inadequate or neglect their duty, then the higher authority should offer assistance and help. In this way both the vitality and the responsibility of the subordinates remains intact and the higher authority can carry out more effectively its own task of coordination and higher decision.

In our case this principle is true both for individual local communities and for congregations and the Order. For in a monastery it is the superior's task to promote and direct to the common good the prudent initiatives and personal responsibilities of the members and the particular officials. The authorities of the congregations and of the Order best fulfill their duty if while respecting the legitimate freedom and particular tasks of the monasteries or congregations they offer them practical assistance to reach their goals more easily and surely, and furthermore if they strive to elaborate and promote those proposals and larger projects that benefit all but exceed the resources of the individuals.

## **CHAPTER XXX. How Young Boys Are to Be Corrected**

<b>8 May</b>
<b>10 Aug.</b>
<b>12 Nov.</b>
<b>3 Feb.</b>

**E**very age and understanding should have its proper discipline. Whenever, therefore, boys or immature youths or such as can not understand how grave a penalty excommunication is, are guilty of a serious fault, let them undergo severe fasting or be disciplined with corporal punishment, that they may be corrected.

### **Declaration art.87**

**87.** *The principle of legitimate pluralism within necessary unity* now follows

from the preceding. For a legitimate pluralism must be acknowledged – that is, the diversity of the members coming together in a union – nor may one suppress in the name of unity the variety of abilities or talents. Also in a monastery there are diverse charisms: each one has his one gift, but to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given to be useful. The diversity of the members serves what is useful for the whole body, and only through the communion of their diverse gifts can the individuals can participate in the fullness of the Spirit.

The same is true also for our monasteries and congregations, which differ among themselves more than a little with regard to their historical evolution, the native character of the members, the social and cultural circumstances, tasks and duties that they must undertake according to the various needs of the local church. The differences, however, do not prevent the members from coming together into a living unity. Indeed, the variety of gifts can give the whole Order greater force and vitality if the sense of communion and the will for cooperation is present.

Whether the equilibrium of pluralism and unity can be brought about depends very much on appropriate legislation and the proper exercise of authority. For the security of pursuing the particular goals through stable laws, the clear delineation of competencies, the clear presentation of common goals and projects, the establishment of practical forms for mutual assistance – these and similar steps will encourage everyone to embrace and to nurture union quickly. Similarly, it is very beneficial if the authorities of the congregations and of the Order do not look with suspicion and distrust on the special characteristics and particular interests of the communities but try to cultivate more fully whatever is good and valid in them and to direct them to the benefit of all. At the same time the individual communities of the Order should recognize the demands of unity and in promoting them should be prepared to cooperate with sincere trust with other communities of the Order and with the organs of higher of authority.

## **CHAPTER XXXI. *The Kind of Man the Cellarer of the Monastery Ought to Be***

<b>9 May</b>
<b>11 Aug.</b>
<b>13 Nov.</b>
<b>4 Feb.</b>

**L**et there be chosen from the brotherhood as Cellarer of the monastery a wise man, of settled habits, temperate and frugal, not conceited, irritable, resentful, sluggish, or wasteful, but fearing God, who may be as a father to the whole brotherhood.

Let him have the charge of everything, let him do nothing without the command of the Abbot, let him do what hath been ordered him and not grieve the brethren. If a brother should perchance request anything of him unreasonably let him not sadden the brother with a cold refusal, but politely and with humility refuse him who asketh amiss. Let him be watchful of his own soul, always mindful of the saying of the Apostle: "For they that have ministered well, shall purchase to themselves a good degree" (1 Tm 3:13). Let him provide for the sick, the children, the guests, and the poor, with all care, knowing that, without doubt, he will have to give an account of all these things on judgment day. Let him regard all the vessels of the monastery and all its substance, as if they were sacred vessels of the altar. Let him neglect nothing and let him not give way to avarice, nor let him be wasteful and a squanderer of the goods of the monastery; but let him do all things in due measure and according to the bidding of his Abbot.

Above all things, let him be humble; and if he hath not the things to give, let him answer with a kind word, because it is written: "A good word is above the best gift" (Sir 18:17). Let him have under his charge everything that the Abbot hath entrusted to him, and not presume to meddle with matters forbidden him. Let him give the brethren their apportioned allowance without a ruffle or delay, that they may not be scandalized, mindful of what the Divine Word declareth that he deserveth who shall scandalize one of these little ones: "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Mt 18:6).

If the community is large, let assistants be given him, that, with their help, he too may fulfil the office entrusted to him with an even temper. Let the things that are to be given be distributed, and the things that are to be gotten asked for at the proper times, so that nobody may be disturbed or grieved in the house of God.

### **Declaration art.100**

**100.** While reserving the final direction and supervision for himself, the abbot commits to skilled officials and other suitable brothers, insofar as it is possible, the financial and administrative tasks, the daily distribution of activities and jobs (specific permissions, organization of work, correspondence, reception of guests, and other affairs) so that he might remain free to carry out his task.

## **CHAPTER XXXII. *Of the Tools and Goods of the Monastery***

10 May  
12 Aug.  
14 Nov.  
5 Feb.

**L**et the Abbot appoint brethren on whose life and character he can rely, over the property of the monastery in tools, clothing, and things generally, and let him assign to them, as he shall deem proper, all the articles which must be collected after use and stored away. Let the Abbot keep a list of these articles, so that, when the brethren in turn succeed each other in these trusts, he may know what he giveth and what he receiveth back. If anyone, however, handleth the goods of the monastery slovenly or carelessly let him be reprimanded and if he doth not amend let him come under the discipline of the Rule.

### **Declaration art.38**

**38.** Our Order in its concrete existence, as we have shown above, exhibits pluralism and a rather great deal of diversity. This diversity, however, tends towards harmony and is not lacking in unity. Our unity consists not only in a goal common to all members of the Order, but also in the sharing of most of the means for attaining this goal. These should not be considered as disjointed elements, but should be integrated into a living whole. Obviously, in our Declaration we do not want to elaborate a treatise on the monastic life that we have promised to live in the Cistercian Order. We will, therefore, explain only a few aspects which can and should give inspiration and direction to our activities and institutions today.

## **CHAPTER XXXIII. *Whether Monks Ought to Have Anything of Their Own***

11 May  
13 Aug.  
15 Nov.  
6 Feb.

**T**he vice of personal ownership must by all means be cut out in the monastery by the very root, so that no one may presume to give or receive anything without the command of the Abbot; nor to have anything whatever as his own, neither a book, nor a writing tablet, nor a pen, nor anything else whatsoever, since monks are allowed to have neither their bodies nor their wills in their own power. Everything that is necessary, however, they must look for from the Father of the monastery; and let it not be allowed for anyone to have anything which the Abbot did

not give or permit him to have. Let all things be common to all, as it is written. And let no one call or take to himself anything as his own (cf Acts 4:32). But if anyone should be found to indulge this most baneful vice, and, having been admonished once and again, doth not amend, let him be subjected to punishment.

**Declaration art.50**

**50.** We do not practice poverty only for the sake of privation or out of contempt for material goods, but in order to obtain the freedom of the sons of God and to use this world as if not using it, aware that the. form of this world is about to pass away. Therefore, renouncing the possession or quest of wealth, our desire is to be poor with Christ Himself poor. This also makes us true disciples following the model of the early Church in which no one claimed anything as his own, but everything was held in common. In this way our hearts are freed from material worries so that there, where our treasure is, our hearts might also be, that is, in and with Christ and the Church.

**CHAPTER XXXIV. Whether All Should Receive in  
Equal Measure What Is Necessary**

<b>12 May</b>
<b>14 Aug.</b>
<b>16 Nov.</b>
<b>7 Feb.</b>

**I**t is written, "Distribution was made to everyone according as he had need" (Acts 4:35). We do not say by this that respect should be had for persons (God forbid), but regard for infirmities. Let him who hath need of less thank God and not give way to sadness, but let him who hath need of more, humble himself for his infirmity, and not be elated for the indulgence shown him; and thus all the members will be at peace.

Above all, let not the evil of murmuring appear in the least word or sign for any reason whatever. If anyone be found guilty herein, let him be placed under very severe discipline.

**Declaration art.15-17**

**15.** Our Order is above all a social reality. For it consists of several congregations, monasteries, and ultimately individuals joined to one another multiple relations. Each one of us should form for himself a clear image of this concrete reality -- not only of the status of the monks with regard to their numbers but above all of the vocation, tasks, and aspirations

of the members and the concrete circumstances in which this vocation is lived.

Cistercian monasteries exist today in Europe, Asia, Africa and in both Americas under the most diverse economic and cultural conditions. Some of these are in mission lands, while the majority are in those lands which up to our own times were imbued in the Christian tradition and for the most part still are. Some of our monasteries belong to one of the so-called Oriental churches (the Ethiopian monks), but the others differ greatly among themselves because of language, mentality, and education proper to each region. Even though our Order numbers barely more than 3,000 members (divided almost equally between the monks and nuns), this geographic, cultural, social, and ecclesiological diversity constitutes a very complex state of affairs. In many issues virtually each community has its own problems and desires, which are explained from its own special situation. The Cistercian Order cultivates friendly relations with “circles of friends” that are gathered around our monasteries, both active and suppressed, and with Cistercian Communities of the Lutheran Confession.

**16.** A great variety appears even in regard to the kind of life to which the individual monasteries see themselves called. Some monasteries strive to cultivate a life which they call contemplative, while in others different works of the apostolate are carried out, such as pastoral work in parishes, the education of youth in schools, various works of priestly ministry, scientific and cultural work, etc. The vast majority of the members in our monasteries of men are not only ordained to the priesthood but also look upon the exercise of priestly ministry as an integral part of their vocation. The proportion of prayer to work, the intensity and form of contacts with the world outside the monastery, the importance of activities carried out beyond the walls of the monasteries, the nature and forms of the common life are so diversely conceived that the diversity appears first and the unity can be uncovered in the common aspirations and values of the monastic way of life rather than in the uniform ordering of life.

**17.** This diversity, however, even though it exists in certain fundamental questions is not so great in our Order that it would render impossible or superfluous all common effort of renewal. Clearly, as we have already said, in many areas the individual monasteries and congregations should reach their own conclusions. However, we possess many values from our common tradition, and we are attempting to solve almost the same problems as our Mother the Church is, in fact, attempting to solve everywhere in the same world of today that is unifying itself so quickly. Therefore, elaboration of common solutions in several areas of life seems not only useful and possible but also clearly necessary. For a common need calls for common solutions:

- a) with regard to questions of the fundamental means of religious life, such as professing vows of the evangelical counsels, life in community, work and the apostolate, liturgical life, etc;
- b) with regard to the fundamental values of monastic life that are founded in
- c) the spiritual tradition of the Order and in the spiritual life of today's Church;
- d) with regard to the general problems of the juridical structure of the
- e) monasteries, congregations, and the Order, with regard to the questions of the superiors' tasks, the responsible participation of all members in the affairs of the monastery;
- f) with regard to forms of cooperation and mutual help among the individual communities, that is, with regard to common plans and projects.

Whatever will be established in this general manner will require a further application to the individual congregations and monasteries.

## CHAPTER XXXV. *Of the Weekly Servers in the Kitchen*

<p>13 May 15 Aug. 17 Nov. 8 Feb.</p>
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**L**et the brethren serve each other so that no one be excused from the work in the kitchen, except on account of sickness or more necessary work, because greater merit and more charity is thereby acquired. Let help be given to the weak, however, that they may not do this work with sadness; but let all have help according to the size of the community and the circumstances of the place. If the community is large, let the Cellarer be excused from the kitchen, or if, as we have said, any are engaged in more urgent work; let the rest serve each other in charity. Let him who is to go out of the weekly service, do the cleaning on Saturday. Let him wash the towels with which the brethren wipe their hands and feet. Let him who goeth out, as well as him who is to come in, wash the feet of all. Let him return the utensils of his department to the Cellarer clean and whole. Let the Cellarer give the same to the one who cometh in, so that he may know what he giveth and what he receiveth back.

