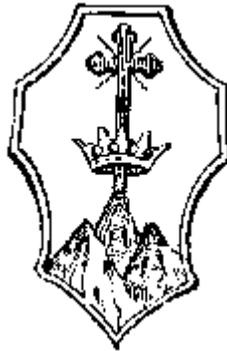


**THE CUSTOMARY
OF THE CONGREGATION
OF THE
CAMALDOLESE HERMITS OF MONTE CORONA
Revised by the Intermediate
General Chapter of 2015**



And the Ceremonial for the Divine Office

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LIFE IN THE CELL

1. First and foremost, the cell should be a place of prayer, even if no particular prayers are prescribed during the time which we spend in the cell.

The solitary recitation of the Psalms is an ancient monastic, and especially Camaldolese, custom. According to our Blessed Founder, “to take delight in the daily private recitation of the Psalms” is one of the “instruments” of the eremitical life.

Even if Holy Mass is not celebrated therein, the chapel of the cell should be free of anything unbecoming to a sacred place.

2. The *Lectio Divina* requires dedication and discipline from all. The cell is the most appropriate place for it.

In any case, stability in a definite place is necessary. It is not permitted, during the time destined for this important spiritual exercise, to move about from one place to another in the hermitage.

3. “Whether you eat or drink, do all for the glory of God”, St. Paul exhorted (cf. 1Cor. 10:31). In the Christian life nothing is profane.

Therefore, the hermit will try to sanctify his solitary repast. He will habitually take it in his cell, and while he refreshes his body, let him not forget to elevate his mind to God through prayer or reading.

4. So as to better preserve the spirit of recollection, either on the days and hours dispensed from silence, or on other days with due permission, one may go to the cell of another, only entering the main room for a brief colloquy. In the case of illness, of Confession, or of some emergency, one is allowed to enter the bedroom.

In a novitiate house, the Father Master or Father Prior can make this rule stricter if he should encounter abuses harmful for eremitic formation.

The Prior may receive his confreres in his study, even if the latter also serves as his bedroom.

No extern may enter the solitary cells without the explicit permission of the Prior.

5. The cell should always be kept clean and in order, and the little garden should never be left uncultivated.

The bed and the other furniture of the cell should be of simple make and in conformity with poverty. Beds and mattresses which are too soft should remain prohibited. In heating too, one should maintain eremitic austerity.

6. No one is allowed to rest in bed between Matins and Lauds. “May it never happen that at the hour in which our Redeemer, having destroyed the dominion of death, arose to life, we give in to drowsiness! At the rising of the material sun, our inner man should rise up too with eyes fixed on the light which does not wane.” (cf. St. Peter Damian, *Opusc.* 15, 17)

7. It is a praiseworthy tradition that we request anew of the Prior newly appointed or confirmed a blessing on the permissions granted to us and on all that we have for our use, while being ready also to sacrifice something.

8. In so far as possible, we should avoid leaving the cell during the great silence after Compline.

RULES CONCERNING FOOD

9. “The Kingdom of God does not mean eating or drinking this or that, it means righteousness and peace and joy brought by the Holy Spirit” (cf. Rm. 14, 17). On the other hand it is also true that the Lord Jesus admonishes us to be watchful lest our hearts be coarsened with debauchery and drunkenness (cf. Lk. 21, 34). Then He calls blessed those who hunger (cf. Lk. 6, 21).

Diet has always occupied an important place in monastic rules. Let us follow with docility our traditional norms in this regard, somewhat adapted. Let us neither exaggerate nor undervalue their function in the total monastic discipline.

10. Our food ought to be simple, healthful and carefully prepared, in order to avoid giving, as far as possible, any valid reason for criticism.

- a. According to our established custom, in the morning it is permitted to have a light breakfast. For dinner the hermits will be given, in addition to the main dish (macaroni, rice, soup...) a dish of salad or of vegetables along with a “pittance”

of fish or of eggs. For supper, when there is no fast, a pittance will be given.

- b. On Sundays outside of the two Lents let each one be given about a half pound of cheese or of butter to be consumed during the week at the individual's discretion. Likewise, twice a week or more frequently as it may be available, a portion of fruit is given to the hermits.
- c. No fixed quantity of bread is set. The measure of wine (where it is available) will be determined by the Prior. Where it is not customary to drink it, let the hermits thank the Lord and not murmur (cf. RB 40: 8).
- d. Outside of meals we are not allowed to take food or drink except water.
- e. It is not allowed to give a portion of one's own food to others, with the exception of fruit, which the hermits can give to one another. Let the Prior be attentive lest abuses be introduced concerning the feeding of the domestic animals.
- f. It is forbidden to pick for oneself fruit and vegetables designated for the common use or to

cook anything in one's cell without the permission of the Prior.

g. Whenever in accordance with the Constitutions, the common supper is being replaced by a solitary one in the cells, such a supper should be more abundant than usual in accordance with the solemnity or recreation of that day.

11. Our dietary regimen includes different times and forms of abstinence and fast.

a. By ancient tradition we abstain from any kind of meat. This abstinence obliges the hermits and any other person eating in the hermitage, unless the Prior, for a just motive and with the advice of his Counselors, deems it necessary to act differently either for weak or infirm religious or for other persons. It will never be lawful, however, to eat meat at the common table.

b. The monastic fast is observed from the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14) inclusive until Easter. The fast consists in this, that for supper only a portion of soup or of salad is received, without pittance. Exceptions are

solemnities, Sundays and the days of recreation spoken of in articles 65 and 66.

- c. Abstinence from eggs and dairy products is observed in addition to the monastic fast (letter “b”) during both Lents. A dispensation is granted from such abstinence when a meal is taken in common. On Mondays and Wednesdays during the two Lents the abstinence and fast proper to Fridays is observed.
- d. Friday is a day of abstinence and fast. On this day we abstain from fish, eggs and dairy products (milk, butter, cheese). The Friday fast consists in this, that the hermit takes a frugal dinner (soup and a single plate of vegetables or salad) and for supper he contents himself with just bread, fruit and a beverage. Dispensation from abstinence and fasting is granted only on those Fridays on which a solemnity is celebrated or on which a dinner in common is legitimately held according to the norm in article 67 of the Customary. Those who have begun their sixtieth year are not bound to the Friday abstinence.

- e. The fast of the Church is prescribed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. On these days the hermits should be exhorted to be content with bread and water in order thus to honor, in union with all the people of God, the beginning of Lent and the most holy day of the Passion and Death of the Savior. On Holy Saturday, we keep the abstinence proper to Friday.
- f. The Friday of the Octave of Easter is, in effect, a solemnity.

12. The sacrifice offered to God with the various forms of fasting and abstinence would not be complete if we did not sometimes limit ourselves spontaneously and discreetly in the quantity of food and drink.

Before all else, we must never yield to the temptation of murmuring but rather reflect on the plight of the hungry throughout the world.

The Prior should, therefore, be alert lest monastic austerity be lost.

13. Our religious should abstain from the use of tobacco.

14. Whenever our hermits for any reason find themselves outside the hermitage, they are not bound to the regular fasts and abstinences. Let them, however, try to observe something of them, content in simplicity with whatever they find. (cf. Lk. 10, 7).

Abstinence from meat is always observed in the hermitage; during an outing, one may consume it only if it is offered by other persons.

THE FORMATION OF HERMITS

15. At the beginning of the postulancy, the candidates will deposit with the Cellarer the money which they have brought with them and be given a receipt.

Our hermitages and our Congregation as such cannot accept donations from the novices and the temporary professed. Their deposits can in no case be used for the needs of the Congregation or of the hermitages but should always remain at the disposition of the owners in case they wish to interrupt the period of formation. The acceptance of gifts before the novitiate is not recommended unless it is a question of things of modest value.

What is established in Canon 668 #3 for religious holds also for the professed of temporary vows. Any eventual derogations are allowed with the consent of the Father Major.

Should one of our religious eventually receive a pension based on work done before entering the Order, it is included among those goods whose administration the religious has ceded to a trustworthy person (cf. Constit. 60).

16. At the end of the postulancy the novice, in agreement with the Prior, is free to take a name different from that of his baptism, provided that it be in the form used in the national language. Let him avoid choosing a name already present in the congregation, as also one alien to Christian tradition.

If a name contains a specification (for example, Francis of Jesus), this is omitted both in usage and in the official register.

In the spirit of the Rule of St. Benedict (Chap. 63), the hermits in addressing one another will make use of the pronouns more indicated for expressing charity and respect, according to the language and the local usage, avoiding use of the simple name.

17. The declaration to which article 43 of the Constitutions refers is the following:

I, _____, the undersigned, beginning the religious life in the Congregation of the Camaldolese Hermits of Monte Corona, declare that I am aware that, in conformity with the Constitutions of the said Congregation, the priesthood is conferred in view of service to the eremitical community; and that the presentation of candidates for Sacred Orders depends solely on the decision, not subject to review, of the Superiors General. I pledge myself to the gratuitous performance of services in the community, and I declare that work, an integral part of the eremitical observance, can never be the basis of a right to a salary to be demanded as a recompense in the event of my possible departure from the Congregation.

Hermitage of.....

Date

18. Before the beginning of the novitiate as well as before temporary and perpetual profession the candidates are to have some days of greater tranquility and freedom of spirit in the cell, where in an atmosphere of serene reflection they can prepare themselves for their new obligations.

