



# CONSTITUTIONS OF THE CISTERCIAN ORDER

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## PART 1

### THE NATURE, PURPOSE, AND MEMBERS OF THE CISTERCIAN ORDER

#### CHAPTER I

##### THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE CISTERCIAN ORDER

###### Article 1

The Cistercian Order, which looks to the mother monastery of Citeaux for its origin, consists of monastic congregations and monasteries not belonging to a congregation, which are all united in it.

###### Article 2

The purpose of the union of congregations and monasteries is the following:

- a. mutual inspiration and encouragement and the rendering of the reciprocal aid of charity, in order to lead the monastic life according to the Rule of St. Benedict and Cistercian traditions and continuously to adapt to the circumstances of life;
- b. a common and more effective representation before the Holy See, ecclesiastical and civil authorities, and other orders.

###### Article 3

The evangelical and theological principles of the Cistercian life and its union with the Church as well as its fundamental values are described in "The Declaration of the General Chapter on Cistercian Life Today" in addition to the Rule of St. Benedict, the Charter of Charity and the constitutions of the individual congregations.

###### Article 4

The name of our Order is "The Cistercian Order".

###### Article 5

The Cistercian Order constitutes a collegial, juridic person and is therefore a subject with obligations and rights and is able to possess and claim goods as its own.

###### Article 6

The Cistercian Order is governed by the General Chapter, the Synod of the Order, and the Abbot General with his Council according to these Constitutions, written by the General Chapter of the Order and approved by the Holy See. The new Constitutions or changes to the existing Constitutions

of Congregations of the Order and monasteries not incorporated to any Congregation must be submitted to the Holy See for approval by the Procurator General, after asking an expert in canon law to assess that they do not contain norms contrary to these Constitutions of the Order.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **THE MEMBERS OF THE ORDER**

#### **Article 7**

The Cistercian monastic congregations are the immediate members of the Order, not the individual monasteries, except those mentioned in Art. 8, nor the individual monks. The individual monks, therefore, belong through their own monastery to their congregation and through their congregation to the Order.

#### **Article 8**

§1. If a monastery of the Order, with due regard for the provisions of the law, is separated from its particular congregation and is not incorporated into another congregation of the Order, and likewise, if a monastery existing outside the Order but living according to Cistercian traditions is incorporated into the Order by the Holy See with the consent of the General Chapter but for grave and specific reasons does not enter a congregation of the Order, it shall be placed as an immediate member under the governance of the Abbot General for the time being.

§2. Similarly, for a monastery not incorporated into a congregation the faculties, rights, and duties that by common law and by these Constitutions are granted to the abbot presidents of monastic congregations belong to the Abbot General, besides the particular rights contained in the specific statutes of these monasteries, approved by the General Chapter or, if it is not in session, by the Synod of the Order.

#### **Article 9**

Monasteries of nuns incorporated by the Holy See into a congregation or directly into the Order (vi) belong to the Order by law and are subject to the authorities of the Order according to the norm of these Constitutions.

#### **Article 10**

Monasteries of Cistercian nuns can be incorporated or aggregated into particular monastic congregations of the Order, according to these Constitutions and with due regard for the provisions of the law, or directly into the Order, according to the judgment of the General Chapter or, if it is not in session, of the Synod of the Order.

#### **Article 11**

Congregations of nuns living according to Cistercian traditions can be incorporated into a congregation according to Art. 32 k or directly into the Order according to Art. 54 n of these Constitutions; moreover, congregations of sisters or of Cistercian oblates may be aggregated to a congregation or to the Order.

#### **Article 12**

Single monasteries of nuns that request incorporation, insofar as it is possible, may be incorporated into a congregation, but for grave reasons they can also be incorporated directly into the Order according to the judgment of the General Chapter or, if it is not in session, of the Synod of the Order.

### **Article 13**

It belongs to the General Chapter to define the conditions according to which congregations or monasteries of nuns are to be incorporated or a congregation of sisters or Cistercian oblates is to be aggregated to a congregation or directly to the Order.

### **Article 14**

That which is stated in these Constitutions about monasteries of monks or about monks applies also to monasteries of nuns or to nuns, unless the contrary is expressly stated or is evident from the very nature of the case.

## **PART 2**

### **THE CISTERCIAN CONGREGATIONS**

#### **CHAPTER I**

##### **THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE CISTERCIAN MONASTIC CONGREGATIONS**

### **Article 15**

The monastic congregations of the Cistercian Order are unions of several autonomous monasteries under a congregational chapter and under the same superior, who is called the president.

### **Article 16**

The Cistercian congregations are monastic congregations according to the norm of law. Each congregation is governed according to constitutions written by the congregational chapter and approved by the Holy See.

### **Article 17**

It belongs solely to the Apostolic See to establish new Cistercian monastic congregations and to suppress those established, after a vote reserved exclusively to the General Chapter. It also belongs to the competence of the Holy See to separate a monastery from its congregation and join it to another according to the norm of these Constitutions.

### **Article 18**

Beyond the special purpose which the individual congregations of the Order can have and which is to be expressed clearly in their own constitutions, the purpose of the Cistercian congregations is to encourage the Cistercian way of life to flourish more abundantly in them, the regular observance be kept more surely, the mutual help of charity in times of necessity be offered more promptly, those things that are contrary to the life of the congregation and monasteries be countered more effectively, and the tasks that the Church requires of the congregation be more peacefully and easily performed.

### **Article 19**

It belongs to the General Chapter to establish norms concerning the conditions required to establish a new congregation of the Order, as well as to determine the procedure in those cases when an existing congregation departs substantially from the prescribed norms.

