

with, however, all syncretism excluded, our monasteries should acknowledge those spiritual and moral goods as well as the cultural values that are found in non-Christian religions, and thus promote the peace of the human family.

## 6. The Desire for Authenticity and the Cultivation of Simplicity and Sincerity

36. Together with men and women of our age, we too desire greatly to embrace authentic values, also in our religious and monastic life. Therefore, we want simple forms of life that manifest clearly their meaning. Our actions should express the interior state of our soul. We desire to understand the meaning of our rites, and we want to conform our minds to our voices. We shun formalism and rituals that lack sense. With a sincere heart and an open mind we want to live for Him, who sees our hearts and does not judge according to appearances. In this search for simplicity, we think that we join in a special way the intentions of our Founding Fathers as well.

37. In this way our Order participates in the vital movements of the Church and of secular history. And so while the Order draws constantly from the springs of her traditions, she should especially hold the future before her eyes. For one may not believe that all perfection is contained either in remaining unmoved in the Church's and the Order's past ways of acting or in not approaching to some extent common ways of acting congruent with the spirit of the men and women of this our age. These ways of acting, however, are to be tested, according to the teaching of St. Paul, "Test all things; keep what is good."

The duty of examining and interpreting the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel lies upon us just as it does upon the Church. We should do this in such a way that we can answer the questions of men and women in a manner appropriate to our generation. We should recognize and understand the world in which we live and its expectations, its desires, and its characteristics, for only in this way will our monasteries be able to be the seedbeds for the building up of the Christian people.

PARS SECUNDA

*De Valoribus Fundamentalibus  
Vitae Cisterciensis Hodiernae*

38. **O**RDO NOSTER IN SUA EXISTENTIA CONCRETA, uti supra exposuimus, revelat pluralismum, diversitatem sat magnam intra Ordinem, diversitatem tamen concordem et unitate non carentem. Unitas haec consistit non solum in communi fine sodalium Ordinis, sed etiam in communione plurimorum mediorum ad finem attingendum adhibendorum, quae omnia non ut elementa disjuncta consideranda sunt, sed in synthesi vitali integrentur oportet.

Nostra Declaratione, uti patet, non volumus quasi tractatum de vita monastica quam in Ordine Cisterciensi vivere promisimus elaborare. Ideo solum quaedam puncta exponemus, quae hodie actionibus et institutionibus nostris inspirationem et directionem dare possunt et debent.

**A. Finis notaeque essentialis vitae  
Cisterciensis hodiernae**

**I. Vocatio ad Deum quaerendum per  
sequelam Christi in schola caritatis**

39. Vita nostra alium non potest habere finem ultimum, nisi Deum, a nobis in omnibus glorificandum, et uti summum bonum et supremam beatitudinem hominis attingendum. Mediator autem et via ad Deum

PART II*The Fundamental Values  
of Cistercian Life Today*

38. **O**UR ORDER IN ITS CONCRETE EXISTENCE, as we have shown above, exhibits pluralism and a rather great diversity within the Order, a diversity however that tends towards harmony and is not lacking in unity. Our unity consists not only in a goal common to all members of the Order, but also in the sharing of most of the means for attaining this goal. These should not be considered as disjointed elements, but should be integrated into a living whole. Obviously, in our Declaration we do not want to elaborate a treatise on the monastic life that we have promised to live in the Cistercian Order. We will, therefore, explain only a few aspects which can and should give inspiration and direction to our activities and institutions today.

### A. The Goal and Essential Characteristics of Cistercian Life Today

#### 1. The Vocation to Seek God

##### by Following Christ in the School of Love

39. Our life can have no other ultimate goal than God, whom we must glorify in all things and seek as man's highest good and supreme happiness. The mediator and the way to God the Father is Christ present in

Patrem est Christus, qui in Ecclesia, in communione fratrum, in Verbo Dei, in sacramentis praesens est.

Vitam monasticam sub ductu Spiritus Sancti amplexi sumus, ut ad hunc finem adipiscendum simus modo speciali, directe et radicaliter ordinati, ut ad eundem assidue efficaciterque dirigamur et perducamur.

40. Monasteria Ordinis nostri vocationi singulorum servire, eamque conservare et promovere debent. Unde finis quaerendi Deum non est solummodo obligatio singulorum, sed et structura generalis vitae monasterii, scholae Dominici servitii, et iussio doctrinaque abbatis, fermentum divinae iustitiae, eum fovere debent. In hoc ergo fine ultima ratio vitae monasteriorum nostrorum invenitur. Omnia alia bona, uti sunt reputatio socialis, utilitas humanitaria vel civilis, emolumenta materialia, huic fini debent subordinari et apte componi, numquam autem progressui spirituali, emendationi morum vel profectui virtutum anteponi.

41. Si autem monasteria vocationi singulorum inservire debent, etiam nos scire debemus, quod si hunc spiritum vocationis perdimus, etiamsi plurimum prodesse cupimus utilitati monasterii, nos a monasterio alienos facimus et conversationem nostram inanem vacuumque reddimus. Monachum enim vocatio, et responsum ad vocationem datum facit et solum exinde ratio existentiae monasteriorum et Ordinis derivatur.

42. Cum autem Deus nonnisi per Christum et in caritate attingatur, in scholam caritatis intravimus. Caritas modo indiviso et quasi per modum unius amplecti debet Deum et proximum, qui creatus est ad imaginem Dei et sanguine Christi redemptus est. Ideo caritas veri nominis in duplici servitio Dei et hominis se manifestare debet, nec fas est haec duo servitia inter se opponere acsi Dei servitium non esset eodem tempore etiam hominis utilitas aut servitium proximi vera caritate informatum non esset obsequium Deo oblatum. In unitate actus caritatis fundatur unitas inter vitam nostram orationis et occupationes laboris, ita integratur navitas nostra cum cultu divino et otia contemplationis negotiis actuosus societati humanae servientibus componuntur. Insuper cum virtutum summa et culmen sit caritas, etiam exercitia pietatis et observantiae huic debent subordinari.

the Church, in the community of our brothers and in the sacraments.

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit we have embraced the monastic life so that we might live a life ordered toward this goal in a special, immediate and radical way, and so that we might be directed and led continuously and effectively to this same goal.

40. The monasteries of our Order should serve, protect and develop the vocation of the individual members. Therefore, the goal of seeking God is not only the obligation of individuals, but should be supported by both the general structure of the monastery's life, the school of the Lord's service, and by the abbot's commands and teaching — the leaven of divine justice. Thus, in this goal the ultimate rationale for the life of our monasteries is found. All other goods, such as social recognition, usefulness to individuals or society, or material gain, must be subordinated and appropriately adapted to this goal. They should never be put before spiritual progress, the correction of our habits, or growth in virtue.

41. If the monasteries should serve the vocation of the individuals, we must also realize that if we should ever lose the spirit of vocation, no matter how much we might wish to be of use to the monastery, we estrange ourselves from the monastery and render our way of life senseless and empty. For his vocation and the response by which he accepts it make the monk. From this alone flows the only reason for our monasteries and our Order to exist.

42. Since God is only reached through Christ and in love, we have entered the school of love. In a single, undivided act our love should embrace God and the neighbor, who has been created in the image of God and redeemed by the blood of Christ. Therefore, true love should manifest itself in the twofold service of God and man. It is not right to oppose the two services as if service to God would not at the same time benefit man or as if service to our neighbor informed by true love would not be a sacrifice offered to God. The unity between our life of prayer and our work is founded on the unity of the act of love. In this way our work is integrated into divine worship, and the leisure time given to contemplation is brought into harmony with work in service of human society. Moreover, since love is the sum and peak of all virtues, even devotional practices and observances must be subordinated to it.

## 2. Responsum ad vocationem in professione datum

43. Quaerimus autem Deum non quasi proprio marte, sed uti Illum, qui nos prius dilexit quaesivitque et ad suae propriae vitae communionem invitavit. Radicatur ergo illud Deum in Christo quaerendi constans conamen in nostra vocatione divinitus data qua nos Christus incessanter vocat ad responsum amore plenam reddendam. Responsum permanens professione nostra secundum Regulam S. Benedicti damus, totam vitam famulatu Christi mancipientes. Ita professio nostra constituit peculiarem quandam consecrationem totius existentiae nostrae, quae consecratio in Sacramento baptismatis intime radicatur, eamque plenius exprimit, et ab Ecclesia sacrificio Missae associatur.

## 3. Servitium Ecclesiae

44. Cum autem professio nostra ab Ecclesia suscepta sit, etiam eius servitio plenius addicti sumus. Pro nobis enim Christus in Ecclesia est praesens, cum qua inseparabiliter unitur. Unde servitium Christi est et debet esse servitium Ecclesiae sive per viam orationis et poenitentiae, sive etiam per diversas formas apostolatus. Ita vita nostra erit exemplum vocationis Christianae fideliter adimplendae, testimoniumque illius novae vitae in Christo, quae iam nunc vitae aeternae Regni caelestis initium est et signum.

