

RULE OF LIFE

A.A.

**Rule of Life
of the Congregation
of the
Augustinians of the Assumption**

Augustinians of the Assumption
(Assumptionists)
Via San Pio V, 55
00165 Rome, Italy

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Sons of Emmanuel d'Alzon

When God sees that his people are in need, He calls individuals. He gives them the grace to feel and to love as He does. He gives them the strength to act. He calls them and He sends them.

In the Church of the 19th century, Emmanuel d'Alzon was one such individual.

Sensitive by nature and by grace to the upheavals in his country and in the world in the aftermath of the French Revolution, he suffered whenever he saw God threatened in man and man threatened as the image of God.

He felt compelled to share with his brothers his own passion for the coming of the Kingdom of God as well as his passion for Jesus Christ and for everything that Jesus Christ loved.

On Christmas 1845, at Assumption College in Nîmes, he founded his first Assumptionist community. He wanted it to be modern, yet rooted in the tradition of the Church. He wanted it to be inspired by the teaching of Saint Augustine regarding the experience of God, fraternal life, love for the Church, and service to mankind in truth, unity and charity.

That is why he wanted us to be known in the Church as the Augustinians of the Assumption.

Founded in a school, the Congregation soon expanded beyond its walls. The Founder sensitized his first disciples to the great causes of

God and of man at that time: truth, faith, Church unity, vocations, the poor... He sent them along ways which were new and bold: seminaries for the poor, missions in the East, journalism, pilgrimages, ministry to working-class families...

Before all else, however, he invited them at the same time to “*seek the Reign of Jesus Christ in us and around us.*”

Born in Le Vigan in 1810, Emmanuel d'Alzon died in Nîmes in 1880. For more than a hundred years, this seed of religious life which God had entrusted to him has continued to spread and to take root a little everywhere in the world.

In 1855, he wrote the first Assumptionist Rule of Life. The present Rule, drawn up in 1983, bears the imprint of that first Rule and carries within itself the genes of its origins. Whoever is willing to read it and to live it in the spirit of the Founder will discover a way of living the Gospel.

This Rule carries traces of 130 years of Assumptionist history throughout the world. It is in the life of the communities and in the conscience of each religious that it will again bear fruit.

The Rule never stops calling those who are willing to listen... Like true disciples, let us heed the call.

Here and here alone, Assumption will find the secret of its vocation, of its common life, and of its mission in the Church, in the manner envisioned by Emmanuel d'Alzon.

Rome, November 21, 1984

Fr. Herve Stéphan,
A.A. Superior General

Rule of Saint Augustine

Translators' Note

The *Rule of Saint Augustine* appears here as a new translation based on the Latin critical edition prepared by Father Luc Verheijen.¹ Like Verheijen's text, it is divided, not into the traditional twelve chapters, but into eight chapters. The chapter headings were added by the translators. Three sources were especially valuable in trying to render Augustine's thought: Father Verheijen's own commentary, the Villanova translation published in 1942,² and the work of Father Athanase Sage.³

All scriptural quotations are drawn from the 1970 edition of *The New American Bible* published by the members of the Catholic Biblical Association of America.

Joseph G. Loisel, A.A.
Robert J. Fortin, A.A.

August 28, 1972
New York City

Rule for the servants of God

Prologue

¹ Luc Verheijen, *La Règle de Saint Augustin*, Etudes Augustiniennes, Paris, 1967, Vol. I and II.

² *The Rule of Our Holy Father, Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo*, trans. Francis E. Tourscher, O.S.A. and Robert P. Russell, O.S.A. Villanova, Pennsylvania, 1942.

³ Athanase Sage, A.A., *La Règle de saint Augustin commentée par ses écrits. La vie augustiniennne*, Paris, 1961.

[Before all else, dear Brothers, love God and love your neighbor, for these are the first commandments given to us.]⁴

I. Unanimity of mind and heart

- 1 Here are the rules we are directing you to observe in the monastery.⁵
- 2 First of all, since you have come together in community, live in a household of perfect harmony (Ps 67, 7), having but one mind and one heart intent on God.
- 3 Do not call anything your own, but hold everything in common. The distribution of food and clothing (1 Tm 6, 8) should be made by your Superior, not to all alike, because all do not enjoy the same health, but to each according to his need. For thus you read in the Acts of the Apostles:

⁴ Though considered part of the Rule, possibly since Ivo of Chartres, this first sentence is taken from the Prologue of the *Ordo Monasterii* and is not part of the original *Præcepta* (Rule). Verheijen thinks that Alipius wrote the *Ordo Monasterii* for the monastery of Tagaste and that Augustine approved it by writing its prologue and conclusion, but all scholars do not agree. Sage, for instance, thinks that Augustine wrote only its conclusion and that the rest, including this first sentence, was written by someone else. But, in any case, the *Ordo* and the original *Præcepta* were quickly brought together in a single document called the *Præceptum longius*. It was not until the twelfth century that the *Ordo* was dropped because it contained too many details which could no longer be observed. However, its first sentence, *Ante omnia...*, was retained as the Prologue to the *Rule*.

⁵ The *Præceptum*, which begins with the words *Hæc sunt*, was written by Saint Augustine most likely for the monastery of lay brothers at Hippo not long after his ordination to the priesthood. This monastery preceded the one he founded in that same city some years later after his episcopal consecration.

“Everything was held in common and distribution was made to each according to his need” (Acts 4, 32-35).

- 4 When those who held some wealth in the world come to the monastery, they should willingly place it in common.
- 5 When those who had nothing come to the monastery, they should not seek there what they could not have on the outside. You should, nevertheless, provide for their frailty according to their needs, even if their former poverty would not have permitted them to satisfy those same needs. However, they should not delight in having found the food and clothing they could not have had on the outside.
- 6 Nor should they carry their head high because they live with those whom they would not have dared approach in the world. On the contrary, they should lift up their hearts to higher things (Col 3, 1-2), instead of setting them on the vanities of the earth, lest the monastery become useful to the rich and not to the poor, a place where the rich become humble and the poor become proud.
- 7 In turn, those who enjoyed a certain prestige in the world (Gal 2, 2) should not look down upon their brothers who came to this holy society from a more humble condition. They should try to pride themselves less in the rank of wealthy parents than in their association with poor brothers. Furthermore, they should not boast of having contributed even a small part of their wealth to the common life, for fear that they become more proud for having shared it with the monastery than for having enjoyed it in the world. (Whereas all other vices suppose the practice of evil deeds in order to exist, pride conceals itself even in good deeds, but to destroy them.) And what advantage is there in giving to the poor (Ps 112, 9), or

even in becoming poor (Lk 18, 22), if the wretched soul becomes prouder for despising riches than for having possessed them (1 Cor 13, 3)?

- 8 Therefore, you should all live with one mind and one heart (Rom 15, 6) and, in each other, honor God whose temples you have become (1 Cor 3, 16; 2 Cor 6, 16).

II. Prayer

- 1 Be assiduous and punctual at the scheduled moments of prayer (Col 4, 2).
- 2 In the oratory, no one should engage in anything for which it was not intended and from which it takes its name, so that if, outside the appointed hours, some had the time and wanted to pray there, they might not be deterred by others who are doing something else.
- 3 When you pray to God in psalms and hymns, meditate in your hearts what your lips are uttering.
- 4 Sing only what is prescribed to be sung; do not sing what was not written for song.

III. Asceticism

- 1 To the extent that your health allows, subdue your flesh by fasting and abstaining from food and drink. However, those who cannot fast should not eat between meals unless they are ill.

