

CONSTITUTIONS
of the
SOCIETY OF MARY

Rome, 1988

Padri maristi, Casa generalizia, via A. Poerio 63, Roma.

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GREGORIUS PP. XVI

Ad perpetuam rei memoriam

Omnium gentium salus, cujus causam a Principe pastorum, et Episcopo animarum accepimus, Nos continenter vigiles esse compellit, ut nihil inexpertum relinquamus, quo a solis ortu usque ad occasum laudetur nomen Domini, ac Sanctissima Catholica Fides, sine qua impossibile est placere Deo, ubique terrarum vigeat atque refulgeat. Quocirca singulari sane paterni Nostri animi benevolentia eos potissimum ecclesiasticos viros prosequimur, qui in societatem coacti memores institutionis, et vocationis eorum, divini verbi praeconio, et multiformis gratiae Dei dispensatione, non desinunt populos exhortari in doctrina sana, atque omni cura, et contentione uberes in vinea Domini fructus virtutis, et honestatis afferre conantur. Non mediocri certe voluptate affecti fuimus, ubi accepimus, dilectum filium Claudium Collin, et aliquot Presbyteros dioecesis Bellicensis in Gallia multis abhinc annis novae religiosorum hominum societatis fundamenta posuisse, titulo Societatis Mariae. Quae quidem societas eo potissimum spectat, ut Dei gloria ac Sanctissimae illius Genitricis honor augeatur, ac Romana Ecclesia propagetur tum christiana puerorum institutione, tum etiam Missionibus usque in ultimas terrarum Orbis oras. Jam vero cum ejusmodi Societas in Dioecesibus paesertim Bellicensi, Lugdunensi, et Gratianopolitana divino favente numine fuerit propagata, et aliquot ipsius Societatis Presbyteri ad Catholicam religionem in Insulas Indiae Australes promovendam a Congregatione de Propaganda Fide missi fuerint, iccirco ejusdem Societatis Presbyteri, quo illa magis, magisque vigeat, et floreat, supplici cum prece a Nobis efflagitarunt, ut non solum Societatem ipsam Auctoritate Nostra Apostolica confirmare velimus, verum etiam veniam tribuamus, qua ejusdem Societatis presbyteri Supremum Moderatorem, seu Praesidem Generalem, a quo regantur, adlegere, et simplicia vota emittere possint. Nos igitur, quibus nihil potius, nihilque optabilius quam Dei gloriam amplificare, et spirituali omnium populorum bono summopere prospicere, gravissimis Venerabilium Fratrum Archiepiscopi Administratoris Ecclesiae Lugdunensis, et Episcoporum Bellicensis, et Gratianopolitani acceptis testimoniis, ex quibus perspeximus ex hac Societate plurima bona, et commoda in christianam rempublicam posse redundare, de VV. FF. NN. S.R.E. Cardinalium negotiis, et consultationibus Episcoporum, et Regularium Praepositorum consilio, hujusmodi supplicationibus alacri, libentique animo annuendum censuimus. Quare omnes, et singulos, quibus hae Litterae favent, peculiari beneficentia prosequi volentes, et a quibusvis excommunicationis, suspensionis, et interdicti, aliisque ecclesiasticis sententiis, censuris, ac poenis quovis modo, vel quavis de causa latis, si quas forte incurrerint, hujus tantum rei gratia, absolventes, ac absolutos fore censentes, Societatem, seu Congregationem Presbyterorum Societatis, de qua habita mentio est, Auctoritate Nostra Apostolica hisce Litteris approbamus, et confirmamus, eademque Auctoritate ejusdem Societatis Presbyteris potestatem facimus, cujus vi Supremum moderatorem, seu Praesidem Generalem eligere, et simplicia vota emittere libere, ac licite possint, et valeant. Eidem vero Supremo Moderatori facultatem tribuimus, cujus ope, illius Societatis Presbyteros a commemoratis simplicibus votis solvere queat. Denique eidem Congregationi negotiis, et consultationibus Episcoporum, et Regularium praepositae examen regularum ejusdem Societatis reservamus. Haec volumus, concedimus, statuimus, atque mandamus, decernentes, has praesentes Litteras firmas, validas, et efficaces existere, et fore, suosque plenarios, et integros effectus sortiri, et obtinere, et omnibus, ac singulis ad quos spectat, et spectabit in posterum hoc, futurisque temporibus plenissime suffragari, sicque in praemissis per quoscumque Judices

Ordinarios, et Delegatos etiam Causarum Palatii Apostolici Auditores, ac S.R.E. Cardinales, sublata eis, et eorum cuilibet quavis aliter iudicandi, et interpretandi facultate, et auctoritate iudicari, et definiri debere, irritumque, et inane, si secus super his a quoquam quavis auctoritate scienter, vel ignoranter contigerit attentari. Non obstantibus, quoties opus fuerit, fel. rec. Benedicti XIV., Praedecessoris Nostri super Divisione Materiarum, aliisque Apostolicis, ac in Universalibus, Provincialibusque, et Synodalibus Conciliis editis generalibus, vel specialibus Constitutionibus, et Ordinationibus, ceterisque contrariis quibuscumque. Datum Romae apud S. Petrum sub Annulo Piscatoris die XXIX Aprilis MDCCCXXXVI. Pontificatus Nostri Anno Sexto.

Pro Domino Card. De Gregorio.
A. Picchioni Substitutus.

GREGORY XVI, POPE

In perpetual commemoration

The salvation of all nations, a charge we have received from the prince of shepherds and bishop of souls, compels us to be ever watchful that we leave nothing untried by which from the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the Lord may be glorified and the most holy catholic faith, without which it is impossible to please God, may flourish and shine forth throughout the world. Wherefore we cherish with a truly special benevolence of our paternal heart those ecclesiastics who, gathered in a society and mindful of their state and vocation, do not cease by the preaching of the divine word and the dispensation of God's manifold graces to exhort the people in sound doctrine and who strive by every care and effort to bring forth abundant fruits of virtue and goodness in the Lord's vineyard. We felt indeed not a little pleasure when we learnt that our beloved son Claude Collin and some priests of the diocese of Belley in France had many years ago laid the foundations of a new society of religious under the title Society of Mary. Indeed this Society is concerned above all that the glory of God and the honour of his most holy Mother be increased and that the Roman Church be propagated, whether by the christian education of children or by missions even to the utmost ends of the earth. Now, since this Society has under divine auspices been propagated especially in the dioceses of Belley, Lyons, and Grenoble, and since some priests of the same Society have been sent by the congregation for the Propagation of the Faith to promote the catholic religion in the islands of the southern Indies, the priests of this same Society, in order that it may thrive and flourish ever more, have earnestly besought us not only to approve the Society itself by our apostolic authority, but also to grant to the priests of the same Society permission both to elect a supreme moderator or superior general by whom they may be ruled, and also to take simple vows. We, therefore, to whom nothing is more important or desirable than to increase the glory of God and to provide to the utmost for the spiritual good of all peoples, having received the most weighty testimonies of our venerable brethren the Archbishop administrator of the church of Lyons and the Bishops of Belley and Grenoble, from which testimonies we have perceived that through this Society many benefits and advantages may accrue to Christendom, with the counsel of our most venerable brethren the cardinals of the holy Roman Church of the congregation of Bishops and Regulars, have resolved to give ready and eager assent to the above supplication. Wherefore, wishing to show a particular benevolence to all and each whom this letter favours, and to this effect alone absolving and accounting them absolved from any censures of excommunication, suspension, and interdict, and from other ecclesiastical sentences, censures, and penalties howsoever and for whatever reason imposed, if perchance they have incurred such, do by our apostolic authority and by this letter approve and confirm the Society or Congregation of priests of the Society of which mention has been made, and by the same apostolic authority we grant to the priests of the said Society the right whereby they may elect a supreme moderator or superior general, and freely and licitly pronounce simple vows. Indeed to the supreme moderator we grant the power whereby he may loose the priests of that Society from these simple vows. Finally, to the congregation of Bishops and Regulars we reserve the examination of the rules of the said Society. This we will, we grant, we establish, and we command, holding this present letter to be and to remain in force, valid, and effective, to receive and maintain its whole and entire execution, to favour completely in all things and in all respects each and every person whom it concerns or shall hereafter concern, at this time or in the future. Thus shall judgement and definition be given in the foregoing by all

judges whatsoever, even by auditors in cases of the apostolic palace and by cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, from whom, together and severally, all power and authority to judge and interpret otherwise is withdrawn. Should an attempt be made by anyone, whatever his authority and whether wittingly or unwittingly, to decide otherwise in these matters, the same shall be null and void. These things we decree notwithstanding, wherever necessary, the general and special constitutions and ordinances of our predecessor of happy memory, Benedict XIV, upon the division of matters and other general and special constitutions and ordinances, whether apostolic or promulgated in universal, provincial, and synodal councils, and all other things whatsoever to the contrary. Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, under the seal of the fisherman, on the 29th day of April, 1836, in the sixth year of our pontificate.

For the lord Cardinal De Gregorio,
A. Picchioni, Substitute.

