

Part III

THE GENERAL CHAPTER

XVII

PRAYERS FOR THE GENERAL CHAPTER

214. The success of a General Chapter depends to a great extent on its spiritual preparation. Therefore following the Order's ancient and cherished custom as the celebration of a Chapter approaches all our communities will address special prayers to the Lord that he might guide the work of Chapter members with his light and grace. These prayers can be said: during a *Mass for the Chapter* (no. 215), during the prayer of the faithful at daily Mass (no. 216), at the intercessions in the Liturgy of the Hours (nos. 217-218) or during the closing Marian prayer of the *Vigil of Our Lady* (no. 29).

MASS FOR THE CHAPTER

215. In the month before the Chapter a special Mass should be celebrated in all our communities on an appropriate day. This Mass will be a votive Mass *De Spiritu Sancto* or *De Domina Nostra*¹ such as the *missa pro graviore necessitate*.²

UNIVERSAL PRAYER – PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

216. During Mass at the Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful) there should be a prayer for the success of the General Chapter. Here are some examples:

- For all who will take part (are taking part) in the General Chapter:
that they may reflect
on the Order's faithfulness to the Gospel and the Constitutions,
and obedience to the Lords' command:
and recognition that our cultural diversity
is a source of mutual enrichment for us all, we pray.

- For all who will take part (are taking part) in the General Chapter:
that every Chapter decision
will benefit the Order,
meet the needs of our time and our young people,
and renew the zeal of all our friars, we pray.

- For all who will take part (are taking part) in the General Chapter:
that God, who reads hearts and minds
will grant them clear-sightedness
so that they choose the best brothers for the Order's leadership, we pray.

- For all Servants of Mary travelling the roads of the world:
may they share the prayer and goals
of our brothers attending the Chapter

¹ Cf. *Missale Romanum* (2002), Missa Votiva ... ???; *Proprium Missarum O.S.M.*, Missa de Sancta Maria in sabbato.

² Cf. *Missale Romanum* (2002), Missa Votiva ... ???

and may they be willing to go wherever service calls them, we pray.

- For all Servants of Mary,
following the example of Our Lady, the docile and obedient handmaiden,
will wholeheartedly accept the decrees of the Chapter,
carry them out with generosity,
and see them as an expression of God's Will, we pray.

- For all Servants of Mary,
following the example of Mary at the foot of the Cross,
may they be quick to stand
at humankind's countless crosses
and bring compassion and comfort, we pray.

INTERCESSIONS AT LAUDS AND VESPERS

217. In the three months prior to the Chapter and while its agenda is circulating among the friars³ in place of the intercessions found at Lauds and Vespers in the Liturgy of the Hours the following intercessions could be recited daily (except on Sundays of greater feast days):

Monday

At Lauds – Listening to the Word of God

218. The brother presiding says:

We raise our voices
to God, the Father of the Eternal Word
with confidence in Christ's proclamation, we implore:

Make us receptive to your Word.

Open, O Lord, our hearts to the voice of the Spirit,
- make us meditate ceaselessly on your Word.

Give us a love of your Word,
- let the Word, the seed of life, take root in us.

May listening to Christ's Word purify us,
- so that we may remain in his love and bear abundant fruit.

May the Virgin who heard and treasured the Word with faith
be the guide and model of our listening,
- so that we may be not just hearers of the Word, but doers.

May your Word of Truth resound
in the hearts of all the Chapter participants,
- so that through its inspiration
they may elect brothers filled with your Spirit

³ Cf. *Const. OSM*, 256.

to be leaders in our Order.

Special intentions or a brief silent pause.

At Vespers – Christ, the Way of the Faithful

219. The brother presiding says:

With confidence in the words of Christ
we address our prayers to our Father in heaven:
“If two of you agree on any request my heavenly Father will grant it” (Mt 18: 19)
we ask therefore:

Show us Lord the way of your decrees.

Allow us to live always united in your Son,
- for he is the way, the truth and the life.

Care for us Lord and we will lack nothing
- lead us on the path of truth and justice.

May the Virgin Mary be the light that guides
her pilgrim servants on earth,
- may she be a sign of certain hope and comfort.

Let the decisions of the General Chapter
be our rule of life,
- so that we may live out our vocation with generosity.

We commend to you our deceased brothers and sisters,
who followed in your Son’s footsteps on earth
- that they may praise you forever in the heavenly kingdom.

Special intentions or a brief silent pause.

Tuesday

At Lauds – Christ, the Wisdom of God

220. The brother presiding says:

We address our prayers
to God who spreads wisdom
from one end of the earth to the other
and who disposes all things with sweetness and strength:

Give us that pure wisdom that comes from above.

Grant us O Lord
the gift of wisdom
- to be our guide

in understanding the events of life.

Make us persist, O Lord,
in searching for truth
and doing good,
- so that our speech may be wise
and our actions inspired by charity.

Remember your servants
who lead a humble and hidden life in Christ,
- you who confound the wise of this world
and raise up the humble.

May we be faithful disciples of Christ, Incarnate Wisdom,
- through his grace we will be the salt of the earth
and leaven in the midst of human family.

Look kindly upon the family of the Servants of Mary
and place brothers enlightened by the Spirit of Wisdom
in its leadership,
- give us a spirit of obedience
and sincere collaboration.

Special intentions or a brief silent pause.

At Vespers – Prayer

221. The brother presiding says:

Mindful of the Lord's words (cf. *Mt* 26: 41)
we raise our voices to God the Father
knowing that Christ
is in our midst and is praying with us, we say:

Remain with us for the day is coming to a close.

Grant us the spirit of prayer,
- so that our minds and hearts
will ever be turned to you.

Purify our hearts and strengthen our spirits
- so that our prayer will be confident,
our praise pure and our plea humble.

May our prayer be like the Virgin's
listening lovingly to your Word,
- and attentive to your promptings
in men and creation.

May prayer be a source of wisdom
and the basis of agreement

for our brothers who prepare to elect the Prior General
- may their choice reflect
the light and peace of the Spirit.

To our deceased brothers and sisters
who have spent their lives in work and prayer
- grant eternal rest
and the perfect fulfilment of their expectations.

Special intentions or a brief silent pause.

Wednesday

At Lauds – Christ, the Light of the World

222. The brother presiding says:

With a sincere heart we address our prayer
to God, who has given us Jesus Christ
the true light that enlightens every person.

Let your word of light shine through us.

Father of light
fill our minds with the light of your truth
- so that we might recognize the signs of your loving plan
in the events of life.

Source of eternal light
shed light on our nights and days
- dissipate the fog of sin
make us eager to do your will.

Sustain and encourage our brothers
who spread the light of the Gospel
- strengthen their words with the efficacy of your grace.

Succour the family of Servants of Mary, the Mother of light
- keep their faith undiluted
their hope firm
and their charity sincere.

Father, dawn without sunset,
shed your light on our brothers
attending the General Chapter,
- that they may study your will zealously
and make their decisions accordingly.

Special intentions or a brief silent pause.

At Vespers – Love for God and neighbour

223. The brother presiding says:

Let our prayers go up with confidence
to God the Father
who manifested his love for humankind
by sending us his only Son.

Give us the spirit of your love.

Grant that all who have chosen
this Servite way of life
- may live in fraternal communion
and mutual respect.

Make our journey straightforward
and our speech sincere,
- and we will live as one in your house.

O Lord, assist the Servants of Mary,
- so that they may join others
on the path of justice and peace
and establish with them a communion of intense love.

Grant patience in adversity and courage in difficult times
to those brothers called to lead the Order
- let our love and understanding
lighten the burden of their service.

Remember our deceased brothers and sisters
- may they receive the promised reward
of a lifetime of love for you and their neighbour.

Thursday

At Lauds – Obedience to the law of God

224. The brother presiding says:

We address our plea to God, the Father
with Christ, the fulfilment of the Law
and through the Holy Spirit:

Write your law in our hearts.

O Lord, let us
observe your precepts with diligence
- and our hearts will be filled with joy.

Allow us to observe the law of the Spirit
- and to live in Christ Jesus, free from sin.

