

CLIOS
Commissio Liturgica internationalis
Ordinis Fratrum Servorum Beatae Mariae Virginis

ORDER OF SERVANTS OF MARY
RITUAL
FOR CELEBRATING THE CHAPTER

ROME
SERVITE GENERAL CURIA
2000

PRESENTATION

CLIOS set about editing the *Servite Chapter Ritual* several years ago. It prepared the *Rito della conferma e della promessa del Priore provinciale, del Socio e dei Consiglieri* [Rite for the Confirmation and Promise of the Prior Provincial, the Assistant Provincial and Councillors] during the Plenary Assembly held in Düsseldorf (April 1977)¹. CLIOS further edited the *Rito per l'elezione del Priore generale* [Ordo eligendi Prioris Generalis] and the *Rito per la conferma del Procuratore e dei Consiglieri* [Ordo confirmandi Procuratorem Ordinis et Consultores generales] during the Plenary Assembly in Poggio di Roio (August 1983).² All that was missing was the *Rito per il Capitolo conventuale* [Rite for the Conventual Chapter]. CLIOS made an effort to complete this ritual and prepared several formularies

During this six-year period (1995-2001) a subcommittee (Fra Liam M. Tracey and Fra Robert S. Anderson) of the Plenary Assembly at Monte Senario (August 1996) developed and expanded the formularies prepared by another subcommittee (Fra Silvano M. Maggiani, Fra Silvano M. Danieli, Fra Francesco M. Carnimeo and Fra Larry Choate) of the Rome Plenary Assembly (January 5-12, 1989). Everything was discussed, modified and then submitted to an editorial subcommittee.

Fra Robert S. Anderson, Fra Gnanapragasam M. Arulanandu, Rosella Barbieri, Sister M. Corina Bressan, Fra Ignazio M. Calabuig Adán, Fra Camille M. Jacques, Fra Giuseppe M. Piccolo, Fra Francesco M. Rigobello (Fra Liam M. Tracey was absent) attended a Plenary Assembly in Follina (August 4-13, 1998). The editorial subcommittee (Ignazio M. Calabuig Adán and Rosella Barbieri) revised and expanded all the material and then presented ten outlines for celebrating the Conventual Chapter. The Plenary Assembly discussed and approved those outlines:

- I. Ordinary Conventual Chapter;
- II. Conventual Chapter of Elections: the Prior is elected by the community;
- III. Conventual Chapter to initiate the Prior's service after election by the community;
- IV. Conventual Chapter to initiate the Prior's service after election by the Provincial or Vicarial Council;
- V. Conventual Chapter for the election of house officials;
- VI. Conventual Chapter for the admission of candidates to the Order;
- VII. Conventual Chapter for the admission of candidates to Holy Orders;
- VIII. Conventual Chapter for business and financial decisions;
- IX. Conventual Chapter for review of and renewed commitment to fraternal communion;
- X. Conventual Chapter for review of and renewed commitment to service.

The outlines were then sent to several communities and friars for evaluation and a deadline was set: June 1, 1999. Only one written reply reached CLIOS: Fra Peregrine M. Graffius sent a very favourable evaluation.

With the *Rito per il Capitolo conventuale* in hand the CLIOS Italian group met at Monte Senario (August 2 – 11, 1999). One of the items on their agenda was completion of the *Rituale del Capitolo*. An effort was made in that meeting to re-read the whole work and make up for missing elements. The editorial subcommittee (Ignazio M. Calabuig and Rosella Barbieri) with the help of Camille M. Jacques and Francesco M. Rigobello prepared a general introduction as well as introductions to

¹ *Rito della conferma e della promessa del Priore provinciale, del Socio e dei Consiglieri* = Schemata, nova series, 1, De ordine Capituli 1 (Roma, febbraio 1979) 11 p.

² *Ordo eligendi Prioris generalis* = Schemata, nova series, 16, De ordine Capituli 2 (Poggio di Roio – Istituto Santa Maria della Croce, agosto 1983) 20 p.; *Ordo confirmandi Procuratorem Ordinis et Consultores generales* = Schemata, nova series, 18, De ordine Capituli 3 (Poggio di Roio – Roma settembre 1983) 9 p.

each of the three sections (Conventual Chapter, Provincial Chapter and General Chapter [= *Orientamenti per la liturgia capitolare*]), Prayers for the General Chapter, suggestions for the opening liturgy, the closing session of the General Chapter and “in extremis” the Conventual Chapter rite for concluding the Canonical Visitation.

