

# **Statute on Unity and Pluralism (1969)**

## **Guidelines and Conditions for Applying Them**

This present General Chapter is convinced that "the unity which is based on charity and which has been the strength and beauty of the Cistercian Order ever since its origin" (Letter, Paul VI to Abbot General), will best be served today by a deep sense of communion in the lived experience of our common spiritual values. That is why the present Chapter, in its Declaration on the Cistercian Life, has already insisted on the contemplative orientation and fundamental observances of our Order.

In the present Statute those observances which demand special attention in our times are presented in a more concrete fashion. Thus the fundamental values of our life are guaranteed without imposing a detailed uniformity, where in fact a legitimate diversity should exist. Conditions are laid down so that each community, in union with the other monasteries of the Order and following these guidelines, may deepen its own living experience of the Cistercian life.

## ***Guidelines***

1. Faithful to the thought of their Founders, Cistercian monks live under a Rule and an Abbot. They live, united in the love of Christ, in a community which is stable and effectively separated from the world.
2. The Abbot, as spiritual father of his community, should try to discover the will of God. One important way of doing this is by listening to his brethren in the spirit of Chapter 3 of the Rule.
3. In our daily horarium we keep the balance between the Opus Dei, Lectio Divina and Manual Work, as required by the Rule of St Benedict.
4. The hour of rising is so regulated that Vigils, which follows it, should keep its traditional character of nocturnal prayer- as we watch for the coming of the Lord.
5. The monk, who is tending to a life of continual prayer, needs a fixed amount of prayer each day. The Abbot will see to this for the community as a whole and for each individual monk in particular.
6. This search for a life of prayer should be lived in an atmosphere of recollection and silence for which all are responsible. In particular, the great silence at night and the silence in the regular places will be maintained.
7. Separation from the world demands that journeys out of the monastery should be infrequent and only for serious reasons. The use of radio and television will be exceptional. Discretion is needed in the use of other media of communication.
8. Our monasteries should practice generous hospitality, but this should not be allowed to interfere with the contemplative nature of our way life.
9. Our diet should be simple and frugal. The monastic practice of fasting and abstinence should be retained.
10. The habit should be retained as the distinctive sign of our Order. Its use can differ from house to house.
11. The life of the community, as of each monk, should be marked by, simplicity and poverty. Fraternal correction in the spirit of the Gospel a help in this direction.

## ***Conditions***

12. Within the limits of the above guidelines the monasteries of our Order are free to arrange the details of their observance. An effective consultation of the community should accompany these experiments - though the manner of it may vary.
13. Anything in the second or third parts of the Constitutions, or in the. Usages, which does not fall under common law, retains only a directive, force.
14. The results of these experiments will be reviewed by the Visitor, who: will make a statement on them in his report to the General Chapter.
15. The experiments should be discussed at the Regional Conferences So that communities may be helped in their work of renewal.