

METHOD AND CRITERIA OF WORK OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL FOR THE PERIOD 2007-2013

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1. Herein are listed, for the benefit above all of the Priors, Councils and Secretariats of the Provinces and Vicariates, some points of information about the method and criteria of work which the General Council wishes to adopt during this current period of office.

I. EXERCISE OF AUTHORITY IN THE ORDER

2. The Prior General, to whom the *Constitutions* assign the role of leader of the entire Order (cf. *Const.* 266), is assisted in his work of governing the Order and administering its affairs by the General Councilors (cf. *Const.* 278), who share his responsibility and his authority (cf. *Const.* 174).

Our *Constitutions* repeatedly point out certain guiding values, which characterize the multiple relationships in which our religious life is structured and evidenced:

- fraternal communion (cf. *Const.* 1, 42),
- service (cf. *Const.* 1, 3, 43, 172),
- collaboration (cf. *Const.* 5, 75b, 176, 307),
- dialogue (cf. *Const.* 91, 107-108, 167),
- teamwork (cf. *Const.* 227),
- seeking points of agreement (cf. *Const.* 5, 42, 204b),
- subsidiarity (cf. *Const.* 224, 267),
- collegiality in decision-making (cf. *Const.* 3, 182a).

Our very style of life as Servites is rooted in these values and every exercise of authority in the Order receives its distinguishing mark from them.

All of us, in fact, at the local, provincial and general level, *united by charity and sustained by mutual esteem, place in common our goods, hopes and activities and we make our decisions fraternally* (*Const.* 3).

The General Council wants to take inspiration from these values, both in its internal relationships, between the Prior General and the Councilors, and in its dealings as a Council with the General Officials and Secretaries; with the Provinces, Vicariates, Delegations and Regional Conferences; with the communities and friars; and with the entire Servite Family.

II. AREAS OF WORK OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

THE ROLE OF THE COUNCIL IN THE LIFE OF THE ORDER

3. The Council, besides carrying out the tasks connected with the government of the Order and the administration of its affairs (cf. *Const.* 278/b), considers it in keeping with its role to devote attention to analysing, reflecting upon, studying and making proposals about various aspects of the life of the

individual friar and of communities, as well as the present structure and future prospects of the Order as it is engaged in responding to the calls of the Spirit at this point in its history.

To achieve this end, in the midst of the various diverse tasks of its individual members, it will seek to find the necessary space and time.

Residence in Rome, besides enabling fraternal relationships and a spirit of collegiality within the Council, is also understood as providing an opportunity to use the time available for working together (cf. *Const.* 278/b), and making contact with the Curias of other religious orders and congregations.

THE COUNCIL AND THE SECRETARIATS

4. Following the indications of the 2007 General Chapter (cf. *GC 2007*, n. 74), the Council has entrusted the leadership of several General Secretariats to the Councilors (Formation & Studies, Regent of Studies, Ongoing Formation, Evangelization of Peoples and Justice and Peace, Communications), so as not to involve too many friars in the work of the General Curia and because a General Councilor is helped, in the carrying out of these tasks, by his very role as Councilor, which puts him in regular contact with the jurisdictions of the Order, with the Servite Family, and with colleagues in other religious orders and congregations who are engaged in the same work.

COLLEGIAL WORK – MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL

5. Three days of the week – Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday – are normally devoted to Council meetings:

- to exchange information on the life of the Order;
- to examine personal and administrative matters and requests sent in from the Provinces and Vicariates;
- to update the Council's programming;
- to follow the work of the General Secretariats and Offices;
- to prepare canonical visitations;
- to compare ideas and projects concerning the life and work of the Order.

LISTENING AND EVALUATING

6. The General Council is grateful to all those who, in a spirit of fraternal collaboration, send in opinions, suggestions, proposals and critical observations about its programming, the Council's own method of work and the style of governing the entire Order.

At the beginning of each social year, the Council will dedicate a few days, in place of its usual business, to evaluating the work it has done and to revising its programming.

