

RATIO
FORMATIONIS
MARIANORUM

KAPITUŁA GENERALNA
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GENERAL CHAPTER
ROME 2005

RATIO FORMATIONIS MARIANORUM

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*In memory of Fr. Mark T. Garrow, MIC
the main author of „Ratio Formationis Marianorum”*

General Curia
of the Congregation of Marian Fathers
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Foreword of the Superior General

Since the Second Vatican Council, the documents of the Church have frequently pointed to a crucial correlation between formation and the renewal of the Consecrated Life. Religious formation, through its strong rooting in the charism, spirituality and mission of individual religious communities, becomes the tool which, as no other, contributes to the efficiency, stability, permanence and continuity of renewal, simultaneously, having a decisive influence on the development and future of the Consecrated Life.

Each and every one is personally responsible for the gift of a vocation received from God, which becomes one's path to holiness. The particular responsibility, before God and the Church, for the religious formation of the candidates rests on the entire community, the superiors and the directors of formation in particular. Their role is to discreetly assist the development on the path of strengthening one's vocation, a path which is individual and unique for each candidate, as unique as each person is. To waste one's vocation is a harm done to man, and since "man is the primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission," (RH, 14) it becomes also a wound for the Church.

In order to set the process of renewal of consecrated communities on the right track, to shield it from the pressures of the individual predilections of superiors, to secure it from the improvisations of directors of formation, and to avoid provisional measures and leaving things to chance, the Apostolic Letter, *Ecclesiae Sanctae* called for each Religious Institute, "to prepare its own suitable norms for the formation of its members" (ES, Part 2, VII, 38). Such a manual, called over time, a *ratio formationis*—is a kind of map of formation with a clearly marked "course to be followed, in order to assimilate fully the spirituality of the respective Institute" (VC, 68). The importance and urgency to formulate such rules, seems to be stressed by the fact that, from the time of *Ecclesiae Sanctae* (1966) until *Vita Consecrata* (1996), almost all of the documents on the consecrated life of the Magisterium of the Church include such promptings.

Our Congregation, following the directives of the Church, prepared a manual on formation. Fulfilling the decree of the General Chapter of 1993 (Decree I, Committee II), the Superior General, Father Adam Boniecki entrusted Father Mark Garrow with the task of formulating the rules of initial and continuing re-

ligious formation. He also appointed Fr. Mark Garrow as the General Prefect of Formation and the head of the Formation Committee which was to support him in his work. The Committee proceedings resulted in the working papers of the *Ratio Formationis Marianorum*, approved *ad experimentam* by the General Chapter in 1999. During the years 1999-2005, the *Ratio* was being polished through consultations with the entire Congregation. They were carried out by the Formation Committee, headed by then General Prefect of Formation Fr. Paweł Naumowicz, working in close cooperation with then Superior General, Fr. Mark Garrow. The text of the *Ratio Formationis Marianorum* was approved by the General Chapter in 2005, as binding for the entire Congregation (Decree 3).

The document approaches formation in a comprehensive way, taking into consideration its integral character (a process influencing the entire person with various aspects of his identity, actions and intentions), embracing its various levels, (human, spiritual, religious, Marian, communal, intellectual, pastoral, apostolic, and cultural), and paying attention to the specificity of the consecutive stages (vocational ministry, postulancy, novitiate, post-novitiate formation, and permanent formation). The “Appendix,” which includes criteria and rules for admittance into postulancy, novitiate, vows, ministries and ordinations, constitutes a valuable help in the process of recognizing a Marian vocation, and in evaluating a candidate’s maturity to take up the tasks in the consecutive stages of formation.

With gratitude to the authors and editors, let us accept the *Ratio Formationis Marianorum* as a particular help in growing to reach “the highest measure”, which for us, is Jesus Christ (c.f. NMI, 30), since “None are exempt from the obligation to grow humanly and as Religious; by the same token, no one can be over-confident and live in self-sufficient isolation. At no stage of life, can people feel so secure and committed, that they do not need to give careful attention to ensuring perseverance in faithfulness; just as there is no age at which a person has completely achieved maturity” (VC, 69).

May the *Ratio Formationis Marianorum* be of help, not only to the people responsible for initial religious formation in their difficult, delicate and extremely responsible task “to prepare people for the total consecration of themselves to God in the following of Christ” (VC, 65), but also to each and every Marian, may it become a tool supporting his development, inspiring individual formation and enhancing the growth of one’s devotion to the charism and mission of our Congregation.

Fr. Jan M. Rokosz, MIC
Superior General

Abbreviations

1. Documents of Vatican II

AG	Ad gentes: Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church
DH	Dignitatis humanae: Declaration on Religious Liberty
GS	Gaudium et spes: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World
LG	Lumen gentium: Dogmatic Constitution of the Church
OT	Optatam totius: Decree on the Formation of Priests
PC	Perfectae caritatis: Decree on the Renewal of Religious Life
PO	Presbyterorum Ordinis: Decree on the Life and Ministry of Priests
SC	Sacrosanctum concilium: The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy

2. Papal Documents

EN	Evangelii nuntiandi: Exhortation on Evangelization in the Modern World (1975)
ES	Ecclesiam suam: Encyclical Letter on the Church in the Modern World (1964)
ET	Evangelica testificatio: Exhortation on the Renewal of Religious Life according to the Teaching of the Council (1971)
FC	Familiaris Consortio: Exhortation on the Family (1981)
MC	Marialis cultus: Exhortation on Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary (1974)
PDV	Pastores Dabo Vobis: Exhortation following International Synod of Bishops (1990)
RD	Redemptionis Donum: Exhortation on Religious Consecration in the Light of the Mystery of the Redemption (1984)
RH	Redemptor Hominis: Encyclical Letter at the beginning of his Papal Ministry (1979)

- RM **Redemptoris Missio:** Encyclical Letter on the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate (1990)
- VC **Vita Consecrata:** Exhortation on the Consecrated Life and Its Mission in the Church and in the World (1996)

3. Documents of the Holy See

- CIC **Code of Canon Law** (1983)
- CNUCA **Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor:** Fraternal Life in Community (1994)
- DPMV **Developments of the Pastoral Ministry of Vocations in the Particular Churches** (1992)
- FP **The Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day:** Instrument Laboris (1990)
- MR **Mutuae Relationes:** Directives for Mutual Relations between Bishops and religious in the Church (1978)
- PI **Potissimum Institutioni:** Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes (1990)
- RC **Renovationis Causam:** Instruction on the Renewal of Religious Life (1969)
- RDC **Starting Afresh from Christ: A Renewed Commitment to Consecrated Life in the Third Millennium** (2002)
- RF **Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis** (1985)
- RHP **Religious and Human Promotion** (1980)

4. Marian Documents

- C **Marian Constitutions**
- D **Marian Directory**
- Instr. **Instructions of Archbishop George**
- NV **Norma Vitae**
- RFM **Ratio Formationis Marianorum**
- SD **Spiritual Diary of Blessed George Matulaitis-Matulewicz, MIC**

Introduction

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF *THE RATIO*

1. The Ratio presents formation according to our charism: it details the fundamental elements of the Marian vocation as a following of Christ, in openness to the Holy Spirit, in imitation of Mary Immaculate, in the service of the Church, responding to the signs of the times according to the spirit and vision of our Founder, Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński and of our Renovator, Blessed George Matulaitis-Matulewicz, according to the actual laws of the Congregation (cf. CIC 659.2-3; PI 4; C 1-13, 143, 148, 151; D 102-103).
2. The program proposed here aims to be systematic and realistic. It presents principles and directives for safeguarding and developing the spiritual and apostolic values of our religious vocation and presents an integrated picture of an authentic Marian life. The Ratio provides a common foundation for our formation while allowing for legitimate diversity among Marians of different cultures (cf. C 143, 148, 151; D 102-103).
3. The Ratio neither supplants nor substitutes for the *Marian Constitutions* and *Directory*. Rather, it is a fuller expression of their directives; an aid to help members live with integrity the way of life envisioned in our proper law (cf. CIC 659.2-3; PI 4; C 148; D 102-103).

THE INTENDED AUDIENCE

4. The Ratio is meant for every member of the Congregation: in its pages, they can find a point of reference for living the spirit of our Congregation in the diverse formative stages of life on their way to full maturity in Christ (cf. C 147, 151).
5. The directives contained in the Ratio should be particularly useful for formators, providing them with a reliable guide in their work. Its spirit

and directives will help them to discern what is essential and useful for their formation programs from that which is secondary and of limited value.

STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS

6. The Ratio contains the following:

Foreword of the Superior General

Introduction

Chapter I: Marian Formation

Chapter II: The Pastoral Care of Vocations

Chapter III: Vocational Discernment and Evaluation

Chapter IV: Postulancy

Chapter V: Novitiate

Chapter VI: Post-novitiate Formation

Chapter VII: Ongoing Formation

Appendices

Bibliography

Chapter I presents a synthesis of Marian formation, highlighting the characteristics and values that are essentially “Marian.” Subsequent chapters are devoted to the basic principles, directives and norms of the stages of formation. The Appendices present information on special topics, such as, the prerequisites and procedures for admission to the ministries of Reader and Acolyte, and ordination to the Diaconate and Priesthood.

CHAPTER I

Marian Formation

THE PURPOSE OF MARIAN FORMATION

7. At the heart of our vocation is a loving and transforming relationship with Christ, who reveals to us the gracious and merciful Father and His will for us, in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life. This relationship calls us to follow Christ Jesus more closely and to freely and lovingly offer ourselves completely in the service of His Body, the Church, according to the charism of our Congregation. Thus, the goal of Marian formation is to provide the members with the suitable means and environment to deepen their relationship with the Triune God, to assimilate the values of the Marian identity, to live the Marian life according to the spirit and directives of the Constitutions, and to zealously carry out the apostolic works that are consistent with the Marian charism (cf. CIC 659.2-3; PI 4; C 143, 148, 151; D 102-103).

THE SOURCES OF FORMATION

The Sacred Scriptures

8. By reading and meditating on the Word of God daily, we permit the Word to form our minds and hearts, and allow it to illuminate and judge our lives. Each Marian, following the example of the Immaculate Virgin Mary and with the assistance of her prayer, seeks to welcome and reflect on the Word with reverence and to respond with prompt obedience to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. While all the Scriptures are useful for instruction and growth in our vocation, first place is given to the Gospels, in which the following of Christ is placed before us (cf. CIC 252.2; DV 25; PC 2a, 6; VC 94, 95; C 5, 66).

The Liturgy and sacraments

9. The Liturgy, especially the Eucharist, is a privileged source for our formation. In the celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy and in its active participation, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we enter into the Paschal Mystery of Christ and renew and intensify its effects in our lives, growing in conformity to the image and likeness of Christ (cf. SC 7, 10, 17; C 67, 69, 74, 146; D 102-103).

From the Liturgy we receive the necessary nourishment and inspiration for our religious consecration:

- In the Eucharist, we hear the Word of Life, we unite our self-offering to the offering of Christ to the Father, and we receive the Body and Blood of Christ, who truly is our Bread of Life and Cup of eternal salvation, “a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and the pledge of future glory is given us (cf. SC 47).”
- In the Liturgy of the Hours, our hearts are raised in praise of God, and we are gradually led to offer all our time and activity as a sacrifice of praise (cf. SC 83-86, 88; OT 5).
- In the regular celebration of the Sacrament of Penance, we receive from the mercy of God pardon for our sins, and are reconciled with the Church and our own community, which we have wounded by our sins (cf. CIC 664; LG 11; PO 18; C 70).

The Liturgy – in particular, the Eucharist – is the summit to which each member and the whole Congregation are tending and the font from which all its evangelical strength flows (cf. PI 22; VC 95; C 67).

The Magisterium

10. To be a Marian means to be profoundly attached to the Church, to be in harmony with its thinking and guided by its principles. Thus, for us the Magisterium is a sure guide for our formation. Through the teachings of the Holy Father and the Bishops, “we come to know what the Church needs most, with what ailments humankind is afflicted, what remedies are prescribed, what errors are...to be avoided, what truths are to be stressed” (cf. SD, 9.IV.1913). We receive from the Church, particularly in the documents of Vatican II and of the Postconciliar renewal, guidance for expressing our identity in an ever more authentic way and for making our

unique contribution to the Church's life. Taking to heart the teachings of the Magisterium helps us to develop a manner of thinking not only "with" the Church but "within" the Church (cf. LG 45; C 2, 7, 57, 124-125, 201-202).

The Charism in our history

11. The Lord brought the Congregation of Marians of the Immaculate Conception into being in the Church through the charism granted to Father Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński, our Founder, and renewed and enriched it through the charism given to Blessed Archbishop George Matulaitis-Matulewicz, our Renovator. In these holy men our Marian way of life is clearly portrayed. Their charisms form the heart of our spiritual patrimony. Their life and teachings are formative influences that shape our vocations. At every stage of formation, formators should strive to impart the elements of their spirituality and teaching, so that each member may interiorize and embody the traits that distinguished their lives and apostolic activity (cf. P 2; C 148).

12. Over the centuries, other heroic witnesses have enriched our spiritual patrimony and manifested the fruitfulness of our charism by their lives of prayer and zealous service of Christ and the Church. Among this "cloud of witnesses," Fr. Casimir Wyszzyński occupies a special place of honor. Through his devotion to the person and teaching of the Founder, his profound love of Mary Immaculate and his zeal for the Marian vocation, the Congregation was reinvigorated in spirit and experienced a "springtime" of growth and expansion.

There are still many others whose fidelity is a powerful example and incentive in living out our Marian life today:

- Blessed Anthony Leszczewicz and Blessed George Kaszyra, who gave their lives for their people during the Nazi Holocaust,
- Father Raymond Nowicki, under whose guidance the Marians reaffirmed the apostolic character of their vocation,
- Father Christopher Szvernicky, the "Apostle to Siberia,"
- Father Vincent Senkus, who trusted in God's providence and persevered in the Marian vocation, even when the Congregation seemed destined to die,
- Brother Bronisław Załuski, prominent educator and director of the Bielany Institute,

- Father Witold Nieciecki, who contributed significantly to the renewal of our legislation in accordance with the instructions of the Second Vatican Council and played an important role in rediscovering of our charism,
- the many Marians who suffered for their faith under the long years of Communist persecution, among them: Archimandrite Fabian Abrantovic, Archimandrite Andrew Cikoto, Father Joseph Hermanowicz, Father Felix Mendriks, Father Benedict Skrinda, Father Pranas Raciūnas,
- and the pioneering Marians who spread the Congregation to new lands and new cultures, among them Father Felix Kudirka, Father John Navickas, Father Joseph Jarzębowski, Father Joseph Łuniewski.

Their lives and teachings are also formative influences that call for careful study and imitation (cf. C 148).

The Marian *Constitutions and Directory*: The Charism Today

13. The renewed *Constitutions and Directory* (1988), revised according to the directives of Vatican II and the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* and *Marian Ritual*, constitute the basic norms that define the distinctive elements of our charism and the way of living it today. For this reason, it is a fundamental text for our formation (cf. C 148).

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MARIAN VOCATION

Graciously called by the Father

14. The origin of Marian consecrated life is in the gracious and loving call of God the Father. This call – coming wholly at the initiative of the Father – is absolutely gratuitous, personal, and unique. It embraces us to the extent that we are no longer our own, but God's in Christ. Responding to this call of divine love, we feel the need to respond by the unconditional dedication of our lives to His service, taking up the obligation of the common life and striving for the perfection of charity through the evangelical counsels (cf. VC 17; C 1).

Identified with Christ

15. The principal task of a Marian is the closer imitation of Christ by taking up the same type of life he embraced -- poor, celibate and obedient to the Father -- for the sake of the Kingdom. Hence, for us Marians there is no greater ideal than this: to strive to know, love and imitate Christ more and more from day to day, to be filled with and directed by his Spirit, to spread his Kingdom with all our energy and to bring Christ into everything, to such a degree that one day we might say with the Apostle Paul: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (cf. Gal. 2:20; PC 5; Instr. I:12; C 5).

16. To put on Christ we must deepen our commitment to live the paschal mystery of His death and resurrection, into which we were baptized and which we have more fully expressed by our religious consecration. The self-emptying that is required of us by the evangelical counsels puts to death the "old self" with its sinful ways and continually makes way for the "new self," that has been "created in God's way in the goodness and holiness of the truth" (cf. Eph. 4:24; Instr. I:11; C 84, 87).

17. As apostolic religious, our prototype is Jesus Christ, "...not only working quietly in His home at Nazareth, not only... mortifying himself, fasting forty days in the desert, not only Christ spending the night in prayer, but also Christ working, weeping, suffering, Christ among the crowds, Christ visiting the villages and cities, visiting sinners, the simple folk as well as the learned, the just and the rich, Christ teaching and refuting the fault-finding Pharisees, Christ seeking the lost sheep..." (SD, 7.III.1911; cf. C 3, 8-11).

Inspired by the Holy Spirit

18. It is the Holy Spirit who has moved our hearts to respond fully to God's call to take up the Marian way of life. It is he who guides the growth of this desire, helping it to mature into a positive response and sustaining it as it is faithfully translated into daily life; it is he who shapes and molds our hearts, configuring us to Christ and prompting us to make his mission our own. By allowing ourselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit on this ongoing journey of purification and transformation, we become gradually conformed to Christ, and become a special witness to the continuing

presence of the Risen Lord in the world for the people of our times. The same Spirit, far from removing us from the concerns and experiences of the rest of humanity, inspires us to be of special service to our fellow men and women and leads us to undertake our mission as Marians in response to the needs of the Church and the world (cf. VC 19; C 32).

The Mystery of the Immaculate Conception:
Sign, Strength and Joy of our Vocation and Apostolate

19. The authentic living of our identity as Marians of the Immaculate Conception requires that we experience for ourselves the gift of the saving love of God in a personal encounter with Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Our experience of God's saving love, as in the life of Mary, manifests itself in a life of joy, love, praise, gratitude, and humility, to which we Marians are called to give witness before all. This gracious and merciful gift is the source of our desire and strength to respond to God's initiative. It leads us to a generous giving of ourselves to Christ and his mission of proclaiming the "good news of salvation." The mystery of Mary's Immaculate Conception is the distinctive sign and inspiration of our life and mission of evangelization. This mystery is above all a sign for us of that gracious gift of salvation that was received and experienced by Mary with joy, love, praise, gratitude and humility, in full cooperation with and total fidelity to the Divine initiative. The gift of God's salvific love in the life of Mary was a source of strength and freedom that enabled her to generously embrace "with all her heart the saving plan of God," consecrating herself totally "as the handmaid of the Lord, to the person and work of her Son" (cf. LG 56, 65; C 6, 23, 56, 117).