Ad maiorem Dei gloriam

et Dei Genetricis honorem

CONSTITUTIONS OF THE SOCIETY OF MARY

Chapter I

NATURE AND FOUNDATIONS OF THE SOCIETY

Article I

Mary Gives Her Name to the Society

1. This little congregation of priests and brothers approved by Pope Gregory XVI on April 29, 1836, is called the Society of Mary. It takes this name from the initiative which it acknowledges as its origin. It is a clerical religious institute of pontifical right.

2. On July 23, 1816, at the shrine of Our Lady of Fourviere, Lyons, twelve priests and seminarians pledged themselves to found a congregation bearing the name of Mary. Those who worked for the next twenty years to carry out this promise were convinced that they were responding to a wish of the Mother of Mercy, which found expression for them in the following words: "I supported the Church at its birth; I shall do so again at the end of time".

3. Jean-Claude Colin and his companions were challenged by these words to make their own the concern of Mary for the Church of their time, which was threatened by new dangers. The new congregation would be made up of several branches so as to reach all classes of people. It would be at once universal and diocesan, prepared to go wherever it was needed, but closely identified with the local Church. It would learn from Mary's presence among the apostles how to be present in the Church in such a way that the more hidden it was the more effective it would be. Finally, it would gather all believers under Mary's name into a third order open to all. And so, there would be seen in the Church at the end of time what was seen at the beginning - a community of believers with one mind and one heart.

4. This work of Mary was shared by Jean-Claude Colin and the Marist Fathers and Brothers, Marcellin Champagnat and the Marist Teaching Brothers, Jeanne-Marie Chavoin and the Marist Sisters, and later by the Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary, as well as by the Third Order of Mary spread throughout the world. All these groups have been regarded from their beginning as belonging to the one Marist family.

5. By entering the Society of Mary, Marists follow in the footsteps of those who began the Marist project. They too are determined to fulfill Mary's desire to be through them a support for the Church in these uncertain times, just as she has always been since the days of Pentecost.

Article II

The Name and Purpose of the Society

6. In striving to understand the meaning of the Society's name, Marists turn to the Venerable Jean-Claude Colin, whom they claim as their founder. The Constitutions which he gave them remain for them the authentic expression of the nature and ends of the Society of Mary.

7. Hence Marists recall and treasure the words in which their Founder expressed the link between the name of the Society and its aims:

This least of Congregations, which the Supreme Pontiff Gregory XVI graciously approved on April 29, 1836, received from the beginning the name SOCIETY OF MARY. The very name indicates the banner under which it desires to serve in fighting the battles of the Lord, and what its spirit should be. It is distinguished by this tender name, SOCIETY OF MARY:

1) so that all who are admitted into it, mindful of the family to which they belong, may understand they are to emulate the virtues of this loving Mother, as if living her life, above all in humility, obedience, self-denial, mutual charity and the love of God;

2) so that in the various works they undertake for the greater service of God, keeping before their eyes this lovable Queen of angels and of men, fired by the example of so great a leader and renewed by her merits and prayers, with greater resolution and with a more lively confidence, they may by the help of God's grace spend themselves for their own perfection and the salvation of their neighbour, and hold more loyally to the Roman Catholic faith until death, defending it with all their strength. In this way they will be able to achieve more fruitfully the purpose of the Society.

Haec minima Congregatio, quam die vigesima nona Aprilis anni 1836 Gregorius XVI Pontifex Maximus benigne approbavit, iam ab initio nomen SOCIETATIS MARIAE sortita est. Quod nomen satis indicat sub quo vexillo militare desideret in praeliandis praeliis Domini, et qualis esse debeat illius spiritus. Hoc enim mellifluo SOCIETATIS MARIAE nomine insignita est:

1° Ut omnes qui in illam admittuntur, memores familiae ad quam pertinent, intellegant se debere virtutes huius Almae Matris aemulari, et ex eius vita quasi vivere, maxime in humilitate, obedientia, propria abnegatione, mutua caritate, et amore divino;

2° ut hanc amabilem Angelorum hominumque Reginam, in variis laboribus ad maius Dei obsequium sustinendis, semper prae oculis mentis habentes, tantaeque Ducis exemplis accensi, meritis ac precibus recreati, maiore cum animi robore et alacriore cum fiducia, tam in propriam perfectionem quam in proximorum salutem, auxiliante Dei gratia, sese impendant, fidemque Catholicam Romanam adusque mortem fidelius teneant, et pro viribus tueantur; sicque scopum quo tendit Societas abundantiore cum fructu attingere valeant.

8. Because they bear the name of Mary, Marists desire to be like her and follow Jesus as she did. Contemplating Mary in the mysteries of Nazareth and Pentecost and her role at the end of time, they come to share her zeal for her Son's mission in his struggle against evil, and to respond with promptness to the most urgent needs of God's people.

9. As Marists, they desire to breathe her spirit, to be humble and obedient, and to deny themselves for the love of God and their neighbour.

10. Mary, as their first and perpetual Superior, inspires them with courage to pursue the aims of the Society: to grow in personal holiness, to work for the salvation of their neighbour, and to keep the faith of the Catholic Church and defend it with all their strength. It is in pursuing these aims in the spirit of Mary that they will help to renew the Church in her image, a servant and pilgrim Church.

11. For the same reasons, they live out the evangelical counsels of chastity, obedience, and poverty so as to follow Jesus Christ and to place all that they are and have at the service of His Kingdom. Attentive solely to the Lord, and aided by the prayer and example of Mary, they strive to become, in their Founder's words, ever more effective 'instruments of divine mercy' (Constitutions 1872, n. 118).

12. Their call is to be truly missionary: they are to go from place to place, announcing the word of God, reconciling, catechizing, visiting the sick and the imprisoned, and doing the works of mercy. They attend especially to the most neglected, the poor, and those who suffer injustice. They are ready to carry out these tasks anywhere and at any time.

13. Guided by the Gospel, the doctrine of the Church, and the insights of Father Colin on education, they devote themselves to all forms of education, especially among the young.

14. Marists are called to establish the Church where it does not exist and to renew existing communities rather than to participate in its activities in places where it is already established with sufficient resources. The Society is no longer true to its calling whenever it becomes so caught up in particular works as to cease to be available for more urgent needs to which it may be called by its mission.

Article III

Marist Presence in the Church

15. To choose Mary's name is to enter into a special relationship with her, which teaches Marists to relate to their neighbour in such a way that through them Mary can be present to the Church of today as she was to the Church at its birth. Mary did not press her privileged position as the mother of Jesus, but was ready to be first and foremost his disciple, one who 'hears the word of God and keeps it' (Lk. 8:21).

16. Marists support the Bishop of Rome with all their strength; they place themselves at his disposal to answer the needs of the Church throughout the world. Because of their desire for the unity of the Church, the healing of divisions among God's people will be one of their constant concerns.

17. While the Society has its own proper character and existence, the way that Marists work in the local Church should encourage the Bishop to look on the Society as if it were his own.

18. Actively present in the local Church, Marists make a specific contribution to it by practising and communicating an attitude of self-effacement and hiddenness in order to build up the Christian community.

19. Marists should respect, support, and work with diocesan priests and other religious in the part they play in the life of the Christian community. They will be especially concerned to enable the laity to live more fully their Christian vocation and exercise their role in the life and ministry of the Church.

20. Marists share the Church's duty to denounce injustice and to show solidarity with the oppressed. They avoid exclusive identification with any ideology, party, or class. Their sole concern must be to announce the Good News.

21. Following their tradition, Marists must refuse any dignity outside the Society, whether ecclesiastical or civil. This helps them to be free from that spirit of ambition which is opposed to the spirit of Mary.

Article IV

Other Characteristics of the Society

1. Hidden and Unknown in the World.

22. Marists seek inspiration in the traditional phrase, "hidden and unknown in the world". For Jean-Claude Colin it best captured, in the light of his spiritual and pastoral experience, Mary's presence in the Church.

23. They learn from him and like him from Mary, how to approach the work of

evangelisation so that the Gospel may be received in all its power and clarity. Fired with apostolic zeal for the Kingdom, they follow the Lord in emptying themselves of all self-seeking so that nothing will prevent the word of God from being heard. It was by coming into the world in obscurity and poverty that Jesus drew men and women to His Father.

24. The spirit of 'hidden and unknown' leads Marists to embrace a life of simplicity, modesty and humility. Nothing in their personal life or behaviour, neither pride nor personal ambition, must cause people to resist the salvation offered them by God. Like Mary they are to be gentle with others, respectful of their freedom, and sensitive to their point of view. In this spirit they are able to hear the longings of the people of God and discern the signs of hope present in today's world.

25. While Marists are willing to undertake any ministry that will help build up the Church for the sake of the world, they work in such a fashion that no one, as it were, notices their presence.

2. Marists and Learning.

26. The Society of Mary desires to bring salvation to all. It cannot achieve its mission unless its members are thoroughly equipped, intellectually as well as spiritually. They must apply themselves diligently to the acquisition of learning and the skills required for the work of Mary. Superiors should do their utmost to ensure that the abilities of each Marist are developed and used to the full.

27. Through prayer they will learn to place their gifts unselfishly at the disposal of the Society for the sake of the Kingdom. The humility which characterizes their apostolate does not exclude high levels of academic achievement or professional excellence.