#### **CHAPTER II**

##### **THE TYPES OF MONASTERIES AND STABILITY**

### **Article 20**

Our monasteries are *sui iuris*, either abbeys or conventual priories; or dependent houses, either of a monastery *sui iuris* or a chapter of a congregation.

#### **Article 21**

§ 1. To the superior of an autonomous monastery belong the rights and obligations of a major superior according to the norm of universal law and the constitutions of the particular congregation.

§ 2. An abbey is normally governed by an abbot, a conventual priory by a conventual prior.

§ 3. The abbot or the conventual prior is elected by the conventual chapter, unless the constitutions of the congregation grant to the *pater immediatus* the right of naming the first major superior.

§ 4. The abbot administrator or prior administrator who for grave reasons are to be appointed, always after the community has been consulted, by the one to whom the constitutions of the congregation grant this right.

§ 5. A simple priory is governed according to the norms of the constitutions of the individual congregations.

#### **Article 22**

Individual congregations are to determine the conditions for founding a dependent house, provided the statute concerning foundations is observed and everything is done according to law.

#### **Article 23**

§ 1. The chapter of a congregation cannot give consent to the canonical erection of a conventual priory unless the following are in place in addition to the provisions of the Statute of Foundations and Closures:

- a. a monastic family embracing a sufficient number of monks, such that, besides the conventual prior, at least eight solemnly professed are present who have declared that they have a firm intention of belonging in a stable manner to this monastery;
- b. the circumstances in which a new family can provide on its own for the necessities of conventual life;
- c. a well-founded hope that there will be candidates to be received and formed in order to strengthen and increase the monastic family, or that there will always be in the same place the appropriate number of monks even if they come from other monasteries;
- d. a good witness to fraternal life in common and a location suitable for the exercise of the regular life.

§ 2. The General Chapter alone can dispense from these conditions, in accordance with the Statute of Foundations and Closures.

#### **Article 24**

A conventual priory cannot be raised by the chapter of a congregation to the status of an abbey unless, in addition to the conditions prescribed in Art. 23, at least thirteen solemnly professed are present.

#### **Article 25**

If in an abbey or a conventual priory the number of monks prescribed respectively in Art. 24 and Art. 23 above, should later decrease significantly, certain rights and privileges of the abbey or of the conventual priory can be suspended by the congregational chapter following the procedure established in the Statute of Foundations and Reductions.

### **Article 26**

Whatever is said in these Constitutions regarding abbots holds also for conventual priors and administrators unless the contrary is evident from the very nature of the case or is expressly stated.

### **Article 27**

A monk can change stability from one autonomous monastery to another with the permission of the abbots of each monastery and with the consent of the chapter in that monastery to which he transfers as well as the consent of the abbot president when the transfer is to a monastery of the same congregation. When, however, the transfer is to a monastery of another congregation, the consent of the Abbot General is also required, the two abbot presidents of the respective congregations being notified.

### **Article 28**

1. The constitutions of the individual congregations should state the juridical condition for someone who is made an abbot or conventual prior in a monastery not his own.
2. The constitutions of the individual congregations should determine the rights of monks who dwell for a time in a monastery not their own.

### **Article 29**

Our monasteries are founded and dedicated in honor of the Virgin Mary, queen of heaven and earth.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **THE CONGREGATIONAL CHAPTER**

### **Article 30**

The congregational chapter is the supreme authority in the congregation. Its power and jurisdiction are to be derived, besides what is defined in universal law and these Constitutions, from the particular constitutions of each congregation.

### **Article 31**

The following matters pertain and are reserved to the congregational chapters:

- a. to compose the proper constitutions of the congregation after having at least consulted every community of the congregation and to submit them for the approval of the Holy See. In these constitutions, nothing can be established contrary to the prescriptions of these Constitutions and "The Declaration of the General Chapter of the Cistercian Order on the Principal Elements of Cistercian Life Today";
- b. to ask for changes in the constitutions of the congregations approved by the Holy See after having consulted each community of the congregation;
- c. to publish the customs of the congregation as well as the declarations and other instructions in which norms and precepts are given by which the principles of the constitutions of the congregation are applied to the particular circumstances of times and places;
- d. to pass laws and make decisions on matters regarding the whole congregation.

### **Article 32**

To the same chapters of the congregations are reserved the following, unless the constitutions declare otherwise or the chapter of the congregation arranges otherwise in particular cases:

- a. to elect the abbot president and his council;

- b. to observe and, if need be, to judge the exercise of office of the abbot president;
- c. to accept the resignation of the abbot president from his office;
- d. to observe and to judge the economic administration of the individual monasteries of the congregation according to the norms of the constitutions of the congregation, with due regard for the economic autonomy of the monasteries;
- e. to make decisions in liturgical matters that concern the entire congregation, with due regard for the provisions of the law;
- f. to decide cases in second instance the cases handled by the abbot of a monastery and to judge in first instance cases handles by the monasteries of the congregation or superiors of the monasteries of the congregation either in a judicial process or an administrative process, with due regard for the right of appeal to the General Chapter of the Order or, if it is not in session, to the Abbot General with his council;
- g. to give permission for the erection of a monastery *sui iuris* if the conditions prescribed in art. 23 are present;
- h. to erect an abbey if the conditions prescribed in art. 24 of these Constitutions and in the constitutions of the congregation are present;
- i. to write a statute for an abbey or conventual priory according to art. 25;
- k. to give consent for the incorporation of a monastery, whether of monks or of nuns, as well as of a congregation of nuns into the congregation and for the aggregation of a congregation or federation of sisters or Cistercian oblates, before a decree is requested from the Holy See, with due regard for the provisions of the law;
- l. to give consent for a parish be entrusted perpetually to a monastery of the congregation, unless the constitutions of the particular congregation declare otherwise, with due regard for the provisions of the law;
- m. to establish or change within the congregation the *pater immediatus* of a monastery of Cistercian nuns;
- n. to make decisions about the property of a monastery of the congregation that is completely extinct or suppressed, with due regard for the laws of justice and the will of the founders.

