

I N D E X

De Vita Cisterciensi Hodierna

Declaratio Capituli Generalis Ordinis Cisterciensis

Introductio

| | | |
|----|---|----|
| A. | De fine huius Declarationis | 4 |
| B. | De fontibus vitae nostrae | 6 |
| 1. | Evangelium et magisterium Ecclesiae | 6 |
| 2. | Traditio monastica | 6 |
| 3. | Regula S. Benedicti | 6 |
| 4. | Traditiones Cistercienses | 8 |
| 5. | Participatio et promotio vitae hodiernae Ecclesiae et societatis | 10 |
| 6. | Actio et inspiratio Spiritus Sancti | 10 |
| C. | De criteriis adhibendis | 12 |
| 1. | Sensus realitatis | 12 |
| 2. | Unitas vitae | 12 |
| 3. | Concors diversitas | 14 |
| 4. | Continuatio vitalis traditionis Cisterciensis | 16 |

Pars Prima

Ordo Noster in Sua Existentia Concreta

| | | |
|----|--|----|
| A. | Ordo Cisterciensis hodiernus ut realitas socialis | 18 |
| B. | Ordo Cisterciensis uti realitas historica | 22 |
| 1. | Initia monachismi usque ad regulam S. Benedicti | 22 |
| 2. | Monachismus Benedictinus usque ad initia Cisterciensia | 24 |
| 3. | Origines Cistercienses | 24 |
| 4. | Evolutio Ordinis usque ad saeculum XIX | 26 |
| 5. | Historia Ordinis saeculo vicesimo | 30 |

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cistercian Life Today

Declaration of the General Chapter of the Cistercian Order

Introduction

| | | |
|----|--|----|
| A. | The Purpose of this Declaration | 5 |
| B. | The Sources of our Life | 7 |
| 1. | The Gospel and the Magisterium of the Church | 7 |
| 2. | The Monastic Tradition | 7 |
| 3. | The Rule of St. Benedict | 7 |
| 4. | The Cistercian Tradition | 9 |
| 5. | Participation in the Life of the Church and Society Today and their Promotion | 11 |
| 6. | The Action and Inspiration of the Holy Spirit | 11 |
| C. | The Criteria to be Applied | 13 |
| 1. | A Sense of Reality | 13 |
| 2. | The Unity of our Life | 13 |
| 3. | A Harmonious Diversity | 15 |
| 4. | The Continuation of the Living Cistercian Tradition | 17 |

Part I

Our Order in its Concrete Existence

| | | |
|----|---|----|
| A. | The Cistercian Order Today as a Social Reality | 19 |
| B. | The Cistercian Order as an Historical Reality | 23 |
| 1. | From the Beginnings of Monasticism to the Rule of St. Benedict | 23 |
| 2. | Benedictine Monasticism up to the Cistercian Beginnings .. | 25 |
| 3. | The Cistercian Origins | 25 |
| 4. | The Evolution of the Order up to the 19th Century | 27 |
| 5. | History of the Order in the Twentieth Century | 31 |

| | | |
|----|--|----|
| C. | Ordo Cisterciensis ut pars viva Ecclesiae et mundi hodierni . . . | 32 |
| 1. | Renovatio theologica | 32 |
| 2. | Dignitas personae humanae | 32 |
| 3. | Sensus communitarius | 34 |
| 4. | Nova aestimatio rerum creatarum, laboris progressusque humani | 34 |
| 5. | Oecumenismus et opus missionum | 34 |
| 6. | Desiderium authenticitatis, cultus simplicitatis et sinceritatis . | 36 |

Pars Secunda

De Valoribus Fundamentalibus Vitae Cisterciensis Hodiernae

| | | |
|----|---|----|
| A. | Finis notaeque essentiales vitae Cisterciensis hodiernae | 38 |
| I. | Vocatio ad Deum quaerendum per sequelam Christi in schola caritatis | 38 |
| 2. | Responsum ad vocationem in professione datum | 42 |
| 3. | Servitium Ecclesiae | 42 |
| B. | De mediis communibus ad finem vitae nostrae Cisterciensis hodiernae attingendum necessariis | 44 |
| 1. | De vita modo speciali Deo et Ecclesiae consecrata per observantiam consiliorum evangelicorum | 44 |
| 2. | De vita in stabili communitate fraterna traditione Cisterciensi imbuta | 50 |
| 3. | De vita orationis | 52 |
| 4. | De sequela Christi humilis crucem baiulantis | 56 |
| 5. | Operositas nostra | 58 |

Pars Tertia

De Vita Ordinis et Communitatum

Eius Recte Ordinanda

| | | |
|----|--|----|
| A. | Aspectus fundamentales structurae iuridicae | 66 |
| 1. | Communitas monastica — societas voluntariorum | 66 |
| 2. | Vita monasterialis exigit ordinationem per leges et praecepta superiorum | 68 |
| 3. | Principia Christiana legislationis et gubernii ad vitam nostram applicata | 70 |
| 4. | Problemata hodierna legislationis monasticae — lex pro vita | 74 |

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| C. The Cistercian Order as a Living Part of the Church and World Today | 33 |
| 1. Theological Renewal | 33 |
| 2. The Dignity of the Human Person | 33 |
| 3. The Sense of Community | 35 |
| 4. A New Appraisal of Creation, of Work, and of Human Progress | 35 |
| 5. Ecumenism and Missions | 35 |
| 6. The Desire for Authenticity and the Cultivation of Simplicity and Sincerity | 37 |

Part II

The Fundamental Values of Cistercian Life Today

| | |
|---|----|
| A. The Goal and Essential Characteristics of Cistercian Life Today | 39 |
| 1. The Vocation to Seek God by Following Christ in the School of Love | 39 |
| 2. The Response Given to Our Vocation by Our Profession | 43 |
| 3. Service to the Church | 43 |
| B. The Means to Reach the Goal | 45 |
| 1. Leading a Life Consecrated to God and Church through the Observance of the Evangelical Counsels | 45 |
| 2. Life in a Stable Fraternal Community Imbued with the Cistercian Tradition | 51 |
| 3. Prayer Life | 53 |
| 4. Following Christ Who Humbly Carries His Cross | 57 |
| 5. Our Work | 59 |

Part III

The Proper Organization of Life in the Order and its Communities

| | |
|---|----|
| A. Fundamental Aspects of the Juridical Structure | 67 |
| 1. The Monastic Community – A Society of Free Individuals | 67 |
| 2. Monastic Life Demands Organization by Laws and the Precepts of Superiors | 69 |
| 3. Christian Principles of Legislation and Governance Applied to our Life | 71 |
| 4. Today's Problems Regarding Monastic Legislation: A Law for Life | 75 |

| | | |
|----|--|-----|
| 5. | Partes communitatum in legibus ferendis | 80 |
| 6. | De exercitio auctoritatis personalis | 80 |
| B. | De regimine monasteriorum | 82 |
| 1. | De abbate monasterii eiusque adiutoribus | 84 |
| 2. | De capitulo conventuali et consilio abbatis | 88 |
| C. | De Congregationibus Cisterciensibus | 90 |
| 1. | Congregationum Cisterciensium origo, ratio et finis | 90 |
| 2. | De Capitulo Congregationis | 94 |
| 3. | De Abbate Praeside Congregationis | 96 |
| 4. | De visitatione regulari | 96 |
| 5. | Momentum congregationum in structura ordinis | 100 |
| D. | De regimine ordinis | 100 |
| 1. | Ordo — unio congregationum. unitas et diversitas | 100 |
| 2. | De Capitulo Generali et de Synodo Ordinis | 100 |
| 3. | De Abbate Generali | 104 |
| E. | De collaboratione cum aliis ordinibus monasticis et cum auctoritatibus Ecclesiasticis | 104 |

Conclusio

| | |
|---|-----|
| De necessitate renovationis continuae | 106 |
|---|-----|

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 5. | The Role of the Community in Passing Legislation | 81 |
| 6. | The Exercise of Personal Authority | 81 |
| B. | The Governance of the Monastery | 83 |
| 1. | The Abbot of the Monastery and His Helpers | 85 |
| 2. | The Conventual Chapter and the Abbot's Council | 89 |
| C. | Cistercian Congregations | 91 |
| 1. | The Origin and Purpose of Cistercian Congregations | 91 |
| 2. | The Congregational Chapter | 95 |
| 3. | The Abbot President of the Congregation | 97 |
| 4. | Regular Visitation | 97 |
| 5. | The Importance of Congregations in the Structure of the Order | 101 |
| D. | The Governance of the Order | 101 |
| 1. | The Order—A Union of Congregations. Unity and Diversity | 101 |
| 2. | The General Chapter and the Synod of the Order | 101 |
| 3. | The Abbot General | 105 |
| E. | Collaboration with Other Monastic Orders and with the Ecclesiastical Authorities | 105 |

Conclusion

| | |
|--|-----|
| The Need for Continual Renewal | 107 |
|--|-----|

FOREWARD

The two documents in this small volume set forth the fundamental principles of our monastery. Their translation into English makes them available to all the young who, in the coming years, will receive the formation necessary to bring to fruition their lives as monks, priests and teachers in the Cistercian Abbey Our Lady of Dallas.