19. The spiritual formation of the candidates, under the authority of the General Council, is reserved to the Father Master, the authority of the Father Prior standing firm in whatever regards their life in the community: schedule, work, leaving the cloister, etc. There should always reign harmony of aims and charity between the Prior and the Master in order to assure the candidates of the necessary atmosphere of serenity and unity in their formation. The temporary professed, as well, are to undergo an annual scrutiny, besides that which precedes their admission to perpetual profession (cf. Constit. 64). For both of these scrutinies and those of the novices, the Prior should send a clear account to the Father Major, absolutely not omitting to point out eventual personality disturbances.

20. Let the Master of Novices be “skilled in winning souls” (cf. RB 58: 6). He should therefore maintain with the persons committed to his care a friendly and kindly relationship accompanied by firmness and by respect for their privacy (cf. can. 220). He will thus be able through his example and his teaching to direct the generosity of the novices toward the complete gift of themselves to God.

In order to facilitate the vocational discernment proper to the Father Master, every candidate will undergo a psychological test. In particular cases, with the consent of the Father Major, it can be dispensed with. The Novice Master can ask the General Council for authorization to participate in a specialized course for formators, if he thinks it useful for himself or for the monks under his direction; it should be in a form compatible with his office.

21. It is the office of the Master to correct the candidates with regard to the observances and ceremonies. The Prior, however, can also do so whenever he deems it opportune.

The mail, whether incoming or outgoing, of the hermits in formation passes through the hands of the Father Master.

22. The temporary profession is to be made in the days immediately following the expiration of the two year period.

If the Prior considers it better to prolong the Novitiate (cf. article 57), after having heard the opinion of the brethren, and principally that of the Father Master, he need not convoke the conventual Chapter for the final scrutiny. Instead, let him

present the request for the prolongation to the Father Major, who can grant it after having consulted the Visitators. In order to be able to make profession, however, it is indispensable that he be admitted at the end of that six months by the conventual Chapter by an absolute majority of those present.

Whoever should renew his temporary profession according to article 63 of the Constitutions is to pronounce privately in the presence of the Major or of the Prior and two witnesses the formula of profession, the customary rite being omitted. In the formula he must include the period of time for which he intends to bind himself by vows. This formula is to be reported and signed in the Register of Professions.

22bis. In reference to the votes in articles 44, 59 and 65 of the Constitutions, it is specified that in them also the President of the conventual Chapter, after the second obligatory scrutiny with the votes still equal, always in the same session, can break the tie by the norm of Canon 119, #2 CIC.

23. If a dispensation from some impediment to profession has been granted, this fact is mentioned in the document of the profession, not in the text of the formula but

in the margin. The beneficiary of such a dispensation should affix his signature as a sign of his acceptance.

The document of renunciation of his own goods to be drawn up by the candidates for the perpetual profession according to article 66 of the Constitutions is to be presented to the General Council in good time together with a copy of the petition of article 64 of the Constitutions. One who has nothing substitutes for the said renunciation a declaration that he is not the proprietor of anything and cannot dispose of anything.

23bis. For he who is readmitted to our Congregation by the norm of article 75 of the Constitutions, the following holds:

- a. The period of probation before temporary profession should last at least a year.
- b. The period of temporary vows of such candidates should last two years.
- c. The votes of the conventual Chapter are deliberative:
 - for the (first) admission for probation;
 - for admission to temporary profession;

- d. Halfway through the probation the conventual Chapter expresses itself on the candidate in an intermediate scrutiny. Whoever does not obtain a majority or at least a parity of favorable votes will be dismissed; whoever instead gets a majority or at least a parity of favorable votes continues the probation (cf. Constit. 56).
- e. At about halfway through the period of temporary vows, the conventual Chapter expresses itself on the religious by a vote with consultative value.
- f. The candidate in probation can be dismissed following the manner established for novices (cf. Constit. 57).

24. For the confessions of the novices the Prior should appoint a number of confessors sufficient to allow the novices the possibility of choice, for such is their right.

The Father Master should not hear the sacramental confessions of his own subjects unless in particular cases they request this spontaneously (cf. can. 985). A priest novice should not normally be given the faculty to hear the confession of the other novices.

24bis. It is recommended that a period of a couple of years intervene between the end of the theological studies and the receiving of Holy Orders.

THE DONATES (OBLATES)

25. Besides the professed religious and the novices, the eremitical family can include also donates (oblates).

This latter term refers to priests or pious laymen desirous of retiring from the world and of living in the solitude of our hermitages without, however, for some serious reason, being able to embrace the religious life with the profession of public vows or to assume all the obligations of the eremitical life. It is of the greatest importance that the institution of the donates not prejudice in any way the fervor, the tranquility, and the regular observance of the religious.

There should not be more than two donates in a hermitage.

26. The conditions for the reception of the donates are as follows:

—previous accurate information;

- the majority of the votes of the conventual Chapter in the various prescribed scrutinies;
- confirmation on the part of the General Council at the end of the year of trial.
- not more than sixty years of age, a limit beyond which dispensation is not possible.

27. The majority of the votes of the conventual Chapter, obtained for their first acceptance, must be reconfirmed in the three scrutinies to be held respectively in the third, sixth and eleventh month from their entrance into the hermitage.

Besides the scrutinies just mentioned, they should be subjected to a further scrutiny each year for four successive years. If they do not get a majority in the vote, they should be dismissed with equity and charity.

Confirmation on the part of the General Council is required after the last scrutiny of the first year.

The donates who have spent five morally continuous years in the community cannot be dismissed by reason of sickness or old age.

28. The donates are bound to our rule of life concerning the cloister, participation at common acts and the Divine Office, use of the means of social communication, and abstinence from meat, unless the Prior decides differently. He can grant important concessions only with the consent of his Counselors, and he will have the obligation in that case of informing the General Council.

29. The donates are to wear, after one year of probation, a monastic habit similar to that of the religious. When present at liturgical functions, they should wear an appropriate mantle.

30. They must perform their services to the community faithfully and diligently according to their own abilities and the orders of the Prior.

Together with the request for confirmation at the end of the year of probation, let the Prior communicate in detail to the General Council the steps he has taken to preclude any possibility of litigation or of legal irregularities because of the services of the donates, as also the measures taken to avoid problems, whether in case of sickness or of a work accident.

31. The donates should contribute, to the degree possible and in agreement with the Prior, to the sustenance of the community. Otherwise, they retain their rights over their property, but they must surrender its administration to reliable persons or institutions. They may deposit small amounts of money with the Prior or the Cellarer. The Prior will allow them to use such money if he deems their request reasonable.

Lest their administrative and legal position give rise to misunderstandings, the Prior should exhort the donates to formulate clear dispositions in a will in favor of whomever they wish.

32. Appropriate information about our spirituality and legislation should be imparted to the donates; once accepted, they are held to our rule of life.

33. The donates can at any time sever their relationship with the eremitical community. The latter can likewise, according to the judgment of the conventual Chapter and for a proportionate cause, dismiss them. In such a case, the donate retains the right of appeal devolving to the General Council.

34. Cancelled.

35. The donates who die after their first confirmation by the General Council have the right to all the suffrages prescribed for our religious, but only in the hermitage where they have ended their days and where they may be buried.

If the death or burial of a donate occurs outside the hermitage, the duty of suffrages pertains to the community of which he was a member.

CLOTHING

36. All our garments ought to conform to eremitical simplicity and poverty and to be, as far as possible, uniform throughout our Congregation. In doubtful cases, the Father Major and the Visitators should be called upon.

37. The tunic should reach the ankles; the scapular with the monastic hood should be somewhat shorter than the tunic, and the mantle ought to be still shorter. The cincture, made of the same material as the tunic, should be about six centimeters wide.

The professed wear the cincture over the scapular, and the novices wear it under the scapular. The tunic, scapular and mantle should be of a lighter material in hot weather and in tropical climates and of a heavier material in winter.

38. The use of the mantle is obligatory:

—for participation at the Conventual Mass, Eucharistic exposition, and the celebration of the Canonical Hours in choir;

—for the common activities which take place in the Chapter room, even if the whole community is not present;

—at the interview during Canonical Visitation.

39. For work the tunic can be replaced by a smock or even by coveralls, if the type of work so indicates. These habits can also be non-white in color. The use of socks is obligatory during common acts and outside the hermitage. Boots and slippers and shoes that are garishly sporty are prohibited in church. The Prior should correct eventual abuses.

40. We also wear the religious habit outside the enclosure. Only the General Council can decide about changing this usage in exceptional circumstances.

41. Our Religious may wear the skullcap even in choir whenever they consider it useful or necessary.

RECLUSION

42. The paschal mystery, center of salvation history, is celebrated by the recluses in the paschal Triduum together with the community. Therefore, they leave the cell to participate in the solemn Mass of Holy Thursday, the Liturgy of Good Friday, and at the Easter Vigil. Likewise they take part in the common refectory of Holy Thursday and Easter. Moreover, they can participate at the perpetual profession and at the funeral of a confrere.

43. On St. Martin's day and on the Sunday preceding Ash Wednesday the recluses, for their own enjoyment and for the sake of fraternal charity, may converse in their cells with their confreres.

44. So as not to disturb the recollection of a priest recluse, only exceptionally can he be authorized to hear confessions.