That which the Father brought to pass in the life of Mary through the Holy Spirit, he wishes to realize in us as well, although in a different fashion recalling the words of the Gospel injunction: "that which you have freely received, freely give" (cf. Mt 10, 8). In the same dynamism of the gratuitous gift of salvation, we are striving to help our brothers and sisters who are in purification after this life so that they might attain the maturity of Christ of which Mary Immaculate is the highest expression (cf. C 2, 23-25).

Mary Immaculate: Model of Our Consecration

20. Consecrated by the action of the Holy Spirit from the first moment of her conception and by the same Spirit generating Christ in her virginal womb, Mary freely and totally responded to the call of God. In light of her complete gift of self to God, everything in her life became a reference to God and her entire life was oriented to cooperation in the salvation of humanity. Thus, Mary is the model of our consecrated life. For this reason, we draw from her life inspiration for the responses that we must make to the Lord in our daily lives. We look to her to learn how to live fruitfully our consecrated chastity, poverty and obedience, in a continual struggle against the three-fold concupiscence (cf. 1 Jn. 2:16), every temptation and sin (cf. PI 20, VC 18, 28; Instr. I:12; C 6).

21. Mary Immaculate is the *Perfect Disciple* (cf. C 6, 145), from whom we learn what it means to follow Christ. She is our *Model of Evangelical Virtues* (cf. C 23) who shows us how to take the Word to heart and live it in our lives, our *Guide to Holiness* (cf. C 145) and the humble *Handmaid of the Lord* (cf. C 56) who shows us how to be docile to the work of the Holy Spirit.

She is also our *Mother* (cf. C16), whose maternal solicitude accompanies us throughout our vocational journey and in whom we seek refuge during the trials of life; our *Patroness* (cf. C 16) who protects and defends the Congregation; the *Mother of the Church* (cf. C 16, 68), whose tender concern for the community of believers leads us to devote ourselves to its service; our *Advocate* (cf. C 16) who intercedes for us, and continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation; and the *Sign of Eschatological Hope* (cf. C 6, 40) who anticipates in herself the fullness of grace that our consecrated life seeks to attain.

“Pro Christo et Ecclesia”:

In the Service of the Church and of the World

22. The ecclesial dimension of our charism remains in close relationship with our Marian character. Mary is the Mother of the Church, its preeminent member and the pattern and beginning of its eschatological fullness. She is a model of faith, charity and perfect union with Christ. In her, the Church finds a sign of sure hope on its pilgrim journey toward God

and a source of consolation until the coming of the day of the Lord (cf. LG 65, 67-68; PI 21; C 117).

23. The charism of religious life in which we participate is a spiritual gift closely united with the very mystery of the Church and its life, growth and holiness. Total self-giving to God through religious profession is for us the means of arriving at a deeper love and service of God. On the basis of this consecration, we are called to plant and nurture the seed of the Kingdom in others and to spread it to the ends of the earth. This consecration is also the source of the strength and freedom necessary for our service of the Church (cf. LG 44; PI 21; VC 3, 46; C 7).

24. Our self-offering in the service of the Church is especially important for us who are heirs to the spiritual heritage of Father Founder and Father Renovator. After their example, we are called to love the Church with our whole heart and to form within ourselves a lively “ecclesial” sense. This implies above all a deep feeling of communion with the life and mission of the Church and a concern for promoting its growth and unity. As Marians, our particular mission leads us to a deep concern for all the members of the Church – whether on their earthly pilgrimage or undergoing the final purification after death – so that all might attain to the fullness of life and communion with Christ (cf. C 2, 7, 166).

This ecclesial sense calls us to generous service on behalf of the Church, even – following the example of our Founder and Renovator – to the point of freely and willingly sacrificing ourselves completely for its good. From Father Founder, we learn that an essential part of our service of the Church is parochial assistance and catechesis of the lowly, and the offering of prayer and charitable acts for the souls in purgatory. From Father Renovator we learn that our “ecclesial” sense should lead us to direct our efforts where we might do more for the glory of God, where our efforts will bear more abundant fruit for the Church, where the needs of the Church are greater and more urgent, and where it encounters the greatest difficulties and dangers (cf. C 7-10, NV I.2-3, II.2, III.1; Instr. I: 18, 22-23, 25, 55; SD 15.X.1910, 24.X.1910, 13.I.1911).

Fundamental to our service of the Church, is our concern to sustain and promote its unity. In particular, we strive to remain in a communion of faith, peace and charity with the Holy Father and the Bishops in communion with him, and to support them in promoting the life of the Church and in furthering its mission. Having received from our Renovator the motto, “For Christ and the Church,” we strive to assist them to the best of our abilities,

to show them fraternal respect, and to refrain from criticism or dissension from their teaching (cf. Instr. I: 23; C 6, 7, 13, 124, 137).

Our Marian vocation also commits us to do all that we can to foster unity and solidarity among Christians of other Churches (particularly our brothers and sisters of the Orthodox Churches), with believers of other faiths and with those who do not believe in God. We undertake this ministry of communion by first doing all that we can to cultivate greater knowledge, dialogue and respect for those who differ from us; by examining our own attitudes and preconceptions toward those who are not in visible communion with us; by acknowledging our failures and by deepening the ties that already unite us (cf. VC 100-102; C 137; D 82, 100).

25. Marian apostolic service is open to any type of ministry that enables the Congregation to meet the needs of the Church. Nonetheless, we devote particular attention to Catholic education and catechesis and to priestly ministry and parish assistance. The Marian apostolate seeks to be creative and adaptable, so that it may be effective and responsive to the signs of the times. The freedom and openness to learn from others – through the teaching and practice of the Church, the advice of experts or the tested experience of others – is a valued characteristic of the Marian approach to ministry (cf. Instr. I: 2, 26, II: 32-34; C 3, 121).

26. The goal of our apostolic formation is to prepare competent and faithful ministers who will be filled with zeal in the service of Christ and the Church. Throughout their formation, young Marians ought to be carefully prepared for pastoral work in our Congregation and gradually be immersed in its apostolate. From the beginning of their formation, their natural abilities and particular talents should be identified so that they may be developed and utilized for the greater glory of God and the good of the Church. Every effort should be made to form within our members an attitude of openness to other nations and cultures, so that when the good of the Church and of the Congregation requires it, they will be ready to live and work in any part of the world (cf. SD, 23.X.1910; 24.X.1910; Instr. I:25, 29-30, IV:1-4, 17; C 8, 10, 149).

Eschatologically Oriented

27. Our religious consecration is a witness in the Church and to the world, that God should be loved above all else and that the ulti-

mate meaning of our existence is not found in this life but in an intimate communion with God in the Kingdom of heaven. Our consecration – individually and as a community – is a sign of the glorious future promised by God: where “every tear will be wiped away,” where “death shall be no more” (cf. Rev. 21, 4), where we shall see our God face to face and become like Him (cf. NV II.1; SD 14.X.1910; PI 25; C 4, 21).

By a common fraternal life and through our apostolic work, we become signs of the Kingdom even now in this life. Enlivened by our hope in the Risen Christ and inspired by Mary Immaculate, we strive to share with others the “good news of salvation,” to be witnesses to the power of forgiveness and reconciliation, to be promoters of solidarity and mercy, and to be instruments of justice and peace. Hence, to the degree to which we authentically live our religious consecration, we will be a prophetic sign that in God alone does human life find full joy and meaning, and that our hearts are made for God and are restless until they rest in Him (cf. VC 27; C 4, 21).

Following the example and teaching of our Founder, Fr. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, we are especially mindful of the eschatological dimension of our mission. This aspect of our charism is particularly expressed through our intercessory prayer, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, indulgences, mortifications, and works of mercy offered up for the souls in purgatory; as well as by catechesis of the faithful in the eschatological truths of our faith, by promoting liturgical and devotional prayer for the deceased, and by providing pastoral care to the dying (cf. NV I, 2; Instr. XVII: ll.6-10; C 19, 118).

Fraternal Life in Community

28. Living out the command of Christ to love one another and to follow his example of humble service of his disciples, religious community is a special sign of the Church in which the mystery of communion is realized. Following patiently this path, empowered by the Holy Spirit who reconciles the Church from its very beginning, the religious community attains the supernatural level of social maturity. Its expression is authentic when it is full of understanding and merciful love, refrains from making judgment and criticism, lives in the spirit of continual forgiveness and reconciliation, has respect for the ill brothers or those of advanced age, calmly bears the weaknesses of others and seeks not personal advantage, but leads to self-subordination in order to attain the goals and particular works of the Congregation (cf. NV II.4; SD 27.X.1910, 7.III.1911; Instr. II: 45-47; PC 15; PI 25; C 91, 94, 95, 98).

FORMATION: A LIVING PROCESS

A Progressive Journey Towards Maturity

29. Religious formation involves the person's whole life, called to develop the human, Christian, religious and Marian aspects of his vocation. It seeks to respect his individual uniqueness and to accompany him through the various stages of human and Christian growth. In the early stages of formation, this will largely mean imparting theoretical and practical information about religious life and our charism to the young religious; but the purpose of this instruction is to inspire him to freely make his own the values and spiritual heritage of Marian life. It is the task of the formator to help the young religious grasp and integrate the various dimensions of his life (cf. PI 33-34; CNUCA 35; C 143, 147).

Human Maturity

30. Spiritual and vocational growth require a sound human base. Maturity is attained through a progressive and ever-more complete integration of the various aspects of the religious's life. The following are some criteria that indicate a suitable maturity (cf. C 143, 147; D 101):

30.1 Healthy physical development is based on an awareness of the value and meaning of the body. It involves education in cleanliness, health care, physical exercise, rest and proper nutrition as the necessary basis for the exercise of the intellect and for vigorous service on behalf of the Kingdom (cf. C 107; D 2, 59, 101).

Equally important, is an education in sexuality that imparts basic knowledge of male and female sexuality, with their physical, psychological and spiritual implications, and integrates them in a positive way into the personality as a whole. Key to this mature and healthy understanding of human sexuality is an appreciation for the "nuptial meaning" of the body (cf. FC 128). This education is all the more necessary in the current social and cultural climate since contemporary norms and practices largely promote a view of sexuality that is impoverished and reductive, "linking it solely with the body and with selfish pleasure" (cf. FC 37, PDV 44; C 42).

30.2 Psychological maturity is shown in calm acceptance of our whole self - including our history, feelings, desires, thoughts and weaknesses - in the conviction that God loves us just as we are. This awareness

of our personal worth enables us to find joy in our own existence, despite all human limitations, adverse circumstances and outward changes. Psychological maturity facilitates the development of our personal, intellectual and spiritual abilities, and creates an active personality with a capacity for self-responsibility, solidarity and love. This maturity will be evident in the ability to judge the events of life with objectivity, reasonableness and clarity, with consistency and fidelity in convictions and Christian values, and in decisions that are assertive, flexible and respectful (cf. C 113-114).

30.3 Affective maturity is grounded in self-respect and self-mastery, and implies the regular practice of directing our emotions and desires towards the attainment of our ideals in life. The process of affective maturity leads us away from self-centered, infantile love towards self-sacrificing, altruistic love. At a personal level, maturity is shown in the acceptance of our sexuality and in a certain emotional stability and equanimity. It implies an ability to set affective boundaries that are in accord with our vocation and are respectful of the dignity of others. Affective maturity is an indispensable precondition for a full and faithful self-offering in consecrated chastity (cf. PDV 44; C 106, 108-114; D 4).

30.4 Social maturity, which has its basis in self-awareness and affective maturity, manifests itself in openness to, and respect for, the dignity of others and in a capacity to live with others in an attitude of fraternal dialogue and generous self-giving. Cultivation of social virtues, such as sincerity, fidelity to promises, cordiality, and sensitivity in one's dealings with others, will all contribute to the perfecting of maturity (cf. RF 51; C 97, 106, 108-114).

Social maturity is nurtured when a healthy environment is created in the community, that is, an environment where mutual respect, acceptance, dialogue, honesty and order are valued and practiced, bearing in mind that all love and genuine growth is nourished by generous sacrifice in the example of Christ and by the practice of fortitude, asceticism and self-control that is enlivened by faith. (cf. PI 36-38; C 108-114)

30.5 Maturity of conscience is indicated by the interiorization of the moral norms grounded in Catholic tradition and in reason enlightened by faith, and the effort to conform one's behavior and values to these norms. It is the capacity to discern what is good from what is evil in an action, the will to affirm the good and to avoid the evil, and the capacity to judge rightly the morality of the choice made. It is demonstrated in the

ability to make moral choices that are not based on the intensity of one's feelings, or because of prevailing fashion, or due to social pressure, but on objective moral norms. It is shown in the ability to reflect critically on the morality of one's own behavior, values and habits. It leads a person to greater consistency between what he believes and how he behaves. Maturity of conscience leads a person to continually deepen his understanding of and adherence to Catholic moral teaching in light of the times, to subordinate his will to the direction of conscience, to be responsible in his use of freedom, and to grow in his capacity for sacrifice and self-giving. Progress in moral maturity is shown in a person's move toward greater integration of the moral virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, and away from self-centeredness, hypocrisy, insincerity, inconstancy and moral relativism. At its heart, maturity of conscience leads the person to do what is good not because of duty, or fear, or compulsion, but out of a conscious, free and loving response to God's love and God's call (cf. PDV 44; C 28-30, 83-84, 113-114).

A mature conscience is especially important for those aspiring to religious life and priesthood. In their pastoral care, they are often called upon to teach and guide others in their moral choices. The skill, prudence and judgment necessary to faithfully execute this role require that they first be sound in their own moral development. It requires above all that they become accustomed to listening to the voice of God, who is speaking in their hearts, and to adhere with love and constancy to his will (cf. PDV 44).

Christian Maturity

31. Genuine human development and Christian growth are complementary. The Gospel looks to the good of the human being, called to be a child of God and to experience in Christ the reconciling, healing and merciful love of God incarnated in the human "face." Christ not only reveals to us the mystery of God but what it means to be a human being. Thus, whoever follows Christ, the perfect man, becomes himself more authentically human (cf. GS 41).

31.1 Christian maturity results in an appreciation and gratitude for our baptism, by which we are incorporated into Christ and become a new creation. It is a firm and lively commitment to live our faith individually and as a fully committed member of the Church. It is a new life in grace that enables the fruits of the Holy Spirit to be produced in us, and finds expression in the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Growth

in Christian maturity is evidenced by our willingness to embrace the Cross of Christ in the daily events of life: e.g., in patiently bearing responsibilities and difficulties for the sake of the mission of the Church or the Congregation, in bearing with the shortcomings of self and others, in enduring illness and privation for the sake of Christ, in persevering in our vocational commitments in moments that are difficult or “dry.” Christian maturity also manifests itself through going out of oneself in solidarity with others (cf. C 26-27).

31.2 The growth in faith and theological insight is another sign of Christian maturity. This presupposes, above all, that one lives in a spirit of faith. Faith reveals the presence of God in the events of daily life and sees Christ in all our brothers and sisters. Faith enlightens us to discover God’s will and the true value of earthly things. Faith impels us to follow the Lord with our whole being. Such a spirit of faith, supported by meditation on the Word and fortified by participation in the Sacraments, gives life and meaning to our religious consecration (cf. OT 9; C 27-30).

Religious Maturity

32. When there is a solid foundation of human and Christian maturity, the young religious can truly live his consecration to God. Following Christ more closely, under the prompting of the Holy Spirit, he expresses his faith and complete dedication to the Lord through the profession of the evangelical counsels (cf. C 22).

The three evangelical counsels, lived in a concrete community according to its proper law, form the backbone of the religious life and are the three principal means for fostering human and Christian growth. They affect the three fundamental dimensions of the person: those of loving, possessing and choosing (cf. PI 12).

32.1 Consecrated chastity deepens our capacity for union with Christ and asserts that in Christ it is possible to love God with all our heart and, above all else, to love all others as our brothers and sisters. Lived authentically, consecrated love leads to a universal love, self-mastery and self-discipline, respect for others and honesty in human relationships. It is our goal to form our religious in such a way that they will embrace celibate chastity as a good which benefits their whole person, enables them to overcome egoism, and to accept the risks of a life of evangelical counsels in complete self-surrender to Christ and the Church. Consecrated chastity,

when it is authentically lived, far from being an obstacle to personal maturity, leads us to a respectful, mature love of God and neighbor (cf. PC 12; ET 13-14; PI 13; C 39-40).

32.2 In the contemporary world, which is particularly sensitive to the “cry of the poor,” evangelical poverty is an expression of theological hope. We should make Christ, who was poor and free, and Mary, who shines forth among the poor and humble of the Lord, the center of our life (cf. C 43). Christ overcame all temptations of power and riches. Evangelical poverty testifies to the value of the Beatitudes, creates solidarity with the poor and commits one to work for justice in the world. Complete trust in Providence, following the example of Mary, the lowly servant of the Lord, a spirit of openness and availability for the needy and an awareness of the common law of work, show that poverty has been interiorized (cf. ET 16-17; PI 14; C 43-44).

32.3 Religious obedience is an expression of a faith that is constantly seeking and doing the will of the Father; making oneself totally available for the Kingdom. Genuine obedience, far from diminishing our human dignity, leads us to maturity and increases our freedom (cf. PI 25). If it is to attain this goal, obedience must become active and responsible, and it must result from discernment on the part of the Superior, the community and ourselves (cf. C 60, 64).

We find inspiration for our obedience in Mary, the faithful witness to Christ, who through her *fiat*, full of love and obedience, made her life a loving service to God. She refers all to Christ and to his precepts: “Do whatever he tells you” (cf. Jn. 2:5; ET 2-5; C 56).

32.4 The growth of a religious vocation means that we attain greater harmony with the mind of the Church and leads us to place ourselves at the service of Christ and the Church. In this way, prompted by the Holy Spirit, we participate in the mission of Christ, who came into the world to bear witness to the truth (cf. Jn. 18:37), to save the world and not condemn it (cf. Jn. 3:17), to serve and not to be served (cf. Mt. 20:28)(cf. C 20-21, 32).

