

STATUTES
of the
COMMUNITY
of the
BEATITUDES
Christmas 1998

**DECREE OF APPROVAL
of the
NEW STATUTES
of the
COMMUNITY OF THE BEATITUDES**

On January 14th, 1994, after consultation with the Bishops of France having a house of the Community of the Beatitudes in their Diocese, I approved the New Statutes of the Community of the BEATITUDES - Private Association of the Faithful with juridical personality from the Diocese of Albi since January 1st, 1985- **ad experimentum for a period of five years.**

The experience of life and the development of the Community have necessitated, at the end of the five-year period, a revision of these Statutes.

Today, and **for a new period of five years**, I approve these **New Statutes.**

At Albi, January 10th, 1999, on the Feast of the BAPTISM OF THE LORD.

OVERVIEW

The Community of the Beatitudes was founded by Ephraïm and Josette Croissant and another young couple in 1973 in France, under the name of "Community of the Lion of Juda & the Immolated Lamb."

It brings together the faithful of all walks of life, laity married or otherwise, clerics, consecrated brothers and sisters, in a unique reality, image of the people of God in its unity and the diversity of its calls. Its members have the common desire to imitate as closely as possible the model of the primitive Christian community through communal life, in terms of sharing their goods, living voluntarily in a spirit of poverty, sharing an intense sacramental and liturgical life, manifesting a great love for the Catholic Church and its representatives, and being actively engaged in the service of the poor and the proclamation of the Gospel. It was first recognized by an ecclesiastical authority through Monseigneur Coffy, Archbishop of Albi, who set it up as a *pious union* in 1979.

In 1991, the Community decided to take the name of "Community of the Beatitudes", which is more acceptable to the diversity of cultures where it is implanted, and manifesting a desire to be more open to the poor.

In 1992, Monsignor Meindre, Archbishop of Albi, approved "ad experimentum" the Statutes, defining the Community of the Beatitudes as a private Association of the Faithful with a juridical personality, with diocesan rights.

The present Statutes replace the previous, taking into account the evolution of the Community during the last five years.

There are two other documents, which complete the current Statutes :

- The ***Book of Life***, which describes the Spirituality of the Community,
- The ***Directory***, which outlines the standard given for the Statutes and directives given by the General Council of the Community.

The Community received its identity through the intuitions of its founder, Ephraïm. This identity is expressed through the following texts. The Community, however, does not consider the history of its foundation to be closed, as it continues to listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying through the charism proper to its founder. For so long as he plays his rôle, it will continue to improve these texts so that they best express its vocation and mission, submitting them, of course, for the approval of the Church.

1. THE COMMUNITY AND ITS MEMBERS

1.1. JURIDICAL NATURE

1. The Community of the Beatitudes is an **International Private Association of the Faithful of Diocesan right with legal personality**, approved by the Pontifical Council for the Laity according to Canons 298, 299 and 322 of the Code of Canon Law.

1.2. SPIRIT

2. The spirit of the Community is principally expressed in its "Book of Life", especially in the following text which introduces it, summing up its main features:

In these last times, the Lord sends forth His consoling Spirit to renew His Church, in order to adorn His Bride and invite Her to the wedding banquet of the Lamb. He rejuvenates and renews Her unceasingly, bringing Her towards perfect union with Her Bridegroom. The Spirit and the Bride, in effect, say to the Lord: "Come, Lord Jesus!" Seized by this eschatological reality, fascinated by the perfection of the world to come, the Community sighs and groans with the whole of creation in a watchful and unending prayer; it proclaims by its life, in an implicit and explicit declaration, the reality of the Kingdom and the imminence of its coming; it anticipates it through brotherly life, sacramental life, adoration, and through the liturgy which makes us participants "in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the Holy City of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims." (S.C.8)

Mary, Daughter of Zion, Mother of the Church and our Mother, bears us into the contemplation of the mysteries of Her Son in the joining together of our wounded hearts to Her pierced heart. She invites us to follow her on the path of renunciation of our own will and selfishness, for "through her obedience, she has become, both for herself and the whole of mankind, cause of salvation." (L.G. 56) Bearer of the One who bears all, Mary initiates us into the riches of the Eucharistic Body of Christ, uniting the earthly praise to the jubilation of the Church of Heaven where the saints and the blessed spirits unceasingly sing the canticle of the Lamb.

The contemplative life is a grace producing fruits which are not to be kept for ourselves: "You anoint my head with oil and my cup overflows." (Ps 23) The practice of hospitality and of almsgiving will occupy the first place in our sharing.

Nonetheless, the needs of the Church and the prompting of grace may push us towards a more apostolic work and a more systematic evangelization, in complete agreement, of course, with the local bishops and under their watchful guidance.

The vocation of the Community is none other than a call to be a People of God, aspiring to the Trinitarian life and, like Therese of the Child Jesus, choosing everything in order to be love in the heart of the Church.

1.3 ITS MEMBERS

3. The vocation of the Community of the Beatitudes is available to all members of the people of God who receive a calling and decide to follow the evangelical life as suggested by the Community. Part of its own charism is to manifest the diversity and complimentary nature of the various callings within the Church. Therefore, the Community will welcome people of all walks of life:

- married couples with their children,

1.3 ITS MEMBERS (CONT.)

- single brothers and sisters of whom some will be orientated towards consecrated celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom, should they feel so called,
- priests or brothers who feel called to the priesthood,
- permanent deacons, either married or single.

It is clearly understood that each person will be given the time to discern their own personal vocation. Clerics will take into account their previous or present commitment. Single brothers and sisters will demonstrate their total availability. What is common to all is the requirement to make a radical choice of life and a determination to carry one's cross and follow Christ.

4. Secular priests may be admitted to the Community if they obtain permission from their bishop. Their position will be regulated by the law of the Church and by the present Statutes, particularly, the norms of the chapter concerning priests (chapter 5).

5. Normally, married persons can be only admitted with their spouse, and if they are both in full agreement. However, persons separated (in the general sense of the word) from their partner may also be admitted to the Community if there is no reasonable hope of life in common between the spouses being resumed, if the calling is authentic, and if entering the Community does not injure in any way the rights of the partner or of their children.

6. Persons already members of an Institute of Consecrated Life or Society of Apostolic Life will not be admitted into the Community unless they have previously been released from their commitments to that institute according to the norms of Canon Law.

7. Non-Catholic Christians may be integrated into the Community, should they feel called, fully sharing its spirituality and way of life. They will conform to the present Statutes and to future directives from the Directory which concerns them, while still observing the discipline of their own Church. They cannot be given a rôle of government in the Community.

1.4. INTEGRATION, COMMITMENT, WITHDRAWAL

1.4.1. *Standards applicable to all*

8. The vocation of the Community of the Beatitudes consists in a calling to give oneself totally to Christ. All members of the Community, whatever their state of life, are therefore called to commit themselves to the Community permanently after a time of discernment and formation consisting in different stages of integration as proposed in the following paragraphs.

9. The first stage of integration into the Community for a single member or a family will be a **time of probation** which consists in remaining for a period of time in one of the houses of the Community sharing its life in every aspect and receiving basic formation in the spirit and the rule of life of the Community. The duration of this time of probation shall be no less than a minimum

of one year. It is the "Shepherd" (§ 133) of the house who admits someone to this time of probation.

1.4.1. Standards applicable to all (cont.)

10. The probationer can freely leave the Community. The Shepherd of the house, should he or she consider the probationer's integration into the life of the Community as unsatisfactory, can bring the time of probation to an end.

11. The period of probation leads to a second stage of integration called **postulancy**. Its duration lasts a minimum of two years. During this time, the Postulant receives formation in the life of the Community, according to the program in the Directory. It is the Shepherd of the house who admits the candidate to the postulancy after having consulted the House Council (§ 164 ss).

12. The postulant can freely leave the Community.

13. A postulant can be invited to leave for legitimate reasons: behaviour that contradicts the spirit and the rule of the Community, evidence that the postulant does not have a true vocation, or integration within the Community does not proceed in a satisfactory manner. In order to dismiss a postulant the Shepherd needs the consent of his House Council. A Postulant who feels unjustly dismissed has recourse to the Provincial.

14. At the end of the period of postulancy, the candidate will make a **first commitment** lasting three years and will become "**temporarily committed**". This commitment will be taken during a liturgical celebration in the presence of the Shepherd and the members of the house, according to the formula defined in the Directory, by which the candidate is committed to live according to the spirit and the rule of life of the Community.

15. It is the Shepherd of the house who agrees to the Postulant making this temporary commitment, with the agreement of the House Council and the Provincial (§ 182). At the end of the three-year period, should the candidate not feel ready for or not be admitted to, a permanent commitment, the temporary commitment can be renewed from year to year, but not beyond three years except in particular cases and by permission of the Moderator General.

16. Any persons temporarily committed and wishing to leave the Community will inform the Shepherd of their intention; the Shepherd will invite them to pray and consider their decision before God. Should they persist in their intention, they will inform the Moderator General in writing and leave the Community.

17. Should a temporarily committed members seriously and repeatedly fail to observe the essential points of the community rule, the Shepherd can ask them to leave. In taking this decision the Shepherd must consult his House Council, obtain the consent of his Provincial, the Provincial Council, and inform the Moderator General in writing. Any person feeling unjustly dismissed has recourse to the Moderator General.

18. Following the period of temporary commitment the candidate will make his **permanent commitment** to the Community. This commitment will be taken during a liturgical celebration in the presence of the Shepherd and the brothers and sisters of the house, according to the formula defined in the Directory. The candidate will be committed to live forever in the heart of the Community in faithfulness to its spirit and respecting its rule of life.

1.4.1. *Standards applicable to all (cont.)*

19. In order to admit a member to permanent commitment, the Shepherd must first consult his or her House Council and obtain the consent of the Provincial and his Council.

20. Should permanently committed members wish to leave the Community, the Shepherd will invite them to consider the seriousness of such a decision, to take time to pray, and to seek help in discerning the will of the Lord. Should they persist in their decision they will ask the Moderator General of the Community, in writing, to be released from their commitment.

21. Should permanently committed members fail seriously and repeatedly to observe essential points of the community rule and not amend their behavior in spite of the Shepherd's repeated observations -- followed, if necessary, by those of the Provincial -- they could be asked to leave the Community. Such a decision is taken by the Moderator General with the General Council's consent.

22. Every person who withdraws from the Community or is asked to do so will be supported by the prayers of all. The Community will help them in their social reintegration, providing financial help if necessary, especially in the case of a family. They may not, however, request financial compensation from the Community for the work carried out while living within it nor claim any donations made to the Community conforming to the Statutes and Civil Law.

23. The commitments mentioned above incorporate a member not only in a particular house but in the Community as a whole and, therefore, remain valid should the candidate move to another house.

1.4.2 *Married Couples and Families*

24. Married couples are able to proceed through the various stages of commitment together, as husband and wife, and only if they are in total agreement with one another.

25. A family can be integrated into the Community only if it is peacefully accepted by the children. The children, of course, are not bound by the commitments of their parents.

26. Marital ties obviously have priority over community commitments. If a married person wishes to leave the Community the partner will have to consent to this decision and also leave the Community.