3. Unity among Members of the Society.

28. Nothing will contribute more to the attainment of the goals of the Society than the deep mutual love of its members. Marists respect each other as brothers in the Lord and strive to set aside all that may divide them.

29. They must be careful to avoid all discrimination which might arise from difference of race, nation, region, or culture. They try to understand each other, to listen, to communicate frequently in friendship, and to go beyond their own views and interests for the sake of the Kingdom.

Article V

Membership of the Society of Mary

30. A baptized Christian becomes a member of the Society of Mary when he makes his religious profession. Through their common profession, Marists form a family where all enjoy the same rights and are bound by the same obligations. The only exceptions are those enjoined

by Canon Law and these Constitutions.

31. From the beginning the Marist project envisaged a branch open to lay men and women. In 1850 this branch took on a particular form and was officially recognized by the Holy See as the "Third Order of Mary". In Father Colin's mind it was to be a broadly-based association available to all people, whatever their situation, age, or condition. It could assume many forms, and, where appropriate, might even be given another name.

32. The Marist project is open to still other ways of association. Each province, in agreement with the superior general and his council, decides the forms which this might take, with the understanding that such association does not constitute formal membership of the Society of Mary.

Chapter II

ADMISSION AND INCORPORATION OF NEW MEMBERS

Preamble

33. A person enters the Society of Mary in order to share with others a project of apostolic religious life. This commitment is his way of living the Gospel. His sharing in the common vocation of the Society is his response to a call from God and a choice of Mary.

34. The process of becoming a Marist must take account of two elements: the common vocation of the Society and the individual's personal vocation. At each step of formation one is confronted by the interplay of these two elements.

35. To enter the Society a candidate must first make an application. If he is accepted, he is gradually incorporated into the Society by living the life of the community and by becoming familiar with its history, spirit and mission. He prepares himself for the apostolate by acquiring the necessary qualifications. In this way the Society can continue to serve the Church in the world and constantly renew itself.

Article I

Admission of New Members

1. Invitation to enter the Society.

36. In their efforts to foster vocations Marists place their trust in the Holy Spirit who gives to certain people a longing for the Marist religious life. They pray that the Lord may awaken this

desire in many Christians and help them to recognise it.

37. Marists prefer to be known by their life and their work with the poor and abandoned rather than through publicity. Their joy in belonging to Mary's family and the generosity with which they do her work will attract candidates to join them.

38. They will scrupulously respect the freedom of prospective candidates as they endeavour to discover with them the way God is leading them to work for His kingdom.

2. Examination and Admission of Candidates to the Novitiate.

39. The right to admit new candidates belongs to major superiors. All Marists, however, are concerned both in drawing up the criteria for admission and the actual process leading to admission.

40. The superior general with the advice of his council has the right to admit to the novitiate. Normally, however, the decision to call to the novitiate rests with the provincial superior and his council.

41. The superior general ensures that the procedures used in the provinces are in harmony with the nature and mission of the Society. Provincial superiors, with the advice of their councils, will regularly evaluate admission procedures.

42. The criteria for admission to the novitiate are determined by the aims and the spirit of the Society. Besides the requirements of Canon 642, the candidate shall have the following qualities:

- (a) a sufficiently wide experience of life to ensure a mature awareness of its realities;
- (b) a desire to live the evangelical counsels in the Society of Mary and the ability to do so;
- (c) the emotional balance to live in community and work with others;
- (d) evidence of generosity and compassion so that he can enter fully into Marist life;
- (e) the intelligence, judgement and physical health necessary to enable him to contribute effectively to the mission and apostolates of the Society;
- (f) a desire to give a proper place in his life to Mary.

43. Those charged with the examination of candidates must take care to consult widely. Their chief concerns shall be:

- (a) to recognise and respect the way the Holy Spirit is working in them.
- (b) to help them discern their vocation in the Church.
- (c) to help the Society to achieve its goals.

44. The Society adds no impediments to those listed in Canon 643.

45. Each province will draw up specific criteria and a process of admission to the Society, which take into account the social and cultural environment from which the candidates come and the kind of apostolic activities in which they are likely to be engaged.

46. Each provincial superior, with the advice of his council, will appoint a person or group to prepare documentation on the candidates to be presented to the provincial superior with an appropriate recommendation.

47. There should normally be an interval of several months between the candidate's request to join the Society and the decision to admit him to the novitiate. All or part of this time shall be spent in a Marist community. Each province determines how this will take place.

48. Before a candidate is admitted to novitiate the competent authority will ensure that no impediments exist; that the candidate is living a Christian life; that he fulfils the criteria of admission; that he is sufficiently acquainted with the Society to be reasonably sure that it is the place where the Holy Spirit is calling him.

Article II

Incorporation of New Members

49. In accepting new members the Society renews itself in two ways. It transmits and reformulates its tradition and gives a new generation the opportunity to enrich Marist tradition by expressing it anew.

1. Aims of the Process of Incorporation.

50. Marist tradition can continue to be a living reality only if it offers an experience of the Gospel similar to that of Jean-Claude Colin and his companions. Successive generations make the tradition their own by praying and reflecting on the events crucial to the foundation of the Society.

51. The foundational Marist experience can be seen as symbolized in the promise made at Fourviere, the spiritual experience lived by Jean-Claude Colin at Cerdon, and the missions of the first Marists in Bugey.

52. At the shrine of Fourviere twelve companions promised before the image of the Blessed Virgin to express their love for God and their neighbour by founding the Congregation of Marists.

In a similar way the novice comes to see the Society as the place where God wants him to live the Gospel. By the time he makes his profession he should appreciate the meaning of the religious vows and the nature, ends, and spirit of the Society. His profession is a first important step in assuming responsibility for the enterprise which was taking shape on the hill of Fourviere.

53. At Cerdon Jean-Claude Colin became convinced that the idea of the Society of Mary came from God. In prayer and meditation on the mystery of Mary's presence at the birth of the Church, he discovered how the Society should be present in the Church of his time.

In the same way a Marist novice learns to 'taste God' and discover for himself in prayer how, by belonging to her Society, he must live the spirit of Mary. By the time of his profession, he will have made sufficient progress to begin to discern the action of the Holy Spirit in his life. He is aware of the obstacles within himself that hinder the action of the Spirit, but he uses the means to remain united with God in all that he does.

54. In the mountains of Bugey the first Marist missionaries experienced the joy of proclaiming the Good News to forgotten people.

The Marist novice too, comes to share this yearning to bring the Gospel to all people, especially those who are neglected or abandoned. By the time of his religious profession the novice has demonstrated his suitability for the apostolic life. He can forget his own interests in order to respond to the call of those in need. He knows that such forgetfulness of self in the service of others always finds its source in God alone.

55. These are the chief features of the Marist vocation. They express the principal goals of the novitiate and of the whole period of incorporation into the Society up to the time of perpetual profession.

2. Levels of Responsibility in Initial Formation.

56. The superior general has overall responsibility for formation. He ensures that procedures and programmes adopted in the provinces are true to the spirit of the Constitutions.

57. The provincial superior is responsible for formation in his own province. He entrusts the drawing up and implementation of procedures and programmes to competent Marists. He supports them in their work, helps them to evaluate results, and keeps the superior general fully informed of achievements and difficulties.

3. Novitiate.

58. The novitiate is to take place in a house designated for that purpose in writing by the Superior General with the consent of his council and in consultation with the provincial superior concerned.

59. For the validity of the novitiate a novice must spend twelve months in the novitiate community (Can. 648, 1). In order to complete the formation of the novices, one or more periods may be added to the twelve months, according to the judgment of the provincial superior with the advice of his council, and these may be spent in apostolic activity. (Can. 648, 2)

60. Absences from the novitiate community are subject to the norms of Canon Law (Can. 647-649).

61. The direction of the novitiate is entrusted to a perpetually professed Marist priest assisted by at least one other Marist. The master of novices is appointed by his provincial superior with the consent of the provincial council and the approval of the superior general.

62. The master of novices is responsible for carrying out the novitiate programme. He

helps the novices to attain its objectives and evaluates with them successes and difficulties. He prepares a report on each novice for the provincial superior and recommends whether or not he should be called to profession.

63. At all times, but more especially at the beginning of the novitiate, the master of novices will take account of the background, personal history, experience and culture of the novices, and will watch over their progress. He will keep an open mind so as to be able to listen to them and share in their difficulties, hopes, and enthusiasms. He should help them to a fuller understanding of the spirit of Mary and the demands made by the profession of the evangelical counsels. Following the advice of Jean-Claude Colin, he will be careful not to discourage the novices by asking too much before they are ready.

64. For their part the novices should listen attentively to the word of God to allow the Holy Spirit to form them into better disciples of the Lord. In this way they will develop that spirit of faith and responsibility which will enable them to recognize the Society of Mary as the place to which God invites them and calls them together.

4. Profession.

65. The authority to admit to profession and to the renewal of vows belongs to the superior general for the whole Society, and to the provincial superior for his province. Each must have the consent of his council.

66. To be admitted to religious profession novices must freely and responsibly request it. They must be judged capable of living as Marist religious and of contributing effectively to the ends of the Society.

