

THE RULE OF LIFE
OF THE COMMUNITY OF JESUS

PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES

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CONTENTS

PROLOGUE	1
SECTION I	
PRINCIPLES: VOCATION AND PROFESSION	
PART A	
VOCATION	
CHAPTER 1: The Call to Follow Jesus Christ	3
CHAPTER 2: The Call to Live for God	4
CHAPTER 3: The Call to Worship and Prayer	7
CHAPTER 4: The Call to a Common Life	11
CHAPTER 5: The Call to Reconciliation and Unity	16
PART B	
PROFESSION	
CHAPTER 6: The Vowed Life	18
CHAPTER 7: The Vow of Obedience	20
CHAPTER 8: The Vow of Conversion	21
CHAPTER 9: The Vow of Stability	22
CHAPTER 10: The Vows of Celibacy and Poverty	23
SECTION II	
PROCEDURES: MEMBERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	
PART C	
MEMBERSHIP	
CHAPTER 11: Categories of Membership and Association	24
CHAPTER 12: Formation	29
CHAPTER 13: Separation from the Community	30
PART D	
GOVERNANCE	
CHAPTER 14: The <i>Rule of Benedict</i>	36
CHAPTER 15: <i>Rule of Life of the Community of Jesus</i>	36

CHAPTER 16: The Superior	37
CHAPTER 17: The Subprior(ess)	43
CHAPTER 18: Chapter	44
CHAPTER 19: Council and Deans	49
CHAPTER 20: Officers of the Chapter	51
CHAPTER 21: Temporalities	52
CHAPTER 22: Ratification and Amendment of the <i>Rule of Life</i>	53
The Vows	55
The Oblate Covenant	56

PROLOGUE

FOR ALMOST TWO MILLENNIA, Christian monasticism has received inspiration and instruction from its roots. Each new generation draws upon these roots to give shape to the values of the monastic life, even as it strives to make its own particular application of those values both contemporary and abiding. The originating vision, with all of its multiple expressions, is the primary source for monasticism's continual vitality and advancement.

Monastic rules form an integral part of that source. They serve to identify and explain the fundamental characteristics of the monastic tradition—defining its purpose, ordering its priorities, and regulating its practice. Based upon biblical teaching, church tradition, and a particular founding charism, these rules historically have served as guides for those who embark upon the monastic journey. Through their message the pilgrim community hears, again and again, the compelling and corrective voice of the Master: “This is the way; walk in it” (Isa. 30:21).

The Community of Jesus has been called by God to take its place along this venerable path. As we make our way, we read the helpful signs left by those who have gone before us, and we endeavor to leave our own for those who will come after us. More than words, of course, the most effective signs are the examples of those who have been and are being faithful to this sacred vocation. The monastic life has never been so much about adhering to written rules as it has been about yielding to the work of the Spirit. The life-giving source that most inspires and instructs us is found in those letters “written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts” (2 Cor. 3:3). So it is that, just as we best read the word of God in the incarnate life of God, Jesus Christ, we best read the spiritual principles of the Community of Jesus in the lives of its members.

Since its founding, the Community of Jesus has cherished the inherited conviction that human lives can be changed—converted and re-formed by the burnishing hand of the Holy Spirit—and made to reflect more clearly the life of their Maker and Lord. We believe that, in the end, it is lives, not

words, that are the true keepers of the monastic vision. Etched with the marks of God's handiwork, people, not rules, are the only guarantors of a community's faithfulness and preservation. Therefore, the simple purpose of this rule is to assist in the making of such transformed people. In this generation and in the generations to come, may it serve as a guide for those who walk this way, in the name of Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and to the glory of God the Father.

THE RULE OF LIFE

SECTION I:

Describes the fundamental spiritual principles integral to the life of the Community.

PART A:

Vocation: Lat. *voco*, to call, summon.

Phil. 2:9-11

Col. 1:16

Mt. 4:18-22; Rom. 1:6;

Gal. 1:15; Heb. 11:8

RB Prol. 14-21

Rule of Benedict (RB)

Prol. 45; 4.21; 72.11

Rom. 10:9

RB Prol. 35; 4.78

SECTION I

PRINCIPLES

PART A VOCATION



CHAPTER 1

THE CALL TO FOLLOW JESUS CHRIST

The Community of Jesus is a fellowship of Christian disciples called by our Lord Jesus Christ and dedicated to the honor of his name. He is the source of our life, both individually and corporately, and our existence is made possible only in him. God's call is pure gift, and our grateful response, made possible by his grace, is the complete offering of our lives to him and to his service. We believe, therefore, that the supreme vocation of our lives is to follow Jesus Christ—confessing with our lips, believing in our hearts, and affirming by our lives that he is Lord and Savior. It is our joyful and solemn “yes” to this call that has brought us from our various backgrounds to form a united body of believers who seek to express a sacred vocation in the ordinary routines of daily life together. In turn, it is our daily life together that supports our constant attention to the divine call.