The first document was originally published in 1969 and entitled "The Declaration of the General Chapter of the Cistercian Order on the Principal Elements of Cistercian Life Today." It was written in response to the initiatives of The Second Vatican Council which called all religious communities to review and renew their way of life according to both the divine will that had moved their founders and the needs of the Church in the 20th century. Between 1967 and 1969, a committee of Cistercians — in which several members of our monastery and Congregation played an active role — prepared the first draft of this document. The Declaration was intended to identify the concrete historical, social and legal entity which called itself "the Cistercian Order." It also sought to describe the spiritual ideals, goals, norms and structures by which the Order lived its life at that time, both as a part of the body of the Church and in the flow of the 20th century. The committee's work appears to have been a moment of grace for our Order. Over nearly 900 years of history, the Order had been torn by the vicissitudes of religious dissent and secularization, ravaged by a multiplicity of wars (including two World Wars), and sidetracked by a long chain of movements and attempts at reform. But through the Declaration of 1969, the Order established a vision of its past and present challenges, formulated the ideals and norms of its present-day existence, and manifested its call for the future.

Recent events indicate that the Declaration successfully assessed

the resources and the tasks of the Order, despite the fact that many paragraphs of the document were fiercely debated during the General Chapters of 1968 and 1969. At the General Chapter of 2000, various abbots and delegates not only praised the Declaration, but referred to it as the most important document defining the identity of the Order for monks and nuns of our time and providing the fundamental tool for spiritual formation in all monasteries.

The General Chapter of 2000 revised and introduced a few improvements to the text. After several partial and provisory translations, it became necessary to produce a complete and more accurate English text to be read in both common and private, as well as to be used for the instruction of novices and junior monks. The Declaration should also be used in pastoral work with vocations as a document that authentically defines the goals and standards of our life and spirituality.

The second document, the Constitutions of the Congregation of Zirc, emerged from a far more complex historical context, and yet serves similar purposes. The Abbey of Zirc — originally founded in 1182, but destroyed in 1540 — owes its recent history to a restoration of Cistercian life in Hungary which began in 1699. After slow and arduous beginnings, the monastery saw remarkable growth and expansion in the 19th century. At that time, Zirc became part of the “Austro-Hungarian Congregation,” which united the Cistercian monasteries of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. After the division and reduction of the Monarchy to national states, Zirc and its dependent houses remained the sole center of Cistercian life in Hungary. By decision of the Holy See, it then became an autonomous monastic congregation of the Cistercian Order named “The Congregation of Zirc.” Its Constitutions were approved by the Holy See in 1941. But when Zirc fell victim to the persecution of the Church by the Hungarian Communist Regime in 1950, scores of monks had to seek refuge abroad and the abbey was abandoned. Moving to the United States and eventually to Dallas, Texas in 1955, the monks began building a new home adjacent to the University of Dallas. This monastery became an independent Abbey in 1963. Living within the legal framework of the Constitutions of the Congregation of Zirc, the community of Dallas was forced to update those constitutions in light of the new Code of Canon Law, promulgated by Pope John Paul II in 1983. Then came the fall of communism in

FORWARD

Europe in 1989-90, which gave new life to the Abbey of Zirc. The revived Hungarian abbey needed a new constitution and it was the constitutions of Dallas that provided the framework. It has taken about a decade to revise and finalize the new constitutions for the Congregation of Zirc, which currently consists of the three independent Abbeys of Zirc, Dallas, and Kismaros (a monastery of nuns founded during the years of persecution in Hungary).

The process of legislation never stops as the changes of life require new regulations and procedures to meet changing circumstances. Despite such changes, the Declaration clarifies and stabilizes our Cistercian identity, and the Constitutions secure and clarify legal relationships, rights and obligations. Both are to be followed with an attitude of fidelity to our call and perseverance in our vows.

Abbot Denis Farkasfalvy, O.Cist.

January 26, 2005

Feast of the Founders of the Cistercian Order

Introductio

A. De fine huius Declarationis

1. **N**os, membra Capituli Generalis ad accommodatam renovationem Ordinis nostri congregati, matura deliberatione collatisque consiliis, praeprimis elementa praecipua vocationis vitaeque nostrae explanare statuimus, ut totius operis renovationis quodammodo fundamenta ponamus. In hac ergo Declaratione sincere et honeste exponere volumus quid in renovatione accommodata nobis proponamus, quos fines assequi velimus, quaque via eos attingere studeamus.

2. Nostra autem Declaratione minime volumus praecludere ultiores reflexiones vel novas solutiones, quia etiam futurae generationes Cistercienses ius et officium habebunt quaerendi formas aptiores ac meliores vitae monasticae, non minus quam Fundatores Cistercii saeculo XII vel generationes subsequentes. Tunc enim Patres Fundatores "Novi Monasterii" vere sequimur, si non cessamus quaerere vias ac modos, quibus vocationem nostram semper plenius secundum Dei voluntatem vivere possimus.

Introduction

A. The Purpose of this Declaration

1. **W**e, the members of the General Chapter gathered together for the appropriate renewal of our Order, after duly deliberating and seeking advice, have decided to set down above all the essential elements of our vocation and way of life so that we might in some manner establish the foundations for the entire work of renewal. In this Declaration, therefore, we wish to set forth sincerely and honestly what we understand as an appropriate renewal, what goals we wish to achieve, and how we will strive to reach them.

2. By our Declaration, however, we do not wish to preclude further reflections or new solutions, for future generations of Cistercians will have the right and the duty to find apter and better forms of the monastic life, no less than the Cistercian Founding Fathers in the twelfth century or the subsequent generations. For we truly follow the Founding Fathers of "Novi Monasterii" if we do not cease searching out the ways and means by which we can live our vocation ever more fully according to the will of God.

B. De fontibus vitae nostrae

3. Ad enuntiationem elementorum fundamentalium vitae Cisterciensis hodiernae necessarium est primo, ut videamus quibus ex fontibus ideas rectrices et impulsus haurire possimus in ordinanda vita nostra religiose, et quomodo singulis uti debeamus.

1. Evangelium et magisterium Ecclesiae

4. Evangelium, praeprimis vita et doctrina Christi, uti ab Evangelio proponitur, a Magisterio semper vivo Ecclesiae exponitur et reflectitur in Ecclesiae conscientia et experientia, est fons primarius, suprema lex et norma cui vitam nostram conformemus. Inter documenta Magisterii Ecclesiae specialem locum pro nobis hodie obtinent constitutiones et decreta Concilii Vaticani II, praesertim decretum "Perfectae caritatis," et posteriora documenta Magisterii Ecclesiae, quae de vita monastica ac consecrata agunt, quae accommodatam renovationem vitae nostrae urgent.

2. Traditio monastica

5. Vitae Cisterciensis etiam hodiernae principia radican- tur in traditione monastica. Et quidem considerare volumus totam traditionem monachismi christiani, tum prae- tum post-benedictinam, tum initia Cisterciensia, tum vitam monasticam et Cisterciensem subsequentium saeculorum. In opere renovationis eo tendimus, ut vita Cisterciensis nostra moderna sit continuatio fecunda et organica valorum traditionis monasticae. Minime tamen ignoramus indolem historicam huius traditionis, quae etiam secundum criteria scientiae historicae illustranda et diiudicanda est. Investigationes recentiores tum de historia tum de theologia monachismi clare demonstrant multiplicem varietatem conatum et formarum monachismi antiqui, et distinctionem inter elementa permanenter valida atque elementa transitoria expostulant.

Itaque traditiones et documenta totius historiae monasticae diligenti studio cognoscere debemus atque iis prudenti cum fidelitate ac libertate uti in efformandis vitae nostrae principiis et muneribus.

3. Regula S. Benedicti

6. Inter documenta vitae monasticae praecipuum locum tenet et tenebit Regula S. Benedicti, testis eximius idearum et experientiarum monachismi antiqui. Monachi Benedictini et Cistercienses Regulam continua meditatione perscrutabantur, interpretabantur et iterum

B. The Sources of our Life

3. To formulate the fundamental elements of Cistercian life today, we must first consider from which sources we can draw the guiding ideas and motives for organizing our religious life today and how we should use each of them.

1. The Gospel and the Magisterium of the Church

4. The gospel, especially the life and teaching of Christ as it is presented by Scripture, expounded by the ever-living Magisterium of the Church and reflected in the conscience of the Church and her experience, is the primary source, the highest law and the norm according to which we should pattern our lives. Among the documents of the Church's Magisterium, the constitutions and decrees of the Second Vatican Council hold a special place for us, especially "Perfectae Caritatis" and subsequent documents of the Church's Magisterium on monastic and consecrated life that call for the renewal of our life.