Let us fix our eyes
on the perfect law of liberty
- and serve our brothers joyfully
bearing each other's burdens.

Let us grow in mutual love
by obeying your new commandment
- so that everyone will recognize we are Christ's disciples.

Give our Order a Prior General
who will lead it along the paths of your law,
- and build it up with the example of his life.

Special intentions or a brief silent pause.

At Vespers – Serving the Lord and the brethren

225. The brother presiding says:

We plead with you God, Father of infinite goodness
through Jesus Christ
who took on the form of a servant
and lives forever to intercede for us
with confidence we say:

Keep us, Lord, in your service.

Allow us to become every day
more like Christ,
- who came to serve
and give his life for the redemption of all.

Preserve brotherly love in our family
- and make the spirit of service grow
service to you and to Our Lady.

Enlighten our brothers
devoted to the study of your Word,
- that they might discover your inexhaustible riches
through research and teaching.

Shed the light of the Spirit on our brothers in Chapter
- that they may choose wise and prudent brothers
to lead the Order.

And to our brothers, Lord,
who have served you faithfully
and have left this life,
- grant the reward they sought in your kingdom.
Special intentions or a brief silent pause.

Friday

At Lauds – *The Gifts of the Spirit*

226. The brother presiding says:

May the Spirit of Christ we pray for
remain in our hearts,
make them holy and pray with us,
We pray to God the Father:

Make us attentive to the voice of the Spirit.

Send us, your servants,
the Spirit of grace and prayer.
- that we may ponder your law in our hearts
and live lives that are holy.

May your Spirit flourish
in the communities of our Order,
- that each friar may find in them
help to develop the gifts you have given him.

May the fire of your Spirit
increase our capacity for love,
- that we may do joyfully
what is good, just and true.

Send us, the Servants of Mary,
your Spirit of consolation,
- so that we can comfort our brothers
in times of trouble, doubt and anxiety.

Fill our Chapter brothers
with the Spirit of counsel and strength,
- that their work may be inspired by Gospel principles
and the living tradition of our Order.

Special intentions or a brief silent pause.

At Vespers – *Evangelical poverty*

227. The brother presiding says:

With faith we address our prayer
to Christ who chose to be born in a poor family
and once he left home to proclaim the Gospel
had no place to rest his head,
we pray:

O Lord, make us poor in spirit.

Allow us to carry out the spirit
of the beatitudes in our lives,
- as we seek a simple life
in the generous performance of our work.

Christ, our hope,
you taught your disciples
not to worry about food or clothing,
- allow us to live in joyful and voluntary poverty.

Keep us faithful to our goal
of living a life both humble and poor
- so that we may help those who lack the necessities of life
and be an example to those who enjoy abundance.

Christ, our supreme good
give our Order a Prior General
who will be a living reflection of your humble service,
- so that we may follow you, the obedient and poor one,
by following his directions.

Christ, our reward
to the brothers and sisters who take you at your Word
and follow the path of detachment
and forgetfulness of self
- open the gates of heaven
and call them to the fullness of life.

Special intentions or a brief silent pause.

Saturday

At Lauds – Mary, the model of our service

228. The brother presiding says:

We glorify God, the Father
who raised the Blessed Virgin
to be Queen of the universe
because she was so completely like her Son
the conqueror of sin and death
and we pray:

Make us faithful Servants of Mary.

O Lord,
As she was for our Seven Holy Fathers
may the Blessed Virgin

be our guide on the path to Christ
show us how to bring him to humankind.

May the humble handmaiden's total adherence to your will
teach us to be attentive to the voice of the Spirit
- and do what her Son tells us.

May the presence of the Mother at her Son's cross
prompt us
to take up our cross every day
- and recognize the suffering brothers of the crucified Christ.

May Mary's holiness and freedom from sin
lead us to fight evil
- and to support the struggle for freedom
of society and individuals.

May the wisdom of the Mother of Jesus
who pondered the Word in her heart,
inspire our Chapter brothers
- to make decisions that reflect Christ's Gospel
and the tradition of our Fathers.

Special intentions or a brief silent pause.

VIGIL OF OUR LADY (*VIGILIA DE DOMINA*)

229. At the celebration of Our Lady's Vigil (*Vigilia de Domina*)⁴ the prayer *Look kindly, Lord, upon this family* (requesting light and grace for the Chapter) in the first formulary (*Sancta Maria, Servorum Domina*) should be recited in place of the prayer *Almighty and eternal God* in the second formulary (*Sancta Maria, Ancilla Domini*) after the *Servite Supplica*.

In any event the prayer *Look kindly, Lord, upon this family* can be recited by itself.

Look kindly, Lord, upon this family
that trusts in you,
as we prepare to celebrate
a special moment in our fraternal life:
a time when we meet to review our commitment to the Gospel.

Help us hear the voice of your Spirit
and receive your Word in faith;
renew within us ideals of true service,
love for your Church
and zeal for your kingdom.

Assist and make holy our Prior General
and all the brothers who take part in the Chapter.
Give them wisdom in discernment,
prudence in judgment,
firmness in decision,

⁴ *Vigilia de Domina. Ufficio dei Servi a santa Maria* = *Mariale Servorum* 2 (Curia Generalis OSM, Romae 1980).

and vision in planning.

May nothing hinder their true harmony
and may the diversity of views
be reflected in common goals;
respecting our traditions
and attentive to the signs of the times,
may they act always with true concern
for the present and future of the Order.

May they be supported
by our prayers
and by the motherly presence of the Virgin Mary
so that what they do may benefit
the Church and our Order
and so witness our love for you and all your people.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

XVIII

GUIDELINES FOR THE CHAPTER LITURGY

230. Friars attending the General Chapter are like any other community of Servants of Mary and therefore liturgical prayer constitutes an essential part of the Chapter day.

231. The celebration of Mass, Lauds and Vespers constitute the very heart of Chapter liturgy. Special attention should be devoted to daily praise of Our Lady.

232. The Chapter community has a peculiar make-up. Friars are of different ages, nationalities and languages and for this reason Chapter liturgy must be:

- well prepared: it should be neither banal nor excessively complicated;
- while it should include a variety of forms and expressions purely folkloric or exotic elements should be avoided – they distract from the liturgical mystery.

On the whole Chapter liturgy should be balanced: a combination of word, music and silence. Liturgical norms should be observed. The liturgy should be an occasion of enrichment for each friar and for the jurisdiction he represents.

THE CHAPTER LITURGIST

233. The General Council will appoint a friar with experience in the liturgy and with organizational skills as the Chapter liturgist. This appointment should be made well in advance of the Chapter's opening.

234. The liturgist is responsible for:

- coordinating preparation of material for the Chapter's liturgy at the direction of the General Council;
- arranging the Chapter's daily liturgical celebrations and promoting the active participation of all the friars at the direction of the Presidential Board.

235. To assure an seamless operation the liturgist will assemble a team of assistants made up of Chapter friars from different cultural backgrounds; these friars will oversee such things as preparing the liturgical space, providing music (organist, choir director) etc.

CALENDAR

236. Above all the liturgist must provide a schedule (calendar) of Chapter liturgical celebrations. To the extent possible this schedule should reflect the General Roman Calendar and the calendar of the local church. The General Council will exercise leadership in this area.

237. Once a schedule has been established it would be useful to assign Chapter celebrations to the various jurisdictions of the Order so that each of the Order's component parts would have a turn at leading the Chapter liturgy. This would show how our one liturgy is acculturated and experienced in different parts of the world.

238. Certain Chapter rites are determined by the nature and requirements of the Chapter itself (opening ceremony, rite for elections – Prior General and other officers - closing ceremony...). It would be a good to include other liturgical celebrations: specific "days" devoted to the Servite missions, vocations, our sick, the Servite Family, our deceased brothers and sisters, reconciliation; commemorations of our saints: Masses or votive offices in honour of our Seven Holy Founders, St. Philip Benizi, St. Peregrine Laziosi, St. Anthony Mary Pucci, St. Juliana of Florence; commemoration of Our Lady; commemoration - of the Patron Saint of the country or diocese in which the Chapter is being celebrated.