45. Besides true and proper reclusion, there exists for us so-called partial reclusion. It includes custody of the cell, the obligation of silence, and daily participation in choir at one or more of the major liturgical Hours. The Prior, having consulted his Counselors, can grant this form of reclusion to religious who have the necessary qualifications. It can be granted for periods of time of not more than six months. Longer periods require authorization of the General Chapter or of the General Council.

46. One or more days of retreat can be granted to all the professed when they feel the need and, in exceptional cases, also to the novices, in agreement with and through their Master. The Prior, having heard the opinion of his Counselors concerning the seriousness and practicability of the request, will receive the petition favorably, arranging with the petitioner the form of the retreat.

Moreover, all the perpetually professed, including the Priors, cellarers, and novice masters, have the right to benefit

from an annual week of retreat in the cell, capable of prolongation at the discretion of the Prior.

47. Perpetual reclusion can be granted only fifteen years after making solemn profession.

SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD

48. With the exception of the Prior and the porter, no one is allowed to keep the keys of the external gates of the hermitage. In those hermitages in which this norm cannot be literally observed, things should be done in such a way, however, that nobody can enter the cloister without authorization.

49. Whenever charity or notable usefulness suggests, the Prior can exceptionally share a meal with some particular guest on days other than those of common meals.

Persons not belonging to the community should not easily be admitted to the common meal either on the solemnities or on the days of recreation.

49bis. In order to grant hospitality beyond six months, even with the aim of vocational discernment, the consent of the conventual Chapter is necessary.

50. It is strictly forbidden to our hermits to interfere in the affairs of seculars, especially in financial matters, even if it is a question of those of relatives, unless the Prior, for good reasons, decides to do otherwise.

51. The incoming and outgoing mail is delivered to the Prior. Whenever the Father Major is present, all letters should pass through his hands.

It is the right and duty of the Prior not to hand over to a religious something which he prudently considers not in agreement with our spirit. Personal correspondence is not included.

52. In order to follow the events of the Church and of the world and to promote our continuing formation, a prudent choice of appropriate and useful publications should be made by the Prior and his Counselors. On the other hand, there should be no place in the hermitage for publications of

polemical tone or worldly spirit, especially if dangerous for our vocation and for chastity (cf. can. 666).

Let the hermit be very sober in the reading of newspapers and magazines so as not to go wandering continually outside the hermitage in his imagination. Let him avoid especially things more alien to our contemplative vocation, such as scandal sheets, sporting events, and shows. It is never permitted to listen to music together, not even on days of recreation. Wholly banned from our hermitages is the use of radio and television. Only exceptionally, to follow some extraordinary ecclesial event, can we make use of television.

Apart from this exception, there remains always excluded the viewing of anything that presents a moving image, even if edifying.

For the time being, connection to the internet is deemed unsuitable because not in agreement with our life.

53. The use of the telephone is normally limited to the administrative affairs of the house and should not therefore be freely available to the religious. When a religious leaves the hermitage for administrative reasons or the like, the Prior

can grant him the use of a cellular telephone, to be reconsigned upon return to the hermitage.

The computer may be used exclusively for work, study, or similar activities. The perpetually professed may keep one permanently in cell for a reasonable motive, according to the judgment of the Prior. The monks in formation should use one only for work ordered by the Prior or by the Master, done preferably in a place of common use.

54. For whatever reason the hermits may go out, they should first of all request the Prior's blessing and do likewise when returning before they retire to their cells.

For the community outings (cf. Constit. 68), let them say together the prayers contained in the Ritual.

When going out at other times, at the moment they begin to travel, let them not neglect to seek divine protection by saying some prayers.

55. Let those who happen to be outside the hermitage avoid visiting the homes of seculars. While they are outside and when they return they should be discreet and reserved in their conversations. It is strictly forbidden for all

the hermits to remain with seculars, even if they are relatives, for reasons of health.

The following general rule should be followed for going outside the enclosure, whether by the Prior or by a simple religious: One goes out only whenever truly necessary for reasons of administration or of health; for other reasons than those, one goes out rarely and only for grave necessity.

56. Whenever in extraordinary circumstances our relatives ask us to visit them, let us remind ourselves that in choosing solitude for God we have freely willed to give ourselves to Him in a total and irrevocable manner. Our affection thus assists them in a more profound way because we trust that in that case the Lord Himself will take care of them in our place.

57. On the occasions of perpetual professions, priestly Ordinations, First Masses, and funerals of our religious, the female relatives of the religious in question can enter the cloister.

In the premises adjoining the parlor and outside the cloister, the only women who may stay overnight are those strictly related to the hermits, and only in those cases where

spending the night elsewhere would turn out to be difficult. As always, the danger of entering the cloister should be avoided.

The women who exceptionally with due permission may enter the cloister must not eat within the enclosure of the hermitage, but a meal can be offered to them in an appropriate place outside the cloister.

The women who accompany a Cardinal and those who legitimately present themselves in a publicly official capacity are free to enter the enclosure. If the work of a woman is truly useful in a well-defined instance, the Prior will ask the consent of the Father Major according to the norm of article 84 of the Constitutions. If time is lacking, such consent can be presumed. Later on the Prior will communicate to the Father Major about the matter.

58. During the General Chapter, precisely from the departure of the Prior until his return or until the arrival of his successor, the hermits will not be allowed to go out of the cloister without an urgent motive.

58bis. It is not our custom to participate in congresses, even if they are monastic in character. Regarding eventual requests of a pastoral character, what is stated in the

Constitutions is to be kept faithfully. Let the Prior, in particular, guard against making exceptions such that, although they be in conformity with the letter of the Constitutions, are however contrary to their spirit, above all if they bring about some practice of a pastoral sort.

DISPENSATION FROM SILENCE AND RECREATION

59. During the two Lents a continual and truly inviolable silence is to be observed.

At other times it is permissible to speak on certain days: from Easter until the Exaltation of the Holy Cross three days a week and from the latter feast until Easter two days a week.

On these days, the Prior dispenses from silence. Ordinarily this is done on Tuesday and Thursday or also on Saturday.

If such a dispensation cannot be granted on these days, it is transferred to another day of the week.

60. It is not allowed, however, to converse with the guests, whether they be seculars or religious, or even with the friends of the house or with workmen, unless the Superior for a just motive orders or permits it. The hermits of our Congregation who may be passing through our hermitages

may avail themselves of the dispensation from silence like the religious of the house.

61. The following do not admit to dispensation from silence: Sundays and Holydays of obligation, solemnities with a meal in common, the two Lents, the Friday of each week and the hours between Compline and the end of Lauds of the following day.

The dispensation from silence does not authorize the hermits to disturb their brethren.

62. In the church and in the sacristy, one should speak only for some necessity that cannot be deferred. There are also other places which require continual silence, such as: the Chapter room, the lanes between the cells, the small square in front of the church and the one in front of the gate of the hermitage inside the cloister.

63. The purpose of the dispensation from silence is to offer the possibility of a fraternal encounter to whoever desires it or may have need of it. As a matter of fact, “everything has its moment: there is a time to keep silent and

time to speak” (cf. Qo. 3:1, 7). The moments of merry sociability help make silence better observed at other times.

The dispensation does not necessarily imply a communal recreation after the fashion of cenobites. On the other hand, that kind of recreation is recommended once a week for the monks in formation. Other than the Father Master or the Father Prior, the perpetually professed do not take part, while the members of the novitiate, including temporarily professed, are not easily dispensed from it. On this occasion, it is permitted to go out of the enclosure, especially if it is small, and only if the zone circling the hermitage is solitary.

A weekly recreation longer than traditionally done may be permitted to novices by the Father Master if, in agreement with the Father Prior, he considers one to be useful.

Apart from the traditional table games that can be played sometimes in the weekly recreation, communitarian practice of sports is not allowed except during the days spoken of in article 65 of this Customary.

64. All the hermits are requested to use the dispensation from silence, as far as possible, to address their material or spiritual needs to the Cellarer or the Prior.

“Necessary items are to be requested and given at proper times so that no one may be disquieted or saddened in the house of God” (cf. RB 31: 18-19).

65. During the ten days which precede the two Lents, which begin on the day after the feast of St. Martin and on the day after the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, the dispensation from silence is granted every day (including Sunday) except Friday.

On these days the religious, according to our tradition, may spend the afternoon in joyful recreation.

66. On the Sunday preceding Ash Wednesday, on the feast of St. Martin, on two days between the Exaltation of the Holy Cross and St. Martin, and on a day after the Epiphany the dispensation from silence lasts until the end of supper.

On St. Martin’s Day and the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, participation in the common supper is obligatory.

Outside of the above-mentioned Sunday and the Sunday on which the feast of St. Martin may fall, such recreations are never held on Sunday, or on Holydays of obligation, or on Friday, or even on major solemnities.

On these days of recreation the hermits, keeping one another company in the bond of fraternal charity, are accustomed to relax and eat together more abundantly, avoiding in this, however, all excess.

If the feast of St. Martin falls on Friday, recreation will be held on the preceding day.

Supper in the cells can be substituted for supper in the refectory on major solemnities and for the supper of recreation if the conventual Chapter agrees.