2. The Monastic Tradition

5. The principles of Cistercian life are rooted even today in the monastic tradition. We indeed want to consider the entire tradition of Christian monasticism, both before and after St. Benedict, both Cistercian beginnings and the monastic and Cistercian life of subsequent centuries. In the task of renewal we are striving to achieve that our modern Cistercian life is a fruitful and organic continuation of the values of the monastic tradition. However, we are not unaware of the historical nature of this tradition, which must also be illuminated and judged by the criteria of historical research. More recent investigations into both the history and the theology of monasticism clearly show a rich variety in the initiatives and forms of ancient monasticism. They also call for a distinction between the elements that are permanently valid and those that are transitory.

We should, therefore, come to know through careful study the traditions and documents of the entire monastic history, and in establishing the principles and tasks of our life, we should use them with prudent fidelity and freedom.

3. The Rule of St. Benedict

6. Among the documents of monastic life the Rule of St. Benedict holds and will continue to hold a preeminent place as a privileged witness to the ideas and experiences of ancient monasticism. Through their continuous meditation, Benedictine and Cistercian monks have studied,

iterumque finibus ac necessitatibus sui temporis aptabant. Consequenter ideae principales Regulae totam historiam Occidentis pervaserunt, et usque adhuc partem praecipuam constituunt haereditatis monasticae. Pro nobis autem non solum fontem inspirationis permanentem praestat ad vitam nostram recte ordinandam, sed sive agatur de linea fundamentali vitae spiritualis sive de formis constitutivis vitae coenobiticae, Regula Benedicti plenam habet auctoritatem in suis elementis essentialibus et permanentibus.

7. At etiam Regula est documentum historicum, condicionibus sui temporis intime connexum. Etiam eius usus et interpretatio per saecula sequebatur condiciones et mentem uniuscuiusque temporis; ergo practice numquam "ad litteram" observabatur, sed iuxta diversas interpretationes vel accommodationes. Nostris vero temporibus, cum condiciones vitae humanae multo profundius immutatae sint quam quavis anteriore aetate, Regula saeculo VI conscripta multo minus potest omnia particularia vitae nostrae ordinare. Talis fidelitas materialis nec S. Benedicti intentionibus responderet, nec libertati qua monachi praeteritorum saeculorum Regula utebantur.

Modo magis immediato Regula incarnatur in traditione et in actuali vita uniuscuiusque monasterii, quod sub lumine Spiritus Sancti et authentico Abbatis ductu, Regulam servat tamquam inspirationem semper actualement et vivam. Ideo sub hoc aspectu etiam debemus Regulae studere et eam vivere, adeo, ut derelictis illis elementis, quae nimis contingentia vel obsoleta sunt, ipsa pro nobis semper existat vera vitae magistra.

Tali ergo sensu sit Regula fons et norma vitae, qua filiali reverentia et libertate Christiana utamur ad vitae nostrae renovationem promovendam, non autem collectio praescriptionum materialium, quae nos restringat et impediat in inveniendis solutionibus vere aptis problematum nostrorum.

4. Traditiones Cistercienses

8. Magnopere nobis corde esse debent ea, quae ad traditionem Cisterciensem pertinent, scilicet documenta originum Cisterciensium, scripta eminentium magistrorum et magistrarum vitae spiritualis Ordinis, vita Sanctorum nostrorum, historia et experientia fere novem saeculorum. Haec omnia diligenter cognoscenda, diiudicanda atque in

interpreted and adapted the Rule again and again to the goals and needs of their own times. Consequently, the principal ideas of the Rule have pervaded the entire history of the West and to this day constitute a pre-eminent element of the monastic heritage. For us, however, the Rule of St. Benedict not only provides a permanent source of inspiration for the correct organization of our life, but whether in regard to the fundamental line of our spiritual life or the constitutive forms of coenobitic life it has in its essential and permanent elements full authority.

7. But the Rule is also an historical document, intimately connected with the conditions of its own time. Its use and interpretation over the centuries have also reflected the conditions and mentality of each period. It has, therefore, practically never been observed "according to the letter," but according to diverse interpretations and adaptations. And in our own times, since the conditions of human life have undergone much more profound changes than in any earlier period, the Rule composed in the sixth century can determine much less all the particulars of our life. Such material fidelity would correspond neither to the intentions of St. Benedict nor to that freedom with which the monks of past ages have used the Rule.

In a more direct manner the Rule is incarnated in the tradition and the actual life of each monastery that with the light of the Holy Spirit and under the authentic direction of the abbot preserves the Rule as an always relevant and living inspiration. Thus, it is in this respect that we too should study the Rule and live it to such a degree that, the contingent or obsolete elements having been left aside, it might always remain for us the true master of life.

The Rule should therefore be the source and norm of our life in such a sense that we use it with filial reverence and Christian freedom to promote the renewal of our life, rather than being a collection of concrete prescriptions that restrict and impede us in our search for solutions truly suited to our problems.

4. The Cistercian Tradition

8. We should keep especially in mind whatever belongs to the Cistercian tradition — namely, the documents of the Cistercian origins, the writings of the Order's eminent masters, men and women, of the spiritual life, the lives of our saints, and the history and experience of almost nine centuries. In our work of renewal we should diligently

labore nostro renovationis respicienda sunt eodem spiritu fidelitatis et libertatis quem supra memoravimus.

Traditio enim praeprimis non est ut res praeterita accipienda, sed uti res viva et actualis, quae dynamice ad futurum tendit et novam actionem novis condicionibus congruentem postulat. Unde detegenda est vis interna traditionis, quae solum ex studio et communicatione vitali cum ea haberi potest.

Ideo traditio Cisterciensis non est restringenda ad ipsa initia, licet inspiratio primigenia certe praecipuum habeat momentum, sed ratio habenda est etiam posterioris evolutionis, quae per insertionem novorum elementorum vitae nostrae cursum haud parum formavit ac determinavit sanas quoque traditiones constituendo.

5. Participatio et promotio vitae hodiernae Ecclesiae et societatis

9. Necessitates et optata Ecclesiae intime nosse debemus, et inde impulsus haurire ad formandam nostram vitam, ut prompti simus ad eius servitium, sicut antecessores nostri Cistercienses. Ordo Cisterciensis uti viva et utilis pars Ecclesiae viventis, eius proposita et incoepa prompte intelligere, ac pro viribus et possibilitatibus promovere debet et cupit.

Sicut Ecclesia gaudium et spem, luctum et angorem mundi hodierni sua esse sentit, et humano generi intime conjuncta ei adiutorium praestare satagit, ita etiam nos necessitates et studia societatis humanae aperto animo percipere et iis pro posse, servata indole fundamentali uniuscuiusque Congregationis vel monasterii, efficaciter inservire debemus.

Unde in opere nostrae renovationis id quoque nobis considerandum est, ut formae muneraque vitae nostrae indoli et necessitatibus societatis hodiernae respondeant. Scrutari debemus opiniones, iudicia et mores aequalium nostrorum, inter quos vivimus, et quidquid boni et iusti in eis inveniatur, pretiosa haec elementa ad nostrum usum vertere debemus.

6. Actio et inspiratio Spiritus Sancti

10. Fons autem summi momenti et uberrimus vitae nostrae est actio et inspiratio Spiritus Sancti in nobis. Firmiter enim credimus Spiritum Dei etiam in nobis operari, corda nostra accendere ad voluntatem Dei melius

study, evaluate, and refer to all this with the same spirit of fidelity and freedom mentioned above.

For above all a tradition is not to be received as something from the past but as something living and relevant which is directed dynamically to the future and calls for a new actualization befitting new circumstances. For this reason the inner force of a tradition must be uncovered, and this can only be obtained from study and a living dialogue with it.

The Cistercian tradition, therefore, should not be restricted to the very beginnings, although the initial inspiration certainly possesses special importance. One must take into consideration as well the later development, which has by the introduction of new elements shaped and determined in no little way the course of our life by also establishing sound traditions.

5. Participation in the Life of the Church and Society Today and their Promotion

9. We should be very familiar with the needs and desires of the Church, and draw from them initiatives for shaping our lives so that we might be ready to serve her as our Cistercian predecessors were. The Cistercian Order as a vibrant and useful part of the living Church has the duty and the desire to understand promptly her intentions and her undertakings, and to support them according to her strengths and possibilities.

Just as the Church realizes that the modern world's joy and hope, struggle and anxiety are hers and joined intimately with mankind strives to offer her aid, so we too should look with an open mind upon the needs and efforts of human society and render them effective service insofar as we can while safeguarding the fundamental character of each congregation or monastery.

Consequently, in our task of renewal we must also see that the forms of our life and our work correspond to the characteristics and needs of society today. We should look carefully at the opinions, judgments and character of our contemporaries, among whom we are living, and whatever is found to be good and just in them we should turn to our own use as valuable elements.

6. The Action and Inspiration of the Holy Spirit

10. The most important and fruitful source for our life is, however, the action and inspiration of the Holy Spirit in us. For we firmly believe that the Spirit of God is at work also in us, that He enkindles our hearts to

agnoscendam et promptius sequendam. Nil nobis est tam necessarium, quam vitam et vocationem nostram sincero corde, sub luce Spiritus Sancti perscrutari et Eius impulsionibus prompte respondere. Cuius operatio, etsi mysteriosa, sine dubio maxime manifestatur in fraterna conspiratione sodalium Dei voluntatem sincere investigantium, formas aptas et dignas servitii Dei quaerentium. Honestum et apertum colloquium, sincera deliberatio communis, cooperatio responsabilis omnium membrorum, haec sunt imprimis media per quae ductus impulsusque Spiritus manifesti fiunt.

