

CONSTITUTIONS
OF THE SOCIETY
OF
THE PRIESTS
OF SAINT SULPICE

2003 French Edition
2005 English Translation



SACRED CONGREGATION
FOR RELIGIOUS AND
SECULAR INSTITUTES

Prot. n. P. 15 - 1/78

DE C R E E

The Society of the Priests of St. Sulpice, whose generalate is located in Paris, has for its vocation to bring together diocesan priests and put them at the service of the bishops for the formation and sanctification of priests and future priests, ordained for the service of local churches.

In accord with the decrees of the Second Vatican Council and their norms of application, the Society has produced a new text of its Constitutions which the Superior General, following the vote of the General Assembly, has presented to the Holy See for its approval.

The Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, after having submitted the text for study by the Consultors, and taking into account the favorable vote of the Assembly, approves and confirms the text, modified by the same Assembly, in its French language version, which is kept in the Archives, on the condition that everything required by the law be observed.

This Sacred Congregation expresses the wish that, through faithful observance of these Constitutions, the Priests of St. Sulpice will be more and more suited, according to the desire of their founder, "to renew the church through instructing many priests in the ecclesiastical spirit, who will then go out and give service to God wherever it will please Him to call them." (*Memoires autographes*, 3, 83).

Given at Rome, December 25, 1981, on the feast of the Birth of the Lord.

E. Card. Pironio, Pref.

*+ Requiescat in pace
hu.*



CONGREGATIO
PRO INSTITUTIS VITAE CONSECRATAE
ET SOCIETATIBUS VITAE APOSTOLICAE

Vatican City, June 3, 2003

Prot. N. P 15 – 1/2003

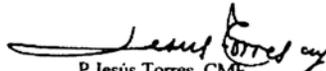
Dear Father,

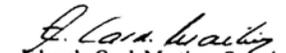
On April 19, 2003 you requested the approval of some modifications to the text of the Constitutions of the Society of the Priests of Saint Sulpice. These changes were voted by a two-thirds majority of your General Assembly of July 2002.

After studying your request carefully, the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life is pleased to approve these changes of the text you sent us. They concern articles 1, 4, 8, 14, 109 (to which were added references to documents) and articles 27, 52, 54, 60, 98 and 136. The Dicastery also approves article 110, but we wish to add further precision to the text as follows:

The Provincial Council is competent for the alienation of goods for which it is directly responsible and whose value does not exceed the maximum limit determined by the Holy See for each region and when the decision does not concern goods which have been given to the Church as the result of a vow or objects which are precious because of their artistic or historic value (Cf. C. 638 #3 and 1292 #2). In these latter cases the consent of the General Council and the Holy See are required.

With gratitude for the precious service that the Society of the Priests of Saint Sulpice renders to the Church, with assure you, dear Father, of our profound and cordial union in the Lord.


P. Jesús Torres, CMF


Eduardo Card. Martínez Somalo

Reverend Father Lawrence B. Terrien
Superior General
Society of the Priests of Saint Sulpice
PARIS

Abbreviations

O.R.A.: Orientations and Rules of Application (of the present Constitutions of the Society of the Priests of Saint Sulpice)

Decrees of the Second Vatican Council

A.G. : *Ad Gentes* - Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church

O.T. : *Optatam totius* - Decree on Priestly Formation

P.O. : *Presbyterorum ordinis* - Decree on the Life and Ministry of Priests

Documents of the Holy See

C. : Canon of the *Codex Juris Canonici* (1983)

P.D.V.: *Pastores Dabo Vobis* - I Will Give You Shepherds, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation (1992)

R.F. : *Ratio Fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis* - The Basic Plan for Priestly Formation (1970)

Texts of Fr. Olier and other texts on the origins of the Society

D.E. : *Divers écrits* - Various Writings

M. : *Mémoires autographes* - Handwritten Memoirs

Project of

1651 : The Project of Founding a Seminary in a Diocese. ed. I. Noye, in *La tradition sacerdotale*, X. Mappus, 1959, pp. 221-232.

Rules : Collection of Rules . . . of St. Sulpice, 1711-1717 (Archives, ms. 1325)

Note:

The text which has been approved in its French-language version and confirmed by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life is that of the Introduction and articles. The approval does not include the O.R.A. and the Appendices.

The approved text cannot be modified without the approbation of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. The O.R.A. and the Appendices, on the other hand, can be modified by a General Assembly.

Following some articles and O.R.A., some quotations from Jean Jacques Olier are included here and there. These texts, which are in italics and in boxes, are not part of the Constitutions but provide a better understanding of them in light of the principal intuitions behind the origin of the Society of St. Sulpice.

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PART ONE

THE MISSION OF THE SOCIETY OF SAINT SULPICE

INTRODUCTION

“The Lord Jesus, whom the Father has made holy and sent into the world (John 10, 36) has made His whole Mystical Body share in the anointing of the Spirit with which He Himself has been anointed. For in Him all the faithful are made a holy and royal priesthood (1 Peter, 2, 5)” (P.O. 2, 1). This people as a whole constitutes a community of faith, called to continue in the Holy Spirit the mission of Christ. “Hence, there is no member who does not have a part in the mission of the whole Body” (P.O. 2, 1).

But within this Body, all the members do not have the same function (cf. Rom. 12, 4). The Lord has appointed certain members to serve the People of God in his name, *in persona Christi capitis*, as ministers, (P.O. 2). Through their preaching and their activity, the risen Christ remains present as Teacher, Priest and Pastor until his final return.

In confiding this mission to certain disciples, Christ has given them a distinct and specific role in the Church. The place which these disciples held in his thought, in his prayer and in his public life show the importance which he attached to their role in the building up of the Church and in the salvation of the world. The life of the Church, yesterday and today, has always brought into sharp relief the importance of this service for which these men are qualified and consecrated by the sacrament of Orders. “By sacred ordination and by the mission they receive from the bishops, priests are promoted to the service of Christ, Teacher, Priest and King. They share in his ministry of unceasingly building up the Church on earth into the People of God, the Body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit” (P.O. 1). In order to obtain priests as capable and as dedicated as possible for this divine mission, both pastors and the faithful have worked, suffered and prayed with great effort, especially in this time of reform inspired by the Holy Spirit, so that the Church may be renewed during the course of its history.

It is at the heart of this ecclesial experience that Jean Jacques Olier (1608-1657) and his companions, inspired by those who went before them, priests and laity, became aware in themselves and in others of the deep need of priestly perfection for the life of the Church and for its apostolic and missionary work. Supported by the Christian people and encouraged by the hierarchy, Father Olier and his companions constituted a community of priests without separating themselves from the diocesan clergy. In the service of the bishops, they endeavored to give full meaning to the ministry and life of the priests and to restore the priestly office to the holiness befitting “the living instruments of Christ, the eternal priest” (P.O. 12).

This project of their founders, updated in the light of Vatican II, is an ever-present summons to the Priests of St. Sulpice to consecrate themselves to Jesus Christ, Teacher, Priest and Pastor, for the service of their fellow priests and of the whole Church.

CHAPTER I

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE SOCIETY

Art. 1 Dedicated to Jesus Christ the High Priest, the Society of the Priests of Saint Sulpice, born of the apostolate of Jean Jacques Olier, its founder, is a community of diocesan priests whose vocation is the service of those ordained to the presbyteral ministry.

With this fundamental purpose in view, they devote themselves to the discernment of vocations, to the initial and ongoing formation of priests as well as to the exercise of other ministries. They fulfill this work with the desire to instruct others in the “interior life” and to form in them the “apostolic spirit.”

The Society is a Society of Apostolic Life of pontifical right. (C. 731ff.)

“The Seminary of Saint Sulpice... has consecrated and dedicated itself to Jesus Christ our Lord not only to honor Him as High Priest and the great Apostle of his Father, but also to respect him living in the Apostolic College. Daily, the seminary prays for an apostolic spirit for itself and for the whole Church so as to renew in her the love of Jesus Christ and his attitude of religion toward his Father, particularly among the clergy who, as the source of holiness, must then diffuse it among all peoples” (DE I, 67).*

“God’s Purpose for the Society is to spread the priestly spirit in the Church” (M 7, 23).

“God wishes to use me to renew his Church by instructing many priests in the ecclesiastical spirit so that they will then go forth to serve God wherever He is pleased to call them” (M 3, 83).

* In the language of the French School of spirituality, the term “*religion*” evokes a sense of reverence, awe and love in union with God the Father.

Art. 2 The Society accomplishes its vocation by placing itself at the service of those bishops who have confidence in its spirit and ask for its collaboration. The confreres, whom the Society places at the disposal of the bishops, receive from them the mission required to accomplish their ministry, while remaining responsible to their superiors and faithful to the specific characteristics of the Society.

“God’s goodness enabled me to see the plan he had for this house: that he desired it to be an apostolic house where there would be persons whom I could send with bishops to found and establish seminaries in places where they would form local candidates, leaving them there to take charge of the houses. After that they would return home or be sent to other places for the good of the Church” (DE I, 61).

Art. 3 Collaborating with the bishops, the Society wishes to share in the solicitude for the whole Church and to take part in the mutual aid among local churches. Consequently, its members may be called upon to exercise their ministries in countries distant from their native lands. Wherever they work, “they will organize their pastoral activity in such a way that it will serve to spread the gospel among non-Christians” (A.G. 39).

O.R.A. In accord with its mission, the Society will readily put itself at the service of the bishops’ conferences and of other organizations depending upon them, primarily for whatever concerns the service of the priests.

“This house and the Society developing within it desire only to honor the Sacred College of Apostles..., with the thought that they will be of service to all the bishops... whose servants they claim to be by vocation and whom they intend expressly to serve when given the ‘honor of being called to that service’” (DE I, 67).

“... It pleased him [Our Lord] to say to me; ‘I want you to take care of forming an apostolic society...’ Thus I envisioned the Society of Saint Sulpice, whose members must have the apostolic spirit, to go out and found churches for God” (M 5, 107).

“Should they dare to do so, they would turn their hearts to the service of unbelieving and uncivilized peoples, and die for the glory of God while bringing them the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (M 7, 206-207).

Art. 4 The members of the Society, being diocesan priests, take no special vows, oaths, or promises. They are united by the bonds of priestly charity and by the resolve to serve priests and future priests, under the authority of their

superiors (C. 738), remaining faithful to the Constitutions (C.731) and with the support and the demands of life in common.

Accomplishing their ministry “in the Spirit of Christ (P.O. 13), they try to realize fully the ideal of Christian and priestly sanctity proposed by the founder (J.-J. Olier): “*Vivere summe Deo in Christo Jesu*” (*Pietas Seminarii*, 1); “*Horum summa cura et unicum studium erit quotidie erudiri et proficere in disciplina Christi*” (First Constitutions, D.E., 1, 50).

“The Seminary of Saint Sulpice, however many members it may have, professes that it will not become a Congregation, so that its love and care may be entirely for the Church of Jesus Christ, and, above all, for the holy clergy, which is her entire light, fervor, power, sanctification, and example” (DE I, 87).

Art. 5 They will live together in close unity of spirit and action so as to achieve, with those entrusted to their care and with the whole presbyterate, a true fraternal community. The mission that they have received will lead the members of the Society to draw closer and to be more deeply united with the bishops and the Holy Father. In keeping with a long tradition of loyalty to the successor of Peter, the Society will seek to promote in its own members and in the priests whom it educates an untiring attachment to the person of the Holy Father and a complete docility to his teachings and directives.

“... My Lord and Master wishes that we be associated not through human ingenuity, but through his Spirit and through charity which will bind all members to me and will keep me united, through him, to those he will give me” (M 5, 108-109).

CHAPTER II

THE EXERCISE OF THE MISSION

Art. 6 The formation of priests is primary among the tasks entrusted to the Society. This priority does not exclude but, on the contrary, calls for other priestly functions. Whether exercised temporarily or definitively, whether part-time, or full-time, these other apostolates allow the members of the Society to be more fully a part of the presbyterate of the dioceses where they work and to make themselves better suited for the formation of local diocesan priests.

O.R.A. To better accomplish the formation of priests, it would be well for Sulpicians to collaborate in the formation of deacons, of other installed ministers or of the laity who fulfill various services in the Church. Each

province should see, working in its own specific situation, what would be fitting to do in this area.

"We must never stray from the plan with which God was pleased to inspire us: that we join together for his service as an organism and, like limited instruments, try to prepare for him priests who will serve him in spirit and truth" (M 7, 229).

"Their deepest concern and chief effort will be the daily instruction and growth in Christ so that with his disciples they may ascend by increasing virtue to the mountain where Jesus, their Lord and Master, is" (DE 1, 50).

"The superior and directors... will inspire the seminarians to become very faithful (to the demands of community life) through their example, i.e. by being present themselves as assiduously as possible" (Rules, p. 10).

"Because it is of prime importance that the seminarians be able to open their hearts to their Director, and because all their progress depends on this trust, the Director will be available to them at any hour, and will not make them wait...; even when they interrupt him several times a day, he will receive them with the same charity, he will listen to them with the same patience, he will answer them with the same kindness, as though he had nothing else to do" (Rules, p. 12).

Art. 7

The Priests of Saint Sulpice should be convinced that, by the very fact of their common vocation, their various functions are complementary. Everyone should cooperate in seeing that the work and experience of all the confreres benefit the common effort.

"Whether it pleases our Lord to have us work with other people or with our brothers, namely, the clerics of his Church whom he destines to serve him, we abandon ourselves totally to him with the hope that he will give us all we need to accomplish his work and to exercise the divine ministry of the priesthood which can only be accomplished through the power and the presence of his Divine Spirit" (DE 1, 8).

"Moreover, I saw that there was no point in founding houses here and there, multiplying our functions, as in colleges and other endeavors, but rather [applying ourselves] only to giving a good formation to the subjects we already have so that they might later found and establish houses elsewhere. Furthermore, that we must not devote ourselves so much to the people, but rather let those we have formed do it, thereby working wonders for God" (M 5, 107).

"In the last few years, we have gathered together several subjects who, after having worked with people in the missions and in parishes, realized that it was useless to work among those people without first having purified the source of their sanctification: the priests themselves. Consequently, they have set themselves apart to cultivate the new seedlings which have been entrusted to their keeping, i.e., those who appeared to be called to the clergy" (DE 1, 71).

"To enter into this holy ministry and into this divine task of bringing the grace of the Holy Spirit and perfect sanctification to the heart of the clergy, this is what I esteem, this is what I honor, this is what I revere to a point that is beyond expression" (Project of 1651, p. 224).

Art. 8 Every confrere whose ministry is exercised completely outside the communities of the Society ought to be associated in some fashion with one of these communities. Normally this would be the one closest to his place of work. In this way, he can better participate in the life, the activity and the orientations of the Society, and, at the same time, profit from the advantages of community life.