1.4.3 *Principles to be observed in the integration of members.*

27. Before admitting a person on probation who has already spent a negative time of probation in another house, one must proceed with prudence and inform the Shepherd of the previous house. Likewise, if a Shepherd has to take a decision regarding any kind of stage of commitment of a person who has only recently arrived at his house, he or she is advised to consult the Shepherd of that person's previous house.

1.4.3 Principles to be observed in the integration of members. (cont.)

28. Before admitting on probation a person from another community, Institute of religious life or Society of Apostolic Life, the reasons for departure and their canonical situation will be looked into. A priest will not be admitted to a time of probation without the permission of his Bishop or competent ecclesiastical superior.

29. On no account should the necessity to meet certain needs be a reason for admitting persons who do not have a real vocation to the Beatitudes. One will be strict in discerning the authenticity of the call, which must reflect a genuine desire to give oneself to God, without, however, being elitist: many of those whom the Holy Spirit is calling to this offering today are fragile and wounded.

30. Even if it is normal for the brothers and sisters to change house after a time, it is important that the Shepherd who discerns their call and integrates and forms them, does so in a responsible way, that is, with an attitude of being responsible for them on a long term basis.

2. RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS COMMON TO ALL MEMBERS

2.1. IN GENERAL

31. All the members of the Community, whatever their walk of life, commit themselves to live according to the spirit of the Community and conform to the present Statutes. They will, therefore, seek to live the reality of the early Church, where the believers were but one heart and one soul. Following their example, each will remain faithful to the teaching of the apostles and their successors; to fraternal communion guaranteed by the practice of obedience; to charity towards all and in welcoming the poor of our day; in the integral sharing of goods and resources and in renouncing personal property and leading an intense prayer life worthy of a contemplative vocation. In exchange, every member of the Community is sustained by the prayer and fraternal help of the whole Community. They are materially taken care of and helped in their spiritual walk; they can also avail themselves of all the means of formation and thorough study offered by the Community according to the requirements of their personal vocation, their role in the Community and their work--all this according to the present Statutes.

32. The Community will take care to fully respect the rights of its members, particularly those guaranteed to the faithful by the Code of Canon Law.

2.2. CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

Faithful practice of prayer

33. Among all the obligations of the members of the Community, owing to their personal vocation, the most important one, which the Shepherds will take most to heart in encouraging, is to lead a contemplative life based on common and personal prayer. All the other activities of the members, whether apostolic or professional, are to be rooted in prayer.

34. The first duty of all members will be one of regular contemplative prayer. They will spend an hour every day in silent prayer, face to face with God, as often as possible in front of the Blessed Sacrament. They will take concrete steps to allow this type of prayer to be an authentic means of

Faithful practice of prayer (cont.)

spiritual growth and a transforming encounter with God leading to union with him. They will faithfully persevere in prayer, using the means of formation in prayer suggested by the Community, and being honest with their spiritual director. They will choose as masters for their prayer life the saints whose particular charism in this field has been recognized by the Church, namely the Carmelite saints. The Shepherds will be attentive to the presence of a lively spirit of prayer in their houses and see to it that all brothers and sisters receive the necessary help for their personal growth and life of union with God. Care will be taken to maintain an atmosphere of prayer in the houses and uphold times and places of silence to allow living in the presence of God. The timetable of the houses will allow for adequate times of lectio divina and the possibility of regular times of desert.

Liturgical prayer

35. Liturgical prayer, following to the Community's own offices, will be one of the essential dimensions of the life of each house and everyone will make the effort to attend the offices in a faithful and fervent manner. Absence from the moments of prayer in common should be avoided except for a good reason and with the Shepherd's permission.

36. Particular care will be taken of the beauty of the liturgy and the quality of the singing, so that our earthly worship, which is a foretaste of and participation in the heavenly liturgy, may reflect something of the splendor of the unceasing praise which fills the Jerusalem on high. Our communal prayer will also be one of intercession for the Church and the needs of the world. We will particularly carry in prayer, at times set aside during the night whenever possible, the great themes of intercession entrusted to the Community by the Lord: prayer to hasten the coming of Christ in Glory, for the proclamation of the Gospel, for the unity of the Church, for vocations and for the accomplishment of God's designs for Israel.

Eucharist and sacraments

37. The highlight of liturgical life will be the Eucharist, whose central importance in the life of each house and the personal existence of its members will be ensured.

38. Whenever possible participation in the Eucharist will be a daily occurrence. The members will prepare themselves with care through prayer and a frequent practice of confession. Holy Communion will always be followed by an adequate time of silent thanksgiving. When the Eucharist is celebrated in the houses of the Community one will give its celebration the required solemnity, particularly through worthy and respectful attitudes, beauty of the songs, decoration of the chapel, and of the implements of the liturgical service.

39. The conservation, exposition, and replacing in the tabernacle of the Blessed Sacrament will be performed in the houses of the Community in a manner which vigorously adheres to current liturgical rules. Particular care will always be taken to ensure that handling of the Blessed Sacrament within the Community will manifest on the part of all a deep love of the Eucharist and a great veneration for the holiness of this mystery.

40. The Eucharist will be celebrated as often as possible in the chapel of the Community. On Sundays, however, representative will be given to participation at the Parish Mass, unless a pastoral necessity dictates the contrary.

Eucharist and sacraments (cont.)

41. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be received frequently as a privileged means of ongoing conversion and purification of the heart.

2.3 DEVOTION TO MARY

42. Since the Community was founded, it has been convinced of its belonging to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Over a certain number of years, it has experienced how much the Lord wants to pour out His merciful love during this time, through the hands of the Immaculate. A filial love for Mary will therefore be cultivated in all the houses as well as trust in her motherly intercession. Everyone will be encouraged to consecrate themselves to the Holy Trinity through her hands, along the lines of the spirituality of Saint Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort. Praying of the Rosary will have a place of honor in all the houses.

4.2 FRATERNAL COMMUNION

43. All the members of the Community commit themselves to encouraging an authentic fraternal communion, considering it to be one of the most precious gifts granted to them by the Lord, thus desiring to witness to the truth of the words of Psalm 133: "How good, how delightful it is to live together like brothers!" They will do everything in their power in order to be of one heart and one soul, carrying each other's burdens, loving each other with a joyful, simple, and pure love. Every house of the Community aspires to become a true family around the Shepherd in the image of the Holy Family of Nazareth. They will submit humbly to one another, each member not seeking his own interest, but preferring his brother's well-being to his own. Faced with the inevitable difficulties of life in common, they will neither retire within themselves, nor seek purely human solutions. They will find in forgiveness and prayer the means to overcome their conflicts or misunderstandings, come to know how to kneel together before the Lord to ask Him humbly and with faith, the grace to love one another, convinced that God does not refuse anything to those who agree to ask together something in His name.

44. Those brothers and sisters who are sick, aged or handicapped will be surrounded by help and affection, so that they do not feel left-out or not useful. They will be considered as the presence of the suffering Christ among us and the most precious and fruitful part of the body of the Community.

2.5. OBEDIENCE AND THE EXERCISING OF AUTHORITY

45. Whatever their walk of life, every member of the Community commits themselves to live out of love for Jesus who had no other will than His Father's. They seek to free themselves of their own will in order to achieve total docility to the Holy Spirit, in humble and trusting obedience towards those who have legitimate responsibility over them in the Community, particularly the Shepherd of their house. Through this promise of obedience, they will also freely choose to adhere and conform to the law of the Church and the present Statutes. This filial submission will also touch our relations with the Church, principally the Holy Father and the Bishops. In order to live this call to obedience as a grace, they will be filled with a true spirit of faith in God who guides everything for the good of those who surrender themselves totally to Him.

5. OBEDIENCE AND THE EXERCISING OF AUTHORITY (CONT.)

46. Brothers and sisters will disclose simply, freely and trustfully the eventual difficulties they encounter in fulfilling what is asked of them, avoiding at all costs a critical and contesting spirit, thus allowing those in charge to better discern the will of the Lord.

47. All those in positions of responsibility at every level and particularly the Shepherds, will exercise their authority in the fear of God. They will be careful to remain free of every spirit of domination and avoid seeking their personal interest, bearing in mind the fulfillment of God's will, the faithfulness of the Community to its personal calling, and the spiritual well-being of the brothers and sisters whom they will love with an attentive and paternal love. They will not act on human motives or seek to win the affection of the brothers or sisters. They will have no favorites, aiming solely at the glory of God and the true good of souls. They will exercise their authority with gentleness and kindness, endeavoring to encourage a climate of mutual trust and co-operation, seeking the will of God together with those under their care, so that the latter may always feel free to confide their difficulties and make known in a simple way their suggestions.

48. Superiors will be attentive in respecting the liberty of all brothers and sisters to freely speak with the House Visitors (§ 170ss), Superiors at whatever level, and Ecclesiastical Authorities if necessary, should they so desire.

49. Whenever the General Council or General Chapter is asked to make decisions, they will do so in an atmosphere of prayer, attentiveness to the Holy Spirit, and in a spirit of unity, being free to express their points of view and listening attentively to those of others.

50. At whatever level of government, (House Council, Provincial Council, General Council or others), one will be very vigilant in being discrete when dealing with personal situations. Nothing will be diverged which has been disclosed in spiritual accompaniment but the strictest minimum may be disclosed in order to help make decisions vital for the person concerned. In this way, the members will be able to speak honestly, trusting in the confidentiality of their Superiors and those who accompany them spiritually.

2.6 CONFESSION, SPIRITUAL ACCOMPANIMENT, RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SHEPHERD

51. In all the houses of the Community one will see to it that the brothers and sisters can go frequently and regularly to confession to priests who understand the vocation of the Community and know the ways of God. If necessary, one will be mindful to let them go to confessors other than those who ordinarily come to the house. Their freedom to choose a confessor will be respected.

52. If the Shepherd of a house is a priest, he will not be the ordinary confessor of the brothers and sisters under their care. He may hear their confession only in exceptional circumstances.

53. During the first years of formation, in order to help the members of the Community discern their calling and enter into its specific spirituality, they will normally be followed spiritually by those members of the house who have been designated for this by the Shepherd because they have the necessary maturity and experience. The permission of the Shepherd is required before taking a spiritual guide from outside the house or the Community.

54. After taking their permanent commitment, each member is free to choose their spiritual guide. Wherever possible, this should not be the Shepherd nor a person exercising a role of

2.6 CONFESION, SPIRITUAL ACCOMPANIMENT, RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SHEPHERD (CONT.)

responsibility over the community member, so as to dissociate spiritual guiding from tasks of governing as much as possible. In those cases where a person assumes the two roles, they will ensure the utmost discretion and will forbid themselves to use in their role of governing anything which may have been confided to them in spiritual guidance.

55. All members of the Community will do everything in their power to establish with their Shepherd a trusting, filial, simple, and open relationship. This is so that the grace of paternity, which normally rests upon the ministry of the Shepherd, unfolds for the benefit of his brothers and sisters, so that the authority he exercises be founded on dialogue and mutual trust. In that way the Shepherd will be sufficiently informed as to what a person is experiencing in his spiritual walk to allow for a good integration in the life of the house, i.e., to avoid tasks be imposed upon him which he could not assume because of what he is going through in his inmost being.