C. De criteriis adhibendis

1. Sensus realitatis

11. Non est propositum nostrum effingere idealia theoretica et ab usu vitae remota ad formas obsoletas conservandas aut restaurandas, sed vitam nostram hodiernam, modernam, realem examinare, perficere et ad eius renovationem principia administrare. Vitam monasticam Cisterciensem saeculi vicesimi primi, genuinam et efficacem studemus efformare, illam quae sequitur vocationem concrete nobis a Deo datam. Deus enim nos hic et nunc vocat, et sanctos esse vult, hac aetate, hisce temporum adiunctis, cum possibilitatibus hominis hodierni vult nos Christum sequi et hominibus caritate inservire.

Labores nostri semper in veritate et realitate vitae innitantur oportet. Ideo in hac Declaratione semper ante oculos habere volumus facta, possibilitates, exigentias, munera sodalium et communitatum nostrarum, necnon et Ecclesiae et mundi hodierni vitam.

Hic sensus realitatis minime tamen significat acceptionem vel approbationem imperfectionum aut vitiorum situationis praesentis, acsi vulgari pedestrique realitate contenti ad meliora tendere nollemus. Hoc merito rejicimus ut contrarium ipsi essentiae vitae religiosae, studio vitae perfectae caritatis. Sed rursus bene novimus idealia propositaque, quamvis sublimia, nihil valere, nisi ab hominibus quibus proponuntur, libere immo et libenter suscipi et efficaciter perfici possint.

2. Unitas vitae

12. Renovatio vitae nostrae religiosae totam vitam amplectatur oportet, ideoque omnia eius elementa constitutiva respicere et unicuique parti

recognize the will of God more clearly and to follow it more promptly. There is nothing so important for us as to look with a sincere heart at our life and our vocation in the light of the Holy Spirit and to respond without hesitation to His promptings. His working, even if mysterious, is without a doubt especially evident in the fraternal harmony of confreres sincerely searching out the will of God and seeking appropriate and worthy forms for the service of God. Honest and open dialogue, sincere deliberation in common, the responsible cooperation of all members — these above all are the means through which the Spirit's leading and prompting become manifest.

C. The Criteria to be Applied

1. A Sense of Reality

11. Our goal is not to draw up theoretical ideals removed from our way of life in order to preserve or restore obsolete forms, but to examine and perfect our modern, actual life today and to apply principles for its renewal. We are striving to give form to Cistercian monastic life of the twentieth century, the life which follows a vocation given us concretely by God. For God calls us here and now, and He wants us to be saints in this age, in the circumstances of these times, and He wants us with the possibilities of the human being today to follow Christ and to serve men and women with charity.

Our efforts should always be rooted in the truth and reality of life. In this Declaration we want therefore always to have before our eyes the facts, possibilities, needs, and work of our confreres and our communities, as well as the life of the Church and the world today.

This understanding of reality certainly does not mean that we accept or approve of the imperfections and vices of the present situation, as if, content with the common and banal reality, we did not want to reach toward better things. We rightly reject this as contrary to the very essence of religious life, to our striving for the life of perfect charity. On the other hand, we clearly understand that ideals and goals, although sublime, are of no value if the men to whom they are proposed can not freely and, indeed, willingly adopt them and effectively carry them out.

2. The Unity of our Life

12. The renewal of our religious life should embrace the whole of our life. We should, therefore, consider all its constitutive elements and give

suum debitum pondus tribuere debemus. Falsum esset omnino quosdam aspectus vitae nostrae ita extollere acsi in iis tantum essentia vitae Cisterciensis resideret, aliasque partes negligere, quasi appendices tantum, immo obstacula verae vitae monasticae. Nos enim in quocumque momento vitae Cistercienses sumus et esse debemus, non tantum cum ad orationem convenimus vel observantias communitarias exercemus, sed et in studiis, in laboribus, in ministerio sacerdotali, in oratione privata, in serviendo hominum necessitatibus et similibus.

Quaerimus ergo visionem integram, omnes partes vitae in unum servitium Domini harmonice coniungentem. Si quae elementa vitae Cisterciensis hodiernae non ad omnia membra Ordinis pertinent (uti sacerdotium) vel non ad omnia monasteria spectant (ut educatio iuventutis vel cura pastoralis), diligenter tamen considerentur et momentum pondusque eorum sincere agnoscatur. Elementa vitae monasticae, quae in Regula vel initiis Cisterciensibus vix vel ne vix quidem inveniuntur, non ideo respicienda sunt uti secundaria vel suspecta. Vita monastica enim, sicut omne vivum, decursu temporum crescit, evoluitur, assimilatur sibi multa nova et abjicit vetera non pauca.

3. Concors diversitas

13. Formae institutionales, in quibus hodie realitas vitae Cisterciensis se concrete manifestat, sunt diversae communitates vivae. Constat autem nostras communitates decursu temporum in diversis regionibus varias vitae formas et diversa servitii munera suscepisse. Haec diversitas per se non est deploranda tamquam quaedam degeneratio perversa, sed potius agnoscenda non tantum uti factum indisputabile, sed et tamquam signum vitalitatis et tamquam Dei invitatio ad agendum. Nam valores et munera diversa singularum congregationum et monasteriorum, si fiducia mutua praevalet, per cooperationem communitatum ad bonum et progressum totius Ordinis servire poterunt. Multo enim plus valet concors diversitas quam coacta et discors uniformitas. Quam ob rem Capitulum Generale agnoscit et promovet legitimam autonomiam singularum congregationum et monasteriorum in suis vitae formis elaborandis studebitque eis in hisce conatibus auxilium praebere.

Ideo in renovationis labore maximi momenti est, ut inprimis singulae communitates fines valoresque suos agnoscant et reconsiderent, et suas vitae formas apte efforment. Nam pondus laboris praeprimis sin-

each part its due weight. It would be altogether false so to extol certain aspects of our life as if the essence of Cistercian life resided only in these and to neglect other parts as if they were only accretions, indeed obstacles to true monastic life. For we are and should be Cistercians in each moment of our life, not only when we come together for prayer or carry out community observances but also in our studies, our work, our priestly ministry, our private prayer, service to the needs of others, and similar activities.

For this reason we seek an integrated vision that unites harmoniously all the parts of our life into the one service of our Lord. If certain elements of Cistercian life today do not pertain to all members of the Order (such as the priesthood) or do not concern all monasteries (such as the education of youth or pastoral care), they should still be carefully considered and their importance and significance sincerely recognized. Elements of the monastic life that are only barely found in the Rule or the Cistercian beginnings or not at all should not for that reason be looked upon as secondary or suspect. For the monastic life, as with every living thing, grows, evolves, and assimilates to itself over the course of time much that is new, and casts off more than a little that is old.

3. A Harmonious Diversity

13. The institutional forms in which the reality of Cistercian life manifests itself concretely today are the various living communities. It is clear that our communities have over the course of time adopted in diverse regions various forms of life and diverse kinds of service. This diversity is not in itself to be deplored as if it were some sort of perverse degeneration. It should rather be recognized not only as an indisputable fact but both as a sign of vitality and as God's invitation to action. For the values and various occupations of the individual congregations and monasteries will through the cooperation of the communities be able to serve the good and the advancement of the whole Order if mutual trust prevails. A harmonious diversity is much more effective than a forced and discordant uniformity. For this reason the General Chapter recognizes and encourages the legitimate autonomy of the individual congregations and monasteries in working out the forms of their life, and it will strive to offer them its help in these efforts.

Therefore in the work of renewal it is of the greatest importance that the individual communities first of all recognize and reconsider their own goals and values, and suitably adapt the forms of their life to them. For

gulis communitatibus incumbit. Capitulum Generale eis tantum adiutorium praestare intendit, cum laborem renovationis promovet et coordinat, sed partes monasteriorum et congregationum neque suppressere nec sibi assumere potest.

4. Continuatio vitalis traditionis Cisterciensis

14. His prae oculis habitis nos realitatem vitae Cisterciensis ita renovare cupimus, ut sit naturalis continuatio et quasi organica explicatio traditionis monasticae et Cisterciensis saecularis. Certe volumus cognoscere (et quidem accuratius quam antea) traditiones monasticas et Cistercienses, et ex eis quam plurima haurire intendimus ad nostrum emolumentum et inspirationem. Nolumus tamen ab eis restringi vel impediri in solvendis problematibus hodiernis, de quibus, propter condiciones vitae funditus mutatas, veteres saepissime vix aliquid vel nihil nosse potuerunt. Non licet nobis renunciare responsabilitati propriae in efformanda vita nostra religiosa, neque reformidare vias vel solutiones novas. Historia sit nobis vitae magistra, non domina, moneat et inspiret, numquam autem nos impediat.

the burden of work rests primarily upon the individual communities. The General Chapter intends to offer them only its help when it encourages and coordinates the work of renewal; it can neither suppress the role of the monasteries and congregations nor take it upon itself.