67. The normal period of temporary profession is three years. It may be extended up to another three years. For sufficient reason a further extension may be granted by the provincial superior, but not beyond a total of nine years.

68. Those Marists may be admitted to perpetual profession who have spent at least three years in temporary vows, who freely and responsibly request it, and who have been judged capable of a lifelong commitment.

69. Religious profession is received in the name of the Church by the superior general or by the provincial superior of the candidate, or their delegate.

70. Profession is made according to a formula which must contain the following:

Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, before Mary our Mother and all here present I N... pronounce the three temporary/perpetual vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty, and I now promise to God and to you, very Reverend Father, Superior General of the Society of Mary, and your successors (or: to you very Reverend Father, representing the Superior General of the Society of Mary, and his successors), that I will keep them for one/two/three years/for life

according to the intention expressed in the Constitutions of this same Society. Strengthen, O Lord, the work which you have begun. Mary, loving mother, I am yours: through the power of your intercession keep me unto life everlasting. Amen.

It is permitted to add an introduction or conclusion to this formula, with the approval of the major superior.

Sanctissima Trinitas, Pater, Fili et Spiritus Sancte, coram Maria Matre nostra, et omnibus circumstantibus, ecce ego N... emitto tria temporaria/perpetua vota castitatis, obedientiae et paupertatis, quae nunc Deo et tibi, Reverendissime Pater, Societatis Mariae Superiori Generali, et tuis successoribus (vel: tibi, Reverendissime Pater, Superioris Generalis Societatis Mariae locum tenenti, et successoribus eius) toto anni/biennii/triennii/vitae decursu servare promitto, iuxta rationem in Constitutionibus eiusdem Societatis expressam.

Confirma hoc, Deus, quod operatus es. Maria, Mater amabilis, tuus sum ego; tua supplicii potentia salvum me fac in aeternum. Amen.

Article III

Preparation for Mission

I. Principles.

71. From the beginning of his novitiate and throughout his life the Marist dedicates all his energies and talents to becoming ever more effective in the mission given to the Society.

72. The goals of this continuing preparation are shaped by the ends and spirit of the Society. It is the duty of the formation team to plan, implement and evaluate formation policies.

73. Those in the phase of initial formation should be members of a formation community. Other aspects of the preparation for mission will be adapted to the needs, personality, and capabilities of the individual, always keeping in mind the common good of the Society.

74. In the acquisition of the necessary skills and qualifications, in the development of personal talents, and in making decisions regarding formation, it must be remembered that the Society has but one overall mission, namely, to proclaim the Gospel to the people of our time, ever conscious of the mystery of Mary in the Church.

75. The Marist prepares for his task by learning at Mary's side a particular way of relating to the Word of God, to the person of Jesus, and to the Church.

76. He prepares himself to proclaim the word of God by studying it with faith, using the

appropriate skills and expertise. He is also concerned to understand it from the viewpoint of the stranger, the destitute and the abandoned.

77. He prepares for his apostolate by remaining in intimate union with Christ through prayer, by frequent reception of the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation, and by studying in depth the person and mystery of Jesus. He learns how to discern the needs of the world in order to bring to it the response of the Gospel.

78. Finally, he prepares himself to be present in the Church in Mary's way by learning to love the Church as it is while at the same time being an agent of its renewal and unity.

79. Marists minister either as lay religious or as priests. Both ways require suitable qualifications and their own formation. Preparation for Holy Orders is governed by the common law of the Church, by the instructions of the Holy See, and the programmes drawn up by each Province. These programmes must be approved by the superior general with the advice of his council.

2. Responsibilities.

80. Each member of the Society, according to his level of responsibility, plays his part in planning, implementing, and evaluating the preparation of Marists for their apostolate.

81. The superior general should see that formation for the apostolate is in line with the overall mission of the Society and is not confined within the particular horizons of any one province.

82. The provincial engages those preparing for ministry in an ongoing dialogue. Understandably, he is concerned about the needs of the province and its commitments; he must, however, make every effort to balance this concern with an openness to the gifts and hopes of each member and with support for the work of the Society throughout the world.

83. The individual, naturally aware of his own aspirations and insights into the needs of the world, must be careful to relate his life and work to the broader perspectives of his province and of the whole Society.

3. Ongoing Formation.

84. Growth and development, human, spiritual, and professional, must continue through all stages of Marist life:

(a) In daily life: by sharing the situation and tasks of each Marist and of the community, in prayer and in action, in study and in apostolic reflection, and in brotherly challenge as well as recreation - these are the everyday conditions of formation.

(b) During special periods set aside for spiritual growth and conversion, and updating and developing skills demanded by the apostolate. Such periods are necessary at regular intervals and superiors are to see that all Marists are given the opportunity to avail themselves of them.

4. Vow of Stability.

85. The vow of stability is an opportunity for a Marist to deepen the commitment he made to the Society at profession and which he has been living out during his years of apostolate.

86. Every Marist is free to ask the superior general for permission to take the vow of stability. Before granting it the superior general consults his council and seeks the advice of the provincial superior.

87. To prepare himself to take this vow a Marist should withdraw for a time from apostolic activity, so that in prayer and reflection he may deepen his understanding of what it means to belong to a Society which bears the name of Mary.

88. By the vow of stability he confirms publicly his commitment, and pledges himself to work to re-establish the Society should it ever be dispersed.

5. Separation from the Society.

89. Separation from the Society may be temporary or permanent, at the request of the individual or imposed by the Society. In all such cases the procedures laid down by the general law of the Church will be followed (Can. 684-704) and the Society will always act with charity and equity.

90. For dismissal of a professed member a collegial vote of the superior general and council is required (Can. 699). Except for the cases mentioned in Can. 694-695, the Society will not proceed to dismissal until all means of correction or reconciliation have been exhausted.

Chapter III

FORMING A COMMUNION FOR MISSION

91. Marists form a Society to carry out the mission to which they have been called by Mary. To fulfill it they profess chastity, obedience and poverty according to the tradition of the Church and the norms defined in the Constitutions. They agree on rules for living their lives together and holding in common certain possessions which they use in a way that is true to the ends of the Society.

92. Marists are called, above all, to make their own a Marian vision of the Church. To achieve this, nothing will be as effective as a re-living of the founding experience of the Society. Like the twelve young men at Fourviere they respond to a special call. By 'tasting God' as Father Colin did at Cerdon, they realise the radical opposition between the spirit of Mary and the spirit of ambition, covetousness, and the lust for power. Like the first missionaries in Bugey they proclaim the Good News of God's mercy to those most in need. Thus in continuity with the

experience of the first Marists, the Society of Mary, generation by generation, becomes a reality in the world and its members know the joy that comes from a whole-hearted response to their vocation.

Article I

The Vows

93. When they make profession, Marists declare before the Church and one another their intention to live out their baptism more fully. They choose to follow Christ more closely by a radical commitment to the spirit of the Beatitudes in a community that has one heart and one mind. They consecrate all that they are and have to the service of the Gospel wherever they may be sent in the name of the mission entrusted to the Society.

94. By vowing chastity, obedience, and poverty Marists live the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection. They die daily to this world and herald the new world inaugurated by the risen Jesus. Freed by God's love from all self-seeking, they become faithful servants of the Father's will and come to know the joy promised by Christ when he said: "There is no one who has left home, or wife, or brothers, parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God who will not receive a plentiful return in this age and life everlasting in the age to come" (Lk. 18:29-30).

1. Chastity.

95. By vowing chastity, which is both a gift of the Spirit and a human choice, Marists respond personally to the love of God. They renounce the founding of a family of their own and by their vow commit themselves to live as celibates and to practise perfect continence. Thus they place themselves entirely at the service of God in the world and in their Marist communities and undertakings.

96. The vow of chastity demands that the Marist consecrate his whole life towards union with God. By listening attentively to His word he is led to simplicity and purity of heart. And so he becomes a more eloquent witness to God's word in his life and apostolate.

97. Following the Lord's command to love his neighbour as himself, the Marist manifests to others that same compassionate love with which he himself is loved by God. In loving all those whom God has given him - his confreres, his family and friends, and those to whom he has been sent to preach the Gospel - his chief concern must be their good. A life so lived will bring the joy which comes from an intimate relationship with God and from loving one's brothers and sisters.

98. The gift and choice of chastity mean that the love of Christ and his service liberate them and enable them, when called upon, to leave those they have come to love and go where others need them.

99. Aware of their human weakness and frailty, they rely on the power of the Spirit from whom comes the call to chastity. Chastity demands a life grounded in faith and nourished by prayer. Proper use should also be made of the human means necessary to live relationships with detachment: prudent asceticism, a sound and balanced life, happy community living, friendship and mutual trust.

100. A life of chastity requires watchfulness in relationships and in the use of the media (Can. 666) and presupposes a certain solitude. The living out of this vow must be constantly evaluated and re-affirmed as new relationships and commitments develop. Because of the danger of self-deception, spiritual direction and fraternal counsel are recommended.

