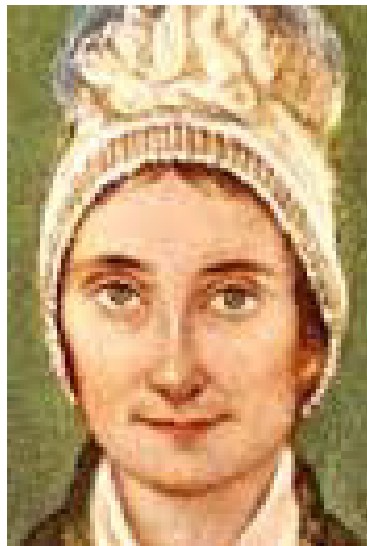


**CONGREGATION
OF THE
SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY
CONSTITUTIONS**



Mother Leopoldina Naudet, Foundress

God Alone

1989

English translation by
Rev. Joseph Henchey, CSS
[2000]

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PRESENTATION

Beloved Sisters,

It is with profound gratitude to the Lord that we receive the text of the Constitutions. These have been brought into conformity with the new code of Canon Law and approved with a new Decree of the Congregation for the Institutes of the Consecrated Life.

We take this event as a gift of grace in order to become more and more open to an apostolic life that is truly gospel transparency, according to Mother Foundress' original inspiration.

From her we learn to live "the internal law of charity and love, which the Holy Spirit wishes to write and imprint on our hearts", that we might each day choose to live "solely for Christ our Lord, and to hold Him in place of father, mother, brother and all else."

Only in this way can we experience that interior strength to respond to the challenge "proper to our vocation", which is "to go wherever God deigns to call, for the purpose of the Institute" (cf. NAUDET L.C., Summary, 1-3).

Sister Pia Accordini
Superior General

Verona - December 31, 1989
Feast of the Holy Family

**The Congregation
for the Institutes of Consecrated Life
and Societies of Apostolic Life**

Prot. n. V 7 - 1/89

DECREE

The Superior General of the Sisters of the Holy Family, in the name of the General Chapter, for the purpose of bringing their Constitutions previously approved by the Holy See in 1981, into conformity with the new Code of Canon Law, request the approval of some adaptations.

This Dicastery for Institutes of the Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life, after having examined these adaptations, approves them in virtue of this present Decree, in accord with the copy of them in the Italian language, which is conserved in its Archives.

The Sisters of the Holy Family are to live their consecration with the same spirit with which their Foundress was inspired, the Servant of God, Leopoldina Naudet, who wrote: "It seemed to me that the Lord was drawing me to consider not so much an ordinary and customary call to this Kingdom. Rather His invitation was for something higher, raising me up and drawing me to Himself, leading me to understand that while He does call some to serve Him, He called me not simply to respond in that way, as the lowest serving girls in His Court - nor, even like those who are as ladies in waiting near the King and who are the more favored. It indeed seemed that He was calling me to be His spouse, who is to seek to imitate her Spouse in everything." (Personal Memoirs, f. 104).

In their Apostolate, the Sisters of the Holy Family are to maintain "their love for God as the beginning, the cause and purpose of their every word, their every activity, even in the very least tasks they perform" (ib., 1.17).

They are to look to Mary, as "the perfect model of this apostolic and spiritual life. While on earth, her life was like that of any other, filled with labors and cares of the home; always, however, she remained intimately united to her Son and cooperated in an entirely unique way in the Savior's work" (AA 4).

Rome, December 8, 1989 - Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Jean Jérôme Cardinal Hamer, OP
Prefect

Fr. Torres Lorente Jesus, CMF
Under Secretary

SOURCES AND ABBREVIATIONS

From the Documents of the Magisterium

- AG** = *Ad Gentes* (Decree of Vatican II on the Missionary Activity of the Church, December 7, 1965).
- C** = *A Canon from the Code of Canon Law* (1983).
- CeC** = *Comunione e Comunità* (Pastoral Plan of the Conference of Italian Bishops - CEI - for the 1980's).
- ET** = *Evangelica Testificatio* (Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation on the Renewal of Religious Life, June 29, 1971).
- GS** = *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, December 7, 1963).
- LG** = *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution of Vatican II on the Church, November 21, 1964).
- MC** = *Marialis Cultus* (Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation on Devotion to Mary, February 2, 1974).
- PC** = *Perfectae Caritatis* (Decree of Vatican II on the Renewal of Religious Life, October 28, 1965).
- PO** = *Presbiterorum Ordinis* (Decree of Vatican II, Decree on the Ministry and the Life of Priests, December 7, 1965).
- SC** = *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Dogmatic Constitution of Vatican II on the Sacred Liturgy, December 4, 1963).

From the Writings of the Foundress

Leopoldina Naudet

(Archives of the General House)

- C** = Constitutions
- Ca** = Outline of Constitutions
- Cs** = Spiritual Conferences
- L** = Letters
- Ms** = Personal Memoirs
- Pc** = The 'Plan' in Brief

Chapter I

The Identity of the Congregation within the Church

• *"Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.'"*

(Mt 16:24-25).

• *"From the very beginning of the Church ...in keeping with the divine purpose a wonderful variety of religious communities came into existence. This has contributed towards enabling the Church ... to appear adorned with the manifold gifts of her children, like a Bride adorned for her husband ... and to manifest in herself the multiform wisdom of God ..."*

(PC 1).

• *"At times, when I think that the Lord one day wishes from us to be served, and to find among us His delights, I feel a special taste and a great consolation. As a result, I desire that whatever He does want, might really be accomplished in us, and that He be continually loved and glorified in us in the broadest manner possible for His creatures ever to achieve."*

(NAUDET L. **Ms** f. 70).

**The Sisters
of The Holy
Family**

1. Our Religious Family, founded by Leopoldina Naudet under the wise direction of St. Gaspar Bertoni, is called: "The Sisters of the Holy Family", and is of Pontifical Right, as of December 20, 1833.

Name

2. "The Institute of the Sisters of the Holy Family bears this name because of our particular devotion toward Jesus, Mary and Joseph; this is a devotion that we wish always to confirm the more in our spirit, both out of the gratitude for the favors obtained in the forward progress of this Institution, as well as to perpetuate the very efficacious results of such an efficacious patronage, even to the perfect accomplishment of good work undertaken."

NAUDET L.
Pc 1

Scope

3. "The scope of this Institute is the imitation of Jesus Christ, for the perfecting of all who make it up in the spirit of charity toward God and toward our neighbor.

For this purpose we study in the most holy hearts of Jesus and Mary, as in the source, those acts and affections of this most ardent charity toward God and humanity. We choose as our guide the most glorious patriarch, St. Joseph. By his own intimate union with those most sacred hearts, he lived on a sublime level in this school of charity.

It is from here that we will learn to sanctify our souls in the exercise of all the virtues, and to obtain the salvation of our neighbors, in whatever manner fitting for our sex.

It is to this end that the Constitutions that are observed in this Institute are directed."

NAUDET L.
Pc 2

Spirit

NAUDET L.
Pc 3

4. "The spirit of this Institute is essentially based on the mortification of ourselves, on prayer, on interior recollection, from whence proceeds good and fruitful activity. It is our resolve to study in depth the Holy Family in order to join to it our intentions, and to conform to it all our activities."

Participants in the Charism

NAUDET L.
Ca

5. Sharing in the charism of Mother Foundress, particularly sensitive to the needs of her own times, the Sisters will dedicate themselves:

to the human and christian formation of children and the youth;

to activities that promote the sanctification of the family;

to service in the parish community;

to the promotion of days of recollection and retreats.