- O.R.A.
- a. However diverse these apostolates may be, the members of the Society should preserve in their prayer and in their work a constant concern for priests and for future priests.
 - b. The Provincial Council, which bears the concern and responsibility of assigning them, should take care to obtain all the normal assurances regarding the material, moral and spiritual life of those confreres exercising a ministry outside a Sulpician community.
 - c. In each province, one or more confreres, appointed by the Provincial Council, will be given the responsibility of preserving close fraternal ties between the Society itself and the confreres just mentioned above. They may, for example, make arrangements for periodic gatherings.

Art. 9 The Society exercises its mission in complete fidelity to the decisions of the universal Church and to the directives of the bishops' conferences. To assure effective cooperation with the local or regional episcopate, it would be well for the Society to enter into contracts, which should lay out the broad outlines of the Society's methods and procedures. These contracts should emphasize the essential characteristics of the pedagogy of the Society and thus show that the mission of the Society does not amount simply to a response to needs for personnel.

- O.R.A.
- a. The authorities of the Society should submit to the interested bishops everything (especially written documents such as Constitutions, Handbooks, etc.) which will enable them to judge whether the Society appears capable of giving them the service they expect, taking into consideration particular times and places.
 - b. Three types of contracts may be considered:
 - a contract of administration in which the Society would assume responsibility for the entire operation;
 - a contract of institutional collaboration in which the Society would participate officially in the life of a center of formation by assigning some of its members to work there;
 - a contract of occasional simple collaboration in which the Society would put one or another of its members at the disposition of a community.
 - c. The first two types of contracts should specify especially the fundamental elements of the life of a center of formation in conformity with episcopal directives and the Constitutions of the Society, as well as the conditions regarding the recruitment of personnel. The contracts will be agreed upon with the approval of the General Council.
 - d. In each type of contract, the financial arrangements for the confreres should be specified.

CHAPTER III

THE MINISTRIES OF THE SOCIETY

Ministries to Future Priests

- Art. 10 Priestly ministry, with its own distinctive character, is exercised at the heart of the mission of the whole people of God, especially in collaboration with other ministers, ordained or installed. Formation ought to include this perspective from both the theoretical and practical points of view, thus preparing future priests to acknowledge and to realize the unity of the mission in the diversity of services and functions.

O.R.A. a. Seminarians are to be presented a sound theology of priesthood which enables them to grasp its uniqueness: “Priests exist and act in order to proclaim the Gospel to the world and to build up the Church in the name and person of Christ the head and shepherd” of whom they are the “sacramental representation” (P.D.V, 15).

Priests are “incorporated in the apostolic structure of the Church” (P.D.V. 16) as “co-workers of the Episcopal order (P.O,2). In allowing themselves to be guided by the Spirit, they will find the coherence of their life and their ministry through their witness to holiness.

b. Seminarians are to be prepared to exercise a ministry with a “radically communitarian form,’ one which can only be carried out as ‘a collective work” (P.D.V., 17) done in close collaboration with those who exercise diverse functions in service to a common mission (C. 230).

Art. 11 1. The objective of the ministry to candidates for the priesthood is to help them discern the call of God to service in the Church and prepare them to answer the call.

2. Faith bids us, in reality, to recognize in a vocation to the pastoral ministry a divine intervention, which continues all throughout life. However, the initial awareness, the discernment and the support for such a vocation demand human assistance. It is at this level that the service of the Society comes into play.

Art. 12 This service, however varied in its expressions, has but one ultimate purpose, namely, to dispose candidates for the ministry to be deeply rooted in the Spirit of Christ, Teacher, Priest and Pastor, and “to become skilled in the ministry of teaching, sanctifying and ruling the People of God” (R.F. 20; Cf. O.T. 4).

Art. 13 Those in charge of formation will try to discover and to develop in all the candidates, whatever may be their talents and individual virtues, a capacity for dialogue and for collaboration, personal or institutional, which is indispensable for their ministry.

Art. 14 In the formation of priests, care should be taken to be faithful to the essential characteristics of the pedagogical traditions of the Society. The fundamental points may be classified as follows:

1. The collegial exercise of responsibility, which applies first to the formation faculty but which also, calls for the collaboration of the candidates for ministry, of the diocesan clergy and of other members of the Christian community.
2. A genuine community life of faculty and candidates so as to constitute a “formation community”* which prepares for co- responsibility and which allows for necessary confrontation and a better discernment of vocations.
3. A progressive initiation into a personal spiritual life, which is achieved most especially through regular spiritual direction.
4. A great concern for the spiritual freedom of the candidates, emphasized by a clear distinction between the responsibility of the Council and that of the spiritual director, as well as by the Sulpician directives which regulate their relations. (Cf. Articles 135, 136, 137).
5. The constant search for union with Christ in whom priests discover the unity of their lives (cf. P.O. 14); it is through that union that they must try to unify the various aspects of formation (human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral).

O.R.A. Seminarians will be formed with a sufficient understanding of their social context and their local cultures; they should be helped to grasp the limits in these cultures in order to strive to bring the spirit of the gospel to bear on them; they should also learn a spirit of openness to other cultures and to intercultural dialogue.

Art. 15. All the various duties will be coordinated by the Local Superior, but the confreres should not let everything fall upon him alone in the administration of the house. They should have, each one according to his share, the deep conviction of their collegial responsibility. Participation in the Council meetings is one of the special manifestations of this collegial responsibility.

Art. 16. Preparation for the presbyteral ministry constitutes a unified whole. It requires of the Priests of Saint Sulpice the necessary aptitudes, not only for working in seminaries, but also for cooperating with other members of the

* In French, the term “*communauté éducatrice*” describes a setting of shared life between seminarians and faculty where much of the formation process takes place through personal contract and example as well as by the more explicit forms of instruction and evaluation.

clergy and the people of God, in the entire development of candidates for the priesthood, keeping that preparation in contact with the realities of the Church and the world.

Art. 17. 1. In seminaries in which the Society is engaged institutionally as a Society, those responsible for formation, whether Sulpician or non-Sulpician, work together under the leadership of the superior. They constitute a team whose ministry is accomplished in the exercise of collegial responsibility and which includes, in particular, the function of spiritual director.

2. This team, together with the seminarians, forms a single community whose mission demands loyal collaboration on the part of all.

O.R.A. a. Non-Sulpicians who are working with us should be well informed concerning the principles and methods of formation that are characteristic of our tradition and be invited to follow them carefully.

b. A spirit of initiative and a sense of mutual responsibility are to be encouraged in the candidates for the ministry, keeping in mind the different levels of responsibility and the degree of maturity among those involved.

c. Since he has the primary responsibility for the unity of spirit in the community, the superior oversees the whole program especially in the area of spiritual and pastoral formation. In union with the other members of the team, he exercises this leadership chiefly during the liturgy, in conferences to the community and in other meetings with seminarians (review of life, shared reflection on the Gospel texts, etc.).

d. The superior should see that the directives of the Church concerning the spiritual formation of priests are faithfully followed and that every candidate chooses a spiritual director. In conformity with Church law (C. 985), the superior himself should not minister the sacrament of reconciliation to the seminarians.

e. All the members of the formation team should try to deepen, by study, reflection and experience, the principles of the spiritual life which the Church makes available to us in Scripture, in the liturgy and in the tradition handed on by the teaching and lives of the saints and theologians.

f. Those responsible for the work of priestly formation will be attentive to the question of psycho-affective maturity and a good grasp of the meaning of human sexuality, since these are essential to the capacity to live the charism of celibacy. In doing so, those who are responsible for discerning the fitness of candidates for the priesthood will be especially conscious of their duty to protect the reputation of the seminarians and to respect the rules of confidentiality (C. 220, 247, 1029, and 1051).

g. The members of the formation team should also take care to be acquainted with the psychological knowledge needed by anyone who is a guide and counselor. They should try their best to keep abreast of professional developments in this field. They will remain prudently within their own domain, without claiming to rule on cases dependent on psychology and psychiatry. The proper authority will put at the disposition of seminarians specialists in these disciplines, judiciously chosen.

h. The members of the formation team should make themselves easily available to those who may wish to come to them for the sacrament of reconciliation and for spiritual direction.

Art. 18 Although the ministry of spiritual formation holds first place in Sulpician tradition, the majority of the members of the Society are likewise called to the ministry of teaching.

Art. 19 One of the chief roles of a professor is to form in his students an appreciation and love of the truth. As Christian and priest, the Sulpician professor should never forget that he is called to be for the seminarians a witness and an instructor in the faith, as they themselves will have to be for the people.

- O.R.A.
- a. The professors should possess the necessary competence, certified by appropriate degrees. Great importance should likewise be attributed to their teaching ability.
 - b. During their whole teaching careers, they should maintain and develop their abilities: they should courageously confront the dangers of stagnation and of inflexibility by keeping their knowledge up to date, by improving their methods and by making the necessary adaptations to changing needs.
 - c. With due consideration for local laws and circumstances, it would be well to obtain from competent authorities and agencies accreditation of

the teaching in the seminary and to encourage the seminarians to obtain university degrees.

d. The teaching in the seminary should be of a degree at least equal to that given in institutions of the same level recognized by the State.

Art. 20. In their mission of teaching, received from the bishops, the professors should have a two-fold intellectual concern, namely, fidelity to Revelation, of which the Magisterium is the authentic interpreter, and a spirit of openness to a rapidly changing world. In this way the Gospel message may be heard, understood and lived.

O.R.A. a. A pastoral sensitivity to the intellectual trends of their contemporaries should keep them alert to the most important currents of thought of their day (cf. Phil. 4, 8), and, especially, to the contribution of the social sciences.

b. The professors should take care to develop in their students-and first, by their own example-a truly critical sense to which their faith will add, at one and the same time, a gift of insight, balance and humility. This same critical sense will also keep them from acceding to popular enthusiasms and to rash ideas, as well as preventing them from identifying the doctrine of the faith with transient traditions (cf. 1 Thess. 5, 21).

Art. 21 The formation should be responsive to the ecumenical solicitude of the Church, not only by providing opportunities of this kind for the seminarians but also by preparing them to become authentic promoters of this unity.

Art. 22 While respecting the precision proper to each field of study, the methods of teaching should be adapted to the actual needs of the Church and of the presbyteral ministry with adjustments being made according to the demands or necessities of various milieus.

O.R.A. a. Group endeavor and a spirit of research should be encouraged, judiciously selecting the form and the level best suited to local circumstances and to the needs and capacities of the students.

b. Each professor should regard the matter he teaches as being part of an organic whole. To assure coherence in the intellectual formation, it is necessary that the superior and the professors be familiar with the fundamental positions of each other in the material that each one teaches.

c. Besides the spontaneous consultations, which are normal among confreres, discussions should be arranged between professors of various subjects, as well as meetings between professors and students, for the investigation of certain themes.

Art. 23 The members of the Society should be encouraged, according to their competence and position, to publish. Their active use of other means of communication (radio, television, etc.) should also be promoted. In all these instances, it should be remembered that the very fact of membership in the Society carries with it a special responsibility.

O.R.A. When a confrere wishes to publish a work, to contribute articles regularly to a periodical, or serve on its editorial board, or to participate on a regular basis in any public communications media, he should seek the approval of his provincial superior or of the confrere designated by the provincial for this purpose.

Art. 24 The very nature of the “formation community” (“*communauté éducatrice*”) presumes that the confreres will participate in the seminary’s community activities, such as liturgy, study groups, spiritual formation groups. Moreover, they should also be available for certain diocesan or regional pastoral activities. The Local Superior should facilitate the Local Council’s discussion and decisions about the extent of such external activities and choices among those presented.

O.R.A. To preserve in each local community a sense of unity in its common endeavor, every confrere should share with the superior or with the formation faculty every important undertaking on his part that would have an effect on community life.

Art. 25. Convinced that sharing of their priestly life is the most profound and the most effective teaching, the Priests of Saint Sulpice will live in a closely-knit community with the candidates for the ministry. This will open the way to a true dialogue, which will enable everyone to feel responsible for the community. By this means the concrete conditions of the exercise of ministry in the Church, under the double aspect of fraternal life and of participation in a common mission, will have been explored and already actually experienced. It is within such a context that aptitudes for ministry will show themselves more clearly.

O.R.A. In consideration for others and in order to preserve an atmosphere of trust in the community, everyone should maintain a suitable discretion, particularly in group work and even more so in spiritual direction.

Art. 26 Seminaries constitute important centers of theological and pastoral reflection for any diocese or region. Consequently, it is only fitting that the seminary maintain friendly relations with the various dioceses, so that all, both clergy and laity, may benefit from its presence and own their share of responsibility for their share of priestly formation (cf. Art. 136).

O.R.A. In dealing with those outside the seminary, care should be taken to avoid any imprudent actions prejudicial to the community itself or to any of its members.

"It is fitting that in the Church of God there be institutions where one can test the spirit and behavior of those persons we desire to offer to God and whom God wishes to commit to himself in his house for his service" (DE 1, 89).

"One should enter by the door of vocation. The shepherd must call you and move you for he knows all his sheep and calls them by name: vocat eas nominatim" (M 3, 324).

"If there were three apostolic men in a seminary filled with humility, kindness, patience, zeal, charity and poverty, with the knowledge and wisdom needed for this heavenly work, they would be able to sanctify a whole diocese... they would sanctify many people and would be able to affect not only the seminary of a diocese, but a whole kingdom. Such is the power of the apostolic and selfless spirit" (Project of 1651, pp. 228-229).

"These words of God came to me: 'I confide this house to you, you will answer to me for it!' Thus I realized that I was given the responsibility for this work and the parish which was annexed to the seminary in order to make public the ecclesiastical spirit of the seminary, which otherwise would be hidden without giving example to the church or putting the virtues and graces received there into practice" (M 8, 53).

Ministry of Ongoing Formation

Art. 27 Formation of the pastor is not the work of the seminary alone, nor does the work end there. Formation ought to continue during the whole life of the priest and should be constantly developed along with doctrinal enrichment and pastoral renewal within the Church. The members of the formation team

shall instill in the students a commitment to enter into a lifelong process of spiritual, intellectual, human and pastoral formation.

- O.R.A.
- a. Sulpicians should collaborate with the diocesan and interdiocesan organizations set up for the ongoing formation of priests; they should be open to the recent methods available for the service of priests.
 - b. The general and provincial authorities should foster and support the employment of Sulpicians in this ministry.
 - c. In the exchanges of information between the Provinces and during the interprovincial meetings, this matter should be taken into account.

"I see that now there has to be a large number of pastors throughout the Church who will seek reform... That is the Order of Jesus Christ, the first Pastor of souls, which must now reform itself to bring about the reform of the universal Church" (M 3, 332-333).

Other Ministries Exercised by Sulpicians

Art. 28 Each ministry demands its own competence and, hence, a specific preparation. The Priests of Saint Sulpice should be particularly concerned about the doctrinal foundation of their pastoral work and about its spiritual dimension. The Provincial Superiors should try to provide every confrere with a suitable formation and to encourage its updating.

- Art. 29
1. The Priests of Saint Sulpice engaged in ministries other than those of the initial and ongoing formation of priests should be constantly concerned to adapt their pastoral work to the needs of the People of God, in consistent harmony with the presbyterate of the dioceses where they are stationed.
 2. Those who are engaged in the parochial ministry should remember that their founder excelled in the office of pastor, the ultimate expression, for him, of the priestly mission.