- 2 From the beginning to the end of the meal, be attentive to what is read according to custom, avoiding commotion or discussion. Your mouth should not be alone in taking nourishment; your ears also should hunger for the Word of God (Am 8, 11, Mt 4, 4).
- 3 But if those who are frail because of their former life-style are granted a special diet, this ought not to appear offensive or unfair to the others whose different life-style made them more robust. Nor should they consider these brothers more fortunate simply because they eat differently. Rather, they should be thankful for their own strong health which the others do not enjoy.
- 4 Those who are stronger and therefore better off should not resent the exceptions which are made in the way of food, clothing, or bedding for those who come to the monastery from a more delicate way of life. On the contrary, they should consider how much these others have lowered their standard of living in order to reach their present one, even though they have not been able to attain the frugality of their stronger brothers. Nor should everyone desire the extras that are granted to only a few, more out of forbearance than out of deference, for it would be a deplorable perversion if in the monastery the rich were to become austere and the poor self-indulgent.
- 5 As for convalescents, just as they had to eat less during their illness not to worsen their condition, so after their illness they should be treated in a way that will hasten their recovery, even though they came from the poorest of the world. Indeed, their recent illness gives them the same need for special treatment which the rich receive because of their former way of life. But once they have regained their earlier strength, they should

return to their better habits which are all the more befitting the servants of God that they are less demanding, for, after their recovery, indolence should not keep them enslaved to this special treatment which their needs called for when they were ill. They should consider themselves richer for being able to sustain themselves on little. Indeed, it is better to want little than to have too much.

IV. Safeguarding celibacy

- 1** The habit⁶ you wear should not attract attention. Do not seek to please by your clothes but by your behavior.
- 2** When you go out, travel together. When you have reached your destination, remain together.
- 3** In your gait, in your bearing, in all your manners, avoid anything that might appear offensive to others. Rather, act always as befits the holiness of your calling.
- 4** Although you will cast your eyes upon women, do not let them become fixed on any one. When you go out, it is not forbidden to look at women; however, it is wrong to desire them and to want to be desired (Mt 5, 28). It is not only by touch and affection that mutual desire is aroused, but also by sight. Do not say you have a pure heart if your eyes are not chaste, for unchaste eyes are the sign of an impure heart. When lustful hearts are silently revealed to each other by

⁶ Because of the distinction Augustine makes between *habitus* and *vestis*, and because of the play on words found in Chapter V, 1 (“hinc vos probate quantum vobis desit in illo interiore *sancto habitu cordis*, qui *habitu corporis* litigatis”), it would seem that the word *habitus* used here might best be translated by habit, and not simply by *clothes*. (Italics supplied by translators.)

mutual glances and when, yielding to that lust, they take delight in their passion for one another, their lives are no longer chaste even though no physical impurity has been committed.

- 5 And he who fixes his eyes upon a woman and likes hers fixed upon him should not think that he goes unobserved by others. He is certainly seen, and by those he suspects the least. But even if this went unobserved by others, what would he do about that Observer from on high from whom nothing can be concealed? (Prv 24, 12) Does he think that He is blind just because in his greater wisdom He sees more patiently? The religious man should, therefore, fear to displease God, rather than sinfully desire to please a woman (Prv 24, 18). If he remembers that God sees everything, he will avoid sinfully seeing a woman, for it is precisely in this context that Scripture recommends fear: "*He who fixes his gaze is an abomination to the Lord*" (Prv 27, 20, quoted from the LXX).
- 6 When therefore you are together in church, or wherever there are women, help each other to remain chaste, for thus will God, who dwells in you (2 Cor 6, 16), protect you through one another.
- 7 If you notice in any of your brothers this lustful gaze of which I am speaking, admonish him at once in order to halt, by immediate correction, the advance of evil.
- 8 But if, at any other time after this admonition, any of you see him repeating the same fault, whoever discovers it should report him as a wounded man in need of treatment. Beforehand, however, expose the offense to a second or even to a third brother so that the delinquent may be convicted on the testimony of two or three and punished with due severity

(Mt 18, 15-17). Do not consider yourselves mean because you point out these faults. Quite to the contrary, you are not free from guilt if, by your silence, you permit the loss of brothers who might have been saved by timely correction. For if your brother had a physical wound which he wanted to conceal for fear of proper treatment, would it not be cruelty to say nothing, and mercy to reveal it? How much more, then, should you not uncover a more dangerous spiritual wound which may be festering in his heart?

- 9** If after your warning the offender refuses to correct himself, you should, even before bringing the offense to the knowledge of those who would convict him in the case of his denials, make it known to the Superior in order that your brother might be corrected more privately, without exposing him to others. But if he denies the fault, he should be confronted by the others so that in the presence of all he may be proven guilty, not on the indictment of one witness, but upon the testimony of two or three (1 Tm 5, 20). Thus inculcated, he should accept the salutary punishment imposed by the Superior or the Priest who has authority in this matter. If he refuses to submit to the punishment, yet will not leave on his own accord, expel him from your community. Once again, this is not cruelty but mercy, intended to prevent the ruin of many others through bad example.
- 10** And what I have said about not fixing one's gaze should also be observed carefully and faithfully with regard to the discovery, prevention, revelation, judgment and punishment of other sins, out of love for the person and hatred for the sin.
- 11** Should anyone be so advanced in sin as to secretly receive letters or small gifts from any woman, spare him and pray for him if he confesses it voluntarily. But if he is caught and

proven guilty, he should be more harshly corrected according to the judgment of the Priest or the Superior.

V. Self-detachment

- 1** Keep your clothing in one place under the care of one or two, or of as many as are necessary to shake them out so that the moths will not damage them. And just as you are fed from a single pantry, so also you should be dressed from a single clothes closet. And, if possible, pay little attention to the clothes you will be given for the various seasons (Acts 4, 35) and to whether each one receives what he had put away or what was worn by someone else, as long as no one is denied what he needs. If criticisms and discussions arise on this account, whether someone complains that he received worse clothing than he had before or is humiliated because he is now dressed as someone else was in the past, by this you may appreciate how deficient is the interior habit of your soul, complaining as you do about the exterior habit of your body (Ti 2, 3). However, even if the others indulge you by giving back what you previously had, you should continue to keep in the same place under the common care whatever you are not presently wearing.

- 2** Thus, no one should ever work for himself alone. Instead, all your work should be done in common and with still greater care and zeal than if each one worked for himself, for you should interpret charity, which according to Scripture is not self-seeking (1 Cor 13, 5), as giving precedence to community property over personal effects, and not vice versa. Therefore, you will know that you are making greater progress to the extent that you care more for community goods than for your

own. Let charity which abides overrule all things which are used (1 Cor 13, 13) out of transitory necessity.

- 3 Consequently, even if someone should bring to his sons or acquaintances residing in the monastery gifts, clothing, or anything else that is considered necessary, these should not be received in secret but turned over to the Superior so that, placed in the common store, they may be distributed to whoever needs them.⁷
- 4 The decision as to whether your clothes are to be washed by yourselves or by a launderer should be left to the discretion of your Superior so that you can avoid soiling your soul by excessive concern over the cleanliness of your clothing.
- 5 Should anyone's health require that he take baths, he should not refuse to do so. Rather, he should take them without grumbling, on his doctor's advice. In that way, and on his Superior's orders, he will do what his health requires, even if he does not like it. On the other hand, if anyone wanted to take a bath which perchance was unwarranted, his fancy should not be satisfied. Indeed, one may sometimes believe that what he wants is beneficial when, in fact, it could be harmful.
- 6 Finally, and without hesitating, you should take the word of the servant of God when he complains of a physical pain which is not visible. Moreover, if there is any doubt whether the medicine he likes will ease his pain, you should consult the doctor.

⁷ Some more recent manuscripts add the following sentence: "Should anyone hide something he has received, he should be judged guilty of theft."

- 7 Whenever you must go to the [public] baths or anywhere else, go at least two or three together. If someone has to go out, he should do so, not with the companions he has chosen for himself, but with those whom the Superior designates.
- 8 The care of the sick, of the convalescent or of those who, even without a fever, suffer from some ailment shall be entrusted to one particular brother so that he may request from the common storeroom whatever he deems necessary for his patients.
- 9 Those who are in charge of the storeroom, the clothes closet or the library should serve their brothers without grumbling.
- 10 Books are to be requested at a fixed hour each day. Requests made at other times shall not be granted.
- 11 But if anyone were in serious need of clothing or shoes, those in charge shall not delay in honoring the request.