The *Rituale del Capitolo OSM* was then submitted for eventual modification and approval to the General Council who approved it on October 1st, 1999.

Fra Camille M. Jacques, O.S.M.
President of CLIOS

Rome, September 26, 1999.

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Hubert M. MOONS,
PRIOR GENERALIS ORDINIS SERVORUM MARIAE

Prot. 386/2000

To the Order of Friar Servants of Mary
And the whole Servite Family

Beloved brothers and sisters,

Our Order “arose as an expression of evangelical apostolic life ... a community of men gathered together in the name of Jesus the Lord. Moved by the Spirit we commit ourselves, as did our First Fathers, to witness the gospel in fraternal communion ...” (*Const. OSM* 1). Among the “expressions which most nourish our fraternal life” are liturgical prayer, the common table and the Chapter. During the post-Conciliar years CLIOS [*Commissione Liturgica Internazionale dell’Ordine dei frati Servi di santa Maria* / International Liturgical Commission of the Order of Friar Servants of St. Mary] concentrated on updating, revising and preparing study aids for liturgical prayer and meals. And now the Commission has completed the editing of *Rituale del Capitolo O.S.M.* [Ritual for Servite Chapters] and is now promulgating it.

Our model: the primitive Christian Community

Our community life finds inspiration in the primitive Christian Church described in the Acts of the Apostles. That church had its roots in the Easter Event and the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. That church continues to live in our time and will endure until the Second Coming of the Lord. Just as the apostles joined in prayer with Mary, the Mother of Jesus (cf. *Acts* 1: 14) we too recognize the Lord’s presence and rely on Our Lady’s intercession when we pray together. In the matter of

feeding the faithful the apostles, moved by the Holy Spirit, consulted the community (cf. *Acts* 6: 2). Similarly we decide together questions concerning our common meals (cf. *Const. OSM*, 64-67). Just as the Antioch community gathered in prayer before imposing hands on a member or sending him on a mission (cf. *Acts* 13: 2-3) we too call on the Holy Spirit before admitting our brothers to Holy Orders or sending them on a mission. We decide in common what help to send communities in need (cf. *Const. OSM* 58) just as the Antioch community decided together what help to send the brethren in Judea (cf. *Acts* 11: 29). Just as the church of Jerusalem prayed unceasingly for the release of the Apostle Peter who had been unjustly imprisoned (cf. *Acts* 12: 5) “we take on the responsibility of promoting justice among all men and women, children of the same Father” (*Const. OSM*, 77).

The Chapter – the Risen Lord reveals himself to the community

In celebrating the Chapter we re-live the experience of the apostolic community; we know we are in the presence of the Master, Jesus Christ: “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (*Mt* 18: 20; cf. *Const. OSM* 34) and we know we are assisted by the Holy Spirit: “The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name, he will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you” (*Jn* 14: 25). There is a close connection between the Upper Room where Jesus prayed for unity (cf. *Jn* 17: 20-23), washed the feet of his disciples (cf. *Jn* 13: 1-15) gave himself to them in the breaking of the bread (cf. *Lk* 22: 14-20; 24: 30-31) and each of our communities – the modern Upper Rooms – from which we are sent out on missions.

When we celebrate Chapters we must be convinced of the Risen Lord’s continuing presence in our midst. He journeys with us as he did with the disciples of Emmaus (cf. *Lk* 24: 15); he listens as we recount our disappointments; he opens our eyes so we can interpret every day events in the light of Scripture; he depends on our willingness to be messengers of the Good New, to be good and faithful servants who do what he tells them (cf. *Jn* 2: 5). We must be docile like Our Lady, the humble servant of the Lord. He breathes his Spirit upon us and entrusts us with the ministry of forgiveness (cf. *Jn* 20: 23); he gives life to and renews our community life.³

The Chapter – a place of healing

The Chapter is also a place of healing. In the Chapter we share and discuss our goals; we make plans and strive to reach agreement, resolve problems, build community harmony and change bad attitudes. The Chapter is “the place where we look after the common good - a place to cure and heal.”⁴ In the Chapter we look at our lives together (cf. *Const. OSM* 13; 36) to determine how faithful we have been to the command of charity, the Gospel “our supreme rule”, the *Constitutions*, St Augustine’s *Rule for the Servants of God* and how faithful we have been to our shared commitment (cf. *Const. OSM*, 14) to grow in our vocation (cf. *Const. OSM* 105) and to establish only relationships of peace, mercy, justice and constructive love with everyone (cf. *Const. OSM*, 319).