During the biennial meetings (2008, 2010, 2012) with the Priors and Vicars Provincial, envisioned by the 2007 General Chapter (cf. *GC 2007*, n. 58b), the Council will search for ways to implement the decisions of the 2007 General Chapter and *to plan and establish priorities for the sharing of goods, personnel, needs and resources in the Order (GC 2007, n. 58b)*. Additionally, it intends to reflect upon and make decisions, in a mutually agreed upon manner, regarding various subjects indicated by the General Chapter: *the overall plan for communities; restructuring; initial formation, the preparation of formators and centers of study; the status of the new foundations, those already in existence and possible new communities of the Order in the world; the distribution of economic resources; centralization-decentralization in the Order (GC 2007, n. 72a)*.

OFFICIAL SECRECY

7. The members of the General Council commit themselves to taking special care of all Council documents and not to speak with others, or in the presence of outsiders, about confidential matters and

not to give advance notice about things the communication of which belongs only to those appointed and in the manner and time agreed-upon by common accord.

The Council requires the same respect for prudence and confidentiality from those working in the Curia and from those whose technical opinions or suggestions may be requested, as well as from all those who, for whatever reason, may be aware of confidential matters being dealt with by the Council.

COMMUNICATIONS

8. The General Council,

- a) in collaboration with the Secretary of the Order, will send out an annual newsletter containing a digest of the Acts of the General Council. It will be sent to all Priors, Vicars, and Delegates Provincial, to Regional Coordinators, General Secretaries and Officials, to all the communities of friars O.S.M., to the Prioresses General of the Congregations of Servite Sisters and Prioresses of Enclosed Convents, and to those responsible for the Servite Secular Institutes, the Secular Order of Servites and Servite Lay Groups;
- b) will communicate information about canonical visitations by the Prior General, his participation at Provincial and Vicarial Chapters and other initiatives of the General Councilors in an appropriate column of the bi-monthly *COSMO* and in a section of *COSMO on line*;
- c) proposes to write frequently to the Priors and Vicars Provincial to inform them of its work, to support them in their work of actualizing the Chapter Decrees, and to ask their suggestions and opinions;
- d) intends to maintain a regular dialogue with the friars of the Order and with all the Servite Family by means of letters or messages,
 - of analysis on the state of the Order and how the Chapter Decrees are being put into practice;
 - of spiritual reflection and exhortation;
 - on the occasion of anniversaries important to the whole Servite Family.

OFFICIAL CONTACTS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE ORDER

9. For reasons of smooth running, all correspondence of an official nature between the Provinces, Vicariates and the government of the Order is to be addressed to the Prior General or the Secretary of the Order.

The Secretary of the Order, keeper of the General Curia's protocol register, will see that the incoming material is distributed to the competent person or body.

III. PRESENCE IN THE ORDER

FUNCTION OF THE GENERAL COUNCILOR AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PROVINCES, VICARIATES AND REGIONAL CONFERENCES

10. Our *Constitutions* prescribe that General Councilors are to represent the Provinces and Vicariates of the Order *in the manner determined by the General Council (Const. 279)*.

In order to encourage collaboration in the various regions of the Order, each Councilor has been assigned, insofar as possible, the Provinces, Vicariates and Delegations of one of the geographical/cultural areas in which the Order is present: to Franco M. Azzalli, the Regional Conference of Europe; to Eugene M. Smith, the Provinces USA, ISL and TIR, the Delegations DLD, EAF and ZUL, the communities in Swaziland and the regional Conference of North America (NAC); to Charlie M. Leitão de Souza, the Provinces of ESP, MEX, BRA and SMA, the communities in Mozambique, and the regional conference of South America (CONO SUR): to Gino M. Leonardi, the Provinces VEN, ANN and CAN, the delegation FRB, the General Houses, UNIFAS and the regional conference of Africa; to Rhett M. Sarabia, the Province PRG, the Vicariates IND and PHI, the Delegation AUS, the convents in Indonesia, and the regional conference of Asia-Oceania (CASA).