32.5 Religious maturity leads to a willingness to be challenged by the signs of the times, interpreted in the light of the Gospel. It impels us to respond to the needs of every generation, to the timeless questions posed about the meaning of our human existence in this life and the

next. Finally, in the light of the Gospel, we are led to make our own the hopes and concerns of humanity, to confront in faith the profound changes which characterize contemporary events with their psychological and religious implications, and to face in hope the uncertainty of the ever-changing world (cf. C 37.3-6; D 1b).

32.6 In the course of becoming open to the reality of the world and adapting to its needs, it is essential to be guided by the teaching of the Church and to act after reflection and discernment. If religious life is to be effective in the world, it must witness, above all, to the values which Christ lived and preached. Mature living out of the commitment derived from baptism and confirmation is the foundation of our religious consecration (cf. RC 4; PI 34; VC 30; C 1, 7, 22, 57, 115, 121, 129, 144).

Marian Maturity

33. Marian maturity is a form of Christian and religious maturity in which the evangelical counsels and values are assumed with the originality and authenticity found in the person of Fr. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński, Blessed Archbishop George Matulaitis-Matulewicz and other great Marian witnesses of faith. We have received from the Church the mission of practicing our way of life in fidelity to the founding charisms of our Founder and Renovator (cf. C 148, 176).

33.1 The maturity of a Marian religious can be gauged from the depth of his love for the Triune God and Mary Immaculate, his zeal for the service of the Church, and his fidelity to the eschatological element of our charism. In the effort to identify with Christ and strengthened by his grace, the Marian strives to love God and neighbor in daily activities with greater zeal. Thus, he is ready to practice and to witness to fraternal love. He becomes a person who is an “expert in communion,” capable of living the Marian lifestyle, and eager to extend his fraternal love to the whole Church (cf. PI 21; C 2-13, 37-38).

CHAPTER II

The Pastoral Care of Vocations

THEOLOGICAL AND PASTORAL PRINCIPLES

34. Mindful of the Lord's words, that "the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest," (cf. Lk. 10:2) it is the duty of all believers to promote vocations. It is especially incumbent on us who are consecrated to God in religious life to be constant in this duty. Each Marian community and each member should take this responsibility to heart by promoting vocations through daily, fervent prayer, the witness of their lives and with a humble and cheerful spirit (cf. PC 24; Instr. I:29, III:57; C 153, 154). The example of our own lives is the best commendation of our Congregation and an invitation to others to take on the religious life (cf. PC 24; OT 2; VC 64; C 154).

35. Prayer is the most common and consistent characteristic of promoting vocations (cf. DPMV 47). Through persevering prayer, we beseech the Spirit, "who, according to his own richness and the needs of the ministries, gives his different gifts for the welfare of the Church," to arouse in others a call to the Marian life and to the various ministries throughout the Church (cf. LG 7; OT 2; VC 64; C 154).

36. The witness of our lives is important in fostering vocations. We draw others to our Congregation by the example of unpretentious, hardworking and joyful lives; as well as by our mutual charity and fraternal cooperation (cf. OT 2). Our life itself is a sign and an incentive that can awaken in others an awareness of their own calling (cf. PC 24; OT 2; VC 64; C 154).

37. In addition to the witness given personally and communally, we are invited to foster vocations by every means at our disposal. We do this especially through our ministry with families, ecclesial movements,

prayer groups and youth groups, in schools and parishes, and by means of the media. Through this pastoral outreach we can provide timely information about our Congregation, which will help people appreciate the meaning of our consecrated life and our mission in the Church (cf. VC 64; C 153-154; D 109-111).

38. Our attitude toward those who show an interest in the consecrated life ought to be one of attentive care and deep respect. We are cooperating with the work of the Holy Spirit when we help someone to discover his vocation and to respond to it freely. What matters is the benefit of the Church, especially the local Church (i.e., the Diocese), in which we live and labor; therefore, we should be generous in assisting people to discover and follow their calling, even though it may not be to the Marian way of life (cf. VC 64; C 153-154; D 108).

39. Since we are called by God's grace to be Marians, we should keep the growth of the Congregation close to our hearts. This is a spur to make known, in a spirit of humility, its rich heritage and spiritual values, and to offer an authentic and balanced presentation of its way of life and its diverse apostolic activities (cf. Instr. I:29).

MEANS OF CARING FOR VOCATIONS

40. Through preaching God's word, prayer services, liturgical celebrations, retreats, conferences, catechetical courses, or courses given in preparation for the reception of the sacraments (e.g., Confirmation), counseling and spiritual direction, our members are provided with numerous opportunities for instructing others in the need and sublimity of religious and priestly vocations. The dissemination of information about the Marians through the media is an important tool for encouraging vocations to the Congregation (cf. PC 24; VC 64; D 111-112).

41. Pastoral care to families holds a special place in this regard. The way in which the religious and priestly vocations is perceived by young people largely depends on the importance and value it is given in the family and on the intensity of Christian life in the home. Consequently, Marians (particularly those assigned to parish ministry) are called to help families grow in their appreciation of these priestly and religious vocations

and to urge them to become actively involved in their promotion (cf. D 111-112).

42. In its various forms – through education, catechesis, youth associations, youth publications, camps, altar servers’ organizations – youth ministry is a privileged moment for presenting to young people a realistic picture of the religious vocation and for encouraging them to consider the possibility of this call in their own lives (cf. D 110-112).

THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR FOSTERING MARIAN VOCATIONS

43. Each *local Community* holds a privileged place in the pastoral care of vocations. It is the tangible and living expression of the Marian vocation present to the local Church and society. Through the local Community others come to know and appreciate individual Marians, experience the value of community life and its apostolic works, and to appreciate the Marian charism (cf. C 154; D 107).

To fulfill its role in promoting vocations, each local Community should especially undertake the following:

- to draw up a concrete plan that details how it will engage in the pastoral promotion of vocations,
- to engage in regular prayer for vocations, encouraging participation by the local faithful where possible,
- to view the preparation and celebration of important days in its life – vow and ordination anniversaries, anniversaries of the Founder and Renovator, Marian feasts – as opportune moments for promoting an appreciation of religious and priestly vocations,
- to welcome those who are interested in a religious vocation, allowing them some opportunity to experience our religious life through personal sharing with members, participation in our common prayer and life, and volunteer collaboration in our apostolic works.

44. Each *Marian* is called upon to witness to his own personal fulfillment in his vocation and to his love for the Congregation, and to consider the fostering of vocations a priority in his pastoral commitments. In particular, the concrete example of his own Marian life, which makes real and credible the Marian ideal, together with a commitment to prayer, are the most persuasive means for encouraging others to consider their own call from the Lord (cf. C 153; D 107).

45. In response to the Church's request that young people become involved in evangelizing their peers, *young Marians* have a special responsibility to witness to the members of their generation about the value of the Marian vocation. By word and deed, through their personal example and their pastoral activities, our young religious can exert a powerful influence on their peers, showing that the religious vocation continues to be an authentic and relevant response to the Gospel in today's world (cf. VC 109).

46. While each and every member of the Congregation shares in the responsibility to promote vocations, effective organization requires that this task be entrusted to specific members. Each Province (Vice-Province, etc.) should designate member(s) for this purpose (cf. VC 64; D 108).

The primary task of the *Vocation Director and his assistants* is to coordinate and encourage the pastoral care of vocations, coordinating the activities of the local communities with the initiatives of the Province (Vice-Province, etc.), suggesting initiatives, collaborating with their colleagues in the Diocese (cf. D 108), and by educating their fellow Marians about the importance and challenges of cultivating vocations.

47. It is important that the Vocation Director be chosen on the basis of his aptitude and training for this type of work. He should be qualified to help direct candidates through their initial vocational discernment. Insofar as possible, he should make this ministry his full time occupation (cf. PI 44).

48. The initiatives of the Vocation Director will be more credible and effective to the extent to which he maintains close contact with the real life of the Congregation. Hence, a particular local community ought to be chosen to collaborate with him more closely, particularly by providing hospitality to candidates.

49. The main task of the Director is to nurture the seed of vocations by encouraging candidates to be attentive and responsive to God's call. He should make use of whatever initiatives and means seem to him most apt and useful for this purpose, while being mindful of the cultural, religious and pastoral sensibilities of each place (cf. PC 24; VC 64; D 112).

50. Through frequent contact and dialogue with candidates, and from information obtained about them from those who know them in their school, workplace and parish, the Vocation Director forms an initial evaluation of the authenticity of their vocation and their suitability for the Marian way of life. Where possible during initial contact with candidates, the Director should try to work closely with their families. This experience will help him arrive at a more accurate evaluation of the candidate and also help him allay the fears or misapprehensions that family members might have regarding a religious vocation. Insofar as possible, he should try to encourage the family's collaboration in supporting their son's vocational discernment (cf. D 109).

51. When the Vocation Director judges that a candidate is ready and serious about our way of life, he invites him to "come and see" (cf. Jn. 1:39) for himself, the way in which we live our vocation. These brief experiences of living with our Congregation are often very fruitful for candidates. They are most efficacious when the encounter includes a variety of experiences of Marian life and ministry and when someone has been assigned to accompany the candidate during his visit (cf. VC 64).

THOSE TO WHOM THE PASTORAL CARE OF VOCATIONS IS DIRECTED

52. We are mindful of the reality that the Lord calls to the religious life those whom he wills, without regard for human designs and standards (cf. 1 Cor. 1:27-29). It is the task of the Congregation to provide competent and consistent care of those confided to it by the Lord. Always and everywhere, therefore, we sense ourselves obliged to nurture the seeds of God's call at whatever age and in whatever situation they manifest themselves (cf. VC 64).

53. In the early years of adolescence, which are marked by enormous personal development, the first stirring of a religious vocation can make themselves known. Adolescents are attracted to ideals of service and of giving of themselves to others, despite the religious confusion and indifference that often seems evident in their lives. Though the choice for a religious vocation might be far in the future, Marians should treat seriously and respectfully these first stirrings of interest. By faithful fulfillment of their

own vocation, they serve as models of generosity that influence these young people and may bear fruit later in their lives (cf. PI 87; C 154; D 110).

54. At the time in their lives when young people are engaged in sorting out their self-identity and are concerned with making authentic decisions about their future, the idea of a religious vocation can emerge as a compelling possibility. We Marians, by the witness of our own lives, particularly the living testimony that our vocation is a way of being authentically human and Christian, can help these young people respond affirmatively to God's call. We should be particularly mindful of those who work closely with us in our ministry (e.g., altar servers, catechists, volunteers, youth ministers) and experience directly the values of our Marian lifestyle, and together with us are able to promote it (cf. PI 87; C 154).

55. In many parts of the world, it is common for us to find older men discerning a possible vocation to our Congregation. They come to us with a wealth of valuable experiences and with a more solid maturity. They should be welcomed and, where possible, our formation program should be adapted to their level of maturity and experience. It is important that we help them conduct a careful discernment of their motives and attitudes to help them verify that they have a realistic perception of their vocation and the capacity and willingness to submit themselves to a program of guided formation. We should bear in mind that older candidates come to us with a more established and stable personality. Hence, their capacity for profound change is more limited (cf. D 113).

CANDIDACY

56. The last stage of the Vocational discernment process (i.e., before admission to the Postulancy) may be conducted in a structured residential program which we call, "Candidacy." The time, place, content and other pertinent details of the candidacy are to be defined in the Provincial Statutes and the Provincial Formation program (cf. RC 4; PI 44).

CHAPTER III

Vocational Discernment and Evaluation

THE NATURE OF DISCERNMENT

57. Every vocation should be carefully examined in a realistic way and in a spirit of faith. It must be verified in a concrete way by the candidate himself and by his formators. This discernment process has three main protagonists: God, the candidate, and those responsible for formation, who are acting in the name of the Church. Consequently, the work of discernment is the joint responsibility of the candidate and the formation personnel, with the final approval for admission reserved to the major Superior (cf. Instr. III:56; C 143, 157; D 114).

58. Discernment extends throughout the formation program intended to prepare candidates for our consecrated life. The transition from one stage of formation to the next is an important moment in this ongoing process of discernment (cf. C 143, 151, 155).

59. The following guidelines regarding discernment and evaluation will be of use throughout the period of formation. Suitably adapted to the particular circumstances, those in formation and their formators should find them a useful instrument for evaluation at every stage of formation.

THE MEANS OF DISCERNMENT

60. The candidate must ask himself before God whether he has been called to the Marian way of life. His decision ought to be reached only after serious consideration of the responsibilities of this life and the necessary adjustment required of him to adapt to it. It is particularly at this point that the vocation director or formator can be of great assistance to him, by helping him to engage in an open, honest dialog. Together, they

must thoroughly examine the candidate's motivations for choosing our way of life, and clarify and purify this motivation if it is not sufficiently clear or adequate (cf. RF 39-40; PI 89; C 150, 157).

61. Adequate information about the candidate's background – that is, his family and cultural environment, his education, his health, his work experience and his friends – is important for understanding and evaluating his vocational journey. Before making any decision with regard to a candidate's vocation, the vocation director or formators are required to seek the opinion of people who are in frequent and close contact with the candidate in his daily life (cf. RF 41; D 114).

62. In the discernment process, a psychological evaluation can be helpful in providing insights into the candidate's capacity to live the Marian life. However, care should be taken to consult experts who are aware of the Church's expectations for those aspiring to the religious life and the priesthood, are familiar with the emotional and psychological demands of the religious life, and appreciate what the grace of a religious or priestly vocation signifies (cf. RF 11, 39; PI 43; CIC 220, 642; D 106).

62.1. When utilizing a psychological or medical evaluation, those in charge of formation must take care not to violate the person's right to privacy (i.e., the personal information that one has the right to keep to oneself and which one may restrict others from disclosing). To avoid conflict between the individual's rights and the Congregation's right to admit only those who are suitable, those responsible for formation must obtain from the candidate a proper "release form" prior to his evaluation. In obtaining this form from the candidate, one must first carefully and completely explain to him the scope of the evaluation – that is, the nature and type of the information to be sought and the means by which it will be gathered. If, for a just reason, a psychological evaluation is deemed advisable after admission, the member's consent is required (cf. D 106).

62.2 The Provinces (Vice-Provinces, etc.) are to draw up policies that specify who will have access to the information resulting from an evaluation, the use that will be made of the results, and what will happen to the evaluation after its use in the discernment process. Out of respect for the person's good name and privacy, evaluations should be treated with all due confidence (cf. CIC 220).

62.3 In developing the evaluation process, those responsible for formation should consult with canonists and with experts in medicine and psychology, to determine what methods are best suited for verifying a candidate's suitability, while also being respectful of his rights.

62.4 In conclusion, candidates must freely, knowingly and explicitly consent to a psychological and medical evaluation; the Congregation cannot compel them to do so. Nonetheless, if a candidate refuses to let us gather this information, his admissions process should not go forward.

THE CRITERIA OF DISCERNMENT

63. At the minimum, the Congregation should assure itself that a candidate possesses the qualities and characteristics appropriate for his age. This discernment should take into account the various aspects of his personality: i.e., his physical, psychological, social, moral, intellectual and spiritual qualities. A candidate's natural gifts and his customary manner of cooperating with divine grace must also be taken into account in order to judge his suitability for the Marian life (cf. OT 6, D 115).

63.1 To facilitate a student's continuing discernment and evaluation after admissions, each Province (Vice Province, etc.) is to draw up a policy regarding what documents and information are to be kept in personnel files, who has access to this information, and under what circumstances this information may be removed or updated (cf. D 211.2-3, 212). In elaborating this policy, the Province (Vice Province, etc.) should seek legal counsel to ensure that its record retention policy conforms to civil law.

64. God, who calls each person to a particular vocation and bestows on each one charisms for the upbuilding of the Church, also provides the grace sufficient to answer the call that He has given. Thus, we expect that a person called to religious life will have the capacity to respond to the duties of that call, whether as a religious priest or as a religious brother. If this ability is lacking, it is a sign that the candidate is not suitable for admission to our Congregation (cf. CIC 241.1, 642; C 157-158).

POSITIVE INDICATIONS

65. Of themselves, the following positive indications do not prove the existence of a call from God but suggest that the person has the basic capacity to successfully respond to that call. In practice, a vocation is a mysterious reality that is rooted in God's grace and which calls for humility and respect on the part of those assisting the candidate in his vocational discernment. A vocation is not a quantifiable reality; hence, in discerning its authenticity, clarity and certainty are not always possible.

66. Among the qualities that indicate the possibility of a vocation are the following:

66.1 *physical health*: reasonable good health evidenced by: a lack of serious congenital or hereditary illness or handicap; the stamina to engage in vigorous activity; respect for one's body evidenced in reasonable health care (e.g., appropriate rest, proper diet, a balance between work and exercise)(cf. CIC 241.1, 642; D 115a);

66.2 *intelligence and judgment*: a sufficient intelligence evidenced by successful completion of secondary school studies; common sense; a sense of proportion in argument and logic; ability to be self-reflective regarding one's ideas, motives and values; tolerance for opposing points of view; appreciation for authentic cultural values (e.g., the development of one's intellectual and moral faculties, the development of one's aesthetic appreciation in harmony with Christian values, etc.); the ability and willingness to critique one's society in the light of the Gospel (cf. CIC 241.1, 642; D 115b);

66.3 *psychological maturity*: a stable psychological identity that is evidenced by: a capacity for realistic self-knowledge and self-criticism; the ability to be flexible and adaptable; the ability to cope with daily frustrations and tensions; self-confidence and self-esteem; a positive sense of meaning or purpose about one's life; awareness of one's limitations and shortcomings; awareness of one's uniqueness and of one's ability to make a personal contribution to others; a sense of responsibility; integrity; the ability to establish priorities among one's responsibilities and to manage one's resources to meet these commitments; an ability to problem-solve and be self-directive (i.e., to take charge of one's life); good stewardship of material goods (cf. CIC 241.1, 642; C 147; D 115a);

66.4 *affective and psychosexual maturity*: emotional maturity suited to one's age; a trusting and cooperative spirit; sincerity; fidelity to one's word; ability to create and maintain friendships that are respectful and mutual; openness and acceptance of others; a psychosexual and psychosocial development that are positive or free of serious trauma; ease with one's own sexuality and the sexuality of others; ability to relate to both men and women in a healthy and comfortable fashion; evidence of the ability to love another as a person; ability to freely accept celibacy as a gift; and a demonstrated capacity to live the same (e.g., that one has practiced celibacy for a sufficient period of time prior to admission)(cf. CIC 241.1, 642; D 115a);

66.5 *interpersonal relationships and ability to live in community*: respect for others and their rights; ability to empathize with the conditions and experiences of others; sufficient skills to collaborate and cooperate with others; ability to subordinate one's desires in favor of the common good; ability to place one's talents at the service of others; capacity for dialogue; ability to resolve conflicts respectfully; capacity to learn from experience; initiative in responding to circumstances and needs; openness to people of different cultures or faiths (cf. CIC 241.1, 642; C 153; D 114);

66.6 *family environment*: a stable family (i.e., the absence of serious trauma); affection and respect for family members; ability to cope with and surmount family difficulties (cf. C 153; D 114);

66.7 *right intention and motivation*: a desire to cooperate with God's will as one's most basic motivation; a free and deliberate choice to enter the Congregation, conscious of its strengths and weaknesses; a desire to love and serve God within the Congregation; a growing conviction that the Marian vocation is God's will for the person (cf. CIC 241.1, 642; C 157, 161-163, 174; D 115d, 118);

66.8 *Christian life and participation in Church life*: a personal faith relationship with the Triune God; a deep attachment to the person of Jesus Christ and the desire to live as his disciple; regular participation in the sacraments and Church life; the cultivation of a regular prayer life; spiritual direction; a deep desire to serve others; a willingness to accept and represent the teachings and beliefs of the Church; an ability to undertake acts of self-renunciation in light of the Gospel; a commitment to profess

one's values and beliefs publicly; willingness to be accountable to the Community (cf. C 144; D 115c-d);

66.9 *to live the Marian vocation:* a candidate should further evidence a balanced devotion to the Immaculate Virgin Mary (e.g., a devotion that is neither exaggeratedly sentimental, nor preoccupied with extraordinary signs); attraction to the values and teachings of our Founder and Renovator; interest in the life and history of the Congregation; attraction to our principal apostolic works; a growing desire to serve all people – not only those of one's own country or ethnic group; a desire to reach out to those who are alienated or distant from the Church; respect for lay people and a willingness to collaborate with them in the service of the Church; respect for and adherence to the Magisterium of the Church; and a growing interest in and identification with the Marian charism (cf. C 9-10; 144; D 115d).