### **Article 33**

§ 1. The constitutions of the individual congregations should establish the frequency of the ordinary congregational chapter, as long as the congregational chapter is held at least every three years; they should likewise prescribe the mode of proceeding if due to uncontrollable events or other grave causes the congregational chapter is not able to be held in the judgment of the council of the abbot president.

§ 2. To support the unity of the Order and the mutual familiarity among the congregations, the constitutions of the congregations shall establish a way for inviting the Abbot General to participate in the proper chapter meetings of the congregation.

### **Article 34**

The constitutions of the congregations should provide a fitting way for monks to be present at the congregational chapter with a deliberative vote in addition to the major superiors. For the election of these monks, all the members of the monasteries, except for the novices, should have a truly valid role.

### **Article 35**

The acts of the congregational chapter should be transmitted to the Abbot General within three months of the end of the chapter; decrees made according to art. 32 should likewise be

transmitted.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **THE ABBOT PRESIDENT AND HIS COUNCIL**

#### **Article 36**

The abbot president has the rights and duties of the supreme moderator of a monastic congregation, with due regard for the prescriptions of these Constitutions and of the constitutions of the particular congregation.

#### **Article 37**

It is the concern of the abbot president to safeguard and promote the life in the monasteries according to the norm of the constitutions of the particular congregations.

#### **Article 38**

1. It belongs to the abbot president:
  - a. to convoke the congregational chapter and to preside over it;
  - b. to preside at the elections of abbots and conventual priors of his congregation and to confirm the newly elected, unless the constitutions of the particular congregation declare otherwise; the elections of major superiors must be communicated to the Abbot General as soon as possible;
  - c. to perform the regular ordinary visitation of all the monasteries of the congregation with the exception of his own, according to the norms prescribed by the constitutions of the particular congregation.

#### **Article 39**

In special cases the abbot president can dispense individual communities from some observance of a disciplinary precept of his own congregation, with due regard for the authority of the congregational chapter to review and restrict such dispensations.

#### **Article 40**

The abbot president is obligated to give an account of his administration and present his report on the state of the congregation at each congregational chapter.

#### **Article 41**

It is the duty of the abbot president to prepare a report on the state of the congregation for the General Chapter and for the Synod of the Order.

#### **Article 42**

Each of the members of the congregation has free access to the abbot president by epistolary correspondence.

#### **Article 43**

The abbot president ordinarily governs the congregation, aided by his council designated according to the norm of the constitutions of the respective congregation.

#### **Article 44**

In the case of grave and urgent necessity, unless the constitutions of the congregation declare otherwise, the abbot president can with the consent of his council members establish a statute

concerning the whole congregation, which, however, is valid only until the next congregational chapter, by which it is to be approved or rejected.

#### **Article 45**

The constitutions of the individual congregations should establish how the good of the congregation is to be provided for if the abbot president for whatever reason cannot discharge his office, and likewise how a council member is to be substituted should he be impeded or die.

#### **Article 46**

If in a congregation the law of filiation is in effect, these rights are exercised according to the constitutions of the congregation.

### **CHAPTER V**

#### **THE REGULAR VISITATION IN THE CONGREGATION**

#### **Article 47**

The ordinary visitor of the monasteries of the congregation is, unless the constitutions of the congregation declare otherwise, the abbot president, with due regard for art. 84 b-f of these Constitutions.

#### **Article 48**

The constitutions of the individual congregations can assign the visitation of the monastery of the abbot president to at least two visitors belonging to the congregation and designated by the congregational chapter, with the right of the Abbot General according to art. 84a of these Constitutions being preserved.

#### **Article 49**

The duty of the visitor or visitors is to inquire into the general state of the monastery in both spiritual and temporal matters according to the norms of universal and particular law. If he so wishes, he may use the services of an expert in financial matters. He should discretely strive to bring to a better situation whatever needs to be amended, accommodated, or renewed. Hence, the visitation should be organized in such a way that neither the monasteries' legitimate autonomy established in the constitutions nor the authority of the abbots is reduced, but is strengthened, and in this way the visitation should in a true sense serve the growth of the monasteries.

#### **Article 50**

Recourse may be had to the congregational chapter concerning a decree of the visitation, according to the norm of law.

#### **Article 51**

Each monastery should have an ordinary visitation every three years.

### **PART 3**

#### **THE GOVERNANCE OF THE ORDER**

### **TITLE I**

#### **THE GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE ORDER**

### **CHAPTER I**

#### **THE AUTHORITY OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER**



## Article 52

The General Chapter, as the central legislative and judicial organ for fraternal deliberation, is the supreme authority in the Order, with due regard, however, for the legitimate autonomy of each congregation and monastery according to universal law and the present Constitutions, and the constitutions for the individual congregations approved by the Holy See.

## Article 53

The activity of the General Chapter is expressed through laws and decrees that obligate the entire Order, unless they are against a particular purpose or the constitutions of a congregation approved by the Holy See, as well as with resolutions, declarations, and proposals. In the case of doubt, the General Chapter, after the report of the dissenting side has been heard, decides whether something is against a particular purpose or the constitutions of a congregation approved by the Holy See.