An hour before meal time let the weekly servers receive each a cup of drink and a piece of bread over the prescribed portion, that they may serve their brethren at the time of refectio without murmuring and undue strain. On solemn feast days, however, let them abstain till after Mass.

As soon as the morning office on Sunday is ended, let the weekly servers who come in and who go out, cast themselves upon their knees in the oratory before all, asking their prayers. Let him who goeth out of the weekly service, say the following verse: *Benedictus es, Domine Deus, qui adjuvisti me et consolatus se me* (Dan 3:52; Ps 85[86]:17). The one going out having said this three times and received the blessing, let the one who cometh in follow and say: *Deus in adiutorium meum intende; Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina* (Ps 69[70]:2). And let this also be repeated three times by all, and having received the blessing let him enter upon his weekly service.

### **Declaration art.108-109**

**108.** In his Rule St. Benedict does not speak of the union of monasteries among themselves but only of the internal organization of a monastery. In the course of history, however, various forms of joining monasteries together came about so that the religious life in the monasteries might be led more effectively and securely. In some of these unions the dangers of isolation were removed through the organization of a congregation, while the legitimate autonomy of the monasteries was preserved. In others, however, a form of centralization was arrived at in which the individual monasteries were dependent on a central abbey, as was the case in Cluny and generally in the foundations made from Molesme.

**109.** According to the principles set forth in the *Charta Charitatis*, the founders of Citeaux strove both to safeguard the legitimate autonomy of the monasteries and to establish a necessary union and to assure mutual aid through the General Chapters and annual visitations. Once the Order had grown greatly and the way of life had changed in many respects over the course of the centuries, congregations arose, as we have already very briefly outlined above.

Thus, our Order now consists *de facto* of monastic congregations according to the juridical norm, as the General Chapter has explicitly defined:

1. Congregatio Regularis Observantiae S. Bernardi seu de Castella,
2. Congregatio S. Bernardi in Italia,
3. Congregatio Coronae Aragonum,
4. Congregatio Augiensis



5. Congregatio B.M.V. Mediatricis Omnium Gratiarum,
6. Congregatio Austriaca,
7. Congregatio Immaculate Conceptionis B.M.V.,
8. Congregatio Circensis,
9. Congregatio Purissimi Cordis B.M.V.,
10. Congregatio Casamariensis,
11. Congregatio Reginae Mundi seu Poloniae,
12. Congregatio Brasiliensis,
13. Congregatio S. Familiae,
14. Congregatio Monasteriorum Cisterciensium de S. Bernardo  
and of some monasteries of men and of women that are  
not incorporated into a congregation.

The federations of monasteries of nuns that are of pontifical right have great merit and should continue to pursue their task for the benefit of their monasteries and of the Order.

## **CHAPTER XXXVI. *Of the Sick Brethren***

<p>14 May 16 Aug. 18 Nov. 9 Feb.</p>
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**B**efore and above all things, care must be taken of the sick, that they be served in very truth as Christ is served; because He hath said, "I was sick and you visited Me" (Mt 25:36). And "As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me" (Mt 25:40). But let the sick themselves also consider that they are served for the honor of God, and let them not grieve their brethren who serve them by unnecessary demands. These must, however, be patiently borne with, because from such as these a more bountiful reward is gained. Let the Abbot's greatest concern, therefore, be that they suffer no neglect.

Let a cell be set apart for the sick brethren, and a God-fearing, diligent, and careful attendant be appointed to serve them. Let the use of the bath be offered to the sick as often as it is useful, but let it be granted more rarely to the healthy and especially the young. Thus also let the use of meat be granted to the sick and to the very weak for their recovery. But when they have been restored let them all abstain from meat in the usual manner.

But let the Abbot exercise the utmost care that the sick are not neglected by the Cellarer or the attendants, because whatever his disciples do amiss falleth back on him.

## Declaration art.56

66. We have been called to share in the cross of Christ, which consists for us most often in the following:

- a) to humble oneself, fleeing vain glory and egotistical ambitions;
- b) to perform our daily work well, which today often demands of us such sacrifices that we are right to compare it with the austerities of ancient monastic life;
- c) to exercise patience, by which we endure with a good spirit the infirmities of body and soul, the inadequacies of our abilities, and the burdens of common life;
- d) to love our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers;
- e) to accept old age and death in such a way that we profess as much as possible our faith and hope in eternal life.

## CHAPTER XXXVII. *Of the Aged and Children*

15 May  
17 Aug.  
19 Nov.  
10 Feb.

**A**lthough human nature is of itself drawn to feel compassion for these life-periods, namely, old age and childhood, still, let the decree of the Rule make provision also for them. Let their natural weakness be always taken into account and let the strictness of the Rule not be kept with them in respect to food, but let there be a tender regard in their behalf and let them eat before regular hours.

## Declaration art.32

32. Today more than earlier, we are aware of the dignity and freedom of the human person. We know that God draws us to Himself not by force but by our own decision. The human being of our age rightly rejects impositions that repress his nature as a person because no one will perform a deed pleasing to God if he is constrained by force or fear. Moreover, psychology has sufficiently shown how important the development of one's nature as a person is for his whole life, which must be considered of the greatest importance also in our monastic life.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII. *Of the Weekly Reader*

16 May  
18 Aug.  
20 Nov.  
11 Feb.

**R**eading must not be wanting at the table of the brethren when they are eating. Neither let anyone who may chance to take up the book venture to read there; but let him who is to read for the whole week enter upon that office on Sunday. After Mass and Communion let him ask all to pray for him that God may ward off from him the spirit of pride. And let the following verse be said three times by all in the oratory, he beginning it: *Domine, labia mea aperies, et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam* (Ps 50[51]:17), and thus having received the blessing let him enter upon the reading.

Let the deepest silence be maintained that no whispering or voice be heard except that of the reader alone. But let the brethren so help each other to what is needed for eating and drinking, that no one need ask for anything. If, however, anything should be wanted, let it be asked for by means of a sign of any kind rather than a sound. And let no one presume to ask any questions there, either about the book or anything else, in order that no cause to speak be given [to the devil] (Eph 4:27; 1 Tm 5:14), unless, perchance, the Superior wisheth to say a few words for edification.

Let the brother who is reader for the week take a little bread and wine before he beginneth to read, on account of Holy Communion, and lest it should be too hard for him to fast so long. Afterward, however, let him take his meal in the kitchen with the weekly servers and the waiters. The brethren, however, will not read or sing in order, but only those who edify their hearers.

### Declaration art.110-112

**110.** The principles of subsidiarity and of legitimate pluralism have great importance in the structure of the congregations. Whatever the individual monasteries for their part can carry out through their effective competence and more accurate knowledge of local conditions should be left to them. It belongs to the organs of the congregation to help the efforts of the individual communities with fraternal advice and aid, to coordinate their efforts toward common goals, and to correct abuses if any should creep in; they also represent them before ecclesiastical and civil authorities. According to the principle of pluralism, the monasteries' specific characteristics and special tasks are to be recognized and the diversity of their gifts are to be directed toward the harmony of common goals lest the unity of the Congregation be endangered.

111. Among the monasteries, the principle of pluralism notwithstanding, there is very often not only the bond of juridical organization but also a certain common ideal. The delineation of this ideal and of the more important means appropriate and necessary for reaching it will be found in the constitutions of each congregation which, after consultation of the individual communities, are worked out by the congregational chapter and approved by the Holy See.

112. The union of our monasteries under their respective congregational chapters and the Abbot Presidents has as its goal above all else that Cistercian life flourish more abundantly in our monasteries, the observance of the Rule be preserved more safely, charitable help be offered one another more promptly in times of necessity, the strengths of the individual communities, if necessary, be joined together for larger projects to be accomplished with common work, whatever is in opposition to the life of the monasteries be more effectively attacked and the tasks which the Church and modern society demand of monasteries be completed more securely and easily. In addition to this common goal of the individual congregations of the Order, the congregations can have a special goal, clearly articulated in this case in their own constitutions.

## **CHAPTER XXXIX. *Of the Quantity of Food***

17 May  
19 Aug.  
21 Nov.  
12 Feb.

**M**aking allowance for the infirmities of different persons, we believe that for the daily meal, both at the sixth and the ninth hour, two kinds of cooked food are sufficient at all meals; so that he who perchance cannot eat of one, may make his meal of the other. Let two kinds of cooked food, therefore, be sufficient for all the brethren. And if there be fruit or fresh vegetables, a third may be added. Let a pound of bread be sufficient for the day, whether there be only one meal or both dinner and supper. If they are to eat supper, let a third part of the pound be reserved by the Cellarer and be given at supper.

If, however, the work hath been especially hard, it is left to the discretion and power of the Abbot to add something, if he think fit, barring above all things every excess, that a monk be not overtaken by indigestion. For nothing is so contrary to Christians as excess, as our Lord saith: "See that your hearts be not overcharged with surfeiting" (Lk 21:34).

Let the same quantity of food, however, not be served out to young children but less than to older ones, observing measure in all things.

But let all except the very weak and the sick abstain altogether from eating the flesh of four-footed animals.

### **Declaration art.113-114,118**

**113.** The Congregational Chapter is the highest power within the congregation, the principles presented above having been observed. In addition to the major superiors, delegates are also present at the Congregational Chapter with a deliberative vote, elected for this task by all the members of the congregation according to the congregation's constitutions.

**114.** The primary task of the congregational chapter is to be a forum for fraternal discussion and legislation, so that it might:

- a) elaborate constitutions appropriate for our times, with a clear definition of the goals, ideals, and common tasks of the congregation;
- b) compile and publish books of customs, declarations and other instructions, in which the principles of the congregation's constitutions are applied to the circumstances of time and place;
- c) investigate new possibilities with regard to life and work, communicate and coordinate among all the monasteries the experiences and experimental undertakings of individual monasteries;
- d) work out projects and plans that are to be accomplished by the common exertion of forces; strive to find a solution to difficulties by a common effort;
- e) promote the better and more rational use of material and personal resources.

To provide as well as possible for the common good, the Congregational Chapter should be held often and, if it would prove useful, meetings of the members of the Congregational Chapter should take place in another form more often.

**118.** The congregations are of vital importance in our Order: on the one hand, individual monasteries are too small and weak to live and work in full and absolute independence (*autarkia*); on the other hand, the Order itself includes such various and differing observances, forms and apostolates, that very often it cannot be governed with uniform norms or methods. Therefore, the congregation is, or should be, that living and concrete unity of action that joins together the resources of very many houses that have the same ideals and similar tasks in life. From this the necessity and utility of congregations in the structure of our Order is clear.

## CHAPTER XL. *Of the Quantity of Drink*

18 May  
20 Aug.  
22 Nov.  
13 Feb.

**E**very one hath his proper gift from God, one after this manner and another after that (1 Cor 7:7). It is with some hesitation, therefore, that we determine the measure of nourishment for others. However, making allowance for the weakness of the infirm, we think one hemina of wine a day is sufficient for each one. But to whom God granteth the endurance of abstinence, let them know that they will have their special reward. If the circumstances of the place, or the work, or the summer's heat should require more, let that depend on the judgment of the Superior, who must above all things see to it, that excess or drunkenness do not creep in. Although we read that wine is not at all proper for monks, yet, because monks in our times cannot be persuaded of this, let us agree to this, at least, that we do not drink to satiety, but sparingly; because "wine maketh even wise men fall off" (Sir 19:2). But where the poverty of the place will not permit the aforesaid measure to be had, but much less, or none at all, let those who live there bless God and murmur not. This we charge above all things, that they live without murmuring.