Concerning the Councilors' responsibilities in this regard, the following points are to be noted:

- a) The Councilor is to study and present in Council all matters and requests from the Provinces and the Vicariates he represents, and will furnish regular information about the more important happenings in these areas.
- b) Consequently, the Priors and Vicars Provincial must keep their Councilor informed about the requests they wish to make to the General Council, and about life and events in the Province or Vicariate (for example: the work of the Councils, initiatives of Secretariats, etc.), without prejudice to what is stipulated in art. 221/h of the *Constitutions*.
- c) The Councilor will normally participate in Elective Chapters, either with the Prior General or as his Vicar. He will participate in other Chapters or annual Meetings only when matters of considerable importance are foreseen on the agenda.
Moreover, he will prepare the Canonical Visitation together with the Prior General and accompany him during the visitation itself. He is to give the General Council a full report of the Visitations and Chapters he has attended.
- d) As a rule, only one member of the General Council will attend Conferences, Chapters and Interprovincial Meetings, even if the juridical entities coming together are in fact represented by two or more General Councilors.
- e) The General Council will consider, as they arise, other possible requests from the Provinces or Vicariates inviting their General Councilor to make a particular intervention or visit.
- f) The Priors and Vicars Provincial and Regional Coordinators, together with their respective Councils, should value the presence of the Prior General and Councilors, and schedule various appointments (Chapters, Meetings, Council sessions, etc.) at convenient times and venues.

GENERAL SECRETARIATS AND OFFICES

11. The General Council intends to establish cordial relationships of collaboration with all General Officials and Secretaries, whose work is indispensable for the Council itself and whose service is valuable for the whole Order.

The Council will consult them on the important matters within their competence (cf. *Const.* 287), and will periodically meet with them to evaluate their work and update their programming.

Every General Secretariat and Office will have a Councilor of reference who will serve as its contact and liaison with the General Council: Franco M. Azzalli: Historical Institute, Postulator for Causes of Beatification and Canonization, Archivist of the Historical Collection; Eugene M. Smith: Secretary for Formation and Studies, General Regent of Studies, General Coordinator of Vocation Animation, Marianum Pontifical Faculty of Theology; Rhett M. Sarabia: General Treasurer, General Secretariat for Ongoing Formation; Gino M. Leonardi: Center for Communications, International Liturgical Commission O.S.M. (CLIOS), Secretariat for the Secular Order and Lay Groups, UNIFAS; Charlie M. Leitão de Souza: General Secretariat for the Evangelization of Peoples and Justice and Peace, Current Archives.

GENERAL HOUSES

12. The General Council acts as Provincial Council for the Curia Community at San Marcello, the Study Community of the Marianum Pontifical Faculty of Theology, St. Alexis Falconieri Formation Community, the Community at Monte Senario and the Community at Eger (cf. *Const.* 282/e).

They are governed by the "Norms" approved by the General Council. A Councilor will represent them in Council.

The Prior General and Councilors will try to visit the General Houses frequently, over and above official events and occasions, in order to share in the fraternal life of the community.

IV. CANONICAL VISITATION OF THE PRIOR GENERAL

13. The General Council has drawn up some guidelines for the Prior General's Canonical Visitation of the Provinces and Vicariates of the Order.

THOSE TO WHOM THE CANONICAL VISITATION OF THE PRIOR GENERAL IS ADDRESSED

14. A careful reading of article 269/a of the *Constitutions* shows that the Prior General has the duty of visiting, during his term of office, *the individual Provinces and Vicariates* of the Order.

He has, on the other hand the right, but not the duty, to visit *all the priories*.

The primary addressees of the Canonical Visitation are, therefore, *the Provinces and Vicariates* in their organization, programming and administration, and the Prior General fulfills his mandate by meeting with Priors and Vicars Provincial, their Councils, the heads of Secretariats and, if possible, the priors of the communities gathered in a joint meeting. The Prior General will also visit the Delegations and, in conducting the canonical visitation, will use, insofar as they are compatible, the criteria and indications listed below for the jurisdictions (Provinces and Vicariates) (see no. 18).