45. Etsi Ordo noster exemptione gaudet, communitas de facto et de iure pars est Ecclesiae localis et eius gratis, fortunis, difficultatibus, persecutionibus vel tribulationibus participat. Unde monasteria nostra responsabilitatem habent moralem, ut necessitatibus Ecclesiae, in quantum possunt, subveniant. Modo speciali onerat haec responsabilitas nostra monasteria virorum, in quibus maxima pars sodalium sacerdotio ornata existit. Sacerdotium autem Novi Testamenti tendit ad servitium ministeriale in suis diversis formis. Ideo debet nostra esse cura, ut communitates nostrae monastico-sacerdotales, secundum Constitutiones a S. Sede approbatas et necessitates locales promptae sint ad exercitium ministerii pastoralis ipsis convenientis. Quod vero non significat nos elementa vitae monasticae, uti sunt liturgia communitaria aliaque, propter rationes pastorales ad libitum accommodare posse. Unde praeprimis quaerere debemus formas ministerii sacerdotalis, quibus servitium nostrum proprium Ecclesiae reddere possimus.

In toto autem nostro servitio Deo et Ecclesiae reddendo nos sub tutela materna esse volumus B. Mariae V., Matris Ecclesiae et Ordinis

## 2. The Response Given to Our Vocation by Our Profession

43. We seek God not as if by our own effort but as the one who has first loved us and sought us out, and invited us into the communion of His own life. Our unceasing effort to seek God in Christ is rooted in our God-given vocation by which Christ is continuously calling us to a response full of love. We give a lasting response through our profession according to the Rule of St. Benedict, by which we subject our whole life to the service of Christ. Consequently, our profession consecrates our whole existence in a special way. This consecration has its deepest roots in the sacrament of Baptism, and is given a fuller expression by our profession and is united with the Sacrifice of the Mass by the Church.

## 3. Service to the Church

44. Since our profession is received by the Church, we are also dedicated more fully to her service. For Christ is present for us in the Church, with which He is inseparably united. Thus, service to Christ is and must be service to the Church, whether through the path of prayer and penance, or also through different forms of apostolic work. Thus, our life will be an example of the faithful fulfillment of the Christian vocation and a witness to that new life in Christ that is already now a beginning and a sign of life eternal in the heavenly Kingdom.

45. Although our Order enjoys the privilege of exemption, a community is by both fact and law part of the local Church and shares in her graces, good fortunes, troubles, persecutions and sufferings. Therefore, our monasteries have a moral obligation to help the Church in her needs, insofar as it is possible. This obligation weighs especially upon our monasteries of men, in which the majority of the members are ordained to the priesthood. For the priesthood of the New Testament is directed to the ministry in its different forms. Therefore, we should see to it that our monastic communities of priests are ready, according to our Constitutions approved by the Holy See and local needs, to exercise pastoral ministry in an appropriate way. This does not mean that for pastoral reasons we may alter simply as we please the elements of monastic life, such as the common liturgy or the like. We should seek primarily those forms of priestly ministry by which we can give to the Church our own type of service.

In all our service rendered to God and the Church we wish to be under the maternal protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the

Patronae, quam ad exemplum Patrum nostrorum, devotione filiali prosequimur tum intercessionibus eius implorando, tum eius vitam imitando.

## B. De mediis communibus ad finem vitae nostrae Cisterciensis hodiernae attingendum necessariis

46. Deus non solum ad finem supra expositum nos vocat, sed etiam ut media ab Eo nobis destinata adhibeamus, ad quae pertinent praesertim consilia evangelica, vita in communitate Cisterciensi, vita orationis, amor crucis et servitium communitati humanae praestandum per laborem nostrum.

### 1. De vita modo speciali Deo et Ecclesiae consecrata per observantiam consiliorum evangelicorum

47. Ut Christum Magistrum uti discipuli modo speciali sequamur consilia quae evangelica vocantur amplectimur ut nos Ei semper magis uniamur Eumque per viam conversationis monasticae pressius et semper intimius sequamur.

#### a) *Castitas*

48. Castitas voluntaria propter regnum Dei suscepta non est mera abrenuntiatio matrimonii et gaudiorum familiae naturalis, sed nos liberos reddere debet, ut omnibus viribus physicis et psychicis de rebus Dei et Ecclesiae curemus. Professione religiosa modo magis directo et intimo volumus testimonium reddere de expectatione Christiana futuri saeculi, ubi homines neque nubent neque nubentur. Inde castitas etiam signum eschatologicum eminens est vitae nostrae.

49. Haec totalis sui consecratio Deo fundamentum praebere debet ad familiam monasticam construendam. In hac familia Dei caritas communis et eadem vocatio fundant dilectionem et mutuum adiutorium membrorum. Ex una parte ita alter alterius onera fideliter portare debemus, ex altera autem parte gratiarum et virtutum, quibus singuli excellunt, omnes participationem habemus. Sic modo eminenti amplectimur viam communitariam salutis, quam Deus ipse pro genere humano instituit in Ecclesia. Ita Deus corda nostra aperit, ut omnes proximos nostros, praeprimis autem fratres/sorores in monasterio, sincera et operosa caritate diligere valeamus.

Church and Patroness of our Order. According to the example of our Fathers, we honor her with filial devotion by imploring her intercessions and imitating her life.

## B. The Means to Reach the Goal

46. God not only calls us to the goal explained above but also urges us to use the means He has determined for us. These are especially the evangelical counsels, life in a Cistercian community, the life of prayer, love of the cross and the service offered the human community through our work.

### 1. Leading a Life Consecrated to God and Church through the Observance of the Evangelical Counsels

47. The purpose of keeping the evangelical counsels is to follow Christ the Master as His disciples in a special way. We want to be united to Him more and more through the monastic way of life and follow Him always more closely and intimately.

#### a) *Chastity*

48. Chastity freely chosen for the sake of God's Kingdom is not just the renunciation of marriage and the joys of a natural family but it should make us free to attend with care to God's affairs and those of the Church with all our physical and emotional strength. By our religious profession we want to bear witness in a more direct and personal way to the Christian expectation of the future age in which people will neither marry nor be given in marriage. For this reason chastity is an outstanding eschatological sign of our life.

49. This total consecration of the self to God should provide the foundation on which to build the monastic family. In this family the common love of God and the same vocation form the basis for our loving and helping each other. On the one hand, we should faithfully carry one another's burdens; on the other, we all receive a share of the graces and virtues in which the individuals excel. And so in an outstanding way, we embrace the communitarian path of salvation that God himself has established for all mankind in the Church. Thus God opens our hearts so that with sincere and active love we might be able to love all our neighbors, especially our brothers and sisters in the monastery.

*b) Paupertas*

50. Paupertas a nobis non exercetur propter meram privationem vel contemptum rerum materialium, sed ad libertatem filiorum Dei adipiscendam, ut utamur hoc mundo tamquam non utentes, scientes, quod praeterit figura huius mundi. Ideo pauperes esse cum Christo paupere cupimus, possessioni et questui divitiarum abrenuntiantes. Ita sumus etiam veri discipuli in schola primitivae Ecclesiae, ubi nemo aliquid suum esse dicebat sed erant eis omnia communia. Sic corda a praeoccupationibus materialibus liberantur, ut ibi sit cor nostrum, ubi et thesaurus noster est in et cum Christo et Ecclesia.

51. Attamen dum in corpore sumus, rebus huius mundi utamur necesse est; spiritus tamen paupertatis e voto promanans ordinare debet usum rerum ad nostram proximorumque utilitatem, servato respectu erga creaturas debito. Unde faciamus omnia, ut abrenuntiatio nostra praebeat adiutorium pauperibus nostri temporis. Ideo fructus nostros ad utilitatem proximi et Ecclesiae impendamus. Propter eandem rationem valde convenit, ut talibus laboribus incumbamus quibus et pro nobismetipsis necessaria acquirere et aliis prodesse atque naturam, creatam sanam et intactam servare possumus.

*c) Oboedientia*

52. Oboedientia praeprimis significat apertum cor ad incitamenta Spiritus Sancti recipienda, quia Ipse ubi vult spirat et multis modis Dei voluntatem nobis notam facit. Et sicuti cibus Christi erat facere voluntatem Eius qui eum misit, formamque servi accipiens factus est oboediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis, ita et nos Christum pressius sequi volentes, scrutare debemus voluntatem Patris, ut prompto animo eam adimpleamus.

Vocem Dei saepissime vox Ecclesiae transmittit, doctrina et exhortationes Summi Pontificis, Sanctae Sedis, episcoporum et abbatis, quae non solum externa dirigere debent, sed etiam spiritualitatem nostram forment oportet.