### Declaration art.119-120

**119.** Our congregations are united in the Cistercian Order, both in virtue of a common goal and ideal and in virtue of common structures and juridical organs. The primary goal of this union is mutual inspiration and mutual practical aid in cultivating and carrying out the monastic life.

Our congregations manifest differences that are not insignificant both in monastic forms and traditions and in their work because of their diverse historical evolutions and various cultural and social conditions. Those differences, however, do not destroy the Order's deeper unity but serve the vitality and richness of the Order's life if the gifts of this manifold grace are directed to one another and shared. It is, therefore, of great importance that this pluralism be recognized in its positive social and spiritual meaning, and that the diverse but complementary resources be united for practical and effective cooperation.

**120.** The General Chapter of the Order is the central legislative and juridical organ for fraternal deliberation, with the legitimate autonomy however preserved that according to common and particular law belongs to each congregation and monastery.

The task of the General Chapter is to encourage members to strive toward the Order's common ideal:

- a) to declare and explain the fundamental values that constitute our common vocation (Christian, religious, monastic, and Cistercian) even if these values cannot be realized in the same concrete manner by all;
- b) to effectively promote communication among the congregations, mutual aid, and cooperation in common tasks.

## **CHAPTER XLI. *At What Times the Brethren Should Take Their Refection***

<p><b>19 May</b> <b>21 Aug.</b> <b>23 Nov.</b> <b>14 Feb.</b></p>
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**F**rom holy Easter till Pentecost let the brethren dine at the sixth hour and take supper in the evening. From Pentecost on, however, during the whole summer, if the monks have no work in the fields and the excess of the heat doth not interfere, let them fast on Wednesday and Friday until the ninth hour; but on the other days let them dine at the sixth hour. This sixth hour for dinner is to be continued, if they have work in the fields or the heat of the summer is great. Let the Abbot provide for this; and so let him manage and adapt everything that souls may be saved, and that what the brethren do, they may do without having a reasonable cause to murmur. From the ides of September until the beginning of Lent let them always dine at the ninth hour. During Lent, however, until Easter, let them dine in the evening. But let this evening hour be so arranged that they will not need lamp-light during their meal; but let everything be finished whilst it is still day. But at all times let the hour of meals, whether for dinner or for supper, be so arranged that everything is done by daylight.

### **Declaration art.121-122**

**121.** The strictly legislative function of the General Chapter, although it does have great importance, is no longer today its primary task. On account of the diversity of forms and apostolates in our communities as well as because of the rapid change in the conditions of life, uniform regulation through laws in the strict sense is very often impossible or useless. Therefore, the General Chapter will rarely establish laws obliging the whole Order. It will most often define only general norms for acting, which one will then be able to adapt to the particular regional and congregational needs. While the field of the Chapter's legislative function will be restricted on one

side in the future, the other tasks of the General Chapter listed above (the interpretation of goals and values; fraternal discussion of mutual assistance in common causes) will receive much greater importance.

**122.** In the first centuries of the Order, General Chapters were held annually according to the precepts of the Charta Caritatis and of the Roman Pontiffs. In our times both because the individual congregational chapters meet more frequently and because the expense of trips to the Chapter is burdensome for some, ordinary General Chapters are held more rarely, every five years. The meetings of the Synod of the Order will be held more frequently.

## **CHAPTER XLII. *That No One Speak after Complin***

**20 May**  
**22 Aug.**  
**24 Nov.**  
**15 Feb.**

**M**onks should always be given to silence, especially, however, during the hours of the night. Therefore, on every day, whether of fast or of a mid-day meal, as soon as they have risen from their evening meal, let all sit together in one place, and let one read the Conferences or the Lives of the Fathers, or something else that will edify the hearers; not, however, the Heptateuch or the Books of the Kings, because it would not be wholesome for weak minds to hear this part of the Scripture at that hour; they should, however, be read at other times. But if it was a fast-day, then, when Vespers have been said, and after a short interval, let them next come together for the reading of the Conferences, as we have said; and when the four or five pages have been read, or as much as the hour will permit, and all have assembled in one place during the time of the reading, let him also come who was perchance engaged in work enjoined on him. All, therefore, having assembled in one place, let them say Complin, and after going out from Complin, let there be no more permission from that time on for anyone to say anything. If, however, anyone is found to break this rule, let him undergo heavy punishment, unless the needs of guests should arise, or the Abbot should perhaps give a command to anyone. But let even this be done with the utmost gravity and moderation.

### **Declaration art.124-125**

**124.** Our Order clearly has much in common especially with other monastic orders. Therefore of the greatest importance is collaboration with them in



matters that are common to monks, such as promoting the study of the monastic patrimony, cultivating and investigating liturgical matters, solving juridical issues, forming and educating novices and young monks, finding appropriate forms of community life, daily schedule and practical governance.

Furthermore, we should dedicate ourselves to prayer for one another, freely offer charitable assistance, and also communicate with others as well as possible events of the Order, congregations or monasteries.

**125.** In virtue of their primacy over the universal Church, the Roman pontiffs have exempted from the local ordinary's jurisdiction our Order, its congregations and our monasteries with both their male and female members, though not to the same degree everywhere, so that one might provide for a more perfect observance of the monastic life according to the character of our Order. This exemption, however, does not prevent our monasteries from being under the jurisdiction of bishops in certain matters according to the norm of common and particular law, nor does it prevent our monasteries, according to their proper vocation, from working closely together with the local church.

We want always to follow the Roman Pontiff and the bishops, as the successors of the Apostles, with obedience and reverence and to be of help to them insofar as we can and should, keeping in mind the nature of our vocation. It is of great importance that in our apostolic works there be an ordered cooperation with the hierarchy, indeed with the entire diocesan and religious clergy, which is usefully established and nourished in diocesan synods and other meetings.

In this way we promote that ecclesiastical communion which should be so close to our hearts and the peak of which is found in the Eucharistic celebration, in which we offer daily prayers for the hierarchy and the entire people of God.

### **CHAPTER XLIII. Of Those Who Are Tardy in Coming to the Work of God or to Table**

**21 May**  
**23 Aug.**  
**25 Nov.**  
**16 Feb.**

**A**s soon as the signal for the time of the divine office is heard, let everyone, leaving whatever he hath in his hands, hasten with all speed, yet with gravity, that there may be no cause for levity. Therefore, let nothing be preferred to the Work of God. If at Matins anyone cometh after the *Gloria* of the 94th psalm, which on that account we

wish to be much drawn out and said slowly, let him not stand in his place in the choir; but let him stand last of all, or in a place which the Abbot hath set apart for such careless ones, that he may be seen by him and by all, until, the Work of God being ended, he maketh satisfaction by public penance. The reason, however, why we think they should stand in the last place, or apart from the rest, is this, that seen by all they may amend for very shame. For if they stayed outside the oratory, there might be one who would go back to sleep, or anyhow would seat himself outside, indulge in vain gossip, and give a "chance to the devil" (Eph 4:27; 1 Tm 5:14). Let him go inside, therefore, that he may not lose the whole, and may amend for the future.

At the day hours, however, whoever doth not arrive for the Work of God after the verse and the *Gloria* of the first psalm, which is said after the verse, let him stand in the last place, according to the rule which we stated above; and let him not attempt to join the choir of the chanters until he hath made satisfaction, unless, perchance, the Abbot's permission hath given him leave to do so, with the understanding that he atone the fault afterwards.

If anyone doth not come to table before the verse, so that all may say the verse and pray together and sit down to table at the same time, let him be twice corrected for this, if he failed to come through his own fault and negligence. If he doth not amend after this, let him not be permitted to eat at the common table; but separated from the company of all, let him eat alone, his portion of wine being taken from him, until he hath made satisfaction and hath amended. In like manner let him suffer who is not present also at the verse which is said after the refectio.

And let no one presume to take food or drink before or after the appointed time. But if anything should be offered to a brother by the Superior and he refuseth to accept it, and afterwards desireth what at first he refused or anything else, let him receive nothing at all, until he maketh due satisfaction.

### **Declaration art.88**

**88.** As we have seen, a juridical structure and the organization of our life by laws are altogether necessary for a monastic community; however, they are not ends in themselves but only means of great importance serving the goals of monastic life. Law is for life and not *vice versa*. Legal structures and precepts should promote and aid the life of individuals and the community, and should help them reach their goals. They should not hinder or suffocate them. The cause of the unrest and the "crisis of authority" that is manifested in our times not only throughout civil society but also the Church and religious communities derives to a large extent from the fact that laws and institutional structures often do not correspond

sufficiently to today's circumstances or to life's just demands. Not infrequently these laws and institutional structures appear to subordinates as obsolete, foreign, and irrational. It is the responsibility of the competent authorities to see that the laws and institutions truly promote and support the life of today's community and that they not be obsolete and incongruous and thus impede the progress of life. The Second Vatican Council also demands this of us when it decrees that we submit to an examination and appropriately revise the constitutions and manner of governance of the monasteries, the congregations and the Order, and that we suppress those precepts that are obsolete.

## **CHAPTER XLIV. Of Those Who Are Excommunicated -- How They Make Satisfaction**

22 May
24 Aug.
26 Nov.
17 Feb.

**W**hoever is excommunicated for graver faults from the oratory and the table, let him, at the time that the Work of God is celebrated in the oratory, lie stretched, face down in silence before the door of the oratory at the feet of all who pass out. And let him do this until the Abbot judgeth that it is enough. When he then cometh at the Abbot's bidding, let him cast himself at the Abbot's feet, then at the feet of all, that they may pray for him. If then the Abbot ordereth it, let him be received back into the choir in the place which the Abbot shall direct; yet so that he doth not presume to intone a psalm or a lesson or anything else in the oratory, unless the Abbot again biddeth him to do so. Then, at all the Hours, when the Work of God is ended, let him cast himself on the ground in the place where he standeth, and thus let him make satisfaction, until the Abbot again biddeth him finally to cease from this penance.

But let those who are excommunicated for lighter faults from the table only make satisfaction in the oratory, as long as the Abbot commandeth, and let them perform this until he giveth his blessing and saith, "It is enough."

### **Declaration art.89**

**89.** So that the structures of governance and the legislation can in a true sense prove useful for our life, the following must be kept in mind:

- a) *Laws are not to be overly multiplied:* freedom for action and initiatives should not be excessively restricted by detailed norms. Only those matters are to be subject to legislation which demand a certain

uniformity of action and coordination of efforts for common goals. Other matters, however, are to be left to the responsibility of superiors and officials or the free and responsible decision of the confreres.

- b) *Laws are to be constantly adapted to the conditions of life.* Since the conditions, demands, and tasks of life are constantly changing, and in our age the changes are uniquely profound and fast, the means of organizing life – that is, the laws and juridical structures – are to be reviewed and revised again and again. Even the means and structures which at one time seemed useful, indeed were very good, lose their force and usefulness as the circumstances of life change. In fact, they can harm the progress of life. The Founders' proposals and precepts with regard to the organization of monastic life and its juridical structures, although they are to be held in great esteem, are however not unchanging and virtually everlasting norms, for they themselves were connected with the changeable conditions of their times. One must therefore consider prudently whether and to what degree they correspond to the new demands of life. Nor should such a review of the laws and norms of life be postponed too long, so that a community's vitality perishes and dangerous tensions arise among the confreres because of the excessively rigid and obsolete norms. In the constitutions and in the local statutes themselves, the manner and legitimate reasons are to be included by which the revision and change of the laws can be petitioned and carried out by the respective community.
- c) *The continuity of legislation: one must respect the tradition.* Although varied and changeable, life has nevertheless a marvelous continuity and tenacity. In the organization of our life, we should also be careful not to throw away the whole Cistercian tradition, about which we have just spoken and thus violently interrupt the continuity of monastic life. Just as it is destructive to retain obsolete forms of organization and inadequate laws, it is also dangerous to uproot ourselves from the values of our tradition and in the name of accommodation to overturn fundamental elements of our life. So also in the revision of a juridical structure or in the formulation of new legislation, it is fitting that we regard the experiences of previous ages as a model and that we preserve the natural continuity and harmony with the tradition. We must, however, beware that fidelity to tradition not lead to immobility or false security, and that it not blind us to the new demands of life whether in the Church or in the society of our time.
- d) Laws and other statutes are only then useful for living if *they prudently prescribe a possible norm for acting.* For if they define things that are too difficult for modern man or that are foreign to him, they invite him to neglect the laws or embitter even well-intentioned men by imposing

insupportable burdens. The law should, therefore, be simple and clear so that it not disturb the normal course of life with too much complication or ambiguity. It should always respect the reality of our monasteries and their members, nor should it enjoin what is foreign or removed from their way of life. On the other hand, they should not approve existing imperfections or vices. It should be moderate and should positively point out the path to the good rather than serving negatively as a deterrent so that monks of good will can fulfill it willingly. This same principle also reminds us that laws and precepts strictly speaking can sometimes not determine the norm for acting but that the norm is more appropriately determined by more flexible guidelines, by showing several possible ways of acting.