67. It is our custom that the community dines together without observing silence in the following circumstances too, viz.:

—after the assignment of the obediences or charges in the community;

—after the entrance into his office of the new Prior or the confirmation of the same Prior and before the departure of the Prior leaving office;

—at the opening and closing of the canonical Visitation;

—on the name day of the Prior and of the Father Major where he is present;

—on silver and golden jubilees of first profession and of priesthood;

—and when the Prior and his Counselors deem it opportune for just motives.

68. Five times a year outings (*passeggiate*) are held outside the cloister. It is the prerogative of the Prior to take the initiative in proposing a suitable itinerary and in providing what is necessary so that those participating can spend that day in serene joy.

The hermits, however, should avoid eating in the houses of others, and they should return at the time specified by the Prior, however no later than the *De Profundis*.

Let them not ordinarily go to places frequented by people or use an automobile, unless it be to give to the aged the occasional possibility of an excursion or to transport the hermits to solitary places if there are none close to the hermitage.

For the perpetually professed, such outings are optional.

LITURGICAL NORMS

69. In order that our liturgical service may always be executed with dignity and decorum, the liturgical education

which our candidates must receive during the period of formation is of the greatest importance.

Such an education does not consist solely in the transmission of the indispensable historical and theological concepts in liturgical matters but must, above all, introduce the young hermits to a profound liturgical sensitivity, which includes: reverence before God present under the sacramental signs and in the praying community, the avoidance of all haste and superficiality, attention to order, cleanliness, authenticity and a sober beauty, the sense of community and a continual effort to enliven with interior participation all the exterior words and actions.

70. The church is the house of God and a house of prayer. Therefore, throughout the church a profound and inviolable silence is to be observed. Not only all superfluous talk but any other noise which could offend the ear or distract the mind remains forbidden.

71. On all the liturgical solemnities (see art. 72), on the solemnities of the Most Holy Trinity, of Corpus Christi, of Christ the King, and on June 28 (transit of Blessed Paul Giustiniani), the Conventual Mass should be celebrated with

the rite of incensation; on the other solemnities, such incensation is optional.

72. The hermits will dine in the common refectory on the following solemnities called “major” while listening in silence to a reading pertaining to the feast:

Christmas	Pentecost
Epiphany	St. Romuald
Annunciation	Assumption
Holy Thursday	All Saints
Easter	Immaculate Conception
Ascension	Hermitage Church Dedication

On the above-mentioned solemnities the community will assemble also for supper in common if the conventual Chapter will have so decided.

Besides these solemnities, there is common refectory with an appropriate reading also on the day of the passing of Blessed Paul Giustiniani.

73. On the twelve major solemnities, as also on those of the Body and Blood of the Lord, of the Sacred Heart, and of Christ the King, there will be solemn Exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament with adoration by the community. Every first Friday of the month this rite will be observed in a simpler form.

74. It is the prerogative of the Prior to preside at the Conventual Mass on all days of the year which have the liturgical rank of solemnity, and also:

—at the liturgical Action on Good Friday;

—at the Presentation of the Lord, Ash Wednesday, and Palm Sunday;

—at professions and funerals;

—at the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed.

Wherever the Father Major is present, it is his prerogative to preside at the above-mentioned Masses.

75. In each one of our communities a Holy Mass should be offered every month for the spiritual and material

needs of our Congregation and another for the intentions of our confreres who are not priests.

Each one of our priests is permitted to offer two Holy Masses a month and two on Christmas day for his own intention.

76. In every hermitage there should be a hermit, appointed by the Prior, who records all the Holy Masses celebrated or to be celebrated there, indicating the stipend for each Mass.

Moreover, there should be an auditor of the Mass register who with the greatest diligence checks and verifies everything at least every two months, affixing his signature. The Visitators General, on the occasion of the canonical Visitation, should make a final check.

The Mass intentions which cannot be satisfied at the hermitage should be sent, if possible, to Father Major.

77. Our Superiors, by virtue of their office, have the faculty to hear the confessions of their subjects and of any others who live day and night in the house (cf. can. 968, par.2).

The Superiors should not, however, hear the confessions of their own subjects unless the latter request it spontaneously (cf. can. 630).

Our Priors are also competent to confer on any priest the faculties to hear the confessions of their subjects and of others who live day and night in the house (cf. can. 969, par.2).

78. For the community celebrations of Holy Mass, we follow the ordinary rite provided by the Missal of Paul VI.

79. In particular cases and for just and reasonable motives the Prior can dispense his subjects from the obligation of reciting the liturgical Hours, bearing in mind that this obligation is stricter for those who have received Holy Orders and for the perpetually professed.

80. Lest the decorous progression of the Liturgy of the Hours be disturbed, all the hermits are to remain in choir until the end of the Office unless a grave necessity forces them to leave.

The Prior himself should not be called out while he is celebrating the Divine Praises with the others, nor should he, if

he happens to be absent from choir for a just cause, call others out.

81. Whenever the absence of a confrere is noticed at the beginning of Matins, the one appointed should call him immediately. If during the day someone fails to appear in choir, at the end of that part of the Office the Prior should go to see or send someone else to see why the hermit was absent.

82. Whoever makes a mistake in the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours should be discreetly corrected by the Prior.

The hermits are obliged to make satisfaction for arriving late in choir and for errors committed in the recitation of the Divine Office. They are small gestures of courtesy and humility.

According to the gravity of the error they are to bow or genuflect.

83. In all the hermitages the following are to be recited:

—the Angelus,

- the Litany of Our Lady,
- the prayer to St. Romuald, and
- the *De Profundis* (after Compline).

In the houses where there is a novitiate the rosary is recited in common by the novices and the temporarily professed and, optionally, by the other religious. All of the prayers mentioned are to be recited in the national language. Following the directives left us by our founder, we celebrate the liturgy without singing, except for the following times at which singing is allowed: the Easter *Exultet*; and a hymn during the Eucharistic Benediction. The Prior does not have the authority to introduce any communal devotional practices beyond those foreseen in this chapter.

THE OFFICE OF THE PRIOR

84. “Let the Prior not refrain, through a misunderstood humility and a false benevolence, from correcting abuses. Let him pay careful attention, however, lest it happen that he himself be guilty of the defect which he wishes to reprove or correct in others. Let the Prior, therefore,

do everything with discretion. He will do this without difficulty if, according to the admonition of the Rule, he hates sin and, on the other hand, loves the sinful brother too much to despise him in any way for his vice or to fail to interest himself with equal solicitude in his welfare” (cf. Bl. Paul, Rule, p. 96 f).

To know how to act as a wise physician is one of the most delicate tasks of the Superior. Let him prefer those penances which humble the spirit to those which afflict the body, as he will judge more opportune in individual cases.

85. When the Prior commands according to our Constitutions, verbally or in writing, the hermits are held to obedience, even in a case where the task seems difficult or “impossible” (see RB ch. 68). The violation of such orders constitutes a sin more or less grave according to the circumstances and the internal dispositions of the religious. The formal precept of obedience in virtue of the vow (cf. Constit. 103) which obliges under pain of grave sin and which supposes, at least in the Prior’s judgment, a matter which is not light, should be used only after careful consideration. Whoever transgresses what is established by our legislation

will not escape sin whenever his deportment is infused with contempt or another disordered affection. In any case, everything we do we ought to do not so much through fear of eternal punishments or through the desire of heavenly happiness, but above all through pure, simple and most ardent love of God, the Best and Greatest, in full abandonment to His will and seeking in everything His Glory (cf. Bl. Paul, Rule, p. 108 f).

86. Every Saturday, in place of the usual reading before Compline, the Prior will give the community a conference on a biblical or liturgical or spiritual or monastic subject.

He will also communicate to his confreres useful information concerning events in the house, the Congregation, the Church and the world. He will recommend possible special intentions to their prayers, and finally he will hold the Chapter of faults, which is spoken of elsewhere in the Customary.

87. Let the Prior communicate seasonably to the General Council all the data necessary for the compilation of

the register of the Congregation, which contains the names of all our hermits, the place and date of birth, the date of entry into the novitiate as well as the first and perpetual profession, and of priestly ordination if it occurs. Every superior receives such a list each year.

Every Prior should also have for each of his subjects the address of some relative or acquaintance in case it should be needed.

87bis. A “Chronicle of the Hermitage” should be kept in each hermitage. In it are recorded the events worthy of being handed down for the remembrance of posterity. Particularly on the occasion of the death or the departure from the Institute of a hermit, a rather precise biographical entry concerning his years passed in religion should be compiled. It would be good to make a similar but more general entry for every novice about his life in the world.

88. At the beginning of their mandate the Priors are obliged to make a profession of faith. This is done during the General Chapter or the Diet, or else, if they are absent, in the presence of the Father Major or his Delegate (cf. can. 833, 8).

THE VICAR

89. The Vicar, of whom article 110 of the Constitutions speaks, possesses the same authority as the Prior in spiritual as well as in temporal matters. Therefore, all shall render their obedience and submission to him as to the Prior.

Until the Prior's return the Vicar, if a priest, can give faculties to hear confessions according to article 77 of the Customs.

90. Not only when his authority has ceased, but also while he is in office, the Vicar is to remain subject always and in everything to the Prior, at whose judgment, expressed either orally or in writing, he can be removed from office.

The Vicar cannot read letters addressed to the Prior without the latter's previous consent.

It is not permissible for the Vicar to build, innovate, change, alter, sell or buy anything extraordinary or to engage in similar activities without the express permission of the Prior.

