

RATIO INSTITUTIONIS

Guidelines on Formation

Called to be transformed into the image of Christ

Modified and approved by the General Chapters of 2011 – vote 28

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PROLOGUE

1. Cistercian monks and nuns are called to follow Christ along the way marked out by the Gospel, as interpreted by the Rule of St. Benedict and the tradition of Cîteaux. In a community that the Lord has brought together to be a place of his special presence, they allow themselves to be formed by the love of God, each according to the grace he or she has been given.

C. 1; C. 3.1; C. 3.2; C. 5; C. 9; Perf. Car. 2,5; Lumen G., 40; RB Prol. 21; RB 40,1; Dir. 8.

[Dir. = the document of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes, published in 1990.]

2. Entering a monastery is a decisive moment in a life history within which the call of God's eternal love has been heard. Baptismal commitment is by it given a new expression. The goal of the monastic journey is a gradual transformation into the likeness of Christ through the action of the Spirit of God.

C. 45.1; C. 8; C. 56.

3. As a school of the Lord's service, each community is called to maintain and to transmit the Cistercian patrimony and a faithful version of its charism to those who enter. It remains constantly alert to the promptings of the Spirit in each person's heart, and to his or her need for healing.

RB Prol. 45; C. 16.3; C. 45.3.

4. In this school of love, monks and nuns will grow in humility and self-knowledge. Through the discovery of the depths of God's mercy in their lives, they will learn how to love. Gradually becoming detached from false sources of security and growing in dependence on God, they will run with an open heart in the paths of his service, aided by the maternal solicitude of Mary, Mother of Jesus and of the Church, and our model in the following of Christ.

Will. of s. Th., De natura et dignitate amoris, PL 184, 396 D; C. 49.2; RB Prol.49; C. 3.4; C. 45.1.

5. The Constitutions describe in detail the essential aspects of Cistercian spirituality, as well as the structures of the life of the community and of the Order. Based on these Constitutions, the present Ratio on Formation in the Cistercian Order of the Strict Observance describes the spiritual principles and the concrete norms that are to be followed in the process of Cistercian monastic formation, especially during the initial stages. While this Ratio is addressed in particular to those responsible for formation in their communities, it is also addressed to every other member of the Order.

PART I : THE FORMATIVE ROLE OF CISTERCIAN CONVERSATIO

6. It is essentially by living out the various aspects of Cistercian conversatio that a person gradually becomes ever more truly a Cistercian. The community is the ambience where the transforming action of the Spirit of God takes place. Through the daily practice of the monastic disciplines and under the pastoral care of the superior and those who share in the superior's ministry, this conversatio provides the means for personal and communal growth.
C. 3.1; C. 10; Dir. 80.

1 Lectio divina, Liturgy, and Work

7. The various elements of Cistercian conversatio, such as obedience, humility, asceticism, solitude and silence, lead, each in its own way, to the interior freedom through which purity of heart and an abiding attention to God are attained. But it is in the particular and delicate balance of lectio divina, liturgy and work, that the Cistercian charism most directly manifests itself.
C. 3.2; C. 14.2; RB 48,1;
Aelred of Rievaulx, De institutione inclusarum, 9.

8. In their lectio divina, to which they dedicate themselves with fidelity and regularity, monks and nuns are further awakened in faith to the reality of God within and around them. Lectio, which leads to meditatio, oratio and contemplatio, is therefore a source of continual prayer and a school of contemplation. Through it the one who reads is given the grace to embody the Word in a transformed way of living. It is also an asceticism of the mind that opens the heart to listen constantly to God.
C. 21; Dir. 76.

9. In the liturgy monks and nuns celebrate with joy the Lord who has gathered them into a community of praise and intercession. From this daily participation in the Paschal Mystery of Christ they draw strength and grow in a personal understanding of their monastic vocation and deepen their communion with their sisters or brothers. The daily celebration of the Eucharist nourishes the new life received at Baptism and strengthened at Confirmation. The celebration of the Divine Office, in which the community listens to the Word of God, is a means towards a constant mindfulness of God and is therefore a school of continual prayer.
C. 17.1; C. 18; C. 19.1; C. 19.2; C. 20;
Evangelica Testificatio, 48; Dir. 77.