"I feel such great desire to save the whole world, to spread the zeal of the love and glory of God in the hearts of all people. I think so much about being able to have a thousand subjects whom I could send everywhere bearing the love of Jesus Christ ...And when I think that the pastorate [of Saint Sulpice] which I am being given could serve that purpose, so as to give of that zeal to Paris and to all of France, I am overjoyed" (M 2, 279).

“Parishes are centers of blessings and graces and God has founded them to diffuse throughout the Church within the souls of people his anointing and sanctification. That is how it happens that I believe in this general gathering of people and clergy where God abides to achieve his purpose and to sanctify all who are there and who share in this undertaking” (DE I, 81).

- Art. 30 Whatever may be their ministry, all should take a special interest in priestly and religious vocations. They should be particularly friendly and brotherly to all priests and toward candidates for the ministry.
- Art. 31 In the present Constitutions, many of the points concerning the seminary communities apply also to other Sulpician groups, with the necessary adjustments made by the local and provincial authorities.
- O.R.A. In the other houses of the Society, Sulpicians shall continue their common life, taking into account the possibilities in the particular circumstances; they remain under the authority of the local Superior (Art. 138).

PART TWO

PERSONS IN THE SERVICE OF THIS MISSION

INTRODUCTION

The paths to holiness are substantially the same for all Christians, members of Christ and his brothers and sisters, called to be perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect (cf. Matt. 5, 48.).

But the Holy Spirit, whose graces are diverse, gives to each person the means of sanctification best suited to that person’s duties and needs (1 Cor. 12, 4; L.G. 41).

As with their brothers in the presbyteral order, so for the Priests of Saint Sulpice, it is the loyal, persevering exercise of their duties in the Spirit of Christ, which is the authentic means to achieve holiness (P.O. 13).

All during their lives, in the liturgy of each day, in their ministry exercised in union with the bishop and other priests, they strive to live more and more, in the midst of people, a holiness which may enable them to say with Christ: “For them do I sanctify myself that they also may be sanctified in truth” (P.O. 12; Jn. 17, 19).

Inspired by the grace of the priesthood, the Priests of Saint Sulpice are also led by a living tradition: “The first and final end of this Institute will be to live supremely for God in Christ Jesus, Our Lord. This will be the one ambition, the one thought, the one action of all: to live the life of Christ inwardly and to show it outwardly in our mortal body” (*Pietas Seminarii*, 1. Cf. 2 Cor. 4, 10-11).

The charity of Christ will urge them all the more strongly to be transformed into him since they will have to imitate him in his task of forming the ministers of the Gospel.

”Primarius et ultimus finis hujus Instituti erit vivere summe Deo in Christo Jesu Domino nostro... Haec erit una omnium spes et meditatio, unicum exercitium: Vita vivere Christi interius, eamque operibus manifestare in nostro mortali corpore” (Pietas Seminarii, 1. Cf. 2 Cor. 4, 10-11).

CHAPTER I

THE LIFE OF THE PRIESTS OF SAINT SULPICE

Art. 32 To be one with the risen Christ and to accomplish his mission demands a total docility to the action of his Spirit, “to let him act in us so as to impel us to do whatever he wishes, placing no limit to his desires nor to his inspirations” (M. 7, 241).

” . . . It seems to me that since the Holy Spirit within us is our true director, as he was that of Our Lord Jesus Christ, we must have a great deal of confidence in this Divine Spirit and abandon ourselves fully to him so that he might guide us” (M. 1, 145).

”We must abandon ourselves to the Holy Spirit so that he might use our ministry and our speech to effect that which is pleasing to him, bringing his imperceptible word to the heart under the guise of our own perceptible words” (M. 1, 274).

Art. 33 In that spirit, the Priests of Saint Sulpice will be united every day all the more deeply to the Paschal Mystery through the celebration of the Eucharist, the very source and summit of their ministry. In the contemplation of the “mystery of faith” they shall allow themselves to be transformed into the image of the Risen Christ and they will unite themselves to his love for all people.

O.R.A. The confreres will strive to nourish their spiritual lives at the “two-fold table of Sacred Scripture and the Eucharist” (C.276 #2). They will see in

the daily celebration of the Mass an “act of Christ and of the Church, in which priests fulfill their principal function” (P.O. 13 and C. 904). They will instill these convictions in the seminarians.

”It is the work of the Blessed Sacrament which helps us die to the world and live for God alone. And even Our Lord asks his disciples to remember his death in their own sacrifice...; if we die to self as Our Lord did, we shall share in the risen life of Jesus Christ” (M. 2, 256).

”According to Saint Paul, being a living victim, hostiam viventem, does not mean that we merely have the outward appearance of death, but rather that we be alive interiorly, that one’s interior life be like that of the sacred host on the altar... in which there is a divine life, a holy life, a spiritual life of union with God; this is the life of a victim which Saint Paul calls a spiritual reverence and a continual respect for God, an interior devotion rendered to God with the help of the Holy Spirit which Our Lord Jesus Christ intends to give us when we receive the most sacred host in Communion” (DE 1, 19).

Art. 34

The mysteries of Christ, communicated through the liturgy, do not become truly our own except through an interior assimilation. That is why the Priests of Saint Sulpice, faithful to the tradition of the Church, will meditate on the Scriptures and will give themselves perseveringly to prayer. They will set aside an hour of prayer a day. In filial union with Mary, the perfect model of prayer and the perfect handmaid of the Lord, they will be faithful to the tradition of Marian devotion inherited from their founder.

”It is necessary in our house to profess our intention of living according to that faith which acts with the ease and inclination given it by the charity of the Holy Spirit... To do this readily, one must study a great deal what the Scriptures have to teach us about all things, what Jesus Christ himself said about them to his apostles. We must also study Christ’s conduct in all things so we may imitate him and share in his interior and exterior life” (DE 1, 105).

”They should be devoted faithfully to prayer, frequently lifting up their heart and soul to God, either to offer him their actions, or to implore his help for different needs, or just to be still in the presence of God... They will spend at least one hour a day in prayer... “ (Rules, pp. 40 and 55).

Art. 35

Thus, led by the Spirit of Jesus, they shall feel a deep sense of being bound to the mission of the Church, anxious to participate in the work of evangelization and to develop among future priests an apostolic and missionary spirit.

"I implore you to pray often and vigorously that I might possess an apostolic spirit; ... for if I obtain that grace, I shall neither desire nor request anything further of Our Lord than to preserve it. How much good this spirit would enable us to do! ... How many hearts would be converted; how many souls would return to God; how many blessings there would be everywhere we would go! We must make every effort to obtain this gift" (Letter 52).

"Our risen Lord had an intense desire for the growth of the Church... ; that must also be the fervent desire and constant prayer of priests" (Letter 444).

"All those who enter the Seminary of Saint Sulpice will consider it an apostolic college where people come together under the protection of the holy apostles to study their words, to invoke their spirit, to imitate their conduct, and to live according to the Gospel which they preached to us" (DE 1, 281).

Art. 36 Firmly rooted in the faith, mindful of the Word Incarnate and open to every genuine manifestation of the Spirit, they will help each other in seeking carefully the signs of God and in discerning the workings of his grace in the daily occurrences within their community, the Church and the world.

"If possible, one must... always act according to the holy inspiration and divine light of the Holy Spirit, imitating the Son of God, our older brother, who teaches us how always to look within God hic et nunc: is this pleasing to the Master and to the Father in heaven, is this his will?" (DE II, 39).

Art. 37 Experiencing the paschal mystery in their condition of sinful men, they will understand the Gospel call for a conversion of heart as a continuous demand of their faith. They should be faithful in celebrating frequently this mystery of reconciliation in the sacrament of Penance.

"Oh, my Lord Jesus. . . , give me this grace that by means of the power of your Spirit within me, I may, in all that I do, live my whole life motivated by the dispositions of true repentance" (Christian Life and Virtues, p. 78).

Art. 38 Realizing that the disciple is not above his Master, they will recognize, in the contradictions, the shocks and frustrations of life, the mystery of the Cross, which is the wisdom and power of God.

"They will abandon themselves to Jesus Christ to be used by him entirely as he pleases, so that he might suffer in them the Cross and even death, and also act

through them, thereby continuing in them the ministry of his divine priesthood” (DE I, 7).

”The servant is obliged to suffer all things for the sake of his Master, There is neither heat nor cold, neither hunger nor thirst, neither work nor scorn nor contradiction that he should not endure while pursuing the Master’s interest. There are no trials he should not endure in the service of the Master, nothing he should not be willing to do or suffer for him” (DE 1, 22).

Art. 39 The members of the Society should set their hearts on achieving that profound unity among themselves that the priestly ministry presumes in all those who have received this responsibility. Their unity manifests itself at various levels:

-cordiality in their human relations and in their mutual support, understanding and trust within a community in which everyone feels called upon to be fraternally sociable;

-effective collaboration for the sake of their mission in making their work a genuine team-effort;

-finally, simplicity of a spiritual sharing (cf. Rom. 1, 11-12), in their common seeking and contemplation of the Lord.

O.R.A. The privileged means of participating in the life, the activity and the orientations of the Society are, for example, workshops to prepare the general and provincial assemblies, retreats and days of recollection, major celebrations of events in the province, days of ongoing formation, etc.

”We have... to examine whether or not we live with our neighbor as brothers, whether we are cordial, simple and charitable toward one another as true brothers who are much more united than blood-brothers because not only do we have the same father and mother, namely, God and his Church, but also have in them the same Spirit who makes them all one” (DE 1, 107).

Art.40 Both members and candidates will find in their participation in the retreats planned by each province a special opportunity to deepen their common vocation, to express and strengthen their fraternal ties. They shall gladly welcome to these spiritual exercises the priests who habitually work with them.

- O.R.A. a. Each member will make a spiritual retreat every year. Normally each member will likewise participate in the Sulpician retreat every two years. The Provincial Councils will facilitate their participation. b. It would be well if the confreres, about every ten years, could devote a longer period to prayer and reflection in order to find therein the renewal necessary at various stages of their lives. The local and provincial authorities should help them in trying to achieve such a goal.

"About every ten or twelve years or thereabouts the associates and assistants will spend three to six months, at the discretion of the Superior General, making a retreat in this house. And the Superior General and the consultors for one month every three years, provided, nonetheless, that they are not all here together. The Superior General could also send here, more often and for a greater or lesser period of time, those who would request it. In addition to this, all members will also take eight or ten days a year for a retreat" (Rule of 1659, p. 56).

- Art. 41 The Sulpicians recognize in priestly celibacy not only a practice of the Church but a "precious gift" (P.O. 16). They accept with loyalty and generosity this practice of the Church and find in the gift of the Spirit a summons and a support to identify their lives with the life of Christ, sharing in his freedom and pastoral charity by their chastity of heart and of life.

"It is inconceivable how much physical and spiritual dependency is required by this servitude [to Jesus Christ].... However strange, it is a subjection which is admirable for its mildness, its sweetness and peacefulness.... That requires a complete renunciation of everything for the sake of loving Jesus alone, of living dependent only upon Jesus and for Jesus; in brief, it means being all and doing all according to the mind of Jesus" (M 1, 159-160).

"The pastor should be looked upon as the spouse of the Church and not considered only as the foster-father of his people. Indeed, the pastor is a spouse and, insofar as he is a spouse, he becomes so enamoured of his Church... that his spouse's interests are a thousand times more precious to him than his own. Thus did Jesus Christ give up his life for his Church" (DE I, 126).

- Art. 42. Working at the heart of a servant Church that is poor, Sulpicians should be attentive to the poverty required by their vocation and mission. While keeping ownership of their personal property, they should not make a selfish use of it. If they have a choice of supplementary ministries, they should not allow themselves to be attracted by the money to be gained but should, by preference, turn to the poorer ministries.

Art. 43. In use of whatever is received from their ministry, Sulpicians should recall that, if the priest has the right to live from the Gospel, he should not seek, however, to profit from it but should rather spend himself in the service of those entrusted to his charge.

Art. 44. Sulpician communities, as well as each member of the Society, should readily put at the disposition of the Church and of the poor whatever superfluity they have and, sometimes, even necessities, in a realistic practice of charity.

"Whoever gives up everything for God, finds everything in God... Jesus Christ who is all will compensate for every creature" (M. 3, 343-345).

"As regards poverty, one must, in spirit, . . . place his goods and personal belongings at the disposal of the Master, who has absolute power over that which he has entrusted to his servant, so as to keep them for his own service. Our Lord is thus alive in all his members making demands on us in his need: we must immediately open our resources to him and say to him: 'Lord, take that which is yours'" (DE II, 133).

"The spirit of poverty is fully necessary for the members of the Society and, principally, for those who are wealthy" (Rules, p. 119).

Art. 45. In community life, the burdens of which should be accepted with good will, care should be taken not to exaggerate one's needs and each confrere should treat with special respect anything destined for the use of all. In every way they should be inclined toward the poverty of the Gospel in remembering that, according to the tradition of the primitive Church, "some common use of things can pave the way to pastoral charity in an excellent manner" (P. O. 17).

It belongs to the Provincial Assemblies to specify, in agreement with the General Council, the ways in which the Society and each of its members commit themselves to cooperate with the material care of the members and services of the province, in a spirit of poverty, of sharing and of mutual aid.

O.R.A. a. In whatever concerns the ownership and administration of material goods, personal or institutional, the members of the Society should bear in mind that their life-style is an important factor in the witness they give to other people but also in maintaining their own interior freedom (P.D.V. 30).

b. Every Sulpician should carefully keep his financial affairs in order, especially any money involving Mass stipends. Every member is likewise obliged in conscience to make a will which is clear and drawn up according to civil and ecclesiastical laws. A copy of the will should be filed in the provincial office, or the place where it is filed should be clearly stated to the proper authorities. It is customary to appoint a priest as executor of the will.

Art. 46. Like the life of Christ sent by the Father, so the priestly life is fundamentally a mission and, as such, is exercised in a spirit of obedience. To assure a complete docility to the Holy Spirit, this obedience includes at one and the same time a deep renunciation and an unflinching initiative. It is the type of obedience, which has the courage to question the authorities frankly and yet accept completely whatever mission it is given. By reason of their special vocation the members of the Society will try their best to bear witness to this obedience. They will practice obedience towards their superiors according to the Constitutions in virtue of their admission into the Society.

" . . . We are obliged to live according to this new birth [of baptism]: we must cling to our new Father who is God, we must cling to the new Spirit who is the Holy Spirit, we must cling to the Church and listen to her advice" (M. 3, 234-235).

"When I profess obedience to the Church, I pledge to obey with discretion [discernment] and according to God's plan for his Church. For I profess obedience to the Holy Father, to the bishop, to the one under him, . . . the particular superior whom the bishop appoints, and then to everyone else who presents himself desiring something from me in the name of Jesus Christ" (DE II, 131).