91. The authority of the Vicar will last until the return of the Prior or until the latter has been legitimately replaced by another.

92. Let the Prior provide for any absences of the Vicar that may occur by naming a substitute or causing one to be named. Whenever through unforeseen death or another cause the community would otherwise remain without a Superior, one of the Counselors of the Prior, according to the order of election, becomes by law his substitute.

Where, according to article 189 of the Constitutions, there is a Vice Prior, he is by virtue of his office a Counselor of the Prior.

THE COMMON LIFE

93. At meetings of the conventual Chapter all are obliged to express their own opinions sincerely (cf. can. 127, 3) and to respect those of others. Let all then accept the decision reached. For the voting three colors are used to indicate a positive vote, a negative vote and abstention.

If there are only two perpetually professed in the community of a Hermitage, and a conventual Chapter vote is necessary by the norm of our laws, a decision must be unanimous in order to be valid. For more important decisions, a member of the General Council will go to the Hermitage.

94. The president of the chapter is whoever has convoked it, even in the case when the Father Major or the Visitators participate in it.

In order to accomplish the cutting down of trees which are neither dense nor dead within the boundaries of the hermitage, the Prior needs the consent of two thirds of the conventual Chapter and the permission, where required, of the competent civil authorities.

In case the Prior has grave reasons not to convoke the conventual Chapter or to act in spite of its vote to the contrary, he should have recourse to the General Council in order to have the necessary authorizations.

95. The daily schedule of the hermits is determined by the conventual Chapter of the individual hermitages

according to local needs, the following common points remaining firm:

- a. The nocturnal rest should not be interrupted by the celebration of the Office of readings which should be celebrated during the first hours of the morning (around 4:00 a.m.).
- b. After the midday meal there should be free time which can be used for rest by those so desiring.
- c. At least two hours a day are to be dedicated to *lectio divina* done preferably in the cell.
- d. The hermits should be occupied for at least three hours a day in the various labors of common utility assigned to them.
- e. The hours of the Divine Office should respect, as far as possible, the *Veritas horarum*.

The schedule of every hermitage is to be communicated in detail to the General Council and approved by the latter.

Modifications in regular observance, the introduction of which depends on the conventual Chapter, can be submitted anew to its examination at the request of at least two perpetually professed upon the arrival of the new Prior or of the same Prior who has been confirmed in office.

96. The Chapter of faults normally takes place every Saturday. The hermit who has presented himself spontaneously or who has been invited by the Prior should declare briefly in front of everyone his transgressions of the regular observance and his possible failures in fraternal charity. Let him ask pardon for them and receive a penance.

It would be well for the Prior also, remaining seated at his place, to accuse himself sometimes of his defects. Indeed, it is not possible to build a Christian community without reciprocal forgiveness.

97. Four times a year, that is, on the vigils of

—Christmas

—Easter

—Pentecost

—Assumption

the General Absolution will be imparted. The latter substitutes that week for the accusation and penance of which the preceding article speaks.

98. In community life the right of precedence promotes order and peace.

The Master of Novices comes immediately after the Prior. The right of precedence among the professed is determined by the time of first profession made in our Congregation. If several have made profession on the same day, he who entered first will take precedence over, the others. If they entered together, the senior in age will take precedence. Those in Holy Orders precede the others of their own rank. Precedence among the novices is determined by the day of their clothing.

99. The visits which we may make to sick confreres should be brief and discreet.

In the cell of a sick hermit no more than two persons besides the infirmarian should remain at the same time. Let no one remain there longer than is fitting or visit too frequently.

In order to visit a recluse staying in his own cell the special permission of the Prior is required.

100. The rigorous prescriptions regarding bedding are not extended to the sick and the aged, to whom the Prior

can grant opportune dispensations. This applies also to food and to the use of meat.

THE OFFICIALS OF THE HOUSE

101. “Let the house of God be wisely governed by wise men,” St. Benedict (cf. RB 53: 22) recommends to us. Therefore, let the hermits render mutual service to one another in the various ministries required by the life of a community.

It is in the faithful fulfillment of the service assigned to him that each hermit is trained concretely in generous obedience and in fraternal charity, virtues which contribute so much to a serious life of prayer. The various tasks are distributed by the Prior with his Counselors according to the norm of article 128 of the Constitutions.

102. If the circumstances require it, one hermit can be responsible for more than one ministry, just as one ministry can be entrusted to more than one religious.

It is opportune, however, that there be a certain alteration among the religious in the offices in order to avoid both an inordinate attachment to a particular task and the

burden proceeding from the uninterrupted fulfillment of the same office.

Once the list of the officials of the community has been determined at the beginning of the Prior's administration, it should be sent by the Prior without delay to the Father Major.

103. The porter, often the only hermit with whom outsiders have contact, should show himself courteous and charitable to all. He ought always to have a religious and reserved demeanor and to be careful not to talk too much.

It is his duty to dismiss promptly those who have come for no good reason, prompted as they are only by curiosity or by a wish to pass the time. In the hermitages in which there are frequent visitors, the visits of guests and of tourists should be well controlled.

Occasional visitors, once they have entered, should be admonished to speak only in a low voice and not to make any noise. They are not to be allowed to go through the hermitage alone, but they are to be accompanied by the porter or by another hermit appointed by the Prior.

104. It pertains to the guest-master to keep the guesthouse clean and in order and to obtain for the guests all that is necessary. He should remember that his office requires him to be reserved and a man of few words, and that only in this way can he be a source of edification to them and leave them a helpful example.

In the rooms of the guesthouse the beds are to be prepared in the manner customary among secular people. In each room there should be a copy of the regulations for guests with the schedule of the community and some practical notices. Normally the guests eat alone as do the hermits.

The Priors should beware of offering hospitality to persons who are suspect or being sought by public authority.

105. The sacristan has the duty of guarding diligently and of preparing at the proper time the sacred vessels, the vestments and the sacred furnishings of the altars and of the sacristy.

It is part of his office to ring the bell for the liturgical Hours and the other common acts, to clean the church and the sacristy, to keep the sanctuary lamp burning day and night before the Blessed Sacrament and to regulate the main clock.

106. The secretary of the Chapter records in a suitable register the minutes of all the acts of the conventual Chapter with the relative circumstances and the indication of the day, month and year, adding his own signature.

At the beginning of every session of the conventual Chapter he reads the minutes of the preceding session.

107. It is the duty of the librarian to make every effort to keep the common library clean and orderly and its catalogue always up to date, if possible.

The books are at the disposal of all our religious, who use them to enrich and promote their spiritual life. The perpetually professed do so freely. Those, however, who are still in the period of probation do so with the consent and under the guidance of the Father Master.

Whoever takes a book from the library should keep it only for the time necessary and should remember to bring it back as soon as he has finished reading it.

Whoever takes a book to his cell should sign in the library a card listing the author and the title of the work and the date of its eventual return. Neither indiscriminate access to

the library nor the use of its books outside the hermitage should be granted to outsiders. Suitable regulations designed to guard the hermitage's patrimony of books should be drawn up and displayed in the library.

108. The archivist has the task of preserving, recovering and guarding in the archive or in a securely locked safe all the documents of patrimonial, personal and historical interest to the hermitage. The archive will be useful and functional to the extent that the archivist keeps its inventory up to date.

109. In preparing food for the hermits and for the guests the cook is to follow in everything the orders of the Prior and to treat all alike unless he has been ordered to do otherwise.

All those who have no duties to perform in the kitchen are forbidden to enter it, so that an atmosphere of recollection may be maintained there.

110. Suppressed.

111. Suppressed.

112. The barber is to cut the hair of the hermits every month in the same manner for all. All the hermits, according to our tradition, wear the beard.

REMEMBRANCE OF THE DEAD

113. The hermits who have left us in order to encounter at last without shadow and veil the Risen Christ remain our brothers toward whom we are obliged to show the charity of obsequies and suffrages. Therefore, as soon as a sick hermit has expired, the bell should be rung so that all may know that they ought to pray for him.

114. In the hermitage where a confrere, even if only a novice or donate, has died, the Office of the Dead with the appropriate oration will be recited in place of the Divine Office of that day or else of the first day not liturgically impeded. Thirty Gregorian Masses will be celebrated in addition, and besides the customary alms, a more generous sum of money or of natural goods will be distributed to the poor.

115. In order that all our religious may be able to fulfill their duty of suffrages as soon as possible, the Prior is to notify the Superiors of the other houses concerning the death and to expect a response.

116. As soon as the notification of the death of a hermit, even if a novice, has arrived, all the priests of our Congregation will be obliged to offer three Holy Masses for him. All the other hermits will recite five decades of the Holy Rosary or else the entire Office of the Dead.

If the deceased was a Superior in office, or else if he had been Prior, Visitor, or Major for at least eighteen years, each of our priests will offer a fourth Holy Mass for him, and the non-priests will recite an additional five decades of the Holy Rosary.

117. In all the hermitages there should be a register containing the names of the deceased hermits, with the indication of the place and the date of their death and with the declaration that the suffrages have been duly performed. This

register will be presented to the Visitators General during the canonical Visitation.

118. Every year four commemorations are to be celebrated for the deceased:

—the first is that of November 2, established by the universal Church;

—the second is for the deceased of our Congregation on a free day in November;

—the third, on a day not impeded by other celebrations after the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, is for the souls of the benefactors of our Congregation;

—the fourth, before Ash Wednesday, is for the deceased parents of the hermits.