10. Through work, especially manual work, monks and nuns participate in the creative activity of the Father and share in the experience of all workers, particularly the poor. At times this work may be marked by fatigue, tension or frustration: a sharing in the cross of Christ. As one of the principal ways of serving the community and exercising responsibility towards it, work is a powerful instrument in drawing the community closer together. It is also a means of self-discipline that promotes health of mind and body and fosters maturity. When the necessary conditions of simplicity and peace are provided, work is an opportunity for the exercise of the continual prayer that flows from lectio and the liturgy.
C. 26; Exordium Parvum 9; Dir. 79.

2 The Community as Formative

11. All who live in the community share responsibility for its unity, its dynamic fidelity to the Cistercian charism, and its capacity to provide all its members with the conditions needed for the human and spiritual growth that leads to the fullness of love.
C. 13.1-2; C. 14.1; C. 16.

12. A community's ability to form new members depends largely on its having a unified spirit so that it can impart a single orientation to the upcoming generations. Where unity is lacking, difficulties are created for those entrusted with the task of formation. The community should therefore work towards a unified approach that is founded on a common patrimony treasured by all, so that practical everyday questions can be located within a shared vision of the Cistercian ideal. This vision must be one that is rooted in the experience of monastic living and which spans the several generations which together form the community.
C. 45.3; ST.49.1.B.

13. Communal discussions and dialogues, forms of Gospel sharing and fraternal correction, can be important means in the formation of the community. In these and other ways, members of the community are trained to listen to others, exposed to different viewpoints and encouraged to develop skills of self-expression; they learn courage through facing problems, and patience through the slowness of community processes. They grow in mutual understanding and are more ready to forgive when conflicts are unavoidable. Thus a climate is fostered where mutual trust and fraternal support aid conversion of life.
C. 15.1; ST.15.1.A.

14. While the experience of dialogue helps a community to grow in self-understanding, celebrations also have a part to play in community formation. On feastdays and on other occasions throughout the year, the community celebrates the gifts God has bestowed on it and joyfully recognizes that all are bonded together in one body and one spirit.

3 The Pastoral Care of the Superior

15. Because they exercise the role of spiritual father or mother of the community, abbots and abbesses have a responsibility to guide their communities towards unity and growth in the Cistercian charism. Through their teaching they develop the identity of the community; through their administration they create the necessary conditions for formation, and through their pastoral care they aim to provide guidance, support and healing for each and every member. They share these responsibilities with all whom they appoint to help them in the service of the community, but more especially with the monks or nuns who accompany those going through the various phases of initial formation.

C. 33.1-4; C. 3.2; C. 41.2; C. 35; C. 45.3; C. 47.

16. A prolonged and regular spiritual guidance (accompagnement) constitutes an important element of formation, whether initial or ongoing. It leads the monk or the nun towards a real knowledge and acceptance of self, under the eyes of God. Monks and nuns strive to see their superiors with the eyes of faith as the representatives of Christ.

C. 33.1; C. 11; C. 2.2.

Part II : INITIAL FORMATION

17. The experience of centuries expressed in the Rule of St. Benedict as well as in the legislation of the Church and the Order have provided for a gradual initiation into the monastic way of life. **The various stages of this initiation, which include intellectual formation as well as affective and spiritual development**, are meant to assist the candidates to grow as human beings and as disciples of Christ.

C. 46.

1 General Principles

18. According to St. Benedict, great care must be taken to see that those who enter truly seek God, that they "show eagerness for the work of God, for obedience and for trials". Therefore those responsible for their formation help them to develop a life of continual prayer; they teach them to love the Divine Office and to find in it a large part of their spiritual nourishment; they guide them on their journey to take up the cross after the example of Christ.