CHAPTER II

THE MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY

Art. 47 Admission into the Society of Saint Sulpice is subject to a certain number of conditions of which the most fundamental is the disposition to unite oneself in the Holy Spirit to the mystery of Jesus Christ forming his co-workers of the Gospel.

"One subject of God's choosing is better than a hundred thousand others" (M. 5, 109).

[Examination of Conscience for the members of the Society:]

"Have they spent the day in the presence of Jesus Christ Our Lord, bearing everywhere a consciousness of his interior life to adore this life and to form it in them;

Have they been faithful, as they begin their duties, to recollect themselves as prescribed; have they lived according to faith, considering everything with the same sentiments and esteem that Jesus Christ had;

Have they witnessed to Jesus Christ through their conduct, have they shown his gentleness, humility and patience, his charity, obedience and support for one's neighbor;

Have they practiced, among other virtues, that virtue of modesty which is particular to clerics;

Have they lived in a spirit of servitude to Jesus Christ and his members;*

*Have they also lived in a spirit of victim-hood?*** (DE I, 65).*

"Everything should radiate Jesus Christ, and all things, inwardly as well as outwardly, must preach him and make him known" (Letter 316).

"A fervent desire for the glory of your Master, a great desire that he be known, honored, and loved; and when others love, honor, and glorify him more than you do, you should not be jealous but rather rejoice greatly and experience perfect satisfaction in another's work and in the advancement of the Master's glory; this is how you will show that you are not self-seeking in your work" (DE I, 25).

Art. 48

Those responsible for admission into the Society should pay particular attention to the sincerity of the motives of each candidate, namely

-an intention to consecrate one's life to the service of priests, by devoting himself to one or another apostolate connected with this ministry;

-an openness of heart and spirit which allows a priest, while devoting himself to a particular task, to be primarily dedicated to whatever concerns the ministry and life of priests and to give full value to the apostolic missions which he himself cannot personally accomplish.

* These two expressions are technical terms of the seventeenth-century French School of Spirituality. "Servitude" refers to an act of total personal consecration which was at various times and in different circumstances directed toward Jesus or Mary of the People of God.

** The French term which "victim-hood" translates is *hostie* as in the host at Mass. This was a powerful symbol for M. Olier of the total self-oblation of Christ which took place on the Cross and continues in His eternal self-transcending adoration of His Father.

- Art. 49. The various forms of the Sulpician mission demand diverse aptitudes; these aptitudes should be investigated according to their physical, psychological, intellectual and moral perspectives. It is essential that the candidates be capable of integrating themselves into the life of a community and of participating in the collective responsibility of a priestly formation team.
- O.R.A. a. The candidates must be specifically qualified to undertake spiritual direction, teaching and leadership of groups.
- b. The superiors will be particularly alert to the candidates' ability to adapt since they might be called to exercise their ministry in a geographical, cultural and pastoral milieu different from that of their origin.
- Art. 50. Admission into the Society is made in progressive stages. It comprises the following steps:
- the acceptance of the candidates into the formation process;
 - temporary admission as members;
 - definitive admission.
- Art. 51. The acceptance or responsibility for the candidates marks the beginning of the formation of future members of the Society. It presupposes the consent of their bishop. It is decided by the Provincial Council by majority vote, upon presentation by the person responsible for initial formation. The conditions of this assumption of responsibility are established for each province by the Provincial Assembly, and, in this context, for each particular case by the Provincial Council. Between the candidates and the provincial authorities, reciprocal rights and obligations must be understood as analogous to those of members, unless there is some indication to the contrary.
- O.R.A. a. Those responsible for the initial formation should provide opportunities for the candidates to gain some adequate preliminary information about the Society by arranging suitable contacts for them. They should also keep in touch with those for whom acceptance as candidates has been temporarily deferred
- b. Before presenting the candidates, the director of initial formation should neglect no reasonable means in gathering information, so that he may give a clear picture of them to the Provincial Council.

He will request, especially from the Council of the seminary where the candidates prepared for the priesthood, a reasoned and careful evaluation of them and the director should attach great weight to such an opinion.

If the candidates have been gone from the seminary for a while, the desired information should be sought from the appropriate persons.

c. The experience that constitutes the formation of candidates is continued only through a common agreement between the candidates and the provincial authority. In case of an interruption, decided by one party or the other, the pattern to be followed will be analogous to the prescriptions laid down for withdrawal from the Society (Art. 54, O.R.A. a and b; Art. 59, O.R.A. d).

d. The orientation of candidates toward the Society, accompanied by a kind of limited acceptance, may precede the reception of Orders.

Art. 52.

1. Candidates admitted into the Society enter at first in a provisional way. Temporary admission gives them the duties and most of the rights of members. It may take place only after ordination to the priesthood and after a period of probation sufficiently long to weigh the aptitudes of the candidates for the ministries of the Society.

2. As a general rule, the time of probation, which is not less than a year, should not last more than three years and, normally, should include a period of ministry, fulfilled, at least partially, in a Sulpician community. It belongs to the provincial authorities to determine the length and to provide for an evaluation.

3. Temporary admission, which presupposes a written application from the candidate, and the evaluation of the Sulpician community where he has been working, is decided in the Provincial Council, by a majority vote, upon presentation by the director of initial formation and with the advice of the Sulpician community in which he has performed his ministry. This decision, after being ratified by the Superior General, is communicated in writing to the candidate and to the Ordinary of his diocese of incardination.

4. Temporary members are held to the same duties as the other members of the Society. They enjoy the same rights, except for the right to be elected to General Assemblies and the right to serve as members of the Provincial Council and the General Council.

5. The Provincial Council may, by a majority vote taken in a secret ballot, terminate the membership of a member admitted to temporary membership. The confrere involved may appeal the decision of the Provincial Council to the General Council.

Art. 53. Definitive admission into the Society cannot take place until the initial formation period proper to the Society has been fulfilled. As a general rule the interval between temporary and definitive admission should be not less than one year and no more than five years.

Art. 54. The decision concerning definitive admission will be taken in the Provincial Council by a majority vote upon presentation by the director of initial formation. It will be ratified by the Superior General, communicated to the member's Ordinary and in writing to the new member who thereby acquires in a definitive manner all the rights of the Society as well as all the obligations of the members, taking into account the details contained in the following articles: 85, 93, 114, 120.

O.R.A. a. Admission presupposes the consent of the concerned individual as well as a consultation of the Sulpician community where he is exercising his ministry.

b. The Society retains a certain fraternal responsibility toward those whom it has not admitted, readily agreeing or proposing to offer them whatever service it can according to the circumstances. It would be especially fitting for the Provincial, or for his delegate, to discuss with each one, if the latter so desires, the question of his readjustment and to act, if need be, as an intermediary with his diocesan bishop, so that his return to the immediate authority of the bishop may be accomplished under the best conditions for all concerned.

Art. 55. Members of the Society and candidates remain incardinated in their dioceses. If they leave the Society by their own choice, if they are canonically dismissed or if they are denied temporary or definitive admission, they come once more under the direct authority of their Ordinary.

Art. 56. All the confreres, whatever may be their ministry, should show an interest in the future of the Society and in its normal recruitment, which depends not only on prayer but on their conduct.

Art. 57. The Provincial authorities have an obligation to be concerned about the best way of caring for the needs of the members of the Society all during their lives. They should show a special concern for the sick and aged members.

- O.R.A.
- a. The Provincial authorities may appoint someone with the special duty of visiting the confreres who are isolated, ill or aged.
 - b. Confreres working in distant communities have the choice of retiring, if feasible, in the country where they have exercised their ministry.
 - c. In order to be well informed concerning the activities and the needs of the confreres and in light of the need to do good planning for the province's communities, the Provincial Superior or his delegate will meet regularly with each confrere in order to evaluate with him his health, his experience, his qualifications, his needs, his capacity and his desire to serve in various ministries.
 - d. The Provincial Superior will consult with each member to determine in dialogue with him the appropriate time and conditions for retirement. Circumstances may justify asking a member to retire. The Provincial Superior may propose participation in a workshop or other program that prepares for retirement, since such an experience may help to give new meaning to his life.

Art. 58. Fraternal charity imposes an obligation on all members of the Society to pray for the confreres called to God, especially the prescribed Masses.

- O.R.A.
- a. On the death of one of their number, all the members of the Society will celebrate one Mass for his intention. The community to which the deceased belonged at the time of his death will celebrate a Mass for him as soon as possible.
 - b. Besides the Mass celebrated by each member for every deceased confrere, another Mass will be offered in each community, on the death of the Superior General throughout the whole Society, and at the death of a Provincial, throughout his province.
 - c. Every year, in all the houses where it is possible, a Mass will be celebrated for the intention of the members of the Society who have died during the year.

Art. 59. Any member who believes he ought to withdraw from the Society is asked to discuss the matter with his Provincial, if possible one year in advance. The Provincial will notify the Superior General of the decision taken and will also inform the confrere's Ordinary.

O.R.A. The date of departure of a confrere, voluntary or not, is determined:

-either by an agreement between the confrere concerned, the Provincial and, if need be, the Ordinary of incardination;

-or, lacking a precise agreement, by the date on which the Provincial Council or the Provincial takes official note of resignation after a confrere has sent in his notification of resignation, or, also, according to the case, when the Provincial Council or the Provincial Superior issues a definitive statement of the non-acceptance or the dismissal of a confrere. In the latter case, however, certain canonical effects, relating to membership in the Society, may continue until a definitive settlement is concluded with the Ordinary. In all cases a written notification, specifying the date of departure, will be sent to the Superior General.

Art. 60. The Provincial Council may by a majority vote determined in a secret ballot dismiss from the Society a definitive member. In some circumstances foreseen by Canon Law and by the Constitutions, the authorities of the Society have the right and sometimes the duty to exclude a definitive member. Except for cases of automatic dismissal foreseen in Canon 694, this will never be done without having exhausted all possible means of remedying the situation (warnings, grace periods, etc.), and always in a manner inspired by fairness and fraternal love. Discretion is called for on all sides during the whole course of the proceedings. For the dismissal procedure Canon Law must be followed. The confrere concerned has the right to appeal the decision of the Provincial Council to the General Council (cf. Art. 83, O.R.A. b, #9).

O.R.A. a. Besides the cases foreseen by Canon Law (C. 694), the following faults will also be considered as causes for dismissal:

-to stir up or to lend support to grave divisions in the Church or in the Society;

-to persevere in disobedience to the Superior General or to the Provincial.

b. The dismissal, as well as voluntary departure, does not constitute for the former member, a title to any material damages. However, the Provincial Councils will investigate each case in a spirit of fairness and charity, taking as their rule that it is better to suffer a material loss oneself than to cause others any spiritual harm. Even in cases in which the dismissed members had committed very grave faults, an attempt should be made in a spirit of deep and sincere friendship, to maintain good personal relations with them

CHAPTER III

INITIAL AND ONGOING FORMATION

"The greatest good and the most pressing need of the Church is that of forming priests who, through their ability to participate in the spirit and grace of the Most Reverend Bishops, help them to prepare and... sanctify their clergy" (DE I, 68).

"The chief and leading occupation of this house must be the sanctification of persons who will be like salt for the rest of the priests, entering into the whole body to penetrate it with their wisdom and divine life. To achieve this end, it is necessary that the principal persons who make up this house have a great fullness of life, which they can spread throughout the vast and immense body of the clergy. They must possess a spirit of death and self-denial regarding all high positions in order to merit the honor and grace of working for the sanctification of those persons who fulfill the responsibilities and the high offices of the Church" (M. 8, 284).

"We will take care of [those]... who feel they are called to be a part of the seminary and desire to give their whole life for the service of priests, by training them to empty themselves interiorly and exteriorly, . . . we shall train them in humility, patience, mortification, and in other similar virtues so that they might fully receive the holy spirit of their order and thus be very rich resources.... They must be apostolic foundations who build up the spiritual house of the Lord" (DE 1, 117-118).

"To direct souls faithfully and carefully to suppress the passions and the inclinations of the flesh, not by pretending to nip them in the bud, for they must spring up and make themselves felt in us, but by being careful not to cling to them" (DE 1, 148).

- Art. 61. The Society will see to it that all of its members have the benefit of the following elements of formation:
- a doctrinal formation through higher and specialized studies;
 - a pastoral experience properly adapted and supervised;
 - a pedagogical training oriented toward the various Sulpician ministries;
 - a spiritual preparation including both the study of spirituality and a concentrated period of spiritual exercises;
 - an adequate knowledge of the foundational texts of the Society and of its history.

Art. 62. All the above elements of formation will be the object of continuous scrutiny. In establishing the order to be followed and in determining the various procedures to be used, consideration should be given to the needs and capabilities of the candidates, as well as the means of implementation at the disposal of each province.

- O.R.A. a. The pedagogical formation should include theoretical instruction and supervised training. It must prepare the candidates especially for the ministries of leadership and of spiritual direction.

If institutes or courses, as foreseen by the decree *Optatam totius* of the Second Vatican Council are being given, the Society will normally see that their members take advantage of them.

- b. Those in charge of formation will take into account the particular needs resulting from the diversity of civilizations and cultures. Special care should be taken:

- concerning necessary pedagogical formation which can be adequately acquired only in a given locale;

- concerning knowledge, as perfect as possible, of a foreign language.

Art. 63. In the perspective of a commitment made, in principle, for one's whole life, the Society will offer all candidates the opportunity and the means:

- to achieve an actual deepening in the spirit and tradition of Saint Sulpice and to form fraternal ties with the members of the Society;
- to pursue a prolonged spiritual formation in recollection and prayer;
- to deepen the singleness of purpose in their lives which is prescribed for every priest and still more especially for those who form other priests.

Art. 64. These objectives will be achieved;

- by an attentive and persevering, personal and communal listening to the Word of God;.
- by developing an ability of discern in common, in light of that Word, the signs and the calls of God in the various events of life;
- by an initiation into the spirit of the Society, through its history, its witnesses, its Constitutions and its present situation.

Art. 65. The particular patterns of this formation proper to the Society, as presented in particular in Articles 63 and 64, especially its location and duration, will be determined by each province, in agreement with the General Council, in fidelity to the spirit of the Society and by taking into account the true needs of the candidates.

- O.R.A.
- a. In the actual organization of the program, it should be remembered that the Sulpician vocation implies a deep apprenticeship in prayer and a call to contemplation, that there is no authentic spiritual experience without a certain duration of time and the patience of prolonged waiting. It should likewise be recalled that the "God who speaks to the heart" in prayer is the same who reveals himself and gives himself through the actions of the ministry; finally, that fraternal union is a state privileged by the presence of God.
 - b. Other aspects of this formation do not demand of themselves a continuous being together, but, in any case, they will be properly organized by the director appointed by the Provincial Council.

Art. 66. All during his ministry every Sulpician has the obligation to develop and to renew his competence in the various areas of his work, spiritual, intellectual, pedagogical and pastoral. The Provincial Councils should make provision for this ongoing formation of the confreres and should facilitate it in a variety of ways.