VI. Forgiving offenses

- 1 There should be no quarrels among you. However, should any arise, bring them to an end as quickly as possible, lest anger develop into hatred, a straw into a beam (Mt 7, 3-5), and the heart become murderous. For thus you read: "*Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer*" (1 Jn 3, 15).
- 2 If someone offends another by insults, detraction or slander, he should remember to make amends as soon as possible, and the person who was offended must be willing to forgive without recriminating. If you have mutually offended one another, you should mutually forgive each other because of your prayers

(Mt 6, 12) which, given their frequency, should be all the more sincere. Indeed, he who is often moved to anger yet hastens to ask forgiveness of the one he knows he has offended is better than another who is slower to become angry but who finds it more difficult to ask for forgiveness.⁸ If someone never wants to ask for forgiveness or does so without meaning it, he is out of place in the monastery even though he is not expelled (Mt 18, 35). Therefore, spare yourselves harsh words. If they have escaped your lips, do not hesitate to provide the remedy from the very mouth which caused the wounds.

- 3 When, in training the young, discipline requires that you use harsh language, you need not ask forgiveness of them, even if you feel that you have been overly harsh, for fear that by your excessive humility towards those who should obey, you destroy your authority to govern. Instead, ask forgiveness from the Lord of all who knows how kindly you love those whom you have corrected with undue severity. To be sure, your love for one another should be according to the spirit, not according to the flesh.

VII. Obedience and authority

- 1 Obey your Superior as a father, with all due respect, so that in him you will not offend God (Heb 13, 17). Be especially obedient to the Priest who is in charge of you.
- 2 The Superior is given the principal responsibility of seeing to it that this rule is observed and, in case of infractions, of insuring that they not be negligently overlooked but redressed

⁸ Some more recent manuscripts interpose the following sentence: "He who will not forgive a brother must not expect to obtain the fruits of his prayer."

and corrected. He shall refer to the Priest, your higher superior, whatever is beyond his power or control.

- 3 The Superior should not find his happiness in dominating power but in serviceable charity (Lk 22, 25-26; Gal 5, 13). Before you, out of deference, he should be given the first place; before God, out of fear, he should lie prostrate at your feet (Sir 3, 20). In your midst, he should be an example of good deeds (Ti 2, 7). He should admonish the unruly, cheer the faint-hearted, support the weak, and be patient toward all (1 Thes 5, 14). While embracing the rule with all his heart, he should impose it on others with trembling. Though both are necessary, he should seek to be loved more than feared, remembering always that he will be accountable to God for you (Heb 13, 17).
- 4 Through your obedience, have pity not just on yourselves but especially on him because among you the highest position is the most perilous.

VIII. Conclusion

- 1 The Lord grant that you may observe these rules out of charity, as lovers of spiritual beauty (Sir 44, 6), discharging the fragrance of Christ (2 Cor 2, 15) from the holiness of your lives, not as slaves under the law but as freemen under grace (Rom 6, 14).
- 2 So that you might look into this booklet as into a mirror and neglect no point through forgetfulness, it should be read to you once a week. And if you find that you have observed its precepts, give thanks to God, the giver of all good things. But if anyone of you realizes that he has failed on a specific point,

he should regret the past and guard against the future, while praying that he may be forgiven his offense and not led into temptation (Mt 6, 12-13). [Amen.]

RULE OF LIFE

Part I: Constitutions of the Augustinians of the Assumption

“Before all else, dear brothers, love God and love your neighbor, for these are the principal commandments that have been given to us.

Rule of St. Augustine, Prologue

* * *

“We take as our motto the words of the Lord’s Prayer – ADVENIAT REGNUM TUUM, and those of the Divine Office. PROPTER A MOREM DOMINI NOSTRI JESU CHRISTI!

The coming of the Reign of Christ for ourselves and our neighbor, that is what we seek above everything else.

Fr. d’Alzon, Constitutions of 1865, I, 1

* * *

“The spirit of Assumption may be summarized in these few words: love of Our Lord, of the Blessed Virgin, his Mother, and of the Church, his Spouse.”

Fr. d’Alzon, Directory, I, 1

I. Assumption

- 1** As Assumptionists, we are religious who live in apostolic community. Faithful to our founder, Father d’Alzon, we

choose before all else to work, out of love for Jesus Christ, for the coming of the Reign of God in ourselves and around us.

- 2 Jesus Christ is at the center of our life. We commit ourselves to follow Him in faith, hope and charity.
Like Him, a witness to the Father's love and in solidarity with all human beings, the Assumptionist seeks to be a man of faith and a man of his time.
- 3 Christ is the one who gathers us together. We live in community according to the spirit of Saint Augustine: *"Before all else, live in a household of perfect harmony, having but one heart and one mind intent on God"* (Rule of Saint Augustine, I, 2).
We strive to lead a fraternal life characterized by frankness, cordiality and simplicity. Our common prayer is that of the Church. Through it, the community celebrates its faith and opens itself to the Spirit in view of the mission.
- 4 The Assumptionist community exists for the coming of the Kingdom. The spirit of the founder impels us to embrace the great causes of God and of man, and to go wherever God is threatened in man and man threatened as the image of God.

We must display daring, initiative and disinterestedness, in fidelity to the teaching and to the directives of the Church. That is our way of sharing in its life and mission.
- 5 Faithful to the will of Father d'Alzon, our communities are at the service of truth, unity, and charity. In this way, they herald the Kingdom.

II. Our common life

That all may be one as you, Father, are in me and I in you; that they also may be one in us so that the world may believe that you sent me. (Jn 17, 21)

- 6** Called by Christ, the source of our unity, we choose to live in community according to the Rule and spirit of Saint Augustine, in view of the Kingdom.
The coming of the Reign of Jesus Christ for us and our neighbor is already taking place in our common life.
As dispersed as we may be for apostolic reasons, we continue to share in the life and mission of the community.
- 7** Fraternal life has to be built every day. Welcomed as a gift from God, it requires of each religious a daily conversion that strengthens his own fidelity and that of his brothers.
Our love for God and for all human beings is tested and manifested in the genuineness of our relationships. No one can experience the joy of this life without committing himself to it totally.
- 8** We accept one another with our differences because He who unites us is stronger than that which separates us. We must constantly transcend our divisions and limitations so that we can learn to accept and forgive each other. If we put kindness and respect for persons before differences of opinion and distinctions based on background, age, mentality or health, our diversity becomes richness.
- 9** Fraternal life requires periodic meetings.
The Local Chapter is an event of paramount importance in the life of each community.
In prayer, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist, the community renews its strength and its unity.

Through frank and cordial exchanges, nurtured by community meetings, the community seeks a religious life which is more faithful and an apostolate which is more open to the needs of the Church and the world.

In keeping with the traditional family spirit of Assumption, joys and trials as well as recreations and meals are opportunities for us to cement, in all simplicity, the bonds that unite us.

We show particular consideration for our sick and elderly brothers.

- 10** It is important that the community be hospitable, all the while respecting those parts of the house that are reserved to its members in order to safeguard the privacy which they need.

The community acknowledges its solidarity with the other communities and always keeps alive its sense of the Church where all fraternal communion takes place.

- 11** Our responsibilities and roles are different. They must all be undertaken in a spirit of service and charity.

The Superior seeks to animate the community; he is particularly attentive to each person; he ensures the freedom of each and the unity of all.

- 12** Lived in this way, our common life fosters the fulfillment of each one's vocation.

In a divided world, it bears witness that Christ is alive among us, and it unites us for the proclamation of the Gospel.

III. Our life of apostolic service

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.

(Mt 28, 19)

- 13** The apostolate of our Congregation inserts our communities into the Church's mission of gathering all men and women into the People of God.

Our motto, "*Thy Kingdom Come*", prompts us to work for the coming of Christ's Reign in us and in the world.

Just as the Father sent Him, so Christ sends us, with the promise of his Spirit, to serve our brothers and sisters by proclaiming the Gospel.

- 14** Our communities wish to share the joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties of the men and women of their time, especially of the poor and of all "*those who hunger and thirst for justice*" (Mt 5, 6).

In solidarity with their aspirations and struggles, we participate in building a world which is more just and more fraternal.