## Article 54

To the General Chapter in particular is responsible:

- a. to establish laws that obligate the entire Order according to the norm of these Constitutions;
- b. to issue a statute concerning a change to the Constitutions of the Order, which, however, cannot be put into effect unless the approval of the Holy See has been obtained; to the Holy See belongs also the authentic interpretation of these same Constitutions;
- c. to elect the Abbot General of the Order according to Art. 65 § 1;
- d. to elect the Procurator General of the Order, who represents the cases of the individual congregations before the Holy See, according to Art. 65 § 3;
- e. to check the administration of the Abbot General according to Art. 81;
- f. to accept the resignation from office of the Abbot General and, if need be, to remove him from office, with due regard for the prescriptions of the law;
- g. to check the administration of the Procurator General and to accept his resignation from office if the length of time for which he was elected has not yet elapsed and, if need be, to remove him from office, with due regard for the prescriptions of the law;
- h. to approve the particular statutes of individual monasteries which are not incorporated into a congregation, drawn up by the respective chapter;
- i. to impose a tax for the needs of the General Chapter and the General Curia on all the congregations and upon the monasteries not belonging to a congregation, according to the law of equity, and to seek charitable assistance for other purposes;
- j. to give consent for the establishment or aggregation of a new Cistercian monastic congregation to the Order according to art. 17 and 19 of these Constitutions;
- k. to give consent for the union or suppression of congregations before a decree is requested of the Holy See;
- l. to give consent for the incorporation into the Order of monasteries, whether of men or of women, that are not incorporated into a congregation according to art. 8 and 12;
- n. to give consent for the incorporation or aggregation of congregations of nuns or for the aggregation of sisters or Cistercian oblates according to art. 10 and 11;
- o. to give consent for the establishment of a new feast of a saint or mystery or for the elevation, reduction, or suppression of a feast for the whole Order, observing what must be observed of the law, as well as to approve the structure of the common rites of the Order;
- p. to give consent for the initiation of contracts, whenever such contracts obligate the entire Order, and to establish a statute concerning the required formalities for these contracts if the General Chapter is not in session;

- q. to make decisions about the property of a congregation that is completely extinct or about the property of a monastery that is not incorporated into a congregation in the case of suppression, with the laws of justice and the will of the founders as well as art. 74 g being preserved;
- r. to approve the Statutes of the International College of St. Bernard in Rome and to change them for a just cause;
- s. to approve the Order of Celebrating the General Chapter and, if need be, to change it according to the norms established by it;
- t. to elect five synod fathers and three substitutes for them and five synod mothers and three substitutes for them according to art. 71 § 1, and to elect three male major superiors and three female major superiors as members of the council of the Abbot General as well as their substitutes according to art. 96 of these Constitutions. The synod fathers and mothers as well as the members of the Abbot General's council are elected from among the superiors who have a seat in the General Chapter, including the Procurator General.
- u. to establish various committees as necessity demands and to elect their members;
- v. to grant to someone a seat and a deliberative vote in General Chapters on account of their outstanding services toward the Order;
- x. to decide cases at the final instance within the Order, whether by a judicial or an administrative course, if they have been brought to it; to settle in the second instance controversies between monasteries or between superiors of the same congregation; or to settle in the first instance controversies between congregations or between their superiors, always with due regard for the right of appeal to the Holy See. Recourse may be had by the chapter of a congregation of the Order to the General Chapter of the Order and by the same to the Holy See.

## CHAPTER II

### THOSE WHO HAVE A SEAT AND A VOICE IN THE GENERAL CHAPTER

#### Article 55

To the General Chapter of the Order, whether ordinary or extraordinary, the following are to be convoked and have a deliberative vote:

- a. the Abbot General, the Abbot General Emeritus, the Procurator General, and those to whom, on account of their outstanding services rendered to the Order, the General Chapter has granted a seat and a vote in General Chapters;
- b. the Abbot Presidents in office in the monastic congregations of the Order;
- c. the major superiors in office of a *sui iuris* monastery incorporated into the Order who on the day of the convocation to the General Chapter possess all the requisites to be autonomous as established in art. 23-24 in this Constitution;
- d. if, according to the norm of art. 19, the rights of a congregation are suspended from the General Chapter, then its monasteries, in reference to this article, are considered monasteries not incorporated to a congregation.

#### Article 56

If one of the chapter members who has a seat and a deliberative vote in the General Chapter cannot come to the General Chapter, he should send another solemnly professed monk or nun delegated by him to the General Chapter with a letter of delegation, with the exception of the Abbot General Emeritus and those who are invited on account of outstanding services rendered to the Order. Such a delegate has the right of a deliberative vote in the General Chapter.

### **Article 57**

If one of the chapter members for just cause cannot be present for certain sessions or must depart before the end of the General Chapter, he can, with the Order of Celebrating the General Chapter being observed, delegate another chapter member, so long as no chapter member ever has more than two votes.

### **Article 58**

It belongs to the General Chapter to establish a statute concerning the experts to be invited to the General Chapter.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **THE TIME AND FORM OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER**

### **Article 59**

§1. The ordinary General Chapter is held every five years.

§2. Besides the ordinary General Chapter, an extraordinary chapter should be convoked according to the norm of these Constitutions when the Abbot General of the Order must be elected or whenever grave necessity or the interest of the Order demands it, according to the judgment of the Abbot General with the consent of the majority of the synod fathers or according to the judgment of two thirds of the synod fathers.