## **CHAPTER XLV. *Of Those Who Commit a Fault in the Oratory***

**23 May**  
**25 Aug.**  
**27 Nov.**  
**18 Feb.**

**I**f anyone whilst he reciteth a psalm, a responsory, an antiphon, or a lesson, maketh a mistake, and doth not humble himself there before all by making satisfaction, let him undergo a greater punishment, because he would not correct by humility what he did amiss through negligence. But let children be beaten for such a fault.

### **Declaration art.90**

**90.** In preparing laws or in reaching decisions that affect the community, the conditions of modern life call for and the Second Vatican Council demands that all the members of the community play a role. If all matters are determined by the judgment of the superiors or a few counselors, the members of communities will rightly feel that the norms of their lives and decisions made are foreign to them. This participation of all can take place in differing ways and degrees (by the prior consultation of individuals and communities; by the vote of the conventual chapter; by the election of officials and delegates; by the right to make proposals, etc.). It is, however, altogether necessary that everywhere and on every level of the Order's structure appropriate forms for real and active participation be established.

## CHAPTER XLVI. Of Those Who Fail in Any Other Matters

24 May  
26 Aug.  
28 Nov.  
19 Feb.

**I**f anyone whilst engaged in any work, in the kitchen, in the cellar, in serving, in the bakery, in the garden, at any art or work in any place whatever, committeth a fault, or breaketh or loseth anything, or transgresseth in any way whatever, and he doth not forthwith come before the Abbot and the community, and of his own accord confess his offense and make satisfaction, and it becometh known through another, let him be subjected to a greater correction.

If, however, the cause of the offense is secret, let him disclose it to the Abbot alone, or to his spiritual Superiors, who know how to heal their own wounds, and not expose and make public those of others.

### Declaration art.91

**91.** While laws and other written norms regulate the more general and permanent aspects of monastic life, in many matters the organization of concrete daily life and particular decisions belong to the personal authority of the superiors and officials. The exercise of this authority has certainly become more difficult and more involved than before both because of the new circumstances of our times and because of the changed attitude of modern man toward authority.

On the one hand, because of very rapid changes and developments, which can hardly be foreseen much less governed by general laws, very many issues call for the personal and immediate decision of the superiors, and that often in matters that are very complex and call for professional expertise. On the other hand, men today respect the superior's office itself less but often demand of the superiors human qualities and perfections to an excessive degree. They pass judgment openly and bitterly on the superiors' errors and deficiencies, they want to see the reasons for an order clearly, and they do not readily show obedience if an order opposes their personal judgment or convenience.

Although the task of those who exercise authority in the community is certainly difficult, it is not a labor taken up in vain. Indeed, if appropriate forms and methods of governing are worked out, it can become much more effective than in any age before: for in our age confreres are prompter for sincere and active cooperation, and they have been even better prepared to share with the superiors the care and concern for the common good.

## **CHAPTER XLVII. Of Giving the Signal for the Time of the Work of God**

**25 May**  
**27 Aug.**  
**29 Nov.**  
**20 Feb.**

**L**et it be the Abbot's care that the time for the Work of God be announced both by day and by night; either to announce it himself, or to entrust this charge to a careful brother that everything may be

done at the proper time.

Let those who have been ordered, intone the psalms or the antiphons in their turn after the Abbot. No one, however, should presume to sing or read unless he is able so to perform this office that the hearers may be edified; and let it be done with humility, gravity, and reverence by him whom the Abbot hath ordered.

### **Declaration art.92**

**92.** To this new type of exercising authority the following belong:

- a) that superiors inform the members about matters of the monastery and the Order, that they apprise the members of difficulties and problems sincerely and openly, and that they seek out and learn their opinions and proposals;
- b) that they not fear prudent criticism or blame, and that they not disdain to carry out necessary corrections;
- c) that they recognize the complexity and multiplicity of their task and not think that they can carry out everything alone, and that they share their roles and functions with qualified members and freely seek out their experience;
- d) that they grant ample freedom for action to individual confreres and especially to officials or those assigned a special duty, and that they respect their competence in the assigned task; but at the same time they should not neglect to require an accurate report on the matters that have been entrusted to their care and execution.

## CHAPTER XLVIII. *Of the Daily Work*

RB 48,1-9

26 May  
28 Aug.  
30 Nov.  
21 Feb.

**I**dleness is the enemy of the soul; and therefore the brethren ought to be employed in manual labor at certain times, at others, in devout reading. Hence, we believe that the time for each will be properly ordered by the following arrangement; namely, that from Easter till the calends of October, they go out in the morning from the first till about the fourth hour, to do the necessary work, but that from the fourth till about the sixth hour they devote to reading. After the sixth hour, however, when they have risen from table, let them rest in their beds in complete silence; or if, perhaps, anyone desireth to read for himself, let him so read that he doth not disturb others. Let None be said somewhat earlier, about the middle of the eighth hour; and then let them work again at what is necessary until Vespers.

If, however, the needs of the place, or poverty should require that they do the work of gathering the harvest themselves, let them not be downcast, for then are they monks in truth, if they live by the work of their hands, as did also our forefathers and the Apostles. However, on account of the faint-hearted let all things be done with moderation.

### Declaration art.34,69

**34.** In our days theology also sees more clearly the positive value which creation, work and human progress hold for the whole of human life. Consequently, the sense of responsibility should grow in us so that with the entire human community we would also concern ourselves with earthly values. For we recognize that we too should share in the work of promoting that progress by which the created world is more and more subjected to the power of the human being, and the entire society in a just and equitable way shares in the fruits of their work. For only by such serious work is the sanctification of all things in Christ and the return of every creature to God brought about.

**69.** Like all men we, too, are subject to the common law of serious work so that through our work we might collaborate in the task of rendering the world ever more perfect and of carrying out God's plans in this world. By doing this we also fulfill our vocation. For it is false to say that the perfection of each person's soul and the tasks of this life are at odds when, in fact, they can be combined very well. No one should of necessity remove himself from the affairs of this mortal life to strive for Christian



perfection. For this activity carried out in the proper manner not only does not endanger one's dignity as a man and as a Christian but perfects it.

Our work, therefore, is not only a measure against idleness or some sort of "occupation" only to be carried out temporarily. It is an essential part of our striving to acquire Christian perfection. At the same time, it is also brotherly service to the monastic community and to people living in the world if, of course, we perform it competently and responsibly.

**RB 48,10-13**

27 May  
29 Aug.  
1<sup>st</sup> Dec.  
22 Feb.

**F**rom the calends of October till the beginning of Lent, let them apply themselves to reading until the second hour complete. At the second hour let Tierce be said, and then let all be employed in the work which hath been assigned to them till the ninth hour. When, however, the first signal for the hour of None hath been given, let each one leave off from work and be ready when the second signal shall strike. But after their repast let them devote themselves to reading or the psalms.

**Declaration art.70**

**70.** The formation and education of youth in schools and colleges suits monastic life very well, and those who dedicate themselves to such work contribute very much to furthering God's Kingdom and human society. For they intend to enrich not only the intellect but the whole person by showing the intrinsic connection between the arts and sciences and the Christian spirit. When communicating truths about created things, they lead their students to the source of all truth and creation, Christ Himself. Furthermore, since whatever we do to even one of the least of Christ's brothers, we do to Christ Himself, one serves Him in a special way in the education of youth.

**RB 48,14-25**

28 May  
30 Aug.  
2 Dec.  
23 Feb.

**D**uring the Lenten season let them be employed in reading from morning until the third hour, and till the tenth hour let them do the work which is imposed on them. During these days of Lent let all received books from the library, and let them read them through in order. These books are to be given out at the beginning of the Lenten season.

Above all, let one or two of the seniors be appointed to go about the monastery during the time that the brethren devote to reading and take notice, lest perhaps a slothful brother be found who giveth himself up to idleness or vain talk, and doth not attend to his reading, and is unprofitable, not only to himself, but disturbeth also others. If such a one be found (which God forbid), let him be punished once and again. If he doth not amend, let him come under the correction of the Rule in such a way that others may fear. And let not brother join brother at undue times.

On Sunday also let all devote themselves to reading, except those who are appointed to the various functions. But if anyone should be so careless and slothful that he will not or cannot meditate or read, let some work be given him to do, that he may not be idle.

Let such work or charge be given to the weak and the sickly brethren, that they are neither idle, nor so wearied with the strain of work that they are driven away. Their weakness must be taken into account by the Abbot.

### **Declaration art.73**

**73.** We should consider manual labor not only as a very useful and frequently necessary element of common life but as a sign of solidarity with all human beings, especially the poor, who provide for themselves and their families the necessities of life by their daily and humble work. It is also an effective instrument of self-denial and participation in the Lord's cross as well as of serving the neighbor, especially one's brothers in the monastery. Therefore, it should never be considered simply as an occupation that is in itself indifferent for one's spiritual life. It should rather be exercised competently and effectively as an instrument of love.

## **CHAPTER XLIX. *On the Keeping of Lent***

<b>29 May</b>
<b>31 Aug.</b>
<b>3 Dec.</b>
<b>24 Feb.</b>

**T**he life of a monk ought always to be a Lenten observance. However, since such virtue is that of few, we advise that during these days of Lent he guard his life with all purity and at the same time

wash away during these holy days all the shortcomings of other times. This will then be worthily done, if we restrain ourselves from all vices. Let us devote ourselves to tearful prayers, to reading and compunction of heart, and to abstinence.

During these days, therefore, let us add something to the usual amount of our service, special prayers, abstinence from food and drink, that each one

offer to God "with the joy of the Holy Ghost" (1 Thes 1:6), of his own accord, something above his prescribed measure; namely, let him withdraw from his body somewhat of food, drink, sleep, speech, merriment, and with the gladness of spiritual desire await holy Easter.

Let each one, however, make known to his Abbot what he offereth and let it be done with his approval and blessing; because what is done without permission of the spiritual father will be imputed to presumption and vain glory, and not to merit. Therefore, let all be done with the approval of the Abbot.

### **Declaration art.30-31**

**30.** The history of almost nine centuries has left deep traces in our Order, which was always part of the Church and the world, and which has always participated in their changes and crises. Also today the movements, aspirations, convictions, and anxieties of our time are keenly felt in the Order and to a large extent shape the work of renewal.

It would be too long to describe here all the principal movements of the Church and world today, even if only summarily. They are to a large extent, moreover, found in the documents of the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent documents of the Church, which examine many of the problems facing the Church in the world today. Here we want to explain and to apply to ourselves only certain of the more principal concerns of religious life today.