C. 51; C. 49.1; RB 58,7.

19. It is highly recommended that the superior, the novice director and the junior director, together with one or two others designated by the superior, meet regularly to review the progress of those in formation. The purpose of this formation committee is to ensure good communication and continuity of policy, and also to provide a wider range of experience to draw upon in dealing with particular situations.

Dir. 32.

2 Reception

20. Persons who desire to enter the community will be led to the monastery by various natural and supernatural motives. These aspirants will be helped by those who receive them to discover the working of God in their lives and the nature of the attraction they experience. Several visits to the monastery guesthouse, retreats, and possibly a period spent within the community will be the usual means taken to arrive at such a discernment. Those with insufficient knowledge of Christian doctrine will be invited to complete their catechetical preparation.

C. 46.1; Dir 43.

21. Since it is not unusual that an attraction to deeper prayer life is first perceived as a call to a more contemplative form of religious life, candidates will be asked to examine seriously whether God is really inviting them to the monastic life or whether he wants them to remain in their present vocation. All candidates will be encouraged to give themselves totally to God in whatever way he is calling them.

C. 46.2.

22. When candidates have demonstrated positive signs of a Cistercian vocation, the superior receives them, after discussing the matter fully with the novice director and, if there is one, the vocation director. These positive signs include: the sincere desire to embrace the life of the community as a means to union with God; the necessary physical, mental and emotional health to live their vocation fruitfully; the "spiritual disposition" referred to in C 46, 1, which is a humble docility born of faith, hope and love, making the candidate eager to learn and instinctively open to both the solitary and the communal dimensions of Cistercian life. The positive decision of the local superior who receives the candidate is also a necessary criterion for establishing the presence of a Cistercian vocation.

23. Candidates must present certificates of baptism and confirmation and of freedom from obligations due to others. In the case of priests, seminarians, present or former members of institutes of consecrated life, and those

needing dispensation from impediments, the specific requirements of Canon Law are followed. An up-to-date medical certificate is also required. There will be times when competent psychological testing is to be recommended. C. 46; CIC 644 and 645; cf. CIC 642.

In some cases, it can be useful to set up a pre-postulancy. This period is a time of practical formation, including courses that ensure a solid preparation for the postulancy : a complement to basic catechesis, further study of the community's language in the community if this is not the postulant's mother tongue, training in singing or any other.

3 Postulancy

24. Newcomers will be entrusted to the pastoral care of the novice director. Chosen for a real love of the monastic life and an aptitude for winning souls, the novice director will be responsible for introducing the candidates to the Cistercian conversatio, accompanying them on their spiritual journey until the moment when they leave the novitiate. Apart from this individual guidance, the novice director attends to the quality of the novitiate environment and gives regular conferences. He or she is responsible for the practical organization of the novitiate and may also supervise group activities and work.

C. 47; Exordium Cistercii, N 5; RB 58,6; C. 49; Dir. 30, 31, 52.

25. The novice director and those who assist him or her need to have a real love for persons and a reverence for the grace of God present in each individual. As they strive to foster growth, they are attentive to the novices' gifts and strengths, as well as to their limitations and weaknesses. They need to be persons who possess the ability to listen and they are careful to teach by the quality of their lives as much as by their words. They are open to receive some form of supervision in their task.

C. 47; C. 49.2; Dir. 30, 31, 52.

26. The relationship between the superior and the novice director should be characterized by a deep unity of spirit, heart and orientation and a respect for each other's service within the community. Together they formulate a policy for the organization of the novitiate, which they explain to the community. This is important, since the cooperation and the confidence of the community are essential for those who are responsible for formation.

ST 49.1.B; Dir. 32.

27. The postulancy is a period of initiation and of progressive adaptation to the monastic life. The novice director introduces the postulant to prayer, to the Divine Office and to lectio divina, and helps him or her surmount the difficulties which are proper to this stage. Often these are connected with the physical and affective separation from the activities and relationships that were part of the postulant's life before entering the monastery. Although the postulancy is not a time for studies, in some cases it can be a time for completing the catechetical instruction required for taking part profitably in the novitiate program if it has not been possible to complete it before entry.

