

**SUPPLEMENTARY  
ARTICLES**

CONSTITUTIONS

CONGREGATION OF OUR LADY  
Canonesses of Saint Augustine

*2014 Edition*

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The text of the Supplementary Articles was updated at :

- the General Chapter in Nancy (1990)
- the General Chapter in Berlaymont (2002)
- the General Chapter in Locquirec (2014)

## **SUPPLEMENTARY ARTICLES\***

### **1. APOSTOLIC LIFE**

- 1.1** The apostolic mission of the Congregation is embodied in educational work of different kinds (social or pastoral work, teaching, educative presence ...).
- 1.2** Each Vicariate, Delegation or Group is responsible for carrying out a critical analysis of real-life situations based on factual knowledge of
  - the culture (history, customs ...)
  - the socio-economic and political background (national and international structures)
  - the religious situation (local Church ...)
- 1.3** On the basis of this analysis, which requires constant renewal, each Vicariate, Delegation or Group must
  - study everything that affects its apostolic work, whether paid or unpaid
  - establish priorities which it periodically reviews
- 1.4** In order to carry out the foregoing, the Vicariate, Delegation or Group must seek out methods of discernment and evaluation, at both personal and community level.

\* to be included with the text of the Constitutions

## **2. COMMUNITY LIFE**

- 2.1** The local Superior is responsible, with her community, for working out a pattern for living, which must be submitted to the Vicar for approval. It should include
- a rhythm of prayer
  - a rhythm of community reflection
  - hospitality
  - times of silence and solitude
  - leisure time
- 2.2** For reasons of health, study or apostolate, the Vicar, with the consent of her Council, may authorise a sister to live out of community. She may also grant this permission for other reasons, in which case there will be an annual review.  
Care is needed to see that sisters living their participation in communal life outside the community receive information and are involved in community reflection and decision-making.
- 2.3** In our personal and community prayer, we remember our sisters who are with God. We celebrate the Eucharist for each one as an expression of our faith in the communion of saints. Further details can be set out in the Vicariate statutes.

### **3. PRAYER**

### **4. CONSECRATED CELIBACY**

## 5. POVERTY

- 5.1** The day-to-day practice of the vow of Poverty must clearly show, on both personal and community levels, that we belong to the Congregation:
- we submit our accounts every year to the Bursar at the appropriate level
  - we commit ourselves to transparency with regard to our goods
  - we take steps to discern together what commitments to justice are needed according to Gospel criteria.
- 5.2** We therefore need
- a) to view and understand the society in which we live from the position of those outside it
  - b) to re-read the Word of God and our own apostolic choices from the point of view of the poor
  - c) to move from individual to collective action by promoting possibilities in the Congregation for critical analysis, forward planning and discernment in order to
    - communicate information
    - take a stand
    - collaborate with national and international organisations in the cause of justice.
- 5.3** The dress worn in the Congregation should be in keeping with our choice of a life based on the Gospel, our mission and the context in which we live it out. Our attire should be simple and modest in material and colour (according to the criteria in different countries), with or without a veil, as seen fit by the Superior General or her delegate.

## **6. OBEDIENCE**

- 6.1** The day-to-day practice of the vow of Obedience must clearly show, on both personal and community levels, that we belong to the Congregation. It must be converted into an active participation in the various proposals coming from the Vicariate, Delegation or Group, or from the General Council.

## **7. FORMATION**

- 7 A** Admission or non admission of a candidate to any stage of formation is decided by the Vicar in a spirit of collegiality and with respect for the principle of subsidiarity in regard to the sister in charge of formation at the stage concerned.
- 7 B** The mandate of those in charge of formation, and of those assisting, is linked with that of the Vicar. It may be renewed.

### **THE FIRST STAGE (POSTULANCY)**

- 7.1.1** Before being admitted, the candidate may be required to have experienced a time of personal autonomy and work.
- 7.1.2** Each Vicariate must
- ensure the organisation of meetings and days of study or prayer which will allow a better discernment of the postulant's vocation and enable her gradually to learn the spirit of the Congregation and understand its choices.
  - arrange for her to have a fairly long stay in a community of the Congregation.
  - help her gradually get to know different communities in the Vicariate and their apostolic work.
- 7.1.3** When a candidate joins a Group, or a Delegation, the Generalate will appoint the sisters to be responsible for her formation.
- 7.1.4** The minimum length of time required for this first stage (postulancy) is six months.

### **NOVITIATE**

- 7.2.1** As far as possible, the twelve months of the canonical Novitiate should be consecutive.
- 7.2.2** Several Vicariates, Delegations and Groups may share a common Novitiate and other formation communities.