53. Unde monachi in spiritu fidei et amoris voluntatem Dei facere cupientes abbatem sibi praeesse desiderant vices Christi pro eis gerentem, cui ad normam Regulae et Constitutionum humile praestant

*b) Poverty*

50. We do not practice poverty only for the sake of privation or out of contempt for material goods, but in order to obtain the freedom of the sons of God and to use this world as if not using it, aware that the form of this world is about to pass away. Therefore, we desire to be poor with the poor Christ, renouncing the possession of riches or the quest for them. Thus, we are also true disciples in the school of the early Church in which no one claimed anything as his own, but everything was held in common. In this way our hearts are freed from material worries so that our heart might be where also our treasure is in and with Christ and the Church.

51. Yet, as long as we are in the body, we must use the things of this world. But the spirit of poverty which derives from our vow should direct our use of things for our own benefit and for that of our neighbors, remaining duly respectful toward material creation. Hence, we should make every effort so that our renunciation provides help for the poor of our time. Therefore, we should apply the fruits of our work for the benefit of our neighbor and the Church. For this very reason it is most appropriate that we undertake those jobs by which we are able to take care of our needs and benefit others as well as preserve created nature safe and intact.

*c) Obedience*

52. Obedience means, above all, a heart open to receive the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, for He blows where He wills and makes known to us in many ways the will of God. Just as Christ's food was to do the will of the One who sent Him; and assuming the form of a slave, He became obedient unto death, death even on a Cross, so wishing to follow Christ more closely we should also look for the will of the Father so that we might fulfill it promptly.

Most often the Church's voice transmits to us the voice of God by the teaching and exhortations of the Pope, the Holy See, the bishops and the abbot. These should not only regulate externals, but should shape our spirituality.

53. In a spirit of faith and love, and out of the desire to do God's will, monks want an abbot to be over them and represent Christ for them. They offer the abbot humble obedience according to the norms of the

obsequium, vires intelligentiae necnon voluntatis gratiaeque dona in praeceptorum executione et in impletionem munerum sibi commissorum conferendo, scientes se ad aedificationem Corporis Christi secundum Dei propositum operam praestare. Sic oboedientia religiosa, necdum dignitatem personae humanae minuit, illam ampliata libertate filiorum Dei, ad maturitatem adducit.

54. Attamen oboedientia religiosa, etiam quando materialiter in explendo mandato superioris consistit, semper ad Deum dirigitur, estque actus humanus liber et personalis, deliberationem maturam et responsabilem requirens. Mutatae nostrorum temporum condiciones novas formas praecipiendi et oboediendi requirunt, et novas relationes inter superiores et sodales postulant. Aetas nostra respuit quidquid servilismum, paternalismum vel cultum formarum feudalium redolet et recte desiderat, ut dignitas personae humanae semper et ubique ante oculos teneatur. Porro, quia condiciones laboris et munera sodalium hodie saepissime cognitiones speciales requirunt et responsabilitatem personalem supponunt singulorum monachorum, superiores amplum spatium relinquere debent pro iniciativis quas vocant personalibus, et in praeceptis suis magis de consiliis principalibus et longius prospicientibus quam de minutis et particularibus curare. Plus quam antea necesse est, ut superiores nonnisi auditis personis expertis et consultatione facta confratrum suorum, praecepta formulent et semper aperti maneant ad suggestiones ulteriores recipiendas. Superiores libenter sodales audiant, firma tamen sua auctoritate decernendi et praecipiendi, quae agenda sunt. Fratres autem sua consilia dent, personam et iudicia aliorum aestimando et sententiam suam bonis rationibus proferendo neque proprii cordis voluntatem sequendo.

55. Bonum oboedientiae religiosae tunc tantum in vita monastica revera praeservatur, si superiores cum suis sodalibus uno animo Dei voluntatem sincere quaerunt, sciuntque oboedientiam non auctoritati humanae, sed semper ipsi Deo vocanti praestandam esse. Bonum quidem communitatis exigit praecepta clara, firma et sine aequivocatione sodales obligantia, tamen gubernium monasterii numquam carere potest conspiratione responsabili omnium ad bonum monasterii, Ordinis et Ecclesiae. In tali enim profundo consensu omnium in communi vocatione et in professione religiosa radicato, fundatur exercitium quotidianum auctoritatis et oboedientiae.

*Rule* and the *Constitutions* by applying their powers of intellect and will as well as the gifts of grace to carrying out the commands and fulfilling the tasks entrusted to them. In doing this they know that they help build up the Body of Christ according to the will of God. In this way religious obedience does not lessen the dignity of the human person but enriches it with the freedom of the children of God, and thus leads it to maturity.

54. Even when it consists practically in carrying out the command of a superior, religious obedience is always directed to God and is a free and personal human act requiring mature and responsible deliberation. The changed conditions of our times require new forms of giving and obeying commands. They also call for new relationships between superiors and monks. Our age rejects anything that smacks of servilism, paternalism, or the cult of feudal forms. It rightly desires that the dignity of the human person be always and everywhere kept in mind. Moreover, because the working conditions and the members' tasks today demand quite often specialized knowledge and presuppose the personal responsibility of the individual monks, superiors should leave ample room for so called personal initiatives. In giving orders they should be concerned with advice that is based on principles and is forward-looking rather than being concerned with minor details. More than before it is necessary for superiors to formulate their commands only after having heard the experts and having consulted with their confreres, and they should always remain open to receive further suggestions. Superiors should listen willingly to the members of the community, yet their authority to discern and command what is to be done must remain firm. In giving counsel, the brothers should respect the person and judgment of others, and they should present their position with solid reasons and not follow the will of their own heart.

55. The good of religious obedience will only then be truly preserved in our monastic life if the superiors together with their confreres sincerely seek the will of God with one mind and realize that their obedience is due not to human authority but always to God Himself who calls them. Although the good of the community demands orders that are clear and firm and that bind the members without ambiguity, nevertheless the government of the monastery can never do without the responsible cooperation of all for the good of the monastery, the Order and the Church. For this profound consensus among all, rooted in a common vocation and religious profession, is itself the foundation for the daily exercise of authority and obedience.

## 2. De vita in stabili communitate fraterna traditione Cisterciensi imbuta

56. Monachus vocationem suam sequens congregationem fratrum in monasterio ut Dei familiam quae et sua est, respicit. Scit enim Christum in monasterio speciali modo adesse, qui praesens est ubique, ubi duo vel tres in nomine Eius congregantur. Nostram ergo vitam ita volumus ordinare, ut primitivae Ecclesiae verificetur exemplum quod cor unum et animam unam requirit, non tantum in oratione, in doctrina Apostolorum et communione fractionis panis et communi possessione bonorum, sed et in communitate finium, munerum, responsabilitatum et actionum. Sicut Apostolus gaudere cum gaudentibus et flere cum flentibus voluit, ita et successus et clades, tristitiae vel gaudia, difficultates et emolumenta singulorum omnes nos afficiant oportet. Praeprimis autem communis cura sit sodalium de eis quae ad spiritualem vitam pertinent monasterii sentiantque se responsables pro singulorum salute aeterna et vocatione adimplenda. Hoc modo ipsa vita communitaria directionem spiritualem exercet, in sensu latiore, in quantum debiles fortificat, pusillanimes refovet, in tepidis zelum restaurat et pro omnibus quotidie valores nostri servitii annuntiat.

57. Cura vitae communis non est ergo solummodo munus superiorum, etsi ad eos respicit imprimis eradicare vitia et abusus exhortando, admonendo vel corripiendo. Tale vero munus facilius et efficacius adimpletur a superioribus, si communitas et patientiam erga fratres et fidelitatem erga valores vitae religiosae demonstrat et componere scit semper amorem delinquentis cum odio delicti.

Studendum ergo est, ne vita communitaria nonnisi onus fiat vel quasi occasio laedendi caritatem, sed oportet ut experiatur uti schola ipsa caritatis, in qua honore nos invicem praevenimus nobisque mutuo libenter oboedimus, in qua etiam ex ipsis nostris debilitatibus occasionem sumimus ad progrediendum in amore et per exemplum et doctrinam confratrum efficaciter ad Deum trahimur.

Etsi maxime conveniat muneri abbatis, ut communitatem ipsemet de vita spirituali doceat et ad virtutes exhortetur, nonnullas tamen partes

## 2. Life in a Stable Fraternal Community

### Imbued with the Cistercian Tradition

56. Following his vocation, the monk looks upon the community of brothers in the monastery as God's family and his own. For he knows that Christ is present in the monastery in a special way everywhere that two or three are gathered in His name. Therefore, we want to organize our life in such a way that the example of the early Church is realized, which demands one heart and one soul not only in prayer, in the teaching of the Apostles and in the communion of the breaking of the bread and in the common possession of goods but also in sharing goals, tasks, responsibilities and activities. Just as the Apostle wanted to rejoice with those who rejoice and cry with those who cry, so it is fitting that the successes and failures, sorrows and joys, difficulties and advancements of the individuals affect all of us. Above all, however, the common concern of the monks should be for whatever pertains to the monastery's spiritual life. They should feel responsible for the eternal salvation of each individual and for the fulfillment of his vocation. In this way, community life itself provides spiritual guidance in a broader sense, insofar as it strengthens the weak, encourages the disheartened, restores zeal to the lukewarm, and daily proclaims for all the values of our service.