§3. A new series of General Chapters begins with an extraordinary General Chapter, so that the next ordinary General Chapter should be held five years calculated from the last extraordinary General Chapter.

### **Article 60**

§ 1. The President of the General Chapter will be the Abbot General or, if the seat of Abbot General is legitimately vacant for whatever reason, the abbot president who is the senior in abbatial office, or if several became abbot at the same time, the senior by profession.

§2. If the Abbot General or, if his seat is legitimately vacant, his substitute is not able to appear at the General Chapter on the designated day and preside over it for a truly grave reason, another abbot delegated by him or, if he delegates no one, the first abbot in order of precedence presides over the General Chapter.

### **Article 61**

§1. Once the convocation has been legitimately made, the right of electing and voting belongs to those who are present in the chapter hall.

§ 2. For elections, if one of the electors is present in the house in which the General Chapter is held but cannot be present for the election because of ill health, his vote is to be obtained according to the norm prescribed in the Order of Celebrating the General Chapter.

### **Article 62**

Even if someone has the right to vote in his own name by more than one title, he can cast only one vote; in the case of delegation no chapter father can have more than two votes.

### **Article 63**

§ 1. A vote is null unless it is free, certain, absolute, and determined.

§ 2. Conditions appended to a vote prior to the election are to be considered as not having been added.

#### **Article 64**

§ 1. For any decision of the General Chapter to obligate the entire Order, it is necessary that, in the judgment of the General Chapter, the matter pertains to the entire Order and that it be declared obligatory for the entire Order by two thirds of the votes, with due regard for art. 53.

§ 2. For decisions to be made with regard to other matters in the General Chapter, an absolute majority of the votes of those who cast a ballot, with null votes having been subtracted; if there is a tie, the president decides the matter. Abstentions are considered as null votes.

§ 3. What pertains to all as individuals, however, ought to be approved by all.

#### **Article 65**

§ 1. For the election of the Abbot General, in the first three ballots two thirds of the votes are required. After an inconclusive third ballot a fourth takes place, in which those two candidates who in the third ballot received a relative majority of the votes have a passive not an active voice. In this ballot an absolute majority of the votes suffices. In the case of a tie in the third ballot, he has a passive voice for the fourth ballot who is senior by profession or, in the case of equality of profession, by age; in the fourth ballot he is considered elected who is senior by profession or age.

§ 2. In elections of moderators and other officials of the General Chapter as well as of members of commissions elected by the General Chapter a relative majority of the votes suffices.

§ 3. For other elections carried out in the General Chapter an absolute majority of the votes is required, so that in the third ballot those two candidates alone who in the second ballot received a relative majority of the votes have a passive not an active voice.

#### **Article 66**

All the acts of the General Chapter, whether (of) elections or [other] official transactions, must be recorded faithfully in writing by notaries and must be signed at the end of the minutes of the last session by them and by all the chapter members.

#### **Article 67**

What has been decreed and defined in the General Chapter is published in the Acts of the General Curia and promulgated appropriately to the individual monasteries of the Order either in Latin or in translation.

#### **Article 68**

The expenses for both food and travel that arise on the occasion of the General Chapter should be paid by each monastery or congregation according to the norms passed by the respective Congregation, unless provision is made otherwise for a General Chapter.

#### **Article 69**

Regarding what pertains to the rite and form of celebrating the General Chapter, the prescriptions of the Order for Celebrating the General Chapter, approved by the General Chapter, should be observed.

### **TITLE II**

#### **THE SYNOD OF THE ORDER**

#### **Article 70**

The Synod of the Order is a college that is convoked with the purpose of gathering advice on issues that regard the entire Order, discussing them, and proposing them to the General Chapter for a decision. If certain issues are urgent, the Synod should decide them in a preliminary manner until the decision of the next General Chapter, according to the norm of these Constitutions.

It is also the task of the Synod of the Order to see that, as there is need, those matters are carried out that have been prescribed by the Holy See or the General Chapter; to gather accurate information on the status of the Order so that its good can be better provided for; and finally, to receive the reports of the Abbot General on the status of the Order and of the abbot presidents on the status of their congregations.

### **Article 71**

§ 1. The Synod of the Order consists of the Abbot General, who invites the synod members and presides over the sessions, the abbot presidents of the individual congregations of the Order, the Procurator General of the Order, the members of the Abbot's Council, and five synod mothers and five synod fathers elected by the General Chapter according to Art. 54 u, who will remain in office until the next General Chapter.

§ 2. If a synod father, who by virtue of his office is a member of the Synod of the Order, cannot come to the Synod of the Order, he should send a delegate; in the same situation, a synod father who has been elected should be substituted for by the first substitute. A delegate or substitute has the right of a deliberative vote in the Synod of the Order.

§ 3. The Abbot General, with the consent of his Council and an absolute majority of the votes of the Synod of the Order, can call experts to the Synod of the Order, so that they, with their knowledge, may contribute to properly and advantageously resolving the questions to be treated at the Synod of the Order.

§ 4. It belongs to the Abbot General to name, in addition to the secretary of the Synod of the Order appointed according to Art. 74 q, notaries and other officials with at least the written consent of his Council.

§ 5. If between two General Chapters, an elected Synod member's term as a major superior of his community ends, his terms also ceases as a member of the Synod, and he is substituted by the first substitute elected by the General Chapter.

### **Article 72**

§ 1. The ordinary Synod of the Order is to be held every two years, so that it is celebrated at least twice between two ordinary General Chapters.

§ 2. An extraordinary Synod of the Order is to be held whenever urgent and grave necessity demands it, according to the judgment of the Abbot General with the consent of the majority of the abbot presidents or according to the judgment of two thirds of the synod fathers.