2.7 POVERTY AND SHARING OF RESOURCES

Principles

56. In committing themselves to poverty all the members of the Community freely choose to renounce the possession of any personal property, owning everything in common after the example of the early Christian community. They wish to be free from all attachment to the goods of this world, so that God alone may be their wealth and their hope. In wishing to meet their needs through their work, they wish to live in trustful surrender to Providence, seeking above all the Kingdom of God convinced that all other things will be added unto them by their Father in Heaven, who knows the needs of his children and faithfully provides for them. They choose a lifestyle which clearly differs from the world's by its simplicity and sobriety, willingly accepting the hardships implied by their vocation or circumstances. They wish not only to renounce personal wealth but also, whether they have arrived with much or with little, avoid all egotistical use of goods which have been put at their disposal in the Community and maintain this spirit of poverty constantly throughout their life in the Community.

Concrete ways of practicing the above principles

57. The **probationers** and **postulants** (§ 9 & 11) keep complete control over their resources and can freely dispose of their revenues. They are simply asked to comply with the style of life of the Community and not any let expenses which they may assume, weigh upon it, always remaining in a truthful and sincere relationship with the Shepherd. They can offer certain of their resources to the Community but the latter will not accept any resources or gift of money of important value from them, according to the indications in the Directory. This is done in order to maintain a totally free relationship with them, and to prevent them from unwisely and excessively renouncing their resources.

58. Should probationers have any debts, the Shepherd of a house will only accept them with the permission of the Moderator General.

59. On becoming **temporarily committed**, (§14) every member of the Community is expected to share resources in the following manner:

Concrete ways of practicing the above principles (cont.)

- They will be covered by the Community for their legitimate needs, according to the terms stated in the Directory, which may vary from one country to another.
- Only with their Shepherd's permission will they be able to avail themselves of their resources, income, salary, pension, allowance, insurance, gifts in kind and in cash. They cannot use them personally, except with the permission of the Shepherd.
- They remain the owners of their inheritances. However, whenever possible they should entrust the administration of this to a person of his choice. Should this prove to be impossible or inadvisable, they will remain in charge of the administration. They will freely decide who may use these resources and their benefits, remaining open and truthful with their Shepherd.
- The Community cannot accept a large donation in its favor from a person of temporary commitment. All exceptions to this rule must be agreed to by the Moderator General and his Council.

60. When **permanently committed**, every member of the Community will totally relinquish the resources still in his personal possession, the renouncement having legal effect according to civil law. He will be entitled to undertake such a relinquishment in favor of the Community or one of its apostolates. He will also be free to do so in favor of another person, charity or other, after having informed his Shepherd and sought his advice. It is understood that this transaction injures no one, privileges real needs and is not a disguised means of protecting oneself against any eventuality. Relinquishment They will likewise be expected to relinquish resources received later on, either through inheritance or in another manner.

Concerning married persons, all relinquishment of goods should be in conformity with the canonical and civil legislation of each country concerned and must protect the rights of the children in the case of a donation. In all cases, a right proportion of the goods will be reserved for the children present and future, according to the standards set out in the Directory

61. Concerning the lifestyle of the houses of the Community, one will avoid anything that reflects luxury or the spirit of the world. Simplicity will be sought in the arrangement of the houses, the food, the leisure activities, etc, so that the poor in our midst may feel at ease.

2.8 CHASTITY

62. All the members of the Community commit themselves to living the form of chastity which corresponds to their calling and their state of life, according to the doctrine of the Church concerning either consecrated celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom, or the Sacrament of Marriage and conjugal chastity.

63. Concerning the lifestyle, reading, leisure activity, arrangement of the dwelling quarters, clothing, the use of means of communication such as the television, everything that might excite

the senses and imperil chastity will be avoided. Vain curiosity, preoccupations irrelevant to our vocation, superficial and useless gossip, negligence in one's attitudes, agitation and noise, and judgements, are to be avoided in order to keep one's heart chaste and free from anything which could distract us from an intimate dialogue with the Spouse of our souls.

2.8 CHASTITY (CONT.)

64. In the field of one's affectivity, all members, whatever their state of life, will accept the poverty and renouncement which faithfulness to their calling or circumstances in life impose upon him. They will use them to learn how to love with an impartial love according to the teaching of the Gospel and how to give the Lord first place in their affection; for it is the Lord who invites us to love Him with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our strength as well as "those who cannot repay us" (Lk 14,14).

65. Single consecrated brothers and sisters, after the required time of maturation, will commit themselves through vows to live in perfect continence for the sake of the Kingdom, offering their body and their heart as a sacrifice of praise to God. (§ 83)

66. Married members will see to it that their life as a couple is consistent with the teaching of the Church. They will allow the Holy Spirit to totally permeate and illuminate their conjugal and affective relations so that these may become the expression of a true gift of their persons, one to the other and to God.

67. Those who have not yet chosen a state of life will live in continence and purity in expectation of the gift to which God is calling them.

2.9. RESIDENCE IN THE HOUSES

68. All the members of the Community are part of a house, where they normally reside, under the authority of the Shepherd of that house.

69. In order to move to another house for a long period, the permission of the two Shepherds and the Provincials concerned is required. Any change from one house to another will be notified to the Moderator General.

70. A member of the Community can only live outside the Community for valid reasons (studies, family situation, apostolate, health, sabbatical) with the permission of his Shepherd. Should one have to live for more than three consecutive months outside the Community, the permission of the Provincial is also necessary. Whoever lives outside of the Community will do their utmost to maintain a rhythm of prayer and quiet time in keeping with his vocation inside the Community. He will maintain a link with either his Shepherd or directly with his Provincial, who will look after his spiritual and material circumstances, and they will keep in regular contact with one another.

71. All the members of the Community are entitled to times of leave from the Community in order to rest and relax, to visit their families, and to go on a spiritual retreat according to the requirements of each state of life.

2.10. WORK

72. Every member of the Community will work during the time allocated to that purpose within the timetable of each house. The work entrusted to each person will be chosen by the

Shepherd and the House Council, taking into account his or her aptitudes and the needs of the house.

2.10. WORK (CONT.)

Whether working inside or outside the Community, whatever the nature of his work may be, either material, apostolic, or charitable, the brothers or sisters will undertake the task entrusted to them in a responsible, generous and self-giving spirit, offering their aptitudes wholeheartedly or to the service of the Lord and the members of their house.

73. When choosing and organizing the work, one will encourage a sense of responsibility and a spirit of initiative; the spiritual and human growth of every brother will be taken into account, giving priority to spiritual criteria in harmony with the contemplative and apostolic vocation of the Community, avoiding passion, anxiety or any excessive pursuit of output and profit, or even overwork which would reduce prayer-life to second place.

3. MARRIED COUPLES AND FAMILIES IN THE COMMUNITY

74. The Community was founded by married couples and the very identity of the Community includes the presence of couples and families in its heart. Their presence allows the Community to give an authentic image of the diversity of the Church. Married persons in the Community accomplish their own vocation of being a couple and a family according to their own specific road, characterized by a desire to live radically according to the Gospel and by a contemplative life. They reply to a call to leave all to follow Christ, to live for Him and His Kingdom and not uniquely for the values of this world, a world which is passing away. They seek to live intensely the grace of marriage as a total consecration of themselves to the Lord and the service of the Church and as a way of exercising the priesthood common to all the baptized. They seek to create real households of prayer and love which have at their heart the communion of persons that anticipates full participation in Trinitarian love which will be lived in the Kingdom. The married couples will exercise their fatherhood and motherhood with responsibility, being open to the gift of life and considering the welcoming and education of children as a privileged way of serving the Church. Living with brothers and sisters of different states of life, they will seek to openly manifest the vocation of the family and not be closed-in on themselves, but realize the gift of self and the acceptance of others. They also desire to be an instrument of the new-evangelization by the witness proper to their life and by their participation in the apostolic mission of the Church.

75. The couples shall bear in mind that they have freely committed themselves to conformity to the Community's rule, particularly in the area of prayer, poverty and obedience and that their style of life should be clearly distinguished from that of the world. The particular circumstances of each family will, however, be taken into account with flexibility and prudence, particularly with regard to the ages of the children, so that insertion into the life of the Community may be in no way detrimental to conjugal and family life but, on the contrary, favor its harmonious development. Sufficient areas and daily periods will be provided in the timetable and design of the houses to allow for moments of conjugal intimacy and presence to the children. There will also be weekly periods reserved for family life and each family will be entitled to annual holidays. Organization of the prayer life and other aspects of community life will allow parents to be available to their children whenever the latter need them. Authority will be exercised and obedience lived out in such a way as to respect the natural authority of the parents with regard to their children, and will tend toward valuing the of the role of the father and mother of the family.

The way in which poverty is lived will respect the rights of the children (§60). The families will be allowed their own

3. MARRIED COUPLES AND FAMILIES IN THE COMMUNITY (cont.)

budget for certain everyday needs, which they will manage themselves, but in an open and loyal manner with regard to their superiors.

76. The Community will allow families to give their children everything which they have a right to legitimately expect of them: satisfaction of their material needs, human and spiritual education, possibility of study, healthy spare time activities, cultural and artistic education, while taking into account the cultural context and standard of living of the country. One will proceed, however, with wisdom and moderation without giving way, as far as the children and their needs are concerned, to excessive preoccupation, which would be a projection of one's fears and frustrations, contrary to an evangelical spirit of simplicity and surrender to God.

77. Though the children are fully integrated in the Community, they are in no way bound by the commitments of their parents. They remain, of course, totally free to dispose of their future. The Community will respect their liberty of choice and will do everything possible to help them fulfil their personal vocation.

78. For their part, parents will fully attend to their common responsibility concerning their conjugal and family life. Entitled as they are to expect in this area the support and help of the Community, they must not, however, shift on to the latter, either their responsibility towards one another as a married couple or their duty to educate their children. Paternity will be exercised responsibly, taking into account their concrete circumstances, their commitments as members of the Community, and the decisions they take concerning their life as a family.

79. One will take care to provide teaching to engaged and married couples, according to the teaching of the Church, on the Christian views on marriage and conjugal life, on natural birth control, on education, and on the place of the family in the Community. Every couple will try to attend the annual Families' Retreat. In each province, a "representative" couple will be designated to look after the families.

4. CONSECRATED SINGLES

4.1 CONSECRATED LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY

80. In the Heart of the Community, certain brothers and sisters can receive the call from the Holy Spirit to consecrate themselves to the Lord and His Kingdom by the profession of the Evangelical Counsels in a more particular way. After the required time of discernment and formation, the brothers and sisters who feel called to consecrated celibacy will commit themselves, first through temporary vows followed by final ones, to observe the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. They will directly embrace the form of life lived by Jesus in this world, being a sign of the pre-eminence of the Kingdom which is coming over all present reality and will visibly manifest the vocation of all Christians: to be espoused by God, according to the words of Isaiah: "Your Creator will espouse you." Through the renouncements implied by the vows, they take up their cross after Christ so as to tend even more toward the fullness of the love of God and love of one's neighbor.