- 15** We choose, within the possibilities of our resources, those commitments that effectively answer the needs of today and correspond to the spirit of Assumption.

- 16** We work to build up the Church by proclaiming Jesus Christ. We give priority to education in the faith, to training responsible laypeople, and to awakening and supporting Christian vocations, particularly religious and priestly vocations.

The proclamation of Jesus Christ is inseparable from the promotion of the whole person in justice, love and unity.

All our undertakings shall be imbued with a doctrinal, social and ecumenical spirit.

- 17** We are determined to remain faithful to the general directives of the Church, in communion with the Pope, the College of Bishops, and the local Church.

We collaborate in a frank and disinterested manner with all those who are involved in the work of evangelization.

- 18** From the very beginning, our apostolate has taken on various forms, in particular: teaching “*understood in the broadest sense of the word,*” studies, social communications, pilgrimages, ecumenism, parish ministry, apostolic movements of laypeople, social work, service to the younger Churches, etc.

In keeping with Assumption’s distinctive vocation, we must constantly make ourselves available and remain creative.

- 19** The community, by the quality of its life and work, bears witness to the Good News. Healthy or ill, young or old, we share this apostolic mission with our brothers, each according to his vocation and situation.

- 20** Our missionary vocation invites us to become “*all things to all people.*” This availability requires especially:

- An openness of mind and heart to the cultural, social, and religious values of people from various backgrounds;
- A willingness to receive as well as to give, based on mutual esteem and respect;
- A concern for formation, competence, and adaptation;
- A readiness to take initiatives and to be creative;
- Zeal, dedication to work, frankness, and daring.

- 21** On a regular basis, we will evaluate the quality of our apostolic service, and we will study the choices and adaptations that might be needed. Our personal preferences and aptitudes will be taken into account, but they must always be weighed against the apostolic objectives and priorities of our communities as well as against the needs of the Institute.

- 22** Our personal and community prayer welcomes and celebrates God's action in the lives of people. In that prayer, we beg his forgiveness for our refusals to answer the promptings of the Spirit, and we rekindle our hope of becoming Christ's witnesses "*until He comes.*"

IV. Our religious profession

"To me, life means Christ." (Phil 1, 21)

- 23** In a world where we share the pursuit and efforts of all men and women to become fully human, we acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the perfect human being, and we find in God the deepest motivation for our life and action. He wants to make of everyone his people, his friends, and his sons and daughters.

He encountered us personally in order to carry out with us and through us his plan of being present to people and of being in communion with them.

- 24** We are called to follow Christ radically on the paths of the Gospel. Prompted by his Spirit and inspired by Mary's example, we choose to risk our lives in the adventure of encountering God.

Our religious consecration, which is an outgrowth of the treasure we received at baptism, impels us to grow constantly in faith, hope and love.

- 25** Through the commitment of our religious life, we wish to respond to this vocation and to its evangelical demands, according to the Lord's gift.

By our vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, which witness to our faith in Jesus Christ, we wish to call attention to the ultimate meaning of human realities and to become servants of the Kingdom.

Poverty

- 26** In a world where attachment to material goods and their unjust distribution foment division and hatred, we bear witness to the fact that God is our real treasure and wants us to be at one with the poor.

By doing our share of work among our fellow men and women, we want to participate in promoting the welfare of individuals and peoples in view of the Kingdom.

- 27** Aware of our responsibility as Christians, we commit ourselves to live in evangelical poverty.

Christ invites us to place our trust in the Father who gives the earth to all. He wants people to share it with one another because they are all brothers and sisters.

For us, this is a call to share what we are and what we have in the service of others.

It requires a true detachment from all forms of possession, which allows us to achieve a greater inner freedom and to align ourselves with the poor and the oppressed.

- 28** By the vow of poverty, we choose to give up the right to use and to dispose of goods that have monetary value without permission from the legitimate superior.

We also choose to put our talents and resources in common, to oblige ourselves to work, and to lead a modest and simple life. In the same spirit of detachment, we may surrender definitively all our inherited possessions.

The community provides for each one's needs.

- 29** Each one bears his share of responsibility for the financial situation of the community.

The pooling of information, an active participation in reaching decisions, and a sharing of chores are required of all members.

- 30** The spirit of poverty obliges our communities and the Institute to avoid anything that does not correspond to the needs of a simple life and of our apostolate.

We will allow ourselves to be challenged by those of us who live among the poorest.

- 31** Our sharing of goods must extend to other communities, to those in need, and to those who work for world justice, because poverty, in its social and international dimensions, calls us to be attentive and present to the collective problems in the lives of people.

- 32** Thus, each community bears witness to the relative value of worldly goods and contributes toward establishing among human beings the Kingdom of justice and of peace.

Chastity

- 33** Created to love and to be loved, human beings carry out this vocation of love in various ways. Like Christ, who was totally at the service of his Father, we choose celibacy in view of the Kingdom. We direct toward God all the love we can give and receive.

- 34** In this way, our life is dedicated to the service of the Gospel and of our neighbor. Far from producing a sterile self-centeredness, our celibacy opens our hearts to others.
Lived out in openness to others and as a gift of self, celibacy reveals the profound meaning of human love and its ultimate purpose.
- 35** This gift of ourselves to God and to others makes us free; it prepares us for fraternal living and for the apostolate.
The more we love as Christ did, the more we will be able, under His watchful eye, to pursue our human relationships, and the more we will become sensitive to the joys, sufferings, and concerns of others.
- 36** Aware of the radical self-denial and inevitable solitude this implies, yet trusting in the Lord who strengthens us in our weakness, we commit ourselves by vow to a life of celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom in the perfect chastity demanded by our total gift of self to Christ.
- 37** Fidelity to this commitment requires human and spiritual training. It presupposes intimacy with Christ, but also prudence, self-control, a balanced life style, and wisdom in the use we make of the media.
Attentive to each one's vocation, we will seek to foster in our communities a truly fraternal life built on friendship, attentiveness, sensitivity, mutual support, and forgiveness.
- 38** Lived out in serenity and joy, our celibacy becomes a sign of the Kingdom by foreshadowing the day "*when God will be all in all.*"

Obedience

- 39** Solidarity and mutual dependence are for all human beings the path to their liberation and fulfillment.

The Gospel invites us to assume these bonds in submission to the Father and in brotherly love. To the thirst for power and to self-centeredness, it opposes concern for the lowly and service to others.

Thus, in the face of culpable servitudes and indifferences, we seek to bear witness to true freedom in the Spirit: “*Called to live in freedom,*” we wish “*to place ourselves at the service of one another out of love*” (Gal 5, 13).

- 40** Our obedience is rooted in that of Christ. His fidelity to the Father and his love for others led Him to the total gift of Himself. Having come to serve, He made Himself obedient unto death.

- 41** By the vow of obedience, we offer our will to God in a radical way, and we commit ourselves to obeying our legitimate superiors in everything that concerns the *Rule of Life*. We owe this same obedience, which unites us closely to the Church, to the Sovereign Pontiff.

Attentive to the Spirit, the Church and the world, we seek together to discern God’s will in our community, in the lives of individuals, and in events.

- 42** We are all searching to know the Father’s will in an atmosphere of freedom and frankness, of trust and collaboration, and of initiative and co-responsibility.

Thus, the Superior is the brother who helps the local, provincial, general community to build itself up day after day.

He reminds his brothers of the convictions and decisions of the community, the Province, or the Institute.

At times, he challenges them to a more exacting fidelity to the Gospel.

At the end of a common search or of a personal dialogue, and with the authority vested in him by virtue of his office, he renders service to all by making the final decision according to the Constitutions.

- 43** Lived in faith and prayer, obedience opens our hearts to God and to all human beings. Gradually, it transforms our tendency to dominate into a desire to serve and to promote the good of others. It reveals our faith and our availability to the will of the Father. It is thus a sign of the Kingdom.