4. The Continuation of the Living Cistercian Tradition

14. Keeping all this before our eyes, we want to renew the reality of Cistercian life in such a way that it be a natural continuation and organic development, as it were, of the monastic and Cistercian tradition. We certainly desire to get to know — and, indeed, more accurately than before — the monastic and Cistercian traditions, and we intend to draw from them as much as possible for our enrichment and inspiration. But we do not want to be restricted or hindered by them in solving today's problems, about which predecessors could very often know very little or nothing at all, for the conditions of life have fundamentally changed. We may not shirk our own responsibility in shaping our religious life, nor may we shrink back in fear of new paths and solutions. History should be the teacher of our life, not its tyrant; it should teach and inspire, never hinder us.

Pars Prima*Ordo Noster in
Sua Existentia Concreta*A. Ordo Cisterciensis hodiernus
ut realitas socialis

15. **O**RDO NOSTER EST PRAEPRIMIS REALITAS QUAEDAM SOCIALIS. Constat enim ex pluribus Congregationibus, Monasteriis et ultimatin individuis, multiplicibus relationibus inter se connexis. Unusquisque nostrum claram imaginem sibi efformare debet de hac realitate concreta, non tantum de statu eius quoad numerum monachorum, sed praeprimis de vocatione, muneribus, aspirationibus sodalium atque de circumstantiis concretis in quibus haec vocatio vivitur.

Monasteria Cistercensia hodie in Europa, Asia, Africa et in utrisque Americis existunt inter condiciones oeconomicas et culturales diversissimas. Nonnulla eorum in terris missionum sunt, maior autem pars intra ambitum terrarum, quae usque ad nostra tempora traditione Christiana imbuta erant et adhuc plerumque sunt. Quidam nostrorum monasteriorum ad unam ecclesiarum quas orientales vocant pertinent (monachi Aethiopici et Abessini), sed et reliqui inter se maxime differunt propter linguam, mentem et educationem unicuique regioni propriam. In ordine nostro diversitas geographica, culturalis, socialis et ecclesiologica statum rerum valde complexum constituit. In multis quaestionibus quasi unaquaeque communitas sua habet problemata et desideria, quae ex suis specialibus adiunctis explicantur. Ordo Cisterciensis

Part I

Our Order in its Concrete Existence

A. The Cistercian Order Today as a Social Reality

15. **O**UR ORDER IS ABOVE ALL A SOCIAL REALITY. For it consists of many congregations, monasteries, and ultimately individuals connected by the multiple relationships among them. Each one of us should form for himself a clear image of this concrete reality — not only of its status with regard to the number of monks, but above all of the vocation, tasks, and aspirations of the members and the concrete circumstances in which this vocation is lived.

Cistercian monasteries exist today in Europe, Asia, Africa and in both Americas under the most diverse economic and cultural conditions. Some of these are in mission lands, while the majority are in those lands which up to our own times had been imbued with the Christian tradition and for the most part still are. Some of our monasteries belong to one of the so-called Oriental churches (the Ethiopian and Abyssinian monks), but even the others differ greatly among themselves because of the language, mentality, and education proper to each region. In our Order geographic, cultural, social, and ecclesiological diversity constitutes a very complex state of affairs. In many issues virtually each community has its own problems and desires, which develop out of its own special circumstances. The Cistercian Order cultivates friendly relations with "cir-

amicales relationes colit cum Communitatibus Amicorum circa monasteria nostra actualia et suppressa existentes et cum Communitatibus Cisterciensium, quae Confessionis Augustanae sunt.

16. Etiam quoad genus vitae ad quod singula monasteria se vocata agnoscunt, magna varietas apparet. Nonnulla monasteria vitam contemplativam colunt, dum in aliis etiam opera diversa apostolatus exercentur, uti cura pastoralis in paroeciis, educatio iuvenum in scholis, varia opera ministerii sacerdotalis, labor scientificus et culturalis et similia. Permagna majoritas sodalium in nostris monasteriis virorum non solum sacerdotio initiata est, sed et exercitium sacerdotii ministerialis uti partem integram suae vocationis considerat. Proportio inter orationem et laborem, intensitas et forma contactuum cum mundo extramonasteriali, momentum navitatis extra saepta monasteriorum exercitae, natura et formae vitae communis tam diverse concipiuntur, ut primum diversitas appareat, et unitas potius in aspirationibus et valoribus conversationis monasticae communibus quam in uniformi ordinatione vitae detegi possit.

17. Diversitas tamen etiam in quibusdam quaestionibus fundamentalibus existens non est tanta in Ordine nostro, ut omnem communem renovationis laborem impossibilem vel quasi superfluum reddat. Certe quoad multa, uti iam diximus, singula monasteria et congregationes suas debent facere conclusiones practicas. Quia autem multos valores ex communi traditione possidemus, et fere eadem problemata eiusdem Matris Ecclesiae hodiernae ubique solvere conamur, et quidem in eodem mundo hodierno celeriter se unificanti, elaboratio communium solutionum in compluribus vitae campis non solum utilis et possibilis, sed etiam plane necessaria videtur. Communis enim necessitas communes solutiones postulat:

- a) quoad quaestiones de mediis fundamentalibus vitae religiosae, uti sunt vota de consiliis evangelicis emissa, vita communitaria, labor et apostolatus, vita liturgica et similia;
- b) quoad valores fundamentales vitae monasticae qui in traditione spirituali Ordinis et in vita spirituali hodiernae Ecclesiae fundantur;
- c) quoad problemata generalia structurae iuridicae monasteriorum, Congregationum et Ordinis, quoad quaestiones de muneribus

cles of friends" that are gathered around our monasteries, both active and suppressed, and with Cistercian Communities of the Lutheran Confession.

16. A great variety appears even in regard to the kind of life to which individual monasteries recognize they are called. Some monasteries cultivate a contemplative life, while in others even various apostolic works are carried out, such as pastoral work in parishes, the education of youth in schools, various works of priestly ministry, scientific and cultural work, and the like. The vast majority of the members in our monasteries of men are not only ordained to the priesthood but also look upon the exercise of the ministerial priesthood as an integral part of their vocation. The proportion of prayer to work, the intensity and form of contacts with the world outside the monastery, the importance of activities carried out beyond the walls of the monasteries, the nature and forms of the common life are so diversely conceived that the diversity becomes apparent first and the unity can be uncovered in the common aspirations and values of the monastic way of life rather than in the uniform ordering of life.

17. The diversity, however, that exists even in certain fundamental questions is not so great in our Order that it would render impossible or almost superfluous all common effort of renewal. Clearly, as we have already said, in many areas the individual monasteries and congregations should draw their own practical conclusions. But because we possess many values from a common tradition and we are everywhere attempting to solve virtually the same problems as our same Mother the Church of today and, indeed, in the same world of today that is so quickly becoming one, the elaboration of common solutions in several areas of life seems not only useful and possible but also clearly necessary. For a common need calls for common solutions:

- a) with regard to questions of the fundamental means of religious life, such as professed vows of the evangelical counsels, life in community, work and the apostolate, liturgical life, and the like;
- b) with regard to the fundamental values of monastic life that are founded in the spiritual tradition of the Order and in the spiritual life of the Church today;
- c) with regard to the general problems of the juridical structure of the monasteries, congregations, and the Order, with regard to the ques-

superiorum, de participatione responsabili omnium sodalium in rebus monasterii;

- d) quoad formas cooperationis et mutui adiutorii inter singulas communitates, nempe quoad communia consilia et proiecta.

Quidquid hoc modo generali statuatur, ulteriorem exigit applicationem quoad singulas congregationes et monasteria.

B. Ordo Cisterciensis uti realitas historica

18. Ordo noster — aequae ac homo individualis et societas aliqua particularis — praeteritum suum in seipso conservat, haereditatem ac pondus portat non tantum suae historiae ab initiis Cistercii, sed historiae etiam generalis monachismi, cuius radices usque ad prima saecula Christiana pertingunt. Unde utile est breviter recolere principales partes historiae monachismi earumque momentum.

1. Initia monachismi usque ad Regulam S. Benedicti

19. Formae primitivae vitae monasticae inde ab initiis aderant in Ecclesia (confessores, virgines, quorum vitam aliqui "monachismum domesticum" vocant). Saeculo III, praeter formam praedictam, apparent anachoretae et coenobitae in universa Ecclesia, inde vero a saeculo IV conscriptae sunt regulae ad novas institutiones monasticas ordinandas et experientias "patrum spiritualium" transmittendas. Evangelium tamen remanebat illa "Regula non regulata," cui omnes regulae subserviebant.

20. Inter has regulas certe eminet Regula S. Benedicti in qua S. Patriarcha a ceteris regulis suam "minimam inchoationis regulam" contraxit, iuxta quam monasterium est "dominici schola servitii," in qua congregatio sub paternitate Christi, cuius vices gerit abbas in servitium fratrum, in aequilibrio harmonico Operis Dei, lectionis divinae et laboris aliorumque exercitiorum per ducatum Evangelii currit viam mandatorum Dei.

