

IV

RITE OF THE SOLEMN PROFESSION OF THE FRIAR SERVANTS OF MARY

INTRODUCTION

175. The friar who intends, at the end of the formation period, to share our life until death, makes his solemn profession.

176. Solemn profession is a public act which consecrates the friar for his entire life to the service of God and his people in the perfect following of Christ and in complete dedication to our Lady. It leads him, through the observance of the evangelical councils, to the fullness of charity.^[17]

177. With solemn profession the friar is definitively received into the Order of Servants of Mary and fully assumes its life and responsibilities.^[18]

178. By its nature of permanent commitment, the rite of solemn profession ought to be celebrated separately from the ones of initiation to religious life and temporary profession.

ENVIRONMENT OF THE CELEBRATION

179. The friar makes his solemn profession during the celebration of the Eucharist.^[19]

MINISTER

180. The rite is presided over by the prior general, the prior or vicar provincial, the conventual prior, or the delegate of any of these.^[20]

VENUE AND DAY

181. The appropriate days for solemn profession are: Sundays and Solemnities of the Lord; feasts of the blessed Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph and Saint Augustine; memorials of our holy brothers and sisters; the main feasts of the local Church.

182. The rite of solemn profession usually takes place in a church of the Order, especially the one of the community of the candidate. But, for pastoral reasons, the rite may be celebrated in another church.

CHOICE OF FORM

183. In choosing the form for the celebration of Eucharist, we observe the following recommendations:

- a) on solemnities and the Sundays of Advent, Lent and Eastertide, we celebrate the mass of the day;
- b) in the other Sundays, feasts and memorials, we celebrate the ritual mass «On the day of the perpetual profession» or the mass of the day;
- c) when we do not celebrate the ritual mass «On the day of perpetual profession», we may choose a reading -the first or the second- from among those indicated in the *Lectionary for the religious profession* (cf. Appendice II, nn. 241-340);
- d) in any case, we may use the proper texts of the mass «On the day of perpetual profession»,^[21] for the intercessions of eucharistic prayers and the final blessing.

184. In the ritual mass «On the day of perpetual profession», we use white colour vestments.^[22]

185. The liturgical action will be celebrated with fitting solemnity, as the nature of the rite requests.[23]

NOTIFICATION OF THE CELEBRATION

186. Solemn profession is an act which pertains not only to the Order and the family of the friar, but to the whole ecclesial community. So it is appropriate to inform the neighbouring communities and the laity of the celebration of this rite, so that they may accompany the preparation of the candidate with their prayers and may take part in this rite.[24]

PREPARATION FOR THE CELEBRATION

187. In the place where the celebration takes place, there must be prepared:

- the Ritual of solemn profession of the Servants of Mary;
- the *Gospels book*;
- a container of holy water for the ritual remembrance of baptism;
- the register of professions;[25]
- eventually: on the altar or before the image of the Virgin Mary, a candle which the friar will light after he has made his profession.

188. The day before his solemn profession, the candidate will write with his own hand the formula of his profession either in the register of professions or on a card or parchment, which he will sign and place on the altar during the rite.

PREPARATION OF THE CANDIDATE

189. Approaching the moment of the solemn profession, the candidate will take care, with the help of the master of professed or a competent friar, to acquire an adequate understanding of the texts and symbolic gestures in the rite of solemn profession: this will help him to perform the celebration of the rite with truth and generosity. This knowledge could be usefully deepened on the occasion of the retreat which precedes the solemn profession.

RITE OF THE SOLEMN PROFESSION

I. INITIAL RITES

190. Before the beginning of the celebration, it is appropriate to briefly explain the nature of the rite and its parts, and also to present the candidates in a modest way.

RITE OF ENTRY

191. It is suitable that the candidates take part in the entry procession. It is also appropriate that the *Gospels book*, on which, as a rule, the candidates will recite their formula of solemn profession be carried in that procession.