On such commemorations the community celebrates only the Office of the Dead with its related Conventual Mass. On the same day or as soon as possible the priests are to offer a Holy Mass for the souls of those being commemorated.

THE MATERIAL ADMINISTRATION

119. “Let the hermits seek the more humble and abject labors, those which are useful and contribute to the beauty of the hermitage. All the lanes, the little squares and the other common places are to be kept in order through the work of all.

Each should take care of his own cell and the little garden in front of it, seeing to whatever the Prior may indicate to him, so that there may be no dirt or disorder anywhere” (cf. Bl. Paul, Rule, 87).

120. All who have utensils connected with their office should try to use them carefully, watch over them and, when necessary, repair them or have them repaired because, as the Holy Rule (cf. chap. 31: 10) says, all things of the monastic family are to be considered sacred, and strict account will have to be rendered to God for negligence in caring for them.

121. The Cellarer should diligently provide everything pertaining to the food and clothing of the hermits and the necessary furnishings of the cells and the common

places. He should make his purchases in the way most convenient, so that he will not be forced to deny just requests for lack of provisions.

He should never lose sight of the eremitical simplicity to which everything serving our needs should conform. Let him also take care to reduce his trips outside the cloister to what is strictly necessary.

122. The Cellarer should keep a daily register in which income and expenses are annotated distinctly; a ledger listing the monthly or periodic income and expenses for each category; and finally, a third register giving the updated cash statement.

Every two months he is to send a detailed financial report to the Bursar General.

123. The Cellarer should see that the goods entrusted to his care are not destroyed or damaged in any way.

Auto vehicles and other machinery are to be acquired only if they are truly useful, taking into account our manner of life and avoiding every form and appearance of luxury.

124. As far as possible we are not to employ laborers. However, once they have been hired, they must be paid justly and honestly so that they can provide suitably for their own needs and those of their families.

125. As far as it depends on us, we should always avoid initiating litigation and becoming involved in it.

Only with the permission of the General Council is it allowed to have recourse to the law.

126. Before publishing books, articles or writings of any kind, even with the purpose of making our life known, the hermits should not fail to ask permission of the General Council.

127. One assigned to another hermitage belongs to the house he left so long as he has not reached his destination. In the case of a transfer of a hermit it is the duty of the house from which he departs to pay the expenses of the journey. In particular cases the General Council will make special provisions. The Prior of the house of departure should see to it that the hermit has clothing that is either new or at least in

good condition. The hermit should ask permission for the things that he takes with him to his newly assigned hermitage. Let the Prior obtain with all charity for one assigned to another hermitage all that is necessary. The money taken for the trip should be spent responsibly and an account of it rendered. The Prior to whom the remaining money is consigned will have the duty of restoring it to the house of departure.

THE GENERAL CHAPTER

128. During the General Chapter or the preceding week all our priests are to celebrate a Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit for the happy outcome of the Chapter. During the same period those who are not priests are to recite an entire Rosary of twenty decades.

129. In order to elect the Capitulars to whom article 144 of the Constitutions refers, the following procedure is observed:

- a. If any of those eligible believes he has serious motives for renouncing his eventual participation in the Chapter, he should manifest such motives,

clearly specified, six months before the Chapter to the Father Major, to whom it belongs to decide on the eligibility of the writer. The latter is then bound to accept such a decision.

- b. About four months before the beginning of the General Chapter the Father Major is to send to all the hermitages a complete list of those who are eligible.
- c. This list, which is to contain also the number of Capitulars to be elected, should be exposed in a public place. For some days the electors, that is, all the hermits with solemn vows not deprived of active voice, should reflect and occasionally consult one another on the choices to be made.
- d. Every religious having the right to vote is to manifest his preferences by means of a sealed ballot containing the name of the elector on the outside and the names of the elected on the inside. If a ballot should contain a greater number of names than that required or the name of the elector himself on the inside, such a ballot would be without any value.

- e. Once the examination of the ballots has been accomplished with due secrecy in the presence of the Father Major, the results of the election are to be communicated as soon as possible to the communities. If more than one candidate received the same number of votes, the senior by first profession is elected. If they made their profession on the same day, the senior by age is elected.
- f. If for some unforeseen reason one of those who are Capitulars either by right or by election should be prevented from attending the Chapter, the one who after those elected received the greater number of votes and is not impeded becomes a Capitular. The supplementary Capitulars are declared such by the General Council.
- g. Anybody who did not make his perpetual profession before the six months from the beginning of the General Chapter has neither active nor passive voice in this election.
- h. Anybody who, during the General Chapter, happens to be elected a member of the new

General's Curia, participates fully in that same Chapter with the right to vote.

130. The date for the beginning of the General Chapter will be determined and communicated in due time by the General Council. The same holds for the choice of the place.

The General Council should prepare an Agenda in view of the imminent General Chapter and communicate it to the Capitular fathers.

131. The Plenary General Council will name a Vicar of the house which is the seat of the Chapter. He will enter into office immediately after the opening of the Chapter.

The Capitulars will deposit their money with him. He is to give each one a receipt and to return the money at the opportune moment.

132. The General Chapter will be officially opened on the date pre-established provided that there are present at least two thirds of those who are bound to attend.

133. During the Chapter the Capitulars are obliged to participate in the Conventual Mass, Lauds, Vespers and the midday meal in the refectory, during which they will listen to suitable reading.

134. On the day of the opening of the Chapter or as soon as possible a Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit is celebrated.

In his opening discourse the Father Major exhorts all those convened to entrust to God the labors which they are about to begin and to implore light from above for the good of our Congregation.

The first act of the Chapter is the absolution from censures and irregularities which, as a precautionary measure, the Father Major will impart to the Capitulars according to the following formula:

“I, Dom..., to the extent of my faculties absolve you from every censure of excommunication, suspension and interdict, and I dispense you from all penalties and irregularities in so far as I am able and you have need, in order that the elections may be legitimate and canonical, and I declare you legitimate electors.”

135. For the promise of the Capitulars, to which article 152 of the Constitutions refers, the following formula is used:

“I, Dom or Brother..., promise under oath that in this Chapter I will elect those whom before God I consider truly worthy and suitable.”

135bis. Among us it remains forbidden to vote for oneself. Therefore the ballot that contains the name of the one voted for shall also feature a personal initial or code of the voter. In this way any vote cast for the voter himself will be noticeable.

136. For resignation from offices we use the following formula:

“In the act of resigning from the office held by me until now I acknowledge the faults of various kinds which I have committed, and renouncing any title whatsoever to the office, I beg the mercy of God and the understanding of all the Brethren.”

137. The resignation from the offices is accepted with the following declaration:

“With the authority granted to me I declare in the name of the General Chapter, the supreme authority of the Congregation, that all the hermits present and absent, even those who may not have explicitly presented their resignations, are relieved of the mandate held by them until now, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

138. During the General Chapter whoever is being submitted to vote should leave the hall and wait until he is recalled.

If in the first two scrutinies of an election, a two-thirds majority (cf. Constit. 155) is required, and it is not obtained, one does not proceed to a third scrutiny (in which only the two candidates have passive voice). Rather, one begins the election all over again from the first scrutiny.

139. After the proclamation of the results of the elections, the ballots and all other material regarding the elections are to be burned.

140. With opportune interruptions the President will give the Capitulars the time and the means to relax between sessions and to consult one another.

Questions difficult to resolve can be postponed to a following session.

141. The porter of the Chapter gives the signal for the beginning of the sessions, and he receives at the door any possible wishes and messages from the outside. He will keep the room of the sessions clean and orderly.

142. After the completion of the preliminary elections to which articles 153 and 157 a of the Constitutions refer, the scribe is to read the letters addressed to the Chapter, taking note of anything which in the opinion of the Capitulars merits special consideration or eventual measures to be taken.

No letter should ever be left unanswered lest the writer be discouraged or mortified. The President is to appoint one of

the Capitulars to formulate a reply satisfactory for its truth, justice and charity. Before being sent, such a reply is to be read to the Capitulars and submitted to their judgment.

143. A hermit who writes to the General Chapter should place on the outside of the envelope the name of the hermitage from which the letter originates. Before the scribe opens it, the religious of that hermitage present in the hall are to go outside. Only when called may they reenter.

Letters containing a grave accusation against someone must be sent to the General Council at least two months before the beginning of the Chapter in order to make it possible to verify the allegations. Anonymous letters should be seen for what they really are, that is, devoid of any value whatever.

144. After having dealt with the correspondence, the Capitulars then listen to the accounts of the canonical Visitations held in the various hermitages. The two Visitators General going out of office read a synthesis of the accounts.

The residents of the individual hermitages are to absent themselves from the Chapter room while the account of their respective hermitage is being given. In the absence of the

President the senior by profession among the Capitulars is to take his place during that interval.

After the accounts of the canonical visitations of the hermitages, the Capitular assembly, with the members of the General Council present, submit the operation of the General Council itself to a serene and calm judgment, in order to point out any defects and thus allow for its improvement for the future.

145. After an examination by two accountants of the triennial financial reports of the individual hermitages and of the Bursar General, the latter will read and explain his report on the economic situation of the Congregation and of the local administrations.

The financial reports, however, will remain available to the Capitulars.