O.R.A. a. Various means may be foreseen and used according to the possibilities of each province, for example:

-conferences and “priestly months,”* especially adapted to the needs of the Priests of Saint Sulpice;

-after about ten years of Sulpician ministry, to grant the option, in agreement with the Provincial Council, to interrupt their work in order to devote themselves to spiritual, intellectual or pastoral activities which would prepare them better in the future for a normal resumption of the ministries of the Society.

b. The use of these periods of enrichment will have a genuine effectiveness only if every community actively promotes such renewal on a regular basis (mutual information, a pooling of pedagogical efforts, openness and an exchange of ideas on pastoral problems and a sharing of spiritual insights).

c. The ongoing formation of the confreres who exercise their ministries in far-distant communities is particularly important and frequently more difficult to put into effect. It merits special attention. It could take place in a different form and time from the program planned for the other members of the province.

Art. 67. In each province a director of initial formation will be appointed by the Provincial Council. In virtue of this mandate and in close cooperation with the Provincial Council, his task is to plan, organize and supervise everything connected with this formation. An associate may be appointed to assist him in this work.

* The original French expression, “*mois sacerdotaux*” refers to those month-long sessions which have been popular in the contemporary French Church. They generally seek to further either the pastoral, spiritual or intellectual renewal of priests.

O.R.A. Personally or through confreres explicitly charged with this duty, the director will acquire an adequate knowledge of the candidates so that he may be in a position to follow their progress and to guide them during their whole formation.
Every year he should furnish the Provincial Council with a report on each one of the candidates. The substance of the report will be subsequently conveyed to the candidate himself.

Art. 68. The Provincial Council will appoint a director for the ongoing formation of the members of the province.

O.R.A. This director should keep in touch with various organizations of the province. If he is not a member of the Provincial Council, he should be requested to participate in the meetings whenever it is necessary.

PART THREE

STRUCTURES IN THE SERVICE OF THE MISSION

INTRODUCTION

Structures are necessary, in the natural order, so that diversified personal talents may work together for the common good of various societies. In the Church itself, inspired by the Holy Spirit, the divine mission is not accomplished without the mediation of these structures, although they then acquire a supernatural dimension.

Pastoral authority, in particular, proceeds entirely from the Redeeming Love, which has made the Son of God the servant of his Father and of his brothers and sisters, even to the giving of his own life. This pastoral authority is exercised only in his name, to serve as he served “not simply as a duty but gladly” (1 Peter 5:2), and its firmness should be only an expression of its fidelity.

The Society of St. Sulpice has its own structures determined by its mission. They organize the common and apostolic life of a group of priests who share in solidarity a responsibility for the work entrusted to them. From its origin, the “Assembly of the Directors” has collegially assumed the responsibility of formation within the context of the seminary, making decisions related to its functioning by majority vote. At the other levels of government, the structures of the Society take analogous institutional forms, with the necessary adaptations, and without a confusion of functions and roles.

This form of collaboration would be ineffective without sincere dialogue and without each committing his talents and energies to the common endeavor. It would also be ineffective, within the limits of the common good, if the prerogatives proper to the functions, which each individual is called upon to exercise, were not duly respected.

Care for this shared responsibility and its proper exercise falls upon each member, but the obligation falls especially upon the various superiors, who are the first servants of the community and the persons most responsible for its unity of spirit and action.

In the Society the flexibility of its canonical structure fits in well with the status of the diocesan clergy whose life-style must be capable of being adapted to the multiple tasks of pastors and to the varied patterns of their presence to people. In this spirit, each Sulpician can, without vows, be united with joy to a Christ poor, chaste, and obedient, making his own the interior urgency of the charity of him who came not to be served but to serve.

CHAPTER I

THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE SOCIETY

- Art. 69. The General Assembly holds authority over the entire Society, within the limits of the Constitutions. The Superior General and the General Council exercise authority, according to the orientations and the decisions taken by the General Assembly and according to the powers granted to them by the Constitutions.
- Art. 70. In each province, the Provincial Assembly exercises authority over the entire province dependent, however, on the Constitutions and on the General authorities. The Provincial Superior and the Provincial Council exercise authority in conformity with the Constitutions and according to the orientations and decisions of the General authorities and of the Provincial Assembly.
- O.R.A.
- a. The Society consists at present of three provinces, those of France, Canada and the United States. To establish a new province or to suppress an existing province, a decision of the General Assembly is necessary.
 - b. A new province cannot be established unless a certain number of questions have already been studied, for example:
 - the status of the confreres already in the locality;

-the formation of future confreres;

-the sharing of personnel and of material resources necessary for the new province. This study, begun first on the level of the province of origin, is followed up in one of the meetings of the General Council foreseen in Art. 84.

c. In order to stimulate interest among the confrere, to encourage greater participation of each member in the life and the decisions of the Society, and to foster a greater sense of belonging and of responsibility for the life of the community, it is desirable that the General, Provincial and local authorities furnish the confreres with information regarding questions of major interest and that they consult the members when it is opportune and possible.

Art. 71. In each house, the superior and the local Council exercise their authority in regard to local needs, in conformity with the Constitutions and according to the orientations and the decisions of the General and Provincial authorities.

CHAPTER II

THE STRUCTURES AT THE GENERAL LEVEL

Art. 72. The General structures guarantee the unity of direction and of spirit essential to the very life of the Society and to the exercise of its proper mission in its international setting. These structures have, for their principal purpose, the orientation and the leadership of the Society by decisions and directives in harmony with its mission and its vocation. They take into account the adaptations necessary to various times and places, as well as the diversity among the people called to collaborate with the members of the Society in the duties which are entrusted to it.

The General Assembly

Art. 73. The General Assembly represents the whole Society. It exercises therein the highest authority. To it belongs the power to elect the Superior General and the General Consultors, to discuss the important matters of interest to the Society and to make the necessary decisions.

Art. 74. The regular General Assembly is held every six years. In the intervening period, exceptional General Assemblies are held, if it is necessary to replace

the Superior General before the end of his term or if the General Council deems it necessary. In all cases, the General Council has the right to convoke the Assembly and to set the date and the place.

Art. 75. The General Assembly is composed of ex officio members and elected members. The ex officio members are:

- The Superior General and the Vice-Superior;
- The four General Consultors;
- The Provincial Superiors;
- The General Procurator at the Holy See.

Art. 76. Each province elects a certain number of delegates according to the proportion fixed by the Regulations on Elections (Appendix I). In this election, all members of the Society have the right to vote, and definitive members are eligible for election except those who are already ex officio members of the Assembly.

Art. 77. The General Assembly conducts the following elections:

-The regular General Assembly and the exceptional General Assembly for elections elect the Superior General following the specifications indicated in Articles 85 and 92 of the Constitutions, and according to the procedure described in Appendix 1, 24-29.

-The regular General Assembly also elects the four General Consultors, following the specifications indicated in Article 93 and according to the procedure described in Appendix I, 24-27 and 30-32. The exceptional General Assembly elects, following this procedure, one or more consultors if the General Council has previously named one or more temporary consultors (cf. Article 94).

Art. 78. The General Assembly considers all matters that affect the whole Society.

It studies, in particular, questions relating to the general orientation of the Society as well as its adaptation to the task entrusted to it, the modifications foreseen in the Constitutions and in the Rules of Application, and the contributions from the Provinces for the general needs of the Society, for example, for its missionary expansion. Proposals for changing the Constitutions which have received a two-thirds vote of the Assembly will be subsequently submitted for the approval of the Holy See, whose right it is to give them an authentic interpretation.

- Art. 79. 1. The General Assembly may set up various groups for consultation or research and regulate their functioning.
2. Within the limits of the Constitutions the Assembly may adopt various regulations or rules. Its decisions have the force of law until a subsequent General Assembly modifies or abrogates them. Decisions that restrict individual rights must receive two-thirds of the votes.
- O.R.A. a. At the beginning of each General Assembly, the principal decisions taken by the preceding General Assembly will be reviewed, and any special points that have caused difficulties since they were implemented will be discussed. This discussion will be prepared according to the directives given in Art. 83, O.R.A.b. 1, and Art. 105.
- b. During the .final session, after hearing the Secretary read the minutes of the Assembly, the Superior General and all the members will sign them.
- c. For the general procedure of the Assembly, the regulations of Appendix I, 19 and following, will be used.
- Art. 80. The Constitutions or the Regulations may demand, for certain decisions, a two-thirds majority of those voting. In all other cases, the decisions of the Assembly are taken by an absolute majority of the delegates.
- The deliberations of the Assembly are valid only if two-thirds of the members are present.

The General Council and Related Responsibilities

- Art. 81. The General Council, which is composed of the Superior General who convokes it, sets the agenda and presides over it, and of the four consultors, exercises ordinary authority over the whole Society, in the cases and in the manner foreseen by universal law and the law of the Society. The General administration includes also those responsible for various duties which are under the charge of the General Council.

1. The General Council

- Art. 82. The General Council carries out its responsibility by exercising a service of leadership and of organization of the whole Society. It is responsible for the application of the Constitutions and for the implementation of the decisions

taken by the General Assembly. In case of doubt, it interprets these latter decisions. Especially attentive to the life, the mission and to the international character of the Society, it is responsible for maintaining unity within the Society while respecting, at the same time, a just autonomy for the provinces, in complete fidelity to its spirit. The Council further has the responsibility of understanding and of informing, of challenging and of coordinating.

Art. 83. In the framework of the Constitutions, the General Council has the right to make decisions binding the whole Society until the next General Assembly, which can confirm, modify or abrogate them. It meets several times a year. On questions that concern the nature and the mission of the Society, a majority vote is needed; the list of these is given below in O.R.A. b.

O.R.A. a. In non-electoral matters, that action of the Council will have the force of law which, when a majority of those who must be convoked are present, receives the approval of an absolute majority of those present.

b. The powers of the General Council are exercised in regard to the following questions, among others, which concern, in a more special way, the nature and mission of the Society:

1. The convocation and preparation of the General Assemblies with the collaboration of the provincial authorities.
2. The appointment of the General Procurator at Rome, of the General Secretary, of the General Treasurer and of the Associate General Treasurer.
3. The administration of the temporal goods of the Society which do not belong to the provinces, or which the provinces, in accord with the Constitutions, have entrusted to the General authorities; the alienation of the goods of the Society or the acquisition of new goods of notable value, which ought always to be decided by majority vote and with account taken of Canon Law. In these matters the Council shall never enter into negotiations with one or the other of its members nor with their relatives or in-laws.
4. Questions touching on the fundamental principles of the formation of priests and of the initial formation of Sulpician candidates, on the missionary service of the Society, on the study of its history, of its tradition, of the theology and of the spirituality of the ministerial priesthood. The bringing up to date, in dependence

on the General Assembly, of the liturgical Proper of the Society, of the Constitutions, Regulations and General Guidelines, etc.

5. The relations with the Holy See and, when the Council judges it necessary, with the Bishops' Conferences, especially in the countries in which no province is active or in those countries in which the Society exercises a missionary activity. In the latter case, the relations depend also upon the Provincial Council; consequently, it is important that everything be done in cooperation with it.

6. The preparation and convocation, with the collaboration of the provinces, of conferences, seminars or meetings having for their purpose the study of questions referring particularly to the mission and the community life of the whole Society.

7. The approvals necessary for:

- the taking charge by one province of a new house or of a new form of ministry;

- the regrouping of houses juridically distinct;

- the initiative for the departure from a house, pure and simple;

- the alienation of the temporal goods of a province in those cases in which recourse to the Holy See is necessary;

- the general program and the decisions of the Provincial Assemblies;

- new experiments unforeseen in the Constitutions;

- methods for the formation of the members of the Society, etc.

All these approvals suppose a preliminary discussion with the provincial authorities.

8. In the particular case of a new foundation in a mission territory or in a country far distant from the center of the provinces, except for a simple, occasional collaboration, the General Council acts in

cooperation with the interested provincial authorities on the preliminary studies. The final decision is taken in common accord with the provincial authorities.

9. The dismissal of members, according to the regulations given in Part II of the Constitutions (Art. 52, 5 and Art. 60).

10. Other matters which the Constitutions or the General Assembly may have entrusted to the General Council or to the Superior General as well as those cases in which an appeal is made to the General Council and which it judges to be within its jurisdiction.

Art. 84. To be better informed and to achieve more effective communication in the government of the Society, the General Council will meet with the Provincial Superiors at least once a year.

O.R.A. a. The agenda of this meeting will be prepared by joint agreement. It ought to include, among other matters, a study of the questions raised by the far distant communities. In particular, in order to give them effective aid, an inter-Provincial Fund should be set up, as a sign of the collaboration of the whole Society in the missionary tasks assigned to it by the Church. The General Council and the Provincial Superiors assure the supervision of this fund.

b. Once each year this session will include a report on the financial situation of each province given by the Provincial Superiors.

c. The General Council will be assisted, if need be, by commissions, committees or other consultative or research groups created by it or by the General Assembly. The appointment of the members of these groups will be made in agreement with the Provincial Superiors involved. The General Council will keep in close contact with the leaders of these groups to insure their effectiveness. It will make use of the results of their work and, as opportunity offers, communicate their findings to all the confreres.

2. The Superior General

Art. 85. 1. The Superior General must be a definitive member with ten years of active and still continuing service in the Society. He is elected by the General Assembly, by a two-thirds majority of the votes by secret ballot. His term runs until the next regular General Assembly. He may not serve for more than two complete terms (of six years), partial terms (resulting from cases

foreseen in Art. 92) not being counted.

2. As soon as a ballot gives the desired majority, the Superior General is elected and the presiding officer publishes the result. The election takes effect upon the acceptance by the person chosen without need of any confirmation.

Art. 86. The authority and the responsibility of the Superior General extends over the whole Society. It is he who convokes, presides over and provides leadership for the meetings of the General Council whose agenda he sets. In a spirit of service, he keeps in touch with the activities and needs of the whole Society, attends to the carrying out of the Sulpician mission in the Church according to the Constitutions, and to the implementation of the decisions taken by the General Assemblies. He confirms the election of the Provincial Superiors, and the appointments of the Local Superiors are submitted before hand to him for approval. In cases of doubt he interprets the Constitutions. He also keeps in touch with the Holy See and with the bishops.

Art. 87. The Superior General acts in union with the consultors in the discharge of his office. He discusses with them, except in cases of emergency, all the matters concerning the Society. By majority vote with the consultors, again except in urgent cases, he makes the decisions on those matters mentioned in the Constitutions as needing such a vote (Art. 83). Furthermore, every member or candidate of the Society always has the right to direct and personal contact with the Superior General, independently of the Council.

O.R.A. In all the non-secret voting of the General Assembly or of the General Council, if the number of votes is equally divided, the vote of the Superior General is decisive; however, he is free not to make use of this privilege.

Art. 88. The Superior General visits, at least every six years, personally, or by means of a delegate, the provinces and the houses of the Society. He takes an interest in the various aspects of the community life and in the activities of each confrere.