57. Concern for the community's life is, therefore, not only the task of the superiors, even if it is primarily for them to uproot vices and abuses by exhorting, warning and correcting. Yet this task is more easily and efficiently carried out by superiors if the community shows both patience towards the brothers and fidelity to the values of religious life, and if they always know how to combine love for the offender with hatred for his offense.

One must, therefore, strive to prevent community life from becoming just a burden or an occasion for offending, as it were, against charity. Rather community life should be experienced as the very school of love in which we anticipate one another in showing respect and willingly obey one another. In this school we find an opportunity even in our weaknesses to advance in love, and through the example and counsel of our brothers we are effectively drawn to God.

Although it is especially appropriate to the office of the abbot that he himself teach the community about the spiritual life and spur them

huius muneris saepe aliis confratribus demandare potest. Valde convenit autem, ut conferentiae bonae de rebus spiritualibus regulariter habeantur et fratres sibi invicem communicent in donis gratiae et intellectus.

58. In vita communis insuper colere debemus divitias traditionum monasticarum quaerendo formas vitae monasticae authenticas, pro hodiernis circumstantiis validas, imprimis traditionem monasteriorum nostrorum vitalem, cuius valores servare, fructificare et ad alios transmittere debemus. Colenda quoque est conscientia communitatum maiorum, uti propriae Congregationis et totius Ordinis, ita ut ad vocationem nostram semper melius vivendam invicem efficaciter adiuvemus.

### 3. De vita orationis

59. Monachus Deum in sequela Christi quaerens eique servire cupiens saepe orat. Tum meditatione Verbi Dei se nobis revelantis, tum oratione sive communi sive privata ad Verbum Dei respondente, mens et affectus ad ea quae Dei sunt elevantur. Hoc modo etiam fontem inspirationis pro omnibus nostris actibus invenire possumus simulque directionem nostrae vitae melius perspicere eamque saepius rectificare.

60. Sicut vocatio religiosa est Dei gratia, ita et nostra possibilitas orandi non a nobis venit, sed a Spiritu Sancto, in quo clamamus: "Abba, Pater." In receptione sacramentorum, et modo speciali in celebratione quotidiana Eucharistiae haec vita gratiae in nobis assidue alitur nos-  
traque oratio cum actibus salvificis Christi sacramentaliter unitur.

Monachi autem — uti ex tota traditione monastica et mandatis Ecclesiae elucet — speciali modo vocantur, ut orationem Christi in Ecclesia continuent, tum in celebratione missae et opere Dei, quae primatum in eorum vita habeant oportet, tum in aliis formis orationis, quae suo modo totam vitam penetrare debet.

61. In celebratione eucharistica sacrificium Christi semel in cruce pro nobis oblatum quotidie nobis praesens redditur actionesque humanae Deum colentes in signum efficax evadunt actuum Christi, ita ut donum et verbum Dei atque responsio hominis per gratiarum actionem et lau-

on to the virtues, he can, however, often delegate some part of this task to other confreres. Nevertheless, it is very fitting that spiritual conferences be held regularly and that the brothers share with one another the gifts of grace and intellect.

58. In addition, the life of the community should cultivate the riches of the monastic tradition, by seeking out authentic forms of monastic life that fit today's circumstances, above all the living tradition of our own monasteries, whose values we must preserve, make fruitful, and hand on to others. We should also cultivate an awareness of the larger communities, such as our own Congregation and the whole Order, so that we might effectively help each other live our vocation even better.

### 3. Prayer Life

59. Seeking God by following Christ and desiring to serve Him, the monk prays often. Both by meditation on the Word of God who reveals himself to us and by common and private prayer which is a response to the Word of God, our minds and hearts are raised to the things of God. In this way we can also find a source of inspiration for all our activities. At the same time we can more clearly discern the direction of our life and quite often straighten it out.

60. Just as the religious vocation is a grace of God, so also our ability to pray does not come from ourselves but from the Holy Spirit, in whom we cry out — "Abba, Father." In the reception of the sacraments and particularly in the daily celebration of the Eucharist, this life of grace is constantly nourished in us, and our prayer is sacramentally united with the saving acts of Christ.

As it is clear from the whole monastic tradition and the directives of the Church, monks are, however, called in a special way to continue Christ's prayer in the Church both by the celebration of the Mass and the Divine Office — the two of which should hold primacy in their lives — and by other forms of prayer which in their own way should penetrate their whole lives.

61. In the Eucharistic celebration the sacrifice of Christ offered once on the cross for us is rendered present for us daily, and human acts of divine worship become the effective sign of Christ's acts in such a way that God's gift and word and man's response through thanksgiving and praise

dem quam maxime uniantur ad Dei gloriam et sanctificationem hominis. Omnia enim ecclesiastica ministeria ordinantur ad celebrationem Eucharistiae, quae totius liturgiae, immo et vitae christianae vere est centrum. Unde primas partes habeat oportet etiam in vita nostra, sacramentum pietatis, signum unitatis, vinculum caritatis, convivium paschale, in quo Christus sumitur, mens impletur gratia et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur. Adoratio Christi in Eucharistia praesentis, adiutorium praestat praeclarum, ut participatio actuosa in sacrificio Christi ad totam diem efficacius extendatur.

62. In Officii divini renovatione, quae continuanda et complenda est, attendamus oportet praeprimis ad unitatem et harmoniam inter liturgiam et reliquas partes vitae religiosae. Nam etsi liturgia est "culmen ad quod actio Ecclesiae tendit et simul fons, unde omnis eius virtus emanat," non explet totam actionem Ecclesiae vel monasterii. Propterea et vita quotidiana apta sit ad fructuose celebrandam liturgiam et structura formaeque liturgiae tales sint, ut vitam quotidianam alere et animare possint.

63. Ad vitam orationis necessario pertinet etiam lectio divina, quae educationem exigit idoneam et quasdam condiciones, quarum ope fieri possit vera lectio orans, quieta, assidua. His dotibus ornata, lectio divina monachum et monialem efficaciter adiuvat, ut magis ac magis fiat "homo Dei," et Domini praesentiam et voluntatem clare percipiat. Multum autem ad spiritum orationis favendum nos adiuvet observatio silentii. Tempora enim taciturnitatis fideliter observando corda nostra ad Verbum Dei melius audiendum et ad eum apertius attendendum praeparantur.

64. Unitas vitae in harmonica elementorum fusione se manifestet. Praeprimis actio liturgica monasteriorum nostrorum sit lucerna ardens et lucens irradians totam ecclesiam localem, celebrationes nostrae liturgicae vicinos christifideles ad participationem actuosam invitent et populo christiano fontem uberrimum vitae suae spiritualis praebeant oportet.

are united as much as possible for the glory of God and the sanctification of the human being. For all the Church's ministries are directed to the celebration of the Eucharist, which is truly the center not only of the entire liturgy but of all Christian life. Therefore, also in our life the leading role should be played by the sacrament of love, the sign of unity, the bond of charity, the paschal meal, in which Christ is received, the mind is filled with grace and we are given a pledge of future glory. Adoration of Christ present in the Eucharist provides an outstanding aid for extending more effectively the active participation in the sacrifice of Christ throughout the whole day.

62. In the reform of the Divine Office, which is to be continued and completed, we should pay attention above all to the unity and harmony between the liturgy and the other parts of our religious life. For although the liturgy is "the summit toward which the activity of the Church tends and at the same time the spring from which all her power flows," it does not exhaust all the activity of the Church or the monastery. Consequently, both our daily life should be suited to celebrating the liturgy fruitfully, and the structure and forms of the liturgy should be such that they can nourish and animate our daily life.

63. Spiritual reading belongs necessarily to the life of prayer as well. It calls for an appropriate education and certain conditions that aid it in becoming a truly prayerful, quiet and continuous reading. Enriched with these qualities, spiritual reading helps the monk to become ever more "a man of God" and to perceive clearly the presence and the will of the Lord. The observance of silence should help us greatly to foster the spirit of prayer. For by faithfully observing periods of silence, our hearts are prepared to hear the Word of God better and to pay heed to Him with a more open heart.

64. The unity of our life should manifest itself in the harmonious integration of its elements. Above all, the liturgical activity of our monasteries should be a light enkindled and enlightening that sheds its rays on the entire local Church. Our liturgical celebrations should invite the local Christian faithful to active participation and should offer the Christian people an abundant resource for their spiritual life.

## 4. De sequela Christi humilis crucem baiulantis

65. Vita monastica sequela debet esse Christi humilis. De peccatis nostris sincere poenitentes et nostrarum limitationum conscii, etsi simul misericordia divina erecti, Dei gloriam quaerere debemus, non nostram. Ex hoc spiritu humilitatis tribulationes et privationes sereno animo accipere, atque modicis etiam vitae emolumentis et mediis contenti esse debemus.