## THE STAGE OF TEMPORARY PROFESSION

- 7.3.1** During this period, it is desirable that the professed sister should follow theological and biblical studies.
- 7.3.2** According to each person's needs and the possibilities of each Vicariate, an educative stay in another country or region where there are sisters of the Congregation may be recommended.
- 7.3.3** Three months before the expiry of her temporary vows, the professed sister must write to the Vicar, asking to be allowed either to renew her vows for one year (Constitutions §79) or to make final profession.

## GUIDE-LINES FOR ALL STAGES

- 7.4.1** Each stage of formation should be preceded by a retreat.
- 7.4.2** The sisters in charge of formation may be helped by other people who are specialists in the different areas covered by the formation programme. The Vicar must approve the choice of these people.
- 7.4.3** It is desirable that the same sister should not be in charge of formation throughout the three stages.
- 7.4.4** The study of a foreign language spoken in the Congregation is required during the formation period.
- 7.4.5** Each Vicariate will draw up its formation programme according to its own situation, to include:
- the sister in charge of each stage
  - the means of achieving the separation from ordinary life required for the canonical Novitiate.
  - a form of regular evaluation
  - the links the sisters in formation have
    - . among themselves
    - . at inter-congregational level
    - . at international level
  - the periods of time spent living together



The Vicar will carefully work out how a smooth collaboration can be achieved between the different people responsible for the sister, that is:

- . the community in which she lives
- . the sister in charge of formation
- . the Vicariate Council
- . the General Council

**7.4.6** The sisters in charge of formation must take care to extend and deepen their own biblical, theological, sociological and psychological knowledge as well as their knowledge of the Congregation. They should continue to carry out some form of apostolic work.

**7.4.7** Each Vicariate is responsible for ensuring, by appropriate means, the training of its formation personnel.

**7.4.8** The Generalate of the Congregation has the responsibility of organising international formation meetings at such times as it judges appropriate.

## **8. ORGANISATION OF THE CONGREGATION IN THE SERVICE OF THE APOSTOLIC LIFE**

### AT LOCAL LEVEL

- 8.1.1** To be a local Superior a sister must have been finally professed for one year.
- 8.1.2** To help local Superiors fulfil their task better, Vicars must make sure that the programme of continuing formation includes sessions on topics of especial relevance to them (group dynamics, spiritual direction ...).
- 8.1.3** Communities will choose a local council in agreement with the Vicar. In small communities it will consist of all the sisters.
- 8.1.4** In large communities, the existence of a council does not dispense the Superior from holding meetings with the community to discuss matters which concern them.

### AT VICARIATE LEVEL

- 8.2.1** A collection of sisters may form a Vicariate, or a Delegation, or a Group. Each sister is a member of a Vicariate, a Delegation or a Group.
- 8.2.2** However, she may move to another Vicariate, Delegation or Group either permanently or temporarily.  
If, for purposes of study or apostolic work, the period exceeds 3 months, the General Council, in dialogue with the Vicariate, Delegation or Group of origin, will specify the person in charge.  
For a shorter period, those in charge in the respective Vicariates, Delegations or Groups must reach an agreement, which they will then convey to the Generalate.
- 8.2.3** A permanent move requires the agreement of the General Council, the Superiors in charge of the Vicariates, Delegations or Groups concerned, and the sister herself.
- 8.2.4** If the move is temporary, the person to whom the sister is responsible must in each case be clearly named.
- 8.2.5** Depending on the geographical situation in which the Congregation is present, a Vicariate may be subdivided into Regions.
- 8.2.6** When a new Vicariate is set up, all the sisters concerned must be convoked to a constituent assembly which will work out the Vicariate statutes.
- 8.2.7** Vicariate statutes lay down the details of apostolic and community life, prayer and continuing formation.
- 8.2.8** The statutes establish the composition of the Vicariate Assembly. In some Vicariates it may consist of all the sisters, while in others it can be composed of ex officio and

elected members. In either case, the Vicar and the Vicariate Councillors are ex officio members. The statutes may add further ex officio members.

**8.2.9** To be a Vicariate Councillor, a sister must be finally professed. Similarly, only finally professed sisters may elect the Vicar, her Councillors, and delegates to the General Chapter.

**8.2.10** If the charge of Vicar should fall vacant, the Councillors choose from among themselves a provisional Sister-in-charge of the Vicariate and submit their choice to the General Council for ratification. This sister remains in charge until a Vicar has been legitimately appointed.

**8.2.11** The Vicar keeps the General Council informed about the life of her Vicariate. In addition to informal and verbal contacts, written reports concerning important matters should be made periodically.