ST 46.1.A; Dir. 42, 43.

28. A minimum period for the postulancy is determined by each community. When, on the advice of the novice director, the superior judges that postulants are ready to begin their canonical novitiate and they themselves express a desire to do so, they are accepted after the council has been consulted.

ST 38.C. a; ST 46.1.A; C. 48,1; ST 48.A; ST 12.A.

4 Novitiate

29. The novitiate is a time for a personal integrating of the Cistercian way of life. Through prayer, asceticism, growth in self-knowledge and participation in the life of the community, the novices are led to a more intense personal experience of what is involved in the living out of the Cistercian conversatio. They should continue to develop humanly and spiritually, growing in a personal relationship with Christ.

C. 49; C. 49.2; C. 51; Dir. 45.

30. In order to profit from this period the novices will strive to develop from the very beginning an open and confident relationship with the novice director and the superior who, in their turn, will help the novices by their pastoral care, prayer and example.

C. 11; C. 45.3; ST 33.3.B.

31. The novices, who normally live in a separate part of the monastery, learn through their community life to develop a realistic acceptance of and love for one another. This experience of common life within the novitiate forms the basis of their integration into the community. As they gradually learn to know the community and the community comes to know them, the novice director may have at times to act as mediator, by helping the novices to understand the community and the community to understand the novices.

C. 13.1; ST 49.1.A.

32. A program of monastic studies is begun in the novitiate. The courses of the novitiate are under the control of the novice director and are oriented to the spiritual needs of this stage of formation. They are also however coordinated with the program of the monasticate. Among the topics to be presented are the following: Sacred Scripture, in particular the Psalms; the Liturgy, especially the Liturgy of the Hours, with practical instruction in singing and public reading; the Rule of St. Benedict; Monastic History and Spirituality, especially the Cistercian Patrimony; instruction in Prayer and Lectio, on the Vows and the meaning of Religious Life; an introduction to the Christian Mystery and Christian Doctrine, and to the Constitutions and the Statutes of the Order, **practical accompaniment and other means to understand and manage affective life.**

Dir. 46, 74.

33. The novitiate remains a time of probation, and departures of novices are not abnormal. The novice director shows understanding and sympathy for the hesitations and soul-searching of those who are doubtful in their vocation, and helps them make a decision in such a way that, even if they do depart, they do not feel that they have failed but, rather, leave the monastery more determined to serve God in whatever way he indicates. When novices must be asked to leave, they should be helped to see this not as a rejection but simply as the recognition that there are not enough positive signs of their Cistercian vocation for this community at this moment. In such cases it would be false kindness and, in the long term harmful and unjust to the novices and to the community to allow them to remain too long in the monastery.

34. At the end of the novitiate, when the novices are ready to commit themselves to Christ and to the community through monastic profession, they make a petition to the superior, who reviews each case with the novice director before presenting the novice to the vote of the conventual chapter. If the needs of the individual warrant it, profession may be delayed for up to six months after the two years of the novitiate have elapsed. According to local circumstances, the novice may also remain in the novitiate for some time after profession.
C. 50; C. 51; ST 53.A; ST 38.C.e; Dir. 54, 56.

35. Voting for profession is an important way in which the community exercises its responsibility. Therefore the superior and the novice director will do everything possible to ensure that this act of the conventual chapter is not a mere formality. While respecting the necessary confidentiality, they will keep the community informed, in a general way, of the progress of each novice. Most of all, the community must remember that its attitudes towards the novices are very important: its welcome, its acceptance of them as individuals, its affection for and understanding of each of them.
ST 37.B.a; C. 51.

5 Monasticate

36. Novices are still young in the monastic life when they are admitted to first vows and therefore need special help and attention from the community.
C. 53; ST 53.A; Dir. 58, 59, 60.

In recent times the period of formation that comes after that of the novitiate has been called the monasticate, and those who are in it are called juniors.