Art. 89. If the Superior General so desires, he may appoint from among the consultors a delegate with a particular mission. If the Superior General foresees that he will be hindered from carrying out his duties for a considerable length of time, he must choose from among the consultors a Vice-Superior General who will possess, in principle, all his powers. At the same time, the Council will elect a temporary consultor for the duration of the difficulty.

Art. 90. If the Superior General believes he has grave motives for submitting his resignation, he should send the reasons to the Holy See, which has the right to accept or reject the proposed resignation.

O.R.A. It would be well for the Superior General not to take such a decision without the advice of the consultors. In such an instance, he will request them to send their observations to the Holy See.

Art. 91. If, for grave reason, the consultors judge that the Superior General should be replaced before the normal date of the regular General Assembly, or that a provisional substitute should be designated for him, they should submit the case to the Holy See.

Art. 92. In case of death, of the resignation juridically accepted by the Holy See or, finally, of the canonical dismissal of the Superior General, and until the election of his successor, the Vice-Superior General administers the Society in union with the consultors. If there is no Vice-Superior General, the first consultor, elected according to the procedure for determining the order among the consultors (Appendix I, 32), becomes the Vice-Superior General automatically. As soon as possible, the General Council should convoke an exceptional General Assembly over which the Vice-Superior General will preside. The Assembly will elect a new Superior General whose mandate will run until the next regular General Assembly.

3. The General Consultors

Art. 93. The General Consultors, numbering four, assist the Superior General in the government of the Society. They are elected at the General Assembly from the definitive members of the various provinces, according to the regulations prescribed for the procedure of the Assembly (Appendix 1, 30-32). Their term of office lasts until the next regular Assembly. They may not serve consecutively more than two complete terms (of six years each), partial terms not being counted.

Art. 94. In case a substitute must be named among the consultors, this should be done by the General Council with due consideration for proper representation of the provinces or of groups designated by the General Assembly (Appendix 1, 30). Except for the case foreseen above in Article 89, the substitute-consultor is elected for the amount of the term which still remains until the next General Assembly (regular or exceptional) which will then proceed to a new election.

- O.R.A. a. The General Consultors have not, as such, and taken individually, any particular powers in their respective provinces, except the case in which the Superior General has entrusted a special mandate to them.
- b. No one may serve as a member of the Provincial Council and the General Council at the same time.
- c. The two offices of General Consultor and Provincial Delegate are incompatible.

4. Other Offices of the General Administration

Art. 95. Those holding offices in the General administration, other than the Superior General and the General Consultors, are chosen by the General Council, by a majority vote, after an understanding with the provincial superiors involved. Those appointed remain in office until a new decision of the Council.

O.R.A. It would be well for the Council to consider, at the end of six years, a change in those holding these offices.

Art. 96. The General Procurator represents the Society before the Holy See.

O.R.A. The Procure in Rome comes under the General government of the Society, even in regard to temporalities.

Art. 97. The General Secretary keeps the records and takes care of the correspondence and of the communications necessary for the administration of the Society under the responsibility of the Superior General. He may be chosen from among the consultors.

Art. 98. The General Treasurer administers the real and movable property of the General government of the Society, under the direction and the supervision of the Superior General and of his Council. He should fulfill his duties according to law. The responsibility of General Treasurer is incompatible with that of Consultor and of Superior General

Art. 99. The General Treasurer gives an accounting to the Superior General whenever he asks for it. He makes an annual official report, for the entire year, to the Superior General and to the consultors assembled together.

O.R.A. a. At the time of the regular General Assembly, a report prepared by accountants will be presented to the delegates. The Superior General will

send the substance of the report to all the confreres in the letter in which he informs them of the results of the General Assembly.

b. The General Treasurer will be invited to the meetings of the Council whenever the nature of the questions to be considered demands his presence.

c. The General Treasurer will be assisted by an Associate General Treasurer.

CHAPTER III

PROVINCIAL STRUCTURES

Art. 100. The division of the Society into provinces comes as a result of the solid roots it has laid down in various regions and cultures. The establishment of various provinces insures, thanks to a more direct contact, a better adjustment to local problems. The provinces should strive to maintain and to develop the fraternal ties binding them together and, in whatever measure possible, their mutual collaboration.

The Provincial Assembly

Art. 101. The Provincial Assembly represents the whole province. It has the right to elect the Provincial Superior and his consultors, to consider important matters affecting the province and to make the necessary decisions.

Art. 102. The regular Provincial Assembly is held every six years. Other exceptional Provincial Assemblies are held if there is need to replace the Provincial Superior before the end of his term or if the Provincial Council believes it is opportune to hold an assembly. In the latter case, the authorization of the General Council is necessary.

Art. 103. The Provincial Council sets the date and the place of the Provincial Assembly. It likewise prepares the agenda and submits the general outline of it to the General Council for approval.

O.R.A. A Provincial Assembly may occur in several sessions organized according to a common plan but separated in time for particular reasons of convenience. However, this extended interval may not exceed one year.

Art. 104. The Provincial Assembly is composed of ex officio members and elected members. The ex officio members are the Provincial and the consultors. The preceding Assembly or, if it fails to do so, the Provincial Council, with the approval of the General Council, determines the number of delegates to be elected, the norms of representation and the manner of election.

- O.R.A.
- a. The Provincial Council may summon the Provincial Delegate (Art. 125) to participate in the Provincial Assembly with the right to vote.
 - b. Unless the Provincial Assembly decides otherwise by a two-thirds majority vote, all questions concerning the preparation, the leadership, the secretariat, the “quorum,” the order of work and of voting, are regulated as has been provided for the General Assembly.

- Art. 105.
1. The Assembly concerns itself with the concrete application of the Constitutions, with the details called for according to the needs and circumstances, as well as the orientations and the decisions of the General Assemblies and of the competent Church authorities. It also assists in organizing the preparation and study of the questions which will be submitted to the next General Assembly of the Society.
 2. It considers matters of interest to the province, to the various communities and to the members. Within the framework of the Constitutions and the decisions of the General Assembly, it sets the general policy in the province, establishes the necessary consultative groups, makes decisions which oblige the province in whole or in part and issues regulations binding upon its members.

Art. 106. The decisions and regulations of the Provincial Assembly, duly approved by the General Council, are in force until a subsequent Provincial Assembly modifies or abrogates them. The decisions are made by an absolute majority of the votes unless there has been some other determination. Thus, a two-thirds majority vote is required for any regulations restricting the individual rights of the confreres and also for the election of the Provincial Superior.

- O.R.A.
- a. At the beginning of each Provincial Assembly, discussion will center upon those particular points which, since they have been put into practice, have caused certain difficulties. This discussion will be prepared along the indications in Art. 110, no. 1 and in Appendix I, 16-17.
 - b. The consultative groups, such as the standing commissions for study and research or for provincial gatherings, may be opened to others besides

the confreres of the province. These groups are established by the Provincial Assembly or by the Provincial Council.

c. Once approved by the General Council, the decisions of the Provincial Assemblies will be sent to the confreres of the province and to the Provincial Councils of the other provinces. Results of the important work of the commissions and of other provincial gatherings will also be sent to the same people.

The Provincial Council and Related Responsibilities

1. The Provincial Council

Art. 107. The Provincial Council is composed of the Provincial Superior who convokes it, sets its agenda, and presides over it, and of four consultors. It has the responsibility of administering both the spiritual and the material affairs of the province, according to the norms of Canon Law and the law of the Society. With this purpose in mind, it makes all the decisions regarding the exercise of the mission of the Society within the limits of the province, in conformity with the Constitutions and the decisions or directives of both the General authorities and the Provincial Assembly. In case of doubt it interprets the decisions of the Provincial Assembly.

Art. 108. In the service of the common good, the Provincial Council sees to it that unity of spirit and of action is maintained in the exercise of the mission of the Society, taking into account special circumstances and the necessary adaptations to be made. It encourages at the same time initiative and common effort within the province.

Art. 109. The Provincial Council studies the situation and the needs of the houses and of the members of the province, develops plans for the future, organizes the preparation of the candidates for their ministry and assigns the confreres to the various communities of the province. In addition, it provides leadership in the activities of the province and of the houses and encourages fraternal contacts among the members of the Society. It meets about once a month (Cf. *infra* art. 57, O.R.A. a and b).

O.R.A. In non-electoral matters, that action of the Council will have the force of law which, when a majority of those who must be convoked are present, receives the approval of an absolute majority of those present.

Art. 110. The Provincial Council decides, by majority vote, the following questions:

1. The convocation and the preparation of the Provincial Assemblies.
2. The adoption of regulations which oblige the whole province as long as the Provincial Assembly has not abrogated or modified them.
3. The alienation of the goods of the province, the acquisition of new goods of notable value, the business of current administration, and the supervision of the temporal administration (cf. Art. 83, O.R.A. 3 and 7; Art. 145 and Appendix III). The Provincial Council is competent for the alienation of goods for which it is directly responsible and whose value does not exceed the maximum limit determined by the Holy See for each region and when the decision does not concern goods which have been given to the Church as the result of a vow or objects which are precious because of their artistic or historic value (Cf. C. 638 #3 and 1292 #2). In these latter cases the consent of the General Council and the Holy See are required.
4. The acceptance of the refusal for the confreres of duties other than those officially entrusted to the Society.
5. The acceptance of candidates and the admission of members into the province, all of whose names are sent to the Superior General.
6. The dismissal of subjects, in first instance.
7. The decision, in accord with the General Council, to accept a new foundation, to abandon one already established, to regroup or to change the purpose of a house, in keeping with the law.
8. The drawing up and the establishing of various contracts foreseen in Article 9, as well as, generally speaking, the discussion of important matters with the bishops and the Bishops' Conferences.
9. Finally, all the questions submitted to the competence of the Provincial Council in virtue of the Constitutions or of the decisions of the General or Provincial Assemblies.

O.R.A. In the seminaries, the formation staff and the professors who belong to the Society are appointed by the Provincial Council and their appointments are sent to the diocesan bishop. The appointments of other formation

personnel or professors are made by an agreement with the diocesan bishop and, if necessary, with other competent authorities.

Art. 111. 1. The Provincial Council also decides, by majority vote, questions of appointments to positions in the seminaries and in other houses of the province, as well as to various provincial offices. The appointments of Local Superiors should be submitted, except in emergencies, to the Superior General. It is also the Provincial Council that presents to the competent authority the candidate to become a pastor or the superior of a seminary when that appointment rests with a Roman authority or with the diocesan bishop.

2. Questions relating to the appointments, rights and duties of those confreres who have functions in parishes or houses directed by the Society, other than the seminaries, are regulated by analogy with what has just been said about the seminaries, keeping in mind the rules of Canon Law.

- O.R.A. a. If someone outside the Society requests a confrere to accept a permanent office outside the houses or the normal ministries of the Society, or if he has some reason to offer himself for such a position, he ought to discuss the matter as soon as possible with the local and provincial authorities and obtain authorization before accepting such a position.
- b. The Provincial Council may take the initiative in regard to such an appointment. In all these cases, it is the right of the Provincial Council to discuss and to regulate, with the Ordinary, with the competent authorities and with the individual himself, the various questions which would arise regarding his functions, including also the question of his contributions to the common fund. The competent authority will then make the appointment. The departure of a confrere who is going into retirement should involve a procedure similar to the one outlined above.

Art. 112 The Provincial Councils are assisted by various consultative groups established by the Councils themselves or by the Provincial Assembly.

- O.R.A. The Provincial Councils should see to the participation of all in these groups and keep in frequent touch with those in charge of them. They should make use of the results of their work and, as opportunity offers, give the confreres a report on these activities.

Art. 113. The Provincial Council should appoint, if the occasion warrants it, someone charged with maintaining mutual ties among the confreres and with organizing whatever may aid the confreres, in communities distant from the center of the province, from a material, intellectual and spiritual point of view.

- O.R.A. a. The director of these activities should make a report on his work each year to the Provincial Council.
- b. The confreres of these distant communities should, in turn, try to give their active cooperation to the common good of the Society or to certain of its communities, when the opportunity presents itself.

2. The Provincial Superior

Art. 114 The Provincial Superior, who must be a definitive member, is elected by the Provincial Assembly, by a two-thirds majority vote, taken in secret ballots. News of his election is sent without delay to the Superior General for his approval. His term of office lasts until the next regular Provincial Assembly. He may not serve for more than two complete terms (of six years each), although partial terms resulting from cases foreseen in Art. 119 are not counted.

- O.R.A. The election of the Provincial Superior follows the same procedure foreseen in the election of the Superior General, with recourse to the latter if no one has obtained the necessary majority at the end of the balloting.

Art. 115. The authority and the responsibility of the Provincial Superior extend over the whole province. It is he who convokes, presides over and gives leadership to the meetings of the Provincial Council. Concerned for the general good of the Church and of the Society, he keeps in touch with the Superior General, with the bishops, with the houses, with the various provincial organizations and with every confrere of the province. In a spirit of service, he should be aware of the activities and of the needs of all and see to the accomplishment of the Sulpician mission in the local context, according to the Constitutions and the decisions of the General and Provincial Assemblies.

Art. 116. In the exercise of his office which involves a personal responsibility, the Provincial Superior acts in union with the consultors (cf. Art. 109). If, in an emergency, he settles a matter without them, he must later refer the matter to the Council. Every member or candidate has, in addition, the right to direct and personal contact with the Provincial

Superior.

- O.R.A. a. The vote of the Provincial Superior is decisive in the same conditions as that of the Superior General (cf. Art. 87, O.R.A.)
- b. The Provincial Superior may, without necessarily consulting his Council, give permissions for the publication of works and of articles and for participation in other forms of the media, as well as permissions for distant trips.

Art. 117. The Provincial Superior visits, at least every three years, either personally or by delegate, the houses and confreres of his province, being guided by what is said concerning visits in Appendix 11.

Art. 118. If the Provincial Superior so desires, he may appoint one of his consultors as a delegate with a particular mission.

If he foresees that he cannot perform his duties for a considerable length of time, he should request the first consultor to act as his substitute.

If the Provincial Superior believes he has serious reasons for resigning, he should submit them to the General Council.

If, for grave reasons, the consultors judge that the Provincial Superior should be replaced before the end of his term or that a provisional replacement should be named for him, they, too, should submit the matter to the General Council.

Art. 119. In case of the death, the resignation juridically accepted by the General Council or, finally, the canonical dismissal of the Provincial Superior, until the election of his successor, the first consultor administers the province. With the authorization of the General Council, the Provincial Council must convoke, as soon as possible, a Provincial Assembly with the purpose of electing a new Provincial Superior. The term of office of the new Provincial Superior will last until the next regular Provincial Assembly.

In the interval before the election, the first consultor administers the business of the province in union with the other consultors; he presides also over the Provincial Assembly

3. The Provincial Consultors

Art. 120. The four consultors are collegially responsible, with the Provincial Superior, for the administration of the province. They are elected by the members of the Provincial Assembly according to the procedure used for the election of the General Consultors (Appendix I, 30-32). Their term of office lasts until the next regular Provincial Assembly. They may not serve successively more than two complete terms (of six years each), although partial terms are not counted.