**31.** In recent decades Catholic theology has been profoundly renewed and is still in a state of rapid development. The biblical movement is probing Scripture with new methods, the patristic movement is opening up for theology previously unknown treasures, the liturgical movement is casting new light on the Church's sacramental and prayer life. Theological anthropology, ecclesiology, the theology of the religious life -- to name just a few fields of intensive work -- are offering in more than a few areas new perspectives and new understandings of God's life in us. The principal elements of Cistercian life today and our appropriate renewal should be directed according to the approved perspectives of this contemporary theology, which has already born such fruit in the Second Vatican Council.

## **CHAPTER L. Of Brethren Who Work a Long Distance from the Oratory or Are on a Journey**

30 May  
1<sup>st</sup> Sept.  
4 Dec.  
25 Feb.

**T**he brethren who are at work too far away, and cannot come to the oratory at the appointed time, and the Abbot hath assured himself that such is the case -- let them perform the Work of God in the fear of God and on bended knees where they are working. In like manner let those who are sent on a journey not permit the appointed hours to pass by; but let them say the office by themselves as best they can, and not neglect to fulfil the obligation of divine service.

### **Declaration art.71**

71. The formation and education of youth in schools and colleges suits monastic life very well, and those who dedicate themselves to such work contribute very much to furthering God's Kingdom and human society. For they intend to enrich not only the intellect but the whole person by showing the intrinsic connection between the arts and sciences and the Christian spirit. When communicating truths about created things, they lead their students to the source of all truth and creation, Christ Himself. Furthermore, since whatever we do to even one of the least of Christ's brothers, we do to Christ Himself, one serves Him in a special way in the education of youth.

## **CHAPTER LI. Of the Brethren Who Do Not Go Very Far Away**

31 May  
2 Sept.  
5 Dec.  
26 Feb.

**A** brother who is sent out on any business and is expected to return to the monastery the same day, may not presume to eat outside, even though he be urgently requested to do so, unless, indeed, it is commanded him by his Abbot. If he act otherwise, let him be excommunicated.

### **Declaration art.76**

76. If we are to be able to give ourselves cheerfully and promptly to our tasks, we should also concern ourselves with recreation. In establishing the daily schedule of the monastery, we should aim at a healthy balance

between prayer life, work and recreation, keeping in mind the principles of psychology and medicine. For when it is directed to its due purpose, recreation is not some sort of deviation from the spirit of monasticism but the condition for a well-balanced life. Only in this way will we be able to fulfill the Apostle's instruction: "God loves the cheerful giver."

## **CHAPTER LII. *Of the Oratory of the Monastery***

<b>1<sup>st</sup> June</b>
<b>3 Sept.</b>
<b>6 Dec.</b>
<b>27 Feb.</b>

**L**et the oratory be what it is called, and let nothing else be done or stored there. When the Work of God is finished, let all go out with the deepest silence, and let reverence be shown to God; that a brother who perhaps desireth to pray especially by himself is not prevented by another's misconduct. But if perhaps another desireth to pray alone in private, let him enter with simplicity and pray, not with a loud voice, but with tears and fervor of heart. Therefore, let him who doth not say his prayers in this way, not be permitted to stay in the oratory after the Work of God is finished, as we said, that another may not be disturbed.

### **Declaration art.36-37**

**36.** Together with men and women of our age, we also greatly desire to embrace authentic values, even in our religious and monastic life. Therefore, we want simple forms of life which manifest our attitude. Our actions should express the interior state of our soul. We desire to understand the meaning of our rites, and we want to conform our minds to our voices. We shun formalism and rituals that lack sense. With a sincere heart and an open mind we want to live for Him, who sees our hearts and does not judge according to appearances. By this search for simplicity, we feel that we have been united in a special way as well with the intentions of our Founding Fathers.

**37.** In this way our Order participates in the vital movements of the Church and secular history. And so while the Order draws constantly from the springs of her traditions, she should have before her eyes especially the future. For it is not allowed to believe that all perfection is contained either in remaining immobile in the church's and the Order's past ways of acting or in not approaching to some extent ways of acting congruent with the spirit of men and women in our age. These ways of acting, however, can be tested, according to the teaching of St. Paul, "Test all things; keep what is good."

The duty of seeing and interpreting the signs of the times according to light of the Gospel lies upon us just as it does upon the Church. We should do this in such a way that we can answer the questions of men and women in a manner appropriate to our generation. We should recognize and understand the world in which we live and its expectations, its desires, and its characteristics, for only in this way will our monasteries be the seedbeds to build up the Christian people.

## **CHAPTER LIII. *Of the Reception of Guests***

2 June  
4 Sept.  
7 Dec.  
28/★29 Feb.

**L**et all guests who arrive be received as Christ, because He will say: "I was a stranger and you took Me in" (Mt 25:35). And let due honor be shown to all, especially to those "of the household of the faith" (Gal 6:10) and to wayfarers.

When, therefore, a guest is announced, let him be met by the Superior and the brethren with every mark of charity. And let them first pray together, and then let them associate with one another in peace. This kiss of peace should not be given before a prayer hath first been said, on account of satanic deception. In the greeting let all humility be shown to the guests, whether coming or going; with the head bowed down or the whole body prostrate on the ground, let Christ be adored in them as He is also received.

When the guests have been received, let them be accompanied to prayer, and after that let the Superior, or whom he shall bid, sit down with them. Let the divine law be read to the guest that he may be edified, after which let every kindness be shown him. Let the fast be broken by the Superior in deference to the guest, unless, perchance, it be a day of solemn fast, which cannot be broken. Let the brethren, however, keep the customary fast. Let the Abbot pour the water on the guest's hands, and let both the Abbot and the whole brotherhood wash the feet of all the guests. When they have been washed, let them say this verse: "We have received Thy mercy, O God, in the midst of Thy temple" (Ps 47[48]:10). Let the greatest care be taken, especially in the reception of the poor and travelers, because Christ is received more specially in them; whereas regard for the wealthy itself procureth them respect.

★Let the kitchen of the Abbot and the guests be apart, that the brethren may not be disturbed by the guests who arrive at uncertain times and who are never wanting in the monastery. Let two brothers who are able to fulfil this office well go into the kitchen for a year. Let help be given them as they

need it, that they may serve without murmuring; and when they have not enough to do, let them go out again for work where it is commanded them. Let this course be followed, not only in this office, but in all the offices of the monastery -- that whenever the brethren need help, it be given them, and that when they have nothing to do, they again obey orders. Moreover, let also a God-fearing brother have assigned to him the apartment of the guests, where there should be sufficient number of beds made up; and let the house of God be wisely managed by the wise.

On no account let anyone who is not ordered to do so, associate or speak with guests; but if he meet or see them, having saluted them humbly, as we have said, and asked a blessing, let him pass on saying that he is not allowed to speak with a guest.

### **Declaration art.75**

75. A very old form of the apostolate of monks is hospitality, which should offer not so much material relief as spiritual food in its various forms.

All guests are to be received as Christ, for He himself will say, "I was a stranger and you received me." Insofar as it is possible, the divine law should be read to the guests to edify them, and afterwards every form of hospitality is to be shown them. One of the brothers should take care of the guest room, and the House of God should be administered wisely by wise men.

## **CHAPTER LIV. Whether a Monk Should Receive Letters or Anything Else**

3 June
5 Sept.
8 Dec.
1 <sup>st</sup> Mar.

**L**et it not be allowed at all for a monk to give or to receive letters, tokens, or gifts of any kind, either from parents or any other person, nor from each other, without the permission of the Abbot. But even if anything is sent him by his parents, let him not presume to accept it before it hath been made known to the Abbot. And if he order it to be accepted, let it be in the Abbot's power to give it to whom he pleaseth. And let not the brother to whom perchance it was sent, become sad, that "no chance be given to the devil" (Eph 4:27; 1 Tm 5:14). But whosoever shall presume to act otherwise, let him fall under the discipline of the Rule.

## CHAPTER LV. *Of the Clothing and the Footgear of the Brethren*

4 June  
6 Sept.  
9 Dec.  
2 Mar.

**L**et clothing be given to the brethren according to the circumstances of the place and the nature of the climate in which they live, because in cold regions more is needed, while in warm regions less. This consideration, therefore, resteth with the Abbot. We believe, however, that for a temperate climate a cowl and a tunic for each monk are sufficient, -- a woolen cowl for winter and a thin or worn one for summer, and a scapular for work, and stockings and shoes as covering for the feet. Let the monks not worry about the color or the texture of all these things, but let them be such as can be bought more cheaply. Let the Abbot, however, look to the size, that these garments are not too small, but fitted for those who are to wear them.

Let those who receive new clothes always return the old ones, to be put away in the wardrobe for the poor. For it is sufficient for a monk to have two tunics and two cowls, for wearing at night and for washing. Hence, what is over and above is superfluous and must be taken away. So, too, let them return stockings and whatever is old, when they receive anything new. Let those who are sent out on a journey receive trousers from the wardrobe, which, on their return, they will replace there, washed. The cowls and the tunics should also be a little better than the ones they usually wear, which they received from the wardrobe when they set out on a journey, and give back when they return.

For their bedding, let a straw mattress, a blanket, a coverlet, and a pillow be sufficient. These beds must, however, be frequently examined by the Abbot, to prevent personal goods from being found. And if anything should be found with anyone that he did not receive from the Abbot, let him fall under the severest discipline. And that this vice of private ownership may be cut off by the root, let everything necessary be given by the Abbot; namely, cowl, tunic, stockings, shoes, girdle, knife, pen, needle, towel, writing tablet; that all pretence of want may be removed. In this connection, however, let the following sentence from the Acts of the Apostles always be kept in mind by the Abbot: "And distribution was made to every man according as he had need" (Acts 4:35). In this manner, therefore, let the Abbot also have regard for the infirmities of the needy, not for the bad will of the envious. Yet in all his decisions, let the Abbot think of God's retribution.



**51.** As long as we are in the body, we must use the things of this world. But the spirit of poverty which derives from our vow should direct us in the use of material things for our own benefit and for that of our neighbors, remaining duly respectful toward creatures. Therefore, let us make every effort to provide help for the poor of our times by our renunciation. The fruits of our work we should use for the sake of our neighbor and the Church. For this very reason it is most appropriate that we undertake those jobs by which we are able to take care of our needs and at the same time to benefit others and preserve safe and intact created nature.

### **CHAPTER LVI. *Of the Abbot's Table***

<b>5 June</b>
<b>7 Sept.</b>
<b>10 Dec.</b>
<b>3 Mar.</b>

**L**et the Abbot's table always be with the guests and travelers. When, however, there are no guests, let it be in his power to invite any of the brethren he desireth. Let him provide, however, that one or two of the seniors always remain with the brethren for the sake of discipline.

### **CHAPTER LVII. *Of the Artists of the Monastery***

<b>6 June</b>
<b>8 Sept.</b>
<b>11 Dec.</b>
<b>4 Mar.</b>

**I**f there be skilled workmen in the monastery, let them work at their art in all humility, if the Abbot giveth his permission. But if anyone of them should grow proud by reason of his art, in that he seemeth to confer a benefit on the monastery, let him be removed from that work and not return to it, unless after he hath humbled himself, the Abbot again ordereth him to do so. But if any of the work of the artists is to be sold, let them, through whose hands the transaction must pass, see to it, that they do not presume to practice any fraud on the monastery. Let them always be mindful of Ananias and Saphira, lest, perhaps, the death which these suffered in the body (cf Acts 5:1-11), they and all who practice any fraud in things belonging to the monastery suffer in the soul. On the other hand, as regards the prices of these things, let not the vice of avarice creep in, but let it always be given a little cheaper than it can be given by seculars, That God May Be Glorified in All Things (1 Pt 4:11).