CHAPTER HALL

239. Over the centuries the Chapter Hall has assumed special importance in our Order. If there is no special room for the Chapter the place chosen for this purpose should be appropriate. The furnishings should be sober as befits a place for work and prayer. Traditionally there should be a crucifix in the room – a symbol of the Lord's presence in the midst of the friars -- and an image of Our Lady. The *Book of the Gospels* should be placed in a prominent place with a candle next to it. The candle will be lit during Chapter sessions.

CELEBRATION FORMULAS

240. Along with suggestions for preparing and celebrating the General Chapter this *Ritual* provides guidelines for four other Chapter events:

1. The Opening Liturgy (XIX);
2. Election of the Prior General (XX);
3. Confirmation and oath of the Procurator of the Order and the General Councillors (XXI);
4. Closing ceremony (XXII).

XIX

THE OPENING LITURGY

241. The General Chapter opens with a celebration of Mass attended by all the members of the Chapter. According to the norms set out in the Regulations which follow the *Constitutions* (no. 17) it should be a votive Mass of the Holy Spirit.⁵ The Prior General, the Procurator General and the General Council who have led the Order for the previous six years will preside at this Mass.

PENITENTIAL ACT

242. It would be appropriate that at the end of his mandate the Prior General, his Council and the Procurator of the Order would make a common act recognizing their shortcomings and how they have failed to respond to God's promptings in the past six years.

⁵ Cf. *Const. OSM*, Regulations, no. 17.

COMMEMORATION OF THE LIVING

243. During the Eucharistic Celebration at the *Memento* of the Living the whole Servite Family should be remembered: cloistered nuns, sisters, secular institutes, Servite associates, members of the Secular Order, members of youth movements and friends of the Servites.

COMMEMORATION OF THE DEAD

244. During the Eucharistic Celebration at the *Memento* of the Living all the friars who have died in the last six years should be remembered. When it is their turn to oversee the liturgy each jurisdiction can name its own deceased brothers and sisters.

XX

RITUAL FOR ELECTION OF THE PRIOR GENERAL

245. According to norms in the Regulations that follow the *Constitutions*⁶ the *Rite for Election of the Prior General* determines how the election should be conducted. It is a harmonious combination of ritual and legal acts.

246. Some parts of the *Rite* can be adapted to the concrete circumstances in which this legal-ritual event is taking place.

247. Given the solemnity of the event and the importance it has in the life of the Order Chapter members should wear the Servite habit.

248. Presiding at the Chapter are:

- a) the outgoing Prior General from the beginning to the point where he surrenders his mandate to the Chapter (art. 253-259);
- b) the voting Chapter member who is oldest by profession,⁷ from the invocation of the Holy Spirit (art. 261) until the moment the Constitutions and seal are given to the new Prior General (art. 276);
- c) the new Prior General from the moment he receives the *Constitutions* and the seal and takes first place at the liturgy until the end of the Chapter.

249. This legal-liturgical event takes place (in general) in two distinct locations:

- a) in the Chapter hall;
- b) in the Chapter chapel.

250. Depending on circumstances the session can proceed to completion without interruption or it can be interrupted. Reasons for a possible interruption are:

- a) The friar elected does not accept the election: in this case the Presidential Board will call a new election session which will begin with the singing of the *Ave Maria* followed immediately by balloting (art. 263).
- b) The friar elected asks for time to consider whether he should accept this mandate: in this case after the allotted time the electors will return to the Chapter hall to hear what the friar elected has decided.
If the friar accepts the mandate the Chapter members will express their pleasure (art. 265) and then go in procession to the Chapel singing the *Litanies* (art. 269).
If the friar does not accept the mandate the Presidential Board will call a new election session which will begin with the singing of the *Ave Maria* followed immediately by balloting (art. 250a).
- c) The Presidential Board or the friar elected (even if he has accepted the mandate) believes a longer pause would be useful. At the time determined by the Presidential Board the session will resume directly in the Chapel with singing the *Litanies*;

⁶ Cf. *Const. OSM*, Regulations, nos. 21-25.

⁷ Cf. *Const. OSM*, 259.

d) The friar elected is not present at the Chapter: once he has arrived Chapter members will gather in the hall and the legal-liturgical event will resume from the point where he is asked if he accepts the election (art. 264).

251. The Chapter liturgist – at the direction of the Presidential Board – will determine how the ritual should unfold in an orderly fashion. He can ask the assistance of other friars for this task.

252. The *Book of the Gospels*, the *Constitutions* and the seal should be available in an appropriate place.

INITIAL RITE

HOMAGE TO OUR LADY

253. The friar electors gather in the Chapter Hall and the election of the Prior General begins with singing the *Ave Maria*:

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum;
benedicta tu in mulieribus,
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Iesus.

254. After this homage to Our Lady, the outgoing Prior General says:

P. In the name of the Father,
the Son
and the Holy Spirit.
All. Amen.

255. He then greets the assembly with these or other similar words:

P. I wish you, brothers,
grace, mercy and peace from the Father,
from Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary, Our Lady,
and from the Holy Spirit.
To the One God
be glory and honour forever and ever.
All. Amen.

PENITENTIAL ACT AND THE WORD OF GOD

256. The outgoing Prior General invites Chapter friars to purify their hearts with an act of penance. He says these or similar words:

P. Brothers,
at this time, so serious for the future of our Order,
we turn our hearts to God, the Holy and Merciful One
and ask him forgiveness
for the faults we have committed
in our service to God,
in our obligations of fraternal communion
and in our commitment to the apostolate.

257. A reader will proclaim the Biblical texts for this act of penance:

R. True worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth;
and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him. (*John* 4: 23)
For the faults committed
in our service to God.
Singers: Kyrie, eleison.
All. Kyrie, eleison.

R. “If I, therefore, the master and teacher,
have washed your feet,
you ought to wash one another's feet.” (*John* 13: 14)
For the faults committed
in our service to our brothers.
Singers: Christe, eleison.
All. Christe, eleison.

R. Proclaim: The kingdom of heaven is at hand.
What you have freely received;
you must freely give. (*Mt* 10: 7, 8b)
For the faults committed
in our service to the apostolate.
Singers: Kyrie, eleison.
All. Kyrie, eleison.

SURRENDER OF THE MANDATE

259. After the act of penance the outgoing Prior General leaves the Presidential Board and surrenders his mandate to the Chapter with these or similar words:

P. Brothers
in the year ... from the ... Chapter
I received the mandate to serve the brothers
as Prior General,
today I surrender my mandate
to this ... Chapter.
I thank you for the help you have given me
in carrying out my task
and I trust that my service
contributed to the good of the Order
and increased communion in the Servite Family,
in spite of my mistakes and shortcomings.

260. He then hands the *Constitutions* and the Seal to the voting Chapter member who is senior by profession and takes his place among the other Chapter members.
At this time the senior (by profession) Chapter member presides at the Chapter. He does not, however, sit in the place left empty by the outgoing Prior General.

ELECTION OF THE PRIOR GENERAL

INVOCATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

261. The senior voting Chapter member urges the other Chapter members to seek the light of the Holy Spirit with these or similar words:

S. Brothers

Let us ask God the Father, the giver of all good gifts
to give us the light of the Spirit.

Everyone prays in silence for a moment, and then the senior says:

*S. You, Lord, know the heart of all,
send your Spirit
to show us
which brother you have chosen
for the ministry of Prior General
of the Order of Friar Servants of St. Mary.*

262. Everyone sings:

*All. Veni, creator Spiritus
mentes tuorum visita,
imple superna gratia,
quae tu creasti pectora.*

*Qui diceris Paraclitus,
altissimi donum Dei,
fons vivus, ignis, caritas
et spiritalis unctio.*

*Tu septiformis munere,
digitus paternae dexteræ
tu rite promissum Patris
sermone ditans guttura.*

*Accende lumen sensibus,
infunde amorem cordibus,
infirmis nostri corporis,
virtute firmans perpeti.*

*Hostem repellas longius
pacemque dones protinus;
ductore sic te praevis
vitemus omne noxium.*

*Per te sciamus da Patrem
noscamus atque Filium,
te utriusque Spiritum
credamus omni tempore.*

*Deo Patri sit gloria,
et Filio qui a mortuis*

Surrexit, ac Paraclito,
in saeculorum saecula.
Amen.