2. Obedience.

101. By vowing obedience Marists dedicate their will to God. This is a radical way of following Christ who lived according to the Father's will by serving the brethren and by being 'obedient unto death' (Phil. 2:8). And so, obeying a man for the sake of God, they pledge to the members of the Society to work together at the common task, putting that ahead of independent undertakings.

102. By their vow of obedience Marists accept the obligation to obey the orders given by lawful superiors in any matter pertaining directly or indirectly to the observance of the Constitutions. The vow binds gravely when the superior gives an order expressly in the name of obedience. Implied in the vow is obedience to the Pope. (Can. 590, 2)

103. Obedience establishes and strengthens the Society's unity, drawing Marists together in the common mission of building up and renewing the Church. Through it they offer their gifts generously and they commit themselves to responding joyfully and sensitively to the demands of the mission, whether it be in devising policy, planning, taking decisions, carrying them out, or evaluating.

104. Mary was attentive to the word of God through whatever person or event it came to her. For the Marist community and each of its members obedience implies a readiness to listen to others, since the word of God and the will of the Father can be manifested through human words and actions. This is a way to peace of mind and broadening of outlook.

105. Conscious of its prophetic role and the freedom of the Spirit, the community searches for the best ways of being obedient to the Lord. In this process of discernment the superior of the community has a special function: he leads and animates the community, ensuring that each person is free to speak; he encourages initiatives and integrates them into the one Marist mission; he retains, however, his authority to decide (Can. 618).

3. Poverty.

106. By vowing poverty Marists put their trust in a Father who knows their every need. They choose to be poor to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Like the first believers, they bring what they have to their brothers, and hold everything in common with them (Cf. Acts, 4:32).

107. By the vow of poverty a Marist may not use or dispose of anything of monetary or material value without permission or as belonging to himself. He may, however, retain ownership of his goods and acquire new goods through inheritance. Before his first profession he must cede the administration of his present and future goods to a person of his choice and make dispositions concerning the use and usufruct of these goods. Before perpetual profession, at the latest, he must make a will valid in civil law. After he has been perpetually professed, he may, according to the judgment of the provincial superior and with permission from the superior general, renounce his possessions in whole or in part. Whatever he acquires by personal labour, or on behalf of the Society, belongs to the Society. Whatever comes to him by way of salary, pension, grant, and the like, also accrues to the Society.

108. The Gospel shapes the attitudes of individuals and of communities towards material goods. By reason of his commitment to poverty, every Marist regards himself as bound to the common law of work and places the fruits of his work at the disposal of the community. He adopts a simple lifestyle, strives to be satisfied with what is necessary and considers himself responsible for what is held in common. His use of material goods is subordinated to the accomplishment of the mission of Christ.

109. A Marist will find joy in sharing what he has with other Marists throughout the world and with the people around him. Aware that time, talents and education constitute riches, he willingly places these also at the service of others.

110. The poverty that Marists freely profess is genuine in the measure that their standard of living - place of residence, clothing, food, belongings, travel - brings them closer to those who are poor through no choice of their own. Their poverty would be unreal and deserving of scorn if Marists were always concerned for their own comfort and wished to be lacking in nothing.

111. They should be attentive to the cry of the poor which makes an urgent and continuous appeal for a conversion of minds and attitudes. They acknowledge that action for justice is an integral part of the proclamation of the Gospel and they strive, therefore, to remedy injustices in economic and social relationships.

112. Through the practice of poverty, Marists choose to rely on God alone rather than on their own resources or on any influence they may have with persons highly placed in the Church or civil society.

113. They are sensitive to the ways attachment to money can hinder the proclamation of the Good News. In all their dealings they should show themselves generous and free from the least appearance of greed as they endeavour to practise literally the Lord's command: "You have received freely; give freely" (Matt. 10:8).

Article II

Everyday Life

114. By his profession every Marist commits himself anew to the conversion begun at his baptism, a daily dying and rising with Christ. This attitude permeates his every thought and action.

115. A Marist does not act in isolation. By his vocation he has a responsibility to see that his actions taken individually and with his brothers help form a communion for mission.

116. Thus, to enter truly into the mission of the Society, every Marist has a twofold responsibility: to develop his spiritual life and to build up community.

1. Spiritual Life.

117. The Society, like the Church, finds its model in Mary the woman of faith. Its spirituality is simple and modest in its expression, close to the lives of ordinary people, apostolic in character, and marked by spontaneity and joy. It tries to make its own the Christian experience lived by Mary.

118. The spiritual life is nourished and sustained by contemplation of the word of God. This heightens awareness of the presence of the risen Jesus in the everyday life and work of Marists. His presence inspires them to make of their lives an unceasing prayer.

119. Community prayer is vital for those who undertake a spiritual and apostolic venture together. It is an expression of faith and solidarity, and demands a creative search for new forms, such as reading the Scriptures together in faith, shared prayer and reflection.

120. Private prayer, for which Christ found time and space even on the busiest days of his ministry, cannot be omitted without presumption by those who call themselves his disciples. Fidelity to the spirit of prayer and to prayer itself is one of their first duties, and requires that they spend at least one half-hour a day in private prayer.

121. The celebration of the Eucharist symbolises and develops union with Christ and their brothers. It should be considered the high point of each day. Communities should seek opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist together, especially on important occasions.

122. The desire for conversion and the proclamation of God's pardon have their ecclesial expression in the frequent reception of the sacrament of Reconciliation. It is an indispensable source of Christian healing and growth. Marist tradition has emphasized conversion of heart through interior and exterior mortification undertaken with generosity and prudence. The penitential attitude, which has its roots in consciousness of sinfulness, further expresses itself in accepting joyfully, after the example of Jesus and Mary, the trials, difficulties and privations encountered in life itself.

123. In order to foster spiritual growth, the Marist turns to regular spiritual reading, examinations of conscience and the counsel of a spiritual director - all of which help him to discern the inner movements of his heart.

124. In union with the Church, Marists give a special place to praying the Liturgy of the

Hours; clerics are careful to fulfill their canonical obligations. All are invited to pray part of the Liturgy of the Hours in common and to encourage the faithful to join them.

125. Every Marist is required to make an annual retreat, normally in common.

2. Common Life.

126. Marists are not simply workers in a common enterprise, but members of one Society built on shared faith and a shared vision. Like the Apostles, moved by the Spirit and supported by Mary, they discover together in faith the meaning of their mission.

127. The ministry of loving service to each other in community is a primary apostolate. The Marist community is a place of sharing. The common life grows from searching the Scriptures and participating in the mystery of the Eucharist. By its fraternal life the Marist community is a place for continuous renewal and conversion. It can thus provide a sign of what the Church is called to be in the world.

128. The support and concern which each community offers its members help their personal development at all stages. Marists strive to be open to all confreres, rejoicing in the enthusiasm and fresh vision of the younger members of the community, and heeding the wisdom and experience of the older confreres. There is a special need for friendship and community concern in times of sickness, distress, bereavement, and difficulty.

129. The Founder urges Marists to be sensitive and understanding toward the terminally ill and the dying. Everything possible should be done to ease their sufferings and help them prepare for the moment of death and their entry into eternal life.

130. Becoming a religious involves a commitment to the common life and the obligation to live in a house of the Society. Even those who are engaged in different apostolates and ministries should normally reside together. The provincial superior, with the consent of his council, may give permission for absences from community up to one year. In the case of study, apostolate undertaken in the name of the community, or for health reasons, he may extend this period (Can. 665, 1).

131. Every Marist concerns himself with the community of the province to which he belongs or in which he works, and shares in the responsibility for its undertakings.

132. Marists belong to a Society with a worldwide mission and take a keen interest in its life and progress throughout the world.

133. According to the tradition of the Society, Marists wear the clerical attire of the region in which they work.

134. Inherent in the Marist mission is the need to share with others its spirit and attitude to life. Marist communities should be open and welcoming. However, a part of the community

house or property is reserved to members of the community alone.

135. The norms which govern the lives of Marists, from the Constitutions to the arrangements made by communities themselves, are accepted by them as their way of living the Gospel and of strengthening the bonds that unite them.

3. Apostolic Life.

136. The Society of Mary is constituted in the Church as an apostolic religious community. The phrase 'unknown and even hidden in this world' indicates the manner in which Marists engage in the apostolate and it does not hinder them from doing great things for God. It leads Marists to place themselves in the situation of those to whom they are sent and to put aside everything in themselves which might be an obstacle to the working of the Spirit.

137. While respecting its traditional ministries, the Society remains open to every form of apostolate, but preference is to be given to those works which are humanly unattractive and less rewarding. In all their ministries Marists are to be wholly compassionate and understanding towards human frailty.

138. Priests and brothers, each according to their own vocation, share a common apostolate, whether it be manual work, administration, teaching, pastoral care, or preaching and celebration of the sacraments. Sick confreres and those in retirement fulfil an important apostolic task through their presence, prayers, and loyalty to the Marist vocation. The members of the third order of Mary and other associate groups participate in the same mission by praying and working for the conversion of sinners and the perseverance of the faithful.

4. Mutual Help.

139. A Marist should be able to turn to his confreres for help and counsel, especially in times of difficulty and when he feels the need to evaluate the quality of his Marist life and his apostolic work. For this to be possible the community must create a climate of openness and mutual trust, particularly with those in authority.