146. The Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, recommends to the religious Institutes that they not only preserve their proper character but also adapt themselves continually to the changed conditions of the times.

Therefore, the Capitulars should know how to combine firm fidelity to our eremitical charism with a just openness to the realities in which we are called to realize such a charism.

147. The decrees of the Chapter should be clear, concise, adapted to the purpose intended and, above all, realistic. Lest they fall into oblivion after their promulgation, the decrees are to be read publicly once a year in the individual communities.

148. The scribe should compile in legible handwriting an accurate account not only of the elections and postulations but of each session, to be read in the following session, holding to the essential lines of the development of the discussion.

Before the text is written in the register of the General Chapters, the Capitular Fathers should correct possible errors or oversights.

The text is to be signed by the scribe and by the President. The above-mentioned register, outside the Chapter, must be kept under lock and key and can be consulted only for official reasons.

149. At the end of the Chapter, the Vicar of the house is to return the money taken into custody in the following manner:

- a. Each one receives the money which has come from the hermitage to which he is assigned.
- b. If there should be a hermitage to which no one is returning, the money which has come from it is to be restored to it in another way.
- c. If in a certain case the money should not be sufficient for the expenses of the journey, the needed funds are to be drawn from the account of the Congregation.

150. The Father Major, as the head of the whole Congregation, always has precedence over all the other Superiors.

The Visitators General precede the local Priors everywhere except in the residences of the latter outside the time of a canonical Visitation.

Among the Visitators the first elected by the Capitulars has precedence, even if he should be the junior of the other by profession.

The Consultors General and the Bursar General follow the Visitators.

Among the Priors, the Prior of the hermitage in which the Father Major has his residence precedes the others; afterwards follows the Priors of the houses of novitiate according to the priority of erection; then those of the other houses according to their respective dates of foundation. This precedence ought to be respected also when there is question of completing the electoral college in the cases contemplated in articles 194 and 202 of the Constitutions.

In his own hermitage, the Prior has precedence over all the other Superiors except the Father Major and also the Visitators on the occasion of the canonical Visitation.

151. On the day of the conclusion of the General Chapter the Father Major, after having exhorted all those present to accept with a spirit of faith and dedication the decisions of the Chapter, invites the scribe to read all its

legislative and disciplinary decrees with any possible exhortations and recommendations.

If he deems it opportune, the Father Major may explain to some extent the bearing and the general or particular range of the decrees of the Chapter.

THE GENERAL'S CURIA

152. The Father Major with the consent of the Visitators can nominate one of the hermits his representative at the Holy See, called Procurator General. Such an appointment ought not be lacking whenever the Father Major does not have his ordinary residence at the Holy Tuscolan Hermitage. The Procurator, who is subject in everything to the General Council, is not part of the General's Curia unless a member of it under some other title.

153. The Father Major can make use of the fund of the Congregation for the ordinary expenses for the benefit of the Congregation, sending regularly the relevant report to the Bursar General. For extraordinary expenses he will need the

consent of the Visitators and, if considerable, of the Consultors and Bursar General as well.

154. The Visitators are not, according to our legislation, a controlling body over the Father Major (except in the case where he might also be prior of a hermitage to be canonically visited). Being however his closest collaborators, they are the persons most indicated to exercise fraternal correction in his regard if the good of the congregation calls for it.

155. When a Visitator resides in a hermitage without being its Prior, he is a fully entitled member of the community and as such is subject to the Prior. The Father Prior on his part will respect the necessary autonomy of the Visitator in the carrying out of his activity. When for some reason the First Visitator General needs to be substituted for, the Second Visitator General becomes by that very fact the First and the newly elected will be the Second. The same norm applies to Consultors.

155bis. Whenever a perpetually professed requests

either a dispensation from the vows or exclaustation, the Father Major will not neglect to consult even the Consultors General.

156. Although the Constitutions (cf. article 197b) permit that the General Council, regularly convoked, can validly decide also in the physical absence of one of the Visitators even in a case where his approval is demanded, it is recommended that the Father Major convoke to the Council one of the Consultors in the case where one of the Visitators, whose approval is demanded, cannot physically take part. The Consultor, however, does not have the right to vote.

156bis. Whenever the value to be given to the vote of the Father Visitators (or Consultors) is not evident from the legislative texts, it has deliberative value.

THE HERMITAGES OF REDUCED AUTONOMY

157. In our Congregation there can be three kinds of hermitages:

- a. hermitages of ordinary regime, of which the second part of the Constitutions speaks;
- b. hermitages of semi-autonomous regime;
- c. Dependent houses.

158. Particular circumstances can require that a community not have all the rights recognized for hermitages of ordinary regime; when for example it is a question of new foundations or of houses destined, for grave reasons, to be closed, or else of communities that are deprived of their Prior until he is replaced.

159. It is the competence of the General Chapter or else, outside this assembly, of the Plenary General Council:

- a. To raise a house of reduced autonomy to the rank of a hermitage with full rights;
- b. To constitute or declare the reduction in autonomy of a hermitage.

160. A semi-autonomous house is bound by dependence to the General Council. It has:

- a. as superior, a Vicar named by the General Chapter or by the Plenary General Council; the Vicar ought to have received Holy Orders, unless the Holy See gives a dispensation; his office is not to be considered as an office of governance in the strict sense (cf. Constit. 175 and Cust. 116), but he participates by right in the General Chapter (cf. Constit. 144).
- b. its own conventual Chapter;
- c. its own economic administration, under the surveillance of the Prior or of the General Council;
- d. the same obligations as an autonomous hermitage, such as suffrages for the deceased, Holy Masses to apply monthly and annually, etc. Possible transfers of religious require the normal authorization on the part of the General Council.

161. A dependent house together with the hermitage on which it depends form a single community. It has as superior a vicar named by the Prior with the consent of his

Council. In a dependent house, there does not exist a proper conventual Chapter.

In the important things to be treated of in chapter, the Prior ought not to fail to consult the religious residing in the dependent house. The dependent house does not have its own administration, and not yet, or no more, the obligations of suffrages or monthly and annual Holy Masses. The Prior after having consulted his Counselors and obtained the approval of the Father Major, can transfer a hermit from the principal to the dependent house and vice versa.

CEREMONIAL FOR THE DIVINE OFFICE

A) THE PARTICIPANTS AND THE ACTORS

1. “All the hermits are obliged to assemble in the church for the celebration of the liturgy Hours” (cf. Constit. 96). Anybody who foresees that he cannot be present at one of the canonical hours should give the Prior timely notice of his absence.
2. The Prior can impose as a punishment temporary exclusion from the *Opus Dei* (cf. RB 44: 1), or else he can deprive the hermit of any active and official role in it (cf. RB 24: 4). Defects of voice do not justify absence from choir, but they do make the reduction of active participation advisable.
3. The Recluses “say the liturgical hours in their own oratory following the *horarium* of the community with regard both to the hours of the day and to those of the night,

observing the ceremonies which the others observe in church and in communion with them” (cf. Constit. 79).

4. If, with the permission of the Prior, the guests participate in choir, care should be taken that they are decently dressed and able to follow the Office without disturbances to the community.

5. He who precedes the others in dignity is considered the **PRESIDENT** of the liturgical assembly. His responsibilities are:
 - to order the Office (calendar, texts chosen, possible modification of the printed text, selection of the other “actors”, etc.)
 - to give the signal for the beginning of the liturgical hour;
 - to read the Gospel in the third nocturn of Matins (i.e., Office of Readings: always celebrated by us in the first hours of the morning, for which reason we keep the customary term);

- to intone the *Te decet laus*, the *Te Deum*, the canticles of the *Magnificat*, the *Benedictus*, and the *Nunc dimittis*;
- to give the blessing at Lauds and Vespers;
- to give the blessing at Compline and to intone the final Marian antiphon;
- to intone the Our Father (cf. RB 13: 12);
- to act as hebdomadary in all the Hours of solemnities and of the Paschal Triduum;
- to dispense from silence (*Benedicite*), customarily after Terce;
- to sprinkle the hermits with holy water after the *De Profundis*;
- to indicate the end of the pause for reflection after the readings at Matins, the Angelus, and the silent thanksgiving after Holy Mass;
- to correct errors whenever necessary;
- to give permission to those who may arrive late in choir to go to their own places;
- to give permission for absence from choir;

- to leave first from choir at the end of a liturgical Hour (or else, in case he wishes to remain, to give a signal that the others can leave).

6. The HEBDOMADARY, preferably a hermit priest, begins his service at the first Vespers of Sunday; when the week is over, he is replaced by another, customarily from the other side of the choir. It is his function to begin and to conclude the Hours. He reads the short readings, leads the invocations and intercessions, intones the antiphon for the *Magnificat*, *Benedictus*, *Nunc dimittis*, and says the oration. It also pertains to him to lead the Litany of the Madonna and the prayers that follow it.

7. The INVITATOR recites the invitatory antiphon and the relative psalm, intones the antiphons, says the versicles and the brief responsories, intones the responsories after the readings of Matins and says their verse. The length of his service corresponds to that of the hebdomadary. The hebdomadary and the invicator are customarily on opposite sides of the choir.

8. Each of the two groups of the choir has a **GUIDE** whose task it is to intone with a sure voice the hymns and psalms. The first strophe of the hymn, at the beginning of the Hour, is intoned by the guide who stands on the side of the hebdomadary.