MEMORIAL OF BAPTISM

192. After the kissing of the altar and the greeting of the assembly, instead of the penitential act, we remember our Baptism. The servers put in the middle of the sanctuary or in an appropriate place a container in which has been -or will be- poured the water to be blessed.

193. The presider addresses the Assembly and the candidates, in these or similar words:

Dear sisters and brothers,
before we celebrate the memorial

of the death and resurrection of the Lord,
let us humbly pray to God, our Father,
so that he may bless this water,
with which we will be sprinkled
in memory of our baptism.

But especially you, Brothers **N.N.**,
in this moment of preparation
for making your solemn profession
you ought to remember the sacrament of Baptism,
which made you, by grace,
sons of God,
brothers of Christ,
temple of the Spirit,
members of the Church:
so that your intention to follow Christ closely
and to serve the Virgin Mary, our glorious Lady,
may grow, like a plant from the seed,
from the salvific event of your baptism.

194. All present pray in silence for a while. Then the presider continues:

God all-powerful, origin and source of life,
bless + this water,
and grant that we, your faithful,
sprinkled by this source of purification,
may obtain forgiveness of sins,
defense against the snares of the Evil one
and the gift of your protection.
Revive in us, Lord,
by the sign of this blessed water,
the memory of our baptism,
so that we may come to you with a simple heart
and that Brothers **N.N.** may make their solemn profession
with a pure spirit.
(We make our prayer) through Christ our Lord.

All present:

Amen.

195. The presider sprinkles himself, then the candidates -or he may bring the holy water to the candidates so that they may make a sign of the cross with it-, and finally the faithful. In the meantime, an antiphon such as the following may be sung.

Sprinkle me, O Lord, and I will be made clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. *Psalm 51 (50), 7*

Or:

I will sprinkle clean water upon you,
and from all your uncleannesses and idols I will cleanse you.
A new heart I will give you. *Ezekiel 36: 25-26*

Or:

I will pour clean water over you,

cleanse you from all your sin
and give you a new heart.

In Eastertide:

This is the water, *cf. Ezekiel 47: 1-12*
which flowed from the holy temple of God, alleluia;
and those whom this water reaches will be saved,
and they will sing: alleluia, alleluia.

196. The presider concludes the memorial of baptism, saying:

May the merciful God
purify our hearts,
and for this celebration of the Eucharist
make us worthy to take part at the banquet of his Kingdom.

All present:

Amen.

197. The penitential rite and *Kyrie* are omitted. The *Gloria* is sung or recited.

II. LITURGY OF THE WORD

198. The Liturgy of the Word takes place as usual. But the prayer of the faithful is omitted, because the intercessions are included in the Litany of Saints.

III. RITE OF THE PROFESSION

REQUEST OF THE CANDIDATES

199. The ritual sequence of request of the candidates may take place in the form of dialogue (n. 200) or may be done directly by the candidates (n. 201).

200. After the proclamation of the Gospel, all present sit down, except the candidates. The presider asks them:

Brothers **N.N.**,
what do you ask of God
of the Church
and of the Order of friar Servants of Mary?

The candidates answer together:

The mercy of the Lord
and the grace to serve with you,
in his honour,
the glorious Mother of Christ.

All present proclaim:

Thanks be to God.

ALTERNATIVE TEXT

201. Or, after the proclamation of the Gospel, all present sit down, except the candidates. These together -or one in the name of all- address the presider, in these or similar words:

We, Brothers **N.N.**,
 having shared your life of fraternity and service,
 after mature reflection,
 freely
 ask you, Brother **N.** Mary, Prior general,
 to be admitted to solemn profession
 in the Order of friar Servants of Mary.

All present proclaim:

Thanks be to God.

HOMILY

202. Then the presider gives the homily, in which he comments on the biblical readings and explains, in light of the liturgical texts, the gift of the religious vocation and its meaning in the life of the Church, and the charism of the Order. It is appropriate that the conclusion of the homily be a preamble to the following interrogations.