Vita monastica nonnisi sub signo crucis existere potest. Nam dum Christi caritatem sequimur, qua nemo maiorem habere potest, viam incedimus abrenuntiationis et mortificamus membra nostra ad serviendum Deo viventi. Christus enim sicut suos discipulos, etiam nos ad crucem quotidie portandam vocavit.

66. Nos autem ad participationem Crucis Christi vocati sumus quae pro nobis saepissime in sequentibus consistit:

- a) se humiliare, vanam gloriam et ambitiones egoisticas fugere;
- b) bene perficere laborem quotidianum, qui a nobis hodie saepe talia sacrificia postulat, ut merito comparari possit cum austeritatibus vitae monasticae antiquae;
- c) patientiam exercere, qua infirmitates corporis et animae, debilitates facultatum nostrarum et pondera vitae communis cum bono animo sustinemus;
- d) diligere inimicos nostros, persecutores, calumniatores;
- e) acceptare senectutem et mortem, ita ut fidem spemque in vitam aeternam quam maxime profiteamur.

67. Insuper sicut in baptismo vovimus contradicere et renuntiare Satanae et omnibus pompis eius, in vita monastica fugere volumus mundum in quantum diabolo est subiectum, desideria oculorum, carnis concupiscentiam et superbiam vitae. Fuga mundi praeprimis consistit in interna separatione a mente huius saeculi, quod nihil ultra sepulchrum expectat, nihilque in hac vita magis aestimat quam delectationes corporis et animae.

Separatio autem externa a "mundo" — diversis gradibus diversisque modis a nostris communitatibus exercita — signum est ac medium huius abrenuntiationis internae.

68. Amor crucis et firma nostra contradictio spiritui huius mundi, non debet nos indifferentes reddere erga veros valores huius saeculi, qui in

#### 4. Following Christ Who Humbly Carries His Cross

65. The monastic life should be a following of the humble Christ. Sincerely penitent for our sins and aware of our limitations yet uplifted at the same time by divine mercy, we should seek the glory of God, not our own. Out of this spirit of humility we should accept sufferings and privations with tranquility, and we should be content with even modest income and means.

The monastic life can only exist under the sign of the cross. For as we follow the love of Christ, greater than which there is none — we set out on the path of renunciation, and we mortify our bodies in order to serve the living God. For just as He called the disciples, Christ has called us also to carry His cross daily.

66. We have been called to share in the cross of Christ, which consists for us most often in the following:

- a) to humble oneself, fleeing vain glory and egotistical ambitions;
- b) to perform our daily work well, which today often demands of us such sacrifices that it can be fairly compared with the austerities of ancient monastic life;
- c) to exercise patience, by which we endure with a good spirit the infirmities of body and soul, the inadequacies of our abilities, and the burdens of common life;
- d) to love our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers;
- e) to accept old age and death in such a way that we profess as much as possible our faith and hope in eternal life.

67. As we have promised in baptism to resist and renounce Satan with all his attractions, in monastic life we also want to flee the world insofar as it is subject to the devil, the desires of the eyes, the concupiscence of the flesh and the pride of life. Fleeing the world consists, above all, in an inward separation of ourselves from the mentality of this age that looks forward to nothing beyond the grave and values nothing in this life more than the pleasures of body and soul.

External separation from the "world," practiced differently and to various degrees in our communities, is both a sign and the means for this inward renunciation.

68. Our love of the cross and our resolute resistance to the spirit of this world should not leave us indifferent to the true values of this age, which

servitium regni Dei debent adhiberi. Valores technici, oeconomici, sociales et culturales a nobis nequaquam alieni sunt, nam eorum cultus et vitam nostram ditat et nos communitati familiae humanae inserit.

### 5. Operositas nostra

69. Sicut omnes homines etiam nos legi communi laboris serii obnoxii sumus, ut per laborem nostrum collaboremus ad mundum semper perfectius reddendum et ad actuanda proposita Dei in hoc saeculo, vocationem nostram ita etiam ad effectum deducendo. Nam erroneum est dicere sui cuiusque animi perfectionem et praesentis vitae negotia inter se pugnare, cum, e contra, optime inter se componi possunt. Nemo se debet a mortalis vitae negotiis necessario remove, ut ad christianam perfectionem contendat, nam haec navitas modo debito facta hominis et christiani dignitatem non solum in discrimen non adducit, sed eam perficit.

Ideo labor noster non est tantum remedium contra otiositatem seu aliqua "occupatio" unice ad tempus implendum, sed pars constitutiva studii nostri ad perfectionem christianam acquirendam. Simul est etiam servitium fratrum pro communitate monasteriali et hominibus in mundo viventibus, utique si opus competenter et cum sensu seriae responsabilitatis perficimus.

70. Cum laboris valor etiam a functionalis sua rectitudine dependeat, ad munera Superiorum essentialia pertinet, ut collaboratores suos sive clericos sive laicos diligenti praeparatione, si opus est etiam technica, ita dotent, ut labores suos optimo quo fieri potest modo adimplere valeant, intelligentes bonam voluntatem et sui deditionem nostro aevo specialisationis et hodiernis in adjunctis minime sufficere.

Labores autem praecipui, uti in variis Congregationibus et monasteriis nostris fiunt, sunt sequentes (enumerationis ordo autem minime significat ordinem valoris vel praestantiae):

#### a) *Educatio iuventutis*

71. Institutio et educatio iuventutis in scholis et collegiis peragenda optime convenit vitae monasticae, et qui tali labori se dedicant, plurima ad promovendum regnum Dei et societatem humanam conferunt. Ipsi enim non solum intellectum, sed totam personam ditare intendunt, nexum internum demonstrando inter artes scientiasque humanas et spir-

should be used in the service of God's Kingdom. Technological, economic, social and cultural values are by no means foreign to us, for their use and promotion both enrich our life and insert us into the community of the human family.

### 5. Our Work

69. Like all men we, too, are subject to the common law of serious work so that through our work we might collaborate in rendering the world ever more perfect and in carrying out God's plans in this world. In this way also we are carrying out our vocation. For it is false to say that the perfection of each person's soul and the tasks of this life are at odds since, on the contrary, they can be combined very well. No one should of necessity remove himself from the affairs of this mortal life to strive for Christian perfection. For this activity carried out properly not only does not endanger one's dignity as a human being and as a Christian but perfects it.

Our work, therefore, is not only a measure against idleness or some sort of "occupation" to be carried out just temporarily. It is an essential part of our striving to acquire Christian perfection. At the same time, it is also brotherly service to the monastic community and to people living in the world if, of course, we perform it competently and with a sense of serious responsibility.

70. Since the value of our work depends also on its quality, it belongs to the essential tasks of the superiors to provide their co-workers, clerics or lay, with a thorough training, and when necessary with technical skills, so that they can perform their jobs as well as possible. One should understand that in our age of specialization and in our modern circumstances good will and dedication are not sufficient.

The main fields of work as they are performed in the various congregations and in our monasteries are the following (The order of the list does not indicate any order of value or excellence.):

#### a) *The Education of Youth*

71. The formation and education of youth in schools and dormitories suits monastic life very well, and those who dedicate themselves to such work contribute very much to furthering God's Kingdom and human society. For they intend to enrich not only the intellect but the whole person by showing the intrinsic connection between the arts and sciences

itum christianum, et dum veritates de rebus creatis transmittunt, alumnos ad fontem omnis veritatis et creationis, ipsum Christum adducunt. Porro, cum quidquid uni fratrum Christi minimorum facimus, ipso Christo facimus, in educatione iuventutis Ipsi modo speciali ministratur.

**b) *Ministerium pastorale***

72. Sacerdotium Novi Testamenti in sua plenitudine non est mere culticum, sed ordinatur ad ministerium communitatis christianae. Sine dubio ministerium pastorale sive ordinarium in monasterio, in parocciis vel missionibus exteris adimplendum sive extraordinarium in conferentiis exercitiisque spiritualibus, in concionibus pro populo christiano habitis, in administratione sacramentorum et aliis similibus efficacissime contribuit ad aedificationem Corporis Christi Mystici quod est Ecclesia. Hoc modo monachi-sacerdotes nostri Ordinis insigne servitium hominibus praestant per talem laborem, oboedientes vocationi a Spiritu Sancto receptae, bene ministrantes sicut servus bonus qui erogavit triticum conservis suis.

**c) *Labor manuum***

73. Labor manualis a nobis non solum uti elementum perutile et frequenter necessarium vitae communis consideretur, sed et uti signum solidaritatis cum omnibus hominibus, praesertim pauperibus, qui labore quotidiano et humili necessaria vitae sibi suisque procurant. Est etiam instrumentum efficax abnegationis sui et participationis in cruce Domini, necnon et serviendi proximos, praesertim fratres in monasterio. Ideo numquam uti mera occupatio per se pro vita spirituali indifferens consideretur, sed modo competenti et efficaci uti instrumentum caritatis exerceatur.