74. Several confreres in various monasteries make significant contributions to the promotion of sacred and secular disciplines by research in philosophy, theology, history, social and natural sciences, and others. Such work is of great value not only for the respective disciplines, but also for the whole of monastic life, which receives true riches from the deeper understanding of both created things and the things of faith. Special importance is due, however, to theology, which excels all other fields in its aid to the spiritual life of monks, spiritual guidance and pastoral ministry.

Many values accompany scholarly work: fidelity to truth, a sense of solidarity deriving from the need to work with others, ever clearer awareness of responsibility, and other such values.

## **CHAPTER LVIII. *Of the Manner of Admitting Brethren***

7 June
9 Sept.
12 Dec.
5 Mar.

**L**et easy admission not be given to one who newly cometh to change his life; but, as the Apostle saith, "Try the spirits, whether they be of God" (1 Jn 4:1). If, therefore, the newcomer keepeth on knocking, and after four or five days it is seen that he patiently beareth the harsh treatment offered him and the difficulty of admission, and that he persevereth in his request, let admission be granted him, and let him live for a few days in the apartment of the guests.

But afterward let him live in the apartment of novices, and there let him meditate, eat, and sleep. Let a senior also be appointed for him, who is qualified to win souls, who will observe him with great care and see whether he really seeketh God, whether he is eager for the Work of God, obedience and humiliations. Let him be shown all the hard and rugged things through which we pass on to God.

If he promiseth to remain steadfast, let this Rule be read to him in order after the lapse of two months, and let it be said to him: Behold the law under which thou desirest to combat. If thou canst keep it, enter; if, however, thou canst not, depart freely. If he still persevereth, then let him be taken back to the aforesaid apartment of the novices, and let him be tried again in all patience. And after the lapse of six months let the Rule be read over to him, that he may know for what purpose he entereth. And if he still remaineth firm, let the same Rule be read to him again after four months.

And if, after having weighed the matter with himself he promiseth to keep everything, and to do everything that is commanded him, then let him be received into the community, knowing that he is now placed under the law of the Rule, and that from that day forward it is no longer permitted to him to wrest his neck from under the yoke of the Rule, which after so long a deliberation he was at liberty either to refuse or to accept.

Let him who is received promise in the oratory, in the presence of all, before God and His saints, stability, the conversion of morals, and obedience, in order that, if he should ever do otherwise, he may know that he will be condemned by God "Whom he mocketh." Let him make a written statement of his promise in the name of the saints whose relics are there, and of the Abbot there present. Let him write this document with his own hand; or at least, if he doth not know how to write, let another write it at his request, and let the novice make his mark, and with his own hand place it on the altar. When he hath placed it there, let the novice next begin the verse: "Uphold me, O Lord, according to Thy word and I shall live; and let me not be confounded in my expectations" (Ps 118[119]:116). Then let all the brotherhood repeat this verse three times, adding the *Gloria Patri*.

Then let that novice brother cast himself down at the feet of all, that they may pray for him; and from that day let him be counted in the brotherhood. If he hath any property, let him first either dispose of it to the poor or bestow it on the monastery by a formal donation, reserving nothing for himself as indeed he should know that from that day onward he will no longer have power even over his own body.

Let him, therefore, be divested at once in the oratory of the garments with which he is clothed, and be vested in the garb of the monastery. But let the clothes of which he was divested by laid by in the wardrobe to be preserved, that, if on the devil's suasion he should ever consent to leave the monastery (which God forbid) he be then stripped of his monastic habit and cast out. But let him not receive the document of his profession which the Abbot took from the altar, but let it be preserved in the monastery.

### **Declaration art.39-42**

**39.** Our life can have no other ultimate goal than God, whom we must glorify in all things and seek as man's highest good and supreme happiness. The mediator and the way to God the Father is Christ present in the Church, in the community of our brothers and in the sacraments. We have embraced the monastic life so that we might live a life ordered toward toward this goal in a special, immediate and radical way, and so that we might be directed and led continuously and effectively to this same goal.

**40.** The monasteries of our Order should serve, protect and develop the vocation of the individual members. Therefore, the goal of seeking God is not only the individual's obligation. Both the general structure of the monastery's life, the school of the Lord's service, and the Abbot's commands and teaching -- "the leaven of divine justice" -- should support this goal. Thus, in this goal is the ultimate set of rationale for the life of our monasteries. Any other good, such as social recognition, usefulness to mankind or society, or material gain, must be subordinated and adjusted to this goal. They should never be put before spiritual progress, personal improvement, or growth in virtue.

**41.** If the monasteries should serve the vocation of the members, we must also realize that, should we ever lose this spirit of our vocation, no matter how much we might wish to be of use to the monastery, we estrange ourselves from the community and make our way of life senseless and empty. For his vocation and the response by which he accepts it make the monk. From this alone flows the only reason for our monasteries and our Order to exist.

**42.** Since God is only reached through Christ and in love, we have entered the school of love. Our love should, in a single, undivided act embrace God and our neighbor, who has been created in the image of God and redeemed by the blood of Christ. Therefore, true love should manifest itself in the twofold service of God and man. It is not right to oppose the two services as if service to God would not at the same time benefit man or as if service to our neighbor shaped by true love would not be a sacrifice offered to God. The undivided character of the act of love is the foundation of the unity between our prayer life and our work. In this way our work is integrated into divine worship, and the time given to contemplation is brought into harmony with endeavors serving society. Moreover, as love is the sum total and peak of all virtues, even devotional practices and observances must be subordinated to it.

## **CHAPTER LIX. *Of the Children of the Noble and of the Poor Who Are Offered***

<b>8 June</b>
<b>10 Sept.</b>
<b>13 Dec.</b>
<b>6 Mar.</b>

**I**f it happen that a nobleman offereth his son to God in the monastery and the boy is of tender age, let his parents execute the written promise which we have mentioned above; and with the oblation let them wrap that document and the boy's hand in the altar cloth and thus offer him.

As to their property, let them bind themselves under oath in the same document that they will never give him anything themselves nor through any other person, nor in any way whatever, nor leave a chance for his owning anything; or else, if they refuse to do this and want to make an offering to the monastery as an alms for their own benefit, let them make a donation to the monastery of whatever goods they wish to give, reserving to themselves the income of it, if they so desire. And let everything be so barred that the boy remain in no uncertainty, which might deceive and ruin him (which God forbid) -- a pass we have learned by experience.

Let those who are poor act in like manner. But as to those who have nothing at all, let them simply make the declaration, and with the oblation offer their son in the presence of witnesses.

### **Declaration art.43**

**43.** We seek God not out of our own initiative; He has first loved and sought us with an invitation to share His life. Our unceasing effort to seek God in Christ is rooted in our God-given vocation by which Christ is continuously calling us to a response full of love. We give a lasting response through our profession according to the Rule of St. Benedict, by which we subject our whole life to the service of Christ. Consequently, our profession consecrates our whole existence in a special way. This consecration has its deepest roots in the sacrament of Baptism and brings the sacrament to a fuller expression. The Church unites it to the sacrifice of the Mass.

## **CHAPTER LX. *Of Priests Who May Wish to Live in the Monastery***

9 June
11 Sept.
14 Dec.
7 Mar.

**I**f a priest asketh to be received into the monastery, let consent not be granted too readily; still, if he urgently persisteth in his request, let him know that he must keep the whole discipline of the Rule, and that nothing will be relaxed in his favor, that it may be as it is written: "Friend, whereunto art thou come" (Mt 26:25)?

It may be granted him, however, to stand next after the Abbot, and to give the blessing, or to celebrate Mass, but only if the Abbot ordereth him to do so; but if he doth not bid him, let him not presume to do anything under whatever consideration, knowing that he is under the discipline of the Rule,

and let him rather give examples of humility to all. But if there is a question of an appointment in the monastery, or any other matter, let him be ranked by the time of his entry into the monastery, and not by the place granted him in consideration of the priesthood.

But if a cleric, moved by the same desire, wisheth to join the monastery, let him too have a middle place, provided he promiseth to keep the Rule and personal stability.

### **Declaration art.44**

**44.** Since our profession is accepted by the Church, it also means a special dedication to her service. This is because Christ is present for us in the Church; with her He is inseparably united. Thus, service to Christ is and must be service to the Church, whether through prayer and penance, or also through different forms of apostolic work. Lived in this way, our life becomes an example of the faithful fulfillment of the Christian vocation and a witness to that new life in Christ which is already now a beginning and a sign of life eternal in the heavenly Kingdom.

## **CHAPTER LXI. How Stranger Monks Are to Be Received**

<b>10 June</b>
<b>12 Sept.</b>
<b>15 Dec.</b>
<b>8 Mar.</b>

**I**f a monk who is a stranger, arriveth from a distant place and desireth to live in the monastery as a guest, and is satisfied with the customs he findeth there, and doth not trouble the monastery with superfluous wants, but is satisfied with what he findeth, let him be received for as long a time as he desireth. Still, if he should reasonably, with humility and charity, censure or point out anything, let the Abbot consider discreetly whether the Lord did not perhaps send him for that very purpose. If later on he desireth to declare his stability let his wish not be denied, and especially since his life could be known during his stay as a guest.

But if during the time that he was a guest he was found to be troublesome and disorderly, he must not only not associate with the monastic body but should even be politely requested to leave, that others may not be infected by his evil life. But if he hath not been such as deserveth to be cast forth, he should not only be admitted to join the brotherhood, if he apply, but he should even be urged to remain, that others may be taught by his example, because we serve one Lord and fight under one King everywhere. If the

Abbot recognize him to be such a one he may also place him in a somewhat higher rank.

The Abbot may, however, place not only a monk, but also those of the aforesaid grades of priests and clerics, in a higher place than that of their entry, if he seeth their lives to be such as to deserve it. But let the Abbot take care never to admit a monk of any other known monastery to residence, without the consent of his Abbot or commendatory letters, because it is written: "What thou wilt not have done to thyself, do not to another" (Tb 4:16).

### **Declaration art.45**

**45.** Although our Order enjoys the privilege of exemption, each community is by both fact and law part of the local Church and shares in her divine gifts, good fortunes, troubles, persecutions and sufferings. Therefore, our monasteries have a moral obligation to help the Church in her needs, each according to its ability. This obligation weighs especially upon our monasteries of men, in which the majority of the members are ordained to the priesthood; for, in the New Testament, priesthood is directed to the ministry in its different forms. Therefore, we should see to it that our monastic communities of priests be ready, according to the Church's intentions and local needs, to exercise pastoral ministry in an appropriate way. This does not mean that for pastoral reasons we may alter simply as we please the elements of monastic life, such as the common liturgy or the like. We should seek primarily those forms of priestly ministry by which we can give to the Church our own type of service.

In serving God and the Church we wish to be always under the maternal protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church and Patroness of our Order. According to the example of our Fathers, we follow her with filial devotion by asking for her help and imitating her life.

## **CHAPTER LXII. *Of the Priests of the Monastery***

11 June
13 Sept.
16 Dec.
9 Mar.

**I**f the Abbot desireth to have a priest or a deacon ordained, let him select from among his monks one who is worthy to discharge the priestly office.

But let the one who hath been ordained be on his guard against arrogance and pride, and let him not attempt to do anything but what is commanded him by the Abbot, knowing that he is now all the more subject to the discipline of the Rule; and in consequence of the

priesthood let him not forget the obedience and discipline of the Rule, but advance more and more in godliness.

Let him, however, always keep the place which he had when he entered the monastery, except when he is engaged in sacred functions, unless the choice of the community and the wish of the Abbot have promoted him in acknowledgment of the merit of his life. Let him know, however, that he must observe the Rule prescribed by the Deans and the Superiors.

If he should otherwise, let him be judged, not as a priest, but as a rebel; and if after frequent warnings he doth not amend, and his guilt is clearly shown, let him be cast forth from the monastery, provided his obstinacy is such that he will neither submit nor obey the Rule.