The Sisters will also contribute their help to every other form of the apostolate, in accord with their proper spirit and the needs of the Church, in any part of the world, where there is hope for the greater service of God.

Chapter II

The Consecrated Life

"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us..."

(1 Jn 4:10)

"... The profession of the evangelical counsels shines before all the members of the Church as a sign ... For bestowing greater freedom from the cares of earthly existence on those who follow it...reveals more clearly to all believers the heavenly goods which are already present in this age, witnessing to the new and eternal life which we have acquired through the redemptive work of Christ and precluding our future resurrection and the glory of the heavenly kingdom ..."

(LG 44)

"I really should always have charity, love for God as the principle, the cause and end of my every word, every motion, and even of every most insignificant activity."

(NAUDET L. Ms f. 117).

**Religious
Consecration**

LG 44

6. The Sisters of the Holy Family consecrate themselves to God, supremely loved, with the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. In this manner the Sisters are committed by a new and special title to the service and honor of God.

They consider themselves to be, and genuinely live, as members of one and the same family, bound by the ties of fraternal love in the Holy Spirit.

Cognizant of their common vocation to holiness, they seek, as their particular charism, to continue the mission of love of the Holy Family.

Habit

NAUDET L. Pc
7
c. 669, § 1

7. The Sisters wear a religious habit, "simple in form, modest, and such that it serves for edification, thus reminding all those whom the Sisters meet, that they are consecrated to God." The Superior General can permit secular dress only in particular instances, and for as long as such a need lasts.

**Community of
Life**

**Prayer and of
apostolic
action**

1 Jn 4:10

NAUDET L.
Cs f. 109

8. The consecrated life of the Sisters is totally orientated toward God's love, "who has loved us first."

The Sisters aspire to the perfection of this love with the profession of the evangelical counsels, in the community of life, of prayer and of apostolic activity. Charity toward God is "the very soul of all their activities, the oil for the prudent virgins' lamps and the measure of their glory."

8.1 To respond to God's love, the Sisters live and keep themselves in His presence, always at work within the family of the Church and in the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, in the persons of their Superiors, the Community and every human being.

The joy of belonging to Christ opens their hearts to a faithful response, which expresses itself in fraternal communion and in ecclesial service.

**Chastity:
theological
meaning**

9. Chastity, embraced for the Reign of Heaven, is a gift of God to us, before it is our gift to God: it is the response of our love to this love.

PC 12

In choosing consecrated chastity, we intend to conform ourselves ever more intimately to Jesus, Mary and Joseph, who chose the virginal life for themselves. We also intend to become able to taste better the beatitude of the Gospel.

NAUDET L.
II, 5, 1

LG 44

We finally intend to realize in a mysterious manner the love that unites the Church to Christ, her Spouse; and to become in time a sign of the future Reign.

The Vow

10. With the vow of chastity, the Sister obliges herself to perfect continence in celibacy.

c. 599

She offers to God her entire self: her affections, her sentiments, her heart, her body, to adhere the more easily to Christ with an undivided heart and to serve more freely, her brothers and sisters.

1 Co 7:32-35

PO 16

Therefore, she renounces marriage, as well as any internal or external act whatsoever, contrary to chastity.

This virginal gift of self favors personal development toward maturity in Christ, it nourishes fraternal relationships and a community openness to the needs of our neighbors.

Means

PC 12

11. Fully convinced that perfect chastity is the result of a laborious conquest of every day, the Sisters will cultivate, with the help of the Holy Family, intimacy with Christ, in prayer, humility and self-denial, in purity of intention and especially in their love for the Eucharist, which permits them to enjoy even now their final encounter with the Lord.

They do not presume on their own strength, but follow the laws of the Church, formulated from her experience. At the same time, they will not neglect those natural means which favor mental and physical health.

**Poverty
Theological
Meaning**

2 Co 8:9

Mt 6:33

12. The Sister of the Holy Family believes herself called to witness to evangelical poverty to share the more perfectly in Christ's poverty.

She considers herself fortunate to be able to live it in a concrete manner and to manifest it in her poor, serious life-style, detached from every form of security and selfish gratification.

She does not seek for herself recompense for any work offered in benefit of her neighbor. She receives everything as God's gift and as a sign of His loving Providence. She avoids every excessive material worry, abandoning herself to Divine Providence, which does not leave anything lacking to anyone who "seeks first the Reign of God and his righteousness."

The Vow

c. 600

PC 13

13. With the vow of poverty, the Sisters renounce the faculty of licitly disposing or using any temporal good whatsoever, of monetary value, without the Superior's permission.

The Use and Administration of Goods

c. 668, § 1

14. The Sisters do retain the ownership of their goods, and also the faculty of acquiring other goods.

However, before their First Profession, the Sisters will cede the administration of these goods to anyone of their own choosing, and will freely dispose of the use and the usufruct of these goods.

At least prior to their Perpetual Profession, the Sisters will draw up a last will and testament, that will be valid in accord with civil law.

To modify these dispositions, even for a just reason, as also to perform any act relative to temporal goods, the Sisters will ask the Superior General's permission.

c. 668, § 3

14.1 Whatever a Sister acquires through personal work or by reason of the Congregation, or by way of pension, subsidy or insurance in any way whatever are acquired for the Congregation.

c. 668, § 4

14.2 Any Sister in perpetual vows who wishes to renounce all proprietorship of her own goods, will present her request in writing to the Superior General.

The Superior General may not grant her permission, unless after prudent reflection and with the consent of her Council.

In making any such disposition of her own goods, the Sister will keep in mind her own family, according to their needs, the indigent, the Church and the Missions, poor religious institutes and even her own Congregation.

**Poverty as
the Foundation**

NAUDET L.

C ii, 4,2

15. "Let all remember that poverty is the surest foundation of the state of religion, and that it gives support to religious discipline. In accord with St. Paul, that just as avarice is the root of all evil, so poverty is the root and the foundation of all the virtues and of every good."

and Life Style

PC 13

16. All the Sisters, in their own office, will obey the common law of work. They will totally avoid wealth, honors and all that this world loves.

In imitation of the Holy Family, the Sisters are content to experience the effects of poverty, even should they have to go without something that may be necessary for them.

16.1 The furnishings of our houses are to bespeak poverty and simplicity, in accord with our traditions. In equipping places for any works of the apostolate, there must be avoided any waste or semblance of wealth. At the same time, as far as it is possible, every effort should be made to render them so that they will be most functional.

When charity is indeed the source of every apostolate, poverty has nothing to fear.

16.2 The Congregation at large, as the individual communities, are to offer a collective witness to poverty. New forms are always to be sought to

express this externally, avoiding every appearance of luxury in our dwellings, in their furnishings, in the means procured for transportation and communication.

In the administration of temporal goods, the Sisters will keep in mind the necessities of the Church and the sustenance of the poor, who are to be loved in Christ.

c. 640

**Obedience:
theological
significance
and vow**

PC 14. 601

17. With religious obedience, the Sister offers to God the complete gift of her own will, as the sacrifice of herself, to unite herself more intimately to the Father's salvific will, and to conform herself to Christ, who made himself obedient unto death on the cross to save humanity.

In this way, the Sister binds herself ever more closely to the service of the Church.

With the vow, the Sister commits herself to carry out the Superiors' dispositions regarding the observance of the vows and Constitutions.

**Particular
Characteristic**

NAUDET L. C
II, 6, 1

18. The Sister of the Holy Family desires to perfect herself in obedience, loving it as her particular characteristic.

To imitate the Holy Family and to share in the mystery of Jesus' submission, she lives this gift of herself in a spirit of faith and of love.