### **Article 73**

The sessions of the Synod of the Order are celebrated according to the Order of Celebrating the Synod of the Order approved by the Synod of the Order itself.

### **Article 74**

When the General Chapter is not in session, it is the right of the Synod of the Order and is reserved to it:

- a. to decide and define the cases, questions, and issues referred by the General Chapter to the Synod of the Order;
- b. if a matter is urgent and there is danger of grave harm in delay, to establish a statute

obligating the entire Order, unless it is against a congregation's particular purpose or constitutions; such a statute is only valid until the next General Chapter, whether ordinary or extraordinary, by which it must be approved or rejected. The Synod of the Order, however, cannot establish a statute that is by nature irrevocable, with due regard for the faculties expressly given to the Synod of the Order in this article;

- c. to give permission for the erection of a religious house of the Order, for the erection of a priory *sui iuris*, or for the restoration of an abbey, when it concerns monasteries not belonging to a congregation, with due regard for the prescriptions of the law;
- d. to give consent for the transfer, union, or suppression of a monastery not belonging to a congregation, with due regard for the prescriptions of the law;
- e. to incorporate individual monasteries of nuns directly into the Order, with due regard for art. 12 and 13, but not federations or congregations;
- f. to approve statutes written according to art. 8 § 2 for monasteries not incorporated into a congregation;
- g. to make decisions about the property of a suppressed monastery not incorporated into a congregation and, if there is fear of great harm in delay, about the property of a suppressed congregation of the Order, with due regard for the laws of justice and the will of the founders;
- h. to remove the Procurator General during the time appointed for his administration, with due regard for the prescriptions of the law;
- i. to elect a Procurator General in place of a Procurator who has died or when his office is legitimately vacant outside the time of the General Chapter, until the next General Chapter;
- k. to give consent for the convocation of an extraordinary General Chapter, with due regard for art. 88 § 2 of these Constitutions;
- l. to establish a preparatory committee for the General Chapter, if need be and if the preceding General Chapter has not established such a committee, yet with the committees instituted by the General Chapter continuing in all circumstances in their office;
- m. to define at the time of the declaration of the General Chapter the matters to be considered, with due regard for the right of the chapter fathers to propose other matters at the General Chapter itself according to the norm of the Order of Celebrating the General Chapter;
- n. to elect the members of the Council of the Abbot General according to art. 96, if the General Chapter cannot be held;
- o. to elect the secretary of the Synod of the Order, who need not necessarily be a member of the Synod of the Order and who will remain in his office until the next Synod of the Order, and his substitute.

#### **Article 75**

In the cases just enumerated the synod fathers have a deliberative vote that is to be sought and given in assembly, except in the cases expressed in the preceding article c, k, m, and n; in these circumstances the written consent of the synod fathers suffices if the matter is urgent and there is danger of grave harm in delay, in which case the Procurator General and the secretary of the Synod of the Order perform the office of tellers.

The outcome of each ballot conducted in this way should be noted precisely in a book specially designated for this and be signed by the Abbot General and the secretary of the Synod of the Order.

#### **Article 76**

§ 1. That has the force of law which, not counting the null votes, the absolute majority of the voters approves; if the votes are equal, after the third ballot the president of the assembly can break the tie with his own vote.

§ 2. In elections carried out according to art. 74 i and n, the prescriptions of art. 65 § 2 should be observed; in others, an absolute majority of the votes suffices at first, or after two inconclusive ballots, even a relative majority.

#### **Article 77**

When the seat of the Abbot General is legitimately vacant, the Synod of the Order should not be held, but the General Chapter ought to be held as soon as possible to elect a new Abbot General. The Abbot General's substitute can, however, with the written consent of the synod fathers having been sought, convoke the Synod of the Order, if the celebration of the Synod of the Order seems necessary to prepare properly for the General Chapter.

#### **Article 78**

The expenses for both food and travel that arise on the occasion of the Synod of the Order should be paid according to the judgment of the Synod of the Order.

### **TITLE III**

#### **THE ABBOT GENERAL OF THE ORDER AND HIS COUNCIL**

##### **CHAPTER I**

###### **THE OFFICE OF THE ABBOT GENERAL**

#### **Article 79**

When the General Chapter is not in session, the Cistercian Order is governed by the Abbot General, who is its supreme moderator according to the norm of these Constitutions, assisted both by the Synod of the Order or his Council. His title is: Abbot General of the Cistercian Order.

#### **Article 80**

It belongs to the Abbot General to promote the spiritual and temporal welfare of the Order and especially to settle matters that cannot be postponed until the next General Chapter, with due regard for the prescriptions of these Constitutions in all things.

##### **CHAPTER II**

###### **THE DUTIES AND RIGHTS OF THE ABBOT GENERAL**

#### **Article 81**

The authority by which the Abbot General governs the Order is to be exercised according to the intention of the General Chapter, which can approve or reject the acts of the Abbot General.

#### **Article 82**

To the Abbot General belong all the privileges once granted to the Abbots of Citeaux and later to the general superiors of the Order, as long as they are still in use and have not been revoked.