### **Declaration art.72**

**72.** The Priesthood of the New Testament in its fullness is not merely cultic, but is directed to the ministry of the Christian community. Pastoral ministry both ordinary (in the monastery, in parishes, or in foreign missions) or extraordinary (spiritual conferences, retreats, lecturing and the administration of the sacraments, among others.) clearly contributes most effectively to building up the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church. Through such work the monks of our Order ordained to the Priesthood offer people outstanding service, obeying their vocation received from the Holy Spirit and like the good servant who distributed grain to his fellow servants serving as good ministers.

## **CHAPTER LXIII. *Of the Order in the Monastery***

**12 June**  
**14 Sept.**  
**17 Dec.**  
**10 Mar.**

**L**et all keep their order in the monastery in such wise, that the time of their conversion and the merit of their life distinguish it, or as the Abbot hath directed. Let the Abbot not disorder the flock committed to him, nor by an arbitrary use of his power dispose of anything unjustly; but let him always bear in mind that he will have to give an account to God of all his judgments and works. Hence in the order that he hath established, or that the brethren had, let them approach for the kiss of peace, for Communion, intone the psalms, and stand in choir.

And in no place whatever let age determine the order or be a disadvantage; because Samuel and Daniel when mere boys judged the priests (cf 1 Sam 3; Dan 13:44-62). Excepting those, therefore, whom, as we have said, the Abbot from higher motives hath advanced, or, for certain reasons, hath



lowered, let all the rest take their place as they are converted: thus, for instance, let him who came into the monastery at the second hour of the day, know that he is younger than he who came at the first hour, whatever his age or dignity may be.

Children are to be kept under discipline at all times and by everyone. Therefore, let the younger honor their elders, and the older love the younger. In naming each other let no one be allowed to address another by his simple name; but let the older style the younger brethren, brothers; let the younger, however, call their elders, fathers, by which is implied the reverence due to a father. But because the Abbot is believed to hold the place of Christ, let him be styled Lord and Abbot, not only by assumption on his part, but out of love and reverence for Christ. Let him think of this and so show himself, that he be worthy of such an honor. Wherever, then, the brethren meet each other, let the younger ask the blessing from the older; and when the older passeth by, let the younger rise and give him place to sit; and let the younger not presume to sit down with him unless his elder biddeth him to do so, that it may be done as it is written: "In honor preventing one another" (Rom 12:10).

Let children and boys take their places in the oratory and at table with all due discipline; outdoors, however, or wherever they may be, let them be under custody and discipline until they reach the age of understanding.

## **CHAPTER LXIV. *Of the Election of the Abbot***

**13 June**  
**15 Sept.**  
**18 Dec.**  
**11 Mar.**

**I**n the election of an Abbot let this always be observed as a rule, that he be placed in the position whom the whole community with one consent, in the fear of God, or even a small part, with sounder judgment, shall elect. But let him who is to be elected be chosen for the merit of his life and the wisdom of his doctrine, though he be the last in the community.

But even if the whole community should by mutual consent elect a man who agreeth to connive at their evil ways (which God forbid) and these irregularities in some come to the knowledge of the Bishop to whose diocese the place belongeth, or to neighboring Abbots, or Christian people, let them not permit the intrigue of the wicked to succeed, but let them appoint a worthy steward over the house of God, knowing that they shall receive a bountiful reward for this action, if they do it with a pure intention and godly zeal; whereas, on the other hand, they commit a sin if they neglect it.

But when the Abbot hath been elected let him bear in mind how great a burden he hath taken upon himself, and to whom he must give an account of his stewardship (cf Lk 16:2); and let him be convinced that it becometh him better to serve than to rule. He must, therefore, be versed in the divine law, that he may know whence "to bring forth new things and old" (Mt 13:52). Let him be chaste, sober, and merciful, and let him always exalt "mercy above judgment" (Jas 2:13), that he also may obtain mercy.

Let him hate vice, but love the brethren. And even in his corrections, let him act with prudence and not go to extremes, lest, while he aimeth to remove the rust too thoroughly, the vessel be broken. Let him always keep his own frailty in mind, and remember that "the bruised reed must not be broken" (Is 42:3). In this we are not saying that he should allow evils to take root, but that he cut them off with prudence and charity, as he shall see it is best for each one, as we have already said; and let him aim to be loved rather than feared.

Let him not be fussy or over-anxious, exacting, or headstrong; let him not be jealous or suspicious, because he will never have rest. In all his commands, whether they refer to things spiritual or temporal, let him be cautious and considerate. Let him be discerning and temperate in the tasks which he enjoineeth, recalling the discretion of holy Jacob who saith: "If I should cause my flocks to be overdriven, they would all die in one day" (Gen 33:13). Keeping in view these and other dictates of discretion, the mother of virtues, let him so temper everything that the strong may still have something to desire and the weak may not draw back. Above all, let him take heed that he keep this Rule in all its detail; that when he hath served well he may hear from the Lord what the good servant heard who gave his fellow-servants bread in season: "Amen, I say to you," He saith, "he shall set him over all his goods" (Mt 24:47).

## **Declaration art.99**

**99.** The image of the abbot that we have drawn above following the traditions of the Order and the opinion of confreres shows clearly that the abbot has such great and varied roles and functions in the life of the community that rarely can one person fulfill them correctly and fully. Nor can these roles and functions be simply omitted because of the limitations of the human person. Therefore the prudent abbot, aware of his duties and at the same time of his limitations, will see to it that he acquire for himself suitable helpers, not only the regular officials of the monastery or those assigned to financial and administrative jobs but also others who can offer him help in his pastoral and spiritual task and in strengthening the unity and coordinating the efforts of individuals.

## CHAPTER LXV. *Of the Prior of the Monastery*

14 June  
16 Sept.  
19 Dec.  
12 Mar.

**I**t often happeneth indeed, that grave scandals arise in monasteries out of the appointment of the Prior; since there are some who, puffed up with the wicked spirit of pride and thinking themselves to be second Abbots, set up a despotic rule, foster scandals, and excite quarrels in the community, and especially in those places where also the Prior is appointed by the same Bishop or the same Abbots who appointeth his Abbot. How foolish this is can easily be seen; because, from the very beginning of his appointment, matter for pride is furnished him, when his thoughts suggest to him that now he is exempt from the authority of the Abbot, because "thou too hast been appointed by those by whom the Abbot was appointed." From this source arise envy, discord, slander, quarrels, jealousy, and disorders. While the Abbot and the Prior are thus at variance with each other, it must follow that their souls are endangered by this discord and that those who are under them, as long as they humor the parties, go to ruin. The fault of this evil resteth on the heads of those who were the authors of such disorders.

We foresee, therefore, that for the preservation of peace and charity it is best that the government of the monastery should depend on the will of the Abbot; and if it can be done, let the affairs of the monastery (as we have explained before) be attended to by deans, as the Abbot shall dispose; so that, the same office being shared by many, no one may become proud.

If, however, the place require it, or the brotherhood reasonably and with humility make the request, and the Abbot shall deem it advisable, let the Abbot himself appoint as Prior whomever, with the advice of God-fearing brethren, he shall select. But let the Prior reverently do what his Abbot hath enjoined on him, doing nothing against the will or the direction of the Abbot; for the higher he is placed above others, the more careful should he be to obey the precepts of the Rule.

If the Prior be found disorderly or blinded by vainglory, or hath been proved to be a contemner of the Holy Rule, let him be admonished up to the fourth time; if he doth not amend, let the correction of the regular discipline be applied to him. But if he doth not amend even then, let him be deposed from the office of priorship, and another who is worthy be appointed in his stead. But if even afterward he be not quiet and submissive in the brotherhood, let him also be expelled from the monastery. Still, let the Abbot reflect that he must give an account to God for all his judgments, lest perhaps envy or jealousy should sear his conscience.

**101.** Among the officials of the monastery, the prior holds first place, whom the abbot uses in his jobs as his closest companion and administrator so that when he is absent or impeded the prior presides over the monastery. Next, in educating and training the younger members the master of novices and the master of professed monks exercise their skill and concern. Their office is very great important and weighty, indeed, for the hope of the harvest is in the seed. The Choir Master assists the abbot in preparing and taking care of the worthy celebration of the Eucharist and the Work of God. In the administration of the material goods of the monastery, the cellarer offers assistance to the abbot. It is his task to look after the community's goods, to provide and care for the things necessary for the life of the house.

## **CHAPTER LXVI. *Of the Porter of the Monastery***

**15 June**  
**17 Sept.**  
**20 Dec.**  
**13 Mar.**

**L**et a wise old man be placed at the door of the monastery, one who knoweth how to take and give an answer, and whose mature age doth not permit him to stray about.

The porter should have a cell near the door, that they who come may always find one present from whom they may obtain an answer. As soon as anyone knocketh or a poor person calleth, let him answer, "Thanks be to God," or invoke a blessing, and with the meekness of the fear of God let him return an answer speedily in the fervor of charity. If the porter hath need of assistance, let him have a younger brother.

If it can be done, the monastery should be so situated that all the necessities, such as water, the mill, the garden, are enclosed, and the various arts may be plied inside of the monastery, so that there may be no need for the monks to go about outside, because it is not good for their souls. But we desire that this Rule be read quite often in the community, that none of the brethren may excuse himself of ignorance.

## **CHAPTER LXVII. Of the Brethren Who Are Sent on a Journey**

**16 June  
18 Sept.  
21 Dec.  
14 Mar.**

**L**et the brethren who are to be sent on a journey recommend themselves to the prayers of all the brotherhood and of the Abbot. And after the last prayer at the Work of God, let a commemoration always be made for the absent brethren.

On the day that the brethren return from the journey, let them lie prostrate on the floor of the oratory at all the Canonical Hours, when the Work of God is finished, and ask the prayers of all on account of failings, for fear that the sight of evil or the sound of frivolous speech should have surprised them on the way.

And let no one presume to relate to another what he hath seen or heard outside of the monastery, because it is most hurtful. But if anyone presume to do so, let him undergo the penalty of the Rule. In like manner let him be punished who shall presume to go beyond the enclosure of the monastery, or anywhere else, or to do anything, however little, without the order of the Abbot.

### **Declaration art.35**

**35.** Recently not only have contacts with non-Catholic Christians multiplied but the spirit in which those meetings take place has also been renewed. Today we feel ever more a common responsibility for restoring the unity of the Church. Therefore, it is useful for our monasteries to help nurture and promote the unity of the Church, if the necessary conditions are present and according to our own possibilities.

We should also have a lively conscience with regard to our task to spread the Gospel in mission territories so that we might promote insofar as we can the missionary work, still a huge task. Moreover, we know that the catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in non-Christian religions. With mutual respect and with all syncretism excluded, our monasteries should acknowledge those spiritual and moral goods as well as the cultural values that are found in non-Christian religions, and thus promote the peace of the human family.

## **CHAPTER LXVIII. *If a Brother Is Commanded to Do Impossible Things***

**17 June**  
**19 Sept.**  
**22 Dec.**  
**15 Mar.**

**I**f, perchance, any difficult or impossible tasks be enjoined on a brother, let him nevertheless receive the order of him who commandeth with all meekness and obedience. If, however, he see that the gravity of the task is altogether beyond his strength, let him quietly and seasonably submit the reasons for his inability to his Superior, without pride, protest, or dissent. If, however, after his explanation the Superior still insisteth on his command, let the younger be convinced that so it is good for him; and let him obey from love, relying on the help of God.