Each Sister seeks the Father's Will through the mediation of the Church and of the Superiors, according to the Constitutions.

NAUDET L. C II,
6, 1

18.1 The profession of obedience, which the Sister has freely embraced, and to which she joyfully submits herself, perfects her in charity and guides her in living community life. This enables her to make more effective the spiritual and apostolic activity of the Congregation.

PC 14

Religious obedience, lived in this spirit, does not allow one to avoid personal responsibilities.

Rather, it increases the interior freedom of the children of God. Far from diminishing the dignity of the human person, it brings this to its full development.

Lk 2:32 **18.2** Keeping in mind that Jesus of Nazareth increased in wisdom and stature and in favor, the Superiors will commit themselves to furthering in the Sisters growth in grace, with regard to their personalities, in which the divine filiation is to mature.

Therefore, above and beyond individual points of view and interests, all are to seek to discover God's will. They will employ every means to recognize it and to present it in a spirit of charity and service toward their neighbor.

PC 14 **18.3** The Sisters recognize in the Superiors' authority that of God. They commit themselves to its disposition in the carrying out of the tasks assigned to them with both the energies of their minds and wills, as well as their gifts of grace and nature.

c. 671 In a spirit of faith and submission, they are ready to accept and carry out each and every assignment, in whatever house to which they may be assigned, certain that they are doing the Father's will.

Therefore, no one will assume any duties or offices outside of the Congregation without the permission of the Superior General.

In the Imitation of Christ

c. 662

19. In the same unity of spirit, the Superiors and the Sisters will love and observe the Constitutions. They will deepen their knowledge of them, certain that they will find in them the Lord's express will.

Mt 20:28

All will be ready to carry out all the services, even the most humble, out of love for God and in imitation of Christ, who did not come to be served, but to serve.

**Humility:
foundation of
all the
virtues**

Mt 11:29

NAUDET L. C
II, 3,1

20. "The Sisters of the Holy Family maintain that humility is the foundation of all the other virtues. They study this heedfully in the most loving Heart of Jesus. He chose in a special manner to make himself its teacher, as recorded in the Holy Gospel: 'Learn from me for I am gentle and lowly in heart.'

And as external acts proceed from within, they will strive to fathom the depths of their own nothingness, and to be unpretentious regarding themselves, each one considering herself the least of all."

NAUDET L. C
II,3, 2

Lk 17:10

20.1 Since by their very vocation, all are called to work for their neighbors' eternal salvation, with all the more reason they need to be humble and imbued with the sentiment of other own wretchedness and unworthiness. They need to consider it as a special grace that they have been chosen by the Lord for such a service.

And they will commit their entire selves, whole-heartedly to the divine service. All the while they will consider themselves to be useless servants in the house of the Lord. They will recall what our Divine Redeemer said in his Holy Gospel: 'When you have done all that is commanded you, say: We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'"

Chapter III

Life of Prayer

• *"Abide in me and I in you...He who abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit."*

(Jn 15:4-5)

• *"They who make profession of the evangelical counsels should seek and love above all else God who has first loved us. In all circumstances they should take care to foster a life hidden with Christ in God, which is the source and stimulus of love of the neighbor, for the salvation of the world and the building-up of the Church.*

Even the very practice of the evangelical counsels is animated and governed by this Charity."

(PC 6)

• *"I desire that in the Institute there be established a profound interior spirit, and to see to it that in accord with this all the externals be planned as well all the tasks of the exterior life."*

(NAUDET L. Ms f. 75).

**Spirit
and Intimacy
of Prayer
with God**

NAUDET L. C
II, 7, 1

21. The Sisters find in prayer the font and the essential expression of their life in fraternal communion. In the spirit of prayer, they listen to the Word of God, they live in an attitude of filial confidence under the Father's loving gaze. Through faith, they discover His presence both in their brothers and sisters as in all things, and they open up for an intimate dialogue with Him. To favor this spirit of prayer and intimacy with God, they cultivate interior recollection, the silence of their whole being and humility of heart.

**Personal
Prayer**

22. Personal prayer assumes a characteristic proper to the Sister of the Holy Family, and becomes as it were, her life's breath. She is taught how to meditate, to contemplate and to offer to the Lord, with humble simplicity, the sentiments of her heart to obtain the grace to serve God and the Church with generosity.

**Community
Prayer**

Mt 18:20

23. In our common prayer, it is the Congregation as such which presents itself to the Lord in order to speak to Him: each Sister participates in this actively in the name of all, and all pray in behalf of each one.

The Sister finds her delight in being in communion with her religious family, gathered in prayer. Each one comes to prayer to honor the Holy Family, to praise and thank Christ Who has promised: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

**Sacred
Scripture**
c. 663, § 3

**Eucharistic
Celebration**

Rm 8:26

24. Sacred Scripture and Liturgy are the **and the Liturgy** privileged fonts from which the Sisters draw to nourish their prayer life. We are convinced that it is the Holy Spirit Who prays in us and that Christ realizes in a special manner His presence in the liturgical actions of the Church. She actually continues the work of human redemption and the glorification of God the Father.

25. The Eucharistic Celebration, is the heart of the Liturgy. So, it occupies the preeminent place in the spiritual life of the Sisters. In offering the divine Victim, they raise up to the Father, with Christ in the Holy Spirit, the praise, the supplication and the thanksgiving of the entire Church.

Adoration
c. 663, § 2

26. The Sisters participate each day in the divine Sacrifice, nourishing themselves with the Body and Blood of Christ, and they adore the same Lord present in the Sacrament. Nourished by the Word of God and the Eucharist, the Sisters have the strength to live in fraternal communion and to work together for the Reign of God.

**Need of
Conversion**
c. 664

27. The Gospel challenge of continuing conversion leads each Sister to attend to her daily examination of conscience and to receive the Sacrament of Penance. This renews her spiritually and inserts her ever more into the Mystical Body of Christ. As for the frequency of reception this of Sacrament and choice of Confessor, each will observe the dispositions of the Church.

**The Liturgy
of the Hours**

SC 84

28. The Liturgy of the Hours renders Christ's priestly praise offered to the Father continuous throughout the course of the day.

In celebrating this attentively and devoutly, the Sisters lend their voices to the Church, which prays uninterruptedly in intimate union with Christ for the salvation of every human being.

Every day the Sisters celebrate in common Lauds, Vespers and Compline. When it is possible the other Hours are prayed together.

Meditation

Ac 17:28

29. In meditation the Sister taps into the light, the power and the love to recognize always and everywhere the God in Whom 'we live and move and have our being.' This enables us to seek His will in every event, to see Christ in each human being and to give the proper value to everything. Meditation is made each day for at least one half hour.

**Spiritual
Reading**

SC 12

30. In spiritual reading, the Sister feeds her faith, is nourished by God's Word and learns the sublime knowledge of Christ. She continues to compare this with her own life during the day.

**Veneration of
Mary Most Holy**

c. 663, § 4

MC 42

31. To venerate in a particularly loving way Mary most holy - she, who with her multiple intercession, continues to obtain for us the gifts of eternal salvation, the Sister prays the Holy Rosary, 'the compendium of the entire Gospel' every day, or offers some Marian devotion.

**Days of
Recollection
and Spiritual
Exercises**

c. 663, § 5

32. In the monthly day of recollection and in the course of the spiritual exercises, the Sister discovers new energies to progress in the holiness of her vocation. This enables each one to be the more radicated in the theological and interior life and to increase in zeal for winning over human beings to Christ.

c. 765

32. 1 In order to preach to the Sisters in our Churches and oratories, there is needed the permission of the Superior General, or her Delegate in her circumscription. Such permission would be required unless it is a matter of some occasional preaching, or a brief course. For such instances, the permission of the local Superior suffices.