**d) *Labor scientificus vel culturalis***

74. Plures consodales nostri in variis monasteriis validam afferunt contributionem ad promovendas scientias sacras vel profanas, adlaborando investigationibus philosophicis, theologicis, historicis, sociologicis, scientiarum-naturalium vel similium. Talis labor magni valoris est non tantum pro respectivis campis scientificis, sed et pro tota vita monastica quae cognitione profundiori rerum creatarum vel rerum fidei veras divitias recipit. Speciale autem momentumtribuendum est scientiis theologicis, quarum adiumentum tum in vita spirituali monachorum, tum in directione spiritu-

and the Christian spirit. When communicating truths about created things, they lead their students to the source of all truth and creation, Christ Himself. Furthermore, since whatever we do to even one of the least of Christ's brothers, we do to Christ Himself, one serves Him in a special way in the education of youth.

#### **b) Pastoral Ministry**

72. The Priesthood of the New Testament in its fullness is not merely cultic, but is directed to the ministry of the Christian community. Whether it is ordinary and exercised in the monastery, in parishes, or in foreign missions, or extraordinary and exercised in spiritual conferences, retreats, lectures held for the Christian people, and the administration of the sacraments, without a doubt pastoral ministry contributes, among others, most effectively to building up the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church. In this way the monks of our Order ordained to the Priesthood offer their people through such work outstanding service, while obeying their vocation received from the Holy Spirit and serving well like the good servant who distributed grain to his fellow servants.

#### **c) Manual Labor**

73. We should consider manual labor not only as a very useful and frequently necessary element of common life but as a sign of solidarity with all human beings, especially the poor, who provide for themselves and their families the necessities of life by their daily and humble work. It is also an effective instrument of self-denial and participation in the Lord's cross as well as of serving the neighbor, especially one's brothers in the monastery. Therefore, it should never be considered simply as an occupation that is in itself indifferent for one's spiritual life. It should rather be exercised competently and effectively as an instrument of love.

#### **d) Scholarly Work**

74. Several of our confreres in various monasteries make a significant contribution to the promotion of sacred and secular disciplines by research in philosophy, theology, history, the social and natural sciences, and others. Such work is of great value not only for the respective disciplines but also for the whole of monastic life, which receives true riches from the deeper understanding of both created things and the things of faith. Special importance is due, however, to theological disciplines, which excel all other fields in aiding the monks' spiritual life, spiritual

ali, tum in ministerio pastorali praecellit omnibus aliis.

Sic labor scientificus magnos valores secum ducit: fidelitatem erga veritatem, sensum solidaritatis a necessitate laborandi una cum aliis, conscientiam in dies vividiorum responsabilitatis, aliaque similia.

*e) Hospitalitas*

75. Apostolatus monastici forma valde vetusta est hospitalitas, quae hodie non tam solatium materiale afferre debet, sed potius cibum spirituale offerre sub variis aptisque formis.

Omnes hospites tamquam Christus suscipiantur, quia ipse dicturus est, "Hospes fui, et suscepistis me." Legatur coram hospitibus, in quantum fieri potest, lex divina, ut aedificentur, et postea omnis eis exhibeantur humanitas. Cellam hospitum habeat assignatam frater, et domus Dei a sapientibus et sapienter administretur.

*f) Recreatio Virium*

76. Ut autem nostris operibus prospere alacriterque incumbere possimus etiam recreatio virium nobis cordi esse debet. Ideo in stabiliendo horario monasterii de aequilibrio sano inter vitam orationis, laborem et recreationem curare debemus, prae oculis habentes etiam praecepta psychologiae et medicinae. Recreatio enim ad finem debitum ordinata, non est aliqua deviatio a spiritu monastico, sed condicio vitae bene ordinatae, nam solum ita poterimus adimplere praeceptum Apostoli nos docentis, "Hilarem datorem diligit Deus."

guidance and pastoral ministry.

Thus, scholarly work brings with itself great values: fidelity to truth, a sense of solidarity deriving from the need to work with others, ever clearer awareness of responsibility, and other such values.

#### *e) Hospitality*

75. A very old form of the monastic apostolate is hospitality, which today should offer not so much material relief as spiritual food in various and appropriate forms.

All guests are to be received as Christ, for He himself will say, "I was a stranger and you received me." Insofar as it is possible, the divine law should be read to the guests to edify them, and afterwards every form of kindness is to be shown them. A brother should take care of the guest room, and the House of God should be administered wisely by wise men.

#### *e) Recreation*

76. However, in order to be able to give ourselves cheerfully and promptly to our tasks, we should also concern ourselves with the recreation of our strengths. In establishing the daily schedule of the monastery, we should aim at a healthy balance between prayer life, work and recreation, keeping in mind as well the principles of psychology and medicine. For when it is directed to its due purpose, recreation is not some sort of deviation from the spirit of monasticism but the condition for a well-balanced life. For only in this way will we be able to fulfill the Apostle's command when he teaches us, "God loves the cheerful giver."

PARS TERTIA

*De Vita Ordinis et Communitatum  
Eius Recte Ordinanda*

77. **I**MAGINE ORDINIS NOSTRI IN SUA EXISTENTIA CONCRETA delineata, atque valoribus fundamentalibus vitae Cisterciensis breviter explanatis, restat ut ordinationem vitae practicam et aptam structuram iuridicam tum singularum communitatum et congregationum, tum totius Ordinis consideremus. Minime enim sufficit tantum doctrinam de finibus ac valoribus nostris proponere, sed exquirendae sunt etiam illae rationes practicae et iuridicae, quibus vita communitatum nostrarum ordinetur et moveatur ad illos fines attingendos.

In sequentibus solum ea elementa vel principia exponenda censemus, quae in problematibus hodiernis recte resolvendis plane necessaria videntur, accuratiorem vitae ordinationem Constitutionibus Ordinis et congregationum vel statutis localibus relinquentes. Et quidem primo aspectus fundamentales cuiuscumque organisationis iuridicae vel exercendae auctoritatis exponemus, deinde vero speciatim loquemur de rationibus regiminis monasterii, congregationis et Ordinis, addentes postremo pauca de relatione Ordinis nostri ad alios ordines monasticos et ad organa Ecclesiae.

78. Quae sequuntur in omnibus valent etiam de monasteriis monialium

PART III*The Proper Organization of Life  
in the Order and its Communities*

77. **H**AVING DESCRIBED OUR ORDER IN ITS CONCRETE EXISTENCE and briefly explained the fundamental values of Cistercian life, it remains to consider the practical organization of our life and the fitting juridical structure of both the individual communities and congregations, and of the whole Order. For it is hardly enough to set forth only the teaching on our goals and values, but we must seek out also the practical and juridical means by which the life of our communities is to be organized and moved to achieve those goals.

In the following we think only those elements or principles should be presented that seem clearly necessary to resolving correctly today's problems. We leave the more precise arrangement of daily life to the constitutions of the Order and of the congregations and to local legislation. We will, therefore, first present the fundamental aspects of any juridical organization and the exercise of authority. We will then speak specifically of the means of governance for monasteries, for a congregation, and for the Order. We will add at the end a few remarks on the relationship of our Order to other monastic orders and to Church organs.

78. The following is valid in all respects also for the monasteries of our

nostrarum, nisi ex natura rei contrarium pateat. Moniales enim Ordinis nostri non constituunt "secundum ordinem" iuxta "primum" (viros), sed sunt omnino ejusdem Ordinis Cisterciensis. Monasteria earum sunt vere sui iuris, etiamsi in foro iurisdictionali in quibusdam dependeant a Patre Immediato vel Episcopo. Insuper complura sunt membra Congregationum nostrarum utentes similibus legibus ac monachi. Ideo dubium non est quin participatio monialium in decisionibus quae vitam earum, sed etiam in rebus quae propriam Congregationem et totum Ordinem respiciunt, efficaciter et constanter promovenda sit.

## A. Aspectus fundamentales structurae iuridicae

### 1. Communitas monastica — Societas voluntariorum

79. Sequentes vocationem nostram, intravimus monasterium Cisterciense libere a nobis electum, ut doctrinam Dominici scholae servitii reciperemus; deinde, professione emissa, munera et idealia vitae monasterii nostri voluntarie suscepimus. Vita ergo monastica non est nobis imposita, sed a nobis voluntaria et libera dedicatione suscepta. Ita communitates nostrae ex voluntariis constant, qui omnes conspirant ad eundem finem omnibus cognitum et ab omnibus volitum, ita ut unanimes habitemus in domo et sit nobis anima una et cor unum.