37. If there are several juniors, the relationships among them constitute a significant element in their formation, as long as a healthy and confident relationship is also maintained with the rest of the community. They are given a director who strives to foster unity and charity in the monasticate, gives conferences and organizes other group activities. The juniors themselves are responsible for developing a good climate of friendship and support in the monasticate.
Dir. 60.

38. It is the task of the director of juniors to accompany those in his or her care as they pass from the relatively segregated regimen of the novitiate to their own distinctive mode of sharing in the life of the community. The director reviews with them their experience of monastic living in the community, prayer, vocation, the vows, study, work and the acceptance of responsibilities. Because the monasticate is such a critical time of growth, it is important that the juniors receive understanding, acceptance and encouragement from the director, as well as being challenged by him.
Dir. 30, 60.

39. The monasticate continues and complements the work of the novitiate in a way that is less structured and which is spread over a longer period. During it the juniors will progressively learn to act more from inner principles and move towards a fuller participation in the activities and responsibilities of the community.

40. Through their participation in a program of monastic education the juniors are led, on the one hand, to a more conscious awareness of the content of the faith and of the monastic patrimony; on the other hand, they are invited to a deeper reflection on their own beliefs and values. In this way it is hoped that they will be able to construct a broader context in which to locate their personal experiences and to have some objective means of checking their judgements and opinions.
C. 53; Dir. 61, 74.

41. Although the gradual assumption of responsibility within the community is a characteristic feature of the monasticate, juniors are not to be given work or duties which impede their formation. While the conditions of each monastery have to be taken into account, communities are to be generous in providing time to juniors for classes and personal studies. As a stimulus to serious work and as a necessary condition for further academic studies, some form of evaluation is advisable, especially if these studies are to be done in institutions outside the monastery. Careful attention must also be given to ensure that the fruits of the juniors' vocation are becoming manifest in their lives through their regularity and through their application to prayer, lectio, the divine office, work, and the acceptance of corrections. Also to be considered as evidence of their cooperation with the charism of their vocation is the character of their relations with superiors, seniors, peers and novices, their control over temperament and emotions, and their growth in human maturity.
C. 53; CIC 660,2.

42. **For the monasticate it is difficult to suggest a general course of study, since circumstances differ widely among monasteries and among the juniors themselves. Juniors destined for the priesthood will follow the appropriate theological studies (cf. §§ 60-62) Regarding the regular program of monastic studies, courses in the following areas are highly recommended: sacred Scripture, Cistercian patrimony, Christology, systematic theology, patrology, liturgy, and history of philosophy. These courses should be integrated into the framework of Cistercian**

anthropology and spirituality. Classes may be given in the monastery, at sessions organized by the Regions, or over the internet.

In addition to the above, courses in Church history, the theology of monastic life, comparative religion, or the classical languages such as Latin, Greek or Hebrew could be proposed, and the study of modern languages.

C. 53; Dir. 61.

43. The nature of the monastic life makes it desirable that the students develop a taste for private study. In some cases most of the studies of this period will be done privately, under the supervision of competent tutors. At any rate, it is essential that teaching sessions be supplemented by individual work.

Dir. 84.

44. The director keeps the superior and the other formators acquainted with the general lines of the juniors' progress. In the case of the renewal of temporary profession, it is desirable that the superior discuss the matter with the council, even though there is no legal obligation requiring a vote. If he or she judges it necessary to exclude a person in temporary vows from making further profession, the advice of the council must first be heard. Towards the end of the period of temporary profession a more serious discernment regarding the juniors' vocation needs to be undertaken.

45. At the end of the period of temporary profession, the juniors will freely ask their superior to be allowed to make solemn profession. The superior will examine their spiritual and human progress with the director of juniors, the formation committee and the teachers. Special attention will be given to seeing whether they have sufficient human maturity to make a free and responsible commitment that will enable them to live their consecration with fidelity through the many difficulties and changes which are characteristic of the spiritual journey, and whether they are able to accept the specific identity of the local community and to give themselves to its service. They will be presented for the vote of the community by the superior if these qualities, as well as growth in their life of prayer, are found to be present.