In English
Come Holy Spirit, creator, come
from your bright heavenly throne,
come take possession of our souls
and make them all your own.

You Who are called Paraclete
blest gift of God above,
the living spring, the living fire,
sweet unction and true love.

You Who are sevenfold in your grace,
finger of God's right hand;
his promise, teaching little ones
to speak and understand.

O guide our minds with your blest light,
with love our hearts inflame;
and with strength, which never decays,
confirm our mortal frame.

Far from us drive our deadly foe;
true peace unto us bring;
and through all perils, lead us safe
beneath your sacred wing.

Through You may we the Father know;
through You the eternal Son,
and You the Spirit of them both,
thrice-blessed Three in One.

All glory to the Father be,
with his co-equal Son:
the same to You great Paraclete,
While endless ages run.
Amen.

BALLOTING

263. After the invocation of the Holy Spirit the Secretary the senior voting member will ask all who are not voting members of the Chapter or whose presence is not absolutely necessary for the election to leave the Chapter hall. Then the acts described by the *Constitutions*⁸ and *Canon Law* that guarantee a regular, canonical election are performed.

ACCEPTANCE

⁸ Cf. *Const. OSM*, 260-261; Regulations 21-25.

264. When a friar has received the necessary number of votes to be elected Prior General the senior voting Chapter member will put the following question to him:

S. Brother ... Mary,
the Chapter has elected you
Prior General of the Order of Servants of St. Mary.
Do you accept this mandate of service and love?

The friar elected will respond with these or similar words:

E. Trusting in the mercy of God
and the protection of the Blessed Virgin, Our Lady
I accept.

265. All the friars present will exclaim:
All. Thanks be to God!

and express their joy with an appropriate sign (applause).

266. Then the senior Chapter member invites the newly elected Prior General to take the first place in the Presidential Board.

267. If the friar elected does not accept the position or if he asks for time to reflect, the presiding friar will suspend the session for the necessary amount of time. Cf. Introduction, no. 250.

OATH OF THE PRIOR GENERAL AND THANKSGIVING

268. At this point the doors of the Chapter hall are opened and the results of the election are announced. Depending on where the Chapter is taking place church bells are rung to proclaim the results and express the Chapter's joy.

269. Immediately afterwards the senior Chapter member begins the litany of supplication – to *Our Lady of the Servants* or to the *Seven Holy Founders* or to the *Servite Saints* – with these or other similar words:

S: Brothers,
we call the light and grace of God
down upon Brother ... Mary
the new Prior General of the Servants of Mary
and we invoke the intercession of Our Lady
and the Saints of our Order.

270. The Chapter members and everyone else present go in procession to the chapel. The procession is led by a friar carrying the *Book of the Gospels* which he will place on the altar. During the procession the litany of supplication is sung:

Litany of the Servants of Mary

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.

Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.

Father in heaven,
Son, Redeemer of the world,

have mercy on us

Holy Spirit, the Paraclete,
Holy Trinity, One God,

Hail Mary, Virgin Mother,
Faithful Virgin,
Fearless Virgin,
Wise Virgin,
Prudent Virgin,
Prayerful Virgin,
Hail Mary, Mother of God,
Mother of Christ,
Mother of the Savior,
Mother of the New Man,
Mother of grace,
Mother of Mercy,

pray for us.

Hail Mary, Seat of Wisdom,
Tabernacle of the Spirit,
Temple of holiness,
Ark of the Covenant,
Stairway to Heaven,
Gate of Paradise,

Hail Mary, comfort of the poor,
Refuge of the destitute,
Health of the sick,
Guide for the pilgrim,
Hope of the sinner,
Joy of your servants,

Hail Mary, Model of holiness,
Model of humility,
Model of obedience,
Model of strength,
Model of contemplation,
Model of service,

Hail Mary, source of life,
Source of light,
Source of beauty,
Source of joy,
Source of pardon,
Source of communion,

Hail Mary, Queen of the humble,
Queen of the meek,
Queen of the merciful,
Queen of the pure of heart,
Queen of the peacemakers,
Queen of your servants,

Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,	forgive us, Lord.
Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,	hear us, Lord.
Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,	have mercy on us.

271. Or:

Litany of the Seven Holy Fathers

Lord, have mercy.	Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.	Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.	Lord, have mercy.

Christ, hear us.	Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.	Christ, graciously hear us.

Father in heaven,	have mercy on us
Son, Redeemer of the world,	
Holy Spirit, the Paraclete,	
Holy Trinity, One God,	

Holy Mary, Mother of God,	pray for us.
Virgin, handmaiden of the Lord,	
Virgin, woman of sorrow,	
Queen of our servants,	

St. Joseph,
St. John the Baptist,
Sts. Peter and Paul,
St. Augustine,

Seven Holy Fathers,
Founders of our Order,

Servants of the word,
Servants of St. Mary,
Servants of the brethren,
Servants of the poor,

Good servants,
Faithful servants,
Watchful servants,
Merciful servants,

Seekers after God,
Worshipers of the Father,
Disciples of Christ,
Voices of the Spirit,

Dwellers in solitude,
Men of patience,
Men of silence,

Men of contemplation,

Messengers of the Gospel,
Builders of the Kingdom,
Devotees of friendship,
Peacemakers,

Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,	forgive us, Lord.
Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,	hear us, Lord.
Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,	have mercy on us.

273. Or:

Litany of the Servite Saints

Lord, have mercy.	Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.	Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.	Lord, have mercy.

Christ, hear us.	Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.	Christ, graciously hear us.

Father in heaven,	have mercy on us
Son, Redeemer of the world,	
Holy Spirit, the Paraclete,	
Holy Trinity, One God,	

Holy Mary, Mother of God,	pray for us.
Holy Mary, Servant of the Lord,	
Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows,	
Holy Mary, Queen of your servants,	

St. Joseph,
St. John the Baptist,
Sts. Peter and Paul,
St. Augustine,

Seven Holy Fathers,
St. Philip,
St. Peregrine,
St. Anthony [Pucci]
St. Juliana,
St. Clelia,

Blessed James,
Blessed Joachim,
Blessed Andrew,
Blessed Bonaventure [from Pistoia],
Blessed Francis,
Blessed Ubaldus,
Blessed Thomas,

Blessed Jerome,
Blessed James Philip,
Blessed Bonaventure [from Forlì]
Blessed Benincasa,
Blessed John Angel,
Blessed Ferdinand [Baccilieri],

Blessed Joan,
Blessed Elizabeth,
Blessed Maria Guadalupe,
Blessed Maria Maddalena Starace,

All you holy Brothers and Sisters,

Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,	forgive us, Lord.
Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,	hear us, Lord.
Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,	have mercy on us.

273. In the chapel everyone should take the place assigned to him. The newly elected Prior General, the Chapter Senior, the Secretary and the two vote counters [*scrutatores*] will proceed to the altar and kiss it.

PROFESSION OF FAITH AND OATH

274. After singing the litany the Prior General makes a profession of faith (see Appendix, p. ???) as the *Constitutions* direct;⁹ then placing his hand on the *Book of the Gospels* he vows to carry out faithfully the mandate he has been given:

P. I, brother ... Mary
swear before God and before you, my brothers,
to carry out the mandate of Prior General
of the Order of Friar Servants of St. Mary
faithful to the Church and
in obedience to the Word of God,
our *Constitutions*
and the decisions of our Chapters
May the grace of God
the intercession of Our Lady and our Saints
and your charity, brothers, support me in this commitment.

He then kisses the *Book of the Gospels*.

PRAYER FOR THE NEW PRIOR GENERAL

275. The Senior Chapter member says the following prayer:

S. Hear, O Father, the prayer we raise to you
for our brother ... Mary,
who has been elected Prior General of the Order.
Look down on him:
may he be quick to take courage,
prudent in his judgment,

⁹ Cf. *Const. OSM*, 173.

wise in his counsel,
firm in his decision.
Let him be recognized
as a leader by his wisdom
a brother by his readiness to help
and a servant by his love.
All. Te rogamus audi nos.