67. It would be unrealistic to expect any candidate to possess all these qualities in their fullness at the beginning of his formation, or even in subsequent stages of formation. Yet, he must demonstrate the capacity and disposition to develop them, and evidence a gradual growth in these qualities during his formation. In order to make a correct and discerning judgement, it is not sufficient that there be just some positive indications in this regard. There must be evidence of a true integration taking place in the person's life. That is, there must be an indication that many of these qualities are developing and coming together in his life and activity (cf. FP 28-29; C 157; D 118).

CONTRAINDICATIONS

68. “Contraindications” of a vocation are those characteristics in a candidate's life that impede his ability to respond to the demands of our Marian vocation. Some of these contraindications are the following:

68.1 *lack of physical health:* a lack of sufficient physical stamina to engage in vigorous pastoral work; serious chronic illness (e.g., advanced diabetes); handicaps that seriously limit the ability to function independently or to participate in pastoral work (e.g., blindness); HIV positivity or AIDS; a history of chronic drug or alcohol abuse; the presence of psychosomatic illnesses (e.g., hypochondria); difficulty in attending to one's own physical needs (e.g., not providing for enough sleep, chronic overwork);

lack of prudent healthcare (e.g., lack of a proper diet)(cf. CIC 241.1, 642; D 115a);

68.2 *insufficient intelligence and judgment*: failure to complete secondary school studies; estrangement from one's culture; marked anti-intellectual sentiments; lack of balance and proportion in argument; excessive criticism; impatience or disdain for those with differing opinions; inability to critique the values and attitudes of society in light of the Gospel (cf. CIC 241.1, 642; D 115b);

68.3 *insufficient psychological maturity*: a fragile self-identity; shallow self-knowledge; exceptional rigidity and inflexibility; inability to cope with normal frustrations; exaggerated feelings of personal unworthiness or inferiority; marked inconsistency; extreme timidity; exceptional fear of failure or an exaggerated need to defend oneself against criticism or blame; inability to complete projects or to follow through on responsibilities; habitual instability in studies or employment (e.g., prolonged periods of unemployment); chronic indecision; inability to accept reality as it is or a constant state of high tension; strong narcissistic tendencies; suicidal tendencies; a history of psychiatric problems (cf. CIC 241.1, 642; C 147; D 115a);

68.4 *insufficient affective and psychosexual maturity*: inability to resolve anger (e.g., nursing grudges or offended feelings); unusual distrust of others; affective dependency; excessive independence or passivity; inability to set respectful boundaries with others (e.g., giving unwanted attention to another); serious difficulties in making and maintaining friendships; insecurity in relating with women; serious difficulty with self-disclosure; extreme introversion; marked tendencies toward sensual gratification (e.g., difficulties with gluttony or laziness, habitual masturbation or resorting to pornography); excessive curiosity regarding sexual matters; a history of sexual promiscuity or of homosexual activity; sexual ambivalence; uncertain sexual orientation or identity; a history of having been physically or sexually abused; a history of physical or sexual aggression (e.g., episodes of violent behavior or of sexual abuse of minors)(cf. CIC 241.1, 642; D 115a);

68.5 *lack of interpersonal relationships and inability to live in community*: withdrawal from one's milieu; difficulties in relating to authorities; hostility toward people of different races or ethnic groups; a

need to impose one's thoughts or opinions on others; difficulty in working with others in a group; inability to learn from corrections and from life experiences; a criminal record (cf. CIC 241.1, 642; C 153; D 114);

68.6 *dysfunctional family environment*: extreme poverty; a history of having been abandoned or of having been orphaned; alcohol or drug abuse among family members; a history of inherited illnesses (e.g., schizophrenia); a history of family trauma (e.g., severe family conflicts, divorce or separation); alienation or hostility toward one's family members (cf. C 153; D 114);

68.7 *defective intention and motivation*: evidence that motives other than the love of God and the fulfilment of His will are primary in seeking admission: that is, that one is motivated to enter our Congregation in order to fulfill the desires of others; or from compulsion; or constraint; or a false sense of obligation; evidence of choosing our vocation as a refuge from the problems of life or to improve one's economic status; or as a means of asserting one's independence (e.g., from family); or out of fear of marriage; or from motivations of ambition (e.g., seeking power or to further one's career)(cf. CIC 241.1, 642; C 157, 161-163, 174; D 115d, 118);

68.8 *questionable Christian life and lack of participation in Church life*: lack of a personal faith relationship with the Triune God; a haphazard prayer life; inconsistency in beliefs and convictions; inconsistent participation in the sacraments and in Church life; excessive concern for the externals of the priesthood or religious life; preoccupation with the status given to priests and religious; lack of discretion in the use of money or material goods; marked tendency to accumulate goods; inability to commit oneself unselfishly to apostolic service; a history of having publically worked against or disputed the Catholic faith; and a history of having collaborated with civil authorities hostile to Christ and the Church (cf. C 144; D 115c-d);

68.9 *contraindications relating to our Congregation's particular identity*: lack of devotion to the Immaculate Virgin Mary or lack of interest in cultivating the same; indifference to apostolic service; lack of desire to learn more about the history of the Congregation and its current life and apostolate; lack of self-identification with the principal apostolates of the Congregation (e.g., parish assistance, education, publishing); distaste for the international character of the Congregation; lack of desire to work for

the good of the Congregation or to forego one's own desires for the sake of the common good; marked criticism and lack of respect for the hierarchy and the Magisterium of the Church; disinterest in the eschatological aspect of our charism; and any other important element of our Marian tradition (cf. C 9-10, 144; D 115d).

69. Beyond the contraindications noted above, there are candidates with particular backgrounds that require special scrutiny:

69.1 If a candidate has participated in the formation program of another religious community or seminary, those responsible for admission to the Congregation have a serious obligation to contact these institutions and inquire about their experience of the candidate. They should also request appropriate documentation (e.g., academic transcripts, annual evaluations). If the candidate experienced difficulties during his previous formation or if he was expelled, they should be especially vigilant in their scrutiny. They must consult the previous formation programs about this matter and should request documentation about the nature of these difficulties. Before the candidate's application can be considered, they must be certain that these difficulties have been satisfactorily resolved. If it is discovered that a person has tried to conceal his previous affiliation, he must not be allowed to continue with the Congregation (cf. CIC 241.3, 643.3-5, 645.2).

As a rule, rejection by a previous congregation or seminary should bar a candidate from continuing with our Congregation.

69.2 Candidates who are recent converts to the Catholic faith should also be carefully evaluated. While they may be zealous and sincere in seeking admission, their experience as practicing Catholics is limited. Time is required for them to stabilize and mature in their new faith. Two to three years in the consistent practice of the Faith is generally advisable before considering such a person for admissions. A similar situation applies to those who are returning to the active practice of their faith after a lengthy period of inactivity or who have experienced some type of conversion. They should be encouraged to continue their discernment and to commit themselves to a consistent practice of their faith for a sufficient period of time; only then should their petition for admission be accepted.

A FINAL NOTE REGARDING CONTRAINDICATIONS

70. The contraindications listed in this section should not be treated as a “checklist” for determining a candidate’s suitability to the Congregation. Rather, they are offered to help the participants in the discernment process engage in an open, thorough and profound examination of God’s will for the candidate. Several of the characteristics listed above are of such gravity that they would automatically exclude an applicant from serious consideration (e.g., defective intention or a history of serious psychiatric illness). Others, however, are more ambiguous. They function more as indicators of difficulties and vulnerabilities that would make successful living as a Marian very questionable. During the discernment, reflection on these matters can help both the candidate and those responsible for admission and formation to identify areas of concern and determine if they are sufficiently understood and resolved so as to permit reasonable hope of successfully living the Marian way of life. In reflecting on these different characteristics, it is important to view them in the context of the candidate’s life. That is, how does he understand these matters? How has he coped with them during the different stages of his personal growth? How can one characterize his overall development (e.g., healthy, positive, disordered)? Viewing these characteristics in context will help the formators give them their proper weight while making it less likely to exaggerate or underestimate their importance. In addition, one should not overlook the Divine action in the candidate’s life. It is important for the participants in the discernment to consider how God’s grace might be at work in these matters. Under the action of grace, matters that might seem humanly intractable, may gradually give way to healing and be transformed into greater maturity.

71. Although discernment calls for a sufficiently lengthy period, it cannot last indefinitely. According to the laws of the Church and our Congregation, it calls for definitive choices. A delay in arriving at a decisive conclusion – whether this be due to uncertainty, inertia, misplaced charity, cowardice or any other reason – is always detrimental (cf. CIC 642, 653.2; C 157, 172).

CHAPTER IV

Postulancy

NATURE AND PURPOSE

72. In both our Constitutions and Church law, religious life begins with admission to the novitiate (cf. CIC 646;C 160). Nonetheless, to better enable our candidates to profit from this formation, our Constitutions call for an earlier preparatory stage of formation, which is called “postulancy” (cf. C 159). All candidates, whether they intend to be religious priests or religious brothers, make this stage of formation together. This period is designed to allow the candidate and the Congregation to get mutually acquainted, to introduce the candidate to our way of life, and to help him realize the serious commitment that he is making by entering the novitiate (cf. RC 10-12; PI 42-44; C 159).

73. The postulancy is a time for making a preliminary discernment regarding the candidate’s suitability for the Marian way of life. It judges whether he possesses the human and Christian maturity sufficient to begin the religious life. In addition, it ascertains whether his Christian formation is sufficient and, if not, ensures that this is done (cf. C 159).

74. The postulancy is also intended to provide the postulant with a gradual transition from his previous manner of life to life in the Congregation. The manner in which the postulancy is conducted should not give the postulant the impression that he has already become a member of the Congregation (cf. PI 44; C 159).

75. Postulancy is required of all candidates (cf. C 159). To be genuinely effective, it should neither be too brief nor extend beyond two years (cf. RC 12; D 120); the general recommendation of the formators of the Congregation is that it should be no less than 6 months and normally last about one year.

ADMISSION

76. It is the major Superior's right to accept candidates into the postulancy, with the consultative vote of his Council (cf. D. 279, 1). Before doing so, he should obtain sufficient data about them to reasonably verify their suitability for our Congregation (cf. D 114, 120; RFM 61-62).

THOSE INVOLVED IN FORMATION

77. The community plays an important role in the formation of the postulant. Through the personal experience of a prayerful and apostolic common life, the postulant can compare the reality of our life with his expectations, and so confirm or adjust his thinking (cf. D 107).

78. It is preferable that the postulancy not take place in the same place as the novitiate program (cf. RC 12; D 121). The objectives and lifestyles of both programs are different and these distinctions should not be obscured. Nonetheless, to assure the continuity of formation, there should be frequent communication and close collaboration between the Postulant Moderator and the Novice Master (cf. RC 12; D 119).

79. Though the community bears a general responsibility for welcoming and encouraging the postulant, his immediate formation is entrusted to the guidance of the Postulant Moderator (cf. D 107, 119). It is the Moderator's responsibility to oversee the instruction and experience imparted during the postulancy, and to form a preliminary judgment regarding the postulant's suitability for the novitiate. In the fulfillment of his responsibilities, the Moderator should be subject immediately only to his major Superior (cf. D 119, 123).

CONTENTS AND PROGRAM

80. The postulants are to follow a program of integral formation. The effort will be made to complete their human and Christian formation so that they may acquire a deeper understanding and experience of the Catholic faith and religious life (cf. D 102, 117-118).

The postulancy program should include the following:

80.1 The postulancy is the opportune moment to address areas of personal development that call for further growth. In so far as possible, the postulant should confront and struggle with developmental issues – such as, personal autonomy or self-confidence – prior to the novitiate. If not, his attention is divided, with his energies occupied in attending to his personal issues at a time when he should be concentrating on learning and integrating the values embodied in the vows, and in preparing himself for generous pastoral service. To promote this maturity, it is desirable to identify areas of personal growth that need further attention by the postulant. These areas then serve as the basis for a “personal growth plan” that the postulant is expected to work on during the period of formation. Collaboration with the psychologist who assessed the postulant prior to admissions can be of great assistance in establishing these expectations and in ensuring that they are realistic. When necessary, it is advisable to encourage a postulant to undertake counseling during his formation in order to help him attain the personal maturity necessary for making a commitment to the Congregation (cf. C 143, 147; D 101, 105-106, 115-116).

80.2 Review of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, with an emphasis on completing the postulants’ Christian education (cf. C 159; D 115c).

80.3 Preliminary introduction to the motives and values that underlie the Christian way of life – the religious vocation in particular – and an examination of how these compare and contrast with the postulants’ values and choices in their previous way of life (cf. D 115c-116, 118).

80.4 Introduction to the dynamics of life in common, including such practical matters as: expectations about their comportment and performance of duties during the postulancy; requirements regarding permissions and contacts with others; expectations regarding expenses; basic communication skills; and basic principles for relating to others in a community. (cf. D 117)

80.5 Preliminary introduction to the practice, spirituality and theology of Christian prayer, with the emphasis being on fuller participation in the celebration of the Mass and the adoration of the Eucharist, in the Liturgy of the Hours and other common prayer, in meditation on the Word of God and personal prayer, and regular recourse to the Sacrament of Penance (cf. C 144, 146, 152, 159).

80.6 A general outline of the history of the Congregation, touching on its principal figures and events (cf. D 115d, 117).

80.7 A preliminary introduction to our charism, with an emphasis on its principal characteristics: the Mystery of the Immaculate Conception; pastoral ministry (especially in parishes); fidelity to the Church; apostolic zeal in meeting the needs of the Church, especially where they are greatest and according to signs of the times; animation and collaboration with the laity in the apostolate; prayer and expiatory practices for those in purgatory (cf. D 115d, 117, 118).

The postulancy program should be flexible so that it can be adapted to the capacity and needs of each postulant (cf. RC 4; RF Intro 2; D 117).

81. To help the postulant grow in human and Christian maturity, and in self-awareness of his talents, it is desirable that he take part in some sort of regular community work. In this way, he will gradually be introduced to our Marian way of life, and learn to serve Christ and the Church. It can also be useful to have him continue his education, provided that such studies do not clash with the primary goal of the postulancy, which is preparation for the novitiate (cf. D 116-117).

SUITABILITY OF THE POSTULANTS FOR NOVITIATE

82. It is incumbent on the postulant to demonstrate that he has the human and Christian maturity appropriate to his age, and that he has the necessary qualities and talents needed for our way of life. He must also give witness to his desire to enter our Congregation based on a firm intention to seek God's will and to serve him in all things (cf. CIC 641-645; C 158; D 116).

83. The Moderator is to evaluate the postulant's motives and freedom, his spiritual, moral and intellectual abilities, and his physical health and emotional maturity (cf. PI 43). The experience and observations of the local community should also be included in the evaluation of the postulant. When assessing the postulant's suitability for the novitiate, the Moderator and the community should not only give weight to his present state, but also to reasonable expectations for his future growth and improvement.

They do well to recall that the individual being formed and evaluated is a person with a unique call from God, walking a particular faith journey with the Lord; a mystery who is touched by grace and also by human frailty. In the process of evaluation, the individual's dignity should always be respected and revered (cf. D 118, 123).

CHAPTER V

Novitiate

NATURE AND PURPOSE

84. The novitiate is that phase of formation when the candidate begins his religious life in our Congregation. During this time, he is helped to deepen his discernment regarding a vocation and his decision to serve Christ and the Church according to the spirit of our Founder and Renovator, and to experience more profoundly the way of life that is proper to the spirit and character of our Congregation (cf. CIC 646; C 160).

85. During the novitiate, the novice is given an opportunity to develop and deepen his personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and of the radical commitment that he accepts by following Christ in the Marian vocation (cf. CIC 652; C 165).

86. He is led to a greater understanding and acceptance, both theoretical and practical, of the evangelical counsels, as well as the other Gospel values embodied in our religious life, so that he might truly advance in his pursuit of perfect charity and in his adherence to Christ (cf. CIC 652; C 165).

87. He is also guided to a deeper knowledge and appreciation for the charism of our Congregation. This requires, among others, a diligent study of the Marian history and spirituality (cf. CIC 652; C 160, 165).

88. Since the novitiate is meant to be a time for intense prayer, reflection and detachment, it should be conducted in a stable and peaceful environment that is favorable to solitude, recollection and prayer. Novices should not be engaged in formal academic study, professional training or apostolic work [save for the exceptions cited in PI 48] (cf. CIC 647, 652.5; RC 29.2; PI 48-50; C 169).