Chapter IV

Community Life

• *"A new commandment I give to you: that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."*

(Jn 13:34)

• *"God's Plan is realized in history with the announcement of the faith and the communion among believers, based on the Trinitarian communion - for the Church is nothing other than a 'people gathered in the unity of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"*

(CeC 16)

• *Out of His infinite mercy and goodness, the Lord has called to the same vocation all those who are in this Institute, that of honoring in it His Holy Family and to obtain the sanctification of their neighbors. The Sisters who are united in this vocation are this even more so by that very special love that they will have for one another.*

And they will love one another with that mutual charity, which has God Alone for its beginning and end."

(NAUDET L. C II, 2.).

**In the
Trinitarian
Mystery**

LG 2 - 4

LG 44

33. Community life reflects the light of the Trinitarian Mystery through the Father's action, Who calls us - through that of the Son Who unites us to Himself - and through that of the Holy Spirit Who unites us among ourselves.

This communion of fraternal life tends to fulfill Jesus' prayer completely: "that they may all be one". This also gives witness in a community way to the expectancy of the Lord and of the union of the faithful in the heavenly homeland.

**The Holy
Family:**

A Community of

Love

Lk 2:51

34. The Sisters see in the Holy Family the perfect realization on earth of that community of love, which the Holy Trinity is.

Through that commitment which derives from that special title, "Sisters of the Holy Family", they will make every effort to serve God and humanity, living the mystery of Christ in His family life with Mary and Joseph.

Rm 5:5

Ga 6:2

34.1 The Sisters love one another with that love diffused among them by the Holy Spirit, so that they form one heart and one soul in God. They are members of one and the same body of Christ and are honored by His infinite goodness with a special common vocation.

They treat one another with esteem and charity, each one bearing the others' burdens.

**Commitment
of Charity**

35. With their Religious Profession, which is a commitment of charity, the Sisters assume duties toward the Community and toward all the Sisters. These include the realistic acceptance of one another, each with her own challenges, talents, and limits, with spiritual gifts, as well as inherent fragility. This is realized in such a way that each Sisters feels loved and is willingly listened to by the others. There needs to be that mutual understanding, that is, the commitment to receive the other's personal opinions well, affording to each one every possibility of expressing herself spontaneously, with simplicity and frankness. These are signs of a religious family spirit.

PO 7

35. 1 The Sisters are united among themselves with a bond of charity, prayer and fraternal collaboration. The older Sisters will look kindly on the younger members, help them in their first experiences and apostolic activities, and make every effort to understand their mentality.

The younger Sisters will give the older Sisters that respect which they deserve.

All try to resolve together the problems of community.

**The Religious
House**

c. 665, § 1

36. The Sisters live in their own religious house, observing the common life and do not absent themselves from it without the Superior's permission.

c. 667, § 1

36.1 The Superior General, having heard her Council, determines that part of every house reserved exclusively for the Sisters. This favors the working out of common activities and also the fraternal relaxation.

Externs may be admitted into these places with the Superior's permission, and for just motives.

The rooms set aside for priests and for other guests are separated, in so far as this will be possible, from the Sisters' dwelling.

**Diversity
of Functions**

PC 14

37. The Superiors, representing Christ among the Sisters and being a sign of unity, offer a service of mediation between God and the community, and the Sisters among themselves.

They serve to encourage the community ardor giving a fitting answer to the demands of the Holy Spirit.

PC 14

37. 1 On their part, the Sisters will manifest filial love and respect toward the Superiors.

They pray for them and strive to lighten their responsibilities, by carrying out their dispositions with docility and serene solicitude to grow together in charity.

Jn 17:11

37. 2 The Superiors and the Sisters, in their diversity of functions, seek together God's Will to bring it about in a concrete manner.

Through fraternal dialogue, they become a visible sign to the world of their fraternity in the Lord and they establish that mutual exchange of goods and supernatural riches, which fashions them into one reality in Christ.

37. 3 Without losing their character of a common act, recreations are conducted in a climate of serene fraternity. This provides the Sisters with a just restoration of their fatigue and tension that comes from their daily duties.

**Fraternal
Care and
Assistance**

LG 11

38. All the Sisters will extend a particular care for the sick Sisters, seeing in them Christ's own suffering members. They offer them assistance with concern, showering affection and understanding upon them, in accord with the teaching and the example of Mother Foundress.

The sick Sister humbly accepts God's Will, realizing the apostolic fruitfulness of her prayer and sacrifice.

Gc 14,15

38. 1 Whenever a Sister approaches her eternal encounter with Christ, which will confirm her forever in the 'Amen' of her consecration, the Community will intensify its prayer and fraternal assistance.

All will then take special care to apply for the deceased Sister the suffrages indicated in the Directory.

**Family
Spirit**

GS 48

39. In the spirit of family, proper to our Congregation, the Sisters maintains a profound affection for her loved ones. In one and the same act of charity she fuses the love that unites her to her blood relatives, with that she extends to her religious family, to which she has been called.

c. 665, § 1

39. 1 Respecting their dependence on the Superior and the requirements of both their community and professional lives, each year the Sisters may spend a brief period of time with their families.

Particular situations that require longer and more frequent visits to their families, will be taken up with the Superior General, in accord with the universal Directory.

Chapter V

Apostolic Life

• *"As you did send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth."*

(Jn 17:18-19)

• *"Let religious see well to it that the Church truly show forth Christ through them with ever increasing clarity to believers and unbelievers alike - Christ in contemplation on the mountain, or proclaiming the kingdom of God to the multitudes, or healing the sick and maimed and converting sinners to a good life, or blessing children and doing good to all, always in obedience to the will of the Father who sent Him."*

(LG 46)

• *"How fortunate we are to have been called to religious life in which we are similar to Christ, who was born to spend Himself entirely for humanity, to be of service to all. We, too, have been destined to spend all our energies and commit our service to them. And even more blessed would we be if we could only die as Jesus did: What a blessed fate that would be!"*

(NAUDET L. Cs f. 187).

**Membership
in the
Mystical
Body**

NAUDET L.
Ms f. 105

c. 590, § 2

40. In the Foundress' mind, the Congregation "should give great glory to God and serve for the sanctification of many souls."

It helps the Sisters to ponder deeply the mystery of our belonging to the Mystical Body of Christ, in filial subjection to the Sacred Hierarchy, especially to the Supreme Pontiff, whom all obey also in virtue of the vow.

**Apostolic
Activity**

c. 675, § 1

41. The apostolic activity of the Congregation pertains to its very nature. Therefore, the whole life of the Sisters is permeated with an apostolic spirit, and all their apostolic activity is animated by a religious spirit.

c. 678, § 1

41.1 The Sisters are subject to the power of the diocesan Bishops in all that regards the care of souls, the public exercise of the divine worship and the other works of the apostolate.

**Interior
Spirit**

NAUDET L.
Ms f. 105

42. According to Mother Foundress' teaching, the Sisters strive to acquire a profound interior spirit, the foundation of their apostolic activity.

To render themselves in conformity with "Jesus C simplicity."

NAUDET L. Ms
f. 70

42. 1 Considering themselves to be useless servants, the Sisters continuously ask for the Lord's help.

They consider it as a special grace that they can work for the salvation of their brothers and sisters, thus making evident the authenticity of their charity.

They seek to keep themselves united to God, "as two intimate friends who think of one another's best interests."