O.R.A. The Provincial Assemblies may, however, choose to renew half the number of consultors every three years. The Provincial Assemblies must then draw up precise and detailed regulations if they must have an election by mail in the interval separating two regular Provincial Assemblies. The present consultors continue to function until the election of their successors.

Art. 121. In case a substitution must be made among the Provincial consultors, the Council provides for this by a majority vote. Except in the case foreseen in Article 118, the temporary consultor remains in office until the next regular or exceptional Provincial Assembly, which will proceed to a new election.

O.R.A. If for serious reasons it is determined that a Consultor must be replaced before the normal date of a regular Provincial Assembly, the case will be submitted to the Superior General.

4. Other Offices of the Provincial Administration

Art. 122. The Provincial Council is assisted by various associates, in particular by a Provincial Treasurer, by a Provincial Secretary and by one or more directors of initial and ongoing formation. All these persons are appointed by the Provincial Council.

O.R.A. a. These associates remain in office until there is a new decision of the Council; it would be well for the Council to consider, after six years, the wisdom of a change.

b. The directors of initial and ongoing formation, as well as other confreres, will be invited to the Council meetings as often as is necessary.

c. Of the offices just mentioned, only that of the Provincial Treasurer is incompatible with the office of consultor.

Art. 123. The Provincial Treasurer administers all the movable and real property, which makes up the patrimony of each province, under the direction and supervision of the Provincial Superior and of the Council. He fulfills his functions in conformity with the law.

The province should entrust to the members of local communities, especially to the treasurers, only the ordinary administration of these local goods.

a. A financial report, prepared by accountants, will be presented to the members of the Provincial Assembly. The Provincial Superior will inform the other confreres of the substance of the report.

b. The Provincial Treasurer will be invited to the Council meetings whenever the nature of the question to be discussed calls for his presence.

c. The Provincial Treasurer will be assisted by an associate treasurer.

d. It is desirable that the provinces (and even the houses, where necessary) be legally recognized as moral and civil persons according to the laws of the countries in which they are situated.

e. If the civil law permits them to make regulations governing the internal regime, the provinces must make sure that these regulations fulfill all the conditions prescribed for validity, that they explicitly mention the demands of the present Constitutions and that they truly protect the interests of the province or of the house.

Art. 124. The General Council and the General Assembly may not dispose of the goods of a province, even for the benefit of another province or of the Society itself, without the advice of the confreres of the province in question and without the consent of the Provincial Assembly, or, during the interval between Assemblies, the consent of the Provincial Council, with due attention to the prescriptions of Canon Law.

O.R.A. In their contributions to the expenses of the General government of the Society, the provinces should conform to the decisions of the General Assemblies.

5. Provincial Delegates

Art. 125. By reason of the problems common to a group of communities, or because of difficulties of communication, or, again, with a view to preparing for the creation of a new province, the Provincial Councils may appoint a Provincial Delegate to whom they will give whatever powers they judge necessary. This appointment will be made in agreement with the Superior General and, to the extent possible, after consulting the confreres involved. This delegate may be assisted by a Council, which normally will be chosen by all the members of the communities involved.

The Mediation Committee

- Art. 126.
1. If it seems wise to do so, the Provincial Assembly may establish and organize a “Mediation Committee” to assist in the settlement by friendly agreement of certain disputed questions which do not pertain to general government.
 2. The conclusions of this committee, based on experience and wisdom, and formulated with due attention to the Constitutions, are of their nature impartial recommendations. They could, however, have a binding force if the conflicting parties agreed to accept this committee as their arbiter.

CHAPTER IV

LOCAL STRUCTURES.

- Art. 127.
1. It is within each community that the mission of the Society is exercised more directly and that the principles of action find their practical application day after day.
 2. The Constitutions have already referred to the conditions in which each one will work out his mission and to the importance, in the seminary, of the exercise of a co-responsibility establishing among all the members of a community strong bonds founded on mutual charity, on continuing dialogue and collaboration in all areas. Thus, taking charge of the community will be done in a favorable atmosphere.
 3. In the spirit of the Constitutions, care will always be taken to promote, in the very heart of the local structures, genuine patterns of dialogue penetrated with the spirit of the Gospel. Thus in the concerted seeking of the common

good, the true mission of authority will be put in its proper light and in its most effective operation.

1. The Local Council

Art. 128. The Local Council, led by the superior who convokes it, sets the agenda, and presides over it, is collegially responsible, within the limits proper to it, for the direction of the community and its activities.

Art. 129. The members of the Council, especially for the promotion to Orders, are those Sulpicians or non-Sulpicians who have been appointed as such by provincial authority or, at least, in accord with it. These appointments to the Local Council are to be precisely determined in each case.

Art. 130. The Superior should convoke a meeting of the local Council every month and even more frequently if business demands it.

O.R.A. a. The Local Council will choose a secretary from among its members who will keep the minutes of all the meetings in a special register. The minutes of each meeting ought to be approved in the following meeting. At the end of the year the members of the Council will be requested to sign the register for all the meetings of the past year. The Provincial Superior may always ask that a summary of these meetings be sent to him.

b. The Superior proposes to the Council the agenda of the meeting. Normally, he will give it to the confreres prior to the meeting. In similar fashion, when one of the members wishes to make an important proposal, he should notify the Superior in advance so that the latter may have time to inform the others about the matter and that all may have time to think about it.

c. During the meetings, each member speaks in his turn without being interrupted and he should be content with explaining, simply and calmly, his reasoned opinion. If it seems that the question under discussion needs further consideration, a request can be made to defer the decision until the next meeting.

Once the majority has made a decision, each member should acknowledge and accept it, whatever may have been his personal opinion.

d. When the votes are equal, the vote of the Superior is decisive. The use of this privilege is optional with the Superior.

- Art. 131. 1. The Local Council may set up various committees or commissions exercising, under its authority, a precise and limited mandate.
2. It may be opportune, when the communities are large, for the Local Council to delegate to another such group certain of its powers, to be used within precise limits, for a definite time and with the approval of the Provincial Council. The Provincial Council may even, in agreement with the Local Council, take the initiative in making such an arrangement.
- Art. 132. When matters referring more particularly to the Society come up for discussion, the meeting, in principle, should include only the members and the candidates of the Society and be presided over by the Superior, or, if he is not a Sulpician, by a member appointed by the Provincial Council.
- Art. 133. Local assemblies, distinct from the Council, may be set up to gather together all the confreres who are affiliated in some way with the community.
- Art. 134. All important matters should be presented to the Local Council and decided there by an absolute majority of the votes.
- O.R.A. a. In case the superior cannot be present, the Local Council may meet under the presidency of the member who replaces him to consider current business.
- b. At least twice a year, the Local Council, joined, if occasion offers, by other persons, will explicitly take as its order of business the consideration of a general program for community action: a first meeting to discuss and decide on a program, then, at the end of the year, a second meeting to check on the results accomplished.

"The Superior may propose (to the assembly of directors) whatever relates to the spiritual and temporal well-being of the Seminary... When the superior has nothing further to propose, he will give each of the other directors an opportunity to make proposals in order of his rank in the Council; he will allocate whatever time is necessary to listen to them attentively and to deliberate on what they have proposed... It will suffice simply to state one's thoughts on what is proposed and, after having explained one's reasons without undue attachment to one's own opinion or argument, to accept peacefully the decision that is made ... All proposals will be decided by majority vote" (Rules, pp. 73-74).

Art. 135. In the seminaries, the presentation for Orders by the Local Council requires a majority vote. Normally the members of the Council ought to exercise their responsibility in expressing and justifying their vote, positive or negative, with the exception of the spiritual director of a seminarian since he may never intervene in his regard.

Art. 136. In conformity with the directives of the Church and in dialogue with the diocesan authorities, care should be taken that the seminarians, the priests and other members of the faithful (religious, lay people, men and women) assume the share of the responsibility, which is properly incumbent upon them in the presentation for Orders.

O.R.A. The Superior submits to the diocesan bishop of each subject, in view of his canonical call, the proposal of the Council and also all the explanations he wishes, especially the report on the vote itself for the call to Orders.

Art. 137. The Superior alone may speak in the name of the Council and communicate, personally or through his delegate, information, decisions or opinions to the episcopal authority, to the community, or to one of its members in particular, and to any other person.

2. The Local Superior

Art. 138. The Superior, by reason of his position, is particularly responsible for the life of the local community, while remaining sensitive to the common good of the province. He convokes and presides over the Local Council whose agenda he sets. He insures the leadership and unity of the house, and is interested in the activity of each of its members, allowing them reasonable initiative, listening to them, consulting them and encouraging their collaboration in the common mission.

O.R.A. The Superior ought to insure the establishment of an over-all program for the members of the group as well as the distribution of duties.

Art. 139. The Superior of each house, who ordinarily should be a definitive member, is appointed by the Provincial Council and, in the case of a seminary, it is done in agreement with the episcopal authority. Except in an emergency, his appointment is previously submitted to the Superior General for approval. He remains in office until there is a new decision of the Provincial Council, taking into account any limitations of mandate customary in the local presbyterate. In regard to the seminaries, it is the Provincial Superiors who

resolve, in consultation with the diocesan bishop, the questions which arise regarding the continuance or cessation of the various appointments.

Art. 140. When the Provincial Council judges the matter opportune, it appoints a Vice Superior, after an understanding with the Local Superior. The latter designates the precise duties of the Vice Superior, in accord with the Provincial Council.

- O.R.A.
- a. The Provincial Council would do well to consider whether it would be opportune to change a Superior who has been in office for six years and even to consult the faculty of the house before choosing a new Superior.
 - b. The Provincial Superiors should submit to the Superior General a list of the confreres whom they and their Councils foresee, will be appointed superiors in the near future. They should also notify him of the case in which they foresee the appointment of a Superior who will not be a member of the Society.
 - c. In this latter case, the local non-Sulpician Superior is informed by the Provincial Superior of the spirit and of the pedagogical method of St. Sulpice and also of the principal decisions of the General and Provincial Assemblies relative to the initial formation of priests.

Art. 141. All important questions are submitted to the decision of the Local Council. However, the Superior has the responsibility to settle, in a spirit of service, certain current affairs. He will take care to keep the confreres well informed of these matters; and they, in turn, will welcome, in complete trust and loyalty, the decisions made in that spirit.

- O.R.A.
- a. "Important questions" include but are not limited to the following: significant changes in policy regarding the formation program for seminarians or priests, the goals guiding long-range planning, and major expenditures. If, moreover, a policy matter must be submitted to the decision of the "board of trustees" (where such a structure exists), the local bishop and/or the Provincial Council, it is also to be submitted to the Local Council beforehand. If, in an emergency, the Superior must settle an important matter on his own, he must later refer the matter to the Local Council. As for lesser matters, if a decision will have a significant impact on the lives and ministries of the confreres, the Superior must consult the Local Council beforehand.
 - b. The members of the Local Council should support the decisions of the

Superior, without prejudice to their right to express their concerns to the appropriate Sulpician authorities.

- Art. 142. It is always in accord with the episcopal authority that the Society works for the formation of candidates for the priesthood, according to the Constitutions and taking into account special agreements. That is why the Superiors must acquaint the diocesan bishops with the state of the seminary and must take into account their directives. It will be recalled that Father Olier considered the bishop to be the first superior of the house.
- Art. 143. The Superior should keep in frequent touch with the Provincial Superior and inform him about the life of the community. If he has to go to the Ordinary with proposals or communications involving the Society, he will first submit them to the Provincial Superior.
- Art. 144. The Superior may not introduce important changes in the house without having obtained, besides the consent of the Local Council, the explicit approval of the Provincial Superior.

3. Local Temporal Administration

- Art. 145. In the houses owned by the Society, the treasurer will be appointed by the Provincial Council, after consultation with the Local Superior. The supervision of his administration is in the hands of the local and provincial authorities of the Society. The same rule applies in other houses or parishes in regard to the goods belonging to the Society.
- Art. 146. In the houses not owned by the Society, a treasurer is appointed by the Provincial Council, after consulting the Local Superior and after an agreement with the diocesan bishop, or, in certain cases, the appointment is made by the diocesan bishop with the consent of the Provincial Council. This treasurer is responsible for the administration of the material affairs of the house.
- Art. 147. The treasurer watches over the well-being of the confreres and of the other persons in the house, as well as over the general maintenance of the property and of its furnishings. He performs his duties according to the law in dependence upon the Local Superior and the Council, who, in turn, respect his proper responsibilities, show an interest in his work and try to facilitate matters for him by maintaining a spirit of cooperation in the community.

- O.R.A.
- a. According to the custom proper to each province, the treasurer presents periodically (every month, every quarter, semi-annually) a detailed financial statement of his business dealings to the Local Superior and to the Provincial Superior. If a report should be made to the diocesan bishop, it should be done by the Local Superior.
 - b. Every year the treasurer submits to these same authorities and to the Council of the house a report on the year just completed; this includes the statement of revenues and expenditures and balance sheet. The Provincial Assemblies, the Provincial Council, the Board of Trustees (where such a structure exists) and the diocesan bishop may request an official audit of the books.
 - c. According to the norms established in each province, expenses regarded as extraordinary, major repairs, expenditures notably beyond the amount foreseen in the budget, all these must be submitted, if appropriate, to the attention the Board of Trustees (where this structure exists), to the Provincial Council and to the diocesan bishop.
 - d. In houses where the treasurer is not a resident of the community the Superior will see to it that a member of the Local Council or another resident assures the ordinary functioning of the house and the welcome offered to visitors.

Art. 148. For the temporal administration and for the entirety of the local structures, in the cases in which a particular contract exists, between the diocesan bishop and the Society, the articles of the contract prevail over those which are laid down in the Constitutions and in the General Directives (Appendix III).

Final Directives

Art. 149. The Superior General interprets the Constitutions in doubtful cases. If the doubt persists, one must have recourse to the Holy See, the sole authentic interpreter of the Constitutions which it has approved.

Art. 150. To modify the Orientations and Rules of Application, or, also, the general regulations and directives given to the whole Society by a General Assembly, a new decision of the General Assembly is required. To change the Constitutions it is necessary to have, in addition, an authorization of the Holy See.

Art. 151. The Constitutions bind all the members of the Society by virtue of their admission to the Society. Even though they do not have the same stability, the Orientations and Rules of Application (O.R.A.) also oblige the members of the Society.

APPENDIX I

REGULATIONS FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLIES*

The Election of Delegates

1. Each province chooses as many delegates to the General Assembly as it has complete groups of twenty-five members already admitted into the Society. If appropriate, however, the General Council will reduce this group size as much as necessary in order that the General Assembly will always have at least twenty-four (24) elected members.

On the other hand, the General council will also make sure that each province is represented by a minimum number of delegates.

The Provincial Councils determine the number of delegates from their provinces according to the above reckoning and send the number for confirmation to the Superior General about six months before the date set for the General Assembly.