V. Our prayer life

“Lord, teach us how to pray.” (Lk 11, 1)

- 44** Like Father d’Alzon, a man of faith, we recognize the need for prayer. Prayer opens us to God’s action. It is the constantly renewed source of our apostolic action.
- 45** By being faithful to the Gospel in the choices we make, in our daily work, in our openness to others, and in our availability as events unfold, our whole life, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, becomes an encounter with God.
- 46** Our prayer expresses itself in praise to the Father for having revealed his love, and in thanksgiving for all He accomplishes in us and in others. It also prompts us to beg forgiveness for the world and for ourselves and to ask for the strength we need to do his will.

In turn, prayer provides filial intimacy with God, constancy in faith, and generosity in action.

- 47** Our prayer life is nourished by the Word of God, particularly through the meditation of Holy Scripture, the celebration of the Divine Office, and the Liturgy.
Its center is the Eucharist.
Communion in the body of Christ spurs us on to live in brotherly love and to be servants of unity among people.
Through the frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance, we open ourselves to God's forgiveness and thereby share more fully in the Paschal Mystery.
- 48** After Christ, our sole Mediator, the Virgin Mary holds a privileged place in our prayer as Mother of the Lord and as his humble servant in his redemptive plan.
Together with her, we contemplate the mysteries of the Word Incarnate, especially in the prayer of the Rosary.
- 49** The principal intentions of our prayer are those of the Church. We pray also for our brothers: for those who are living, because the bond of community unites us more closely to them, and for those who are deceased and for whom we faithfully offer the prescribed prayers.
- 50** Our prayer challenges our life in the light of the Gospel. We must ask ourselves to what extent our life enters into our prayer and to what extent our prayer affects our life and that of the community.
- 51** Prayer is difficult for everyone. It entails a struggle so that our experience of God might constantly shed light on our view of the world. It requires on the part of each religious and of the community a discipline of life which keeps us attentive to the promptings of the Spirit.

- 52** Each religious must be able to count on his brothers to find with them conditions which facilitate prayer: recollection, mutual support, a suitable place for prayer, and a spirit of freedom and creativity.
- 53** In Local Chapter, the religious shall determine the frequency and forms of their community prayer, particularly with regard to the daily Liturgy of the Hours (preferably Lauds and Vespers), the community Eucharist, and the most convenient times for retreats and silence. Everyone bears responsibility for these exercises.
- 54** It is incumbent upon each religious to organize, according to his own spiritual inclinations, a program of personal prayer. He shall set aside regular times for spiritual renewal, especially for his annual retreat. He shall foresee each day:
- His participation in the Eucharist,
 - The celebration of the Divine Office,
 - At least thirty minutes of meditation, and
 - A period of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.
- We must remind ourselves that *“contemplation and action are united for us in one and the same goal: to serve the extension of the Reign of Jesus Christ”* (Directory, E.S. p. 79).

VI. Our community organization

1 .Spirit and principles

- 55** The name of our Congregation is “Congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption,” also known as “Assumptionists” or as “Religious of the Assumption.” We are a clerical Congregation of Pontifical Right.

- 56** Religious profession is what unites the members of the Institute in view of our common goal: the coming of the Kingdom. Religious profession and the apostolate place all the religious, Priests and Brothers, within one and the same mission.
- 57** In the spirit of our particular legislation, the community organization of the Congregation aims to bring about our unity in view of our mission in the Church.
- 58** Freedom of decision is left to the local and provincial communities in cases where the common good, Canon Law or our own legislation do not require the intervention of a higher authority. Against any decision and in case of litigation, recourse to a higher authority is always possible.
- 59** The local communities within a Province and the provincial communities within the Institute function in solidarity and co-responsibility. While fulfilling their particular mission, they maintain among themselves fraternal relations, mutual aid, and communication.
- 60** The exercise of authority, in whatever capacity, is a service of charity whereby the Superiors help their brothers, within the framework of our legislation, to discern and to do the will of God.
- 61** All mandates are given for a fixed period of time. They may be renewed or shortened as required by the common good and in conformity with Canon Law.
- 62** The term of office of the local, regional, vice-provincial and provincial superiors is three years, renewable. A third term should be exceptional.

- 63** Shared responsibility in religious life requires information and consultation, which in turn require frankness in the expression of opinions, initiative, and cooperation in the tasks to be performed.
- 64** The *Capitular Rules*, which come under the authority of the General Chapter, are juridically binding. In case of doubt concerning their meaning, it is up to the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, to provide their authentic interpretation.
- 65** Within the parameters of the mission which is assigned to them, the Provincial Chapters apply our particular legislation to the concrete situation of each Province by enacting appropriate statutes.
- 66** Legislation concerning Provinces applies also to Vice-Provinces, with the exceptions foreseen in Canon Law or in the Statutes of the Vice-Province approved by the Superior General with the consent of his Council.

2. The local community

- 67** Our religious apostolic life unfolds in the context of a local community. Every religious is responsible for the smooth functioning of his community.
- 68** With the consent of his Council and for good reasons, the Provincial may authorize a religious to live outside of a local community, but for no more than a year, except where there are serious reasons (illness, studies...) or for apostolates which are consonant with the goals of the Congregation and with the

apostolic objectives of the Province. The Provincial, with the consent of his Council, is judge in each case.

- 69** At least once a year, the entire community comes together in Local Chapter. It is convoked and presided over by the Superior. The community reflects upon its work and its life. It evaluates the past year, outlines its community program, and schedules the frequency of its meetings.
- 70** The Local Chapter determines the number of Councilors. The members of the Council are elected each year by the community, according to the rules set down in the Provincial Statutes. Their election is submitted to the Provincial for confirmation.
- 71** The decisions reached by the Chapter take effect immediately. Taking into account the common good and the general norms of the Institute, and with the consent of his Council, the Provincial may ask that certain decisions be amended.
- 72** The Superior exercises ordinary authority over the community, with the help of his Council and of the Treasurer.
- 73** The Superior is chosen from among the religious priests who have been perpetually professed for at least three years. He is appointed by the Provincial, with the consent of his Council, after a consultation which follows the procedures established by the Provincial Chapter.
His mandate is for three years, renewable.
- 74** The Provincial, with the consent of his Council, appoints the Treasurer for a term of three years, after consulting the community.

Concern for temporal matters rests upon the entire community, which shall be informed periodically of its financial situation.

The Treasurer administers the material goods of the community under the responsibility of the Superior, with the help of his Council, according to the norms of the Congregation and of the Province.

He attends the meetings of the Council. If he is not a Councilor, he votes only on matters which have economic implications.

On a regular basis, the Treasurer reports on his management to this Council and submits to its approval the account books along with the supporting documents if need be.

3. The provincial community

- 75** The Congregation is divided into Provinces. There can also be Vice-Provinces and Regions.
- 76** All the local communities are responsible together for the smooth functioning of the provincial community. This community ensures the unity of the local communities among themselves and with the Institute.
- 77** A religious is affiliated to the Province of his choice upon his admission to the novitiate. The Provincial Superior, with the consent of his Council, may change that affiliation or authorize a temporary transfer to another Province, with the consent of his Council and of the religious concerned.
- 78** The Provincial Chapter exercises extraordinary authority in the Province. The Statutes of the Province and the Chapter

Decrees take effect upon promulgation by the Provincial Superior. The electoral norms must be approved by the General Council. Taking into account the common good and the general norms of the Institute, and with the consent of his Council, the Superior General may ask for modifications of the Provincial Chapter decisions.

- 79** The Provincial Superior exercises ordinary authority in the Province. In this responsibility, he is assisted by his ordinary Council, the Provincial Treasurer and the Plenary Council. His role of animation and organization places him at the service of the unity of the Province.
- 80** The General Chapter or, should the case arise between two Chapters, the Superior General with the consent of the Council of the Congregation may erect, modify or suppress a (Vice-) Province, after consulting the communities and the Plenary Council which are involved.
- 81** The Vice-Provincial, a major Superior, governs the Vice-Province under the authority of the appropriate Provincial Superior or, if need be, under the Superior General.
- 82** The Statutes of the Vice-Province must be approved by the Superior General with the consent of his Council. Among other things, they must specify:
- The ordinary powers of the Vice-Provincial;
 - The structures which are necessary for the life of the Vice-Province;
 - The relations with the Province on which it depends.
- 83** The Provincial Superior, with the consent of the Plenary Council, may group a number of communities into a Region, under the authority of a Regional Superior.