During this six year term, the Prior General will also visit the individual communities in the manner detailed below.

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR THE CANONICAL VISITATION

- 15.** In conducting the Canonical Visitation, the Prior General will keep in mind these general criteria:
- continuity with the preceding visitation of the Prior General;
 - reflection on evangelical poverty and the decisions of the 2007 General Chapter;
 - the projects of collaboration being undertaken by jurisdictions in the various geographical areas;
 - the objectives of the General Council for this six year term;
 - involvement in the religious and ecclesial life of the nations in which the Provinces, Vicariates, Missions and New Foundations are located;
 - openness towards and participation in the life of the entire Order and Servite Family.

AIMS OF THE CANONICAL VISITATION

- 16.** During this six year term, the canonical visitation will be carried out with the following aims:
- to promote the quality of individual and community life in the light of the orientations taken by the 2007 General Chapter;
 - to evaluate and promote the celebration of conventual chapters and dialogue between the friars, collegiality in the pastoral service offered by the community, and personal and community commitment to vocation promotion;
 - to arrive at a good understanding of the state of the jurisdiction through meetings with the Council, the officials of the Province and, if possible, the priors of the communities gathered in a joint meeting;
 - to promote inter-jurisdictional relationships, the formation of the new regional conferences in Europe and Africa, and to consolidate the existing regional conferences.

GUIDELINES FOR THE CANONICAL VISITATION OF THE PROVINCES/VICARIATES

17. The Canonical Visitation of the Prior General to the Provinces and Vicariates is to be prepared in this manner:

- a) The Prior/Vicar Provincial of the Province/Vicariate where the Canonical Visitation is to take place will send the Visitators a dossier containing the following:
 - a panoramic view of the Province/Vicariate, with statistical data;
 - the essential points of its programming, drawn up from the decisions of its recent Provincial/Vicarial Chapters.
- b) The Councilor concerned will obtain useful information about the Province or Vicariate from the General Secretariats and Officials, according to their specific field of competence.
- c) Priors and Vicars Provincial will take care to provide the Visitators with:
 - sufficient documentation about the last Canonical Visitation they carried out in the communities of their Province/Vicariate;
 - a report on the financial situation of the Province/Vicariate, based on the last budget and end-of-year report approved by the Provincial/Vicarial Council;
 - an indication of specific problems still existing, and about which concrete leadership is required during the Visitation;
 - information about the pastoral directives of the national or regional Church, and the thinking of the national/regional Conference of Religious.

GUIDELINES FOR THE VISITATION OF THE PRIORIES OF THE PROVINCES/VICARIATES

18. As regards Visitation of individual priories, the Prior General, in the course of this present six-year term of office, will proceed as follows:

- He will carry out full Canonical Visitation, in accordance with art. 227 of the *Constitutions*, in those communities which welcome new vocations, in formation communities, including inter-jurisdictional ones, and in the priories of the Missions and recent foundations;
- In all other priories, the Prior General will convoke a conventual Chapter of communion and dialogue on the situation in the Province/Vicariate and Order and on the implementation, at community level, of the orientations of the 2007 General Chapter, including the witness to evangelical poverty (work, sharing of goods, style of life, use of money, etc.) (cf. *Const.* 36, 57-63), care for the environment and the house (cf. *GC 2007*, n. 25b), and the process of ongoing formation (cf. *GC 2007*, n. 37bb). He will examine, either in person or through the friar accompanying him, the book of the acts of the conventual chapter, the house chronicle or diary and the financial books.
- Whenever possible, there should be a combined meeting of the friars, those people who collaborate in the pastoral activities of the community, and the Servite Family.

EVALUATION OF THE VISITATION CONDUCTED

19. Evaluation of the Canonical Visitation will take place in the following manner:

- regular dialogue between the respective Councilor of reference and the Prior or Vicar Provincial concerned;
- the reports of the Priors and Vicars Provincial to the Elective Chapter;
- the Prior/Vicar Provincial's visitation of the communities of the Province/Vicariate