INTERROGATION OF THE CANDIDATES

203. When the homily is over, the presider asks the candidates questions saying:

Dear Brothers,
 through the sacrament of Baptism
 you have already died to sin and been consecrated to God:
 now, with solemn profession,
 do you want to commit yourselves more intensely
 in the search of God
 and the love of your neighbour
 in order to reach perfect charity?

The candidates answer:

Yes, I do.

The presider:

Do you want, with the grace of God,
 to follow Christ closely and witness to his Gospel,
 drawing abiding inspiration from the Virgin Mother, our Lady?

The candidates answer:

Yes, I do.

The presider:

Do you want to proclaim the Kingdom of God,
sharing with us
the way of life chosen by the Apostles
and followed by our first Fathers?

The candidates answer:

Yes, I do.

The presider:

Do you want, sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit,
to generously dedicate your whole life
in the service of the people of God?

The candidates answer:

Yes, I do.

204. The presider confirm the desire of the candidates in these or similar words:

May God the Father, who has begun his work in you,
bring it to fulfillment,
until the day of Christ Jesus.

All present:

Amen.

LITANY OF THE SAINTS

205. The interrogations finished, all present stand up. The presider, standing up, addresses the assembly saying:

Dear sisters and brothers,
let us pray to God, our merciful Father,
that, by the intercession of the blessed Virgin,
the seven first Fathers,
and all the Saints,
he may pour his blessing
on these his sons,
whom he has called to follow Christ
in the family of the friar Servants of Mary
and may he confirm them in their holy purpose.

206. So the Litany of Saints for religious profession is sung. The candidates prostrate themselves in humble submission to God. But this gesture of prostration may be substituted, where it is not understood or has a different meaning, by an equivalent gesture.

During the singing of the Litany, in Eastertide, Sundays and Solemnities, the presider and the assembly stand up; on other days, they kneel. In which case, the deacon suitably says:

Let us kneel down.

207. In the Litany, we may insert, in the appropriate place, other invocations of Saints (the titular Saint of the church, the patron Saint of the town, the patron saint of each candidate...) and other intercessions suggested by particular circumstances.

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.	Lord, have mercy.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,	pray for us.
Saint Michael,	pray for us.
All you holy angels of God,	pray for us.
Saint John the Baptist,	pray for us.
Saint Joseph,	pray for us.
Saints Peter and Paul,	pray for us.
Saint John,	pray for us.
All you holy Apostles and Evangelists,	pray for us.
Saint Mary Magdalene,	pray for us.
All you holy disciples of the Lord,	pray for us.
Saint Stephen,	pray for us.
Saint Lawrence,	pray for us.
Saint Agnes,	pray for us.
All you holy martyrs of Christ,	pray for us.
Saint Basil,	pray for us.
Saint Augustine,	pray for us.
Saint Benedict,	pray for us.
Saint Bernard,	pray for us.
Saint Francis,	pray for us.
Saint Dominic,	pray for us.
Seven holy Fathers,	pray for us.
Saint Philip [Benizi],	pray for us.
Saint Peregrine [Laziosi],	pray for us.
Saint Ignatius [de Loyola],	pray for us.
Saint Vincent [de Paul],	pray for us.
Saint John [Bosco],	pray for us.
Saint Anthony Mary [Pucci],	pray for us.
Saint Juliana [Falconieri],	pray for us.
Saint Catherine of Siena,	pray for us.
Saint Teresa of Jesus,	pray for us.
Saint Clelia [Barbieri],	pray for us.
All you Saints of God,	pray for us.
In your mercy,	save us, Lord.
From every evil,	save us, Lord.
From every sin,	save us, Lord.
From eternal death,	save us, Lord.
Through your incarnation,	save us, Lord.
Through your death and resurrection,	save us, Lord.
Through the gift of your Holy Spirit,	save us, Lord.
We, sinners,	we beseech you, hear us.
For the Church:	
may it grow in holiness and unity	
for the harmony and charity of its sons,	we beseech you, hear us.
For the Pope N.:	
grant him wisdom and strength	
in his service of master and pastor,	we beseech you, hear us.