S: May he spend his life
in service to God and the Church
as a Disciple of Christ
who came not to be served but to serve.
As a Servant of St. Mary
may he increase devotion to Our Lady in the Order,
may he seek her help with confidence,
and may he draw inspiration from her service.
As a sign of unity
may he promote
fraternal concord,
communion of possessions,
and an increase in charity
throughout the whole Servite Family.
All. Te rogamus audi nos.

S: May he be like St. Philip Benizi,
firm but mild in his rule,
the first to offer himself,
the first to serve.
Like St. Augustine
may he prefer to be loved rather than feared,
may he be a father, a brother and a friend to all.
All. Te rogamus audi nos.

S: To you, Father, the source of all authority,
through the Son, your faithful servant,
in the Spirit who renews all things,
let there be honour and glory throughout the centuries.
All. Amen.

HANDING OVER THE CONSTITUTIONS AND THE SEAL

276. After the prayer the Senior Chapter member presents the new Prior General with the *Constitutions* of the Order and the Seal, saying:

S: Brother ... Mary
receive the *Constitutions* of the Order and the Seal:
be the first of the brothers to observe our laws
and may the Lord confirm your decisions.

The new Prior General answers:
P. Amen.

THE PRIOR GENERAL SPEAKS

277. Having received the *Constitutions* and the Seal, the Prior General assumes the seat of the President of the liturgical assembly and if he chooses he will address a fraternal word to those present.

SIGN OF COMMUNION AND FRATERNAL GREETING

278. After the Prior General's fraternal address or (if he does not choose to speak) after the prayer for the newly elected Prior General, the Chapter members, the representatives of the Sisters' Congregations, the Servite Secular Institutes, the Secular Order and everyone present shall go to the Prior General to display a sign of obedience, communion and a fraternal greeting.

In the meantime the choir sings this antiphon:

They were of one heart and one soul
and they held everything in common.

Or:

We are your Servants, Lord,
we are your Servants, the sons of your Handmaiden.

then Psalm 133 [132] or some other appropriate song:

Psalm 133 [132]
Joy of brotherly love

How good and how pleasant it is, *
where brothers live in unity!
It is like precious oil upon the head, †
 running down upon the beard,
 running down upon Aaron's beard *
upon the collar of his robes; *Antiphon*

Like dew of Hermon,
 which runs down on the mountains of Sion. *
For there the LORD bestows his blessing:
 life forever. *Antiphon*

Glory be to the Father and to the Son *
and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now *
and ever shall be. Amen. *Antiphon*

SONG OF THANKSGIVING

279. Once everyone has approached the Prior General the community sings a hymn of thanksgiving – preferably the Te Deum or the Magnificat.

Te Deum

Te Deum laudamus:*

te Dominum confitemur.

Te aeternum Patrem*

omnis terra veneratur.

Tibi omnes Angeli,*

tibi Caeli et universae Potestates:

Tibi Cherubim et Seraphim*

incessabili voce proclamant:

Sanctus:* Sanctus:* Sanctus*

Dominus Deus Sabaoth.

Pleni sunt caeli et terra*

maiestatis gloriae tuae.

Te gloriosus*

Apostolorum chorus:

Te Prophetarum*

laudabilis numerus:

Te Martyrum candidatus*

laudat exercitus.

Te per orbem terrarum*

sancta confitetur Ecclesia:

Patrem*

immensae maiestatis:

Venerandum tuum verum*

et unicum Filium:

Sanctum quoque*

Paraclitum Spiritum.

Tu Rex gloriae,*

Christe.

Tu Patris*

sempiternus es Filius.

Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem,*

non horruisti Virginis uterum.

Tu devicto mortis aculeo,*

aperuisti credentibus regna caelorum.

Tu ad dexteram Dei sedes,*
in gloria Patris.

Iudex crederis*
esse venturus.

Te ergo quaesumus, tuis famulis subveni,*
quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.

Aeterna fac cum Sanctis tuis*
in gloria numerari.

Salvum fac populum tuum Domine,*
et benedic haereditati tuae.

Et rege eos,*
et extolle illos usque in aeternum.

Per singulos dies,*
benedicamus te.

Et laudamus nomen tuum in saeculum,*
et in saeculum saeculi.
Dignare Domine die isto,*
sine peccato nos custodire.

Miserere nostri Domine,*
miserere nostri.

Fiat misericordia tua Domine super nos,*
quemadmodum speravimus in te.

In te Domine speravi:*
non confundar in aeternum.

In English:

We praise thee, O God:
we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.
All the earth doth worship thee:
the Father everlasting.
To thee all Angels cry aloud:
the Heavens, and all the Powers therein.
To thee Cherubim and Seraphim:
continually do cry,
Holy, Holy, Holy:
Lord God of Sabaoth;
Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty:
of thy glory.
The glorious company of the Apostles: praise thee.
The goodly fellowship of the Prophets: praise thee.
The noble army of Martyrs: praise thee.

The holy Church throughout all the world:
doth acknowledge thee;
The Father: of an infinite Majesty;
Thine honourable, true: and only Son;
Also the Holy Ghost: the Comforter.
Thou art the King of Glory: O Christ.
Thou art the everlasting Son: of the Father.
When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man:
thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.
When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death:
thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.
Thou sittest at the right hand of God: in the glory of the Father.
We believe that thou shalt come: to be our Judge.
We therefore pray thee, help thy servants:
whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood.
Make them to be numbered with thy Saints: in glory everlasting.

[added later, mainly from Psalm verses:]

O Lord, save thy people:
and bless thine heritage.
Govern them: and lift them up for ever.
Day by day: we magnify thee;
And we worship thy Name: ever world without end.
Vouchsafe, O Lord: to keep us this day without sin.
O Lord, have mercy upon us: have mercy upon us.
O Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us:
as our trust is in thee.
O Lord, in thee have I trusted:
let me never be confounded.

Text: tr. 1662 Book of Common Prayer

280. Or:

Canticle of the Blessed Virgin

Magnificat: *
anima mea Dominum.

Et exultavit spiritus meus: *
in Deo salutari meo.

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae: *
ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.

Quia fecit mihi magna, qui potens est: *
et sanctum nomen eius.

Et misericordia eius, a progenie et progenies: *
timentibus eum.

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo: *
dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.

Deposuit potentes de sede: *
et exaltavit humiles.

Esurientes implevit bonis: *
et divites dimisit inanes.

Suscepit Israel puerum suum: *
recordatus misericordiae suae.

Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros: *
Abraham, et semini eius in saecula.

In English:

My soul glorifies the Lord, *
my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior.

He looks on his servant in her lowliness; *
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.

The Almighty works marvels for me. *
Holy his name!

His mercy is from age to age, *
on those who fear him.

He puts forth his arm in strength *
and scatters the proud-hearted.

He casts the mighty from their thrones *
and raises the lowly.

He fills the starving with good things, *
sends the rich away empty.

He protects Israel, his servant, *
remembering his mercy,

the mercy promised to our fathers, *
to Abraham and his sons forever.

PRAYER

281. After the hymn of thanksgiving two cantors (C.) sing the following verse – to which all (*All*) respond:

C. Support, O Lord, the commitment of your servant, ... Mary.

All. Look down on him with kindness from holy Jerusalem.

Then the Prior General recites this prayer:

P. Father, hear the cry of your children
accept our humble act of thanksgiving
and allow us to work with renewed confidence
in building your kingdom
through a peaceful life
freed from evil
through Christ, our Lord.

All. Amen.

CONCLUSION

BLESSING

282. The new Prior General blesses the whole Family of Servants of Mary and everyone present with these or similar words:

P. The Lord be with you.

All. And with your spirit.

P. Merciful God, our Father
who called the Seven Founders to serve Our Lady
pour your blessing down on our Order.
All. Amen.

P. Confirm all Servants of Mary
in your love
and let them live in peace.
All. Amen.

P. Fill with your grace
all who share our vocation
and with us constitute a single family.
All. Amen.

And may the Blessing of Almighty God,
the Father, the Son + and the Holy Spirit
descend upon you and remain forever.
All. Amen.