140. Before he is called on for any undertaking, a Marist can expect the competent superior to enquire as to his ability and suitability for the work. He can also expect from those in authority, especially from his local superior, friendly guidance concerning his life and work.

141. In their common search for God and fulfillment of His mission, Marists will help one another by sharing their experience and knowledge.

5. Evaluation of Life and Ministry.

142. At regular intervals Marists review and evaluate their community life and apostolates.

143. This evaluation is organised by the superior general at the level of the whole Society, by the provincial superior for his province, and by the local superior for each community. Reflection at these various levels bears especially on fidelity to the Marist mission and spirit.

6. Special Practices in Honour of Mary.

144. Since their vocation is to be in today's world a special presence of Mary, doing God's work in her way, Marists bear in mind this woman who by a gracious choice called them and gave them her name. To strengthen the bonds that unite them to her, they hold in high regard the practices in her honour traditional in the Society, such as praying the *Salve Regina* in common and placing her image at the superior's door to remind them that she is their first and perpetual superior. Following the example of the first Marist missionaries, they keep a special place in their prayers for the conversion of sinners and the perseverance of the faithful, commending them to the intercession of Our Lady by praying three Hail Marys and the *Sub Tuum* on rising and retiring.

145. Marists themselves honour Mary and teach those they serve to honour her according to the mind of the Church. They make use of traditional practices such as the rosary and the *Angelus* and the celebration of her feasts, and they work with the Church to renew these devotions.

Article III

Material Goods and the Ends of the Society

1. What the Society May Own.

146. To carry out its mission, the Society must have stable sources of income for the training of its members, for the care of the sick and aged, and for the support of its ministries. One expression of the Society's trust in God, its spirit of sharing, and its sense of stewardship, is the manner in which its temporal goods are administered.

147. If they are to be faithful to the spirit of Mary, Marists should give witness by the stand they take against covetousness, greed, and consumerism, by freely sharing among themselves and with the poor, by the simplicity of their lifestyle, and by their stewardship of what is entrusted to them. Living in this way strengthens the bonds of solidarity within the Society itself and promotes its mission.

148. A particular expression of the Society's sharing in solidarity is the general fund which is made available to the superior general and his council to meet the expenses of the general administration, to support the community at the general house, to maintain the fabric of the house, and to assist individuals, houses, and provinces of the Society in need. This fund is made up of an invested capital sum and annual contributions from the provinces. The capital sum is to be preserved for the future needs of the Society but for a sufficiently serious reason the superior general with the consent of his council may authorise the expenditure of a portion of this capital.

149. In their financial administration Marists follow the directives of general and provincial chapters, and try to promote the common good by sharing surplus funds between houses and provinces.

2. Administration of Goods.

150. As a juridical person, not only the Society as such, but also each province and each house has the right to acquire, possess, administer, and alienate temporal goods, both movable and immovable. The financial competence of superiors is established by the appropriate body, whether it be the general chapter, the council of the society, or the provincial chapter, always in accordance with Church law.

151. In the tradition of the Society, this capacity for ownership and use of property is subordinated to the common good. Hence, where it is deemed necessary or useful, the superior general with the consent of his council may transfer assets from one province to another. Similarly, with the consent of his council, the provincial superior may transfer assets between houses of his province, provided that their value does not exceed his competence. Such transfers of assets are not permitted in the case of donations if they would conflict with the intentions of the donor.

152. Each community makes regular contributions to the provincial fund according to norms established by the provincial chapter. The property and funds of the Society are administered by bursars under the supervision of superiors and their councils, in conformity with Church law, Marist legislation, and civil law.

153. In temporal matters Marists act as stewards of the Society. This must be made clear to all those with whom they deal. In cases of dispute they forsake their rights rather than forsaking charity. There are cases, however, in which their rights have to be defended, but those in authority must do all they can to avoid such disputes by keeping the Society's affairs in order.

154. The Society will always keep alive the memory of its benefactors and express its indebtedness to them. But it must not accept property or assets if onerous conditions are attached to them in perpetuity.

155. Every Marist must be watchful that his own and the Society's attitude towards the possession and administration of temporal goods be a concrete expression of Mary's spirit of poverty, a spirit that is totally opposed to covetousness.

Chapter IV

GOVERNMENT

Preamble

156. All Marists, especially those in authority, see Mary as the founder and perpetual superior of the Society. They will constantly imitate her delicate responsiveness to the

promptings of the Spirit and to the needs of God's people. All must recognise that they share responsibility for the government of the Society, for fostering its life and welfare, and for the fulfillment of its mission.

157. Since September 24, 1836, when the first Superior General was elected, Marists have understood the Society as a single body, dispersed for the sake of their mission, but united in spirit. Gathered from time to time in General Chapter, they remain bound together through the Superior General whom they have chosen as their head.

158. In the course of its history, the Society has become international. Those who exercise authority in the government of the Society develop between provinces, communities and individuals, a network of interchange and solidarity to promote unity for mission while, at the same time, treasuring the richness and variety that come from its international character.

159. The Society will be capable of fulfilling its universal mission to the extent that it functions as a coordinated whole and adjusts its activities to particular situations. Its forms of government should enable it to provide an effective presence in a variety of places without detriment to the unity required by its universal mission.

160. This mission requires that the Society formulate policies and plans, and put them into action. This is done, on the one hand, through structures of consultation and participation at the local, provincial and general levels, and, on the other hand, through superiors endowed with appropriate authority.

161. Unity in the Society and effective action require that its members be consulted and participate in decision-making, and that superiors have a well-defined authority. In this way decisions will be based on accurate information and reflect the needs of the people they serve, and at the same time decisions can be taken with flexibility and promptness.

162. (a) Government in the Society is to be exercised in a spirit of co-responsibility, so that Marists will plan their community life and pastoral initiatives together, working out solutions in a climate of trust and openness.

(b) For government to function well, it is necessary to distinguish at every level: (1) laws and policies which will be determined as far as possible by the competent representative bodies, and (2) executive decisions which will be taken by those authorised to do so, with the help of their councils or consultative bodies.

(c) In all cases, the principle of subsidiarity is to be observed. A superior must not look to a higher authority to replace his own, nor attempt to take on the responsibilities that belong to a lower level.

Article I

Governing and Consultative Bodies

1. General Chapter.

163. The general chapter represents the entire Society gathered to evaluate its fidelity to its spirit and mission, to resolve important questions concerning the Society as a whole, to decide on directions to be followed for the future, and to elect the superior general and his council. It has a special duty to safeguard the common heritage and to foster growth and development.

164. The ordinary general chapter is convoked by the superior general every eight years. An extraordinary general chapter may be convoked by the superior general with the consent or at the request of more than half of the provincial superiors. Should the office of superior general fall vacant, the vicar general shall convoke a general chapter to elect a superior general as soon as possible unless an ordinary chapter is due within a year. If there is a chapter of election, the interval of eight years between chapters shall be calculated from the date of that chapter.

165. Members of the general chapter are: the superior general and his immediate predecessor, the assistants general, the general officers, the provincial superiors and superiors of districts or their substitutes, and a larger number made up of delegates elected according to the norms of Marist legislation.

166. Delegates are elected by the provincial chapter, which also elects substitutes for them and for the provincial superior. In districts, the substitute of the district superior is elected from among the perpetually professed members of the district. For the election of delegates and substitutes a majority of more than half of the capitulants present at the voting is required.

167. When in session, the general chapter is the highest authority in the Society, but it does not have executive powers. It proposes changes to the Constitutions for approval by the Holy See. Its decrees remain in force until revoked by a subsequent general chapter.

2. Council of the Society.

168. The council of the society meets between general chapters. It has the governing powers given to it by the Constitutions and by the decrees of a general chapter. Its principal function is to review and evaluate the carrying out of decisions taken at the previous general chapter and to prepare for the next one. It fosters unity between the general council and the provincial superiors and allows for adaptation to changes in the life of the Church.

169. The council of the society is composed of the superior general, the assistants general, the general officers, and all the provincial superiors.

170. It is convoked by the superior general and meets at least once between ordinary general chapters and also when the superior general or more than half of the provincial superiors judge it opportune.

3. Provincial Chapter.

171. The provincial chapter is the highest policy-making body in a province. Its purpose is to review the apostolic and spiritual progress of the province, to decide on policy for its life and activity, to determine ways of carrying out decisions of the general chapter, and, when the need arises, to elect delegates to it and submit proposals.

172. The ordinary provincial chapter is convoked by the provincial superior. It is held every four years, namely, before a general chapter, and mid-way between general chapters. Extraordinary provincial chapters may be convoked either by the provincial superior with the advice of his council or by direction of the superior general with the advice of his council.

173. Each province decides the composition of its provincial chapter. Only members in perpetual profession are eligible as delegates. Should a province choose to have members by right in addition to the provincial superior, the number of elected members shall be at least two thirds of the total number of capitulants.

174. The provincial superior submits the decrees and decisions of the provincial chapter to the superior general, who seeks the advice of his council before approving them. After approval, the decrees and decisions of the provincial chapter shall be promulgated by the provincial superior as soon as possible.