89. Insofar as possible, it is preferable to conduct the novitiate in the native culture and language of the novice. The essential reason for this is to avoid complicating a period of formation during which the novice establishes his basic identity as a Marian and when the relationship between him and his novice master and spiritual director should be comfortable, enabling them to speak to each other with all the nuances required at the outset of this intensive spiritual journey. A transfer into another culture at this particular moment in formation also involves the risk of accepting false vocations and of not perceiving what may be false motivations (cf. PI 47).

ADMISSION

90. It pertains to the major Superior, with the deliberative vote of his Council, to admit postulants to the novitiate (cf. C 156, D. 278.1).

91. Before being admitted to the novitiate, Canon law and our Constitutions require that the postulant be free from the impediments listed in Canons 643-645 (cf. C 161.4).

THE METHOD AND CONTENT OF THE NOVITIATE FORMATION

92. The novitiate is of the utmost importance since the formation received at this moment constitutes the foundation of the entire religious life. During this time, one is led to develop Christian and human virtues; is introduced to a fuller way of Christian perfection by way of prayer and self-mastery; is led to a deeper meditation on the Scriptures; cultivates the worship of God in the Liturgy; deepens his knowledge of and devotion to the Immaculate Virgin Mary; is trained in the meaning and practice of the evangelical counsels; is educated in the character, purpose and history of our Congregation; and is imbued with a love for the Church and its pastors (cf. PI 46; CIC 652.1; C 166-168).

93. Since not all the novices enter the novitiate at the same level of human and Christian maturity, it will be necessary for the Novice Master to pay close attention to each individual so that each one can advance at his own pace, and so that the content of the program, and the way it is communicated, are suited to the one receiving it (cf. PI 51).

94. To assist the novice's progress in the novitiate program, the Novice Master is to hold a monthly interview with him during which his behavior and comprehension are reviewed (cf. D 137). Expectations regarding the novice's comportment and directives for his improvement should be as clear and practical as possible. In this way, both the novice and the Novice Master are better able to verify his progress in the novitiate formation. The Novice Master should try to maintain good personal contact with the novice and strive to know him well so that his assistance can be more effective (cf. C 164; D 135). At least twice a year the Novice Master is required to submit a written evaluation to the major Superior regarding the novice's character, traits and qualities, and his behavior and progress in the novitiate (cf. D 139).

These moments of evaluation are also useful occasions for a review of the formation program (cf. RF 40; FP 29).

95. The novitiate program should include the following (cf. CIC 652; C 166-168):

95.1 *Continuation of the process of human and Christian maturation* (cf. D 116);

The process of human and Christian maturation begun in the postulancy should continue with emphasis, gradually shifting to the interiorization of the spiritual values and virtues of the vows. The "personal growth plan" elaborated in the postulancy should be updated and continued.

95.2 *An initiation, both theoretical and practical, into the practice of Christian asceticism* (cf. C 84-90, 166f);

To be consecrated to the Lord commits the religious to following the example of the Lord: "Who came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (cf. Mk. 10:45). The novice should be led to understand and accept that conformity to Christ requires us to put aside inordinate self-love, self-aggrandizement and pride; that it calls for self-denial in matters of food and drink and luxury, self-denial in the acquisition and use of goods, and generosity in serving others regardless of preference or personal convenience. Asceticism should be presented as a positive reality whose practice frees us to love God and others more fully, not solely in terms of its renunciation.

95.3 *Accompaniment in developing the human and Christian maturity necessary for the common life* (cf. C 170);

First and foremost, the novice should understand that community exists and endures because of faith. It is the Lord who has brought us together and unites us in a common consecration and for a special mission. The community is formed anew each day through the action of the Spirit, judged and converted by the Word of God, purified by penance, and deepened through the Eucharist (cf. PI 27, 47).

The novice should also be introduced to the basic attitudes necessary for a harmonious common life: realism, patience, reciprocity and sharing, stewardship of goods, dialogue, good humor, prudence and mutual forgiveness (cf. CNUCA 26, 27).

The truth and necessity of these qualities can be taught, but true appreciation for them the novice acquires by experience. No community is perfect. Misunderstanding and friction are inevitable, even among those sincerely committed to the Lord. By our example and commitment to foster our common life, the novice learns the true meaning of community.

With admission to the novitiate, the novice has entered a new “family” of brothers. While he should be able to maintain relations with his natural family, and they, in turn, should be greeted with hospitality and cordiality by the Congregation, he should realize that his commitment has changed his relationship to them. The Novice Master should establish guidelines regulating the frequency and type of contact between the novice and his family. In general, such contact should be limited and by means of exception. The novice should not be distracted from his primary goal: to grow in his vocation to the Congregation (cf. PI 53).

95.4 *Introduction to the theology and spirituality of religious life* (cf. PI 47; C 166-167);

This should include reflection on and experience of:

- the meaning of Christian discipleship based on the Scriptures and the tradition of the Church,
- the religious life as a particular expression of Christian discipleship, and
- the link between baptismal consecration and religious consecration;

95.5 *Introduction to the theory and practice of the three vows* (cf. PI 12, 47; C 42; 165);

The three vows should be treated from a variety of perspectives: theological, spiritual, physical-psychological, and social. Care should be taken to present the vows in a positive light – as means by which we can love and

serve Christ and others, achieve greater personal freedom and maturity, and become more authentically human – and not solely in terms of the renunciation they entail. It is important that the novice be introduced theoretically and practically into the concrete exigencies of the vows.

95.6 *A review of the history of the religious life and of our Congregation* (cf. PI 47; C 167);

This treatment should include a history of the religious life, from its Scriptural inspirations and apostolic roots to the current day, with attention to contextualizing our Congregation’s history and development within this larger story. In addition, a complete history of the Congregation should be provided with particular emphasis given to the events surrounding its foundation and renovation, and the development of its charism. This should also include detailed information on the life and ministry of the Congregation as a whole and of the particular province.

95.7 *A detailed study of the Marian Constitutions and Directory, and the Provincial Statutes* (cf. PI 47; C 160, 162, 167);

95.8 *Study of the Marian charism* (cf. C 167);

This study should include:

1. The development of the Charism in history:
 - the charism of the Founder: a study of the intention of Father Founder and the finality of our Congregation as founded by him (cf. *Norma Vitae* 1,2);
 - the charism manifested in the life of Fr. Casimir (cf. the preface of Fr. Casimir Wyszyński in *Stella Matutina*);
 - the charism of the Renovator: a close study of the characteristics of the charism demonstrated in Blessed George (cf. *1910 Constitutions, Diary, Instructions (part I), 1930 Constitutions; Sources of Renewal, Vol. I*).
2. The *Constitutions* and *Directory*: The expression of our charism today:
 - the “Marian” element: The mystery of the Immaculate Conception as the distinctive unifying element of our identity and inspiration of our religious consecration and mission in the Church and in the World;
 - the “Ecclesial-Apostolic” element: The salvific love of God gratuitously poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, as the impetus for our mission of evangelization, in imitation of Mary, and of our Founder and Renovator;

- the “Eschatological” element: The joyful hope of the Kingdom, prefigured in Mary Immaculate, sign and promise of the Church’s perfection as the bride of Christ radiant in beauty, and inspired by our Founder, as the motive for our eschatological witness through vowed life in community and our prayerful assistance of the faithful departed.

95.9 *Initiation into the practice of personal and communal prayer* (cf. PI 47; C 74, 144, 166c);

The novice should be initiated into the practice of meditation, prolonged prayer, recollection, and spiritual direction. This instruction should help him to understand that prayer lies at the heart of his vocation, that it is the means by which his life becomes deeply rooted in Christ and the path by which he grows in personal conformity to the Lord. The novice should be instructed in the various forms of prayer and meditation (including the traditional prayer practices of the Marians), the examination of conscience, the place of silence in his spiritual life, and the practice of spiritual reading.

Special attention should be given to the importance of liturgical prayer and its relationship to the novice’s spiritual life. In particular, he should be led to a greater understanding of the Eucharist as the center of his personal and communal spiritual life; the Liturgy of the Hours as a means of consecrating oneself and the world to God throughout the entire day; and the support for ongoing metanoia found in frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance.

95.10 *Initiation into the practice of the prayerful reading of the Holy Scriptures* (cf. C 5, 66);

This instruction ought to emphasize the centrality of the Holy Scriptures in the spiritual life of every Christian and especially of the religious, and offer practical guidelines for ways by which the Scriptures can be used as a source of nourishment for prayer.

95.11 *Theoretical and practical introduction to the Mystery of the Immaculate Conception and to sound devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary* (cf. C 145, 166.d);

The novices should receive a theoretical and practical introduction to the theology and spirituality of the Mystery of the Immaculate Conception, and indications on how this Mystery may be expressed in their spiritual and religious life.

An important means for deepening the novice's personal devotion to Mary is the rosary. Novitiate formation should include a presentation on the rosary, particularly its identity as a prayer that is thoroughly biblical, Marian and Christocentric. Other sound Marian prayers should be proposed to the novice (e.g., the Angelus Domini, the Chaplet of the 10 Virtues of the B.V.M.).

95.12 *Introduction to the eschatological dimension of our Marian religious vocation* (cf. C 19, 166e);

The novices should be helped to understand the Catholic tradition of offering prayer for the deceased and be encouraged to form their own personal practice of intercessory prayer for the souls in purgatory. However, this spiritual tradition should be placed in its proper context by viewing it against the background of the Church's teaching on Christian hope, and on the principal eschatological truths.

The novices should also be led to understand that by their common fraternal life and through their future apostolic work, they are signs of the Kingdom in this world. Their hope in the Risen Christ and the inspiration they draw from the Mystery of the Immaculate Conception is an impetus "to share with others the 'good news' of salvation." The religious consecration is a prophetic sign that in God alone does human life find full joy and meaning, and that our hearts are made for God and are restless until they rest in Him (cf. VC 27, RFM 27).

95.13 *Introduction to the theology and practice of Marian apostolic service and its place in the Marian identity* (cf. C 168-169);

For the novice to be fully introduced into the charism and life of the Congregation, he should receive instruction in the apostolic mission of the Congregation. From the beginning of his religious life he should learn to combine contemplation with vigorous apostolic action (cf. C 11, 168).

After the canonical year, to achieve a more complete formation in apostolic life, the Novice Master, with the major Superior's consent, can direct a novice to be engaged in service to others for a particular period of time, even if this means being temporarily absent from the novitiate house (cf. C 169; D 140).

THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR FORMATION

The Novice

96. Through his admission to the novitiate, the novice has freely assumed a serious commitment. No one else can say “yes” for him to God’s call. While the Congregation is committed to helping him find himself as a Marian, chiefly through the guidance of his formators, nevertheless, he bears the ultimate responsibility for his own formation and for persevering in his decision. Conscious of this responsibility, he should actively collaborate with his Novice Master so that he may faithfully respond to the grace of his vocation (cf. CIC 652.3; PI 53; C 162).

The Novice Master

97. The direction and presence of the Novice Master are key factors in a successful novitiate formation. By his words and deeds he serves as a living illustration of Marian life. Through the guidance and instruction of the Novice Master, the novice forms his basic Marian identity. Hence, the confrere chosen to act in this capacity must be well suited for this responsibility. Among the qualities he should possess are: prudence, charity, patience, a lively faith and fidelity in the observance of the Marian life (cf. CIC 650.3, 652.1; C 164).

98. The relationship between the novice and the Novice Master should be open, honest and sincere. To the degree that the novice is able to do this the Novice Master can fulfill his office of guiding and forming him in the Marian way of life. Hence, the Novice Master should strive to create an atmosphere of trust and confidence in the novitiate. His interactions should set a tone of patience, friendliness, and concern for the novice’s well-being. He should also be realistic in his expectations, recalling that the novice is making his first efforts in taking on the values and practices of the Marian life (cf. PI 52; D 153).

Mindful of the responsibility placed in his charge, the Novice Master should strive to ensure that the novice truly adheres to the directives of his formation and to verify his readiness to commit himself to God through the Congregation (cf. D 135).

To enrich the formation of the novices and to find assistance in the fulfillment of his responsibilities, the Novice Master should call on the collaboration of other members of the Congregation or on experts from outside the Congregation. He may also have the ongoing help of a member appointed to act as his assistant by the major Superior (cf. CIC 651.2). However, these collaborators are subject to the Novice Master's in all matters pertaining to the formation of the novices (cf. CIC 651.2; PI 52; D 132-133). In the exercise of his office, the Novice Master is subject only to the authority of the major Superior (cf. CIC 650, 652.1; D 134).

The Community

99. The local community in which the novitiate is conducted plays an important role in the formation of the novices. By warm hospitality and fraternal support it encourages the novice in his commitment and deepens his desire to affiliate himself with the Congregation. Above all, the members of the local community should recall that they have an impact on the formation of the novices through the vitality, joyfulness and fidelity of their life and prayer as Marians (cf. CIC 652.4, PI 53; C 170; D 107).

100. In the fulfillment of his office, the Novice Master should collaborate closely with the local Superior and community. Insofar as is possible, he should try to promote among them an active interest in the novitiate and a willingness to give fraternal encouragement to the novices. The local community, on the other hand, should be prompt to encourage and assist the Novice Master and the novices, but not interfere in their formation program. Any involvement among the novices by a member not associated with the novitiate program should occur only with the knowledge and permission of the Novice Master. Further, any attempt to influence the process of formation without the approval of the Novice Master is unacceptable (cf. CIC 650, 652.1; D 134).

CHAPTER VI

Post-novitiate Formation

NATURE AND OBJECTIVES

101. By “Post-novitiate formation” the Ratio refers to the period from first profession to perpetual profession for religious brothers and from first profession to ordination for clerical candidates. In so far as possible, the directives of the Ratio are intended for both groups without distinction, except for those matters that pertain to preparation for ordained ministry. Thus, in the following, “professed” refers to all those in formation; otherwise, “religious brother” or “seminarian” when the directives apply to the respective group.

102. After first profession the formation of all the newly professed continues so that they might learn to live their Marian vocation with ever-greater maturity, and be able to participate in the Marian mission to ever greater advantage. This stage is a continuation of basic formation. It lasts no less than three years and generally no more than six. If the major Superior, with the consent of his Council, considers it necessary for the formation of a particular religious, he may extend this period to nine years (cf. CIC 655, 657.2; C 177; D 169-170).

103. Every Province must have its own program also for this phase of formation, designed in such a way that it be systematic, adapted to the capacity of the professed and their future ministries; that it be spiritual and apostolic, doctrinal and at the same time practical, and when opportune, results in both ecclesiastical and civil academic degrees. During the time of this formation, the temporary professed are not to be encumbered with duties and jobs that might impede their formation (cf. C 187; D 102, 104, 169-170).

104. An important goal of this phase of formation is that the temporary professed further develop and deepen their knowledge

of the Marian religious life which they received during the novitiate; that they develop and consolidate their ability to follow our way of life; that they be introduced to the various Marian apostolates; and that they attain the human and spiritual maturity required for admission to perpetual profession. The spiritual, communal and apostolic formation received at this time is meant to create a foundation that will last for a lifetime of religious commitment and ministry. In brief, it is intended to form mature, committed Marian religious (cf. PDV 43; C 146-149, 152, 178, 184, 191-192).

THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR FORMATION

The Professed

105. In the formation process the greatest responsibility for formation is borne by the religious himself. Post-novitiate formation calls upon the temporary professed to assume an ever-greater personal initiative in assuming the Marian way of life and in developing his spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral capacity for apostolic and community service in accord with his God-given abilities. This initiative and responsibility are not exercised in isolation, but in relationship to all those who share this same gift of the Marian vocation. The temporary professed, indeed all the professed, are called to grow together in their common consecration and common mission to serve Christ and the Church. Thus, each one, aware of his responsibility to the community, ought to grow not only for himself, but for the good of all (cf. PI 27, 29; D 147, 150-151).

106. The professed religious should continually deepen his interior life and his friendship with Christ through intimate contact with the Lord through the Holy Scriptures and in prayer. He should further assimilate Marian spirituality through personal study (cf. C 192).

107. The professed religious should also deepen his sense of responsibility and his capacity for working in a group. For this purpose, he should use his time so as to obtain the most out of his formation and experience. He should be faithful to prayer, to the fulfillment of his duties, to study and to work. He should willingly undertake household responsibilities, care for the sick and infirm members, and be willing to serve his brothers and the People of God (cf. C 184).

108. The professed religious also deepens his fidelity to Christ and his vocation by reflecting on the realities of life in the light of his philosophical-theological studies, by accepting with humility and firm hope his own limitations, as well as those difficulties that our way of life entails (cf. C 189-190).

109. The professed religious endeavors to enter into personal dialogue with his Superiors and formators, to form a more objective judgment on the good use of his talents, and to assess what he can achieve with them. The Superior/formators in turn should share with him the wisdom of their own experience and study, and instruct him in the principles that will help him to conduct himself correctly at all times, even in the most difficult situations (cf. C 150).

The Formator

110. Each community of professed in formation is entrusted to one perpetually professed member who is responsible for their formation. It is the specific task of this formator, aided by assistants where necessary and by the formation community, to help the temporary professed in their personal and ministerial growth, both by instruction, example, and personal accompaniment. The formator helps the temporary professed to deepen their faith and to reach personal and vocational maturity in all its aspects (cf. D 152-153, 163).

111. The appointment of these formators is the responsibility of the major Superior with the consent of his Council (cf. D 152-153).

112. Conscious of the personal needs and circumstances of each professed religious, the formator should endeavor to create a fraternal environment, one that encourages responsible freedom and dialogue. He should strive to promote a dynamic and creative spirit among those placed in his care, training them in moderation and diligence, giving each of them the opportunity to develop their personal talents, and providing them opportunities to exercise personal responsibility and decision-making (cf. D. 165).

113. The formator should gradually evaluate the maturity of those under his care, paying attention to how they react in different situations. He should see whether they are really acquiring personal stability; good judgment; a firm readiness to comply with God's will; joy in belonging to the Congregation; and an ardent love for the Church and its apostolic works (cf. D 186).

The Formation Community

114. The role of the formation community is to assist the formators in their work. They do this principally by furnishing the young religious with a favorable environment for their continuing formation, that is: by the example of personal lives lived in fidelity to the Marian way of life; by a common life that truly strives to be fraternal and respectful to all the members; by their good humor; by their effort to be tolerant and forgiving of one another; by their enthusiasm for the apostolate; by their dedication to personal and communal prayer; and above all, by their being a community that truly tries to listen to the Lord and follow his will (cf. D 107).