MARIAN ANTIPHON

283. Traditionally the rite concludes with the *Salve Regina*. The liturgist gives a signal and the Chapter members process out of the chapel while singing.

XXI

RITE OF CONFIRMATION AND OATH OF THE PROCURATOR OF THE ORDER AND THE GENERAL CUNCELLORS

INTRODUCTION

284. *Confirmation* is the legal act with which the Prior General ratifies the election of the Procurator of the Order and the General Councillors.¹⁰

285. The oath is the act with which the Procurator of the Order and the newly elected General Councillors pledge before God and the brethren that they will carry out the mandate given them according to the letter and spirit of the *Constitutions*.¹¹

286. Even though the validity of confirmation or the oath does not require a specific formula or that they be part of a specific rite both these acts should have a religious and community character and should take place during a joyful prayer service.¹²

287. This prayer service is an important event in a Chapter and should normally take place in the Chapter chapel. It is a separate celebration.

288. If however there are valid reasons for conducting the *Rite of Confirmation and the Oath* during Mass or an hour of the Divine Office it should follow the Gospel proclamation or an appropriate Scripture reading. If this is the case the appropriate changes should be made to the rite to avoid the repetition of acts or prayers.

289. Given its nature this celebration is not limited to the Chapter members; other friars, sisters and friends can attend.

290. The Prior General presides at this rite.

291. The *Book of the Gospels* and the Seal of the Procurator of the Order should be at hand.

INITIAL RITE

HOMAGE TO OUR LADY

292. The celebration begins with singing the Angelic Salutation:

Ave, Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum;
benedicta tu in mulieribus,
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.

293. The Prior General says:

P. In the name of the Father,
the Son
and the Holy Spirit.
All. Amen.

294. The General then directs this or a similar greeting to the Chapter members:

P. Brothers,
the grace, mercy and peace of the Father,
of Christ Jesus, the Son of the Virgin,
and of the Holy Spirit
be with all of you.
Glory and honour to the one God

¹⁰ Cf. *Const. OSM*, Regulations no. 32.

¹¹ Cf. *Const. OSM*, Regulations no. 34.

¹² Cf. *Const. OSM*, Regulations no. 34.

forever and ever.
All. Amen.

PRAYER

295. The Prior General then invites all to join him in prayer:

P. Let us pray.

Everyone remains silent for a moment and then the General says this or a similar prayer:

Look kindly, Lord,
upon the family of the Servants of Mary:
grant that it may be attentive to the voice of the Spirit,
follow Christ with renewed commitment
and witness with integrity to the Gospel.
Through our Lord Christ.
All. Amen.

LISTENING TO THE WORD OF GOD

296. At this point one or two passages are read from Sacred Scripture, the *Rule* of St. Augustine, the *Constitutions* or some other traditional Servite text. The reading should emphasize governing as service to the brethren. If two passages are read there should be an interval between them – silent meditation, a psalm or some other appropriate composition.

HOMILY

297. After the reading the Prior General will deliver a homily. If circumstances allow, it can be a fraternal conversation moderated by the Prior General.

ACCEPTANCE, OATH, CONFIRMATION

READING THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTION

299. Once the results have been read the Prior General addresses these or similar words to the newly elected Procurator of the Order:

Brother ... Mary,
the brothers have with confidence
elected you to the office of Procurator of the Order at the Holy See.
Will you accept this service?

The newly elected Procurator General places his hand on the *Book of the Gospels* and responds with these or similar words that express his acceptance of the office and his promise to perform it with energy and commitment:

I, Brother ... Mary
Accept
and swear before God and you, my brothers.
to perform the office of Procurator of the Order
in a spirit of brotherhood and service,
in obedience to our *Constitutions* and Chapter decisions.

He then kisses the *Book of the Gospels*.

300. The Prior General then hands the newly elected friar the seal of the Procurator of the Order and says:

P. I confirm you, Brother ... Mary, in this service.
May the Lord permit you to perform it
with wisdom
and a spirit of understanding and humanity.
All. Amen.

The Prior General then exchanges a sign of fraternal communion and peace with the newly elected Procurator of the Order.

CONFIRMATION OF THE GENERAL COUNCILLORS

301. The Prior General turns to the newly elected General Councillors and addresses these or similar words to them:

Brothers, ... (names) ...
the Chapter has elected you General Councillors.
Will you accept this service
of collaboration and counsel?

One after the other each of the newly elected General Councillors places his hand on the *Book of the Gospels* and says the following or similar words in his own language:

I, Brother ... Mary
accept
and swear before God and you, my brothers,
that I will collaborate faithfully
with the Prior General
and pledge to perform the office of Councillor
according to the letter and spirit of the *Constitutions*.

He then kisses the *Book of the Gospels*.

302. After the four General Councillors have taken this oath the Prior General says the following or something similar:

P. I confirm you, Brothers ... names ...
in the office of General Councillors.
May the Lord enable you to carry out this office
with a sense of responsibility,
in a spirit of service
and fraternal collaboration.
All. Amen.

The Prior General exchanges a sign of fraternal communion and peace with each of the newly elected Councillors.

PRAYER FOR THE NEWLY ELECTED COUNCILLORS

303. The Prior General invites everyone to pray for the newly elected Councillors with these or similar words:

P. Let us join our prayers
to ask the Lord's grace
for our Brothers ... names ...
who have been called to serve
in the government of the Order.

Everyone observes a period of prayerful silence.

304. Then the Prior General continues aloud:

P. O God, Father of mercy
who sent your son among men
to unite them in the Spirit with the bonds of love
and to lead them back to obedience to your Word,
grant that Brother ... Mary
and Brothers ... names ...
will promote fraternal communion and concord
so that persevering in prayer and sharing
the ideals of life and work
they may live in observance of the Gospel.
Father, let their work be enlightened by the Spirit
and guided by your Word;
may they be prudent, diligent, patient and
merciful, comforted by the example of
our First Fathers and supported
by the maternal intercession of Our Lady.
May their service help us
to live our consecration more intensely;
to follow more eagerly in the footsteps of Christ
and to build fraternity day by day,
so that our Order united in love on earth
may reassemble glorious in the Kingdom.
Through Christ, our Lord.
All. Amen.

KISS OF PEACE

305. After the prayer for the newly elected Councillors they exchange the kiss of peace with each other. In the meantime the choir sings this antiphon:

They were of one heart and one soul
they held everything in common.

Or:

We are your Servants, Lord,
we are your servants, the sons of your Handmaiden.

Psalm 133 [132] of some other appropriate hymn.

Psalm 133 [132]
Joy of brotherly love

How good and how pleasant it is, *
where brothers live in unity!
It is like precious oil upon the head, †
running down upon the beard,
running down upon Aaron's beard *
upon the collar of his robes; *Antiphon*

Like dew of Hermon,
which runs down on the mountains of Sion. *
For there the LORD bestows his blessing:
life forever. *Antiphon*

Glory be to the Father and to the Son *
and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now *
and ever shall be. Amen. *Antiphon*

CONCLUSION

PRAYER

306. The gathering concludes with the prayer *Pietate tua* or one of the alternative formulas in the Appendix.

V. May your grace, O Lord, support our commitment.
R. Look on us kindly from holy Jerusalem.

P. Let us pray.

Then:

In your loving kindness, Lord,
loose the bonds of our sins,
and through the intercession of blessed Mary, Mother of God,
together with that of our Seven Holy Fathers,
Saint Philip, your servant
and of all your Saints,
keep us your servants and our dwelling places in all holiness;
cleanse from sin and endow with virtue
all those who are joined to us by kindred, affinity and friendship;
grant unto us peace and safety;
remove far from us our enemies, both visible and invisible;
repress all our carnal desires;
grant us wholesome air;
bestow your charity upon our friends and enemies;
guard this city (place);
preserve our Pontiff N.;
defend the entire Christian people from every adversity.
Let your blessing be evermore upon us,
and grant unto all the faithful departed everlasting rest.

Through Christ, our Lord.
All. Amen.

BLESSING

307. The Prior General blesses the newly elected officials and everyone present with this or some other blessing formula:

V. The Lord be with you.
R. And with your spirit.

P. Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin
and our Fathers
may the blessing of almighty God
Father, Son + and Holy Spirit
descend upon you
and upon all the communities of the Order.
All. Amen.