C. 54; C. 56.1; RB 58.4.

46. The newly professed may continue in the monasticate for some time, until in the judgement of the superior the objectives of the monasticate have been achieved. Then they pass fully into the community. It is recommended that they choose someone in whom they have confidence to be a continuing source of counsel, whom they may freely approach in their difficulties and whose judgement they respect. This may be the superior or one of the mature members of the community who serve as spiritual counsellors.

Dir. 63.

Part III : ONGOING FORMATION

47. Fidelity to the demands of monastic conversion requires some form of ongoing formation that will last during the whole monastic life, and that can be adapted to each one's needs and potentials.

ST 58.C; RB 58,14; Dir. 67.

1 General Ongoing Formation

48. A program of ongoing formation available to everyone is to be developed in each community. In that way especially, a monastic culture will be built that will enable all to be united in a common understanding of their vocation. A specific wisdom is gradually developed in a community when its members supplement their *lectio divina* with serious reading and study. The goal of such ongoing education is a deeper penetration of the mystery of Christ and of the Church. A good assimilation of the patrimony of the Order, a real familiarity with the contemporary teaching of the Church, and a better understanding of the world of human experience as a whole will contribute greatly to the development of a solid and objective basis for faith and practice.

C. 58; Dir. 68, 75.

49. In order to ensure the ongoing formation of its members, the community will avail of all the means compatible with Cistercian life: courses, conferences given by monks or by persons from outside the monastery, correspondence courses, modern means of communication and an adequate supply of books and periodicals. In particular, the various periodicals of the Order may offer an accessible means for strengthening and renewing a personal interest in monastic history and spirituality. Isolated monasteries and those lacking a sufficient number of persons qualified to teach will seek among the means listed here those best suited to their situation in order to sustain a lively desire for constant prayer. It should be borne in mind that a wholesome and balanced life is nurtured by an environment of harmony and beauty.

ST 27.A; ST 58.A; Dir. 68.

50. There should be good coordination between the general programs mentioned above and the courses given in the various stages of initial formation. It may be helpful, especially in larger communities, that someone be appointed to supervise the study programs in collaboration with the novice director and the junior director. This person could arrange for the ongoing education of the community and maintain contact with juniors and others doing studies outside the monastery, and could also be the contact person for collaborative projects with other monasteries and other religious houses.

C. 58.

51. After solemn profession, monks and nuns are to be encouraged to engage in the personal study of a particular interest, or to engage in some technical specialization in the area of manual work or in some form of artistic creation.

C. 58.

52. Study contributes most to organic growth in monastic virtues when it interacts with work and prayer, with solitude and community living. Prolonged involvement in personal study while pursuing particular fields of attraction should be at the service of the community or the Order, or at least carefully discerned as a particular element in an individual's vocation.

C. 14.2; Dir 68.

2 Help in Times of Difficulty or Crisis

53. The monastic journey is inevitably marked by moments of crisis, which will in reality be challenges and calls to new phases of growth. These may be of interior or exterior origin. They may consist of moments of special difficulty in the life of prayer and commitment. They can also be events that change the quality of an individual's life and upset the equilibrium previously achieved gaining or losing a particular employment, exposure to new influences and experiences, success or failure in some venture, change in the affective relations with the superior or with other members of the community. For everyone, there will eventually be the aging process, often accompanied by illness, and finally the approach of death itself.

Dir. 70.

54. With the necessary discretion and reserve, the community will be particularly attentive to its members in such moments of crisis. Through prayer and pastoral solicitude, the superior will take care of these brothers or sisters who are particularly tried, and will assure them of the support of the community. The light of faith is especially necessary in these times in order to see that, through these difficult periods, one's heart is being formed by the personal experience of Christ's cross, death and resurrection. If it should seem necessary, professional help will be made available for those in difficulties.