80. Fundamentum ergo communitatis monasticae est libera et voluntaria monachorum dedicatio, qui valores muneraque vitae monasterii magni aestimant et uti sua respiciunt. Haec libera dedicatio et alacris persuasio est vis motrix observantiae legum et obedientiae, estque fundamentum totius structurae iuridicae. Ea deficiente communitas monastica, sicuti quaelibet societas voluntaria, veram vitalitatem retinere nequit. Summi ergo est momenti, ut et monachi illam dedicationem, qua vitam monasticam libere susceperunt, vivam alacremque conservent; et quaecumque ordinatio vel organisatio vitae communitariae illam liberam voluntatem industriamque respiciat atque promovere et suscitare studeat.

nuns unless the contrary is clear from the nature of the matter. For the nuns of our Order do not constitute a "second order" next to the "first order" (of men), but they belong fully to the Cistercian Order. Their monasteries are truly *sui juris* even if they depend on a Pater Immediatus or a bishop in certain matters of jurisdiction. Moreover, several are members of our congregations and observe laws similar to those observed by the monks. There is, therefore, no doubt that one must effectively and steadily promote the nuns' participation in decisions that concern their life as well as in matters that concern their own congregation and the whole Order.

## A. Fundamental Aspects of the Juridical Structure

### 1. The Monastic Community – A Society of Free Individuals

79. Following our vocation, we have entered a Cistercian monastery that we have freely chosen in order to receive instruction in the school of the Lord's service. Then, after we have made our profession, we have voluntarily taken up the tasks and the ideals of our monastery's life. Our monastic life has, therefore, not been imposed on us, but we have voluntarily and with free commitment taken it upon ourselves. And so our communities consist of free agents who all strive for the same goal that is known to all and is desired by all in such a way that we live harmoniously in a house and have one mind and one heart.

80. The foundation of the monastic community is, therefore, the free and voluntary commitment of the monks who hold in high esteem the values and tasks of the monastery's life and look upon them as their own. This free dedication and eager conviction is the motivation for the observance of the laws and of obedience, and it is the foundation for the whole juridical structure. If this is lacking, the monastic community, like any voluntary society, is unable to maintain its true vitality. It is therefore of the greatest importance both that the monks preserve that lively and eager commitment by which they freely undertook the monastic life and that any arrangement or organization of community life respect as well as strive to promote and encourage that free will and effort.

## 2. Vita monasterialis exigit ordinationem per leges et praecepta superiorum

81. Etsi communitas monastica inprimis caritate Christi et fratrum, atque voluntaria finium munerumque monasterii proprii susceptione fundetur oportet, tamen uti unio hominum stabilis ad finem determinatum constitutum indiget etiam firma structura, scilicet recta ordinatione per leges et superiorum praecepta. Ita enim stabilitas continuasque vitae firmatur, vires singulorum efficacius ad finem communem diriguntur, vita et actuositas membrorum in pace coordinatur. Praeter leges aliave statuta scripta, quibus aspectus magis permanentes vitae regulantur, opus est etiam auctoritate personali abbatis et officialium, ut concreti modi agendi, qui inter condiciones tam varias et mutabiles vitae modernae legibus minutiosis determinari non possunt, responsabiliter et prompte decerni possint. In legibus vel normis ferendis magnam partem habent capitula, consilia vel alia organa repraesentativa communitatis, in nonnullis casibus a iure determinatis etiam votum deliberativum; eadem organa etiam superiores vel officiales in decisionibus concretis quae de iure ad solum abbatem vel aliquem officialem determinatum monasterii pertinent, adiuvare debent, minime autem eorum responsabilitatem et jus decernendi auferre aut debilitare.

82. Auctoritas legum et superiorum in monasterio multa quidem habet communia cum legitima auctoritate civilis societatis, non est tamen ei simpliciter equiparanda. Nam primo, auctoritas in monasterio exercita semper habet characterem ecclesiam, provenientem tum ex approbatione Regulae et Constitutionum a S. Sede, tum ex acceptance professionis nostrae ab Ecclesia. Unde amor monasterii ex amore Ecclesiae oritur, cui professione intimius conjungimur et eo augetur, quo magis eam amemus. Deinde habet etiam characterem intime religiosum, cum radix oboedientiae monasticae non sit necessitas vel opportunitas humana, sed ipsa nostra vocatio et voluntaria dedicatio in servitium Voluntatis Dei. Illi vero, qui in communitate leges ferendi aut imperandi facultatem habent, sunt quasi media cognoscendi quae sit voluntas Dei concreta de illa communitate. Ita, etsi obedientiam erga Deum non licet simpliciter identificare cum obedientia erga hominem, tamen in vita monastica vero sensu Christi vicem gerentibus oboedimus et obedientia maioribus exhibita est pars Dominici servitii.

## 2. Monastic Life Demands Organization by Laws and the Precepts of Superiors

81. Even if a monastic community should be based first of all on the love of Christ and of the brothers and on the voluntary acceptance of the goals and tasks of one's own monastery, nevertheless as a stable union of human beings directed to a definite and agreed upon end it also needs a firm structure, that is, the correct organization through laws and the superiors' commands. For in this way the stable continuity of life is made firm, the individuals' strengths are directed more efficiently to the common goal, and the life and activity of the members is coordinated in peace. Beside the laws and other written statutes by which the more permanent aspects of life are regulated, there is need for the personal authority of the abbot and his officials to determine responsibly and promptly the concrete ways to act, which in the midst of such varied and changeable conditions of modern life cannot be determined by particular laws. The chapters, the councils, and other representative organs play a large role in passing laws and norms. In some cases determined by law they also have a determinative vote. These same organs should also aid the superiors or other officials in concrete decisions that by law belong to the abbot alone or some specified official of the monastery. They should, however, not remove or weaken their responsibility and right to decide.

82. Although the authority of the laws and superiors in a monastery has indeed much in common with the legitimate authority of civil society, they are nevertheless not to be simply equated. For, in the first place, authority exercised in a monastery always has an ecclesial character deriving both from the Holy See's approval of the Rule and the Constitutions and from the Church's acceptance of our profession. Hence, love for a monastery springs from love for the Church, to which we are bound more closely by our profession, and our love for the monastery is increased the more we love the Church. Secondly, it also has a deeply religious character, for the root of monastic obedience is not necessity or human opportunity but our vocation itself and our voluntary dedication to the service of God's will. Those who possess the power to pass laws and to give commands in the community are, as it were, the means of knowing what the concrete will of God is for that community. Although one may not simply identify obedience to God with obedience to a human being, nevertheless in monastic life we obey in a real sense Christ's representatives, and the obedience shown superiors is a part of the Lord's service.

Auctoritas in communitate monastica profundiores quidem radices habet quam auctoritas in societatibus mere civilibus, non sunt tamen earum experientiae vel novae methodi negligendae aut reiiciendae, immo aperto animo examinandae. Saepissime enim in variis motibus socialibus, vel in novis gubernii formis aliquod utile invenitur, quod etiam nobis prodesse potest in apta ordinatione vitae monasticae hodiernae.

### 3. Principia Christiana legislationis et gubernii ad vitam nostram applicata

83. In organisatione et legislatione vitae monasticae, necnon in exercitio auctoritatis personalis sedulo respicienda sunt illa principia sociologica, in iure naturae fundata, quae recentioribus temporibus clarius percepta, a Magisterio Ecclesiae magna cum insistencia proclamantur. Inter quae pro nobis maximi momenti sunt principia correlativa dignitatis personae et solidaritatis necnon subsidiaritatis et pluralismi legitimi intra unitatem necessariam.

84. Principium dignitatis personae humanae, fundamentale praeceptum doctrinae socialis catholicae edicit subiectum et finem omnium institutorum socialium esse et esse debere humanam personam. Ideo omnes structurae iuridicae nostrae ante omnia ei fini inservire debent, ut consodales nostri suam ipsorum perfectionem plenius atque expeditius possint consequi, et officiis vocationis suae facilius meliusque defungi. Sacra humanae personae dignitas in hominis natura et adhuc magis in eius vocatione supernaturali fundata, atque iura inalienabilia ex ea manantia, etiam in legislatione et gubernatione monasterii vel Ordinis respicienda et agnoscenda sunt.

Unde etiam sequitur, ut legum praescripta vel superiorum mandata monachos non in puerili dependentia continere, sed ad maturam christianam libertatem et responsabilem participationem in gubernio pro bono totius Communitatis perducere debeant, eorumque personalem competentiam respicere atque prudentibus iniciativis amplum relinquere spatium.

85. Ex principio dignitatis personae humanae tamen minime sequitur nos vitio individualismi indulgere posse. Huic enim principio correlativum est principium solidaritatis. Persona humana sua natura vita

Authority in a monastic community indeed has roots deeper than authority in merely civil societies. Nevertheless, one must not neglect or reject their experiences and the new methods of exercising authority; one must rather examine them with an open mind. For very often in the various social movements or new forms of governance one finds something useful that can also be of benefit to us in the proper organization of monastic life today.

### 3. Christian Principles of Legislation and Governance Applied to our Life

83. In the organization and legislation of monastic life as well as in the exercise of personal authority one must carefully respect those sociological principles based in natural law that have been perceived more clearly in recent times and are proclaimed with great insistence by the Magisterium of the Church. The most important of these for us are the correlative principles of the dignity of the human person and solidarity as well as subsidiarity and a legitimate pluralism within a necessary unity.