- 84** The Region is an integral part of the Province; the Province shall grant it sufficient autonomy to organize its life and to pursue effectively its particular apostolic objectives.
- 85** The Regional Superior is appointed by the Provincial with the consent of his Council after consulting all the religious of the Region. The Provincial delegates the necessary powers to him and specifies the structures which are proper to the Region.

The Provincial Chapter

- 86** The Provincial Chapter is convoked and presided over by the Provincial before every General Chapter and according to the frequency stipulated by the Provincial Statutes.
It may also be convened at the request of the Plenary Council.
- 87** The Provincial Chapter is composed of:
- a. Ex-officio members: the Provincial and Vice-Provincial Superiors, the Assistants to the Provincial, the Provincial Treasurer, the religious responsible for formation who has been selected by the Provincial with the consent of his Council, the Regional Superiors and those religious, be they local superiors or not, to whom the Provincial Statutes grant this right;
 - b. Elected delegates. These must constitute a majority of the Chapter.
- 88** The chief responsibilities of the Provincial Chapter are as follows:
- a. It examines the administration of the provincial government and of the local communities, and it takes

whatever measures are needed to help them fulfill the mission which has been entrusted to them;

- b. Taking into account the decisions of the General Chapter, it defines the apostolic objectives of the Province by means of decrees and recommendations;
- c. It establishes or confirms the Statutes of the Province which determine, among other things, the minimum frequency of the meetings of the Plenary Council and the procedures for the elections to the Provincial Chapter;
- d. It determines the number of Assistants to the Provincial, the manner in which they are selected, the duration of their mandate and the way in which they are to be replaced either on particular occasions or on a permanent basis; it also determines the composition and the responsibilities of the Plenary Council;
- e. It listens to and examines the Provincial Treasurer's report. It determines the amount of the provincial assessments;
- f. It considers the proposals freely sent to it by the communities and the religious;
- g. When the occasion arises, it prepares the General Chapter and, by secret ballot, elects the delegates to that Chapter as well as their alternates;
- h. It determines the date of the next Provincial Chapter.

- 89** The Provincial Chapter—or failing that, the Plenary Council—shall establish the rules governing the election of delegates to the Provincial Chapter and submit them to the approval of the General Council.

Ordinary Government

- 90** The Provincial is appointed by the Superior General with the consent of his Council after a secret consultation of all the religious of the Province in which they give the reasons for their choice. He is chosen from among the religious priests. He must be perpetually professed for at least three years.
- 91** The Assistants make up the Ordinary Council of the Provincial.
- 92** The Provincial Chapter elects, in accordance with the norms established in the *Capitular Rules*, a certain number of religious who, together with the Ordinary Council and the Provincial Treasurer, constitute the Plenary Council of the Province.
- 93** This Council has an advisory role. It has the right to make decisions in the cases specified in the present Constitutions.
The Provincial Superior convenes it at least once a year.
- 94** The Provincial informs and consults his Ordinary Council about all important matters and, in particular, about:
- a. The admission or dismissal of a novice;
 - b. The transmission to the Superior General of requests for perpetual vows, the [transitional] diaconate, the permanent diaconate and the priesthood; and also for the dispensation from vows.
- 95** The Provincial Superior, with the consent of his Ordinary Council:
- a. Appoints the Superiors and Treasurers, and confirms the elections of the local Councilors;
 - b. Makes other necessary appointments;
 - c. Modifies, if need be, the decisions taken by the Local Chapters;

- d. Admits to first vows and to their eventual renewal;
 - e. Admits to the ministries of Lector and Acolyte;
 - f. Carries out the transfer and eventual affiliation of a religious;
 - g. Appoints a Provincial Visitor;
 - h. Authorizes individual communities to enter into financial transactions involving amounts which are in excess of their approved budget up to the ceiling amount set by the Provincial Chapter.
- 96** He also needs the consent of his Council to apply the sanctions foreseen by Canon Law and, particularly, to issue the admonitions in view of the dismissal of a professed religious.
- 97** The Provincial Superior, with the consent of the Plenary Council:
- a. Implements in the Province the decisions of the General Chapter;
 - b. Takes the necessary measures to achieve the goals set by the Provincial Chapter;
 - c. Modifies the decisions of the Provincial Chapter upon the request of the Superior General;
 - d. Decides whether an extraordinary Provincial Chapter shall be held;
 - e. Determines what action should be taken on requests submitted by communities and individual religious;
 - f. Sets up such advisory committees as may be necessary or useful to study and solve problems facing the Province;
 - g. Decides on the opening of a house, in accordance with Canon Law and with the written consent of the local Ordinary;
 - h. Appoints the Treasurer and the Secretary of the Province as well as those responsible for formation;

- i. Approves the financial statements of the Province, as well as the extraordinary expenses;
 - j. Adjusts, if need be, the amount of the provincial assessments set by the Provincial Chapter;
 - k. Decides on the use of funds coming from all alienations of land and buildings;
 - l. Authorizes financial transactions above the ceiling amount set by the Provincial Chapter up to the amount set by the General Chapter;
 - m. Determines any extraordinary contributions.
- 98** The Provincial and, if possible, his Assistants visit the communities of the Province frequently, meeting with the religious and the communities and helping them in dialogue. The Canonical Visitation takes place at least every two years. It provides a special opportunity for reflection and for the renewal of religious apostolic life.
The Provincial Statutes may make special provisions for distant Regions.
- 99** The Provincial Superior maintains regular communication with the general government. He forwards information which is useful for a better knowledge of the Province and the documents which are requested by the general government.
- 100** In the case of a prolonged absence of the Provincial, the first Assistant shall govern the Province with the full powers of the Provincial.
- 101** The Provincial Treasurer shall administer and manage directly all of the commonly owned assets of the Province and, where applicable, the property and contents of the Provincial House, under the responsibility of the Provincial Superior with the

assistance of his Council, and in accordance with the norms of the Congregation and of the Province.

He is appointed for three years renewable.

He is at the service of the local Treasurers and oversees their financial administration.

He attends the meetings of the Provincial Council.

He may be an Assistant to the Provincial but not the first Assistant.

If he is not an Assistant, he votes only on matters which have economic implications.

On a regular basis, he reports on his management to this Council and submits to its approval the account books along with the supporting documents if need be.

- 102** The Provincial Secretary draws up and countersigns the official acts of the Province.

4. The general government

- 103** At the service of the Provinces and of their mission within the Institute, the General Government has as its purpose to foster the development and fervor of the Congregation's religious apostolic life.
- 104** The General Chapter exercises extraordinary authority over the Institute. Ordinary authority is exercised by the Superior General with the help of the General Council and the Council of the Congregation.
- 105** The General Chapter and the Superior General, with the help of these two Councils and in fidelity to the thought of the Founder and to the appeals of the Church:

- Ensure the doctrinal and spiritual animation of the Congregation by all useful means;
- Call the attention of the communities and the Provinces to the urgent needs and problems of the time;
- Coordinate the apostolic endeavors of the Congregation;
- Seek to promote the ongoing adaptation of the religious and of the apostolates;
- Maintain the unity of spirit among the Provinces in keeping with our common vocation.

The General Chapter

- 106** The ordinary General Chapter shall meet every six years. It is convoked and presided over by the Superior General.
- 107** An extraordinary General Chapter may be convoked following a deliberative vote of the Council of the Congregation.
- 108** In the event of the death, resignation or deposition of the Superior General, the Vicar General shall convene a General Chapter within six months. At the Chapter, elections shall be held for all offices. If the Superior General becomes permanently incapacitated, the General Curia, after a secret absolute-majority vote, shall consult the Holy See.
- 109** The composition of the General Chapter is as follows:
- The Superior General and his Council, the General Officers, the previous Superior General, and the Provincial and Vice-Provincial Superiors;

- The members elected by the Provincial Chapters according to a system of proportional representation based on the number of electors in the Province.