As an assembly of the faithful, the Community of Jesus is one expression of the universal Church. There are many others whose patterns of life, forms of worship, and structures of government are quite different from ours. This is part of the

1 Cor. 12:12

rich heritage we all share as members of the one Body of Christ. Thus, we embrace a vocation to follow Jesus Christ in communion with all those who have been called by his name, even as that vocation takes a distinctive shape and bears the particular features of this community.

Jn. 13:35

We do not exist for ourselves alone. After our Lord's own example and following his command, this community also endeavors to be for others a faithful witness to the presence of God's kingdom. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we strive to make our common life a sign within the church and a testimony to the world of the prevailing mercy of God and the eternal truth proclaimed in his Son, Jesus Christ.



CHAPTER 2

THE CALL TO LIVE FOR GOD

1 Cor. 6:19-20;
Col. 3:10 ; Eph. 1:3-12

Having accepted the call to follow Christ, we know that we are not our own. In every way our lives belong to God, for we have been created in his image, redeemed by his love, and "appointed to live for the praise of his glory." Members of the Community of Jesus, therefore, make it their aim to seek and to follow God's ways in all aspects of life. We dedicate ourselves to this pursuit as one aspect of our obedience to the great commandment, to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Mk. 12:30
RB Prol. 49-50; 4.1,21

LIVING BY THE SPIRIT

Jn. 16:13

Since its beginnings, the Community has stressed the importance of dependence on the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Life in Christ, individually and communally, is not possible

RB Prol. 41
Lk. 24: 49; Acts 1:8

1 Cor. 2:11
 1 Cor. 12:4-11
 Gal. 5:22-23

without the Holy Spirit's inspiration and help. Any unity we share, any ability to do the will of God, any capacity for creativity or excellence, is due to the gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit's work in our lives.

Rom. 8:1-14

Living in the Spirit of God means that the thoughts of the mind, the emotions of the heart, and the decisions of the will are all submitted to God and renewed by the sanctifying power of his Spirit. Above all, therefore, we seek to be led by the Spirit into the truth of God, and imbued by the Spirit with the love of God. Large and small matters alike are brought to God with the expectation that, by his Spirit, he will supply the direction and provision we need. In spite of human errors, he proves faithful in guiding us—teaching us his ways, correcting our faults, increasing our understanding of his will, and leading us into the truth. Though we actively work to conform our conduct according to Christ's teaching, only the Spirit of God actually transforms our lives according to Christ's image.

Jn. 14: 26; 16:13

RB Prol. 41

Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:49

2 Cor. 3:18;

Phil. 2:12-13

LIVING IN THE LIGHT

1 Jn. 1:5-10; 1 Pet. 2:9

The integrity of our fellowship with God and with each other is dependent upon our commitment to “walk in the light as he is in the light.” “Living in the light,” therefore, means living according to the truth—the truth about God and the truth about ourselves—from which we are often blinded by human sin and frailty. To live for God means to esteem his truth above our own personal perceptions and judgments and to let the light of that truth shine in our hearts, convicting us and changing us.

2 Cor. 13:8

Jn. 8:32

RB Prol. 9

RB 7

*Prov. 3:5-8**Eph. 4:15-16, 25*
RB Prol. 1*Jn. 16:8-13*Cf. *Rule of Life* (RL)
Chap. 8*1 Pet. 4:11*
RB 57:9*Jn. 6:28; 1 Cor. 3:9*
*2 Cor. 3:18; 6:1**Jn. 1:14; 1 Jn. 1:1-3***Ministry:** Lat. *ministro*,
to serve, to wait upon.

RB 48:1

While maintaining the value of individual responsibility and decision-making, we endeavor to develop a spirit of humility, acknowledging the limitations of our own abilities and depending upon the wisdom of God and the insights of others. For example, living in close proximity with others makes it impossible to hide our faults from one another. For the sake of maturing in our common life and in our individual discipleship, we are responsible to live in honesty with one another—“speaking the truth in love” and listening to the truth that is spoken, always endeavoring to share mutual encouragement and correction in the spirit of love. In this way we serve each other as together we seek the Spirit of truth, who is faithful to show us where we need to change and to give us grace in the process of our conversion.