**8.2.12** Statute for a Delegation

a) The Delegate is appointed by the Superior General, after consultation of the sisters, for a renewable period of three years. She carries out the functions prescribed by the Constitutions, the Letter of Mission and points specific to the organisation of religious life, namely:

- Spiritual and community leadership, openness to the world, day-to-day management, mutual support, attention to health, solidarity and mutual help, are some of the areas to be dealt with on a day-to-day basis.
- Management of goods and exercise of civil duties.

b) Although she is not a Major Superior in the Congregation, since her powers and responsibilities are delegated to her by the Superior General, the Delegate is a member of the General Chapter and the Extended General Council of the Congregation. She also answers for the Delegation before her country's civil and religious authorities.

c) In the case of any important decision affecting the future, the Delegate seeks the approval of the Superior General and her Council, after having consulted religious or lay experts, as appropriate, in the relevant field.

d) Should the Delegate be unable to carry out her task, the General Council organises her replacement at an appropriate time.

## AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

### The General Chapter

**8.3.1** Preparation for the General Chapter of elections takes the form of

- reflection at the level of each Vicariate, Delegation and Group
- dialogue between Vicariates, Delegations, Groups and the General Council

This reflection should encourage the sisters to be ready to respond if called upon to serve the Congregation at international level.

- 8.3.2** About six months before the General Chapter, the Superior General establishes the date by means of a circular to all the communities.
- 8.3.3** The venue for the General Chapter is decided by the Superior General or, in her absence, by the Vicar General, with the deliberative vote of the General Council.
- 8.3.4** The General Council must establish, with adequate notice, the total number of delegates to the General Chapter.
- 8.3.5** The General Council must decide on the number of delegates to the General Chapter from each Vicariate or Group, taking into account the criteria established by the preceding Extended General Council.
- 8.3.6** The delegates are elected by the Assembly of each Vicariate or by the members of a Delegation or a Group.
- 8.3.7** The voting method for the election of delegates and substitutes to the General Council is left to the decision of the Vicariate Assemblies or, where there is no Vicariate Assembly, to the General Council.
- 8.3.8** The minutes of the election, signed by the president and the scrutineers, must be sent without delay to the General Council.
- 8.3.9** The names of the delegates are communicated to the whole Congregation by the Superior General.
- 8.3.10** If a Vicar is unable to attend a General Chapter, the Vicariate Councillors will elect one of themselves to replace her.
- 8.3.11** Just as it is of obligation to convoke to the General Chapter all the sisters who have a right to be present, so all those convoked have a reciprocal obligation to attend it unless unable to do so for a reason judged legitimate by the Superior General in consultation with her Council.
- 8.3.12** After beseeching the light of the Holy Spirit, the members of the Chapter meet, under the presidency of the Superior General or, in her absence, of the Vicar General, and proceed to the verification of entitlement, that is to say, of the right of those present to take part in the General Chapter. Then the President declares the Chapter officially open.
- 8.3.13** Next, the two scrutineers for the Chapter are elected by a relative majority and then the Secretary of the Chapter by an absolute majority at the first and second rounds or a relative majority at the third. The General Chapter will establish the procedure for preparing the elections of the Superior General and of the General Councillors.

#### Election of the Superior General

- 8.3.14** The election of the Superior General is presided over by a sister elected from among the members of the Chapter. The election is by secret ballot and an absolute majority is required. If this majority is not obtained in the 1st round nor in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3rd, there will be an interval for the Chapter members to confer. There will then be a 4th round, in which, while remaining eligible, the two sisters who received the most

votes in the 3rd round do not vote. If, in the 3rd round, several sisters in second place have obtained the same number of votes, the youngest of these sisters and the sister who came first remain eligible but do not vote. If necessary there will be a 5th round, still requiring an absolute majority. In the 6th round, the Superior General may be elected by a relative majority. If there is a tie, the youngest sister is elected.

**8.3.15** When the election of the Superior General has been carried out in due order, the presiding sister declares it legitimate and promulgates it. During the remainder of the Chapter proceedings, the newly elected Superior General assumes the functions prescribed by the Constitutions, cf. §132 and §140.

The Chapter Secretary draws up the minutes of the election. The presiding sister signs them and has them signed by the two scrutineers and the Chapter Secretary.

**8.3.16** In the event that the sister who has been elected Superior General is absent, the promulgation is made and she is invited to attend the Chapter forthwith. All Chapter work is suspended until she arrives.