110 The Council of the Congregation determines the basic number on which this proportional representation is established for the next Chapter. When determining this number, it must ensure that the elected delegates will be more numerous than the ex-officio members.

111 The members of the General Curia remain members of the General Chapter even if they are replaced in their function during the Chapter.

112 All perpetually professed religious are eligible as delegates to the General Chapter.

113 If a Major Superior is unable to attend the General Chapter, he shall be replaced by his First Assistant or, in his absence, by his Second Assistant.

If the replacement is already a delegate, he in turn shall be replaced by the first available elected alternate.

114 The Chapter listens to the reports of the Superior General and of the Provincials. It examines the financial report submitted by the General Treasurer, a report which has been previously approved and signed by the General Council.

It also examines a report on the activities of the Council of the Congregation.

It proceeds to the elections according to the rules established in our legislation.

It examines the requests submitted by the religious.

- 115** The issues discussed are decided by secret ballot; an absolute majority of the members present is required to carry a motion. In the event of a tie, the President has the right to decide.
- 116** To amend an article of the Constitutions, a two-thirds majority of the General Chapter is required as well as the approval of the Holy See. It is also up to the Holy See to decide the authentic interpretation of the Constitutions.
- 117** In order to achieve its objectives, the General Chapter adopts Recommendations and enacts Decrees. These become effective upon promulgation by the Superior General.
The following General Chapter amends, confirms or revokes these decisions.
- 118** When it appears most opportune, the Chapter proceeds to the election of the Superior General.
- 119** After consulting with the Superior General, the Chapter determines the number of Assistants and proceeds with their election according to the norms established in our legislation.
Once the election is completed, the Chapter proceeds to elect, from among the Assistants, the religious priest who will serve as Vicar General and First Assistant.
After another exchange, the Chapter elects the General Officers. If it prefers, it may entrust the choice of Officers to the Superior General in Council of the Congregation.

Ordinary Government

- 120** The General Curia is composed of the Superior General, the Assistants and the General Officers.

They are chosen from among the perpetually professed religious for a six-year term.

The functions of the General Officers may be carried out by the Assistants.

A General Officer may concurrently hold more than one Office.

121 The General Officers are the General Treasurer, the General Secretary, and the Procurator to the Holy See.

122 The Superior General is chosen from among the religious priests. He must be at least five years perpetually professed. His election, or his re-election after a first term, requires an absolute majority of the votes of the members present. If an absolute majority is not reached by the third ballot, three new ballots are cast but are restricted to the two religious who had the highest number of votes on the third ballot. If there is a tie on the last of these new ballots, the elder religious by profession, or by age if their profession is the same, is elected.

After a candidate has served two consecutive terms, a two-thirds majority is required. If this majority is not obtained on the third ballot, he ceases to be a candidate and the election begins anew.

123 The following matters shall be decided by the Superior General with the consent of his Ordinary Council:

- a. The choice, between two Chapters, of a member of the Curia, after consulting with the Provincial Superiors;
- b. The appointment of a Major Superior (Provincial or Vice-Provincial);
- c. The deposition of a member of the Curia or of a Major Superior;
- d. The opening of a novitiate and the approval of its program;

- e. The admission to perpetual profession, to the diaconate, including the permanent diaconate, and to the priesthood;
- f. The use of the faculties granted by the Holy See, as foreseen in specific instances;
- g. The choice of the date and place of the next General Chapter;
- h. The approval of the electoral norms for the Provincial Chapters;
- i. All financial transactions concerning personal property or real estate involving amounts higher than the ceiling set by the General Chapter and up to the amount authorized by the Holy See;
- j. Any alienation of property or loan which requires the authorization of the Holy See;
- k. In serious and urgent cases, the implementation, correction or annulment, in the administration of a Province, a Region or a community, of something which is normally within the jurisdiction of their respective Superiors;
- l. The closing of a house, upon the request of the Provincial with the opinion of his Council, and in accordance with Canon Law;
- m. The dispensation, in particular cases, from certain provisions of the *Capitular Rules*.

124 Once a year, the Major Superiors and the General Curia come together as the Council of the Congregation.

This Council studies the problems of adaptation of the Congregation to the changing situation in the world and in the Church.

It prepares, at the appropriate time, for the General Chapter.

It decides about matters reserved to its competence by the Constitutions or proposed by the Superior General.

- 125** A Major Superior who is unable to attend the Council of the Congregation is replaced by his First Assistant.
- 126** It is the responsibility of the Superior General, with the consent of the Council of the Congregation, to:
- a. Convoke an extraordinary General Chapter;
 - b. Examine and approve the financial administration of the Institute and implement inter-provincial solidarity;
 - c. Determine any special financial contribution;
 - d. Adjust, if need be, the amount set by the Chapter for the general assessments.
- 127** The Superior General shall personally visit the Provinces at least once every six years.
- 128** In the case of prolonged absence, serious illness, resignation or death of the Superior General, the Congregation is governed by the Vicar General with all the powers of the Superior General.
- 129** The General Secretary draws up and countersigns all official documents as well as the minutes of the Council sessions.
- 130** Under the responsibility of the Superior General, with the assistance of his Council, the General Treasurer administers and manages the assets owned by the Institute as well as the property and the contents of the General House. He shall see to it that the finances of the Provinces are properly administered and that the relevant documents are preserved.
- 131** The General Treasurer attends the meetings of the General Council. If he is not an Assistant, he votes only on matters which have economic implications.

On a regular basis, he reports on his management to this Council and submits to its approval the account books along with supporting documents if need be.

- 132** In accord with the Superior General, the Procurator General is the channel of communication with the Pope and the Roman Congregations; he takes whatever steps are useful for the welfare of a religious, a Province or the Congregation.

VII. Formation

1. Vocation ministry

- 133** The awakening of vocations is one of the characteristic missions of the Congregation. We collaborate actively in this field with the local Church.
- 134** By their prayer and the testimony of their lives, the religious and the communities are responsible for the awakening of vocations. They shall be particularly concerned with discerning, calling and welcoming those who wish to follow Christ with the Assumptionist community.
- 135** In order to apply the general directives to the cultural and ecclesial context of the country, each Province shall establish a vocation ministry and a formation program which must be approved by the Superior General.

2. Postulancy

- 136** When a candidate, after a period of mutual acquaintance, seriously considers entering the Congregation, the Provincial

Superior welcomes him for a period of postulancy, the length of which shall be specified in each case.

Sustained contact with a religious and eventually with a community will assist him in strengthening his human and Christian personality and in acquiring a better knowledge of the spirit and the life of the Congregation so that he can reach a free and well-considered decision.

137 At the end of this first stage, the candidate shall be expected to have:

- A sufficiently well-balanced personality that enables him to assume the responsibilities of adulthood: sound judgment; sufficient affective maturity; good health; active presence in his milieu; the ability to be financially autonomous; an acceptable level of education or of professional training;
- The spiritual and apostolic experience expected of all committed Christians;
- The qualities needed to enter an Assumptionist community: straight-forwardness, openness, and the ability to cooperate with others;
- The interior dispositions needed to prepare for the Assumptionist religious life: the desire to grow in his life of faith, hope and charity, and to follow Christ by living in an apostolic community with a love for the Church.

138 Concerning the canonical conditions for admission to the novitiate and to religious profession, we shall follow Canon Law.