115. During this period of formation, where possible, it is preferable that formation take place in a larger community that is vigorous and that has sufficient resources to provide solid formation and guidance to the professed (cf. PI 60). The desired place for this formation is a Marian seminary or house of studies (cf. D 147-149).

116. If the professed are numerous, it is advisable to divide them into smaller groups, according to criteria drawn up and proposed by the formators, and approved by the major Superior. In this way their formation will be more personal and they will have a greater opportunity to integrate more effectively into the community.

117. Monthly meetings and other community meetings are very important to creating a lifestyle that is truly Marian. At these meetings, each person should have the opportunity to express his opinion, in this way contributing to the upbuilding of the community and the Province, and manifesting his brotherly concern for and solidarity with the others (cf. D. 73).

118. Meetings of the formators from the houses of formation in the Province are recommended, and where possible inter-Pro-

vincial meetings, in order to foster unity and continuity in the formation program (cf. D. 172).

119. Each formation community, even the smallest, ought to have written guidelines that outline their expectations regarding community life and discipline, participation in spiritual exercises and liturgy, etc. These directives should provide a reasonable schedule with community prayer at its center, allowing time for study and recreation; they should also include prudent directives regarding television viewing, movie-going and other forms of entertainment (cf. CIC 666; PI 13; VC 99; C 129; D 4, 79).

CONTENTS

Human and Religious Formation

120. The professed are challenged to a life of integral human growth and development. In particular – through personal interaction with the formator and in interaction with the other community members – the professed continue their human growth and character and faith development. In the spirit of faith, these interactions challenge them to grow in honesty, personal integrity, better communication, intellectual rigor, hard work, tolerance, self-acceptance of one’s strengths and limitations, discipline, humor and enjoyment – and, above all, acceptance of God’s will. The professed ought to have opportunities to exercise personal initiative, responsibility and decision-making in the formation community and in various pastoral experiences. The Constitutions expect increasing maturity of the professed as a precondition for their assuming pastoral responsibility for others and for the Church.

120.1 As a result of the diverse and more intensive experiences that mark this period of formation, there may arise for the professed and his formators questions regarding his psychological and spiritual maturity. To ensure the individual’s readiness for perpetual profession or ordained ministry, these concerns may call for treatment by qualified experts, taking into account the norm of Church law and the Marian Directory (cf. CIC 220; D 106). Such professional accompaniment can be of enormous value in preparing the professed to assume the duties of perpetual profession or ordained ministry. Those responsible for formation should

ensure that those employed as counselors are knowledgeable and supportive of the Church's expectations for candidates to the consecrated life and the priesthood (cf. RF 39). Depending on the gravity of the concerns, the confrere should not be admitted to final profession or to ordained ministry until such issues have been satisfactorily resolved.

121. Sound interpersonal relationships foster a more secure sense of identity and healthy personal development. In addition, a breadth of experience helps individuals to increase their capacity to relate to others. Hence, the professed ought to be given the opportunity to have some additional contact with their peers and with other environments. Not only does this instill confidence and help them develop their skills, such experiences better enable them to discern if the Marian life is the vocation to which God has called them.

122. A restless search for new experiences and a desire for novelty are to be avoided. Each temporary professed should be led to examine his life and conduct in the light of prayer, spiritual direction and personal reflection in order to make a final confirmation of his choice of the Marian vocation.

123. The vacation period of our professed should be organized by their formators in consultation with the Provincial and his Council according to the customs and traditions of each Province. They should use this time to full advantage not only to get a deserved break and to visit their family, but also to engage in other experiences of formative value; for example, apostolic and missionary experiences or for further studies (cf. C 191; D 159).

124. A genuinely fraternal life is an invaluable support and inducement to emotional maturity and prepares the way for a life of consecrated chastity. Consequently, the formators should offer opportunities and encourage frequent fraternal encounters and fellowship in the formation community.

Spiritual Formation

125. Post-novitiate spiritual formation is meant to be a process of continuing conversion of the minds and hearts of the professed. It is centered on the Paschal mystery of Christ, reflected in the liturgy,

tradition and life of the Church, and in the traditions and charism of the Marian Congregation. This Mystery must shape and direct the rhythm and progress of the formation process in all its particulars. Thus, the community in which this formation occurs must be, above all, a community of prayer. The daily Eucharist, the focal point of the Church's life, the Liturgy of the Hours, the sacrament of Penance, community prayer and other opportunities for prayer, form the professed into a community of prayer, and create an environment for this conversion and formation (cf. NV II, 1; PC 6; C 65, 75, 76, 192).

126. Fidelity to the rhythm and demands of the spiritual life should be a characteristic feature of the period spent in the formation community. Suitable means to renew and strengthen the spiritual life are: faithfulness to both personal and communal prayer; meditation; reading of the Scriptures and spiritual reading every day; cultivation of personal devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the daily recitation of the Rosary; regular confession and spiritual direction; the monthly day of recollection; and the annual retreat. (cf. C 68, 70, 75, 76; D 29, 37, 39).

127. The professed should continue their studies in the theory and practice of the different schools of spirituality and in different forms of prayer, which will not only help them to appropriate the richness of the Christian tradition, but serve as a practical foundation for their future personal growth in the spiritual life (cf. C 192; D 74). In this study, special place should be given to the theory and practice of meditation and prayer as proposed in the writings of our Founder and Renovator (e.g., *Templum Dei Mysticum*, Instructions V).

128. Participation by the professed in ecclesiastical movements ought to be undertaken only in dialogue with their formators. Formators should help the professed to evaluate and integrate this experience with their Marian formation, so that the spirituality of these movements harmonizes with the Marian vocation and does not displace the Marian identity that the Congregation seeks to impart (cf. PI 92-93; CNUCA 62).

129. Every professed should have a spiritual director whose task is to assist him in the path of personal conversion and spiritual maturity leading toward final profession possible ordination.

130. To profit from this powerful opportunity for growth the professed should strive to be as honest and transparent as possible with the spiritual director. Spiritual direction should occur on a regular basis, at least once a month (cf. C 71; D 154). In at least the major houses of studies, the major Superior, with the consent of his Council, should appoint a priest confrere as spiritual director who is responsible for spiritual formation and is available to the professed for private spiritual direction (cf. D 154).

131. Although individual spiritual growth is unique, nonetheless the broad dynamics of growth are similar for all. Consequently, spiritual directors are encouraged to meet on a regular basis with formators to speak about their methods, which ought to be complementary. In general, advice given in the internal forum ought to be in harmony with the public directives and policies of the formation community, thereby more effectively encouraging the personal and spiritual growth of the professed.

Intellectual Formation

132. Intellectual formation is a principle task of this stage of formation, to which the professed should give a constant and personal commitment. Appropriate knowledge is indispensable to the effectiveness of every pastoral responsibility they will undertake in the future.

133. Study helps the professed to live the religious life more intensely, both as a consecration to God and as a service to the Church. Broad knowledge and understanding will support their faith. They study in order to translate and incarnate the Catholic faith and our Marian charism into the various apostolates and environments in which they will serve. Properly integrated knowledge with faith will help them avoid both extremes – rationalism and anti-intellectualism.

134. Each Province must have its own program of studies outlining the academic requirements necessary for this stage of formation. In elaborating this program, the Province must also take into account the cultural context of the professed and their future ministry, the spiritual and theological heritage of the Congregation (and the Province in particular), the maturity of the professed, and their particular academic needs. In matters pertaining to philosophical and theological education, particularly of those aspiring to ordained ministry, the Province must conform itself to

the directives of the universal law and of the local Episcopal Conference (cf. CIC 242-243; C 187).

135. In Provinces that operate their own educational institutions, this program must detail the overall curriculum of philosophical and theological studies (i.e., its strategies and objectives); the program for the disciplines in each year; the calendar for courses and vacation; the number of hours assigned to each discipline; the organization of various pedagogic activities (e.g., conferences, seminars, etc.); and the manner of religious supervision (cf. CIC 242-243; C 187; D 147-149, 151).

136. In Provinces where study is undertaken in non-Marian institutions, the program of studies must also include the supplementary courses necessary to satisfy the requirements for ordained ministry and must detail the manner in which the professed will be introduced into the theological and spiritual traditions of the Congregation (e.g., supplementary academic courses in Mariology, courses or conferences on topics relating to the Marian charism and history) (cf. D 148, 151, 158).

Pastoral Formation

137. Participation in apostolic mission is at the very heart of the Congregation's identity. Each of the professed ought to be prepared for a life of intensive pastoral engagement, directing their efforts where they hope to achieve more for God's glory, the welfare of the Church, and especially, where the need is greater and more urgent (cf. Instr. I: 18, 22, 25; C 116, 191; D 158). For this purpose, apart from an adequate and active sharing in some pastoral work, it is necessary to acquire an ecclesial spirit – that is, to be animated by the spirit of the Church, to love the Church ardently, to live its life, to rejoice at its achievements and grieve with it in its trials and sufferings, and to neglect nothing that can in any way help the Church to prosper and spread (cf. Instr. I: 23).

138. The apostolate is born of the need to share one's faith and the values of the Christian life with other people. Following the Renovator's example, each of the members must realize that their apostolic witness will be effective only to the degree that they allow themselves to be filled by the Spirit of Christ (cf. Instr. I, 24; C 144), make every effort that others may come to know Christ, strive to renew all things in Christ, and

labor to this end – that all things be imbued with the Spirit of Christ. Central to this apostolic spirit is the realization that a Marian must be an evangelizer that first allows himself to be evangelized by attentively listening to the Lord in prayer and in meditation on the Word of God – as did Mary, the perfect disciple of the Lord, who was the first to be evangelized by the Good News (cf. Lk. 1:28-38) and the first to evangelize (cf. Lk. 1:39-56).

139. An adequate preparation for service to the Church presumes a spiritual, cultural, social and practical formation. This includes training for meetings, for dialogue, and for the evaluation and correct use of the means offered by modern technology (cf. C 149, 152; D 10, 158).

140. The professed should be given practical knowledge of the life and needs of the Church and the society, and of the Congregation in their various aspects and ramifications. They are to enter gradually into the different fields of their pastoral work. This pastoral preparation should be intensified after perpetual profession, and as the time of ordination to the diaconate and priesthood draws near. To preserve the professed's spiritual and community life, this pastoral work should normally preclude leadership positions that might be overly burdensome (cf. C 149, 191).

141. As far as possible, this pastoral experience should be made in a Marian environment and under Marian supervision. This will not only serve as an introduction to the actual apostolates carried out in the Province (or Vicariate, etc.), but will also be helpful in assessing their pastoral capabilities and the degree to which the professed on this level of formation have benefitted from their pastoral experience (cf. D 158-161).

It pertains to the formators to explore concrete ways and methods for each and all of these professed to develop their gifts and talents (cf. C 149, 186; D 158).

142. Ecclesial movements exercise an important influence in the life and mission of the contemporary Church. The Congregation often finds itself involved in ministering to members of these movements or collaborating with them in service to the wider Church. Thus, during their pastoral formation, as much as possible, the professed should be acquainted with these movements that are approved by the Church, and should be formed in the skills that will help him to minister effectively to them and with them. In this formation, emphasis should be given to the

ecclesial movements that are represented in Marian pastoral settings (cf. PI 92-93; CNUCA 62; VC 56; RDC 30).

143. In accordance with the Constitutions, the Provincial Council can provide, as it sees fit and necessary, for a certain interruption of studies for priestly candidates so that they might be able to dedicate themselves to specific apostolic activities. Besides contributing to a more intense introduction to the pastoral ministry, this can be a suitable measure in helping them to gain human and religious maturity. In such cases, the Provincial Council should appoint a particular religious to supervise those who are engaged in such pastoral experiences (cf. D 159).

FORMATION OF RELIGIOUS BROTHERS

144. Brothers are to receive a doctrinal formation and continue to study all that pertains to religious and Marian life. This education should begin with the concept of baptismal consecration, and proceed to an appropriate theological reflection illustrating the Marian mission in the Church. In this way the Brothers will gradually acquire a more vivid and complete understanding of their Marian vocation, the theology and spirituality of religious brotherhood and will offer a more effective service to the Church and to the Congregation (cf. C 195; D 169).

145. The Provincial Prefect of Formation and the local formators should see to it that the formation of the brothers is complemented with studies which, in the judgment of the Provincial and his Council, are necessary for a complete Marian religious formation, such as: Mariology; Spiritual Theology; Theology of the Consecrated life; Biblical and Liturgical Theology; and continuing studies in the spirituality of the Founder, Renovator and the Renovated Marian Congregation. These disciplines must always be included in the program of studies of the professed (cf. D 103,169).

146. In the first three years after first profession, the young religious brothers are to reside in a house of formation in order that they might receive a suitable professional and apostolic religious formation. As the Renovator noted, "it is better to protract the period of formation and education of a member than it is to send him unprepared and unskilled into the center of activity..." (cf. Instr. I: 30; D 169).

147. In addition to the topics noted above, the brothers should also be offered concrete opportunities for acquiring an adequate technical and professional training, on the college level, in keeping with their talents and abilities. “The Congregation should do its utmost, sparing neither expense nor effort, to provide itself with suitable men and prepare them especially spiritually, by training and instructing them in the way of perfection; and by diligently preparing them to do their best at the occupations that they will assume, to such an extent that they might become skilled and, if possible, expert” (cf. Instr. I: 29).

It is well to bear in mind that the professional training of a consecrated person has a truly apostolic scope and will provide a genuine service to the Congregation and to the Church (cf. C 194).

148. The Provincial Superior, after having consulted the formation community, may admit to the ministries of Acolyte or Reader, those religious brothers who have requested these ministries and have been judged adequately prepared and suitable for these roles of service (cf. C 149; Appendix II).

CANDIDATES FOR THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

149. Religious called to ordained ministry are to be given suitable instruction on the nature of these ministries and on the place they hold in the Church. They will be taught how the religious and priestly vocations coalesce in the one person to make him a man of God, available for God’s plans and dedicated to the things of God, the Church and his brothers and sisters. They must be encouraged to make a conscientious preparation for their ministry (cf. PI 108; C 184, 192-193).

150. The liturgical life is a privileged means for bringing to maturity a vocation to the priesthood and of acquiring a growing personal appreciation for it (cf. C 146).

151. Other means of effectively promoting priestly formation are the experience gained in pastoral activities and the cultivation of priestly spirituality, in accordance with the teaching contained in the documents of the Church.

152. Before beginning formal ecclesiastical studies, religious will complete the studies which would be required for entry to a university in that country, obtaining the corresponding civil diploma. If their knowledge of Latin is inadequate for philosophical and theological studies, steps should be taken to remedy this deficiency (cf. OT 13; RF 65-66; CIC 249; C 185, 188; D 157).

153. No matter where the philosophical and theological studies are done, whether in Marian institutes or elsewhere, the directives of canon law are to be closely followed, as well as the directives of the Congregation (cf. C 185; D 147-148). Likewise, the directives established by the local Episcopal Conference are to be faithfully applied (cf. C 187). The Provincial Prefect of Formation and the local formators should be attentive to these standards and be vigilant in seeing that they are faithfully followed (cf. C 187, 193; D 102-103).

154. When these studies are done outside Marian institutes, the Provincial Prefect of Formation and the local formators should see to it that they are complemented with studies which, in the judgment of the Provincial and his Council, are necessary for a complete Marian religious formation, such as: Mariology; Spiritual Theology; Theology of the Consecrated life; Biblical and Liturgical Theology; and continuing studies in the spirituality of the Founder, Renovator and the Renovated Marian Congregation. These disciplines must always be included in the program of studies for ordained ministries (cf. C 184-185, 187; D 103).

155. Preparation for the ordained ministries is not limited to a course of theology. In conformity with the norms of canon law and those of our Congregation, the candidates for ordination are obliged to devote themselves for a year to the theory and practice of Pastoral Theology. This period should give special attention to the subjects which are more in harmony with the spirit and apostolic focus of the Congregation (cf. OT 12; RF 97, 98, 101; CIC 255-256, 258; PDV 58; C 191; D 160, 162).

156. In accordance with universal law, the Provincial, having sought the opinion of the formation community, admits to the ministries of Reader and Acolyte the professed who have made the appropriate petition and are found suitable (cf. D 167; Appendix II).

157. It is the major Superior's right, after consultation with the formation community, and with the consent of his Council, to admit a professed religious to the diaconate and to the priesthood only after the professed religious has made perpetual profession and after having completed the requisite studies (cf. CIC 1019.1; D 167, 278.3).

158. Before ordination to the priesthood, the prospective candidate must exercise the diaconal office for a suitable period of time (cf. CIC 1031 §1). The Provincials and their Councils may establish a time period for their respective provinces (cf. CIC 1031 §1; D 160).

159. The Directory also provides for the possibility of promoting to the permanent diaconate those religious who meet the requirements of the Church and who are adequately prepared for it (cf. D160). Similarly, there is the possibility of admitting to the ordained ministry those who have made profession as religious Brothers, provided that they satisfy the requirements of universal law and the Congregation.

160. After ordination to the priesthood, a newly ordained priest must not be placed in a full-time pastoral work without some assistance or supervision. In addition, his Superiors should be mindful not to too quickly commit the newly ordained priest to numerous pastoral obligations until he has had the opportunity to adjust to his new ministerial responsibilities (cf. C. 191; D 162).

CHAPTER VII

Ongoing Formation

NATURE AND PURPOSE

161. Ongoing formation flows from the very nature of the religious vocation, which is the initiative of God, who calls each one, at every moment and in new circumstances (cf. PI 67; VC 69). “To follow Christ,” then, means that consecrated religious are always on the road, that they have not yet reached their destination (cf. PI 67). The seeds of ongoing formation are planted during initial formation when young Marians are gradually lead and encouraged to take ever greater personal responsibility and initiative for their own formation (cf. VC 65-66; RDC 15). Ongoing formation is a continuous process of transformation in Christ, of interiorization and assimilation of Evangelical values. Thus, to deepen the quality and fruitfulness of the apostolic religious life Marians are required to continue their formation throughout their lives.

CONTENT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ONGOING FORMATION

162. Ongoing formation is a comprehensive process of renewal that extends to every aspect of life of both the individual Marian and the Congregation itself (cf. PI 68). Whereas initial formation aims at helping to develop an autonomy sufficient for faithfully living the Marian commitment, ongoing formation assists in integrating creativity within fidelity (cf. PI 67).