81. The purpose of the vow of poverty is to live the form of poverty defined in the present Statutes (§56-61). It obliges one not to use any resources whatsoever other than in agreement

4.1 CONSECRATED LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY (CONT.)

with the decisions of those in charge of the Community and, after one's permanent commitment, to practice a total sharing of possessions and resources and to renounce all personal property. It also obliges use of Community goods without attachment nor a spirit of egotism.

82. The purpose of the vow of obedience, as defined in § 46-50 and following, is to offer in sacrifice to God one's own will, committing oneself to obey those legitimately in charge of the Community in everything related to the life of the Community as expressed in the present Statutes.

83. The purpose of the vow of chastity is to live the state of celibacy in perfect continence for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven, freely assumed as a total gift to God of one's heart and one's body. It invites one to particular intimacy with Christ in prayer, to keep watch over one's heart against any affection contrary to the love of God, to faithful vigilance over one's senses and one's gaze, so that nothing may trouble the dialogue of love with the Spouse and to a great openness of heart so as to love one's neighbor with the very own love of Jesus.

84. Those consecrated members of the Community who feel called to visibly witness to their consecration will receive a habit on the occasion of their first vows. Others among them who feel called to live their consecration as a grace lived in a more hidden manner, will simply keep their normal community clothing. Great care will be taken in discerning these two vocations to consecrated celibacy. Such a choice must be made freely and correspond to a true calling and not to the need to find an identity or other motives of a purely psychological nature or as a means of protection.

85. Brothers and sisters can live out their consecrated life either in houses with other single brothers and sisters as well as married couples, or in houses where only single members of the same sex dwell together with a more specific contemplative vocation. A life of solitude will also be allowed for those who feel so called, but after the necessary time of discernment. In mixed houses, the brothers and sisters' areas of personal living will be clearly separate.

86. Free from family responsibilities, consecrated members will dedicate more time to prayer, night vigil, spiritual reading, brotherly service, and they will be particularly conscious of their responsibility in stimulating the whole Community through their example in living its total consecration to God in vigilant expectation of the Kingdom to come.

87. The Shepherds and other persons in charge will see to it that consecrated brothers and sisters receive, before and during the temporary vows, a solid formation in the consecrated life, which conforms to the teaching of the Church and according to the standards of the Directory. One will be attentive to give them effective ways of blossoming in their consecration: sufficient time of intimacy with the Lord in prayer, silence, times of desert, of lectio divina, appropriate spiritual nourishment, and the possibility to seek the help and advice of brothers or sisters committed to the same state of life. They will go every year on a week's retreat. Each Province will designate a "representative" to look after the consecrated members of the Province. (§189)

4.2 STEPS IN CONSECRATION

88. A brother or sister will not be able to pronounce their first vows before they have lived at least six months of their temporary commitment (§14) and three and a half years of community life. It is essential that they will have had the necessary formation for the first vows, according to the standards in the Directory, and have participated in the Discernment Retreat organized by the Community. The Shepherd of their house will receive their vows, with the consent of his House Council and the Provincial.

89. The first vows are pronounced for a year, in the hands of the Provincial or one of his delegates, preferably during the Eucharistic Celebration, according to the formula laid-out in the Directory. They will be renewed for another year at the end of the first year according to the simplified formula, unless the candidate has expressed the intention not to renew them or has not been allowed to renew them.

90. After a minimum of three years, and only after permanent commitment to the Community, (§ 18), the candidate will be able to pronounce perpetual vows. Those vows will be taken during a liturgical ceremony presided over, if possible, by the Bishop of the diocese or another Bishop close to the Community. The vows will be received by the Moderator General or one of his delegates, according to the formula defined in the Directory.

91. Permission to take final vows is granted by the Provincial, solicited by the Shepherd after agreement with his House Council and the Provincial Council. If the candidate has recently changed house, those previously responsible for him will also be consulted. The authenticity of the candidate's motives will be thoroughly checked, as well as the human and spiritual maturity of his choice and the absolute liberty of his decision. A relevant formation regarding final vows will be given, according to the standard in the Directory. This will include, before any decision, a retreat during which the candidate will meet the "representative" charged by the Provincial to look after the consecrated members. (§189)

92. The minimum age required for temporary vows is twenty-one and twenty-four for perpetual vows.

93. Whoever has pronounced temporary vows and wishes to be relieved of them before the due time, will send a written request to the Provincial asking for dispensation of his vows, which the Provincial may accord for legitimate reasons. Persons dispensed from their temporary vows may stay in the Community.

94. A temporarily consecrated person who shows signs of immaturity in his choice or a lack of liberty or real motives, or for other legitimate or serious reasons, will not be allowed to renew his vows or may even be discharged from them before the term if necessary. The decision comes from the Provincial in agreement with his Council and the Shepherd of the candidate.

95. Whoever has pronounced final vows and wishes to be released from them will submit their request to the Moderator General. This will only be for serious reasons and they will be invited to consider their decision before God and to seek help in discerning the motives involved. The Moderator General would be able to give dispensation, after having obtained the consent of his Council.

4.1 CONSECRATED LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY (CONT).

96. Perpetually professed members of the Community who request dispensation from their vows cannot stay in the Community except by permission of the Moderator General and his Council.

97. Any consecrated person who has been asked to leave the Community according to the present Statutes, is *ipso facto* dispensed from his vows. He will be notified of his dispensation in writing.

5. THE PRIESTS IN THE COMMUNITY

5.1 IN GENERAL

98. Among the single consecrated brothers in the Community, certain may be called to the ministry of the priesthood through which, configured to Christ, Sovereign and Eternal priest, associated to the priesthood of the Bishops, they are consecrated as priests of the New Covenant, to announce the Gospel, to be pastors of the people of God, and to celebrate the liturgy, particularly offering the sacrifice of the Mass.

99. The priests of the Beatitudes exercise their priestly ministry under the guidance of the Bishops and in the service of the people of God, while at the same time being full members of the Community. Their ministry will be rooted in its spirituality and its contemplative grace, and lived in a close communion of life, prayer, apostolic collaboration with other members of the Community: the laity both single or married, consecrated brothers and sisters, permanent deacons. They will live in the houses of the Community, according to the present Statutes, sharing the material and spiritual life of the brothers and sisters of these houses, conforming themselves to the rule of life, benefiting from their fraternal support and their apostolic collaboration, and serving the Church and the members of the Community through their priestly ministry.

100. Their vocation also consists in being open to all the calls of the Holy Spirit and will go wherever in the world where, inserted into the life of a house of the Community, in communion with the local Church and its pastors, they will be of service to the People of God.

101. The Community will do everything possible to favor priestly vocations among its members. It will allow the brothers, whose vocation will have been recognized as authentic, to enter the priesthood and exercise the presbyterial ministry according to the law of the Church and according to the present Statutes.

5.2 INCARDINATION

102. A priest of the Community is incardinated into a diocese which welcomes him. A "**welcoming diocese**" is one in which the Bishop accepts to incardinate the priests of the Community for the good of the universal Church and his church in particular, while at the same time respecting their vocation. If the Bishop feels it appropriate, he can open and entrust to the Community a seminary in his diocese for future priests of the Community, all of which would figure in a written and signed agreement between the Bishop and the Community.

5.2 INCARDINATION (CONT.)

103. The welcoming Bishops will be flexible in allowing a priest of the Beatitudes incardinated in his diocese to offer his services in another diocese so as to reply to legitimate needs of the apostolates of the Community or urgent calls of the Church. The circumstances of a priest who exercises his ministry in a diocese other than his own will be subject to the common law and standards of the present Statutes.

5.3 PRIESTS' SUPERIOR

104. The priests will have their own superior who is a member of the General Council and who is himself a priest committed for life to the Community. His task is to look after the formation of the seminarians, the blossoming of the priests in their specific vocations, and to uphold the special link between the ecclesiastical authority in which the exercising of their ministry is involved.

105. The priests' Superior will be elected for four years by the Moderator General in agreement with his Council, after consultation with those who are concerned. His nomination will be confirmed with a vote by the priests permanently committed in the Community. The Superior will be assisted by two advisors, elected by the priests permanently committed in the Community.

106. The function of the priests' Superior is to :

- represent the priests in the Community in the heart of the General Council,
- be the representative of the Community in dealing with the Bishops regarding questions relative to the formation and ministry of the Community's priests,
- supervise the formation of the seminarians, visit the seminaries of the Community, ensure that the permanent formation of the priests,
- promote communion between the priests of the Beatitudes, their harmonious insertion into community life, and the blossoming of each priest in his ministry. He will visit them regularly, either personally or through a delegate, organize meetings between them for different reasons : general, provincial, or regional.
- promote and co-ordinate the different apostolic activities that they exercise, under the supervision of the ecclesiastical authorities, principally the Bishops to whom they depend.

5.4 MINISTRY AND LIFE

107. The priests of the Community exercise their priestly ministry:

- in the service of the activities of evangelization undertaken in the Community, in agreement with the Bishops and under their supervision , according to the law of the Church,
- to serve the spiritual needs of the houses and the members of the Community of the Beatitudes,
- in the service of all other pastoral activities entrusted by a Bishop that they are capable of undertaking and which are compatible with their commitment to the Community.

108. The priest receives his assignment from the welcoming Bishop, in whose diocese he has been incardinated, or by the Bishop in whose diocese he has been called to serve, following

suggestions given by the Moderator General of the Community, in agreement with his Council. The mission letter for each priest will be signed by the Bishop and the Moderator General.

5.4 MINISTRY AND LIFE (CONT.)

109. A priest of the Community must live in a house of the Community, according to the present Statutes, and must, for that which concerns community life, be subordinate to the Shepherd. Regarding his priestly ministry, he is dependent on the competent ecclesiastical authority, according to the law, and on the superiors of the apostolates in which he is implicated.

110. Those Shepherds who have one or more priests in their houses will be attentive in allowing the exercise of their priestly ministry, in the heart of the Community and outside of it, such that their role as priests in the area of the proclamation of the Word, in celebrating the Sacraments, and in their spiritual paternity, may be lived to the full.

111. Other than in rare circumstances, a priest will not be given an apostolic activity which will isolate him from the Community or will cause him to serve in a purely individual manner or leave him without the support or collaboration of the members of his house. Wherever possible, teams of priests will be formed so as to allow newly-ordained priests to start out in their ministry with the advice of a more experienced priest, and so that deacons and seminarians under formation may learn about the apostolate.

112. Every priest in the Beatitudes will have at heart the obligation to seek union with Christ through an intensely contemplative life founded on prayer both personal and in community; apostolic activities must never be a pretext for neglecting this primordial aspect, without which they will lose their true signification, risking the emergence of a purely human work and no longer a participation in the pastoral love of Christ. But it must also be remembered that the authenticity of a life of union with God is manifested by compassion toward one's neighbor and a zeal for proclaiming the Gospel.