MARIAN ANTIPHON

308. According to the tradition of the Order this rite concludes with singing the *Salve Regina*, the *Servite Supplica* or some other appropriate seasonal Marian antiphon.

XXII

GENERAL CHAPTER CLOSING SESSION

309. Depending on circumstances the Prior General and the Presidential Board will decide how to celebrate the closing session of the Chapter – especially whether it should be part of a ritual (Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, Vigil of Our Lady). Here we offer as a suggestion a possible scheme for the closing session.

310. The *Book of the Gospels*, incense and holy water should be prepared in an appropriate place.

INITIAL RITE

HOMAGE TO OUR LADY

311. The closing session begins with the singing of the *Ave Maria* or some other appropriate hymn to Our Lady.

*Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum;
benedicta tu in mulieribus,*

et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Iesus.

312. After the homage to Our Lady the Prior General says:

P. In the name of the Father
and the Son
and the Holy Spirit.
All. Amen.

PRAYER

313. He then invites the friars to pray:

P. Let us pray.

Everyone prays silently. Then:

Lord, holy Father,
continue to assist us with the light of your Spirit,
and to guide our steps on the path of Wisdom,
may the seeds of grace
seeds sown in the General Chapter
give birth to renewed love of the Gospel,
observance of our rule of life
and fraternal service to each other.
Through Christ, our Lord.
All. Amen.

CLOSING WORDS

LISTENING TO THE WORD OF GOD AND THE DECREES OF THE CHAPTER

314. The following passage from Sacred Scripture (or another similar passage) is read at this point:

From the Second Letter of St. Paul, the Apostle to the Corinthians 13: 11-13
Finally, brothers, rejoice. Mend your ways
encourage one another, agree with one another,
live in peace and the God of love and peace will be with you.
Greet one another with a holy kiss.
All the holy ones greet you.
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

If convenient the Secretary of the Order will read parts of the most important decrees issued by the General Chapter.

CLOSING DISCOURSE

315. The Prior General will pronounce the closing discourse.

PROCESSION TO THE CHAPEL

316. Chapter members and everyone else present will go in procession to the chapel. The procession is led by a friar carrying the *Book of the Gospels* which he will lay upon the altar. During the procession the litany is sung.

Litany of the Servants of Mary

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.

Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.

Father in heaven,
Son, Redeemer of the world,
Holy Spirit, the Paraclete,
Holy Trinity, One God,

have mercy on us

Hail Mary, Virgin Mother
Faithful Virgin,
Fearless Virgin,
Wise Virgin,
Prudent Virgin,
Prayerful Virgin,

pray for us

Hail Mary, Mother of God,
Mother of Christ,
Mother of the Savior,
Mother of the New Man,
Mother of grace,
Mother of Mercy,

Hail Mary, Seat of Wisdom,
Tabernacle of the Spirit,
Temple of holiness,
Ark of the Covenant,
Stairway to Heaven,
Gate of Paradise,

Hail Mary, comfort of the poor,
Refuge of the destitute,
Health of the sick,
Guide for the pilgrim,
Hope of the sinner,
Joy of your servants,

Hail Mary, Model of holiness,
Model of humility,

Model of obedience,
Model of strength,
Model of contemplation,
Model of service,

Hail Mary, source of life,
Source of light,
Source of beauty,
Source of joy,
Source of pardon,
Source of communion,

Hail Mary, Queen of the humble,
Queen of the meek,
Queen of the merciful,
Queen of the pure of heart,
Queen of the peacemakers,
Queen of your servants,

Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,	forgive us, Lord.
Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,	hear us, Lord.
Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,	have mercy on us.

317. Or:

Litany of the Servite Saints

Lord, have mercy.	Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy,	Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.	Lord, have mercy.

Christ, hear us.	Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.	Christ, graciously hear us.

Father in heaven,	have mercy on us
Son, Redeemer of the world,	
Holy Spirit, the Paraclete,	
Holy Trinity, One God,	

Holy Mary, Mother of God,	pray for us.
Holy Mary, Servant of the Lord,	
Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows,	
Holy Mary, Queen of your servants,	

St. Joseph,
St. John the Baptist,
Sts. Peter and Paul,
St. Augustine,

Seven Holy Fathers,
St. Philip,

St. Peregrine,
St. Anthony [Pucci]
St. Juliana,
St. Clelia,

Blessed James,
Blessed Joachim,
Blessed Andrew,
Blessed Bonaventure [from Pistoia],
Blessed Francis,
Blessed Ubaldus,
Blessed Thomas,
Blessed Jerome,
Blessed James Philip,
Blessed Bonaventure [from Forli]
Blessed Benincasa,
Blessed John Angel,
Blessed Ferdinand [Baccilieri],

Blessed Joan,
Blessed Elizabeth,
Blessed Maria Guadalupe,
Blessed Maria Maddalena Starace,

All you holy Brothers and Sisters,

Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,	forgive us, Lord.
Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,	hear us, Lord.
Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,	have mercy on us.

318. Or:

Litany of the Seven Holy Fathers

Lord, have mercy.	Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.	Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.	Lord, have mercy.

Christ, hear us.	Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.	Christ, graciously hear us.

Father in heaven,	have mercy on us
Son, Redeemer of the world,	
Holy Spirit, the Paraclete,	
Holy Trinity, One God,	

Holy Mary, Mother of God,	pray for us.
Virgin, handmaiden of the Lord,	
Virgin, woman of sorrow,	
Queen of our servants,	

St. Joseph,
St. John the Baptist,
Sts. Peter and Paul,
St. Augustine,

Seven Holy Fathers,
Founders of our Order,

Servants of the word,
Servants of St. Mary,
Servants of the brethren,
Servants of the poor,

Good servants,
Faithful servants,
Watchful servants,
Merciful servants,

Seekers after God,
Worshipers of the Father,
Disciples of Christ,
Voices of the Spirit,

Dwellers in solitude,
Men of patience,
Men of silence,
Men of contemplation,

Messengers of the Gospel,
Builders of the Kingdom,
Devotees of friendship,
Peacemakers,

Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,	forgive us, Lord.
Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,	hear us, Lord.
Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,	have mercy on us.

319. Once in the chapel everyone will go to the place assigned to him. The Prior General goes to the altar, kisses it and possibly incenses it. Then he takes his place.

RECONCILIATION AND RENEWAL OF THE COMMITMENT TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN THE SERVITE FAMILY

PENITENTIAL SUPPLICATION

320. At this point there is a penitential prayer of supplication. The Prior General says the following or similar words:

P. Now at the end of the Chapter

let us turn with confidence to the Lord Jesus
who is our Savior, our Brother and our Friend.
Let us ask him to pardon
our negligence and weakness.

I R. You have called us, Lord,
to tread the straight path of the Gospel.

2 R. But we have followed the
twisted path of death.
Have Mercy on us.

All. Lord, have mercy (or *Kyrie, eleison*).

I R. You have invited us to drink
at the spring of life.

2 R. And we have quenched our thirst
with the bitter waters of rebellion.
Have Mercy on us.

All. Lord, have mercy (or *Kyrie, eleison*).

I R. You told us
to let selfishness die
and to follow you with our cross.

2 R. But we have been half-hearted followers
our progress was sluggish
and our renunciation rare.
Have Mercy on us.

All. Lord, have mercy (or *Kyrie, eleison*).

I R. You have urged us to be
the salt of the earth
and the light of the world.

2 R. But we have often acted foolishly,
with hearts of darkness
we have been blind leaders of other blind people.
Have Mercy on us.

All. Lord, have mercy (or *Kyrie, eleison*).

I R. You gave us the Blessed Virgin Mary
as our Mother and our Lady.

2 R. But we have often withdrawn
from her motherly protection
from the Lady Queen of mercy.

Have Mercy on us.

All. Lord, have mercy (or *Kyrie, eleison*).

P. God, rich in mercy,
forgive our sins
and erase our transgressions
in fraternal life and service to one another.
All. Amen.