163. Ongoing formation calls for the capacity to learn from life. The pluralism and rapidity of change in the societies in which Marians live, give rise to questions that often challenge professed faith and values. If Marian religious witness is to be credible and the mission effective, Marians must respond appropriately to the changing circumstances.

164. Ongoing formation comprises the following (cf. VC 71):

164.1 First and foremost, it is a contemplation of the face of Christ and a life according to the Holy Spirit. This calls for a special attention to the voice of the Spirit speaking through the signs of the times, through the personal history of the members and in the hopes and anxieties of others. Prayer, Eucharist, retreats, spiritual direction and other forms of spiritual renewal are to be given priority in this process of renewal (cf. PI 67; RDC 23, 25).

164.2 It requires further development of the human and fraternal dimension of the consecrated life, based on deepening self-knowledge and self-awareness (cf. VC 71).

164.3 It requires of each member and of each community fidelity to the Marian charism, by deepening understanding of the spirit of the Founder and Renovator, and of the Congregation's history, its spirit, and its mission, both personally and together in community (cf. PI 68).

164.4 It invites each Marian to an ever deeper participation in the life of the Church and in the work of evangelization according to the charism of the Congregation (cf. PI 68).

164.5 It calls for a doctrinal and professional updating, which includes a deepening of biblical and theological knowledge; a study of the teaching of the universal and local Church; a better knowledge of the local culture in which the Marian lives and works; and as necessary, new professional and technical training (cf. PI 68; C 10, 199).

THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR ONGOING FORMATION

165. The primary person responsible for ongoing formation is the *individual Marian* himself. This renewal is only possible and effective to the extent that each Marian assumes personal responsibility for updating himself in all that pertains to the religious and apostolic life. This responsibility is undertaken in the context of the local community under the direction and guidance of the local Superior (cf. C 196, 199; RDC 15).

166. In order to create a climate that encourages and supports ongoing formation, both *regional* (i.e., Provinces, Vice-Provinces, Vicariates) and *local communities*, under their Superiors, should undertake this renewal in a systematic way. It is important that each community prepare in advance an annual plan that takes into account both individual and common needs, and which determines what will be given priority in the ongoing formation for the upcoming year.

167. *Superiors*, by means of their personal example, actions and attitudes, also give witness to the importance of ongoing formation. If they themselves are convinced of its importance and are active in attending to their own formation, they will lead their confreres to this same conviction. They should count first among their priorities the religious, pastoral and spiritual animation of their confreres (cf. C 78, 196, 223). Superiors should also ensure that their confreres have sufficient time and opportunity for ongoing formation.

168. Each *major Superior* should do all in his power to promote the ongoing formation of the members entrusted to his care. It is his particular duty to ensure that perpetually professed members, every five years after their final profession, have sufficient time for spiritual renewal apart from their other responsibilities, according to local Statutes. The major Superior oversees the organization of the Quinquennalia in consultation with the Council (cf. C 198).

169. Under the guidance of the major Superior and the Council, the *Provincial Prefect of Formation* is responsible for organizing the ongoing formation of the Province (Vice Province, etc.). When possible, he should also encourage province-wide and inter-provincial meetings devoted to ongoing formation (cf. D 172). He is assisted in this task by the Provincial Committee of Formation.

170. It is the responsibility of the *General Prefect of Formation* to help the members of the Congregation be aware of the need for ongoing formation, by suggesting ideas and projects, by promoting meetings on the general and inter-provincial level, and by fostering the exchange of qualified personnel and of other resources among the different Provinces (Vice Province, etc.).

170.1 To strengthen and facilitate the work of the General Prefect of Formation, and to ensure closer coordination with the general government, it is strongly recommended that the General Prefect be chosen from among the General Councillors.

TIMES OF FORMATION

171. Every moment in life can be an opportune moment for ongoing formation. Nonetheless, certain situations call for special attention (cf. PI 70; VC 70):

171.1 The transition to a full-time apostolic assignment;

171.2 Several years after perpetual profession, when religious life and ministry run the risk of becoming “routine,” leading to a lessening of zeal and the temptation to displace common life with personal interests and goals;

171.3 At times of crisis, such as: a change of work; experiences of failure, alienation, illness, spiritual aridity or strong temptations; in crises of faith;

171.4 Moments of weariness in apostolic work or upon the return to life in common after a lengthy absence due to illness or pastoral demands.

171.5 Old age and illness pose a special challenge and gift to community life. They call religious to witness to the truth that the consecrated life and its value are not tied to efficiency in duties or to what has been achieved in apostolic work. The confreres should be cherished and supported in every situation – particularly when the time comes that they must reduce their active participation in the Congregations’s life and work. At these moments of reduced activity, they can live these experiences as an opportunity to enter more deeply into the Paschal experience of the Lord, making their own the words of St. Paul: “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead” (cf. Phil. 3:10; PI 70; C 96; D 64-65). The elder and infirm confreres also possess a practical wisdom and insight drawn from their life experience which

can enrich the community. They can be of particular service by sharing this wisdom and experience with others by their readiness to serve as spiritual directors, confessors or mentors in prayer (cf. VC 44).

RESOURCES AND MEANS

172. The community has the responsibility to place at the disposal of the confreres those means necessary for their ongoing formation. Some of these means are the following: quinquennial renewals (cf. C 198); retreats (cf. C 76; D 37); sabbaticals; pilgrimages; spiritual direction (cf. C 71); prayer groups; therapy or support groups; symposia; conferences; updated libraries (cf. D 173); access to courses in Marian, theological and professional updating, etc. In addition, given the needs that can arise as a result of human growth, the community should organize programs that inform the confreres on such matters as alcohol or drug dependency, mid-life crisis, old age, etc.

173. The community should make provision for regular meetings of all the members (at least monthly), in which they discuss matters pertaining to developments in the Church and society, to issues in theology, liturgy and other fields of knowledge, and to ways by which the community can introduce useful changes into its own life (cf. C 258; D 171). In cases where it is very difficult or impossible to meet once a month, local communities should strive to meet as often as possible or make some other provision to meet these needs.

174. Various Marian centers and organizations of an inter-Provincial nature could also be established which offer courses open to all the confreres (e.g., the Marian Historical Institute).

175. Communication is essential to learning. One form of ongoing communication is a Provincial newsletter which informs the members of the programs, institutes, and workshops that are available for their participation. A newsletter can also be an opportunity for members to share some of their experiences and reflections in articles that they themselves write. If a separate newsletter is impractical, news and events related to ongoing formation could be incorporated into an already existing Provincial newsletter, or be included as part of regular communication from the Provincial administration.

176. When the size of a Marian community means that its own resources for ongoing formation are few, it should look to the local diocese. Local communities should keep themselves informed of what is available to them through diocesan ongoing formation programs and utilize these resources.

177. Almost every civic community, even the smallest, can provide some resources profitable for ongoing formation. Patronizing local libraries, museums and concert halls, etc., can help members grow in their appreciation of the arts, music, poetry and the sciences. While these subjects might sometimes be viewed as unrelated to ministry, they help broaden the members' mental and spiritual horizons and bring them into contact with a wider variety of people, with whom they might not otherwise have contact through their ministry. In addition, local institutes of higher learning usually offer a number of programs, events or activities that can be helpful to the members' intellectual and professional updating.

REGARDING METHODOLOGY

178. The unique circumstances and needs of adult life call for a special attention to methodology in ongoing formation: adults learn best when formation builds on their experiences and needs. This does not mean that theoretical instruction is not useful or appreciated, but that it is best received and integrated when it is related to the concrete life and experience of the members. It is also important to recall that the members in ongoing formation have achieved a certain hard-won wisdom, based on their successes and failures in the religious life and in the apostolate. Ongoing formation will receive a more prompt and receptive hearing when it is conducted with respect and appreciation for this practical wisdom.

ASSESSMENT

179. During ongoing formation, the structures of accountability in the common life should be taken seriously and adhered to with diligence (e.g, General and Provincial visitations, regular interviews with the local Superior, fraternal correction, examination of conscience).

APPENDIX I

The Criteria for Accompaniment and Evaluation at the Various Stages of Basic Formation

The criteria proposed below come from the experience of our Congregation's formators. Rather than an exhaustive list of requirements to be followed, they are points of reflection to guide both the persons in formation and their formators. They are intended to assist in the periodic evaluation process and, in particular, help formators in the composition of the written opinions that must be submitted to major Superiors.

Obviously, the criteria presented here do not need to be present to the highest degree, but it is important that they be present at a sufficient level and grow in the course of formation.

I. THE CRITERIA RELATED TO POSTULANCY ACCOMPANIMENT AND EVALUATION

Human maturity

1. The desire and real process of progress in personal, Christian, religious development.
2. The candidate's consciousness of self: The knowledge and acceptance of personal limitations and the willingness to overcome them with the help of God's grace; the knowledge of personal talents and qualities, and the desire to share them and use them in the service of the community; the postulant aspiring to the novitiate should in some measure be reconciled with his own past and with the persons who have had an influence on his life (e.g., relationship to his father and mother).
3. The ability to make decisions, particularly lifetime commitments; the courage and consistency to live according to the consequences of his own choices.
4. The ability to express and defend his personal opinion; openness to the opinions of others.

5. Industrious, a sense of duty and the inclination to set things in order; initiative in work- physical, intellectual, pastoral (within the framework of the postulancy); self-reliance and responsibility in thinking and acting (e.g., the ability of self-discipline in the absence of the Moderator).
6. Sufficient intellectual capacity: in candidates to the priesthood - for university studies; in candidates to the brotherhood - to complete a secondary education.
7. The ability both to live in solitude and in community; the capacity to enter into mature, sincere and cordial relations and to cultivate them; the acceptance of one's own sexuality (before the moment of submitting the request for acceptance to the novitiate, the postulant should resolve the problem of any emotional relationship with a girl, if such a problem was present during the process of postulancy formation).
8. Responsibility for others, especially for the weakest; the ability to learn and accept help from others; the capacity for cooperation.
9. Sincerity and openness to dialogue and to relate to the person of the Moderator.
10. The capacity to bear with difficult situations in the community.

Spiritual maturity

1. A deep experience of the truth that one is always loved by God and the certainty that one is able to love for ever; being fascinated by the person of Jesus.
2. A sound piety based on the word of God, the sacraments and the teaching of the Church, having an influence on the whole of the postulant's life (e.g., without fanaticism or an exaggerated sentimentality, not separated from life, not concentrated solely on private revelations).
3. Attraction for a life of prayer; capacity to be silent and to dwell in silence; ability to profit from spiritual direction and from the sacrament of reconciliation; fruitful reception of the Eucharist.
4. The conviction of being loved by God and called by Jesus to live exclusively for Him; gratitude for having received the gift of a religious vocation; the motivation from faith in the description of one's vocation.
5. The desire to imitate Jesus in chastity, poverty and obedience.
6. Interest in the charism, history, and Fathers of our Congregation.
7. Engaged in the process of vocational discernment; a feeling of belonging to our Congregation; a desire to remain in the Congregation and to act in it for Christ and the Church.

II. THE CRITERIA RELATED TO ADMISSION TO FIRST PROFESSION OF VOWS

1. The novice's personal data, life history and vocation:
 - "Vital Statistics": family information; academic achievements; work experience (the profession); acquaintances; duties; manner of recreating; hobbies; health status (e.g., significant past illnesses and present status);
 - Experience in the postulancy and the novitiate and the individual's evaluation of his experience/performance; what the novice considers the most important, most difficult, experiences in the postulancy and novitiate;
 - The novice's degree of human and Christian maturity (in reference to the criteria noted above for the postulancy evaluation).

2. Appropriation of the life of the novitiate and of the Congregation:
 - Does the novice feel that the novitiate with its expectations and challenges (e.g., regulations, common life, dependence/accountability to the Novice Master), and the life of the Congregation are his proper place?
 - What is his motivation to be a religious in the Congregation of Marian Fathers?
 - Is the novice a candidate for the priesthood or the brotherhood - and how does he justify his choice?
 - How does he "find himself" in the history, charism and apostolate conducted today by the Congregation?

3. The place of prayer in the novice's life:
 - How does the novice respond to the different experiences of prayer (e.g., its difficulties and joys)?
 - What does he share having in mind prayer?
 - Does he unite prayer with his daily life?
 - How much does God enter into the motivation of his daily life?
 - What is the place of Mary in the life of the novice?

4. Manner of work and study:
 - With what attitude does he approach work – both those tasks that he has chosen for himself and those he has been assigned (e.g., with diligence and commitment, with interest, with initiative, or in a passive, reluctant or lazy way)?

- How does he participate in common occupations and in individual responsibilities (e.g., private study, cleaning, *services*, assigned readings)?
5. Personal growth:
- Does the novice demonstrate sufficient knowledge of himself: of his good points and vices; of the most important weaknesses that he needs to change or develop?
 - Is there any significant or more serious personal issue that would require a longer period of formation?
 - What is the novice's progress in personal growth (in his own estimation and in that of the Novice Master)?
 - Is he open to the help of others?
 - Is he able to learn from life experiences?
6. The vowed life:
- To what degree does the life in vows lead the novice to greater intimacy with Jesus and to a more complete giving himself to God and neighbor?
 - To what degree is his living of the vows motivated by love of God?

The vow of chastity: Has the novice made, and to what degree, a conscious choice for celibacy and vowed chastity in view of Christ? Does he feel that solitude and friendship with Jesus are the things that suit him? To what degree is he conscious of his sexuality, enjoys it and is able to direct it? In what way does he relate to men and women?

The vow of poverty: How is he transparent in possessing and using material goods? Does he use them competently and carefully? How is he opening to the needs of others and sharing his goods, talents, and free time? Is he at the disposal of others? Is he honest (with regard to things, work, study, *accountings*)?

The vow of obedience: Is his obedience active and responsible? Or is it, for example, only a passive execution of the superior's commands in order to endear himself to the Superiors? Is the novice transparent towards his Superiors? Does he put himself at the disposal of the Superiors and is he ready to give up his own plans? Is he inclined to submit himself confidently to the will of God and the decisions of the Superiors?

7. Life in community:
- How does he feel in the community and what does he contribute to it?
 - What kind of relations does he enter into both inside and outside of the community?
 - How does he participate in and create the common life?
 - Is he ready to sacrifice his time, forces and plans for the good of the community and of its particular members?
 - Does he open himself and come into contact with all members of the community (or rather, does he form small, closed groups of 'mutual adoration')?
 - How is he seen by the community? (Of great help in determining this can be the so-called 'fraternal meetings,' during which the brothers express towards each other their judgment and feelings – pleasant and unpleasant – as well as certain suggestions regarding self-development for the future)?

III. THE CRITERIA RELATED TO EVALUATION FOR ADMISSION TO RENEWAL OF VOWS AND TO PERPETUAL VOWS

- A. After taking into consideration the criteria given for postulants and novices, there are additional questions that it is worthwhile to address with the professed member seeking admission to renewal of vows or perpetual profession:
1. To what degree does the professed direct himself in daily life by faith and supernatural motivation? What place do faith and prayer (both personal and common) have in his life?
 2. What progress has the confrere demonstrated in personal maturity – human, intellectual, spiritual, pastoral, communal, Marian?
 3. Is he demonstrating progress in the realm of affective maturity and in interpersonal relationships (e.g., his relations with men and women)?
 4. How does he cope with crisis and difficulties (e.g., with himself, with study, with finding himself rejected, ...)? What progress is he demonstrating in growth in his vocation in the Congregation (e.g., eventual breakdowns, crisis, doubts,...)?
 5. Does he live by the vows every day according to the charism and law of our Congregation? Does this life bring him joy and satisfaction?
 6. Does he treat the Congregation as his own, as his 'place' in life and as the place for his self-offering to God? Does he want to offer himself or

does he live only in relation to expectations and demands of others? Is he ready to surrender himself and to renounce his plans for the good of the Church and the Congregation, or is he insistent on the realization of his own talents and plans?

7. How does he engage himself in pastoral works? What initiative does he show in this field; what inventiveness, constancy, discipline? Does the pastoral ministry bring him joy and is it an integral part of his whole Christian and religious life?

B. A confrere should not be allowed to make perpetual profession who:

- as a temporary professed has seriously transgressed one of the vows (e.g., has used money or material goods without the consent of the Superiors; has broken the provisions of the Superiors and commonly contests their decisions);
- exhibits a serious sexual disorder; or has serious doubts or a weak sense of the vow of chastity;
- is not able to reconcile proper initiative with responsible obedience; shows marked passiveness and lack of initiative or is excessively active at the cost of prayer and religious life; or one who demonstrates a need to act unceasingly (with or without the consent of the Superiors);
- shows an unhealthy tendency to luxury or to looking for ease and comfort or for personal security; is excessively given to and attached to new technical means (e.g., more as instruments of entertainment than evangelization);
- consistently demonstrates lack of interest in the community and in the needy; manipulates people; is not sincere; constantly considers himself the 'center of the world'; displays such attitudes as: "all must obey me," "I do not tolerate opposition or a different opinion," "I never make a mistake," "I am the best at doing everything," "the other is always guilty," "I have a recipe for life for everybody," "nobody has the right to criticize me," etc.; one who holds grudges and excludes the possibility of reconciliation;
- is attracted to or cultivates odd, excessive or unhealthy devotions: e.g., rejects the kinds of devotion that are accepted by the Church in favor of those that are not approved; is attached to private revelations that are not recognized or are even rejected by the Church; accepts or promotes trends that are tainted by occultism, magic, New Age, Buddhism, etc.; is given to excessive fasting, which is detrimental to the body, or to fasts that are not approved by the Superiors; treats any particular movement or devotion of the Church (e.g., the Neocatechumenate, the Renewal in

the Holy Spirit, rosary circles) as primary and necessary for all; one who forces others to accept their own forms of devotion,...

- questions the teaching of the Church;
- does not esteem for themselves the values of religious life, or its ends or means;
- constantly shows that he feels ill in the Congregation (e.g., persecuted, deceived, not esteemed enough, etc.); does not show interest in today's life and committals of the Congregation.