5.5 FORMATION OF SEMINARIANS

113. Seminarians in the Community will be trained for the priesthood in accordance with a Charter of Formation in conformity to the guidelines of the Church and approved by the General Chapter of the Community. Where possible, the training will take place in seminaries of the Community, set-up by and under the supervision of the welcoming Bishops and run by the Community. Each Seminary will have a Rector, a Formation Team, its own regulations, and will function according to the standards of the Church in this regard. The courses will be given in the seminary according to a program conforming to the *Ratio studiorum* of the country and approved by the welcoming Bishop, unless the seminarians follow their course in an institute or faculty recognized by the Church. Their spiritual and pastoral formation will be ensured by the seminary. The Rector and the Formation Team are nominated by the welcoming Bishop, on the suggestions of the Moderator General and with the agreement of his Council.

114. During the formation, there will be much emphasis on the quality and depth of the spiritual life of the seminarians: their life of prayer, constant conversion of the heart, growth in personal love of Jesus, in filial love for Mary, and an authentic and pure desire to give themselves for the good of souls; the priesthood cannot reach its optimum fruitfulness without these virtues. During the formation, the seminarians should be helped to nurture a love for the poor, as well as a sense of the needs of souls, the capacity to work with people from all walks of life, and a love for both the universal and local Church. Spiritual and human knowledge will help them to reach all those that they meet, in their suffering and need.

5.5 FORMATION OF SEMINARIANS (CONT.)

115. The Community will be conscious that sufficient brother priests will acquire the necessary competence to train seminarians themselves.

116. A brother from the Beatitudes can only enter seminary after two years in a house of the Community, after having received a basic formation in the life and spirit of the Community. He is put forward for admission by the Shepherd of his house, in agreement with the House Council and the Provincial. The priests' Superior must also give his consent. Only those brothers who manifest the necessary aptitude for the priesthood will be admitted to the seminary, according to the standards of the Church on this subject. The brother must want to become a priest in order to respond to a call to serve and not merely to realize a personal ambition. (Cf. cc. 241-245)

117. During each of the steps towards becoming a priest (admission, lectorate and acolyte, deaconal ordination, ordination as a priest) the Rector of the seminary will meet with the Formation Team in a council to discern the call of the candidates at each of these stages. The candidate's application as well as the deliberation of the Council will be transmitted to the welcoming Bishop, whose sends out the letters of admission.

118. Deaconal ordination can only take place after permanent commitment (§ 18) to the Community and final vows (§ 90).

5.6 PERMANENT FORMATION OF THE PRIESTS

119. It will be seen to that all the priests will be visited by the priests' Superior or his delegate, and receive permanent formation through conferences, meetings, an annual retreat, and that they may have the opportunity to meet up and share their experiences in the exercising of their ministry.

5.7 DEPARTURE OF A PRIEST IN THE COMMUNITY

120. If a brother deacon in view of the priesthood leaves the Community or is asked to leave according to the present Statutes (§ 17 & 21), the ordaining Bishop will decide his future.

6. PERMANENT DEACONS

121. Married or single brothers of the Community may become permanent deacons. This should allow them to respond better to the needs of the Community and of the local Church as they will be strengthened through the sacramental grace in order to undertake various tasks in favor of the poor, the sick, the proclamation of the Word, or in the service of the liturgy.

122. The preparation of a brother for the diaconate will follow the general rules of the Church on the subject and the provisions of the diocese in which he resides. Before approaching the bishop for that purpose, he will need, of course, the approval not only of his Shepherd, but also the Provincial and the Provincial's Council.

7. FORMATION

7.1. FOR ALL

123. Every new Probationer, right from the moment of his arrival, must receive a basic formation on the rule and spirituality of the Community, according to the fixed program in the Directory. The Shepherd of each house will appoint a brother or sister who has the necessary maturity and competence to form the new arrivals in the spirit of the Community.

124. Those in charge of the Community will see to it that, especially during the first years of insertion in the Community, (postulancy, temporary commitment) everyone will receive indispensable teaching on theology, of history of the Church, of the great schools of spirituality, of Holy Scripture, of the liturgy and of the Jewish tradition following a program defined by the Directory. In this way, wherever possible, there will be a house of formation established in each country or region of the world, where the brothers and sisters will spend at least a year of full-time study before taking their final-commitment.

125. Specific moments for formation (time provided for teachings, spiritual reading, meetings with the young brothers and sisters in formation with those in charge of them, etc.) will be included in the weekly timetable of each house. It should be seen to that each house has the necessary means of giving its members the opportunity of acquiring spiritual and human maturity, especially in the area of affectivity, necessary for their life in the Community. Young brothers and sisters should not be overloaded with positions of responsibility which would be detrimental to their formation.

126. With a view to spiritual and theological formation one will call on the services of brothers and sisters to whom the Community will have given the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills, as well as the services of outside speakers who can offer the required guarantee of faithfulness to the teaching of the Church.

127. Formation will last a lifetime. Fidelity to the doctrine of the Church, particularly of the Councils and the Sovereign Pontiffs, is the goal of formation. It will be kept from being solely book learning and intellectual since its main aim is to help one grow in one's love of the Word of God, of the Church, and of contemplative prayer. Spiritual wisdom, which is principally a fruit of prayer and purity of heart, is sought more than abstract knowledge.

7.1. FOR ALL (CONT.)

128. Further, more specific training, namely university studies, will be suggested to members of the Community whose ministry requires it.

129. Taking into account the needs of the Community as well as the various tasks, the aptitudes and the good of all, brothers and sisters will be allowed to acquire professional, human and artistic skills with which they will be able to participate better in fulfilling the vocation of the Community. In particular, training in singing, music, sacred dance, iconography, and other forms of artistic expression as a privileged means of glorifying God and evangelizing will be strongly encouraged.

130. One will also see to it that everyone (consecrated brothers and sisters, married couples, clerics and other ministers) receives the specific training which his or her personal vocation requires, in accordance with the present Statutes and the Directory.

131. However, one will be careful to allow the houses situated in different cultural backgrounds to adapt the tenor of the training to the local realities.

7.2 SHEPHERDS AND PERSONS IN CHARGE

132. Care will be given to provide the Shepherds with the formation needed in human support and spiritual direction for the running of the life of a house in its spiritual, human and material aspects. For this purpose, training sessions will be organized for young Shepherds and future Superiors. In the years where the General Chapter (§ 215) will not be taking place, a meeting lasting a week should be organized, if possible, so that the Shepherds can come together for a time of prayer, teaching and sharing of experiences, and preoccupations. These meetings will also provide an opportunity to put into practice the guidelines of the General Chapter and promote common apostolic actions.

8. STRUCTURE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE COMMUNITY

8.1. THE HOUSES

8.1.1. *In general*

133. Within the structure of the Community, the basic unit is the *autonomous house*. It consists in a certain number of brothers and sisters living under one roof or in various buildings sufficiently close to one another to allow for real communal life, under the authority of one and the same person responsible for that house called the "*Shepherd*", aided by the *House Council*.
(§ 164ss).

134. A large house can, if necessary, be split up into different living areas with a relative autonomy, called "maisonettes". Each maisonette will have its own superior who will guide the life of the maisonette, under the authority of the Shepherd. The Superiors will make up the House Council. A maisonette Superior may choose a smaller Council for his maisonette if he or she feels it necessary.

135. The formation of other places of community life can be envisaged which are not houses in the true sense of the word, but an extension of an existing house. An extension is run by a superior, named by the Shepherd and the House Council. He will exercise his task in submission to the Shepherd. An extension may be called to develop and become, with the agreement of the Moderator General and his Council, (§ 141), a house in its own right.

136. Each house, in its own way and according to its own grace, is a depository of the Community's vocation, which it wishes to bring to full maturity by living according to its spirit and its Statutes. It will be helped and counseled by the various bodies set up by the Community to favor brotherly communion in close relationship with all the other houses of the Beatitudes.

137. Each house has a personal identity due to its geographical position, its ministry, its insertion into the local Church, the personality of its Shepherd and of the brothers and sisters within it. This identity will be esteemed and respected by the other houses to encourage a healthy diversity within the Community.

138. Each autonomous house welcomes Probationers (§9) who wish to become members of the Community. It must take steps to discern their call and provide them with formation, using the methods already set-up on a provincial and general level. It develops its own charitable and apostolic works. It is administratively and economically autonomous.

139. The houses must live in communion with one and other, under the vigilance of the Provincial and general authorities of the Community in accordance with the present Statutes. All the houses of the Community, like members of the same family, are effectively called to a deep communion of spirit and prayer with one another, which should express itself through reciprocal assistance at every level: financial with regard to formation, and in apostolic and other activities. This assistance must be exercised in a privileged way at a Provincial level, but also in regard to the Community as a whole.

8.1.1. *In general (cont.)*

140. Persuaded that in all areas, "almsgiving enriches" (St. Francis de Sales), the houses will not jealously keep useful brothers and sisters for themselves, but will allow them to offer their services, if they feel the call, to other houses which are more in need of them, especially to answer calls in the area of missions.

8.1.2. *Foundation and closure of a house*

141. Every project to open a foundation, whether it comes from a Province or other source, must be agreed upon by the Moderator General and his Council, who will verify the opportunity of such a foundation. It must offer prospects of being able to insert itself into the local Church, welcome members in sufficient number, be self-sufficient economically, be able to give basic formation to Probationers and have a certain apostolic outlook.

142. It is understood that the new foundation must receive the consent of the Bishop of the diocese in which it will be opened. (§ 177)

143. For the opening of a new house, a brother or sister will be named its head as the Shepherd, according to § 149.

144. Of course one will have at heart to open a house with brothers and sisters who are stable and adequately formed, and whose vocation has been well tested. They should also have the necessary competence.

145. A new house will be under the particular vigilance of the Provincial or, if it is not yet part of a Province, a member of the General Council will be delegated by the Moderator General to follow the house and its initial development.

146. The Shepherd of the new house, especially if he is new to this role, will be expected to consult the Provincial (or his delegate, as in the explanation above) concerning all important decisions, and inform him of the life and development of his house, being attentive to his indications and advice. Where the Provincial sees non-adherence or unfaithfulness to the Community's vocation or other major difficulties in the new house, he can intervene and, if necessary, advise the Moderator General who will do what is necessary to resolve the situation.

147. It is the Moderator General and his Council who have the authority to decide upon the closure of a house and the disposal of the property belonging to it. The decision to close can only take place after consultation with the Diocesan Bishop. The members of the house will go to other houses of the Community, decided by the Provincial (§ 69).

8.1.4. *Shepherds and their appointment*

148. Each autonomous house is led by a **Shepherd** aided by a **House Council** which is representative of the different states of life in the house, chosen from the brothers and sisters who have sufficient seniority and maturity to help him in his or her charge

8.1.4. *Shepherds and their appointment (cont.)*

149. The Shepherd of a house is appointed by the Moderator General, after consultation with the Provincial and his Council. Before the nomination is put into effect, the permanently committed brothers and sisters of the house will be consulted so that the nomination is welcomed. The Shepherd is appointed for a period of four years, and is issued with a mission letter stating the tasks with which he has been entrusted. The nomination can be renewed at the end of four years but only after a vote of acceptance by the permanently committed brothers and sisters.