C. 33.4; C. 45.2; C. 49.2.

Part IV : SPECIALIZED FORMATION

55. Over and above initial formation and the general ongoing formation described above, some monks and nuns, because of particular services they are called to fulfil in their community, will need specialized formation.

1 Special training for Formation Personnel

56. Certain members of the community are appointed to be responsible for formation. The primary characteristic of those appointed is that they be imbued with love of Cistercian life, of the place, of the brothers or sisters and of prayer. But it is also very important that they be well trained. The superior therefore will see to it that they have adequate opportunities to practice a deeper monastic life and that they are given the means to acquire the knowledge and pastoral techniques needed today for the guidance and direction of souls and for the understanding of the young. This applies especially when there is a question of appointing a novice director.

ST 58.B.C; Exordium Parvum, 17,3; C. 47; ST 31.A (monks); CIC 651.3.

57. Those responsible for formation will always be attentive to the Spirit of God working in those they are called to train. They will be helped by having a clear knowledge of themselves and of their needs. At some stage it may be useful for them to seek the assistance of specialists towards acquiring this knowledge. The duration of their responsibility is subordinated to the need and the good of the community.

58. Competent teachers contribute to the proper formation of new members and to the quality of the intellectual life and monastic culture of the community. They require adequate intellectual and pedagogical preparation that may in some cases have to be acquired at a university. In ensuing years they need to take appropriate measures to maintain their level of competence. For the proper preparation of their courses, they should be provided with the books and time necessary. They are encouraged to share their talents with other monasteries in the Order.

ST 45.3.B; ST 58.B.

59. For the Order to maintain its knowledge and love of its own tradition, it is necessary that at least some of its members receive a more scholarly formation, in particular in disciplines directly related to the monastic and Cistercian way of life, such as Patrology, Monastic History, Liturgy or Canon Law. When a monk or nun who possesses special talents and is well integrated into the monastic life manifests a particular interest in any such discipline, his or her community should be open to making the necessary sacrifices to help this person develop an expertise in that field, if the superior judges that it is for the good of the community and of the whole Order.

2 Formation to Ordained Ministries

60. The nature of the Cistercian life does not of itself require that all monks be ordained. But the Lord's call and the immediate and longterm needs of the community may require that a brother be ordained to the priesthood or to another ministry. It is the responsibility of the abbot to promote such a vocation in the context of the community's needs, to discern with the brother concerned what the Lord's will is, and to make a decision after consulting the conventual chapter, or at least his council.

C. 57 (monks); RB 62.

61. If the abbot decides that a monk is being called to the priesthood, he will see that this brother fulfills all the conditions required by Canon Law before presenting him to the bishop for ordination. Additional formation that complements the studies already done during the monastic training will usually be necessary, so that the courses

completed by these monastic candidates will be in conformity with the norms published by the Holy See. When the studies are done in the monastery, the student will be given the necessary time to acquire an adequate formation in all the required disciplines. If necessary, these additional studies may be done outside the monastery at some appropriate house of studies.

C. 57; RB 62; CIC 1019.1, 1020, 1021; Dir. 103. See the norms contained in the document on the Congregation for Christian Education, *The Theological Formation of Future Priests*, issued in 1976, and in the document of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes*, published in 1990.

62. Throughout their life, but more particularly in the years following ordination, priests are to make use of the means needed to ensure the effectiveness of their ministry, especially by deepening their spiritual life, by increasing their knowledge of theology and the other sacred sciences, and by integrating the contemplative and ministerial dimensions of the monastic priesthood.

3 Formation to Services in the Community

a Ministry to the Guests

63. Because people who come to the guesthouse of a monastery are often seeking guidance in the ways of prayer, it is important that those who are designated to provide this service receive adequate training. They should also observe the pastoral directives given by the local Ordinary. As they enter their ministry, and indeed also later on, they will willingly ask for advice from those more experienced.

C. 30; ST 30.A,B; Dir. 106.

b Training for Those Engaged in Technical Tasks

64. Special training is more and more required today by those who serve the community in management and administration, in health care, in the technical trades and in other similar areas that call for specific skills. This training may be done in the monastery itself or outside.