210. Where the tradition exists of making the profession «into the hands», the candidate goes to the presidential chair, kneels, puts his hands into the hands of the presider and recites with a clear voice the formula of profession.

211. The candidate may replace the third part of the formula of profession with another brief and adapted text.

I. I, Brother **N.** Mary,
 moved by the word of God
 and the grace of the Holy Spirit,
 promise to God the Father
 that I will be a witness of Christ and his Gospel
 and fulfill the commandment of love
 in the service of God and all his children,
 drawing abiding inspiration from Mary,
 Mother and Servant of the Lord.

II. Therefore, in the presence of this community of **N.**,
 a part of the whole Order and sign of the universal Church,
 and before you Brother **N.**, Prior General
 (or **N.** representing the Prior general),
 with free deliberation I vow
 to follow Christ until death
 in chastity, poverty and obedience
 (or in celibacy for the Kingdom of God, in poverty and in obedience).
 I promise to live fraternally with you
 in common prayer,
 in the reflective reading of the word,
 in the breaking of the bread of life,
 in study, work
 and sharing everything with you,
 according to the Rule of Saint Augustine
 and the Constitutions of the Servants of Mary
 so that by serving the Lord,
 the blessed Mary and all men and women,
 I may fulfill the commandment of love
 and attain perfect charity.

III. May the grace of God,
 the intercession of our Lady,
 and the love of the brothers
 support me in my weakness
 and confirm what I have promised.

212. After reciting the formula, the professed kisses the *Gospels book* and says:

Lord, assist your servant,
 who, moved by your Word,
 places his trust in you.

213. Then he lays the parchment or card of his profession on the center of the altar, where the corporal will be placed, and signs it; then he signs the register. After him, the presider and witnesses sign. Before going back to his place, the candidate opportunely lights a candle on the altar or before the image of the Virgin Mary.

214. After the profession of the last candidate, the newly professed go to the center of the Sanctuary and, all together, sing, accompanied, according to the circumstances, by the community of friars, the following antiphon or another adapted hymn, which lyrically expresses the sentiments of gift and joy.

I am your servant, Lord,
I am your servant, the son of your Handmaid.

PRAYER OF BLESSING OR CONSECRATION

215. The professed kneel in the center of the Prebyterium. The presider, extending his arms towards them, says one of the three proposed prayers of blessing or consecration (nn. **216. 217. 218**). In these prayers the parts between brackets may be omit.

1

*The religious profession in the history of salvation,
a covenant of love*

216. O God, origin and source of all holiness
you so loved the human being
that you made him a partner in your divine life
and in your mercy you did not allow
that this plan of your love should be extinguished
by the sin of Adam and the sinfulness of the world.

From the beginning of history
you gave us in Abel the just one
a model of innocent life
and in your providence,
through the centuries
you have raised up offspring from your chosen people,
holy men and women of eminent virtues:
more radiant than all was the daughter of Sion,
the blessed Virgin Mary.
From her virginal womb came forth the light,
your Word who became man for the salvation of the world,
Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The radiance of your holiness, Father,
he emptied himself to enrich us
and assumed the condition of a slave
to give us back freedom;
in the Paschal Mystery
he redeemed the world with infinite love,
he sanctified your Church
and gave to it a sharing in the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

And you, Father, with the mysterious voice of the same Spirit,
have attracted numberless sons
to follow Christ, our Lord,
and to leave all things
for the sake of giving themselves generously to you
in an eternal pact of love
dedicating themselves
to the service of their brothers and sisters.

Look, Father, on your elect;

fill them with the Spirit of holiness,
 so that with your help they can fulfill
 what they have promised with joy.
 May they always contemplate the divine Master
 and conform their lives to his example.

[May perfect chastity,
 generous obedience,
 and poverty lived with evangelical joy
 shine in them.

In their humility, may they be pleasing to you, Father,
 and may they serve you with docility,
 adhering to your will with all their hearts.

May they be patient in trials,
 strong in faith,
 happy in hope,
 and active in love.]