150. A brother or sister who has never been Shepherd will be nominated for a period of two years, at the end of which the permanently committed brothers and sisters will express by voting whether or not he or she is to continue in that function. If the vote is positive, the Shepherd will be confirmed in his or her role for a further four years by the Moderator General, with the agreement of his Council.

151. The person in charge of a house can be a married man or a consecrated brother or sister, if possible permanently committed. He will be chosen with care and should have the necessary human, emotional and spiritual maturity. He or she should have sufficient experience in the areas of: the vocation of the Community, being a model with regard to the spirit of prayer, understanding of the Church, forgetfulness of self and impartiality in eager service of the Kingdom.

152. The Moderator General can ask a Shepherd or person in charge, in the case of a serious fault or if faced with difficulties of such a nature that he can no longer adequately fulfil his role, to resign his office. Before coming to such a decision the Moderator General will ask an extraordinary visitor of the (§ 175) house and then submit the question to the General Council for its opinion. If a Shepherd, for reasonable and serious reasons, asks to be discharged, he can be but with the consent of the Moderator General and his Council.

153. The Moderator General can, when necessary and after having consulted the Provincial, move a Shepherd to another responsibility. For this, he needs the permission of the General Council. The brothers and sisters of the house will also be consulted before moving a Shepherd who has not yet come to the end of his mandate.

8.1.4. *The Shepherd's role, his powers and limits*

154. The Shepherd assumes responsibility for the orientations of his or her house on the spiritual, apostolic, and charitable level. He or she sees to the spiritual and human formation and growth of the brothers and sisters of his or her house. He or she is responsible for unity within his or her house, its communion with the whole body of the Community, for the faithfulness of his or her house to the personal vocation of the Community, and its insertion both in the life of the local and the universal Church.

155. He or she is expected to maintain filial relations with the local Bishop and promote the insertion of his or her house into the local Church (§ 176-180).

156. He or she is also responsible for the healthy running of the economic life of his or her house in accordance with the present Statutes, canon and civil law.

8.1.4. The Shepherd's role, his powers and limits (cont.)

157. The Shepherds must see to it that they are helped locally their or her task by brothers and sisters of their choice and by the House Council, who can take on the responsibility of formation, accountancy, spiritual accompaniment etc. They also receive outside help, at their request, from the Provincial and general services of the Community.

158. They will see to the formation of the brothers and sisters regarding their state of life, and that the means be made available for growth in their own vocation.

159. They will listen to the brothers and sisters with regard to their personal vocation, so that they may live in the house most suitable to them as far as the rhythm of spiritual life and apostolic activities are concerned.

160. They will seek to achieve the full insertion of their house in the life of the Province and the Region to which they belong and to remain in close communion with the whole body of the Community and its provincial, regional, and general authorities.

161. They will see to it that their house is regularly visited and will allow all the members of their house to speak freely with the Visitor (§ 171ss). They will take the initiative in requesting such visits if they need help and advice to resolve the difficulties with which their house is confronted.

162. The Shepherds need the agreement of the Provincial for the following decisions:

- to admit a brother or sister to permanent commitment or to vows of consecrated celibacy, of a temporary or permanent nature (§ 15, 19, 88, 91),
- to dismiss a temporary committed brother or sister or to refuse a temporary consecrated brother or sister permission to renew his vows (cf. § 17, 94),
- to allow a brother or sister to leave their house for another one (§ 69),
- to allow a brother or sister to live more than two months outside the Community (§ 70),
- to incur expenses superior to those defined in the Directory, for which they need the permission of the Provincial,
- to develop a new apostolic activity on a fairly large scale (§ 224),
- to allow a brother to enter seminary,
- to allow a married brother to study with a view to becoming a permanent deacon,

(N.B. If the Shepherd is a Provincial all these requests for agreement are to be addressed to the Provincial Council.)

8.1.4. *The Shepherd's role, his powers and limits (cont.)*

163. The Shepherds require the consent of the Moderator General for the following decisions:

- to change the apostolic orientation of their house,
- to dismiss a permanently committed brother or sister (§ 23),
- to commit themselves to economic activity greater than that defined in the Directory, which would require the permission of the Moderator General.

8.1.5. *The House Council and the Shepherd's assistants*

164. The House Council must represent the living reality of the house i.e. states of life and apostolic activities. If, particularly at the beginning of a new foundation, the Shepherds or persons in charge do not have enough brothers or sisters to set up a Council they will choose at least one assistant. They will also consult the Provincial or the person designated to follow the development of their house (§ 145) in situations which would normally require consultation with the House Council.

165. The counselors are appointed for one year. The Shepherds form the Council choosing from brothers and sisters who are at least temporarily committed. The composition of the Council must then be approved by a vote of the temporarily or permanently committed members of their house.

166. The House Council assists the Shepherds in their role and must meet together at least twice a month. The Shepherds consult their Council regarding important decisions to be taken, such as changes in the rhythm of life of the house, allocation of the various ministries, starting new apostolic activities, deciding on works or costly expenditure, etc. They will also consult the Council on the various community commitments as specified in the present Statutes.

167. The agreement of the House Council is necessary for the following decisions:

- ask a Postulant to leave (§ 13),
- to allow a brother or sister to become a Postulant (§ 11), temporarily or permanently committed (§ 15 & 19), make temporary or permanent vows (§ 90 & 91),
- to allow a brother to apply for Seminary,
- nomination spiritual guides; bursars,
- take extraordinary acts of administration as defined in the Directory.

8.1.6. *Community meetings*

168. The Shepherds will regularly call a meeting of all the members of their house. Those meetings will be privileged moments to strengthen fraternal links in a family climate; to teach and encourage all to remain faithful to the vocation of the Community; to share news concerning other houses and the life of the Community as a whole; to communicate the decisions taken by the various authorities; to ask the advice of the brothers and sisters on certain questions, and to widen the horizon of the house to the life of the whole Church, etc.

8.1.6. Community meetings (cont.)

169. Once a year, under the presidency of the Shepherd, a day's meeting will be held with all the permanently committed members of the house as an occasion to listen to the Holy Spirit together in prayer and share upon the orientation of the life in their house.

8.1.7. House Visits

170. Each house must have a Visitor, chosen for a period of four years which can be renewed.

171. The Visitor will be chosen by the Moderator General after consultation with the Shepherd. He will be selected from a list of Visitors established by the Moderator General and his Council, in which are listed members of the General Council, of the Plenary Council and, if need be, other members of the Community appreciated for their maturity and discernment. If the house changes Shepherd, the mandate of the Visitor also expires so as to allow a new Visitor to be chosen.

Ordinary visits

172. The visits will occur at least once every year. The Visitors provide the Shepherd, the Moderator General and the Provincial with a report on their visit, in which they give their impressions of the house, those elements which are positive but also any abnormal situations which have been observed. In no way do they intervene outside the period of their visit in the life of the house, unless asked to do so by the Shepherd or the Moderator General. How to conduct a visit is defined in the Directory.

173. The purpose of these visits is to allow the Shepherd to be helped by someone not belonging to his house, in his discernment on the life of the house, its orientations, its spiritual and apostolic vitality, and its faithfulness to the grace of the Community. They are a means of communion between each house and the rest of the Community. They also ensure that brothers and sisters of a house have the freedom to speak openly to someone in authority other than the Shepherd. The visits are an occasion to check that everyone is growing and blossoming in the house and in their ministry, and that the necessary training is available to him.

174. Particular care will be taken of the recent foundations or those houses where the Shepherd is new to his role; these will be visited more frequently.

Extraordinary visits

175. Should serious difficulties arise in a house, then "extraordinary visits" will occur, either at the request of the Shepherd or upon the Provincial or Moderator General's insistence. If the request rests with the latter, then two Visitors will be sent, one chosen by the Moderator General, and the other by the Shepherd, selected from among the college of Visitors. They will produce a written report in common, a copy of which is sent to the Moderator General, the Provincial and the Shepherd.

8.1.8. Insertion of the houses in the life of the universal and local Church

176. Each house will set its heart on being a "daughter of the Church", by praying for the needs and intentions of the universal Church. They will participate in the great events which mark its life

8.1.8. *Insertion of the houses in the life of the universal and local Church (cont.)*

and contribute, whenever possible, to the good and the up-building of the Church. The brothers will manifest filial affection to the Holy Father, principally expressed through prayer and through obediently welcoming his teachings and guidelines.

177. No house may be founded without the local bishop's permission. No foundation will be started that would not be beneficial to the local Church, except in the case of a house opened solely for the purpose of serving an internal need of the Community. The life of each house is lived under the vigilance of the bishop of the diocese, according to Canon Law (c. 305), and in a spirit of trustful and filial obedience to his pastoral ministry.

178. Each house will do its utmost to integrate itself in the life of the local Church: particularly in the diocese and in the parish and to maintain relations of fraternal communion with all the other realities expressed in the Church, with the clergy, religious institutions, movements, and associations, etc.

179. Each house will respond, according to its resources, to the needs and requests of the local Church in offering its services in many different ways: catechism, liturgy, visiting the sick, various pastoral activities, formation, responsibilities at parish or diocesan level, etc.

180. However, in serving the Church, each house will remain faithful to its own charism. In particular, one will see to it that if members of the Community are engaged in Church activities, they should not be so on a purely individual level, but as members of the Community, with its specific grace, so that in rendering this service, their own identity be recognized and they be sustained by the house they belong to.

8.1.9. *House Chaplains*

181. A house who has no priest of the Community can, having received confirmation from the bishop of the diocese (c. 324 § 2), call on the services of a chaplain not a member of the Community but who may live in the house. He must be a man of peace, in total communion with the local bishop and the whole Church with the required formation and piety to understand the spiritual ways of God. He will respect the legitimate customs of the Community during liturgical celebrations, such as the observance of an adequate time of silence after Communion. He will celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation without confusing it with spiritual direction, if the latter has not been expressly asked of him. He must be a factor of unity and not encroach on the role of the Shepherd or of the other persons in charge.

8.2. THE PROVINCE

8.2.1. *Definition*

182. The Province comprises a number of houses, situated in a same geographical area, and entrusted to the care of the Shepherd of one of those houses, called "Provincial".

183. It is the Plenary Council who has the authority to establish as a Province a group of houses, after having consulted the Shepherds concerned. A Province must consist in at least five houses.

8.2.1. Definition (cont.)

A smaller Province can, however, be formed on a provisional basis with three houses, with a view to developing itself or being attached to an existing Province.

184. A Province can be subdivided into regions (according to the linguistic or other criteria), with an Assistant Provincial responsible for each region. It is the Provincial who decides upon the constitution of the regions, with the agreement of the Shepherds, and it is also he who nominates the Assistant Provincials and defines their duties.

185. A house of the Community which does not belong to any Province is, on a temporary basis, directly subordinated to the Moderator General, who will nominate a person to watch over it, after consultation with the Shepherd. The Shepherd of that house will refer to this person any decisions that require the Provincial's agreement, as specified in the Statutes. (§ 162).