BLESSING WITH HOLY WATER

321. The Prior General blesses Chapter members with holy water. The following antiphon is sung:

Sprinkle me with hyssop, O Lord
and I shall be cleansed;
wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

Or:

“I will pour pure water upon you
and you shall be cleansed from every sin,
I will give you a new heart,” says the Lord.

In Easter Time:

I saw water coming forth from the temple
on the right side, alleluia:
and all those to whom this water came
were saved, and shall say, alleluia, alleluia.

RENEWED COMMITMENT

322. The Prior General and all the Chapter members renew their pledge to serve the Lord in our Order:

Lord, our God,
at the end of this ... General Chapter,
we renew our pledge to live faithfully
our vocation as Servants of Mary:
a pledge to seek you,
to love you above all things,
and to live every hour of our life for you;
a pledge to follow Christ, your Son,
to witness to the Gospel,
and to dedicate our lives to the kingdom;
a pledge to be attentive to the voice of the Spirit,
to watch for his presence,
to be instruments of his peace and joy;
a pledge to let Mary's life
be the inspiration of our life
to offer her our service of love
like her to receive the Word

and to stand with her at the foot of her Son's cross;
a pledge to serve the Church, humankind and our brothers,
to be in communion with all creatures
and to have relations of mercy and peace with them;
a pledge to love the Order,
to promote concord within it
to keep it in poverty
and to enhance it with our virtue.
Accept, Father, our offering.
We give you what we have received:
life,
vocation,
the joy and the glory of serving Mary.
Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

KISS OF PEACE

323. The Prior General says:

P. Let us share a sign of brotherhood and peace.

The choir sings:

How beautiful it is, Lord, to be together
to love each other as you love us
God is in our midst, alleluia!

Or:

Gathered in the name of Christ
we live in harmony in fraternal service
praising God with one voice.

Psalm 133 [132] of some other appropriate hymn.

Psalm 133 [132]
Joy of brotherly love

How good and how pleasant it is, *
where brothers live in unity!
It is like precious oil upon the head, †
 running down upon the beard,
 running down upon Aaron's beard *
upon the collar of his robes; *Antiphon*

Like dew of Hermon,
 which runs down on the mountains of Sion. *
For there the LORD bestows his blessing:
 life forever. *Antiphon*

Glory be to the Father and to the Son *
and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now *

and ever shall be. Amen. *Antiphon*

THANKSGIVING

HYMN OF THANKSGIVING

324. After the Kiss of Peace the *Te Deum* is sung (or the *Magnificat*):

Te Deum

Te Deum laudamus:*
te Dominum confitemur.

Te aeternum Patrem*
omnis terra veneratur.

Tibi omnes Angeli,*
tibi Caeli et universae Potestates:

Tibi Cherubim et Seraphim*
incessabili voce proclamant:

Sanctus:* Sanctus:* Sanctus*
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.

Pleni sunt caeli et terra*
maiestatis gloriae tuae.

Te gloriosus*
Apostolorum chorus:

Te Prophetarum*
laudabilis numerus:

Te Martyrum candidatus*
laudat exercitus.

Te per orbem terrarum*
sancta confitetur Ecclesia:

Patrem*
immensae maiestatis:

Venerandum tuum verum*
et unicum Filium:

Sanctum quoque*
Paraclitum Spiritum.

Tu Rex gloriae,*
Christe.

Tu Patris*
sempiternus es Filius.

Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem,*
non horruisti Virginis uterum.

Tu devicto mortis aculeo,*
aperuisti credentibus regna caelorum.

Tu ad dexteram Dei sedes,*
in gloria Patris.

Iudex crederis*
esse venturus.

Te ergo quaesumus, tuis famulis subveni,*
quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.

Aeterna fac cum Sanctis tuis*
in gloria numerari.

Salvum fac populum tuum Domine,*
et benedic haereditati tuae.

Et rege eos,*
et extolle illos usque in aeternum.

Per singulos dies,*
benedicamus te.

Et laudamus nomen tuum in saeculum,*
et in saeculum saeculi.
Dignare Domine die isto,*
sine peccato nos custodire.

Miserere nostri Domine,*
miserere nostri.

Fiat misericordia tua Domine super nos,*
quemadmodum speravimus in te.

In te Domine speravi:*
non confundar in aeternum.

In English:
We praise thee, O God:
we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.

All the earth doth worship thee:
the Father everlasting.
To thee all Angels cry aloud:
the Heavens, and all the Powers therein.
To thee Cherubim and Seraphim:
continually do cry,
Holy, Holy, Holy:
Lord God of Sabaoth;
Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty:
of thy glory.
The glorious company of the Apostles: praise thee.
The goodly fellowship of the Prophets: praise thee.
The noble army of Martyrs: praise thee.
The holy Church throughout all the world:
doth acknowledge thee;
The Father: of an infinite Majesty;
Thine honourable, true: and only Son;
Also the Holy Ghost: the Comforter.
Thou art the King of Glory: O Christ.
Thou art the everlasting Son: of the Father.
When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man:
thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.
When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death:
thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.
Thou sittest at the right hand of God: in the glory of the Father.
We believe that thou shalt come: to be our Judge.
We therefore pray thee, help thy servants:
whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood.
Make them to be numbered with thy Saints: in glory everlasting.

[added later, mainly from Psalm verses:]

O Lord, save thy people:
and bless thine heritage.
Govern them: and lift them up for ever.
Day by day: we magnify thee;
And we worship thy Name: ever world without end.
Vouchsafe, O Lord: to keep us this day without sin.
O Lord, have mercy upon us: have mercy upon us.
O Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us:
as our trust is in thee.
O Lord, in thee have I trusted:
let me never be confounded.

Text: tr. 1662 Book of Common Prayer

325. Or:

Canticle of the Blessed Virgin

Magnificat:
anima mea Dominum.

Et exultavit spiritus meus:*

in Deo salutari meo.

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae: *
ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.

Quia fecit mihi magna, qui potens est: *
et sanctum nomen eius.

Et misericordia eius, a progenie et progenies: *
timentibus eum.

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo: *
dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.

Deposuit potentes de sede: *
et exaltavit humiles.

Esurientes implevit bonis: *
et divites dimisit inanes.

Suscepit Israel puerum suum: *
recordatus misericordiae suae.

Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros: *
Abraham, et semini eius in saecula.

In English:

My soul glorifies the Lord, *
my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior.

He looks on his servant in her lowliness; *
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.

The Almighty works marvels for me. *
Holy his name!

His mercy is from age to age, *
on those who fear him.

He puts forth his arm in strength *
and scatters the proud-hearted.

He casts the mighty from their thrones *
and raises the lowly.

He fills the starving with good things, *
sends the rich away empty.

He protects Israel, his servant, *
remembering his mercy,

the mercy promised to our fathers, *
to Abraham and his sons forever.

Glory be to the Father *

and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning, is now
and will be forever.
Amen.

PRAYER

326. After the Thanksgiving Hymn the Prior General asks everyone to pray:

P. Let us pray.

Then:

O Father, you always listen to the voice of your children,
accept our humble thanksgiving
and allow us to work with renewed confidence
at building up your kingdom
while we live a life of peace and freedom from evil.
Through Christ, our Lord.
All. Amen.

CONCLUSION

BLESSING

327. The Prior General continues:

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

P. May the God of faithfulness and love
support us on our journey
until we reach
perfection in Christ.
All. Amen.

MARIAN ANTIPHON

328. The *Salve Regina*, the Servite *Supplica* or some other seasonal Marian antiphon is sung at this point.

DISMISSAL

329. The Prior General closes the Chapter with these or similar words:

P. With my authority as Prior General I declare
the (... no.) legitimate Chapter
of the Order of Friar Servants of St. Mary

which we have celebrated with the Lord's favour
here in the city of ...
from ... (date) to ... (date)
formally closed.
All. Amen.

330. He then dismisses the assembly with one of the two formulas below (or some other similar formula).

P. May Our Lady protect us
and guide us along the path of life.
All. Amen.

Or:

P. Nos cum Prole pia.
All. Benedicat dolorosa Virgo Maria.

Note: All Bible texts are taken from: The New American Bible <http://www.vatican.va/archives/>