### **Declaration art.54-55**

**54.** Even when it consists practically in carrying out the commands of the superior, religious obedience is always directed to God and is a free and personal human act requiring mature and responsible deliberation. The changed conditions of our times require new forms of giving and obeying commands. They also call for new relationships between superiors and monks. Our age rejects anything that smacks of servilism, paternalism, or the cult of feudal forms. It rightly desires that the dignity of the human person be always and everywhere kept in mind. Moreover, because the working conditions and the members' tasks today quite often demand specialized knowledge and they suppose personal responsibility on the part of individual monks, superiors should leave ample room for personal initiatives. In giving orders they should be concerned with advice that is based on principles and is forward-looking rather than with minor details. More than before, it is necessary that superiors formulate their commands only after having heard the experts and having consulted with their confreres. They should always remain open to receive further suggestions. Superiors should listen willingly to the members of the community, yet their authority to discern and command what is to be done must remain firm. In giving counsel, the brothers should respect the person and judgement of others, and they should present their position with solid reasons and not following the will of their own heart.

**55.** The good of religious obedience will only then be truly preserved in our monastic life only if the superiors together with their confreres sincerely seek the will of God with one mind and realize that their obedience is due not to human authority but always to God Himself who calls them. Although the good of the community demands clear and firm orders which bind the members without ambiguity, nevertheless the government of the monastery

can never do without the responsible cooperation of all for the good of the monastery, the Order and the Church. For this profound consensus among all, rooted in a common vocation and religious profession, is itself the foundation for the daily exercise of authority and obedience.

## **CHAPTER LXIX. *That in the Monastery No One Presume to Defend Another***

18 June  
20 Sept.  
23 Dec.  
16 Mar.

**C**are must be taken that on no occasion one monk try to defend another in the monastery, or to take his part, even though they be closely related by ties of blood. Let it not be attempted by the monks in any way; because such conduct may give rise to very grave scandal. If anyone overstep this rule, let him be severely punished.

## **CHAPTER LXX. *That No One Presume to Strike Another***

19 June  
21 Sept.  
24 Dec.  
17 Mar.

**L**et every occasion for presumption be avoided in the monastery. We decree that no one be permitted to excommunicate or to strike any one of his brethren, unless the Abbot hath given him the authority. But let those who transgress be taken to task in the presence of all, that the others may fear (cf 1 Tm 5:20).

Let all, however, exercise diligent and watchful care over the discipline of children, until the age of fifteen; but even that, within due limits and with discretion. For if anyone should presume to chastise those of more advanced years, without the command of the Abbot, or should be unduly provoked with children, let him be subject to the discipline of the Rule; because it is written: "What thou dost not wish to be done to thee, do not thou to another" (Tb 4:16).

## CHAPTER LXXI. *That the Brethren Be Obedient to One Another*

20 June  
22 Sept.  
25 Dec.  
18 Mar.

**T**he brethren must render the service of obedience not only to the Abbot, but they must thus also obey one another, knowing that they shall go to God by this path of obedience. Hence, granted the command of the Abbot and of the Superiors who are appointed by him (to which we do not permit private commands to be preferred), in other respects let the younger brethren obey their elders with all charity and zeal. But if anyone is found to be obstinate, let him be punished.

And if a brother be punished in any way by the Abbot or by any of his Superiors for even a slight reason or if he perceive that the temper of any of his Superiors is but slightly ruffled or excited against him in the least, let him without delay cast himself down on the ground at his feet making satisfaction, until the agitation is quieted by a blessing. If anyone scorn to do this, either let him undergo corporal punishment, or, if he be obstinate, let him be expelled from the monastery.

### Declaration art.33

**33.** On the one hand, our age greatly values the communitarian forms of life in which a person enters into dialogue with others and thus grows, manifests and perfects himself. On the other hand, contemporary ecclesiology points out most clearly the communitarian nature of salvation as an essential mark of Christian revelation. Moved by such considerations, we too should see to it that honest and sincere communication be promoted among persons whom the life of community and common goals and work join together.

## CHAPTER LXXII. *Of the Virtuous Zeal Which the Monks Ought to Have*

21 June  
23 Sept.  
26 Dec.  
19 Mar.

**A**s there is a harsh and evil zeal which separateth from God and leadeth to hell, so there is a virtuous zeal which separateth from vice and leadeth to God and life everlasting.



Let the monks, therefore, practice this zeal with most ardent love; namely, that in honor they forerun one another (cf Rom 12:10). Let them bear their infirmities, whether of body or mind, with the utmost patience; let them vie with one another in obedience. Let no one follow what he thinketh useful to himself, but rather to another. Let them practice fraternal charity with a chaste love.

Let them fear God and love their Abbot with sincere and humble affection; let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ, and my He lead us all together to life everlasting.

### **Declaration art.57-58**

**57.** Concern for the community's life is, therefore, not only the task of the superiors, even if it is primarily for them to uproot vices and abuses by exhorting, warning and correcting. Yet this task is more easily and efficiently carried out by superiors if the community shows both patience towards the brothers and fidelity to the values of religious life, and if they always know how to combine love for the offender with hatred for his offense. One must strive, therefore, to prevent community life from becoming just a burden or an occasion, as it were, to sin against charity. Community life should, rather, be experienced as the school itself of love in which we anticipate one another in showing respect and willingly obey one another. In this school even our weaknesses offer us the opportunity to advance in love, and through the example and counsel of our brothers we are effectively drawn to God.

Although it is especially appropriate to the office of the abbot that he himself teach the community about the spiritual life and spur them on to virtue, he can, however, often delegate some part of this task to other confreres. It is very fitting, nevertheless, that spiritual conferences be held regularly and that the brothers share with one another the gifts of grace and intellect.

**58.** In the life of the community we should, in addition, cultivate the riches of the monastic tradition, by seeking out authentic forms of monastic life that fit today's circumstances, above all the living tradition of our own monasteries, whose values we must preserve, make fruitful, and handed on to others. We should also cultivate an awareness of larger communities, such as our own Congregation and the whole Order, so that we might effectively help each other live our vocation even better.

**CHAPTER LXXIII. Of This,**  
**that Not the Whole Observance of Righteousness Is**  
**Laid Down in this Rule**

22 June
24 Sept.
27 Dec.
20 Mar.

**N**ow, we have written this Rule that, observing it in monasteries, we may show that we have acquired at least some moral righteousness, or a beginning of the monastic life.

On the other hand, he that hasteneth on to the perfection of the religious life, hath at hand the teachings of the holy Fathers, the observance of which leadeth a man to the height of perfection. For what page or what utterance of the divinely inspired books of the Old and the New Testament is not a most exact rule of human life? Or, what book of the holy Catholic Fathers doth not loudly proclaim how we may go straight to our Creator? So, too, the collations of the Fathers, and their institutes and lives, and the rule of our holy Father, Basil -- what are they but the monuments of the virtues of exemplary and obedient monks? But for us slothful, disedifying, and negligent monks they are a source for shame and confusion.

Thou, therefore, who hastenest to the heavenly home, with the help of Christ fulfil this least rule written for a beginning; and then thou shalt with God's help attain at last to the greater heights of knowledge and virtue which we have mentioned above.

**Declaration art.3-9,126**

3. To formulate the fundamental elements of Cistercian life today, it is first of all necessary to see from which sources we can draw the guiding ideas and motives for organizing our religious life today. We should also see how to use these sources.

4. The gospel, especially the life and teaching of Christ as it is presented in Scripture, expounded to the Church by the ever-living Magisterium and reflected in the conscience and experience of the Church, is the primary source, the highest law and the norm according to which we should pattern our lives. Among the documents of the Church's Magisterium, the constitutions and decrees of the Second Vatican Council hold a special place for us, especially "Perfectae Caritatis," and subsequent documents of the Church's magisterium that deal with monastic and consecrated life, which call for the appropriate renewal of our life.

5. The principles of Cistercian life even today are rooted in the monastic tradition. We, indeed, want to consider the entire tradition of Christian

monasticism, both before and after St. Benedict, Cistercian beginnings, and the monastic and Cistercian life of the subsequent centuries. In the task of renewal we are striving to achieve that our Cistercian life is a fruitful and organic continuation of the values of the monastic tradition. However, we are not unaware of the historical nature of this tradition, which must also be illuminated and judged by the criteria of historical research. More recent investigations into both the history and the theology of monasticism show clearly a rich variety in the efforts and forms of ancient monasticism. They also call for a distinction between the elements that are permanently valid and those that are transitory.

We should, therefore, come to know through careful study the traditions and documents of the entire monastic history. In establishing the principles and tasks of our life, we should use them prudently, with fidelity and freedom.

**6.** Among the documents of monastic life the Rule of St. Benedict occupies and will continue to occupy a preeminent place as an exceptional witness to the ideas and experiences of ancient monasticism. Through their regular meditation, Benedictine and Cistercian monks have studied, interpreted and adapted again and again the Rule to the goals and needs of their own times. Consequently, the principal ideas of the Rule have pervaded the entire history of the West and constitute to this day a preeminent part of the monastic heritage. For us, however, the Rule of St. Benedict not only provides a permanent source of inspiration for correctly organizing our life but has in its essential and permanent elements full authority, whether in regard to the fundamental line of our spiritual life or the constitutive forms of coenobitic life.

At the same time the Rule is an historical document, intimately connected with the conditions of its own time. Even its use and interpretation through the centuries has reflected the conditions and mentality of each period. It has, therefore, practically never been observed "according to the letter" but according to diverse interpretations and adaptations. Since the conditions of human life in our age have undergone more profound changes than in any earlier period, the sixth-century Rule can determine so much the less all the particulars of our life today. Such material fidelity would correspond neither to the intentions of St. Benedict nor to that freedom with which the monks of past ages have made use of the Rule.

In a more direct manner the Rule is incarnated in the tradition and the actual life of each monastery which with the light of the Holy Spirit and under the authentic direction of the abbot preserves the Rule as an ever relevant and living inspiration. Thus, it is in this respect that we should also study the Rule and live it so that once those elements that are contingent or obsolete have been left aside, it might always remain the true guide of our life.

In this sense, then, the Rule should be the source and norm of our life. We should use it with filial reverence and Christian freedom to promote the renewal of our life, rather than a collection of material prescriptions that restrict and impede us in our search for solutions truly suited to our problems.

**8.** We should keep especially in mind whatever belongs to the Cistercian tradition, namely, the documents of the Cistercian origins, the writings of the Order's eminent masters, men and women, of the spiritual life, the lives of our saints, and the history and experience of almost nine centuries. All this we should diligently study, evaluate, and refer to in our task of renewal with the same spirit of fidelity and freedom mentioned above.

For above all a tradition is not to be received as something that has passed but as something living and relevant which looks dynamically to the future and calls for a new actualization befitting new circumstances. For this reason the inner force of a tradition must be uncovered, and this can only be obtained from study and a living dialogue with it.

The Cistercian tradition, therefore, should not be restricted to the very beginnings, although the initial inspiration certainly possesses primary importance. One must take into consideration as well the later development which has shaped and determined in no little way the course of our life through the introduction of new elements and has thereby also established worthy traditions.

**9.** We should be very familiar with the needs and desires of the Church, and draw from them directives for shaping our lives so that we might be ready to serve her as our Cistercian predecessors were. The Cistercian Order as a vibrant and useful part of the living Church has the duty and the desire to be prompt in understanding her intentions and her undertakings, and to support them according to her strengths and possibilities.

**126.** By putting an end to this declaration on the chief elements of Cistercian life today, we do not think that by what has been said – even if it is fully put into effect – we have put an end to the renewal of our life. For just as the Church herself is on pilgrimage and is called by Christ to an ongoing reformation, which as a human and earthly institution it always needs, so all the more our Order, the individual congregations, the monasteries and their members.

This continuous reformation is necessary because human history is progressing at an ever faster pace and introducing always new circumstances and creating both new advances and new problems to which our life also must be adapted in those aspects that are subject to change. The necessity, however, of this continuous renewal follows still more from the fact that we never perfectly fulfill our ideal. In this way we will always be

in need of that continuous and sincere conversion by which we – both as individuals and as communities – are transformed into the image of Christ the Son of God.



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