#### **Article 83**

In addition to those things enumerated in these Constitutions or granted to the Abbot General specifically in the constitutions of a congregation of the Order, the following pertain to the Abbot General:

- a. to convoke the ordinary and extraordinary General Chapter, all other things being observed that are to be observed, and to preside over it;
- b. to establish a statute in the case of grave and urgent necessity with the consent of the synod fathers; such a statute is to be reviewed consequently by the General Chapter according to art. 74 b;
- c. to dispense in particular cases from prescriptive or prohibitive laws but not from constitutive laws obligating the entire Order;
- d. to confirm the elections of superiors of monasteries *sui iuris* not incorporated into a congregation;
- e. to give consent for changes of stability according to art. 27;
- f. to name administrators for abbeys or conventual priories not incorporated into a congregation, if an election must be postponed for a grave cause;
- g. to extend, once the consent of his council has been obtained, up to five years after the concession of the first year of an indult of exlaustration given by the major superior for a monk of a monastery directly incorporated into the Order;
- h. to confirm, after having obtained the consent of his council, an indult of definitive departure from the monastery, granted to a person with temporary vows of a monastery directly incorporated into the Order;
- i. to issue, after having obtained the consent of his council, the decree of dismissal of a nun of temporary vows of a monastery directly incorporated into the Order;
- j. to have printed the liturgical books that are used for the entire Order;
- k. to judge with his Council, when the General Chapter is not in session, all cases in the third instance, cases against major superiors in the second instance, and cases against abbot presidents in the first instance, always with due regard for the right of recourse to the General Chapter.

#### **Article 84**

Furthermore, it belongs to the Abbot General:

- a. to perform the regular visitation of the monasteries of the abbot presidents himself or through another delegated by him every three years or, if the monastery of an abbot president also has visitators designated by the chapter of the respective congregation according to art. 48, every six years;
- b. to visit on account of grave necessities and difficult circumstances a monastery of a congregation with the consent of his Council and with the abbot president of the congregation having been previously advised; he should generally have the abbot president as his associate in the visitation;
- c. to visit, having obtained the consent of his council, all the monasteries of a congregation on account of grave circumstances, with the abbot president of the congregation having been heard;
- d. to visit a monastery of a congregation if he is invited by a majority of the monastery to make a visitation, with the abbot president of the respective congregation having been heard;
- e. to visit monasteries whose ordinary visitation is not carried out by those to whom it pertains during the two periods prescribed by the Constitutions;
- f. to make a paternal visit in all the monasteries of the Order at least once during his administration.

#### **Article 85**

The Abbot General has the faculty:

- a. to bestow the abbatial benediction upon newly elected abbots and to delegate this faculty if



- he deems it necessary. To this end, there should be a consultation between the Abbot General and the newly elected Abbot;
- b. to confer on monks of the Order the ministries of lector and acolyte, as long as they are provided with dimissorial letters from their major superior, with due regard for the prescriptions of the law;
  - c. to hear the confessions of the members of the Order if they freely request it, with due regard for the prescriptions of the law.

#### **Article 86**

The Abbot General cannot administer the property or persons of a community or congregation of the Order.

#### **Article 87**

Every member of the Order has free access to the Abbot General by correspondence.

### **CHAPTER III**

#### **THE ELECTION OF THE ABBOT GENERAL**

#### **Article 88**

§ 1. If the Abbot General dies or is impeded or if his office is legitimately vacant in any way, the first abbot among the abbot presidents should immediately assume his office, in such a way, however, that he cannot establish anything new or to do anything without at least the written consent of his Council having been sought.

§ 2. When the office of the Abbot General is legitimately vacant, the principal concern of the substitute will be that as soon as possible, at least within six months of the vacancy of the office of the Abbot General, a General Chapter is convoked at which a new Abbot General may be provided according to the norm of these Constitutions.

#### **Article 89**

He is eligible for the office of Abbot General who has been solemnly professed in our Order for at least seven years and has been ordained a priest and has completed his thirty-fifth year and not completed is seventy-fifth year of age.

#### **Article 90**

He is considered elected who according to art. 65 § 1 of these Constitutions obtains the requisite number of votes or who is postulated properly according to the norm of ecclesiastical law, with election through electoral compromise excluded.

#### **Article 91**

§ 1. He who has been elected Abbot General must within three days of useful time after having been notified of his election make known whether he consents to his election or refuses it; otherwise he loses every right acquired by his election.

§ 2. If he consents to his election, he immediately acquires full right to the office and does not need any confirmation; his election should be made known to the Supreme Pontiff.

§ 3. If the one elected as Abbot General is not present at the General Chapter, the following should be observed:

- a. the election should be made known to the one who is absent as soon as possible according to § 1;
- b. if the one elected consents to the election, he should come immediately to the place of

- the General Chapter, or if he is detained in a rather remote location, he can delegate another, who can preside in his name at the General Chapter according to art. 60 § 2;
- c. in the meantime, the chapter members should refrain from every act of election; but lest the time be wasted, they can spend it in discussing and determining particular questions, with the first abbot presiding over the General Chapter in the interim according to art. 60 § 2, unless the delegate mentioned in b presides.

#### **Article 92**

If the Abbot General legitimately elected in the General Chapter is not yet an abbot, he receives thereby full right to the abbatial blessing; he ought to receive the abbatial blessing within three months of his election from a bishop freely chosen by himself.

#### **Article 93**

§ 1. The Abbot General is elected for ten years. If when ten years have elapsed after his election the General Chapter is not held, according to art. 59 § 3, he remains in office until the next General Chapter, whether ordinary or extraordinary. The Abbot General is always re-eligible.

§ 2. Once the time of his term has elapsed, the Abbot General is to voluntarily present his resignation from office to the General Chapter, unless the General Chapter has determined otherwise, which will make provisions after the circumstances have been examined.

§ 3. If, at the moment of election, the elected monk has already completed his seventieth year of age, then he may be elected for only five years.