175. Whenever a vote is taken in a province, either by way of consultation or election, all perpetually professed members of the province have active voice. Provincial chapters may grant active voice to those who have been temporarily professed for three years or more.

4. Community Meetings.

176. Local communities shall hold regular community meetings to discuss matters of common concern. Each year they shall come together in a special meeting to review and plan their religious and apostolic life.

Article II

Superiors

177. All Marists share responsibility for the life of the Society. Some, however, are called to serve their brothers and promote the common welfare by accepting functions of authority. They keep in mind the words and example of Jesus: "The greatest among you must be like the youngest, and the leader must be like the servant" (Lk. 22:26). They will claim no privileges in virtue of their position. Their first service to the community is the example they give of their fidelity to the spirit of the Society.

178. In the Society of Mary superiors shall remember that it is Mary who is the first and perpetual superior. The one who exercises authority must seek not his own interests but only those of Jesus and Mary. He will trust not in himself but in Mary and be inspired by her in his

relations with others.

179. What is said of the spirit in which the superior general should exercise his office applies to all superiors in the Society.

1. Superior General.

180. The superior general exercises responsibility and care for the whole Society and for each of its members. His chief concern is that the Society should grow and develop, that it be governed effectively, and that it be led with wisdom towards its ends, for the greater glory of God and the honour of Mary, Mother of God. He plays an essential role in the communion of faith and charity formed by Marists among themselves and with the entire Church.

181. The superior general is elected by the general chapter. Every Marist priest who has been perpetually professed for seven years or more is eligible for the office of superior general. His term of office is eight years, once renewable. He shall be elected by a majority of two thirds of the voters present on the first or second ballot. After the first two ballots the incumbent superior general ceases to be eligible. A majority of more than one half of the voters present suffices in a subsequent ballot.

After six indecisive ballots the choice is among the four candidates who have obtained the greatest number of votes. (A tie for the fourth place is broken in favour of the senior by profession or by age if both were professed on the same day). In a possible eighth ballot the choice will be between the top two in the previous ballot. (A tie for the second place is broken in favour of the senior by profession or by age if both were professed on the same day).

In the event of a tie in the eighth ballot, the voting is repeated, twice if necessary. If it still results in a tie, the one deemed elected will be the senior by profession, or by age if professed on the same day.

Other details of the election will be decided by an Ordo Electionis approved by the chapter.

182. To carry out the mission of unifying and animating the Society the superior general needs a deep faith in God, a wide experience of Marist life, a clear discernment of the signs of the times, the ability to make decisions and implement them, and a capacity for communication and collaboration with his fellow-Marists.

183. Conscious of the serious responsibility entrusted to the superior general to foster its unity and development, the Society shall give him full support and the most adequate means to carry out his office.

184. The superior general has full and universal authority over all provinces, regions, districts, houses, and persons, in keeping with common law and the Society's own legislation.

185. With the advice of his council, he may dispense provinces, districts, regions, communities, and persons, in individual cases, from disciplinary provisions of the Constitutions or general chapter decrees. He may also give a practical interpretation of the Constitutions.

186. The superior general has the right of visitation, in person or through his delegate, of all provinces, districts, regions, houses, and individual religious, with regard to spiritual, apostolic,

and temporal matters. He also has the right, after consultation with those concerned, to transfer a Marist from one province or district to another when he judges it opportune for the good of the Society or of the individual.

187. The superior general, with the consent of his council, has the authority to erect, divide, unite, or suppress provinces.

188. Before any major decisions are taken, the superior general, personally or through others, shall obtain all the necessary information and consult the religious concerned.

189. The superior general shall take the necessary means to involve the provincial superiors in the common task of promoting the unity of the Society and carrying out its mission.

190. He shall always remember to what family he belongs, and see that Mary is appropriately honoured in the Society. He shall have recourse to her with confidence and each day entrust to her the concerns of the Society. As a man filled with the spirit of Mary and concerned that others be guided by it, he shall ensure that the Society never departs from this spirit.

191. The superior general has special responsibility for the missionary works of the Society and for co-ordinating all stages of initial and ongoing formation.

192. He has particular responsibility for a mission district, that is, a territory where Marists are working directly under the authority and care of the superior general. With the advice of his council he may appoint an assistant general as the major superior of such a mission district. The superior of a district is appointed by the major superior after consultation with all the perpetually professed members of the district. The rights and duties of the major superior, the district superior, and the Marists working there, shall be explained in the foundation charter of the district.

193. The superior general is responsible for promoting the development of the Third Order of Mary and other forms of Marist lay life. He will also maintain friendship with other branches of the Marist Family and collaborate with them, and will work closely with the superiors general of other religious congregations.

194. The superior general with the advice of his council may compile and issue directories on specific topics.

2. General Council.

195. There shall be four assistants general. Together they form the general council.

196. The function of the assistants is to help the superior general in the exercise of his authority. Under his leadership they form a united group in which each one offers his talents and experience for the good of the whole Society and shares in the responsibility for taking initia-

tives, for making decisions and for carrying them out. They shall see that there is good liaison between the general and provincial administrations and among the provincial administrations. They are also responsible for the well-being of the superior general and in this way they express the concern of the whole Society for him.

197. The superior general requires the consent or advice of the general council in those cases specified in common and proper law. Without prejudice to his freedom to decide what seems best to him in the Lord, he is invited to follow Father Colin's recommendation that, whenever a majority of the assistants differ from him in council, he embrace for humility's sake the opinion which is opposed to his own, for Mary was always ready to follow the will of others rather than her own (Const. 1872, n. 307).

198. The term of office for assistants is four years, twice renewable. The four assistants shall be elected by the general chapter or, between chapters, by the council of the society, according to an Ordo Electionis approved by chapter or council. Each one requires a majority of more than half of the voters present.

199. When choosing assistants, capitulants are invited to keep in mind the international and missionary character of the Society, and the need for a variety of experience, skills, and linguistic ability.

200. If the post of assistant falls vacant at a time when neither a chapter nor a council of the society is due to meet within a year, the superior general, with the advice of his council, after consultation with the provincial superiors, shall fill the post. The new assistant shall complete the term of office of the one he is replacing and shall be eligible for a further three full terms.

3. Vicar General.

201. When all the assistants general have been elected, the general chapter shall elect one of them to be the vicar general, by a majority of more than half of the voters present. Should the office of vicar general become vacant between general chapters, the general council will be brought up to full strength following the procedure in n. 200 above. The new vicar general will then be selected from among the assistants by the superior general with the consent of his council, after consultation with the provincials.

202. Should the office of superior general become vacant the vicar general shall govern the Society until the election of a new superior general. If the next ordinary general chapter is not due within a year, he shall convoke a general chapter as soon as possible, to be held within six months from the date of convocation. He also governs the Society when the superior general is absent, ill, or otherwise impeded from governing. If the superior general has to be relieved of his office, the vicar general will inform the members of the council of the society and refer the matter to the Holy See.

4. General Officers.

203. The general officers of the Society are: the secretary general, the general bursar, and the procurator to the Holy See. They are appointed by the superior general with the advice of his

council, from among the perpetually professed members from any part of the Society after consultation with the provincial superiors concerned. They are at the service of the superior general for the tasks entrusted to them.

204. The role of the secretary general is to assist the superior general with his administrative duties. The general bursar, under the direction of the superior general, supervises the financial administration of the Society. The procurator to the Holy See takes care of relations between the Holy See and the Society of Mary.

5. Provincial Superior.

205. The provincial superior is elected by the members of the province according to norms of general and provincial legislation. These norms shall allow no more than eight ballots. In the final ballot the candidate is elected by an absolute majority, that is, by more than half of the valid votes cast. The provincial-elect will be confirmed in office in writing by the superior general.

206. The primary duties of the provincial superior are to promote the religious and spiritual life of all members of the province according to the Marist spirit, and strengthen the bonds of unity within the province and between the province and the whole Society. He is responsible for the works and the administration of the province. Under the authority of the superior general, he carries out the tasks assigned to him by Marist legislation. He is also responsible for carrying out the policies of the general and provincial chapters. In concert with the superior general and the other provincial superiors, he has a special responsibility for the unity of the Society as a whole.

207. The provincial superior shall be a priest, perpetually professed for at least seven years. His term of office is three years, once renewable.

208. The vicar provincial replaces the provincial when the latter is absent or impeded from governing. His appointment and term of office are regulated by general and provincial legislation.

209. A provincial region is a part of a province possessing a geographical and cultural unity. It is established by a provincial superior with the approval of the superior general. It is governed by the provincial superior through a regional superior whose election or appointment, powers, and term of office are determined by the provincial chapter.

6. Provincial Council.

210. Each province shall have a provincial council of at least three members whose duty is to advise the provincial superior in his decisions and to assist him, when requested, in his executive functions. The actual number of councillors, their competency, norms for selection, and duration of office, shall be determined by general and provincial legislation.

7. Provincial Bursar.

211. In close consultation with the provincial superior, the provincial bursar supervises and takes care of the financial administration of the province. He is appointed by the provincial with the consent of his council and is to be called to the provincial council and has a vote when financial matters are discussed.