LIVING TO THE GLORY OF GOD

As persons who have been consecrated to God and his service, we believe that every aspect of our lives is to be brought into harmony with God’s purposes, so that in all things God may be glorified. In this way, both our labors and our lives come more and more to reflect the image of our Creator as we become co-workers with God in his ongoing creative activity. Goodness, truth, and beauty are given expression through sanctified human labor. In fact, there is no work done in the service of God and of others that is so mundane that it may not be a form of ministry and the means by which God is glorified.

The performance of work is never to be an end in itself. Through both our physical and intellectual

Mt. 28:18-20

Mt. 6:10; Acts 4:32

Apostolate: Lat. *apostolus*, one who is sent out. Works done as part of our participation in the mission of Christ in the world. Phil. 2:4

Monasticism: Gk. *monos*, one, alone. An ordered form of ascetic Christian life (single and corporate), with historic roots in the ancient church; to pursue a life of prayer and work, for the glory of God, the sanctification of the individual, and the good of the church and the world.
Rom. 12:4-5

Ps. 18:3a

Rev. 4:11; 5:12; 7:9-12

Ps. 22:3

Lk. 17:11-19;

Rom. 12:1-2

labors, we render to God our minds and bodies, as well as our hearts, so that, in all our activities, God may be praised, his will may be done, and his word may be proclaimed. Through the arts, which are so closely associated with the Incarnation, the Community works diligently to proclaim the Word of God in tangible forms. By means of all daily work and the apostolates undertaken by the Community, we strive for a level of integrity that will bring honor to God's name, we seek a depth of cooperation among ourselves that will strengthen the bonds of fellowship, and we aim for a standard of excellence that will present to others a vision of the grace and glory of God. New work opportunities should be evaluated according to these principles and any decision to undertake them should be consistent with the values of our monastic vocation.



CHAPTER 3

THE CALL TO WORSHIP AND PRAYER

The Community of Jesus finds the essential purpose of its existence in the worship of God who, by his very being, is worthy of all adoration and praise. Worship is an encounter with the Word of God, by which we are drawn into the mystery of communion with the Holy Trinity and with one another. It is the total offering of our lives to God in answer to the Father's call, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and in gratitude for our salvation in Jesus Christ. While it includes both a personal and a corporate life of prayer, it is in the totality of our commitment of love and obedience

Ps. 100:3

Ps. 145:3

Rev. 15:3-4

Liturgy: Gk. *litourgia*, work of the people; refers to the worship of God particularly in the context of the prescribed services of the church.

that the worship of God is fully expressed. We seek to incorporate into our prayer the fullness of our givenness to God—in body, soul, and spirit—and, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to make our worship reverent, vibrant and active.

The worship of God entails the confession of our humanity—the humble and joyful acknowledgment that, though broken by sin, we are creatures made in the divine image—together with the acclamation of God’s greatness—the solemn and glad profession that he is Lord of all. Moreover, the awe and reverence we know as creatures is united with the love and gratitude we know as redeemed and beloved children of God. In worship, we enter that eternal stream of life that flows from the presence of God and is returned to him in praise and celebration. We are united with the communion of saints, the whole people of God, the blessed company of all faithful people through all the ages. We join with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven in praising God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

LITURGICAL LIFE

The liturgical life of the Community of Jesus is one aspect of the union we share with the church universal. Incorporating forms and prayers common to various streams of church tradition, many of which have enjoyed centuries of use, and adding contemporary prayers relevant to our everyday life, we celebrate our creation and our redemption in Christ and look forward to the consummation of his kingdom. In addition, our liturgy draws upon the gifts of music, dance,

Ps. 150:3-6

RB 4.55-56

Lectio divina:

Lat. holy reading. Traditional method of spiritual reading, esp. of Scripture, leading to prayer and contemplation.

Journaling: Lat.

diurnus, of the day.

The regular practice of recording the thoughts and prayers of one's spiritual "journey."

2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16

Rom. 12:12; Eph. 6:18

1 Cor. 11:23-26

* Gk. *eucharistia*, see Lk. 22:17;

Col. 3:17 Jn. 6:53

Jn. 6:56

drama, visual arts, and many other art forms in order to give the fullest expression possible to our prayer and praise.

PERSONAL PRAYER

Corporate liturgical life shapes the contours of one's individual discipleship. In turn, the habitual practice of personal prayer is indispensable to the quality of communal worship. Each Community member endeavors to maintain a faithful prayer life, including such practices as *lectio divina*, intercessory prayer, Bible study, spiritual reading, personal retreats, and journaling. These disciplines are practiced according to the schedule and ability of each Community member.