The Chapter in Servite Early Days

From the very beginning of our Order the Chapter has been the place of discernment and decision. In Chapter we continue a dialogue with our First Fathers based on their common life experience passed on to us for generations. We express our love for the Order they founded in accordance with the Will of God. Speaking about their friendship the *Legenda de Origine Ordinis* [LO] describes

³ Cf. MOONS, Hubert M., Prior General, Letter *Get up and Walk* (November 16, 1994) no. 36.

⁴ Cf. *Ibidem*.

their capacity to engage in dialogue and discernment based on the Word of God. It describes to a certain extent the spirit with which we should celebrate the Chapter. “To be of one mind and one heart on the way to God” (*Rule of St. Augustine*, no. 3; cf. *Acts* 4: 32) our First Fathers discussed together whether they should remain in the city or climb the mountain. They reached a decision together: “Why are we waiting? Come, let us leave the city ... and go straightway up the mountain of the Lord which God himself has marked out for us, where we can do his divine will in all things, just as we wish” (*LO*, 41).

When it came to accepting new brothers our Fathers would practice discernment together: “they prepared themselves to accept new friars, men whom they knew were well-established in the fear of the Lord” (*LO*, 48). Decisions of this nature were always made with the consent of the Chapter (cf. *Const. Ant.*, chapter 4). When, for example, it was a question of admitting Philip Benizi “the friars gathered together and received him as a brother and companion” (*Legenda ‘vulgata’ beati Philippi*, no. 7). Again when Peregrine Laziosi was admitted to the Order the friars discussed it and then “happily received Peregrine and clothed him in the holy black habit of the Virgin Mary” (*Legenda beati Peregrini de Forolivio*, no. 3).

Like our First Fathers (cf. *LO*, 18) our friars in past centuries were aware of their imperfections – “they had shortcomings and made mistakes because of human weakness” (*Const. OSM*, 52). They wanted our Chapters to be the time and place that we admitted our faults (*Chapter of Faults*; cf. *Const. Ant.* Chapter 18). This practice has fallen into disuse but we are proposing it again in this Ritual as a *review and renewed commitment* in specific areas.

Throughout our history the choice of those who were to lead the Order was made through elections in Chapters. In an election each friar was to seek God’s will and vote as God inspired him; he was to avoid voting “under pressure or some other malice” (*Const. Ant.* Chapter 25). The Lord’s will was sought through common prayer and agreement. For example in 1267: “Blessed Philip [Benizi] was unanimously elected Prior General” (*LO* 61).

The Chapter, a place of communion

In all its phases, preparation, performance, decision, the Chapter is a community activity. It gives the Church, the Servite Family and civil society as well, an example of affective and effective collegiality. It is the only way to bring all brothers together because it carries out the command of Jesus that “all may be one” (*Jn* 17: 21). In Chapter, as in every other community situation, each brother enjoys the same dignity (*Const. OSM* 9) and therefore his voice must be heard and respected.

Promulgation

Since the General Council has approved (October 1, 1999, prot. 865/99) with the authority vested in me by the *Constitutions* with this letter I am promulgating the *Rituale del Capitolo O.S.M.* [in Italian] as the *editio typica*.

At the same time I ask regional coordinators, provincial priors and vicars of our various jurisdictions, to collaborate with CLIOS and your own liturgical commissions to translate this work. When translation involves a language spoken in more than one country work should be coordinated so that the translation is favourably received everywhere. The translations should exhibit the necessary literary dignity; they should be faithful to the original text but respect the nature and expressivity of the language into which the text is being translated.