ST 58.C.

Part V : FORMATION IN THE SPIRIT OF THE CARTA CARITATIS

65. The communities of the Order are united among themselves by the bonds of charity and a common tradition of doctrine and law. This charity expresses itself through filiations, the role of the Father Immediate and of the Abbot General, the General Chapter, and the Regional Conferences.

C. 71.1; C. 71.4; C. 82.1.

1 Filiation and Father Immediate

66. The Father Immediate concerns himself with the quality of the formation given in his daughter houses. In the course of the regular visitation he or the designated visitor examines how formation is being carried out and how the present Ratio is being implemented. He helps the abbot or abbess in seeking solutions to particular difficulties, and refers if necessary to the Abbot General.

C. 74.1; C. 75.2; ST 79.B.

2 Role of the General Chapter

67. The General Chapter concerns itself with the question of formation throughout the Order. It supplements this Ratio with pastoral directives. When approving new foundations it ensures that there are adequate resources for formation.

ST 79.B.

3 Role of the Abbot General

68. Because of his firsthand knowledge of our communities throughout the world, the Abbot General can contribute to improving the quality of formation in the houses of the Order through his visits to the communities and the Regions, his circular letters, his conferences to the General Chapters and his contacts with individuals. He will seek help for those communities that lack the resources and facilities needed for initial formation.

C. 82.1; ST 69.1.C.

4 Role of the Regional Conferences

69. The Regional Conferences can be an effective forum for discussing formation, for furthering inter-house cooperation and for organizing co-operative projects. It can also assist the individual houses of the Region in adapting the present Ratio to their specific needs and to the particular culture they live in.

C. 81; ST 45.3.A; Dir. 91.

5 The Central Secretary for Formation

70. The Central Secretary for Formation will be elected by the joint **Central Commission** for a term of three years. He or she can be re-elected. The Central Secretary's function is to facilitate communication between the Regions and to ensure the dissemination of relevant information about all aspects of monastic formation. He or she may make recommendations to the **Central Commission** about items concerning formation to be placed on the agenda of the **General Chapter**, and may be invited by the Abbot General to attend the meetings of the **Central Commission**, and by the **Central Commission** to attend the **General Chapter**.

6 The Regional Secretary for Formation

71. Each Region elects a Regional Secretary for Formation who may be invited by the President of the Region to attend the Regional Meetings. The Regional Secretaries disseminate useful information relative to formation and promote common formation projects in their own Regions in accordance with the mandate given them by the Regional Conference. They collaborate with the Central Secretary and keep him or her informed about the formation activities and the suggestions of their Regions. With the consent of the Abbot General, the Central Secretary may invite all or some of the Regional Secretaries to meet with him or her to treat of matters concerning formation in the Order as a whole.

7 Care for Monasteries with Special Needs

72. All the communities of the Order share a responsibility for young foundations, in particular those made in young Churches or in isolated regions. They exercise this responsibility, for example, by sharing professors, lecturers or novice directors. Isolated monasteries may also solve some of their own difficulties in the area of formation through collaboration with other monastic Orders and by applying to diverse agencies for help.
C. 69; ST 69.1.C.

EPILOGUE

73. The principles and norms presented here will need to be adapted to regional and local circumstances by the Regional Conferences and by those who have special responsibility for formation in each monastery. A careful implementation by a community of these principles and norms should ensure that its members receive an adequate formation. A frequent recourse to the Rule of St. Benedict, to our Constitutions and Statutes and other documents of the Order and to the appropriate documents of the Church will be necessary. But above all, a constant reading of the writings of our Cistercian Fathers will ever remain a privileged source for learning how to become a Cistercian or how to help someone else discern and nurture the Cistercian grace present in his or her heart. Finally all must remain aware of the fact that whatever the means used in the work of formation, it is ultimately the Holy Spirit alone who can accomplish in us the necessary trans-formation though this is something which will not take place without our co-operation.
RB 73; C. 86.