**In the
Style of
Nazareth**

43. From the very features of the Congregation, we draw the characteristics of our apostolate, responding to Mother Foundress' charism and to present-day needs: it is an apostolate of service to the local Church, in collaboration with the clergy and the laity dedicated to her pastoral life, while remaining open to the problems and to the necessities of the entire Church; it is an apostolate that unfolds with a preference for the education and spiritual growth of children, adolescents, the youth and families.

NAUDET L.
Ms f. 73

43.1 In the exercise of their apostolic activities, the Sisters strive to achieve Mother Foundress' desire "that the Institute might be great before God, and as insignificant as possible in the eyes of human beings."

All the Sisters, no matter what duty they fulfill, will cooperate in it with prayer and action, maintaining the style of the Family of Nazareth.

**In the
Service
of the
Universal
Church**

AG 12

c. 675, § 3

44. The Sisters give a missionary dimension to their charity, considering themselves assigned to the service of the universal Church. They achieve this by being present where the gospel message has not yet been sufficiently announced. With their genuine ecclesial spirit, they move and work in accord with the directives of the Magisterium.

In order to promote an efficacious commitment to a shared pastoral life, the Sisters commit themselves to collaborate with other Congregations.

GS 41

44.1 They shape their apostolic activities in such a way that they can cultivate in their neighbors those natural and supernatural values, both of which Christ is the sole source and the perfect example.

To develop the values of the human person, the Sisters will know how to utilize in the context of the possibilities and obedience, those means offered by science.

Chapter VI

The Path of Formation

• *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide."*

(Jn 15:16)

• *"Since the final norm of the religious life is the following of Christ as it is put before us in the Gospel, this must be taken by all institutes as the supreme rule."*

(PC 2)

• *"I made the meditation recollected, with gratitude toward the Lord for having called me, not only under his banner, but also to follow His counsels in a much more close manner.*

I desired to be able to draw to Him a great host of souls, who would serve Him with perfection. And I prayed to Him to hasten this moment."

(NAUDET L. Ms f. 105)

**Pastoral Work
of Vocations**

PC 24

45. The Sisters are convinced that the best invitation for young women to embrace the ideal of the religious life in the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family, is their own humble and committed life, lived with interior joy, in the spirit of charity, piety and obedience in a family atmosphere.

**Religious
Vocation**

PC 5

46. The religious vocation is a precious gift of grace, given freely by God to some, so that they might consecrate themselves to Him Alone for the good of the entire Church.

The young women who respond to the divine call, commit themselves to an attitude of radical availability to the love of God and to the service of their brothers and sisters, in the practice of the evangelical counsels, living thus to the full their baptismal consecration.

**The Stages
of Formation**

47. Formation is worked out in various levels in the

Postulate,

Novitiate,

Juniorate

and after Perpetual Profession, it continues for the rest of one's life.

The Postulate

48. The Postulate is a time of formation prior to the admission to the Novitiate.

It has as its scope that of permitting a judgment to be made on the attitudes and on the vocation of the candidate. Its purpose is also to verify the level of religious culture already attained, and to complete this, if necessary. This time also helps the human and affective maturity of the candidate, thus permitting her to make a gradual change from life in the world to that proper to the Novitiate.

48.1 Normally, the Postulancy lasts one year, with the possibility of reducing it six months, or to prolong it up to two years. It is concluded with a course of Spiritual Exercises, of at least six days' duration.

It can be lived either in the house of Postulancy, or outside, according to the circumstances, in the judgment of the Superior General. It is up to her to admit a candidate to the Postulancy, and the determination of its duration.

48. 2 In this period, the Postulant is entrusted to a Sister trained in formation. From this time on, formation has as its goal that of assimilating the ideal and the form of religious life of our Congregation, as is laid out in the Directory.

**Novitiate:
Admission**

49. Admission to the Novitiate pertains to the Superior General with the consent of her Counsel, acting upon the request written previously of the Postulant and the opinion of the Sister charged with her formation.

c. 643 - 645

c. 656. 658

49. 1 The Superiors, conscious of the fact that Novitiate is already the beginning of the religious life in our Congregation, admit to it only those candidates who manifest the attitudes and those requirements of maturity necessary for this kind of choice, and that they have already completed their eighteenth year of age.

Special care must be taken to see to it that the candidates have all the requirements both for its validity and its elicity, as established in universal Law. This must be kept in mind also prior to both temporary and perpetual Profession.

Nature **50.** The Novitiate marks the beginning of the religious life in our Congregation and is its foundation.

c. 646 In this period, the Novice prepares herself with the progressive living and study of the religious life, for the total gift of herself to God. This is realized by her living the evangelical counsels of Chastity, Poverty and Obedience, with a view to a more perfect charity.

Duration **51.** The duration of the Novitiate is two years, of which twelve months are canonical.

c. 648, § 1

c. 649

Absences from the community and from the house of Novitiate, during the period prescribed by universal Law that surpass three months, either continuous, or broken, render the Novitiate invalid. An absence that surpasses fifteen days must be made good.

c. 647, § 1

c. 647, § 3

51. 1 In order for the canonical Novitiate to be valid, it must be spent in a house set aside for this purpose, established by a written decree of the Superior General, with the consent of her Council. During specific periods, the Superior General may authorize the community of Novices to be transferred to another house of the Congregation designated by her.

Formation **52.** Assisted by an ambience that favors reflection and prayer, and with the guidance of the Mistress, the Novice attends to her interior conversion. She does this by the practice of the religious virtues and the constant struggle to acquire a mentality of faith, that enables her to look at everything in the light of the mystery of Christ.

Setting

In accord with our spirituality, she is trained in habitual union with God, in humility, in obedience, in availability to the Holy Spirit.

NAUDET L. Ms
f. 75

52. 1 The direction of the Novices, under the Superior General's authority, is reserved solely to the Mistress. She guides the Novices lovingly and respectfully, to acquire gradually the interior spirit, which is the foundation of the Sisters' spiritual life, training them to subordinate to this their various activities.

52. 2 The formation program of the Novitiate has its own regulations, approved by the Superior General with the consent of her Council.

**Following the
Model of the
Family of
Nazareth**

53. The Novice is encouraged to come to the realization, from the very beginning that she has not embraced an easy and comfortable life.

She must learn to place herself at the complete service of God and her neighbor, on the model of the Family of Nazareth.

53. 1 She is guided to a vibrant knowledge of Sacred Scripture, of the Liturgy, of the Vows and christian asceticism. Furthermore, she learns to love the spirit of our Congregation, known in its history, in the Constitutions, and in the life and writings of Mother Foundress.

53. 2 During her formation, the Novice learns to appreciate the value of her total self-giving to God. She comes to experience the joy of living for that unique and higher love. Gradually, she discovers the harmonious unity between contemplation and apostolic activity and to experience the gift of mutual fraternal assistance.

This is characteristic of our Congregation, and is a factor toward an easier spiritual development and perseverance in the vocation.

**Periods of
Apostolic
Formation**

c. 648, § 2

54. During the second year, to round out the Novices' formation, the Superior General, in accord with the Mistress can establish one or more periods of apostolic activities, that might be performed outside the Novitiate community.

54. 1 These periods of apostolic activities allow the Novice to have some experience in the works proper to the Congregation, and to live in a tangible manner the reality of poverty and of work. She learns to be committed personally in the struggle for union with God in the context of the apostolic life.

**First
Profession**

c. 653, § 2

55. At the conclusion of the Novitiate, if the Novice is considered to be suitable, and after a retreat of at least six days, she is admitted to Religious Profession by the Superior General, with the consent of her Council, after having seen the Mistress' report.