IV. THE CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION TO ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE AND THE PRIESTHOOD

1. Faith and the consequences flowing from it:
 - How does he accept the decisions of the Superiors?
 - Does he read his own life history and that of others in the light of faith?
 - Does he accept his own history and does he see it as a place of God's action?
 - Has he pardoned those who have hurt him or done him injury in the past and present?
2. Sound piety and a life permeated by prayer
3. A life according to the word of God and nurtured by the sacraments:
 - Does he live each day by the light of the liturgy and does he cherish the Liturgy?
 - How does he prepare himself for the Eucharist? How does he experience It? What is its influence on his life?
 - Does he avail himself of the sacrament of penance and of spiritual direction?
 - Is he reconciled with everybody or does he hold grudges for real/imagined injuries?
4. Ability to enter into mature relations within the community and outside of it;
5. Openness and friendliness towards people and the surrounding world; responsibility and concern for others:
 - Is he magnanimous towards people and ready sacrifice for them?

- Is he open to everyone or does he beforehand condemn some or refuse to enter certain fields of pastoral activity?
6. Humility and the readiness to learn, to listen:
 - It is not only a question of studies, but chiefly of his approach to life – Does he act omniscient or omnipotent towards people? Is he arrogant or dismissive of others?
 - How much does he draw from the wisdom and experience of others?
 - Is he able to correct his own actions and convictions?
 7. The intellectual fitness:
 - Has he gained a sufficient degree of knowledge about the doctrine of the Catholic Church?
 - Is he able to teach it?
 - Does he care enough about self-education?
 - Has he obtained the required academic degree before the ordination?
 8. The desire and ability of proclaiming the Gospel:
 - Does he live inspired by the word of God and is he zealous in transmitting it?
 9. Openness to the today's Church in the form of the renewal communities and his attitude towards the traditional forms:
 - Is he ready to proclaim Christ in every manner, for each person, in every movement and community (e.g., is the confrere ready to work with the new movements or only according to the 'traditional' means of pastoral care)?
 - In what way does he exhibit love towards the Church – the Mystical Body of Christ – and reverence for the hierarchy of the Church?
 - How does he obey the teaching of the Church with regard to doctrine and practice (e.g., does he introduce or follow novelties? Is he capricious in his teaching and pastoral practice)?
 10. Rootedness in the Congregation:
 - To what degree does he recognize the Congregation as his own?
 - In what way does he take interest in the history, charism and life of the Congregation?
 - How does he respond to the challenges confronting the Congregation?

APPENDIX II

Procedures and Requisites for Admission to the different phases of Formation, the Ministries and to Orders

I. PROCEDURE AND REQUISITES FOR ADMISSION TO THE POSTULANCY

1. Admission to the postulancy:
 - The candidate must submit a written request in which he explicitly states his free, knowing and deliberate will to be admitted to the postulancy;
 - The request must be accompanied by the evaluation of the Vocation Director;
 - Together with this evaluation should be included documentation about his family history, academic record, work history, medical evaluation, letters of recommendation from his pastor and other knowledgeable persons, and church records (e.g., baptism and confirmation certificates). In addition, the Province may require additional proofs to document the candidate's suitability and freedom from any impediment, such as a psychological evaluation or background security check (cf. CIC 645 §3-§4);
 - The candidate must be free of juridical impediments (cf. CIC 643 §1; C 158, 161.2);
 - The candidate must be admitted by the legitimate Superior (cf. CIC 641, C 156);
 - The major Superior admits a candidate to the postulancy with the consultative vote of his council (cf. C 156).

2. Juridical impediments and requisites:

At the time of admission to postulancy, those responsible for admissions should ensure that the candidates conform to the requirements of Canons 643-645.

- “The following are invalidly admitted to the novitiate (CIC 643 §1):
 - one who has not yet completed the seventeenth year of age;
 - a spouse, while the marriage lasts;
 - one who is currently bound by a sacred bond to some institute of consecrated life
 - or is incorporated in some society of apostolic life, without prejudice to can. 684;
 - one who enters the institute through force, fear or deceit, or whom the Superior accepts under the same influences;
 - one who has concealed his or her incorporation in an institute of consecrated life or society of apostolic life.”
- “Superiors are not to admit secular clerics to the novitiate without consulting their proper Ordinary; nor those who have debts which they are unable to meet” (CIC 644).
- “Before candidates are admitted to the novitiate they must produce proof of baptism and confirmation, and of their free status” (CIC 645 §1).
- “Clerics or others who had been admitted to another institute of consecrated life, to a society of apostolic life, or to a seminary, require in addition the testimony of, respectively, the local Ordinary, or the major Superior of the institute or society, or the rector of the seminary” (cf. CIC 645 §2).
- “An institute's own law can demand further proofs concerning the suitability of candidates and their freedom from any impediment” (CIC 645§3).
- “The Superiors can seek other information, even under secrecy, if this seems necessary to them” (CIC 645 §4).

II. PROCEDURE AND REQUISITES FOR ADMISSION TO THE NOVITIATE

A candidate who is judged ready and suitable for the novitiate must be free of the impediments listed in Canon 643, must demonstrate the necessary maturity (human, spiritual, and Christian) to undertake the Marian life, and must have sufficient health to be able to live according to the Marian Constitutions and Directory. Above all, it is necessary to verify that he possesses the proper intention to enter the Congregation. Admission to the novitiate should take place only when there are reasonable signs that the

candidate has made a serious and adequate vocational discernment that indicates a free, knowledgeable and deliberate choice of the Marian way of life as his personal vocation.

1. Admission to the novitiate:

- The postulant must submit a written request for admission in which he explicitly states his free, knowing and deliberate will to be admitted to the novitiate;
- He must be free of impediments (cf. CIC 643.1,C 158, 161.2);
- He must be admitted by the legitimate Superior (cf. CIC 641, C 156);
- The request must be accompanied by the written evaluation of the Postulant Moderator (cf. D 123);
- The major Superior admits a candidate to the novitiate with the deliberative vote of his council (cf. C 156).

2. Juridical impediments and requisites:

- In accord with Canon 642: “Superiors are to exercise a vigilant care to admit only those who, besides being of required age, are healthy, have a suitable disposition, and have sufficient maturity to undertake the life which is proper to the institute. If necessary, the health, disposition and maturity are to be established by experts, without prejudice to can. 220.”
- In view of possible admission to the novitiate, the postulants must conform to the requirements of Canons 643-645 listed above.

III. PROCEDURE AND REQUISITES FOR ADMISSION TO FIRST PROFESSION OF VOWS

The decision to admit a novice to first profession should be based on positive signs that are confirmed by the experience of the Novice Master and others that he has sufficiently achieved the objectives of novitiate formation. That is, that he has purified and deepened his motivation for the choice of the Marian vocation, that he possesses a sufficient understanding of its charism and the capacity to live according to its demands, and that he is maturing in the choice to offer himself completely to God for the service of Christ and the Church according to the spirit of our Founder and Renovator.

1. Admission to first profession of vows:

- The novice must submit a written request in which he explicitly states his free, knowing and deliberate will to be admitted to the profession of vows;
- The request must be accompanied by the following documents:
 - the evaluation of the Novice Master, and
 - the opinion of the local Superior and his council (cf. D 142);
- He must be admitted by the legitimate Superior (cf. CIC 656 §3, C 174.1c);
- The major Superior admits a member to first profession with the deliberative vote of his council (cf. C 156).
- Before making first profession the novice is to spend six days in spiritual exercises (cf. D 131).

2. Juridical requisites:

- For the validity of the first profession of vows it is required (CIC 656, cf. C 174.1-2):
 - that the person making it has completed at least the eighteenth year of age;
 - that the novitiate has been made validly;
 - that admission has been granted, freely and in accordance with the norms of law, by the competent Superior, after a vote of his council;
 - that the profession be explicit and made without force, fear or deceit;
 - that the profession be received by the lawful Superior, personally or through another.
- Regarding the validity of the novitiate, our Constitutions (cf. C 161) and canon law (CIC 647 §2) establish that: “To be valid, a novitiate must take place in a house which is duly designated for this purpose. In particular cases and by way of exception and with the permission of the supreme Moderator given with the consent of the council, a candidate can make the novitiate in another house of the institute, under the direction of an approved religious who takes the place of the director of novices.
- “For validity, the novitiate must comprise twelve months* spent in the novitiate community, without prejudice to the provision of can. 647 §3.” (CIC 648 §1) (*n.b.* CIC 647§3 “A major Superior can allow a group of novices to reside, for a certain period of time, in another specified house of the institute.”)
- “Without prejudice to the provisions of can. 647 §3, and can. 648 §2, a novitiate is invalidated by an absence from the novitiate house of more

than three months, continuous or broken. Any absence of more than fifteen days must be made good” (CIC 649 §1). (*n.b.* CIC 649§2 “*With the permission of the competent major Superior, first profession may be anticipated, though not by more than fifteen days.*”) (CIC 649 §1).

- “The profession is to be made publicly so that it may be well-known in the external forum, and also with the observance of the rite prescribed in the Congregation” (C 175).

**n.b.* Having completed the novitiate, the novice, if judged suitable, is to be admitted to profession, otherwise he is to be dismissed; should a doubt remain about the novice’s suitability, the time of probation can be prolonged by the major Superiors, but not more than six months (*cf.* CIC 653 §2; C 172).

IV. REQUISITES FOR ADMISSION TO RENEWAL OF VOWS

First profession begins the period of temporary vows which lasts at least three years and normally not more than six (*cf.* CIC 655; C 177).^{*} During this time the professed are expected to achieve sufficient maturity in their vocation to make the definitive commitment to God in perpetual profession. In addition, whether as religious brothers or as candidates to the priesthood, they develop their personal skills and capacities, and the aspects particular to their vocation. Admission to the renewal of vows should be based on positive signs that are confirmed by the experience of the formator and others that the member is making sufficient progress in the objectives of this phase of formation. The goal of this formation period is to confirm the young confrere’s suitability for the Marian vocation and to deepen and integrate his intention for accepting the Marian vocation as his own. In the early years immediately after the novitiate, this means that the young confrere is involved in deepening his growth in the life and spirit of our Congregation and in preparation for future apostolic work via an intensive study of philosophy and theology, and spiritual formation. In the latter years of this formation, the emphasis gradually shifts to helping the confrere integrate his activity with the values of his vocation, so that he may achieve an authentic synthesis between the values he professes and the way that he lives. The latter years also involve more intensive preparation for the apostolate via specialized academic studies and greater pastoral formation, including supervised pastoral experiences.

**In rare cases the competent Superior, with the consent of his Council, can extend the period of temporary profession, however not beyond nine years (cf. CIC 657 §2; C 177).*

1. Admission to renewal of vows:
 - The professed must submit a written request in which he explicitly states his free, knowing and deliberate will to be admitted to the renewal of vows;
 - The request must be accompanied by the following documents:
 - the evaluation of the Formator, and
 - the opinion of the local Superior and his council (cf. D 142);
 - He must be admitted by the legitimate Superior (cf. CIC 656 §3, C 174.1c);
 - The major Superior admits a member to the renewal of vows with the deliberative vote of his council (cf. C 156).

2. Juridical requisites:
 - For the validity of the profession of vows it is required (CIC 656, cf. C 174.1):
 - that admission has been granted, freely and in accordance with the norms of law, by the competent Superior, after a vote of his council;
 - that the profession be explicit and made without force, fear or deceit;
 - that the profession be received by the lawful Superior, personally or through another.
 - “The profession is to be made publicly so that it may be well-known in the external forum, and also with the observance of the rite prescribed in the Congregation” (C 175).

V. PROCEDURE AND REQUISITES FOR ADMISSION TO PERPETUAL PROFESSION

Perpetual profession of vows is the definitive gift of self to God through the Congregation. It is the goal of the entire formation process. When a confrere asks to be admitted to perpetual profession, it presupposes that he has achieved the degree of spiritual maturity in the Marian vocation corresponding to the gravity of this commitment. The admission of a confrere to perpetual profession requires that he has arrived at a mature synthesis of

the values of the Marian vocation and his manner of thinking, valuing and acting. It presupposes that he has successfully achieved the criteria mentioned in the previous stages of incorporation into the Congregation and that he confirms that the Marian vocation is the personal choice willed for him by God.

1. Admission to perpetual profession:

- The professed must submit a written request in which he explicitly states his free, knowing and deliberate will to be admitted to perpetual profession;
- The request must be accompanied by the following documents:
 - the evaluation of his Formator, and
 - the opinion of the local Superior and his council (cf. D 142);
- He must be admitted by the legitimate Superior (cf. CIC 656 §3, C 174.1c);
- The major Superior admits a member to the perpetual profession with the deliberative vote of his council (cf. C 156).

2. Juridical requisites:

- In addition to the requirements noted above for the validity of the profession of vows (CIC 656, cf. C 174.3), it is also required for perpetual profession:
 - that the person has completed at least the twenty-first year of age (CIC 658 §1; C 174.3a);
 - that there has been previous temporary profession for at least three years, without prejudice to the provision of can. 657 §3. (cf. CIC 658 §2; C 174.3b);
 - that the period of temporary profession not last more than nine years (cf. CIC 657 §2; C 177).
- “The profession is to be made publicly so that it may be well-known in the external forum, and also with the observance of the rite prescribed in the Congregation” (C 175).
- “Each member who is about to make a perpetual profession must prepare himself for it for an appropriate period of time. The time, place and director of this preparation are determined by the major Superior with the consent of his council” (D 143).

VI. ADMISSION TO THE MINISTRIES OF READER AND ACOLYTE

1. Presuppositions for Admission to the Ministries of Reader and Acolyte.
 - 1.1. Admission to the ministries of Reader and Acolyte is open to all those in formation, provided these ministries are intrinsic to their apostolic service.
 - 1.2. According to current Church law, those aspiring to ordained ministry must be officially instituted in these ministries for a suitable period of time prior to Diaconal ordination (CIC. 1035). Each Province should determine in its own formation program when the professed are encouraged to petition for institution as Reader and Acolyte.
 - 1.3. No one is to be instituted as a Reader or Acolyte who has not undergone a thorough period of preparation in all aspects of the respective ministry.
 - 1.4. To ensure a fruitful preparation for ministry, our Congregation requires the following:
 2. For institution as Reader:
 - 2.1. The professed religious, in consultation with his formators, must select and successfully complete introductory courses in the Sacred Scriptures and Liturgy;
 - 2.2. The professed religious must show the requisite skill and leadership to function in this ministry;
 - 2.3. The professed religious must satisfy the prerequisites established in Church law and by the local Episcopal Conference.
 3. For institution as Acolyte:
 - 3.1. The professed religious, in consultation with his formators, must select and successfully complete courses in the theology of the Eucharist and Liturgy;
 - 3.2. The professed religious must show the requisite skill and leadership to function in this ministry;
 - 3.3. The professed religious must satisfy the prerequisites established in Church law and by the local Episcopal Conference.
4. Procedures for Admission to the Ministries of Reader or Acolyte:
 - 4.1. When a professed religious concludes that he is ready for institution in either ministry, he consults with his formator and together, they discuss his readiness for this commitment. He then writes in his own hand a letter to the Provincial requesting institution in the ministry. This letter must include a statement of the person's intent, that this

petition is freely made, and that he has completed the period of preparation.

- 4.2. The formator then submits a written evaluation regarding the professed religious's readiness for the ministry. Before this report is sent to the Provincial, the local house Council is consulted for their evaluation.
- 4.3. The Council's evaluation, along with the individual's petition and the evaluation of the Rector (or local Superior), is then forwarded to the Provincial Council for its final decision.

VII. ADMISSION TO THE ORDAINED MINISTRIES OF DIACONATE AND PRIESTHOOD

1. Prerequisites for Ordination as Deacon or Priest:
 - 1.1. No one is ordained to the diaconate or priesthood who has not undergone a thorough period of preparation in all aspects of the respective Order.
 - 1.2. No one is advanced to Orders without having satisfied the prerequisites laid down in Church law and established by the local Episcopal Conference.
 - 1.3. A professed religious is not advanced to Orders without having been instituted into the Ministries of Reader and Acolyte, and without having exercised these ministries for a sufficient period of time (cf. CIC 1035.1). There must be an interval of at least six months between institution as an Acolyte and ordination as a Deacon (cf. CIC 1035.2).
 - 1.4. A candidate for Orders must demonstrate the following characteristics:
 - 1.4.1. Knowledge of and fidelity to the Word of God and the authentic teaching of the Catholic Church;
 - 1.4.2. Charity, zeal for souls, and lifelong commitment to the ordained ministry;
 - 1.4.3. Competency in pastoral skills, especially in the proclamation of the Word of God and in leading divine worship;
 - 1.4.4. A sense of responsibility and commitment to the people entrusted to him and an ability to communicate with them; an interest in the universal Church;
 - 1.4.5. Personal initiative and capacity for courageous leadership, together with prudence and decisiveness in action;
 - 1.4.6. Willingness to subordinate personal preferences in the interest of cooperative effort;

- 1.4.7. A commitment to the promotion of justice.
- 1.5. To ensure a thorough preparation for ordained ministry, the following is required:
 2. For ordination as Deacon:
 - 2.1. An acolyte seeking advancement to Diaconal Orders must successfully complete the academic requirements necessary for ordination;
 - 2.2. He must also successfully complete the supervised pastoral training required during his theological studies;
 - 2.3. He must demonstrate the requisite skill and leadership to function as an ordained minister.
 3. For ordination as Priest:
 - 3.1. A deacon must demonstrate the ability to accept and meet the responsibilities of ordained priestly ministry;
 - 3.2. He must have served satisfactorily at least six months as a deacon in a supervised, pastoral assignment.
 4. Procedures for Ordination to the Diaconate or Priesthood:
 - 4.1. The decision to seek ordination is a serious undertaking and should be the fruit of prayerful consideration, and consultation with one's spiritual director, formator and the local community. If the discernment is positive, the professed religious then submits a petition to the Provincial requesting advancement to the respective Order. This petition (written in his own hand) must include a statement of his intent, that he is requesting the ordination of his own accord and is freely receiving this Order, and that he has completed the necessary preparation, and will persevere in his lifelong commitment to the ordained ministry (cf. CIC 1036).
 - 4.2. Along with this petition, the formator submits a written evaluation regarding the candidate's readiness for ordained ministry. Before this report is sent to the Provincial, the local house Council is consulted for their evaluation.
 - 4.3. The decision of the local Council, along with the individual's petition and the evaluation of the formator is then forwarded to the Provincial Council for its final decision.
 - 4.4. In addition, an evaluation of the professed religious's readiness for ordination ought to be sought from those associated with his pastoral assignments (e.g., pastor, supervisor, colleagues, etc.).
 - 4.5. After considering this information, the Provincial and his Council make the final decision on the professed religious's advancement to Orders. It is the obligation of the Provincial to communicate this decision to the professed religious and his local Superior.

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