84. The principle of the dignity of the human person, the fundamental precept of Catholic social doctrine, states that the subject and the end of all social institutions is and must be the human person. Therefore, all our juridical structures must above all be in service of the goal that all our confreres be able to attain their own perfection more fully and with fewer impediments, and to carry out the duties of their vocation more easily and better. The sacred dignity of the human person, which is rooted in the nature of the human being and still more in his supernatural vocation, and the inalienable rights deriving from that dignity must be recognized and respected also in the legislation and governance of the monastery and the Order.

From this it also follows that the precepts of the laws and the commands of the superiors should not confine the monks in childish dependence but should lead them to mature Christian freedom and responsible participation in governance for the good of the whole community. They should also respect the monks' personal competence and allow ample space for their prudent initiatives.

85. From the principle of the dignity of the human person, however, it hardly follows that we can indulge the vice of individualism. For the correlative of this principle is the principle of solidarity. By his nature

sociali indiget et, quod plus est, vocationem habet supernaturalem essentialiter communitariam. Etenim placuit Deo homines non singulatim, quavis mutua connexione seclusa, sanctificare et salvare, sed eos in populum constituere, ut vinculo Spiritus uniti in Corpus Christi congregentur. Quam naturam communitariam salutis et vitae Christianae nostra vita coenobitica specialiter exprimere atque mundo manifestare debet.

Apta legislatio et regimen monasticum magnam partem habent in hac solidari vitae unione instituenda vel firmanda, si imprimis consensum omnium de finibus valoribusque promovent, vires ad fines communes efficaciter coordinant, atque aptas incitantesque vitae familiaris formas efficere student. In spiritu solidaritatis unusquisque sodalium officia sibi assignata etsi aliquando ingrata in servitium confratrum consorumque et boni communis libenter et alacri animo suscipiat.

86 Principium subsidiaritatis ordinat relationes inter singulas personas et communitatem, item inter communitates arctiores et largiores. Enuntiat enim auctoritatem superiorem communitatis largioris ea quae ab inferioribus bene, immo saepissime melius, perfici possunt, ipsis relinquere debere, ubi vero inferiores sibi ipsi non sufficiunt vel debitum suum negligunt, subsidium et adiutorium praestare. Ita et vitalitas responsabilitasque inferiorum permanet, et auctoritas superior munus suum proprium, id est coordinationis et superioris decisionis, quando opus est, expeditius implere potest.

Hoc in nostro casu valet tum pro singulis communitatibus localibus, tum pro congregationibus vel Ordine. In monasterio enim superioris est prudentes iniciativas et responsabilitates personales sodalium atque officialium particularium promovere et in bonum commune dirigere. Auctoritates vero congregationum et Ordinis tunc optime suum officium implent, si legitimam libertatem et munera propria monasteriorum aut congregationum honorantes, iisdem auxilium practicum praebent ad fines suos facilius securiusque assequendos, et praeterea illa proposita proiectaque maiora, quae omnibus usui sunt sed vires singulorum excedunt, elaborare et promovere student.

the human person needs the life of society and, what is more, has a supernatural vocation that is essentially communitarian. For it has pleased God to sanctify and save human beings not singly, as if any sort of mutual connection had been precluded, but to establish them as His people so that united by the bond of the Spirit they might be gathered into the Body of Christ. In a special way our cenobitic life ought to express and manifest to the world the communitarian nature of salvation and the Christian life.

Appropriate legislation and the governance of the monastery play an important role in forming and strengthening this union based on a life of solidarity especially if they encourage the consensus of all with regard to goals and values, if they effectively focus the community's strengths on those common goals, and if they strive to bring about forms that are appropriate and encourage a familial life. In the spirit of solidarity each of the members should gladly and promptly take up the tasks assigned to him, even though sometimes unpleasant, as service to one's fellow monks and nuns and the common good.

86. The principle of subsidiarity orders the relations between individuals and the community as well as between narrower and wider communities. For it states that the higher authority of the wider community should leave those things to the subordinates which they can accomplish well, and quite often better, but that when the subordinates are of themselves incapable or neglect their duty, then the higher authority should offer assistance and help. In this way both the vitality and the responsibility of the subordinates remain intact, and the higher authority can, when it is necessary, carry out more readily its own task — that is, the task of coordination and of the higher-level decision.

In our case this principle is true both for individual local communities and for congregations and the Order. For in a monastery it is the superior's task to encourage and direct to the common good the prudent initiatives and personal responsibilities of the members and the particular officials. The authorities of the congregations and of the Order best fulfill their duty if while respecting the legitimate freedom and particular tasks of the monasteries or congregations they offer them practical assistance to reach their goals more easily and surely, and furthermore if they strive to work out and encourage those proposals and larger projects that benefit all but exceed the resources of the individuals.

87. Principium pluralismi legitimi intra unitatem necessariam ex praecedentibus iam clare sequitur. Agnoscendus est etenim pluralismus legitimus, id est diversitas membrorum in unionem coalescentium, neque licet nomine unitatis varietatem facultatum vel ingeniorum suppressimere. Etiam in monasterio charismata diversa sunt, unusquisque proprium habet donum, sed unicuique datur manifestatio Spiritus ad utilitatem. Diversitas membrorum utilitati totius corporis inservit, et singuli singulaeque solummodo per communionem diversorum donorum possunt esse participes plenitudinis Spiritus.

Idem valet etiam de monasteriis et congregationibus nostris, quae haud parum inter se differunt quoad evolutionem historicam, indolem nativam sodalium, circumstantias sociales et culturales, munera et officia secundum diversas necessitates Ecclesiae localis obeunda. Differentiae tamen minime obstant, quominus membra in unitatem vivam coalescant, immo donorum varietas toti Ordini maiorem vim vitalitatemque praebere potest, si sensus communionis et voluntas cooperationis adest.

Utrum aequilibrium pluralismi et unitatis effici possit, permultum dependet ab apta legislatione et a recto auctoritatis exercitio. Securitas enim persequendi fines proprios per leges stabiles, competentiarum distincta delineatio, finium propositorumque communium clara expositio, institutio formarum practicarum mutui adjutorii — haec et similia omnes incitabit ad unionem alacrius amplectendam et fovendam. Similiter multum prodest, si auctoritates congregationum vel Ordinis notas peculiares et studia propria communitatum non cum suspitione vel diffidentia aspiciunt, sed quidquid in eis bonum validumque est, amplius excolendum curant et ad utilitatem omnium vertunt. Viceversa singulae communitates Ordinis exigentias unitatis agnoscant atque in ea promovenda cum aliis Ordinis communitatibus et cum organis auctoritatis superioris sincere et cum fiducia cooperari paratae sint.

#### 4. Problemata hodierna legislationis monasticae — lex pro vita

88. Aliqua structura iuridica et ordinatio vitae per leges, uti vidimus, omnino necessariae sunt pro communitate monastica, non sunt tamen quasi fines in se, sed tantum media magni momenti finibus vitae monasticae inservientia. Lex est pro vita, et non viceversa; instituta ac praescripta legum vitam singulorum et communitatis necnon assecutionem

87. The principle of legitimate pluralism within a necessary unity now follows clearly from the preceding. For a legitimate pluralism must be acknowledged — that is, the diversity of the members coming together in a union — nor may one in the name of unity suppress the variety of abilities or talents. For in a monastery there are diverse charisms: each one has his own gift, but to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given to be useful. The diversity of the members serves what is useful for the whole body, and only through the communion of their diverse gifts can the individual men and women participate in the fullness of the Spirit.

The same is true also for our monasteries and congregations, which differ among themselves more than a little with regard to their historical evolution, the natural character of the members, the social and cultural circumstances, the tasks and duties that they must undertake according to the various needs of the local church. The differences, however, do not prevent the members from coming together into a living unity. Indeed, the variety of gifts can give the whole Order more strength and vitality if the sense of communion and the will for cooperation is present.

Whether the balance of pluralism and unity can be brought about depends very much on appropriate legislation and the proper exercise of authority. For the security of pursuing proper goals through stable laws, the sharp delineation of competencies, the clear presentation of common goals and projects, the establishment of practical forms for mutual assistance — these and similar steps will encourage all to embrace and to promote union more quickly. Similarly, it is very beneficial if the authorities of the congregations and of the Order do not look with suspicion and distrust on the special characteristics and particular interests of the communities but try to cultivate more fully whatever is good and valid in them and to direct them to the benefit of all. At the same time the individual communities of the Order should recognize the requirements of unity and in promoting it should be prepared to cooperate with sincere trust with other communities of the Order and with the organs of higher authority.

#### 4. Today's Problems Regarding Monastic Legislation: A Law for Life

88. As we have seen, a juridical structure and the organization of our life by laws are altogether necessary for a monastic community; however, they are not ends in themselves but only means of great importance serving the goals of monastic life. Law is for life and not vice versa. Legal structures and precepts should promote and aid the life of individ-