2. Each Provincial Council draws up, likewise, the list of electors and of those eligible to be elected on the first ballot and sends it also for confirmation to the Superior General. On the list the confreres are inscribed according to the order of seniority in the Society. In the case of equality of admission-dates, seniority in the priesthood, or, finally, age determines the precedence.

In each of the provinces of the Society, a confrere may be legitimately unable to participate in a General Assembly. In the event that a confrere knows that he will be unable to participate in such an Assembly, he should inform the Superior General of his reason before the first ballot is cast in the provincial elections for the delegates. The Superior General will make the final judgment about the validity of the reason in consultation with the Provincial Superior. The Superior General will communicate his decision to the interested party. On the ballot of those eligible to serve as delegates from each province, those who have a valid reason not to serve will be so marked.

3. The list contains the family and given names of each confrere, the year of his birth and the mention of the function he fulfills. The ex officio members of the Assembly are not on the list of those eligible to be voted for.

* These regulations may serve also for the Provincial Assemblies unless the Provincial Assembly decides otherwise. (cf. Art. 104 and O.R.A. b).

4. To assure a better representation of delegates, the provincial authorities may also add a representation by region, by function or in some other manner.
5. Two ballots are foreseen for this election. The voting should be done rather early in order that all the confreres in the distant houses may participate and in order that the delegates elected may have sufficient time to study the questions to be considered at the Assembly.
6. The counting of the votes takes place in the Provincial Council, under the presidency of the Provincial Superior or of his replacement. In addition, the confreres of the house in which the meeting is held should be invited to attend and, also, the confreres of the nearby houses, if the Provincial Council judges the latter invitation to be opportune.
7. Listed according to the number of votes received by each, the confreres who have gained an absolute majority of the votes on the first ballot will be recognized by the Provincial Superior as delegates. However, the number on the list may not exceed the total number of delegates foreseen for a given province.
8. The Provincial Secretary will draw up, during the meeting, the record of the balloting and see that it is signed by the president of the meeting and by those who fulfilled the duties of tellers.
9. A second ballot will be prepared without delay to complete, if need be, by a relative majority of votes, the number of delegates and alternates to which the province is entitled.
10. The number of alternates will be one-half the number of the delegates of the province. Listed according to the number of votes obtained, the alternates will replace, in that order, the elected delegates of the province, who, after the elections, for a reason accepted as legitimate by the Superior General, judge that they cannot be present at the General Assembly.
11. Before this second ballot, the names of the delegates already elected on the first ballot should be sent to the electors. A new list will also be distributed containing the names of the confreres who have become eligible for the second ballot. This new list of those eligible, drawn up under the direction of the Provincial Council, will be made up of the names of those who, on the first ballot, obtained the greatest number of votes after the delegates actually elected. Those eligible will be listed in the order corresponding to the number of votes gained on the first ballot. The number of those

eligible will be limited to double the number of delegates and of alternates still to be elected.

12. When the votes are counted, the Provincial Secretary will prepare the minutes of the voting, just as for the first ballot.

13. In both of these ballots, if a tie-vote results, the order of priority given above in No. 2 determines the election.

14. All the other technical details concerning the organization of these elections are in the hands of the authorities of each province who could establish them as rules.

15. Once the above voting procedures have been completed, each Provincial Superior will send the results to the Superior General, to those elected and to the other confreres of the province. When all the results of the elections have been sent to the Superior General, the latter informs the whole Society of the membership of the General Assembly.

Preparation of the Session

16. The General Council itself, or by means of various commissions, will see that the principal questions to be proposed to the General Assembly be made the object of discussion and serious study in the whole Society.

17. The provincial authorities will take care that, in their respective provinces, groups are set up to assure a wide participation of confreres in the study of these questions.

18. Further, every member of the Assembly may request that a question be brought up for discussion. The Assembly has the right to accept or reject such a proposal.

The Session Itself

19. The Superior General or, in his absence, the Vice Superior General presides over the Assembly. The manner of procedure is fixed by the Assembly itself.

20. The powers of the Superior General going out of office at the end of his term remain in force until the election of his successor. After that election, the former Superior General remains an ordinary member of the Assembly during that session as do also the other ex officio members who are leaving office.

21. The Assembly begins by a verification of the credentials of those participating and then elects from among its members, by a relative majority of votes, through

separate and secret ballots, two tellers and a secretary who has the responsibility of taking the minutes.

22. It would be well if the secretary of the Assembly would be helped by a “secretariat” whose members could assist at the meetings without exercising any rights as members. In addition, the Superior General or the Assembly may summon, without giving them the right to vote, the Secretary General and the General Treasurer, if they are not already members of the Assembly. Others, under the title of experts, may also be invited under the same conditions.

23. The Superior General may request the Assembly to elect someone to preside over the meetings in his place.

24. Before proceeding, if need be, to the election of the members of the general administration, the Assembly hears the report, given by the Superior General, on the state of the Society and the financial report mentioned in Art. 99, O.R.A. a, of the Constitutions. The reports are submitted to the Assembly which may request further details and make observations (cf. also Art. 79, O.R.A. a). The financial report foreseen in Art. 99, O.R.A. a, is submitted to the Assembly for approval.

25. At the beginning of the session, no votes should be taken which need previous discussion and a better acquaintance of the members of the Assembly with each other, such as election votes and those which must decide difficult questions.

26. All voting should take place during plenary meetings of the Assembly. Voting is secret, except when there is unanimous agreement for a vote by a show of hands on certain questions of less importance. Only members actually present participate in the voting. The majority is calculated in reference to the number of valid and expressed votes.

27. The election of the members of the general administration takes place by distinct votes for each one of them. Before the voting begins, the texts of the Constitutions and of the Regulations describing the duties, the conditions of eligibility and the manner of election of those holding the various offices are read before the Assembly.

28. In the election of the Superior General, ordinarily, there will be only four ballots per day. If, after eight ballots, no one has gained the necessary majority, the designation is referred, for this occasion, to the Holy See to which a copy of the minutes concerning the balloting is also sent. In awaiting the nomination of the Superior General, the Assembly may continue its work but should avoid making any definitive decisions.

29. As soon as the Superior General is elected, the secretary of the Assembly will draw up the minutes which will be signed by the presiding officer, the tellers and the secretary himself. The work of the presiding officer is then terminated and the new Superior General presides over the Assembly.

30. Before proceeding to the election of the General Consultors, the Assembly ought to distribute these posts among the provinces or among the groups that have already been determined. Then the consultors are elected, by distinct ballots, to each of the positions already determined.

31. In the election of the consultors, if an absolute majority is not reached on the first and second ballots, a third ballot shall be taken in which a relative majority will suffice. If, on the third ballot a tie-vote results, the winner will be determined first by seniority in the Society, secondly by seniority in the priesthood, and finally by age.

32. Once the election of the consultors is completed, supplementary ballots will determine the rank of the consultors in the General Council. An absolute majority will be required for the election of the first consultor; for the others, after a first ballot requiring an absolute majority, a relative majority will suffice.

33. The right to notify the Society officially of the results of the General Assembly belongs to the Superior General. Unless there is a contrary decision, the members of the Assembly may inform the confreres of the broad issues and general orientation of various projects. All are obliged to be discreet concerning election votes, speaking only about the final results of the balloting. In other matters, they should maintain that reserve which is expected from priests conscious of their responsibilities.

APPENDIX II

PRACTICAL NOTES ON THE VISITATION

1. To assure a better achievement of the mission entrusted to the members of the Society and to the Sulpician communities, and also to open the way for a better coordination of effort and research, the Superior General and the Provincial Superiors will make a regular visitation of the confreres and of the communities.

The exact nature and the specific scope of the visits of the Superior General and of the Provincial Superiors are determined according to the respective role of these Superiors as it is defined in the Constitutions. (Cf. art. 86, 87, 88, 115, 116, and 117).

2. In order to have those roles complement each other as well as possible, in regard to their distinctiveness, the visits involve a coordination between the Superior General and the Provincial Superiors. According to the particular case, the visit will concern itself more with the personnel or with the life and orientations of the communities. The Superior General will meet, in each province, with the members of the Provincial Council and discuss with them the state of the province and its orientations.

3. In order that the visits may be effective, a preparation is presumed:

- on the part of the communities or persons visited, so that a true picture of the situation may be presented and that eventual modifications may be suggested;

- on the part of the authorities who should be informed very accurately on all these elements of the situation.

4. The visit of the Superior General should be made at least every six years; that of the Provincial Superior, at least every three years.

5. Every visit of a Superior General or Provincial Superior will also normally include a meeting with the diocesan bishop or the Prelate (or the diocesan bishops) upon whom the communities or the persons visited depend.

6. In the seminaries, the Visitor will see each member of the formation faculty and the professors individually and will meet with the seminarians. In the other communities, he will follow, as much as possible, a similar procedure. The Visitor,

above all in the case of the Provincial Superior, will also meet the confreres who live outside the houses of the Society.

7. Any important modifications which the Visitor judges opportune will be made only in agreement with the Ordinary (if that agreement is necessary) and with the Provincial Council according to the powers described in the Constitutions (Art. 107). At the conclusion of the visit a report will be drawn up and preserved both in the local records and in the provincial archives. It is on the basis of this report that the Provincial Council, in consultation with the Superior General if necessary, will make any decisions that they believe necessary.

8. When the Superior General makes his visit, he may leave to the authorities of each province the duty of examining the finances of the particular houses. He does, however, examine the statement of revenues and expenditures and balance sheet and the accounts of each provincial administration taken as a whole.

9. If the Superior General or the Provincial Superior does not make the visit personally, he will send in his place a consultor or another confrere chosen by the Council, and he may assign a companion to him. This Visitor will confine himself exactly to the instructions he has received and will make a report to the Superior who delegated him. In case of an emergency, the delegate may propose to the Provincial Council or to the Local Council a provisional solution. He will preside over the local assemblies, which he will convoke for the visit. If the Superior General or the Provincial Superior wishes to do so, he may be accompanied by a member of his Council.

10. It would be well for the consultors to be acquainted with all the houses and communities, even those far-distant, and to be given the opportunity to spend several days in each place. These visits, except for a special mandate, will have the character of friendly and informative visits.

11. The expenses of the visit are normally charged to each house visited, with the possibility of an equitable sharing of the expenses within each province.

12. Concerning the seminaries of the Society, the Superior General and the Provincial Superiors will, at regular intervals, inform the competent Roman Congregation about the principal results of their visits.

APPENDIX III

DIRECTIVES FOR THE LOCAL FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

1. Among the goods entrusted to various organizations within the Society and administered by them (treasurers' offices at various levels; vestries, retirement funds, etc.), some are intended for the benefit of the confreres, others for some mission of the Church. It is clear that the members of the Society have no personal right over these latter funds.
2. All the goods, movable and real, attached in any way whatever to the local community, should be under the regular supervision of the authorities upon whom the temporal affairs of this community depends.
3. In the administration of its financial affairs, each house should be motivated by the common good and employ proven methods. The provincial authorities may consult in this regard persons competent in this field and may have an annual audit of the books.
4. Without neglecting to provide for the future by setting up necessary reserve funds, the accumulation of material goods should be avoided while living in simplicity and detachment and carefully fulfilling the obligations of justice and charity.
5. Before the end of each year, in accord with the Local Superior and with the collaboration of those in charge of various services, the treasurer establishes his proposed budget for the coming year and presents it to the Local Council for consideration. He also submits this budget for approval to the authorities who have the financial responsibility of the house.
6. In considering the budget, above all in the seminaries, the Council will be particularly attentive to the requests of those responsible for the library and for other cultural projects.
7. The treasurer keeps an exact and detailed account of all his financial affairs, according to the rules laid down by the provincial or diocesan authorities. He maintains with care all pertinent data (bills, cancelled checks, other receipts) at least for the period prescribed by the civil law.
8. If the treasurer is also in charge of the vestry, he should carefully keep the vestry account distinct from that of the house account.

9. The treasurer keeps watch over the work that must be done, over the salaries to be paid and over the other expenses; he alone has the power to make purchases in the name of the house.

10. He has the responsibility for seeing that all civil regulations concerning sanitation, fire prevention, taxes, etc., are carefully observed.

11. An important duty of the treasurer is to see that the house (movable and real property, cars, personnel) is adequately insured against various risks.

12. All the confreres, but more especially the treasurer, should see that the obligations of justice and charity are respected, as well as the civil laws in reference to salaries, the lodging of the employees, their retirement pensions, medical care, social security, and vacations.

13. The treasurer is particularly responsible for the employees of the house. He ought especially to provide them with every possibility to fulfill their religious duties, with a complete respect for their freedom of conscience.

14. The points mentioned above apply also to the Religious who are employed for the service of the house. These matters, as well as those concerning their state in life, should be set forth exactly in a contract entered into with their Congregation. This contract will be previously submitted to the Provincial Council.

15. In the houses where the treasurer is a lay person, a priest, a member of the Local Council, may be appointed as an associate-treasurer. The latter would be more especially in charge of the relations of the treasurer's office with the confreres, and with families of the students. The priest will also assure the relationship of the treasurer's function to the authority of the Council.

16. All of the following operations may be done only with the prior approval of the Provincial Council or of the diocesan bishop according to the prescriptions of Canon Law and with due regard for the civil law: the acceptance of gifts with attached obligations, of Mass-foundations or of gifts for educational, charitable or religious purposes; the purchase or sale of securities, the sale of property, art objects or anything of special value, as well as borrowing and lending money. Actions necessary for administration or for the renewal of loans or titles are authorized, subject to the annual supervision of the aforesaid authorities.

17. In order to negotiate the loans, sales and investments mentioned above, it is necessary to have, in addition, the opinion of the House Council.

18. The provincial authorities may judge it expedient to put the administration of certain goods of a particular nature in a special procure and to request an annual report on the management of these goods. If the goods do not belong to the Society itself, then the above action can be taken only in agreement with the diocesan bishop. The administration of this procure ought to be entrusted to several confreres.

19. A clear understanding should exist with the episcopal authority concerning gifts which may be received, either as donations or as bequests. The agreement, respecting above all the will of the donors, should make precise the circumstances under which a donation would belong strictly to a particular house or to the diocese (as a foundation for the education of the clergy of a given diocese) or, again, to the Society, either for the whole province or for the benefit of a more particular region.

20. While fully respecting the intentions of a benefactor who has contributed something to a house or to a particular project, the communities which are in a better financial position ought to help those who are in a less favorable situation. Likewise, the houses and the confreres ought to help with the expenses of the administration of the provinces according to the regulations of the Provincial Assembly or, in default of it, according to the directives of the Provincial Council.

21. Since the Local Council is responsible for the ordinary operation of the house, the treasurer ought to keep the Council informed of the work of his office. This is especially true if he foresees, during the course of the year, certain difficulties in meeting the established budget or, if it is necessary to make corrections in the budget in agreement with the higher authorities (cf. No. 5 above). For its part, the Local Council, without interfering in the domain proper to the treasurer, could show its interest in the financial administration of the house by making suggestions and constructive comments.

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Arabic letter = designation of an O.R.A.

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