#### Election of the General Councillors

**8.3.17** If it happens that one of the newly elected Councillors is not at the Chapter, she will immediately be invited to attend; however, pending her arrival, the work of the Chapter will not be interrupted.

**8.3.18** The General Council may appoint as General Bursar and General Secretary General Councillors already elected, or other sisters.

**8.3.19** As soon as possible and not more than 3 months after their election, the General Councillors, the General Secretary and the General Bursar will free themselves from responsibilities incompatible with their new duties.

**8.3.20** From the moment of their election, the Superior General and the newly elected Councillors carry responsibility together for the government of the Congregation (cf. §148 and §143 of the Constitutions).

During the time required for the change of administration, the former Superior General and other Office-holders will deal with matters in hand according to the directives of the new General Council. The expiry date of this transition period will be communicated to the whole Congregation.

#### The General Council

**8.4.1** Each sister on the General Council is attentive to the life being lived in the Congregation as a whole and in the world. However, each one may follow more closely a particular aspect of life in the Congregation or acquire specialised knowledge concerning questions relative to one or more regions in which the Congregation is present.

**8.4.2** The General Council may call upon other sisters in the capacity of “experts” to fulfil specific tasks at international level.

The General Secretary

- 8.4.3** The General Secretary collaborates with the General Council in co-ordinating and communicating information from the Vicariates, Delegations and Groups.  
The General Secretary may have competent persons to assist her.

The General Bursar

- 8.4.4** At intervals determined by the General Council, the General Bursar submits the accounts of the Congregation for approval by the Superior General and her Council (deliberative vote).

### **The Extended General Council**

- 8.5.1** The Extended General Council consists of the General Council, the General Secretary and the General Bursar, the Vicars, the Delegates and, if required, some invited sisters.  
It should meet at least once a year.  
It is an instrument of consultation, reciprocal information and questioning, discernment and evaluation, in co-ordination with the General Council.
- 8.5.2** The Extended General Council is a consultative body but deliberative powers may be delegated to it by the General Council.
- 8.5.3** In the course of a mandate, it belongs to the Extended General Council to replace, or not, a General Councillor or General Officer unable to continue in her charge or who has offered her resignation for personal or apostolic reasons.

### **Other International Meetings and Assemblies**

- 8.6** International meetings and assemblies are an effective mechanism for encounter and formation. It belongs to the General Council, in dialogue with the Groups, Delegations and Vicars, to work out a balanced schedule of different kinds of meeting, taking into account the needs, priorities and availability of people and resources.

### **Renewal of Mandates**

- 8.7** The renewal of mandates for the different levels of government in the Congregation, as allowed by the Constitutions, is entered into only after careful consideration and is not normal practice.

### **The Extended Family of the Congregation of Our Lady**

- 8.8.1** Today, the Congregation of Our Lady has a multiform appearance: new ways of belonging are taking shape. In several countries, associates, co-workers and friends share our charism and our mission.

- 8.8.2** Sisters and lay people, according to their specific way of life and vocation, are keen to make the intuition of our Founders a reality. They are developing partnerships which vary according to the context.  
The modalities will be set out in the statutes of the Vicariates, Delegations and Groups.

## **9. ADMINISTRATION AND USE OF GOODS IN THE SERVICE OF THE APOSTOLIC LIFE**

- 9.1** All goods belonging to the Vicariates, Delegations and Groups belong to the Congregation and therefore to the Church. The Superior General is responsible for them and should therefore be consulted over any change in usage or ownership. Vicars, Delegates and Sisters-in-charge of Groups will therefore make sure they give her all the relevant information as and when it becomes necessary.
- 9.2** All properties situated within the boundaries of a Vicariate or Delegation belong to that Vicariate or Delegation, with the exception of those purchased by the Generalate. Should the Vicariate or Delegation cease to exist, ownership of the properties is transferred to the Generalate.
- 9.3** Properties owned by Groups directly attached to the Generalate belong
- to the Generalate if the Generalate purchased them
  - to the Groups if they purchased them
  - to the Generalate should the Group cease to exist, allowance being made for local legislation.
- 9.4** The Superior General with the consent of her Council takes the decision to buy and sell properties as needed by the Generalate or the Groups directly attached to the Generalate.  
When the price of a sale surpasses the threshold laid down by the local Bishops' Conference, the permission of the Holy See is needed to give the sale validity.
- 9.5** The Vicar with the consent of her Council, the Delegate, or the Sister-in-charge of a Group may decide, after consulting the Superior General, to buy or sell properties according to the needs of the Vicariate, Delegation or Group.  
When the price of a sale exceeds the threshold laid down by the local Bishops' Conference, the Vicar must obtain the permission of the Superior General and her Council and also that of the Holy See.  
She may not dispose of a property which plays a significant part in the pastoral strategy of the Diocese without consulting the local Bishop.
- 9.6** Real Estate: when circumstances require us to create civil moral persons as owners of the Congregation's buildings, lay people who are members of the Administrative Councils must remember that, in the eyes of the Church, these goods remain the property of the Congregation.
- 9.7** Bursars: at all levels they collaborate with their Sisters-in-charge in a spirit of mutual trust. They must be aware of the apostolic dimensions of their task, and not only be professionally competent but also capable of reflection, prudence and courage.