EUCCHARIST

The celebration of the Eucharist (the Lord's Supper, Holy Communion) is the Community's principal expression of worship. As the church's supreme act of thanksgiving,* it is central to our life as a fellowship and to each of us as individual members. We are never more complete and true to our identity as a Christian community than when we are gathered to celebrate the mysteries of God's saving work in Jesus Christ, presented to us in the sacrament of his Body and Blood. Here Christ becomes especially present to us in the proclamation of God's Word, in the mystery of Communion, and in the unity of all those gathered in his name. As we receive the life of Christ again, we leave with a renewed pledge to love and serve him in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Divine Office: Lit. sacred “duty;”

Opus Dei: Lat. work of God. Both refer to the daily, public prayer of the church. See RB 43.3; 19.1-2; chaps. 8-20.

1 Th. 5:17

Ps. 119:164; Acts 3:1

Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16

1 Tim. 2:1-2

Gregorian Chant:

Monodic chant of the Roman rite, named after Gregory the Great (d.604); at one time it was the primary musical vehicle of the West for carrying the text of sacred Scripture.

LITURGY OF THE HOURS

Inherent to our monastic vocation is the observance of the daily round of prayer known as the Liturgy of the Hours (the Divine Office, Opus Dei). This is the most frequent form of our prayer—morning, noon, evening and night—and one means by which we obey the biblical mandate to “pray without ceasing.” In the Liturgy of the Hours we attend to the proclamation of God’s wonderful works in creation and redemption, and we respond with psalms, hymns, and songs to his life-giving Word. We lend our voices to the prayer of the whole church, praising and thanking God for his gifts, surrendering ourselves anew to his service, and interceding for the needs of the world.

GREGORIAN CHANT

Gregorian chant enjoys a privileged place in the liturgical life of the Community. It is an eloquent expression of worship that has stood the test of time, for its source is the eternal message of sacred scripture. As such, Gregorian chant is a musical *icon* of the Word of God— Christ crucified, risen, ascended into heaven, and reigning in glory. It conveys holiness and lifts heart, mind, and soul. The Community seeks both to preserve and to strengthen this unique form of sung prayer as a living tradition. Growing from the earliest roots of our Christian faith, it is equally relevant to our modern, ecumenical monastic life. We maintain the use of Latin in connection with the chant, both as a common and therefore unifying language of prayer, and also as the optimum vehicle for the

Acts 2:42

texts, which are inherently wedded to these time-honored melodies.

We believe that all of the creative *work* of the Community is sustained and nurtured through the daily *prayer* of the Community, public and liturgical as well as private and individual. For us, Gregorian chant is integral to this alliance of work, prayer, and praise.

RB 52

CHURCH OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

Under normal circumstances, all of the liturgies of the Community, especially the Liturgy of the Hours and the Eucharist take place in the Church of the Transfiguration. The church is both the gathering place of the assembled Community at prayer and the sign of God's dwelling place in the midst of the living fellowship. It is a central symbol of who we are and of what we do as a people of faith. Its name recalls for us the glory of God as revealed through his incarnation in Jesus Christ, and the hope of humanity that our transformed lives can become bearers of the divine light.

Mt. 17:1-9; Jn. 1:14
Phil. 2:15
RB Prol. 9



CHAPTER 4

THE CALL TO A COMMON LIFE

Our common life is the essential expression of our vocation. Because we have been united to God in the name of Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are also united with one another. We have chosen to express that unity, in response to God's call, by living together in a monastic community in the Benedictine tradition. We dedicate ourselves to this calling as another aspect

Benedictine: School of spirituality observing the Rule of St Benedict, which gave Western monasticism its distinctive shape. (Benedict of Nursia, d. ca.550) See further: RL Chaps. 6 & 14.

Mk. 12:31

Acts 4:32

Jn. 13:34; 1 Pet. 4:8
RB 4.22-26; 72.3-8

Acts 2:44; Eph. 4:32
1 Jn. 1:7

*Similar to marriage vows, such a vow may be made within the context of the Community, but is not directly related to Community membership.

of our obedience to the great commandment, to love our neighbor as ourselves.

The Community of Jesus finds inspiration from the life of the early church as described in the Acts of the Apostles. There, the company of believers in Jerusalem was described as being of “one heart and soul,” providing a vision of common life together that has been the model for countless Christian communities over the centuries. By this standard, we recognize that the commitment we make to God is inseparable from the commitment we make to one another. The common life to which we have been called, therefore, is founded upon the new commandment given by Jesus to his disciples: “Love one another, even as I have loved you.” Within such a company, communion is strengthened through mutual acceptance and forgiveness, faith is built by the pursuit of truth and honesty, and oneness is expressed through the generous sharing of goods and possessions. This quality of sacrificial love, including all its practical applications, is the aim of our Christian monastic life.