3. Novitiate

- 139** Once he has decided to enter the novitiate, the candidate must apply for admission by submitting a written request to the Provincial Superior who may admit him to the novitiate after consulting the community, the formation team, and his Council.
- 140** The novitiate is erected in a community by a decree of the Superior General and placed under the responsibility of a Master of Novices approved by him.
- 141** The Master of Novices is responsible for directing the novitiate. He must be a priest and a perpetually professed religious of the Institute. He shall be assisted by competent religious. The novices, who also bear responsibility for their own formation, shall cooperate actively with him by engaging in frequent and trusting dialogue.
- 142** The purpose of the novitiate is to form the candidate progressively to the Assumptionist religious life by bringing him to deepen his concept of the evangelical life and to confront it with that of the Congregation, in the presence of God and with his brothers.
- 143** The novitiate is a privileged time of prayer, study, encounters and dialogue, which allows the candidate, in the Assumptionist spirit, to:
- Experience Jesus Christ;
 - Study and meditate on the Sacred Scriptures;
 - Become initiated to personal and community prayer and to the liturgy;
 - Practice the evangelical counsels;
 - Acquire a basic doctrinal formation about religious life;
 - Experience life in an apostolic community;

- Open himself to the life of the world and of the local and universal Church;
- Become acquainted with the Founder, the Congregation, its spirit, its spirituality, its past and its present, its Rules and its Constitutions;
- Learn how to discover God in his own life and in world events.

144 The time of the novitiate proper may not be devoted to studies or to occupations which are not specifically geared to novitiate formation.

145 The novitiate program shall be submitted to the approval of the Superior General and shall conform to the *Ratio Institutionis* of the Institute.

146 The novitiate program must include twelve months spent in the house of the novitiate. The Provincial Superior may, for a limited period of time, allow the transfer of the novitiate community to another house of the Congregation. He may authorize programs of apostolic initiation outside the community. However, the total duration of the novitiate may not extend beyond two years. An absence of three months, consecutive or not, invalidates the novitiate. An absence of more than two weeks must be made up.

4. Temporary vows

147 When this time of preparation has elapsed, the novice asks the Provincial in writing for admission to temporary vows. This request is accompanied by a report drawn up by the Master of Novices and by the opinions of the community and of those

responsible for formation. These opinions must include the reasons on which they are based.

The Provincial, with the consent of his Council, may admit the novice to temporary profession for a period of one, two or three years. He may also ask that the novitiate be extended, but not beyond six months. For a good reason, he may allow the first profession to be anticipated, but by no more than fifteen days.

- 148** The temporary profession is received by the Provincial or his delegate in the name of the Congregation. Notification of the profession is sent to the Superior General. By his profession, the novice consecrates himself to God through the practice of the evangelical counsels and commits himself to lead the Assumptionist life according to the Rules of the Institute. The profession formula expresses this consecration and this commitment. From that moment on, the temporarily professed religious enjoys the rights and duties of all religious, save those attached to perpetual profession.
- 149** The profession formula is the following:
“In the presence of my brothers, in your hands, Father (representing the) Superior General, out of love for Christ and in order to extend his Reign, I, Brother..., promise God to live in religious poverty, chastity and obedience for one year (or two years, or three years, or until death) according to the Rule of Saint Augustine and the Assumptionist Rule of Life.
- 150** In order to renew his vows, the temporarily professed religious sends a written request to the Provincial. There should also be reports from those who are responsible for the community and for formation. The decision is made by the Provincial with the consent of his Council. The duration of the temporary commitment is three years at least, six years at most. By way

of exception, the Superior General may prolong it to nine years.

- 151** Our religious habit, a sign of consecration and a witness to poverty, is, in our tradition, that of the Order of Saint Augustine. It is worn in conformity with the provisions of Canon Law. The Major Superior, after consulting his Council, may grant dispensations in particular circumstances for as long as they are needed.
- 152** During the period of temporary profession, the Provincial Superior shall determine, with those responsible for formation, the conditions which will foster the human and spiritual development of the religious in formation. In particular, he shall see to it that:
- These religious live in a community capable of guiding them on their spiritual journey;
 - Someone be particularly in charge of the religious during this stage of their formation;
 - They follow a serious program of doctrinal studies in conformity with the *Ratio Institutionis* of the Institute and, as the case may be, of professional and technical studies;
 - They continue to deepen their knowledge of Assumption;
 - Those considering Holy Orders acquire the doctrinal and pastoral formation required by the Church.
- 153** When his temporary profession expires, a religious may freely leave the Congregation. If the time of his temporary profession has not yet expired and, for serious reasons, he asks to leave the Congregation, the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, may dispense him from his vows.

5. Perpetual profession

154 When the time of his temporary profession has elapsed, the Brother may request to be admitted to perpetual profession. He presents a written request to the Provincial in which he includes a personal evaluation of the entire period of his temporary commitment.

This request must be accompanied by a report drawn up by the local Superior and approved by his Council, and by the opinion of the community which must include the reasons on which the opinion is based.

155 The Provincial forwards the entire dossier to the Superior General along with his personal opinion and that of his Council.

156 For a good reason, the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, may allow the perpetual profession to be anticipated, but by no more than three months.

157 Before perpetual profession, the Brother shall make a retreat of at least one week. At the appropriate time, he pronounces public vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, which bind him definitively to God and to his brothers in the Congregation.

158 The Provincial receives the vows in the name of Father General. He may delegate someone else on a regular basis or for a particular case.

6. Admission to Orders

- 159** The religious who is preparing for Orders receives beforehand the ministries of Lector and Acolyte.

For admission to Orders, after the definitive commitment of the candidate, the Provincial consults the community, priests and laypeople who know the religious, as well as those responsible for formation. Along with his own opinion and that of his Council, he forwards the entire dossier to the Superior General.

7. Ongoing formation

- 160** Formation must be pursued throughout one's lifetime.

Every religious should remain mindful of the need to study and must seek to adapt and renew his religious, doctrinal and apostolic life.

Communities must also be concerned about these issues.

Each Province shall establish an overall program of ongoing formation. The Provincial shall take whatever measures are needed to enable all the religious to benefit from it.

In order to foster mutual enrichment and unity, inter-provincial and international meetings and sessions may be organized by the Provinces or by the Congregation.

8. Separation from the Congregation

- 161** If a religious, even after his definitive commitment, wants to leave the Congregation, the procedures established in Canon Law shall be followed.

The same holds true in the case of exclaustation and of dismissal by the Congregation. A religious who leaves us cannot claim any compensation for the work he did while he was in the Congregation.

Nonetheless, the Congregation shall treat him with great charity and in all fairness.

VIII. Temporal administration

- 162** The Institute, the Provinces and the communities may acquire, possess, administer and alienate the temporal goods which are necessary or useful for attaining their apostolic objectives.
- 163** The spirit of poverty, community life, and civil and canonical laws oblige us to observe certain rules in matters of administration.
- 164** The community alone owns all that the religious earn by their work as well as their pensions, subsidies, insurances, and the personal gifts they receive.
- 165** Periodically, the religious shall render to the competent authority an account of their revenues and expenditures.
- 166** Communities and apostolates shall keep separate books of account.
- 167** The communities within a Province and the Provinces within the Institute function in solidarity with each other, while at the same time observing what is said in article 31.
- 168** A religious continues to own his inherited goods and may acquire others. He shall cede their administration, use and usufruct to whomever he wishes. This cession takes place before first profession and in accordance with the civil laws of the country.

- 169** Before perpetual profession, every religious must make a will which is valid according to the civil laws of the country.
- 170** A religious may modify the cession of the administration of his goods as well as of the disposition of their use and usufruct, with the permission of the Provincial Superior. However, this modification may not be made, at least not for an appreciable portion of the income, in favor of the Institute. A religious may also amend his will with the permission of the Provincial Superior. These modifications must be made in conformity with civil law in order to ensure their validity.
- 171** A perpetually professed religious, after obtaining authorization from the Superior General with the consent of his Council, may freely and definitively renounce all his inheritance.
- 172** *This Book is our Assumptionist Rule of Life.
Along with the Rule of Saint Augustine,
it maps out a road
on which we want to travel together.
By our Profession in the Congregation,
we commit ourselves
to put this Rule of Life into practice.
We will observe it in union
with Father d'Alzon.
We will reread it in prayer.
We will listen to it in community.
We will live it out with the support of our
brothers.
Thus, it will make us free
to love Jesus Christ and to extend his
Reign.*

The official French-language copy of the
Constitutions
is in conformity with the text approved by
Decree of the Sacred Congregation for
Religious and Secular Institutes
dated December 8, 1983
and signed by Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, Prefect.

Certified by:
Fr. Emmanuel Brajon, A.A.
Secretary General
November 21, 1984

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