21. Regula autem quae de ordinatione intramonasteriali agit, comple-

tions of the superiors' tasks, the responsible participation of all members in the affairs of the monastery;

- d) with regard to forms of cooperation and mutual help among the individual communities, that is, with regard to common plans and projects.

Whatever is established in this general manner will require a further application to the individual congregations and monasteries.

B. The Cistercian Order as an Historical Reality

18. Our Order — just as the individual human being and any particular society — preserves in itself its past, carries the inheritance and the weight not only of its own history from the beginnings of Cîteaux but also of the general history of monasticism, whose roots reach back to the first Christian centuries. For this reason it is useful to recall briefly the principal stages of the history of monasticism and their importance.

1. From the Beginnings of Monasticism to the Rule of St. Benedict

19. Primitive forms of monastic life have been present in the Church from the beginnings (confessors, virgins, whose life some call a "domestic monasticism"). In the third century, the anchorites and coenobites make their appearance in the universal Church. Then beginning in the fourth century, rules were composed to regulate the new monastic institutions and to pass on the experiences of the "spiritual fathers." The Gospel, however, remained the "Rule that is not regulated," which all rules serve.

20. Among these rules the Rule of St. Benedict clearly stands out, in which our holy Patriarch has drawn together from the other rules his "very little rule for the beginning." According to it the monastery is "a school for the Lord's service," in which the community under the pater-nity of Christ, whom the abbot represents in the service of the brothers, follows the guidance of the Gospel and through the harmonious balance of the *Opus Dei*, *lectio divina*, work and other exercises runs along the path of the commandments of God.

21. The Rule, which is concerned with regulating affairs within the

mentum quoddam recipit a "Vita S. Benedicti" nobis in Dialogis S. Gregorii descripta, quae etsi non est in omnibus partibus ad unguem historica, nobis ostendit quomodo secundum traditionem ipse S. Pater illos qui ad monasterium venerunt, receperit, immo et quomodo ipse extra monasterium egerit. S. Gregorius docet enim S. Benedictum "commorantem circumquaque multitudinem praedicatione continua ad fidem vocasse," immo etiam fratres suos crebro ad vicum vicinum misisse "pro exhortandis animabus."

2. Monachismus Benedictinus usque ad initia Cisterciensia

22. Regula S. Benedicti nec unica erat nec universa acceptatione gaudebat usque ad tempus S. Benedicti Anianensis (epocha "regulae mixtae"). Tunc autem lentim introducta est in omnibus fere monasteriis Imperii Carolingiani. Exinde quaedam uniformitas vitae apparuit in monachismo Occidentali, qui "Benedictinus" potest appellari.

Synodi deinde saeculorum IX-XI studebant clarius distinguere monachos a canonicis regularibus, sed non cum multo successu. Nam semper magis crescebat numerus monachorum, qui sacros ordines susceperunt et ita ad statum clericalem transierunt, canonici vero regulares vitam suam secundum usus monasticos ordinabant. Monachismus insuper saeculorum X-XI vitam simplicem derelinquens continuo augebat partem et pondus liturgiae in vita monastica, ita ut aequilibrium inter orationem et laborem penitus perditum est.

3. Origines Cistercienses

23. Saeculo XI tamen novi motus spirituales oriebantur apud monachos (et canonicos) cum fine redeundi ad veram paupertatem evangelicam, ad laborem manuum, ad "puritatem Regulae" et ad authenticos fontes monachismi antiqui.

Cistercium fundatum est tali cum fine. Fundatores "Novi Monasterii" aequilibrium inter vitam liturgicam et laborem restituerunt, etsi non redierunt ad litteram Regulae in omnibus. Plures enim functiones liturgicas S. Benedicto ignotas et postea introductas (uti ex. gr. missam quotidianam conventualem) retinuerunt et ita ordinem diurnum mutaverunt. Ipsi insuper admiserunt fratres conversos, quia dicebant se

monastery, finds a kind of complement in "The Life of St. Benedict," written down for us in The Dialogues of St. Gregory. Although it is not perfectly historical in all details, it does show us how according to the tradition our Holy Father himself received those who came to his monastery as well as how he acted outside the monastery. For St. Gregory teaches that St. Benedict "called to the faith by his unceasing preaching the multitude dwelling all around there" and that he frequently sent even his confreres to the neighboring village "to exhort the souls."

2. Benedictine Monasticism up to the Cistercian Beginnings

22. The Rule of St. Benedict was neither the sole rule, nor did it enjoy universal acceptance up to the times of St. Benedict of Aniane (the period of the "mixed rule"). However, it was then slowly introduced in almost all the monasteries of the Carolingian Empire. From then on a certain uniformity of life appeared in Western monasticism that can be called Benedictine.

The synods of the 9th - 11th centuries then attempted to distinguish more clearly the monks from the canons regular, but without great success. For the number of monks receiving Holy Orders and thus passing into clerical status was steadily increasing, while the canon regulars were organizing their life according to monastic practices. Moreover, monasticism in the 10th - 11th centuries was abandoning the simple life and constantly increasing the role and significance played by the liturgy in monastic life so that the balance between prayer and work was completely lost.

3. The Cistercian Origins

23. In the 11th century new spiritual movements were arising among the monks (and canon regulars) with the goal of returning to true evangelical poverty of the Gospel, to manual labor, to the "purity of the Rule," and to the authentic sources of ancient monasticism.

Cîteaux was founded with such a goal. The founders of "the New Monastery" restored a balance between liturgical life and work even though they did not return to the letter of the Rule in all matters. For they retained many liturgical rites unknown to St. Benedict and introduced later (as, for example, daily conventual mass) and thus changed the daily schedule. Moreover, they admitted lay brothers (*conversi*) because they

sine ipsis non posse" die seu nocte praecepta Regulae servare". Ipsi itaque Regulam, ut in pluribus, non in suo sensu historico saeculi VI, sed secundum commentaria posteriora intelligebant.

Monasteria a Cistercio eiusque filiabus fundata inde ab initio erant abbatiae sui iuris iuxta praescripta Chartae Caritatis inter se unitae, quorum abbates quotannis in Cistercio ad capitulum generale convenerunt ad curam animarum monachorum ipsis concreditorum promovendam.

Inde a primis decenniis saeculi XII abbates Ordinis nostri promoverunt fundaciones monasteriorum monialium, et eas adjuverunt in earum vita ordinanda. Asceteria, sicut etiam monasteria monachorum, usque ad annum 1184 erant sub jurisdictione episcoporum. Obtena exemptione permulta monasteria monialium Ordini incorporata fuerunt.

In initio abbatissae fundatrices abbatias filias regulariter visitabant, et filiationes etiam capitula tenuerunt. Sed propter legem clausurae quae in Medio Aevo pro monialibus semper strictior facta est, visitatio ad patrem immediatum transiit, capitula autem abbatissarum non amplius celebrabantur.

4. Evolutio Ordinis usque ad saeculum XIX

24. Crescente Ordine cum fundacione celerrima centenarum abbatiarum necnon incorporatione Congregationum diversarum (Congregationis Saviniacensis et Obazinensis adhuc tempore S. Bernardi)" similitudo morum" initio existens lentim et sensim sine sensu diversificata est. Transformatio vitae socialis, intellectualis et politicae suum influxum habuit etiam in evolutionem Ordinis. Ideo Capitulum Generale studebat legislationem Ordinis semper novis exigentiis aptare, non reformidans saeculo XII etiam Chartam Caritatis pluries et non leviter retractare.

25. Magnus numerus abbatum in Capitulo Generali duxit deinde ad creationem Definitorii, quod formam suam, usque ad Revolutionem Gallicam conservatam, anno 1265 recepit. Quam ob causam, sed etiam propter bella aliasque difficultates abbates Capitulum Generale rarius adire coeperunt. Eodem tempore vita Cisterciensis in diversis regionibus, praesertim in Europa centrali et orientali, sed etiam in Lusitania, novos aspectus assumpsit.

His rationibus decursu temporum aliae accesserunt, politicae et

said that without them they could not "observe the precepts of the Rule day and night." Therefore as with several other matters, they understood the Rule, not according to its historical meaning of the 6th-century but according to later interpretations.

The monasteries founded by Cîteaux and its daughter houses were from the beginning autonomous abbeys united among themselves according to the regulations of the *Charta Caritatis*. Their abbots met annually in Cîteaux for a general chapter in order to further the spiritual care of the monks entrusted to them.

From the first decades of the 12th century, abbots of our Order encouraged the foundation of monasteries for nuns and helped them in organizing their lives. Convents, just as monasteries of men, were under the jurisdiction of bishops up until 1184. After an exemption was received, very many monasteries of nuns were incorporated into our Order.

At the beginning, founding abbesses made regular visitations of their daughter abbeys, and the daughter abbeys even held chapters. But because of the law of *clausura*, which became ever stricter for nuns in the Middle Ages, the visitation passed over to the *pater immediatus*, and the chapters of abbesses were no longer held.