8.2.2. The Provincial and his Council

186. The Provincial is elected for four years by the Moderator General with the agreement of his Council. The nomination must be preceded by consultation with the Shepherds who will then vote on the matter. The Provincial must be a permanently committed member of the Community. He or she must have sufficient maturity and necessary prudence, as well as the trust of the brothers and sisters. The Provincial should not be a Shepherd of a house as well as Provincial, except in those cases where it is impossible to do otherwise.

187. The Provincial is helped by a Council of at least two members, elected from the Shepherds of the Province according to the procedures outlined in the Directory.

188. The Provincial's role is to attend to the life of the Province, to promote its unity, its spiritual and apostolic vitality, its faithfulness to the vocation of the Community and to encourage a close collaboration between the houses. He or she can set up, on a provincial scale, various services orientated towards helping in the areas of training, apostolic activities, administration, etc. He or she will be attentive to the requirements of each house, to which he or she will try to respond, particularly in the need for brothers and sisters. He or she will attend to the growth of the Community, studying and discerning the possibility of new foundations. He or she will encourage times between the house of the Province, for Community Ceremonies, times of sharing, formation, and relaxation.

189. The Provincial will, in agreement with his Council, designate a "representative" in each Province, representing each state of life: couples, singles, consecrated brothers, consecrated sisters. These members will ensure that the brothers and sisters in all these states of life have the necessary formation available to them, so as to flourish in their vocation.

190. The Provincial acts as an intermediary between the Province and the Moderator General. He or she informs the latter on the Province's life, projects, needs, difficulties. He or she transmits the general decisions taken, adapting them to the local context. He or she sits in the Plenary Council (§ 211) and represents the Province. He or she informs the Moderator General and his Council on the deliberations and decisions of the Plenary Council (cf. §20, 58, 59, 145, 152, 163, 171, 210).

8.2.2. *The Provincial and his Council (cont.)*

191. The Provincial requires the agreement of the Provincial Council for the following decisions:

- to agree to a Shepherd receiving the final commitment or the perpetual vows of a brother or sister (§ 19, 91),
- to nominate a bursar for the Province,
- designate the representatives for the families and the consecrated members § 189),
- to dismiss a temporarily committed brother or sister (§ 17), or not to allow a consecrated brother or sister to renew his/her vows (§ 94),
- to take administrative acts greater than those defined in the Directory.
- to accept the application of a brother to become a Permanent Deacon (§ 122).

192. The Provincial will call to a Provincial Meeting at least once every three months the Shepherds of his Province. This authority has as its goal the encouragement of unity and co-operation between the different houses in the Province, allowing the Shepherds to have a time of sharing and to support each other mutually, to encourage spiritual and apostolic dynamism in each of the houses, to promote common activities in the Province (apostolate, formation, etc.), and supervising the implementation of decisions which have been taken at higher levels. The Provincial Meeting also has the role of encouraging the integration of Community life into the particular context of the Province

193. It is desirable that from time to time a member of the General Council attend the meetings of the Provincial Council to broaden the overall vision of the Community in the world and so that the general government of the Community has a concrete knowledge of the Province.

8.4. THE GENERAL AUTHORITIES

8.4.1. *The Moderator General*

194. The general government of the Community is undertaken by the Moderator General, assisted by the General Council. The Moderator General is called upon to get things moving, to stimulate and to co-ordinate the life of the Community of the Beatitudes as a whole, encouraging it to remain faithful to its personal vocation, to respect the rule of life, furthering its insertion in the Church, its unity, its spiritual and apostolic vitality. He exercises his authority with respect to the whole Community according to the law of the Church, the present Statutes, and the guidelines of the General Chapters.

195. He represents the Community in the eyes of the Church.

196. He convenes and chairs the General Council (§ 198ss), the Plenary Council (§ 211) and the General Chapter (§ 214ss). He is in regular contact with the General Counselors whom he consults on all important decisions.

8.4.1. *The Moderator General (cont.)*

197. The Moderator General is elected by the General Chapter (§ 221) for a period of four years. His mandate can be renewed, but he needs two-thirds of the first vote to be re-elected for a third mandate. If he is Shepherd of a house, he will abandon that charge so as to be totally available to the Community. He can either be a married man, or a consecrated celibate brother or sister. He must be permanently committed to the Community.

8.3.2. *The General Council and the Moderator's Assistants*

198. The General Council helps the Moderator General in his role of stimulating and coordinating the life of the Community as a whole. It is composed of at least five members. All states of life must be represented (married couples, consecrated celibate sisters, consecrated brothers, priests). Its composition must also reflect the international dimension of the Community. The number of General Counselors is decided upon by the General Chapter before electing the latter (§ 221). The members of the General Chapter must all be permanently committed to the Community.

199. The Priests' Superior (§ 104ss) is automatically a member of the General Council. The other members are elected by the General Chapter (§ 221).

200. One or several of the members of the General Council are appointed by the Moderator General to help him more closely with his role. One of them is appointed by the Moderator General as the General Assistant and replaces the former should he be unavoidably prevented from fulfilling his duty, and acts in his place in case of resignation.

201. During deliberations of the General Council, a couple counts as one member and has one vote. The Moderator General does not take part in the vote.

202. The General Council can invite a member of the Community to join in its debates because of his specific skills without, however, the right to vote.

203. The General Council meets at least every three months. It is called together and chaired by the Moderator General, who fixes the agenda after having consulted his Counselors. All the Shepherds are free to make suggestions over the content of the agenda, transmitting them to their Provincial or to the Moderator General.

8.3.3. *Role and function of general moderation*

204. The Moderator General, assisted by the General Council, ensures that the different governing bodies (on a local and provincial level) function as they should, that the decisions of the General Chapter are put into practice, and that the authority exercised in the houses is respectful of the brothers and sisters.

205. It puts into place the general services necessary for the Community and designates their superiors: general bursary, general secretary, brothers' and sisters' formation, formation and accompaniment of families, the consecrated, priests, diverse commissions.

8.3.3. *Role and function of general moderation (cont.)*

206. It pays attention to the existence of a healthy administrative and economical life in the Community in accordance with the Statutes as well as canon and civil law: bursars, economic and judicial advisory services. It also works for a spirit of sharing and solidarity.

207. It orientates and stimulates all that is carried out in the area of brothers' and sisters' formation, especially that of the Shepherds.

208. It is the authority one refers to as a last resort to resolve difficulties or to attend to certain needs where the authorities lower in rank (houses, Regions, or Provinces) are incompetent or powerless.

209. It supervises the growth of the Community, decides on the opportunity for new foundations and names those in charge of them. It can also respond to calls of the Church in encouraging foundations, to promote new orientations of the Community or new houses in areas where the Community's presence could be useful.

210. The Moderator General requires the General Council's consent for the following decisions:

- to dismiss permanently engaged members (§ 21),
- to exempt finally professed members of their vows (§ 95),
- to allow finally professed members exempted of their vows to remain members of the Community (§ 36)
- to found a new house and name the brother or sister in charge (§ 141, 149),
- to entrust a Shepherd with another responsibility,
- nominate a Provincial (§ 186),
- designate the Priests' Superior,
- make a proposal to a Bishop as to which ministry is appropriate for a priest of the Community (§ 108),
- suggest the Rector and Formation Team of a seminary to the Bishop concerned,
- accept a donation from a temporarily committed member (§59) and take extraordinary economical administrative acts defined in the Directory ,
- to nominate the General Bursar (§ 234-235),
- to decide on the closing down of a house and the distribution of its resources (§147),
- to decides the agenda of a General Chapter (§ 214),

8.3.3. *Role and function of general moderation (cont.)*

- to call together an Extraordinary General Chapter (§ 215).

8.3.4. *The Plenary Council*

211. The Plenary Council is composed of the General Council and all the Provincials. The Moderator General can ask those members responsible for services or apostolates to be present on a consultative basis.

212. It normally meets twice a year, once before General Chapters. If required, the Moderator General can call for an extraordinary meeting.

213. It is an instrument available for consultation and sharing with a view to helping the general government in its task by supplying it with a broader and fuller vision of the life of the Community. It helps the General Council in deciding upon composition of the General Chapter, the number of representatives in each Province, and how to vote. It decides on the establishment of Regions and Provinces as well as on any changes to the latter.

8.4 THE GENERAL COUNCIL

8.4.1 *Composition and convening*

214. The General Chapter is composed of three categories of members, who all have one vote:

members by right: the Moderator General, the members of the General Council and the Provincials,

designated members: by the General Council (representatives of services or large apostolates), who must not number more than ten per cent of the Chapter,

members elected in the Provinces, who are at least the same in number as the aforementioned. The number of provincial representatives is proportional to its numerical importance and fixed by the Plenary Council. All the permanently committed members of the Community are eligible to attend and to vote. Those elected in a Province must represent the different states of life in the Community (couples, single brothers, single sisters, the consecrated, priests) and at least one Shepherd.

215. It is convened at least every four years, called together by the Moderator General. An Extraordinary General Chapter may be convened at the Moderator General's request, with the agreement of his Council, for a serious and imperative reason concerning the whole Community.

216. Its agenda is put forward by the Moderator in agreement with his Council, all the participants having the possibility of contributing their suggestions, and approved by the same Chapter at its opening session.

8.4.2 *Role and competence*

217. The General Chapter is the supreme decision-taking body concerning the great orientations of the life of the Community. It is also a place favorable to prayer, reflection, exchange and communion. It allows the members to strengthen the communion between them, which finds its source in an ever deeper understanding of God's project for the Community, and to have a growing desire that the Holy Spirit will help them reach unanimity in perceiving His plans and adhering to His will.

218. For its decisions to be valid, two thirds of its members must be present.

219. It can issue regulations for the whole Community, in accordance with the Statutes. They are kept in the "Directory" and remain in force until they are revoked or modified or by another General Chapter.

220. It can suggest modifying the Statutes of the Community by a two-thirds majority. Any such amendments will have, of course, to be approved by the competent ecclesiastical authority.

221. It elects the Moderator General and the General Council by the procedure in the Directory. These elections are prepared in consultation with the Shepherds.

9. THE APOSTOLIC ACTIVITIES

9.1. APOSTOLIC AND CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES OF A HOUSE

222. Each house wishing to participate in the mission of the Church must desire, according to its own grace and the possibilities available, to undertake apostolic activities in aid of the proclamation of the Gospel and of the service of the poor. These activities will be entrusted either by the diocesan Bishop or other authorities of the local Church, such as the parish, or will be undertaken (with the Bishop's agreement of course) at the Community's own initiative (cc. 211 & 225). The Shepherd of the house is responsible for the good progress of each apostolic activity, its healthy insertion into the life of the local Church and its conformity with the legislation and the doctrine of the Church.

223. Any apostolic activity in a specific locality will, of course, be undertaken with the consent and under the authority of the bishop of the diocese, according to the norms of the universal and particular law.

224. The Shepherd of a house will neither set up nor undertake an apostolic or charitable activity of relatively large proportions without first consulting the Provincial, so as to ensure co-ordination between all the apostolic activities undertaken by the Community in the same Province.

225. No member of the Community will take an active part in a political party or of a trade union, unless the Provincial and the Provincial Council esteem it to be necessary in order to defend the rights of the Church or the common good.