9. The **READERS** have the duty of reading the lessons of Matins.

“In the assignment of readers...the brethren are not to succeed one another in turn, but only those who can do so in a way that will edify the hearers” (cf. RB 38: 12).

B) LITURGICAL ACTIONS

10. The celebration of the liturgical Hours includes different actions that call for an attentive and faithful execution that avoids all haste and superficiality, routine and formalism. The mind should be in agreement not only with the voice (cf. RB 19: 7), but also with the actions, which we should accomplish in such a fashion that they are truly

vehicles for making contact with the spiritual reality to which they refer.

11. It is our custom to recite the liturgical Hours **STANDING** without leaning on the bench or the book stand. It is normal to stand always turned toward the book stand, but whenever the Gospel is proclaimed at Matins, each turns toward the reader. We also stand while saying the *Regina Caeli*.

12. We remain **SEATED** during the readings of Matins, the responsories that follow them, and the successive moments of silence. The readers read standing, while the Invitator, who intones the responsory and says its verse, remains seated. While awaiting the beginning of the Office, one can remain seated. Weak confreres, for whom standing would be too tiring, may remain seated as they participate in choir.

13. We remain **KNEELING**

- before the divine Office, at least from when the final ringing of the bell begins;
- during the Angelus, outside of Sundays;

- during the additional prayers, from the *Sub tuum* on (the Hebdomadary stands up, however, after the versicle);
- during the *De profundis* and the aspersion that follows;
- during the examination of conscience at the end of Sext.

14. We GENUFLECT when passing before the Most Holy Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle, and likewise when passing before the Cross after the liturgical Action of Good Friday until the Easter Vigil. One who makes a mistake in the Office that appreciably disturbs the brethren makes a genuflection at his place in satisfaction.

15. The BOW we use consists in a bending of the head and the shoulders, so that all the upper part of the body participates in it. Such a bow is performed above all during all the doxologies, that is for the “Glory be to the Father” of the psalmody and of the brief responses, at the end of the canticle *Benedicite*, at the last strophe of the hymns whenever they are laudatory and Trinitarian in content. In

addition, during the blessings at Lauds and Vespers. One who arrives late for the Office remains bowing at the entrance of the choir until a sign from the president.

16. He who makes a mistake in the Office which disturbs the others little or not at all bows, but if the error was more sizeable, let him genuflect. The hermit who has erred makes such satisfactions at his place as soon as he notices the error, unless he needs to recite something (alone or as a member of the choir) or all must bow. In these cases, the satisfaction is put off for a moment.

17. We make the SIGN OF THE CROSS in three ways:

- a little one, with the thumb over the lips at the beginning of Matins, accompanying the words “Lord, open my lips”;
- three little ones, always with the thumb, on the forehead, lips, and breast, at the beginning of the Gospel read at Matins;
- a big one—with the hand touching the forehead, the breast, the left shoulder, and the right shoulder—at the beginning of the Hours at the

words “O God, come to my assistance; at the beginning of the *Magnificat*, the *Benedictus*, and of the *Nunc dimittis*; during the blessings of Lauds and of Vespers; at the aspersion after Compline; and when taking holy water.

18. The SACRED SILENCE of the praying community is helpful “for receiving in our hearts the full resonance of the voice of the Holy Spirit and for uniting more closely personal prayer with the Word of God and with the public voice of the Church” (cf. General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours, 202). Some moments of silence are foreseen after the Matins readings with their responsories (a few minutes). We make a brief pause after the Biblical readings in all the other canonical Hours, before the brief responsory or verse, as well as before the intonation of the Our Father at Lauds and Vespers. An examination of conscience is made in silence after Sext and at the beginning of Compline.

19. Missing

20. The RENUNCIATION OF SINGING is our ancient tradition. For the recitation of the psalms and other parts of the Office one adopts usually the *tonus rectus* [monotone], avoiding introducing into it any misplaced modulation. One should avoid both slowness and haste in the recitation. Let each one force himself not to lower the tone, to use a sustained voice without crying out, and to comply with the due pauses. It is permitted to use the normal tone of voice for the readings of Matins, as well as to make use of singing for the Marian antiphon at the end of Compline.

21. The attitude of LISTENING, which demands attention and discipline, must not be neglected in the Divine Office. He who follows the reading being proclaimed by following the text simultaneously in his own book does not correspond fully to this attitude. Such a custom should not be tolerated during the proclamation of the Holy Gospel.

B) THE EXECUTION OF THE DIVINE OFFICE

22. To give a signal by ringing the bell before the liturgical Hours is not simply a means of guaranteeing the punctual arrival of all, but in a certain sense it is part of the prayer itself. In fact, ringing the bell contributes to creating an atmosphere of prayer and expresses the public and social character of the community's liturgy. Each hermitage has its own proper way of signaling the canonical Hours. When an Hour is preceded by sleep or work, it is expected to have two signals separated by a suitable interval.

23. The hermits wear a mantle during the choral Office and will do so also if possible whenever they are guests in another hermitage. One will normally put on the mantle in one's own cell. To promote recollection, tradition recommends covering the head with the hood when going to the church and also when returning.

24. It is sometimes necessary during the Office to cover oneself with the hood to take refuge from the cold. There exist particular customs in the individual hermitages in this regard. We should hold to the following, however:

- Let us avoid walking in church with the head covered with the hood during liturgical actions.
- Satisfactions are made at one's own place with the head covered.
- We do not cover our heads before the first psalm of each Hour nor after the final psalm or canticle, except for the reading of the third nocturn and the silent pause that follows it.
- One should avoid the movement of covering or uncovering the head simultaneously with reciting something.

25. Entering the church, it is good to take holy water and make the sign of the Cross. This is a purifying act, very appropriate before prayer.

26. One who arrives late, that is after the signal of the President for beginning the liturgical Hour, stops at the entrance of the choir, remaining bowed. Only with the permission of the President does he go to his own place. He should avoid walking while the choir bows for the doxology.

27. Whenever different local customs are not in force, candles should be lit on the altar, according to the liturgical rank of the day, at Vespers, Lauds, the Conventual Mass, and at Terce also if it immediately precedes the Mass.

SIX candles are lit on all solemnities; on the Sundays of Advent, of Christmas, of Lent, and of Easter; during the Octave of Easter and on Ash Wednesday; on the feast of the Presentation of the Lord; on All Souls Day; for Masses of profession and funeral Masses; during the solemn form of Eucharistic Exposition.

FOUR candles for Sundays, feasts, Commemorations of the Departed, the Major Ferial Days before Christmas, the ferial days of Holy Week and those of the Octave of Christmas. Also during the simple Exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament.

TWO candles are lit on ferial days and memorials.

28. Whenever, from the Easter Vigil to Pentecost, the altar candles are lit, the Paschal Candle is also lit, and outside this period it is also lit during Professions, Funerals, and optionally for Commemorations of the Departed. The usage of lighting a candle during Compline is optional; during Paschaltide this candle could be the Paschal Candle. During Lauds, Mass, Vespers, and the Exposition of the solemnity of the Dedication of the hermitage's church, twelve or at least four lights or candles are lit along the walls of the church. At Matins, during the proclamation of the Gospel, two candles are lit near the one proclaiming the Gospel.
29. The hermits normally go directly to choir for the celebration of the Hour. But in those communities where it exists, the custom of awaiting the beginning of Matins in the nave of the church and of going into choir after a sign from the President should be preserved. The same holds for Compline before going into the Chapter Room for the preceding reading.
30. The Invitatory precedes the first Office of the day, almost always Matins. The Office of Readings is not

celebrated the night of the Easter Vigil. Therefore Lauds of Easter Sunday is preceded by the Invitatory.

31. The Gospel of Matins is to be proclaimed from the pulpit or from the altar or from a lectern placed in the center of the choir. The President wears a stole. The Gospel does not have a concluding formula, but is acclaimed with the “Amen” of the assembly (cf. RB 11: 10). He does not extend his hands in saying “The Lord be with you”.
32. Neither the Matins readings nor those of the other Hours finish with a concluding formula and an acclamation on the part of the assembly.
33. If, during the course of the week the continuous Biblical reading of Matins happens to be interrupted by some solemnity or feast, the impeded reading or readings can be transferred, uniting them to, or substituting them for, those of another day.
34. On ferial days, one may make a continuous reading in the second nocturn of a work of some Father of the Church

consonant with the Biblical and liturgical spirit. In such cases one omits the responsory.

35. The Amen that concludes the hymn is said only by the choir that does not recite the final strophe.
36. The Hebdomadary is free to add to the invocations or intercessions other intentions, provided they are formulated according to the same structure as the preceding.
37. The Oration of the Office is preceded by the invitation “Let us pray” and by a very brief pause. The Oration of Lauds and Vespers, as a continuation of the Our Father, is without such an invitation.
38. The President, blessing the assembly at Lauds and Vespers, makes a sign of the Cross as he customarily does at Mass. However, he does not accompany the words “The Lord be with you” with the gesture of opening his arms.
39. If in the judgment of the President one of the little Hours exceptionally cannot be celebrated by the assembly at

its due time, it can be omitted. In such case, however, the psalms of the omitted Hour, with their antiphons, should be inserted into the preceding or following little Hour.

40. For a reasonable motive, for example if there has been Eucharistic exposition, the reading that customarily precedes Compline can be omitted by judgment of the Prior.