55. 1 For First Profession and for Perpetual Profession, the Superior General seeks the consent of her Council; for the renewal of temporary vows it is enough to have their opinion.

**Formula
of Vows**

56. The formula of Vows is the following:

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
I,, trusting in the mercy of God,
to Whom I intend to consecrate myself
totally out of love,
confident in the help of Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
into your hands, Mother NN, Superior General
(or, Sister NN, Delegate of the Superior General),

of my own free and spontaneous will,
I pronounce my vows to the
All-powerful God, for one year (or,
perpetually)
of Chastity, Poverty and Obedience, according
to the Constitutions of the Congregation of
the Sisters of the Holy Family.
Amen!"

This formula can be somewhat adapted by
personal expressions, that have been previously
approved by the one who receives the Profession.

Mistress

57. For the responsibility of Mistress, a Sister is chosen by the Superior General, with the consent of her Council. The Mistress should be least thirty years of age, and have five years of Perpetual Profession. She should know and deeply love her own vocation, and the religious family to which she belongs. She should possess those human and spiritual qualities, suited to facilitate for her the delicate task of formation.

57. 1 Freed from all other duties, the Mistress dedicates herself entirely to the formation of the Novices, the hope of the Congregation.

She creates the atmosphere and conditions that are indispensable for the work of authentic formation towards a new mentality, and a new life-style. All of this can result only from interior acceptance and personal activity. By her example and words, she will lead the Novices into the Mystery of the Holy Family.

The Juniorate: **58.** The Juniorate is a time of further religious formation, which begins after First Profession and lasts for five years.
Its
Significance

In this period, the Sisters continue to deepen their religious and apostolic formation that has already begun. They also dedicate themselves to their professional and technical preparation, in harmony with the mission, the spirit and the needs of the Congregation.

58. 1 Mother Foundress exhorts the Sisters to exercise themselves the more in this time "in humility, since it would be better for them and for their neighbors to be deprived of knowledge, rather than of virtue. Actually it is humility is that enables them to receive from God those lights necessary for the acquisition of true wisdom."

58. 2 The organization of the life of the Juniorate must favor the realization of a balance necessary for the Sister to live her consecration.

She is to learn how to combine her spiritual life with the demands of study and the common life, with her own personal development.

Theories in formation are accompanied by practical experiences in the apostolic and professional fields.

58. 3 The young Sisters, in touch with reality, learn to know and evaluate, from a christian perspective, the manner of thinking and feeling of the modern world.

They will come to appreciate more the problems evolving from the cultural and social development in their apostolic environment.

58. 4 At least two months prior to their Perpetual Profession, the Sisters will return to the House of Formation, for a more intense spiritual preparation.

Duration

c. 657, § 2

59. The temporary vows are renewed annually for four years. The Superior General, with the consent of her Council, can in particular cases, modify the duration, but in a way that it will never be less than three years, or extended longer than nine years.

When the period of the Juniorate has been completed, the Superior General, with the consent of her Council, admits to Perpetual Profession the Sister who has been judged suitable, after having examined her request, and taken further information considered to be pertinent, particularly from the Mistress and the Superior of the Community to which the candidate belongs. Perpetual Profession, too, is preceded by a Retreat of at least six days' duration.

Mistress

60. It pertains to the Superior General with the consent of her Council, to name the Mistress of the Junior Sisters, who is responsible for their formation.

She exercises a ministry similar to that of the Mistress of Novices.

**On-going
Formation**

PC 1

c. 661

61. Fidelity to consecration demands a continuing struggle for conversion and adaptation. For this reason, the Sisters, assisted by the Congregation, commit themselves to develop and to complete with care and diligence their own spiritual and apostolic formation.

For this purpose, the Superiors will create the opportunities, help and give the necessary the time for this, in so far as they can.

61. 1 Regarding the modern means of social communication: such as the newspapers and magazines, television and films - which may at the same time be instruments of formation and relaxation - these are to be used with good judgment and prudence.

c. 666

The Sisters will exercise their critical sense:

- they will not hinder their use, but even favor it, while maintaining respect for religious discipline, when they are sure that the source is guaranteed, its content unquestionable, and their purpose is healthy;
- they absolutely exclude the use of these means when it comes to their attention that the opposite is true;
- they use them to obtain useful information of the daily events;
- they exercise real caution in the sector of recreation, so they will not be exposed to embarrassments and dangers regarding their status as consecrated persons.

61. 2 The Sisters who are called by the Congregation to carry out their activity in specialized forms of evangelization, will animate their apostolate in a particular manner with charity, and they will sustain them with truly gospel-centered life. These Sisters will implore from the Lord gifts of wise moral and psychological balance, in order to adjust to the various situations. They prepare themselves for such activities with a solid religious and human formation.

God is faithful in His love

2 Th 3:3

Lk 9:62

Mt 10:37

62. Perseverance is a gift of God, faithful in His love. He Who has called us to a life of total consecration, will not cease having us hear His voice and conferring His grace upon us.

Our challenge is to respond and not to look backward.

A life of incessant prayer and of mutual charity will sustain us in the faithful proposal of not preferring anything to Christ's love.

Separation from the Congregation

63. Our Religious Community may at times experience suffering through the separation of a Sister who leaves the Congregation, either by her own decision or by dismissal.

In every case, the communion of charity will keep alive in us the sense of understanding, respect and fraternal remembrance of those who are separated from us.

c. 653, § 1

63. 1 A Novice can leave the Congregation, or, for a just reason, she can be dismissed from it by the Superior General, having heard her Council's opinion.

c. 689, § 1

63. 2 At each termination of temporary vows, the Sister can leave the Congregation. So, too, the Superior General, having heard her Council, can exclude her from the renewal of her vows, or from making Perpetual Profession.

cc. 684-701

cc. 703-704

63. 3 For all that pertains to the passage, the exclaustation, the voluntary departure of Sister at the expiration of her temporary vows, or during the time of her vows, either temporary, or perpetual, in the dismissal of anyone from the Congregation, all that is established in universal Law must be scrupulously observed.

**Gospel
Charity**

c. 702

64. The Sisters who legitimately leave the Congregation, or who are legitimately dismissed from it, cannot demand anything as recompense for their activities while members of it. The Congregation, however, observes fairness and gospel charity toward the Sister who separates herself from the Congregation.

Chapter VII

The Service of Authority

• "...let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves ...

I am among you as one who serves."

(Lk 22:26-27 c)

• "Superiors will have to render an account of the souls committed to their care. They should be docile to God's will in performing the task laid upon them and should exercise authority in a spirit of service of the brethren, thus giving expression to God's love for them. They should govern their subjects in the realization that they are children of God and with respect for them as human persons, fostering in them a spirit of voluntary subjection."

(PC 14)

• "Here I am, Lord - I have arrived at that day when I must principally preside over others. How much this thought concerns me, only You know, for you can see the depths of my heart.

I am really in a confused state of mind: it seems to me that I see all of my Companions very much superior to myself. I have not been able to think of much else throughout the meditation, other than the charge that I must bear.

I sacrifice to you all the repugnance that I feel in doing this and resignedly I say to You, it seems to me, with all my heart: 'not my will be done, but Yours.'

Remember, O Lord, the promise that I heard often that You made in the depths of my heart - that You would be the One Who would do everything in me, that You will assist me, that I should not be afraid, but that in all occasions, I can refer to You in all confidence."

(NAUDET L. Ms f. 13)

**Authority
as a Gift**

65. Authority in the Church is a gift that the Risen Christ has willed as a visible sign of His presence.

This presence of Christ confers on authority a particular function as sign and mediation.