9.2. APOSTOLIC ACTIVITIES COMMON TO SEVERAL HOUSES

226. Certain apostolic and charitable activities (entrusted by the Church or undertaken at the Community's initiative) can be taken charge of by several houses within the Region, the Province, or even the whole Community, by generously donating brothers' and sisters' services. The grace and strength of evangelization in the Community is due in part to its capacity to get mobilized in common actions. They allow the brothers and sisters to be knitted together and form a spirit of unity, making each person come out of his or her isolation and possible individualistic attitudes in his or her ministry. They are a living witness and visibly show what they live as the Church for the world.

227. Those in charge of these apostolic activities will run them in submission to the Shepherds and Provincials of the houses who have taken them on. They will present an annual report on their activity.

228. The Moderator General, helped by his Council, will see to the co-ordination of the various apostolic activities of the Community. He will settle eventual conflicts. He may stimulate the development of apostolic activities in areas which he feels are urgent or have been neglected. It is his duty to intervene should an apostolic activity not appear to be faithful to the spirit of the Community or undertaken in communion with the doctrine and the life of the Church.

9.3. WELCOMING THE POOR

229. The houses of the Community remain wide open to welcome "the poor our lords," (Saint Vincent de Paul). Hospitality is not optional but a vital necessity. Even if it is not possible to welcome all forms of poverty in all the houses, and discernment should be exercised in each case, one will consider it as a joy, not as a burden, the fact of having in our houses and sharing our life in every way, persons who are poor, materially, humanly, in their health, with emotional and psychological wounds. We have to remember the words of Our Lord: "What you did to the least of my brethren, you did unto me." (Matt. 25:40) One will not refuse, without a pressing reason, to offer food and lodging for at least one night to whoever knocks at our door.

230. In order to allow for an insertion of the poor in the Community a certain flexibility and freedom will be observed in organizing the life of the houses, in applying the concrete demands of the rule of life, etc., always giving priority to charity over a rigid observance of the rule.

10. ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

10.1. In general

231. The General Moderation of the Community, as well as the Provinces and the houses, have the right, according to the legislation of the Church and the present Statutes, to acquire, possess, administrate and dispose of their temporal resources, in line with what is necessary in the pursuit of the spiritual, apostolic and charitable needs of the Community.

232. Management of the resources in the Community must be undertaken in a spirit of responsibility, prudence and trusting surrender to Providence, seeking to share with the poor, to preserve evangelical simplicity and poverty, avoiding any striving after luxury and profit. Those

in a position of responsibility and the administrators, as well as all brothers and sisters will constantly

10.1. *In general (cont.)*

remember that they are only the managers and not the owners of the resources at their disposal, the latter being available in order to serve the Kingdom and the poor.

233. The Moderator General and his Council as well as the Provincials will supervise the administration of goods in the Community and they must intervene should they note any negligence or serious abuse in this area.

234. The administration of all goods of the Community are managed by the legitimate superiors: those of the General Moderation by the Moderator General, those of the Province by the Provincial, and those of a house by the Shepherd.

235. The above-mentioned Superiors will be helped by their own Economic Council of at least two people. The ordinary administration of goods will be carried out by a Bursar, under their authority.

236. The Superiors and Bursars will manage the goods and resources of the Community and those of their apostolates according to their spiritual ends, in conformity with canon and civil law. They will be sure to take account of the present Statutes and the Directory and ask the necessary authority when seeking to take extraordinary acts of administration, such as: acceptance and use of certain donations, important disposal and acquisitions, soliciting financial help.

237. One will be mindful to maintain a climate of "transparency" in relation to any money and its use. The accounts of the houses and the apostolic activities, of the Province, the General Moderation, may be examined by the authorities mentioned in the Directory.

238. In the case of a resource being subject to civil law or being property of an association, a company or other, the majority of the members of these associations must, where possible, be members of the Community. They will remember that in regard to the law of the Church, these goods are the property of the Community and they will conduct themselves accordingly.

239. In its concern to trust in Providence, which provides for that which is necessary on a daily basis, the Community does not commit itself to borrowing or saving up money or goods which do not go toward a precise spiritual or apostolic goal. Neither is it permissible to lend money with interest.

240. The Administrators and Bursars will take care to keep original documents, such as property deeds, contracts of sale or buying, written orders, accounts. Copies of these will be sent to the Archives of the Community, according to the directives in the Directory.

10.2. DONATIONS

241. The Community may receive donations, but the will of the donor must always be respected when administering temporal resources. Inheritances or donations will not be accepted without the permission of the Moderator General.

242. Once the tithe has been set aside (§ 244 ss), a house may freely use the donations received, unless the value of a donation exceeds certain ceilings fixed by the General Chapter, and which

10.2. DONATIONS (CONT.)

are specified in the Directory. In this case, the question of its use will be submitted to the Provincial or the Moderator General. Before using a donation, the Shepherds will ask themselves if the use they are about to make of the corresponds to a real need or whether a poorer house, another institution, or person would not benefit by it, even if at least partially.

243. Gifts received by a member of the Community (temporarily or permanently committed) belong to his house. Only with the Shepherd's permission may he use sums of money or objects received as a gift for his personal use.

10.2. TITHING

244. Since the beginnings of the Community we have believed in living in a spirit of poverty, surrendering to Providence. Experience has shown us that abundance provided by Providence depends on our unselfishness, our faithfulness to serve, but also on our capacity to share what we receive from the Lord. Consequently, each house of the Community pays every month a tenth of all its income and donations into a central account, either Provincial or General, according to the Directory.

245. Tithing is a privileged instrument towards solidarity between the different houses and activities of the Community and sharing with those who are poorer than ourselves. The tithing receipts will be used to sustain houses in difficulty or in the process of being founded, so that certain urgent needs of houses or members of the Community may be met and also to help the poor outside the Community and support charitable or Church activities.

246. The concrete rules governing the functioning of the tithing principle, as well as the general instructions as to the latter's use, have been decided by the General Chapter and are indicated in the Directory. It is the responsibility of the Moderator General and the Provincials to see to their enforcement. They regularly examine the report on the tithing receipts and their use, and they report back on the subject to the General Chapter.

10.4 SOCIAL PROTECTION OF MEMBERS

247. All members should benefit from sufficient social cover in respect of the legislation of the country and according to the eventual directives of the Episcopal Conference. To that purpose, community based solidarity funds may be set up, if required, in the respective countries or Provinces and administered under the responsibility of all the Provincials concerned.

10. OTHER REALITIES LINKED TO THE COMMUNITY

11.1. IN GENERAL

248. In no way does the Community own the gifts and the grace it has received from the Lord. The latter extends far beyond its legal structure and reaches a large number of people, who live according to its spirit, co-operate in its apostolic activities, support it through prayer and material aid and truly participate in its charism without, however, being called to become full members of the Community structure as defined in the present Statutes. Those who are called may enter into certain varied forms of integration in the Community and in sharing different aspects of its life, its prayer, its apostolic activities, etc. Each case will be dealt with individually in a flexible manner and the rights and duties it entails will be specified, under the supervision of the Moderator General and the Provincials. Without being exclusive, the following paragraphs describe several actual modes of participation in the charism of the Community.

11.2 THE ASSOCIATES

249. These are persons who live in the heart of the Community on a long-term basis, being an integral part of the "family" of the house, without assuming the Community's vocation. They are called to share its life for several reasons: for a time of spiritual and human reconstruction, because the Community offers them a spirituality and atmosphere which corresponds to their hopes and needs.

250. Regarding the Associates and the Community, the following aspects are described in the Directory:-

- their reciprocal rights and expectations,
- what the Community requests of Associates in regards to prayer-life, sharing of material goods, the spirit of poverty, obedience and fraternity. is precisely stated,

They will have the opportunity of making an annual commitment.

11.3 THE BEATITUDES OF THE HOLY FAMILY

251. A "*Beatitude of the Holy Family*" is a group of persons who desire to live a real commitment in the spirit of the Community, without living in the same house but living as members closely linked to the Community. They may be families or singles, living close to one another, principally one house away. They are directly linked to one another, without constituting an autonomous group. Their specific vocation is to live according to the spirit of the Beatitudes, where they are, and to collaborate in the apostolic activities of the Community. They have their own rule of life, approved by the General Chapter and described in the Directory

11.4 FRIENDS OF THE LAMB

252. "*Friends of the Lamb*" are persons of all walks of life who wish to share in the spirituality of the Community of the Beatitudes remaining, nevertheless, in the world. Their wish is to place at the center of their lives the desire for the Kingdom to come, to live in faithfulness to the

Gospel, in prayer, and in serving of their neighbor. Likewise they wish to enter with the whole Community

11.4 FRIENDS OF THE LAMB (CONT.)

in an explicit bond of spiritual communion and brotherly assistance, in order to be nourished by its own grace and help it concretely in its mission and apostolic activities.

253. Each "*Friend of the Lamb*" is linked with a house of the Community. It is the Shepherd of the house who discerns vocations, accepts their commitment and periodically organizes encounters between themselves and with the Community.

282. The "*Friends of the Lamb*" have a Charter of their own approved by the General Chapter of the Community, appearing in the Directory.

11.5 MOTHER OF MERCY

255. Mother of Mercy is an apostolate undertaken by lay friends of the Community of the Beatitudes, with the goal of promoting the culture of life. It was -and remains-initiated and co-ordinated - by this same community, the house of Cordes (Diocese of Albi) which is its spiritual cradle. Its activity is dependent on the devotion of thousands of people, non-members of the Community, who work voluntarily according to their own grace and calling, in the defense of human life, there where it is threatened and its dignity endangered, from the moment of its conception to the time it leaves its mother's womb. The spirit in which Mother of Mercy is run is precisely that of "*Evangelium Vitae*". From its beginning in France in 1982, Mother of Mercy has been invited, through the specificity of its action, to deploy its activity in many countries of the world, more often than not by the request of a Bishop. Its method is to plant a fraternity of allegiance, called "*Mission-Life*" (regrouping 10-15 people) working toward a specific, pre-determined goal which meets the needs of a particular local distress in the most adapted way in an explicit witness of Divine Mercy for the suffering. Mother of Mercy has its own Charter approved by the Archbishop of Albi.

11.6 FRATERNITIES OF CAMILLE DE LELLIS

256. A "*Fraternity of Camille de Lellis*" is a place of listening and hospitality in the diocesan Church, where "*psycho-spiritual*" accompaniment is offered to people in difficulty or who suffer and personally ask for this kind of help. The accompaniment is based on Christian anthropology, as it is taught by the Church, particularly in the house of the Community of the Beatitudes at "*Château St. Luc*" (diocese of Albi), in a course which looks at the three dimensions of the human being (physical, psychological and spiritual). A fraternity may include a priest, a Doctor, a Psychologist, the laity, and all those who pray and are capable of listening with compassion. They work together, not as a therapy group, but in sharing their experiences while accompanying them, in prayer and fraternal love. The three aspects physical, psychological, and spiritual are thoroughly distinguished because they reply to laws and different interventions, but they are not separated for as much since they are interdependent and belong to the same person, uniquely. The Fraternities of Camille de Lellis have their own Charter, approved by the Bishop of Amiens, France.

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