May their lives consecrated to you edify the Church,
 promote the salvation of the world
 and appear like a shining sign of things to come.

Be for them, Holy Father,
 a support and a guide,
 be you their true reward
 when they present themselves to your Son,
 and they will rejoice to have remained faithful
 to their consecration;
 confirmed in your love,
 they will sing eternal praise to you
 in the assembly of the Saints.
 (We make our prayer) through Christ our Lord.

All present:

Amen.

Or:

2
*May they become one heart
 and present an image of the heavenly community*

217. O God, by your gift, the holiness blooms in the Church:
 to you be praise from every creature.

At the beginning of time
 you created a beautiful and happy world
 and when it has been disturbed by the sin of Adam,
 you gave us the promise
 of a new heaven and a new earth.

You confided the earth to the human family
 so that with our work we might make it fruitful
 and passing through the ways of the world
 we might direct our steps towards the heavenly city.

To your children
 whom you have gathered into the Church through Baptism,

you distribute a great variety of charisms,
 so that some serve you in the holiness of marriage
 and others,
 renouncing marriage for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven,
 share all their goods with their brothers
 and, united in charity,
 become one heart
 and offer a reflection of the heavenly community.

We humbly beseech you, Father,
 to send your Spirit upon your sons,
 who listened to the word of Christ with faith.
 Strengthen their intention
 and grant that they may be inspired by the Gospel
 for their whole life.
 Awaken in them brotherly love and a caring concern
 for all men and women,
 so that they may show and give witness
 that you are the only true God
 and you love humanity with infinite love.
 Grant that they may endure with courage the trials of life,
 receive now the promised hundredfold
 and then the reward without end.
 (We make our prayer) through Christ our Lord.

All present:

Amen.

Or:

3

*The Order of Servants
 a sign of love and service to the Virgin Mary*

218. We praise you, Father, and we bless you,
 for your infinite kindness,
 through Christ in the Holy Spirit,
 you raised up humanity from its fall
 and made the people of the new Covenant
 a royal, priestly and prophetic line.

We give you thanks and glory
 because, by the work of our seven first Fathers,
 you gave rise to the Order of friar Servants of Mary
 so that it may be
 a sign of love and service to the Virgin Mary, in the Church,
 a place of encounter for free men and women,
 who want to follow Christ, your Son,
 and to serve their brothers and sisters
 by bearing witness to the Gospel.

Father, we now beseech you,
 to look kindly upon these your sons
 and send into them the Spirit of holiness,
 so that they may be faithful to their commitment

and grow continually in love.

May they live in search of your presence,
in listening to your Word,
and in the fulfilment of your will.

May the image of Christ shine in them
and may they be, like their Master,
gentle and humble,
full of zeal for your glory,
attentive to the salvation of mankind.

May they be open to the movement of the Holy Spirit,
attentive to his presence,
instruments of his peace and his joy.

Servants of Mary,
may they not cease to look to the cross,
and with the Mother may they be close to her Son,
where he is still suffering and dying,
so that the light of Easter may shine everywhere.
May humility and mercy,
a spirit of communion
and their search of beauty
shine in them, as it did in our first Fathers.

May they make the Gospel their own rule of life
and, day by day,
may they bend under the pains and labour of mankind,
until, at the end of their day,
you may find them as faithful servants,
their belts tightened and their lamps lighted,
waiting with vigilance for the arrival of the Lord
he who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All present:

Amen.

For only one professed:

219. We praise you, Father, and we bless you,
for your infinite kindness,
through Christ in the Holy Spirit,
you raised up humanity from its fall
and made the people of the new Covenant
a royal, priestly and prophetic line.

We give you thanks and glory
because, by the work of our seven first Fathers,
you gave rise to the Order of friar Servants of Mary
so that it may be
a sign of love and service to the Virgin Mary, in the Church,
a place of encounter for free men and women,
who want to follow Christ, your Son,
and to serve their brothers and sisters

by bearing witness to the Gospel.

Father, we now beseech you,
to look kindly upon this your son
and send into him the Spirit of holiness,
so that he may be faithful to his commitment
and grow continually in love.