8. Local Superior.

212. Every Marist is normally under the authority of a local superior, who must be a priest perpetually professed for at least two years. He is appointed by the provincial after consultation with his council for a period of three years, once renewable.

213. The task of the local superior is to ensure that his community is truly Marist in character and to develop its bonds with the province and with the whole Society. He has a duty of uniting and guiding the community, fostering the personal growth of its members and promoting the apostolic works in which they are engaged. He will encourage cooperation with all other communities to carry out the policies of the provincial chapter.

214. The local superior is assisted by a council chosen according to norms established by the provincial chapter. He may be assisted in temporal matters by a local bursar appointed according to the norms of provincial legislation.

215. A vice-superior is appointed by the provincial superior according to norms established by the provincial chapter. He replaces the local superior when the latter is absent or impeded. If the vice-superior is also impeded, he is replaced by the next in seniority unless, in special circumstances, the superior has judged otherwise.

9. Local Bursar.

216. Local bursars are appointed for three years by the provincial superior with the advice of his council. The term of office may be renewed every three years, after such consultation as the norms of the provincial chapter direct.

Chapter V

GROWTH AND FIDELITY

217. Jean-Claude Colin and his companions believed that, in God's plan, the Society of Mary came into existence because Mary wanted it. Like them, Marists today are convinced that the Lord and Mary, whose work they do, will care for the Society, protect it, and make it grow.

218. Alert to the dangers from within and without that may threaten the very existence of the Society, Marists, on their part, resolve to practise the four virtues which their Founder came to see as the cornerstones on which the Society would be firmly established: humility, obedience, brotherly love, and poverty.

1. Humility.

219. In their life and apostolate Marists will often be aware of their own limitations and the resistance of those to whom they minister. The temptation is to blame themselves and others. Anxiety, bitterness, and cynicism are ever present snares capable of reducing the Society to powerlessness. Humility frees them from such crippling attitudes; it gives them courage to rely on God rather than themselves alone, to seek not their own interests but those of Christ and Mary.

220. In this way, liberated from undue self-concern, they will be useful to others and do great things for God, and so the Society will achieve its goals. They leave it to the Lord to say the healing word that brings inner peace and the freedom to serve their neighbour.

2. Obedience.

221. Marists must excel in obedience because it is the hinge upon which the whole mission of the Society turns. By listening to the Holy Spirit speaking in their confreres and in the events of daily life, they are able to discern what God is asking of them and be ready to respond.

222. Since the mission entrusted to them by God through Mary is so urgent, they must work together to accomplish it. Obedience enables them to look beyond their own personal interests and those of communities and provinces. By a loyal, intelligent, and prompt obedience, Marists support their superiors in the task of animating the community and guiding its work.

3. Brotherly Love.

223. Obedience is sterile if it is cut off from love of God and neighbour. Charity brings Marists into communion with the risen Lord and with all believers, united in heart and mind, as they prepare for the coming of God's kingdom.

224. In brotherly love, Marists strengthen the bonds of friendship by the frank exchange of hopes and concerns. They avoid all that provokes disharmony and envy. They ensure that their diversity enriches the community rather than create discord and division.

4. Poverty.

225. Poverty, freely chosen, protects and safeguards the true spirit of the Society. It leads Marists to depend solely on God and to use the goods of this world to further His Kingdom. With Mary they sing the praises of the Lord who "fills the starving with good things and sends the rich away empty" (Lk. 1:53).

226. Such poverty rids the heart of covetousness and reliance on worldly means. Aware that it is easier to adapt to one's surroundings than to remain faithful to the Gospel, they shall take care that their dwellings, possessions, and manner of life bring them closer to the poor. A Society of rich men could hardly claim to be a sign of the presence of Jesus and Mary in the world.

5. Prayer for the Society.

227. Let them pray for all members of the Society, living and dead, and for the members of other Marist congregations, particularly on September 12, Solemnity of the Holy Name of Mary and nameday of the Society. Their prayer should be that the Lord may govern the Society, increase it, defend it from all error, and keep it faithful to its true spirit.

6. Fidelity to the Spirit of the Society.

228. Finally, let them learn from the first Marists to find in the presence of Mary at Nazareth and Pentecost, in the early Church and at the end of time, the secret of their own presence in the Church and the world of today: a presence attentive to God and vibrant with zeal, so that while doing great things for the Lord, they may seem to be unknown and even hidden in the world. This was Mary's way; this is Mary's work. It is expressed for all Marists in the words of Jean-Claude Colin:

Let them always bear in mind that they belong by a gracious choice to the family of the blessed Mary, Mother of God, from whose name they are called Marists, and whom they have chosen from the beginning as their model and their first and perpetual superior. If therefore they are and desire to be true sons of this dear Mother, let them try constantly to breathe her spirit: a spirit of humility, self-denial, intimate union with God, and the most ardent love of neighbour. So they must think as Mary, judge as Mary, feel and act as Mary in all things, otherwise they will be unworthy and degenerate sons.

Therefore, following in the footsteps of their Mother, let them above all be far removed from any worldly spirit, and from all greed for earthly goods, and completely emptied of all self-interest. Let them strive to deny themselves completely in all things: seeking not their own interests, but only those of Christ and Mary; considering themselves as exiles and pilgrims on earth, indeed as worthless servants and as the refuse of the world; using the things of this world as if not using them; strenuously avoiding in their buildings and living quarters, in their style of life, and in their dealings with others, all that suggests display, ostentation, or a desire for attention; loving to be unknown and subject to all, without deceit or cunning; in a word, acting always with such great poverty, humility, and modesty, simplicity of heart, and lack of all vanity and worldly ambition, and moreover so combining a love of solitude and silence and the practice of hidden virtues with works of zeal, that while they must take up the various ministries by which the salvation of souls may be furthered, they may appear unknown, and even hidden, in the world.

Let them all cling to this spirit in the knowledge that it is the pivot and foundation of their whole Society.

In mente perpetuo teneant se esse, delectu gratioso, de familia B. Mariae Dei Genetricis, de cuius nomine Maristae appellantur, et quam sibi ut exemplar, primamque ac perpetuam Superiorem elegerunt ab initio. Si ergo vere filii huius Almae Matris sint et esse desiderent, ipsius spiritum haurire atque spirare constanter enitantur: spiritum videlicet humilitatis, propriae abnegationis, intimae cum Deo unionis, et ardentissimae caritatis erga proximum; sicque ut

Maria cogitare, ut Maria iudicare, ut Maria sentire et agere debent in omnibus; sin aliter, indigni forent ac degeneres filii.

Et ideo, Matris suae vestigiis inhaerentes, a mundano imprimis spiritu alieni sint, seu ab omni terrenarum rerum cupiditate, et ab omni propria consideratione omnino vacui; semetipsos in omnibus penitus abnegare satagant, non quae sua sunt, sed quae Christi et Mariae unice quaerentes; se tanquam extorres et peregrinos super terram, necnon tanquam servos inutiles et omnium peripsema considerantes; rebus huius mundi utentes, tanquam si non uterentur; quidquid in aedificiis et habitationibus, in ratione vivendi, in omni sua cum ceteris hominibus conversatione fastum, ostentationem aut humanae considerationis appetitum redoleret, sedulo effugientes; amantes nesciri et omnibus subesse; sine dolo et astutia; uno verbo, cum tanta paupertate, humilitate, modestia, cordis simplicitate, vanitatis et ambitionis mundanae incuria ubique procedentes, atque ita amorem solitudinis et silentii, virtutumque absconditarum exercitationem cum zeli operibus conjungentes, ut quamvis variis ministeriis quibus animarum salus adiuvari potest incumbere debeant, ignoti tamen et quasi occulti in hoc mundo esse videantur.

Huic spiritui tenacius inhaereant omnes, scientes illum totius suae Societatis quasi cardinem esse et firmamentum.

229. These Constitutions were approved by the Holy See on September 12, 1987. They can be amended only with the approval of a general chapter, supported by a two thirds majority. In cases of doubt, their authentic interpretation is reserved to the Holy See.

230. The Constitutions are binding as the fundamental charter of the Society and as a powerful means of growth in the spiritual life. Each Marist by his profession undertakes to live them in the spirit of Mary and considers them as a source of strength as he strives to do her work.

FOR THE GREATER GLORY OF GOD AND
THE HONOUR OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

Congregatio
pro religiosis
et institutis saecularibus

Prot. n. L 10 - 1/86

D E C R E E

This Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes, by virtue of its authority to erect, guide and promote institutes of consecrated life, after careful consideration of the constitutions presented by the Society of Mary, acceding to the request of the Superior General and his Council, herewith approves, within the limits of canon law, these same constitutions as amended according to the observations of this Congregation. May the generous living of these constitutions encourage all the members of the Society to an ever deeper commitment to their consecrated life in accordance with the spirit of the Venerable Jean-Claude Colin, their founder, and under the strong and tender protection of Mary, their Mother and Patroness.

Given at Rome, 12th September, 1987
Solemnity of the Holy Name of Mary
and titular feast of the Society

J.-Jerome Card. Hamer, O.P.
Pref.

L.S.

+ Vincentius Fagiolo
Archiep. em. Theat. Vasten.
secr.