The Church in approving our Congregation, has rendered a share in her authority to the Superiors.

65. 1 The authority in the entire Congregation is exercised in a collegial form, by the General Chapter, legitimately constituted; in a personal manner, by the Superior General assisted by her Council, in accord with the norms of universal Law and of our Constitutions.

**The General
Chapter**

c. 631

66. The General Chapter is the representative assembly of the Congregation and expresses the participation and the solicitude of all the Sisters for the achievement of the good of the entire religious family.

The Chapter includes members who attend by right, that is, the Superior General, the four Councilors, the Secretary, the Economa General.

Those elected to attend are chosen from among the Sisters with perpetual vows, and must at least reach the number of those members who attend by right, established by the Directory.

**Ordinary and
Extraordinary**

67. The Ordinary General Chapter is celebrated to proceed to the election of the Superior General and her Council; the Extraordinary General Chapter is celebrated to treat problems of particular importance, regarding the entire Congregation.

**Convocation
and Presidency**

68. The convocation and the presidency of the General Chapter pertains to the Superior General - and should this office be vacant, to the Vicarress General.

The Session in which the Superior General is elected can be presided over by the Diocesan Bishop, or by his Delegate, on the basis of the decision made previously by the Superior General in office with the consent of her Council.

68. 1 The General Chapter cannot be ended without the explicit consent of the Chapter itself, and its statutes remain in force until the successive General Chapter.

68. 2 The Capitulars, realizing that they constitute in the General Chapter, the supreme authority of the Congregation, entrust themselves to the Holy Spirit, Who acts in all of the Sisters, and in each one, provided they exercise humility and docility to His action.

They do not allow themselves to be guided by human motives, but seek solely the glory of God.

Purposes

69. The ends of the General Chapter are the following:

c. 578

- to maintain the nature, the mission, the spirit and the healthy traditions of the Congregation, as well as the Foundress' authentic thought;

c. 631, § 1

- to animate the fervor of the charity and fraternal union in the Congregation, and to maintain the thrust of its charism;

- to promote the renewal of the religious life and its adaptation to the times and places, taking note of the appeals that the Lord directs to us through the directives of the Church and the evolution of society;

- to submit to the judgment of the Holy See the eventual interpretations or modifications regarding the Constitutions;

- to bring up to date and to approve the Directory and to review the Acts of the previous General Chapter.

To this purpose, the Chapter receives and studies the individual and collective proposals of the Sisters and of the Community.

Deliberations

70. Deliberations are decided upon by the absolute majority of votes.

c. 587, § 2

For the modification of the text of the Constitutions, there is required the majority of two thirds of the votes and the confirmation of the Holy See.

The authentic interpretation of the Constitutions is reserved to the Holy See.

Celebration

71. The General Chapter is celebrated according to the norms established in the Directory, after having observed the dispositions of the universal Directory.

For just reasons, the Superior General can anticipate, or delay the beginning and the celebration of a Chapter for a period of time that is not longer than six months.

**Election of
the
Superior
General**

c. 119, § 1

72. In order for the Superior General to be elected, she has to receive the absolute majority of the votes, that is, more than half.

Therefore, if no Sister has obtained the absolute majority in the first ballot, the Chapter proceeds to a second and then to a third.

If in the third ballot, no one has received the absolute majority, a fourth and final ballot will be held. In this one, only the two Sisters who in the third ballot received the greatest number of votes will have passive voice, but not active. If there are several with an equal number, then it will be the two oldest by Profession, or by age.

If in the fourth ballot, an equal number of votes results, the elder of the two by Profession, or by age, if their Profession was pronounced on the same day, will be elected.

**Election of
the
Councilors
And the
Economa
General**

73. For the election of the Councilors and the Economa General, the Chapter proceeds to secret and separate ballots. If in the first and second ballot, the absolute majority is not obtained, in the third ballot a relative majority decides.

The Superior General

c. 624, § 1

74. The Superior General succeeds the Foundress in the guidance of the Congregation and is the principal depositary of her spirit and charism.

She assures our fidelity to the Church of Christ, and represents the congregation before the Church and civil communities.

She is elected by the General Chapter for a term of six years. She can be re-elected only to a second consecutive six year term. She exercises

authority according to the norms of the universal Law and the Constitutions.

She should be at least thirty-five years of age and be perpetually professed for at least ten years.

Competences

c. 592, § 2

75. She has the duty of maintaining the fervor and apostolic fruitfulness in her religious family.

She sees to it that charity animates the Sisters and the fraternal life of every community, that all live the Constitutions and observe the Directory.

She sees to it that the documents of the Magisterium become known to all, especially those that pertain to religious life.

75. 1 She is a Mother in promoting a personal relationship of charity with each Sister: in encouraging each to good, in exhorting the Superiors to carry out their service responsibly and fraternally, in keeping alive the authentic spirit of the Congregation.

c. 628, § 1.3

75. 2 At least every two years, she personally conducts the visit of the entire Congregation, and frequently meets with the Sisters of the local Communities.

NAUDET L. C
IV, 1, 3

In accord with Mother Foundress' desire, she takes her inspiration from the "Holy Family, from which she will learn every virtue and the manner of direction and guiding well the religious family, which has been entrusted to her.

c. 832

75. 3 It pertains to her to give permission to write and publish articles that treat of questions of religion or morals.

75. 4 The Superior General can, for just reasons and in particular cases, dispense for a determined time, individual Sisters, as also a Community, or the entire Congregation, from the observance of some of the disciplinary norms of the Constitutions or of the Directory.

Resignation

76. If because of illness or for other grave reasons, the Superior General comes to the conclusion that she should resign from her office, she will expose the case to the Holy See. The General Councilors must also do this, should they come to believe that she should be taken out of office.

The General Council

77. The General Council is made up of the Superior General and of four Sisters elected by the General Chapter from among the Professed with perpetual vows.

Like the Superior General, they remain in office until the next General Chapter, and they can be re-elected.

c. 127

77. 1 The General Council is convoked at least once a month. The decisions are taken by an absolute majority of votes.

Competences

78. It is the duty of the Councilors to assist the Superior General in the government and in the administration of the Congregation.

They give their vote to whatever they are convinced is the best before God.

In the Council meetings, and also outside the sessions, they express to the Superior General with humble freedom their opinion on all that might be in the best interests of the Congregation.

They collaborate with the Superior General, with whom they are united spiritually, as with one heart and with one soul, even should they have a different point of view in particular cases.

78. 1 The Councilors express their consent, or opinion, in accord with the norms of universal Law, and our particular rules. When their consent is required, the Superior General is held under the validity of the act, to ask for this, and she is not allowed to go contrary to their view. When there is requested only their opinion, it suffices that she ask for this.

**The Vicareess
General**

79. The first Councilor elected is the Vicareess of the Superior General, and she takes her place in the case of her prolonged absence or temporary impediment, and conforms faithfully to the directives she has received.

79. 1 If for any reason whatsoever, the Superior General should cease from office before the end of her six year term, the Vicarress should succeed her in the office governing the Congregation and convokes the General within four months.

**The Secretary
General**

80. The Secretary General is a Sister with perpetual vows, nominated by the Superior General, with the consent of her Council.

80. 1 In close collaboration with the Mother and her Council, she lovingly and competently offers her service: she takes care of the drawing up and keeping of the official documents; as well as community information, the up-dating and the initiatives of motivating the Congregation.

**The Economa
General**

81. The Economa General is a Sister with perpetual vows. She treats of the business matters and the administrative acts with which she is entrusted, under the direction of the Superior General and the vigilance of her Council.