May he live in search of your presence,
in listening to your Word,
and in the fulfilment of your will.

May the image of Christ shine in him
and may he be, like their Master,
gentle and humble,
full of zeal for your glory,
attentive to the salvation of mankind.

May he be open to the movement of the Holy Spirit,
attentive to his presence,
instrument of his peace and his joy.

Servant of Mary,
may he not cease to look to the cross,
and with the Mother may he be close to her Son,
where he is still suffering and dying,
so that the light of Easter may shine everywhere.
May humility and mercy,
a spirit of communion
and their search of beauty
shine in him, as it did in our first Fathers.

May he make the Gospel his own rule of life
and, day by day,
may he bend under the pains and labour of mankind,
until, at the end of his day,
you may find him as faithful servants,
his belt tightened and his lamp lighted,
waiting with vigilance for the arrival of the Lord
he who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All present:

Amen.

FRATERNAL WELCOME

220. After the prayer of blessing or consecration, the new solemn professed stand up. The guide of the celebration invites all solemn professed friar Servants of Mary present, to arrange themselves in the Sanctuary around the new solemn professed. Then the presider says these or similar words:

I, Brother **N.** Mary, Prior general,
together with these friars,
joyfully receive you, Brothers **N.N.**, for ever,

into our family:

from now on every thing will be held in common between us
and our commitment of life will be one,
so that one only is the Lord whom we follow,
walking in the same path.

Then the presider and the friars solemnly welcome them with fraternal embrace. In the meantime, the following antiphon or other adapted hymn is sung:

How good and how pleasant it is
when brothers live in unity.

Psalms 133 (132): 2

After the fraternal embrace, all go back to their places and the celebration of Eucharist proceeds as usual.

IV. EUCHARISTIC LITURGY

221. According to the local uses, the offertory hymn is sung, while bread, wine, water and other gifts are brought to the altar. If it is opportune, the parents of the new solemnly professed can participate in the offertory procession.

222. It is recommended to remember the new solemnly professed in the intercessions of the Eucharistic Prayer, with an appropriate formula.

a) In the Eucharistic Prayer I, we say the proper *Hanc igitur*:

Father, accept the offering that we present to you
we, your ministers and all your family
with these your servants on the day of their solemn profession:
as they have today consecrated their life to you
may they be received into the joy of the eternal Easter
on the day of the glorious coming of your Son.

b) In the Eucharistic Prayer II:

Remember also, Lord, our brothers,
who have today consecrated their lives for ever to your service;
grant that they turn their spirit and their hearts to you,
and give glory to your name.

c) In the Eucharistic Prayer III:

Confirm the holy decision of our brothers
who, by the solemn profession of religious vows,
have today consecrated their lives for ever to your service
and grant that, in your Church,
they manifest the new and eternal life,
the fruit of the redemption of Christ.

223. At the kiss of peace, the new solemnly professed exchange a sign of peace with their parents and friends.

224. In the mass «On the day of perpetual profession», all present may receive the Eucharist under both species.

V. CONCLUSIVE RITES

225. It is recommended that the presider dismiss the assembly with the solemn blessing, using one of the formulas indicated in the *Roman Missal* for the ritual Mass «On the day of perpetual profession» or the following formula:

Presider:

May God the Father
help you with his grace
to fulfil faithfully the commitments of your vocation.

All present:

Amen.

Presider:

May the Lord Jesus
make you true witnesses of the charity of the Church
and signs of the mercy of the Virgin Mary.

All present:

Amen.

Presider:

May the Holy Spirit
nourish in you the flame of love
and the light of hope.

All present:

Amen.

Presider:

And for all here present,
who have taken part in this holy celebration,
that the blessing of almighty God,
the Father and the Son + and the Holy Spirit
may come upon you and remain with you always.

All present:

Amen.

226. Following the tradition of the Order, the blessed Virgin Mary is honoured with the singing of the *Salve Regina* or the *Supplication of the Servants* or another Marian antiphon.