Bursars are responsible for the day-to-day management of the goods entrusted to them and take appropriate initiatives. They regularly give an account of this day-to-day accounting to their Sisters-in-charge. With regard to extraordinary administration, i.e. concerning the patrimony (sales, purchases, loans, mortgages, securities), they prepare the legal, fiscal and financial elements that enable the Sisters-in-charge to take decisions. The Superior General and the Vicars give time to their Bursars for discussion concerning temporal matters and include them in discussions leading to decisions with a financial aspect.

**9.8** Bursars' Meetings: Vicariate Bursars and their teams may meet periodically, when convoked by the General Bursar, to improve their professional competence, share their experiences, inform one another about the economic situation in their countries and reflect together on the management of goods, faced with the needs of the world and of the Congregation as a whole.

The desire to avoid complicity with injustice in the management of goods, and to collaborate with all that is being done to promote greater justice and unity is what underlies this common research.

**9.9** If a sister entrusts the management of her patrimony to the Congregation, these goods are managed at Vicariate level by the Vicariate Bursar, with the Vicar having the final responsibility. They must make sure that these goods are managed with the prudence needed for their conservation.

Upon a sister's death, the provisions of her will are put into effect.

If a sister leaves the Congregation, her patrimony is returned to her.

**9.10** Vicariates, Delegations and Groups must

- ensure that all communities and sisters have enough to live on
- aim for financial autonomy
- practise both internal (in relation to the Congregation as a whole) and external financial solidarity.

They will make a provisional budget which allows, as far as is possible, the constituting of sufficient reserves to ensure

- formation for young sisters
- continuing formation
- support for apostolic works for which they are responsible
- support for sick or elderly sisters in accommodation matching their state of health, whether in houses belonging to the Congregation or elsewhere.

They will build up reserves with foresight and lucidity and will share their resources with the Generalate.

The Generalate must ensure that the Vicariates, Delegations and Groups have enough to live on.



## **10. GENERAL AND PARTICULAR RULES**

- The Vicariate statutes take up the texts of the Constitutions, the Supplementary Articles and the Acts of the General Chapters and re-position them within the context of each Vicariate.
- These statutes may not contradict any point whatsoever in the Constitutions, Supplementary Articles or Acts of the General Chapters. They must be revised speedily, where necessary, whenever any of these texts are modified.
- The statutes may reinforce or adapt certain points, but they may not do away with any decision of the Constitutions, Supplementary Articles or Chapter Acts.

Following the Constitutions §95, §96, §99, the statutes of each Vicariate must be

- approved by the Superior General
- revised after each Chapter, as quickly as possible, but within a deadline of 6 months.

## NOTE ON THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF VOTES

- **After consulting her Council:** this is a consultative vote. The Superior is not legally bound to follow the opinion given.

- **With the consent of her Council:** this is a deliberative vote. The Superior cannot act against the majority. However, she is not obliged to make the decision that the Council is allowing her to make.

- **Collegial Vote:** the Superior votes in the same way as all the members of the Council and is bound by the decision of the majority. If there is a tie, the Superior General, the Vicar or the Delegate has the casting vote.

- **Absolute majority:** this consists of half the votes plus one.

- Abstention = no vote cast
- Void vote = a vote that is not free or secret (if applicable); unclear (e.g. confusion over names); or not absolute (e.g. with conditions attached)
- Invalid vote = e.g. a vote for a sister who is not eligible.

It should be noted that abstentions, void and invalid votes do not alter the number of votes required for an absolute majority.

- **Two thirds majority:** this requires 2/3 of the votes cast. It is obligatory, for example, for a modification to the Constitutions,

- **Relative majority:** this is achieved by the highest number of votes received; where there is a tie, the youngest is elected.

- **Quorum:** two thirds of all voting members must be present.

- **Indicative vote:** (for a text) this is a vote taken by a show of hands before a definitive vote. An indicative vote suffices for drafting a text or a proposal, or for a revised text or proposal more in keeping with the mind of the Chapter.