#### **Article 94**

The Abbot General regularly resides in Rome, at the General House of the Order. His office is incompatible with the office of superior of a monastery *sui iuris*. Without a dispensation from the Apostolic See, therefore, the Abbot General cannot retain governance of a monastery of the Order.

#### **Article 95**

The Abbot General, when he properly relinquishes his office according to the norm of law, has the right either of returning to the monastery of his profession or of choosing another monastery of the Order in which to live. It belongs to the General Chapter to provide fittingly for his livelihood.

### **CHAPTER IV**

#### **THE COUNCIL OF THE ABBOT GENERAL**

#### **Article 96**

§ 1. The Council of the Abbot General, which is also the Council of the General House, consists of the Procurator General who is a council member due to his office, as well as three male major superiors and three female major superiors elected by the General Chapter according to art. 54 t or by the Synod according to art. 74 n during the time between two General Chapters, except for what is said in § 3.

§ 2. The General Chapter or, if the General Chapter is impeded, the Synod of the Order, elects two monks and two nuns as additional members, to be substitutes in fulfilling their office for the members of the Council who are hindered from the exercise of their office for any reason.

§ 3. If, between two General Chapters, a council member's term as major superior ends in his/her community, then his/her term ends also as council member and is substituted by the first of the substitutes elected by the General Chapter.

#### **Article 97**

For the validity of acts of the Council it is required that, besides the Abbot General, at least two council members are present, when the convocation of all the members with due regard for art. 96 § 3 has been properly carried out. Those who cannot come to the assembly can send their opinion in writing.

#### **Article 98**

§ 1. The Council of the Abbot General is to be convoked, with due regard for art. 100:

- a. when the Abbot General by universal or particular law needs the consent or advice of his Council, except in cases reserved strictly for the General Chapter and Synod of the Order;
- b. every time the Abbot General, exercising the rights and faculties of abbot president or father immediate toward monasteries not incorporated into a congregation, needs the consent or advice of his Council according to the norm of universal or particular law.

§ 2. The Abbot General's Council, as Council of the General House, listens at least once a year to the report of the Procurator General, the Rector of the College and the Bursar of the House.

#### **Article 99**

§ 1. The vote of the Council of the Abbot General, with due regard for Art. 100, is deliberative:

- a. in deciding cases delegated by the Synod of the Order to this Council;
- b. in giving consent for the initiation of a legal proceeding before a tribunal, whether civil or ecclesiastical, if it concerns the General Curia or monasteries not incorporated into a congregation;
- c. in making a decision in the dismissal of religious from solemn vows every time the case is transmitted to the Abbot General, with due regard for the prescriptions of the law;
- d. whenever the Abbot General must give an opinion to the Holy See in the name of the entire Order; nevertheless, the Abbot General is completely free when by virtue of his office he must give information and an opinion concerning matters brought or to be brought to the Holy See;
- e. for monasteries directly incorporated into the Order, to give consent to extend the indulgence of excommunication for five years the limit of the period of time of the concession of the first year made by the major superior
- f. whenever universal or particular law prescribe a deliberative vote of the Council.

§ 2. In other cases their vote is consultative, with due regard for the prescriptions of the statutes of the monasteries not incorporated into a congregation, approved according to art. 8 § 2; these statutes in other cases can grant even a deliberative vote to the Council of the Abbot General.

#### **Article 100**

The Abbot General, if he so judges on account of the nature and importance of a matter, can defer other business brought to his Council to the Synod of the Order. (Cf. art. 71 § 3)

### **TITLE IV**

#### **THE PROCURATOR GENERAL**

#### **Article 101**

§ 1. For matters to be treated in Rome before the Holy See the Procurator General of the Order is assigned by the General Chapter according to art. 65 § 3. He also represents the causes of the individual congregations before the Holy See.

§ 2. The Procurator General remains in office until the next General Chapter and can always be re-elected.

§ 3. The Procurator General, due to his office is a member of the General Chapter, of the Synod of the Order, and the Abbot General's Council.

#### **Article 102**

In matters to be treated that pertain to the entire Order, he should do nothing without the counsel and consent of the Abbot General.

#### **Article 103**

If recourse is to be taken against the Abbot General to the Holy See, when the General Chapter is not in session, he needs the consent of the Synod of the Order made manifest by a two-thirds majority while they are in assembly.

#### **Article 104**

§ 1. For matters of individual congregations to be treated before the Holy See, he needs the consent of the abbot president of the respective congregation.

§ 2. For matters of greater importance for the congregations, he should inform the Abbot General for the sake of counsel or help according to the case, as well as that he may also satisfy the requests from the Holy See.

#### **Article 105**

The Procurator General, however, should be free when by virtue of his office he ought to give information and an opinion concerning matters brought or to be brought to the Holy See. However, always preserving fully the faculty to have recourse to the Holy See if necessary, all are advised to make use of the Procurator General's work.

#### **Article 106**

He should request no faculty from the Holy See for any religious of the Order unless the major superior of the religious requesting it or the abbot president of the congregation approves the request.

#### **Article 107**

He should take care that decrees that have come from the Holy See and that pertain to the Cistercian Order either directly or indirectly and that are not promulgated in the Acts of the Apostolic See be published in the Acts of the General Curia and thus notify the superiors and members of the Order of them.

#### **Article 108**

If when the General Chapter is not in session the office of the Procurator General for whatever reason legitimately becomes vacant, the prescription of art. 74 of these Constitutions should be observed.

#### **Article 109**

The Procurator General resides in Rome in the General House of the Order; it belongs to the General Chapter to provide fittingly for his livelihood.