4. The Evolution of the Order up to the 19th Century

24. As the Order grew with the very rapid foundation of hundreds of abbeys as well as with the incorporation of diverse congregations (the Congregation of Savigny and Obazine already at the time of St. Bernard), the "similarity of customs" that existed in the beginning was gradually diversified without rationale. The transformation of the social, intellectual, and political life also influenced the evolution of the Order. The General Chapter, therefore, strove to adapt the Order's legislation to ever new needs, not fearing in the twelfth century to make several, significant changes even in the *Charta Caritatis*.

25. The large number of abbots in the General Chapter then led to the creation of the *Definitorium*, which received its form in 1265 and retained it up until the French Revolution. For this reason and on account of wars and other difficulties, abbots began to attend the General Chapter more rarely. At the same time Cistercian life assumed new aspects in various regions, especially in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in Portugal.

Over the course of time other political and ecclesiastical circum-

ecclesiasticae, uti institutum commendae, quae novas solutiones in diversis regionibus postulabant. Ita ortae sunt diversae Congregationes in Ordine (de Castilia anno 1425, Congregatio S. Bernardi in Italia anno 1497, Lusitaniae anno 1567 per acta Romanorum Pontificum, saeculo vero XVII etiam cooperante Capitulo Generali Congregationes Calabro-Lucana, Romana, Aragoniae et Germaniae Superioris).

26. His saeculis in Ordine momentum sacerdotii magis ac magis augebatur et complura monasteria varia ministerii pastoralis munera assumpserunt. Post Concilium autem Tridentinum in pluribus partibus Ordinis cura pastoralis in parocciis primarias obtinuit partes in labore et munus factum est principale multorum monachorum sacerdotum.

27. Institutio iuventutis in scholis longos fortesque radices habet in traditione monastica antiqua, et licet primi Cistercienses propter illorum temporum adiuncta laborem scholasticum abnuerint, postea tamen hic labor etiam apud nostros in diversis formis invaluit. Munus docendi in scholis publici iuris assumptum est a pluribus monasteriis praesertim inde a saeculo XVIII, quando systema modernum educationis exordia sua habuit.

28. Ordo magna damna passus est saeculo XVI per Reformationem Lutheranam eiusque consequentias, sed saeculo XVII in multis regionibus iterum florere coepit. Hoc tempore abbatiae, quae per assumptionem curae pastoralis vel scholarum participes factae sunt munerum et sollicitudinum ecclesiarum localium, vitam suam magna ex parte his novis muneribus adaptare conabantur. Revolutio tamen Gallica, josephinismus saecularisationesque alibi cito sequentes non solum maximam partem monasteriorum, sed etiam organisationem Ordinis radicitus destruxerunt.

Suppressio Cistercio, cum non adfuissent Constitutiones Ordinis aptae ad superandas difficultates, cum impossibilitate convocandi capitulum generale, ius constitutionale antiquum Ordinis substantialiter mutatum est. Mortuo Abbate Cistercii, S. Sedes ipsa in magnis angustiis posita, solum modo provisorio Ordini providere potuit. Sed Pius VII a captivitate Napoleonis Romam rediens statim constituit caput pro Ordine, qui erat abhinc usque ad annum 1880 Abbas Praeses

stances arose, such as the institution of commendae, which called for new solutions in various regions. In this way various congregations arose: the Congregation of Castile in 1425, the Congregation of St. Bernard in Italy in 1497 (the Congregation of Portugal in 1567, all by pontifical decree; in the 17th century the General Chapter also cooperated in the formation of the Congregation of Calabro-Lucana, the Roman Congregation, the Congregation of Aragona, and the Congregation of Northern Germany).

26. In these centuries the importance of the priesthood in the Order was growing more and more, and several monasteries took up various tasks of pastoral ministry. However, after the Council of Trent pastoral care in parishes assumed in several parts of the Order the primary role in their work and became the principal task of many monks who were priests.

27. The formation of youth in schools has deep and strong roots in ancient monastic tradition. Although the first Cistercians declined work in schools because of the circumstances of their times, this work in various forms later gained importance even among ourselves. Several monasteries have taken up the task of teaching in publicly recognized schools, especially since the 18th century, when the modern system of education has its origin.

28. The Order suffered grave damage in the 16th century because of the Lutheran Reformation and its consequences, but in the 17th century it began again to flourish in many regions. At this time abbeys, which had come to participate in the tasks and concerns of the local churches by assuming pastoral care and schools, tried to adapt their life for the most part to these new tasks. However, the French Revolution, Josephinism, and the secularizations that followed swiftly in other places not only destroyed a very great number of the monasteries but also fundamentally destroyed the organization of the Order.

With the suppression of Citeaux, since there were no constitutions for the Order capable of overcoming the difficulties and it was impossible to convoke the General Chapter, the ancient constitutional law of the Order was substantially changed. After the death of the Abbot of Citeaux, the Holy See, itself in grave difficulties, was able to provide for the Order only in a provisory manner. When he returned to Rome from captivity at the hands of Napoleon, Pius VII immediately appointed a

Congregationis S. Bernardi in Italia. Jurisdictio autem huius Abbatis Praesidis Generalis fere unice ad confirmationem neoelectorum abbatum Strictioris Observantiae restringebatur, tamen hoc modo factum est, ut unitas Ordinis conservaretur.

Quando anno 1834 a Summo Pontifice erecta est prima Congregatio B.M.V. de Trappa, clare dicebatur illam Congregationem esse sub jurisdictione Abbatis Generalis.

Conatus convocandi capitulum generale omnium abbatum felicem exitum non habuerunt, ita primum capitulum generale post Revolutionem Gallicam celebratum fuit solum anno 1880, membra eius a S. Sede fuerunt determinata.

Anno 1892 in capitulo unionis trium Congregationum Strictioris Observantiae, Patres capitulares libere constituerunt ordinem autonomum Ordinis Cisterciensium Reformatum B.M.V. de Trappa. Leo PP. XIII perspecta impossibilitate reuniendi duos ordines, anno 1902 locutus est de « Familia Cisterciensi », Ordini Cisterciensium Reformatum tribuens omnia privilegia Ordinis Cisterciensis.

5. Historia Ordinis saeculo vicesimo

29. Abbates ceterorum monasteriorum iam saeculo elapso pluries ad Capitula Generalia convenerunt et saeculo elapso ter etiam Constitutiones de Supremo Regimine Ordinis exaraverunt. Hoc tempore etiam plura monasteria extra Ordinem exorta necnon Congregatio Casamariensis Ordini se unierunt, item factae sunt plures novae fundationes, etiam in terris missionum.

Post bellum mundiale secundum monasteria monialium Hispaniae et Italiae Foederationes iuris pontificii formaverunt, quae magna merita habent tam sub aspectu spirituali quam materiali et munus suum pro monasteriis et Ordine persequantur oportet.

Ita natus est Ordo noster hodiernus, qui continet realitatem sat complexam. Etiam exinde patet, maxime necessarium esse in labore renovationis accommodatae, ut praeprimis singulae communitates sua munera et fines agnoscant, clare et sincere definiant. Talis clarificatio etiam in Ordine promovebit vitalitatem et mutuam comprehensionem.

head for the Order, who was from that point up until 1880 the Abbot President of the Congregation of St. Bernard in Italy. The jurisdiction of this Abbot President General was restricted almost exclusively to the confirmation of newly elected abbots of the Stricter Observance. In this way, however, the unity of the Order was preserved.

When the Congregation of the Blessed Virgin Mary of La Trappe was first erected by the Supreme Pontiff in 1834, it was clearly said that the congregation was subject to the jurisdiction of the Abbot General.

Efforts to convoke a general chapter of all the abbots were not successful. Consequently, the first general chapter after the French Revolution was held only in 1880. Its members were determined by the Holy See.

In 1892 in a chapter bringing together three congregations of the Stricter Observance, the capitular fathers freely established the autonomous Order of Reformed Cistercians of the Blessed Virgin Mary of la Trappe. When he realized the impossibility of reuniting the two Orders, Pope Leo XIII spoke in 1902 of the "Cistercian Family," and attributed to the Order of Reformed Cistercians all the privileges of the Cistercian Order.

5. History of the Order in the Twentieth Century

29. Abbots of the other monasteries convened at General Chapters several times already in the last century. Three times in the last century they have even composed constitutions on the supreme governance of the Order. Also at this time several monasteries that had arisen outside the Order as well as the Congregation of Casamari have joined the Order. Similarly, many new foundations have been made, even in mission territories.

After the Second World War the monasteries of nuns in Spain and Italy formed federations of pontifical right. These federations of nuns have great merit in both spiritual and material matters, and they should pursue their work for their monasteries and for the Order.

In this way our Order today has come about, encompassing a very complex reality. From this it is also clear that it is especially necessary in the work of appropriate renewal first of all for individual communities to recognize their tasks and goals, and clearly and sincerely to define them. Such clarification will promote also within the Order vitality and mutual understanding.

C. Ordo Cisterciensis ut pars viva Ecclesiae et mundi hodierni

30. Historia novem saeculorum vestigia profunda reliquit in Ordine nostro, qui semper pars erat Ecclesiae et mundi ac eorum mutationibus et crisis semper participabat. Hodie quoque motus, aspirationes, convictiones angoreque nostri temporis in Ordine vivide sentiuntur et opus renovationis magna ex parte determinant.