The beginning of this third millennium is, I believe, a genuine *kairos*, a favourable time, for every community of our Order and the whole Servite Family. It is a time when the Spirit – who blows where he will (cf. *Jn* 3: 8) – is moving us. The Order has never possessed a Chapter Ritual as complete as this present one. It includes formulas and suggestions that fit the various items found on the agendas of conventual, provincial and General Chapters. I believe that this *editio typica* of the Chapter Ritual is a valid tool, a precious aid that will help us live and grow together under God and Our Lady's loving protection.

Fraternally in Christ and Our Lady,

From the Priory of San Marcello in Rome
April 14, 2000
Feast of Our Lady at the Foot of the Cross

Fra Hubert M. MOONS, O.S.M.
Prior General

Fra Reinhold M. BODNER, O.S.M.
Secretary of the Order

I

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

NATURE AND VALUE OF THE CHAPTER

1. The term “chapter” designates “a meeting of all the friars of the community.”⁵

The term is monastic in origin. Monks began their meetings by reading a chapter of the Rule of Life. The word “chapter” was soon applied to the whole meeting. With a few modifications the institution of “chapter” was adopted by Orders of evangelical-apostolic life – mendicant Orders.

2. The Chapter makes “the presence of the Lord among the disciples gathered in his name” a reality.⁶ Jesus tells us: “if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven” (*Mt* 18: 19-20; cf. *Mt* 28: 20). These words imply prayer in common and a meeting of brothers with shared intentions.

3. The Chapter is an important moment in the life of the community: each friar contributes to the community’s growth in fraternal communion, the development of its apostolic commitment, the discovery of new Gospel paths and it provides an opportunity to resolve whatever tension may exist in the community. The Chapter is the place where Christ acts and heals.⁷

4. Our 1987 *Constitutions* add a new element: in specific circumstances guests, collaborators and experts in particular areas can be invited to the Chapter.⁸

5. Through discussion and dialogue the Chapter becomes the place where we seek the will of God for the resolution of specific problems and matters that arise in the life of the community. In this search for God’s will the opinion of every member of the Chapter must be heard with respect for God speaks through the voice of all the brothers.

6. Chapter decisions are the result of what the community discusses in the light of the Word. They must be adhered to and carried out as the *Constitutions* tell us: “The Prior and each friar are to conform to the mind of the Chapter and carry out its decisions loyally.”⁹

THE CHAPTER IN THE ORDER OF FRIAR SERVANTS OF ST. MARY

7. For centuries our Order has celebrated three types of Chapters: conventual, provincial and general. They correspond to the three communities that celebrate them: the conventual community, the provincial community and the whole Order. They handle questions that arise in each and choose the individuals who will lead each community. In recent times new juridical situations have led the Order to celebrate vicarial and inter-jurisdictional Chapters as well.¹⁰

STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS OF THE CHAPTER

8. Over the centuries the Chapter has taken on diverse forms according to its type – conventual, provincial, general – and has added diverse items to its agenda.

In spite of these changes certain structural elements have remained the same;

- a *prayer to Our Lady* either at the beginning¹¹ or the conclusion of the Chapter: homage to Mary, Our Lady and a request for her maternal intercession;

- a *prayer*, fixed or changing, in which we ask for light and help of the Lord in relation to what the Chapter will discuss;

⁵ *Const. OSM*, 34.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Cf. the Letter *Get up and Walk* of Fra Hubert M. MOONS, Prior General of the Friar Servants of Mary, to the Servite Family on the 650th anniversary of the death of St. Peregrine Laziosi (1345-1995), 36.

⁸ Cf. *Const. OSM*, 39.

⁹ *Ibid.* 40.

¹⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 42, 175. *Get up and Walk*, 241-244.

¹¹ Cf. *Const. OSM*, 6.

- a *plea for the light of the Spirit*, especially in Chapters of election;
- a *request for pardon from God* for shortcomings in observing the *Constitutions* and following the Gospel;
- singing the *Te Deum* at the end of the more important Chapters as thanksgiving to the Lord for his gifts to us.

9. In the post-Conciliar era we have become more attentive to making the readings, songs and prayers correspond to the liturgical season and the matter being discussed in the Chapter.

THE CHAPTER HALL

10. Over the centuries the Order has paid particular attention to the hall in which the Chapter is celebrated. It should be arranged according to the provisions given in the *Introduction* to each Chapter (conventual, provincial, general).

ADAPTATION

11. Adaptations can be made to each sequence described in this Ritual according to the needs of each community and each Chapter.