Circumscriptions

c. 581

82. It pertains to the Superior General, with the consent of her Council, to divide the Congregation in parts, for the purpose of simplifying the government, community life and the pastoral service of the Sisters.

Every organism constituted will have its own Statute, approved by the Superior General, with the consent of her Council, that she might guarantee and promote the authenticity of the spirit of the Congregation, the union in charity and at the same time, to insure the necessary autonomy.

Chapter VIII

Local Communities

• *"Love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor."*

(Rm 12:10)

• *"A Community gathered together as a true family in the Lord's name enjoys his presence through the love of God which is poured into their hearts by the Holy Spirit."*

(PC 15)

• *" God Alone.*

Beloved Sisters in Christ ... I am prompted to remind you once again of that charity which so impels me and which is the characteristic virtue of our Institute.

... If you have humility and if each and everyone of you considers herself to be the least of all, then it will come to be that charity will be observed even better. In such a situation, you would not compete with one another, lower one another, you would not be so upset with anxiety that your opinion should prevail against that of the others. Rather, by means of such humility your union among yourselves would be a veritable paradise, where each one would find contentment, and would not complain about others' attitude of authoritarianism of one over the other, but there would indeed be true union and charity. Let us have a genuine esteem for one another, and that will be relatively easy if through a true self-knowledge, you will come to see your own wretchedness and you will appreciate the virtue of the others.

...Remember in every meeting what you are, namely, religious. Be convinced that this is a thought that brings about a great good in every circumstance and helps to make every conversation, every activity, truly religious."

(NAUDET L. Letter 28.I.1808)

**Fundamental
Criteria**

83. In the foundation of houses and works, the Superior General will keep in mind the needs of the Sisters' spiritual and community life.

She will draw up equitable agreements with companies and persons, so that the support of the Sisters might be maintained in the spirit of poverty, and that the Congregation might be assured of the means for its general necessities.

c. 609, § 1

83. 1 For the erection of houses, the Superior General seeks the General Council's consent, as well as the Diocesan Bishop's permission, in whose territory she wishes to establish the house.

c. 612

83. 2 To destine a religious house for an apostolate different from the one for which it was originally established, the Superior General seeks the consent of her Council and also of the Diocesan Bishop.

83. 3 A religious house, legitimately erected, can be suppressed by the Superior General with the consent of her Council, after having consulted the Diocesan Bishop.

**The Religious
Community**

c. 608

84. The religious community dwells in a house legitimately constituted and is guided by a Superior, who maintains harmony and unity of sentiments and work with the Superior General.

In every house, there should be at least an oratory, in which the Eucharist is celebrated and reserved, so that It will truly be the center of the Community.

84. 1 The local Communities collaborate with one another for the advent of Christ's Reign, and for the development of their entire religious family.

They are united to the General House and with each other by a canonical bond and by fraternal charity.

The Local Superior

c. 623

c. 625, § 3

85. The Superior of the local Community, a Sister with perpetual vows, with at least three years of profession, is named by the Superior General with the consent of her Council, following an opportune consultation.

She remains in office for three years; she may be reconfirmed for a second three year term and, in particular cases, even for a third term.

She exercises her service towards the Sisters in manner to express that charity with which God loves them.

Competences

Mt 20:28

86. The local Superior accepts the responsibility entrusted to her and exercises it in a family spirit for the good of the individual Sisters and for the entire Congregation.

She is a sign and bond of unity in the fraternal relations and a guide in the coordination of the apostolic activities.

She is a Sister among Sisters, and takes her inspiration from the example of Mary, the Handmaid of the Lord; from Joseph, in his service to the Holy Family; and from "Jesus who came not to be served but to serve."

86. 1 She maintains a frequent and cordial relationship with the Generalate; she makes known eventual problems; accepts information and observations regarding the discipline and the economy of the house; she facilitates the contacts of the Sisters with the Superior General, and with all due respect to the human person, does all she can that their obedience be voluntary.

PC 14

86. 2 For just reasons and in particular cases, she can dispense a Sister for a determined time, from some disciplinary observance of the Constitutions and of the Directory. In exceptional cases, she may extend this to the whole Community.

**The Local
Council and
the Economa**

c. 636, § 1

87. In the local Community, the Superior is assisted by a Council, as is made clear in the Directory. Furthermore, in so far as is possible, the Economa is distinct from the Superior.

Chapter IX

The Administration of Goods

• *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."*

(Mt 6:19)

• *"The institutes themselves should endeavor, taking local conditions into account, to bear a quasi-collective witness to poverty. They should willingly contribute part of what they possess for other needs of the Church and for the support of the poor, whom all religious should love with the deep yearning of Christ.*

Provinces and houses of the different institutes should share their poverty with one another, those who have more helping those who are in need."

(PC 13)

• *"Even though churches and the houses can be financially endowed and possess goods as property, this cannot become an allowance to diminish the spirit of poverty.*

All property belongs to the Community."

(NAUDET L. C II, 4.4)

**The Use
of Goods**

88. The Congregation as a whole, as well as each individual House, validly and licitly acquires, possesses, sells, administers and uses economic goods. It provides for its own sustenance and development with the work of its members.

It accepts in a spirit of poverty and with gratitude whatever is spontaneously offered.

88. 1 The Superior General, with the consent of her Council, entrusts the administration of the movable and immovable goods of the Congregation, to the Economa General, and fulfills those acts of ownership that pertain to the Congregation.

c. 638, § 3

88. 2 For the validity of any transferral of anything of value, and for any other matter that would surpass the amount established by the Holy See for every region - and whenever it is a matter of free will offerings made to the Church, as well as any gifts that are precious by reason of their artistic or historical value, in addition to the Superior General's permission, there is also needed that of the Holy See.

**The Legal
Representative**

89. The Legal Representative is a Sister with perpetual vows, named by the Superior General with the consent of her Council. She is called to conduct with utmost attention, all of the activities required by the civil statutes, in accord with the Norms of the Directory and the dispositions of the Council.

Chapter X

Commitment of Fidelity

• *"If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love."*

(Jn 15:10)

• *"It is for the good of the Church that institutes have their own characters and functions.*

Therefore the spirit and aims of each Founder should be faithfully accepted and retained, as indeed should each institute's sound traditions, for all of these constitute the patrimony of an institute."

(PC 2)

• *"The law of charity is that which ought to animate all the Sisters of the Holy Family to the perfect observance of these Constitutions.*

The way, therefore, of the Sisters of the Holy Family is the observance of their Constitutions and Rules. These ought to be followed, proceeding from virtue to virtue, wisely and with supreme diligence and attention, without straying either to the right or to the left until they have reached their heavenly Spouse in the blessed eternity."

(NAUDET L. C IV, last chapter)

**Constitutions
approved by
the Church**

90. In approving these Constitutions, the Church assures the authenticity of the evangelical life that we have chosen, while it assists our Congregation to grow in accord with the spirit of the Foundress.

Observed ...

c 578

91. The Constitutions of themselves do not oblige under pain of sin, except the norms that pertain to the Vows, or which refer to divine or ecclesiastical laws, the Sisters nonetheless take it to heart to observe our Constitutions with the greatest possible fidelity, thus acquiring the merit of obedience.

**... and loved
by the Sisters**

92. The Sister of the Holy Family loves her Constitutions, for she can be sure that she finds in them an excellent doctrine for the achievement of perfection and of fraternal communion in the following of Christ. She discovers in this that freedom is strengthened by obedience, to carry out securely and to keep faithfully her religious profession and to progress joyfully along the path of charity.

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