Nimis longum esset hic omnes motus principales Ecclesiae et mundi hodierni, licet summatim tantum, describere. Magna ex parte insuper inveniuntur in documentis Concilii Vaticani II et posterioribus documentis Ecclesiae, quae plurima problemata Ecclesiae in mundo hodierno examini subjiciunt. Hic solummodo quasdam praeoccupationes principaliores vitae religiosae modernae volumus explanare et ad nos applicare.

1. Renovatio theologica

31. Ultimis decenniis theologia catholica profunde renovata est et adhuc est in stadio evolutionis celeris. Motus biblicus novis methodis penetrat Scripturam, motus patristicus thesauros antea ignotos aperit traditionis theologicae, patrimonii Cisterciensis, motus liturgicus nova luce illustrat vitam sacramentalem et vitam orationis Ecclesiae. Anthropologia theologica, ecclesiologia, theologia vitae religiosae, ut saltem quosdam campos enumeremus intensi laboris, in non paucis novum aspectum novumque offerunt intellectum vitae Dei in nobis. Elementa praecipua vitae Cisterciensis hodiernae et renovatio accommodata nostra secundum perspectivas probatas huius theologiae contemporaneae debent ordinari quae iam tantos fructus tulit in Concilio Vaticano II.

2. Dignitas personae humanae

32. Hodie magis quam antea consci sumus dignitatis et libertatis personae humanae. Scimus Deum nos non vi, sed amore ad se trahere et decisiones personales a nobis desiderare. Homo nostrae aetatis merito rejicit modum agendi qui personalitatem humanam opprimit, quia nemo vi vel metu coactus opus Deo placens perficiet. Ideo in ordinatione vitae in monasterio et in formatione iuvenum evolutio personarum attendi debet.

C. The Cistercian Order as a Living Part of the Church and World Today

30. The history of nine centuries has left deep traces in our Order, which was always part of the Church and the world, and which has always participated in their changes and crises. Also today the movements, aspirations, convictions, and anxieties of our time are keenly felt in the Order and to a large extent determine the work of renewal.

It would be too long to describe here all the principal movements of the Church and the world today, even if only summarily. They are, however, to a large extent found in the documents of the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent documents of the Church, which submit to examination very many of the problems of the Church in the world today. Here we want to explain and to apply to ourselves only some of the more principal concerns of religious life today.

1. Theological Renewal

31. In recent decades Catholic theology has been profoundly renewed and is still in a state of rapid development. The biblical movement is probing Scripture with new methods, the patristic movement is opening up for theology previously unknown treasures of the theological tradition and the Cistercian patrimony, the liturgical movement is casting new light on the Church's sacramental and prayer life. Theological anthropology, ecclesiology, the theology of the religious life — to name just a few fields of intensive work — are offering in more than a few areas a new perspective and a new understanding of God's life in us. The principal elements of Cistercian life today and our appropriate renewal should be directed according to the proven perspectives of this contemporary theology, which has already born such fruit in the Second Vatican Council.

2. The Dignity of the Human Person

32. Today more than earlier, we are aware of the dignity and freedom of the human person. We know that God draws us to Himself not by force but by love and desires personal decisions from us. The human being of our age rightly rejects a way of behaving that represses the human person because no one will perform a deed pleasing to God if he is constrained by force or fear. Therefore, in the organization of life in the monastery and in the formation of the youth one should pay attention to the development of the human person.

3. Sensus communitarius

33. Nostra aetas una ex parte magni aestimat formas communitarias vitae, in quibus persona in relationem intrat dialogi cum aliis, sicque se evolvit, manifestat et perficit, alia ex parte ecclesiologia contemporanea clarissime monstrat naturam communitariam salutis, uti notam essentialem revelationis christianae. Quibus rationibus moti, etiam nos curare debemus, ut inter personas quas vita communitatis communesque fines ac munera coniungunt, communicatio vera et sincera excolatur.

4. Nova aestimatio rerum creatarum,
laboris progressusque humani

34. Nostris diebus etiam in theologia magis perspicitur valor positivus, quem res creatae, labor et progressus humanus habent pro tota vita humana, item perspicitur eorum momentum in oeconomia salutis. Unde in nobis crescat oportet sensus responsabilitatis ut cum tota humana communitate de valoribus etiam terrestribus curemus. Recognoscimus enim et nos participare debere in labore promovendi illum progressum, quo mundus creatus potestati hominis magis ac magis subditur, servata tamen dignitate propria creaturarum a Deo Creatore data, ut tota societas modo iusto et aequo partem capiat fructuum sui laboris. Nam solummodo cum tali serio labore sanctificatio omnium rerum in Christo et reditus omnis creaturae ad Creatorem perficitur.

5. Oecumenismus et opus missionum

35. Ultimis decenniis non solum multiplicati sunt contactus inter communitates christianas sed et renovatus est spiritus, in quo istae relationes locum habent. Hodie semper magis sentimus communem responsabilitatem pro unitate Ecclesiae restauranda. Ideo utile erit, ut monasteria nostra, si condiciones necessariae adsunt, secundum proprias possibilitates suam operam praestent ad unitatem Ecclesiae fovendam et promovendam.

Vivam conscientiam debemus habere etiam de munere nostro quoad Evangelii diffusionem in terris missionum, ut pro viribus opus *evangelisationis* adhuc ingens faciendum promoveamus.

Insuper scimus Ecclesiam catholicam nihil eorum, quae in religionibus non christianis vera et sancta sunt, reicere. Respectu mutuo

3. The Sense of Community

33. On the one hand, our age greatly values the communitarian forms of life in which a person enters into dialogue with others and thus grows, manifests and perfects himself. On the other hand, contemporary ecclesiology points out very clearly the communitarian nature of salvation as an essential mark of Christian revelation. Moved by such considerations, we too should see to it that true and sincere communication be promoted among persons whom the life of community and common goals and work join together.

4. A New Appraisal of Creation, of Work, and of Human Progress

34. In our days theology also sees more clearly the positive value which creation, work and human progress hold for the whole of human life. Similarly, their importance in the economy of salvation is recognized. Consequently, a sense of responsibility should grow among us so that with the entire human community we would concern ourselves with earthly values as well. For we recognize that we too should share in the work of promoting that progress by which the created world is subjected more and more to the power of the human being, preserving however the creatures' specific dignity that has been given them by God the Creator. Thus, society as a whole should share in a just and equitable way in the fruits of its labor. For only by such serious work is the sanctification of all things in Christ and the return of every creature to God brought about.

5. Ecumenism and Missions

35. In recent decades contacts among Christian communities have not only multiplied but also the spirit has been renewed in which those relations occur. Today we feel ever more a common responsibility for restoring the unity of the Church. Therefore, it will be useful for our monasteries to offer their efforts to nurture and promote the unity of the Church, if the necessary conditions are present and according to our own possibilities.

We should also have a lively conscience with regard to our task of spreading the Gospel in mission territories so that we might promote insofar as we can the work of evangelization, still a huge task.

Moreover, we know that the Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in non-Christian religions. With mutual respect and

habito, excluso tamen omni syncretismo, monasteria nostra illa bona spiritualia et moralia necnon illos valores socio-culturales, quae in religionibus non christianis inveniuntur, agnoscant, et ita pacem familiae humanae promoveant.

6. Desiderium authenticitatis, cultus simplicitatis et sinceritatis

36. Simul cum nostris coaevs, etiam nos magnum habemus desiderium amplectendi authenticos valores, etiam in vita religiosa et monastica, ideo optamus formas vitae simplices, quae sincere manifestant mentem. Actus nostri exprimant oportet internum statum animae. Desideramus intelligere sensum rituum nostrorum, mentesque nostras voci nostrae conformare. Sincero corde et aperta mente Ei volumus vivere, qui corda scrutatur et non secundum apparentias iudicat. Hoc autem simplicitatis studio nos etiam propositis Patrum Fundatorum nostrorum speciali modo coniunctos esse sentimus.

37. Hoc modo Ordo noster participat et motuum vitalium Ecclesiae et historiae saecularis. Ita dum ex fontibus traditionum constanter haurit, futurum tamen praepimis ante oculos habere debet. Non licet enim credere perfectionem omnem aut in earum immobilitate contineri agendi rationum quas Ecclesia vel Ordo per anteacta saecula suscepit, aut in eo ut quadamtenus non accedamus ad communes agendi modos, cum ingenio hominum nostri huius temporis congruentes, qui tamen probari possint, secundum doctrinam S. Pauli: "omnia probate, quod bonum est, tenete."

Sicuti Ecclesiae, ita et nobis officium incumbit signa temporum perscrutandi et sub Evangelii luce interpretandi; ita ut, modo generationi nostrae accommodato, ad hominum interrogationes respondere possimus. Oportet, ut mundum, in quo vivimus necnon eius expectationes, appetitiones et indoles cognoscamus et intelligamus, nam solum ita poterunt nostra monasteria esse seminaria aedificationis populi christiani.