FORMS OF OUR COMMON LIFE

Our common monastic life takes a variety of forms. Married couples, children, and single adults, some of whom have committed themselves to perpetual celibacy,* live as extended families within Community households. Those living in households are prepared to move periodically from one home to another for the sake of strengthening communal life and meeting individual needs. A celibate Brotherhood and

Cf. See below:
Stewardship

1 Cor. 15:10
1 Ptr. 4:10

Gal. 6:10

Col. 3:14
1 Cor. 12:14-25
RB 4.22-24, 39-40,
68-73

Phil. 2:3-4;
Rom. 12:16-18; 14:19
RB 4.39-40; 34.5-6;
5.17-18

RB 31.10

Sisterhood each occupies its own respective house and, in addition to this *Rule of Life*, is governed by its own specific Constitution. Thus, each of these vocations within the Community is guided by the circumstances and obligations particular to its identity, and each serves as a sign to the whole of the “varied grace” of God at work in human lives.

THE RULE OF LOVE

The preeminent value of love must apply in all our relationships, as we learn to accept others with the affection and respect due fellow-members of God’s family. “And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.” Differences among us are inevitable, but they should serve as occasions for increasing our capacity for patience and humility. We are to prefer others before ourselves and to pursue what makes for peace and common accord. The rule of love forbids all gossip, murmuring, malice, and judgment, for these are destructive instruments that tear at the fabric of community life. If a difference arises between members and they cannot resolve it, another member or members should be asked to help until the difference is settled. This is one way in which our life together becomes a means for personal growth in sanctity and maturity.

STEWARDSHIP

As stewards of creation, who regard material belongings as sacred gifts to be used for God’s purposes, we place all our possessions at the service

Acts 4:32-35
RB 34.1-4

Gal. 6:2
Cf. RL Chap. 10

Is. 58:6-7; Lk. 19:8
Gal. 2:10; 1 Jn. 3:17-18
RB 4.14; 58.24

Cf. See RL Part D:
Governance

RB 1.2

Gen. 1:1; Col. 1:16
Rev. 4:11
Mt. 28:18; Phil. 2:9-11
Jn. 16:13-15; Acts 1:8

2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21
2 Th. 2:15
RB 73.3-6

of God and the benefit of the Community. We consider nothing that we possess as our “own” but rather, holding property in the spirit of detachment, we administer goods on behalf of one another’s needs and for the sake of the common good. Our houses are dedicated to Community use, as we seek to find our true abiding place in Christ. This sacrifice and integration of goods makes for a sense of extended family within each household, and provides countless practical opportunities for “bearing one another’s burdens” toward the goal of following Christ. The Brothers and Sisters make a profession of poverty and thereby depend upon the larger Community for their welfare. Household families and individuals are responsible to arrange for their own financial support. The needs of the poor are to be remembered by every Community member, and contributions are made to assist them.

AUTHORITY

Our common life is also sustained and directed through a mutually recognized order of governance, articulated in this *Rule of Life* and built upon the legitimate exercise of authority and the free exercise of obedience. As a body of Christian disciples, we recognize that the source and foundation for all authority is God, who is the Creator and Ruler of all that is, both seen and unseen; who has revealed himself to the world in his only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and who has imparted the gift of the Holy Spirit to empower his people and to lead them in the truth. God has further spoken, declaring his eternal will and

loving purposes, through the divinely inspired words of Holy Scripture as recorded in the Old and New Testaments, and through the living tradition of the Church as expressed in its ancient creeds and continuing witness. The governance of our life together is grounded, therefore, upon the conviction that the sovereignty and goodness of God, God's power over the world and God's love for the world, are indivisible. In this light, members of the Community exercise both the responsibility of authority and the liberty of obedience for the fulfillment of God's will and for the sake of the common good.

Mk. 10:43-45
Jn. 8:28b-29
RB 71.1-2

ENCLOSURE

For the sake of maintaining the interior life of the Community, it is necessary that, at certain times and places, we limit our availability to the public. At selected times, the Community observes a period of enclosure, when visitation to the Community by guests or others is restricted and the internal work of the Community is limited. Community members are encouraged at such times to make more time for prayer, quiet and recreation. In addition, selected spaces in the Community, such as the cloister and the church vesting corridor, are identified as "monastic enclosures," and are reserved for the use of professed members only.

Mk. 6:31

Mk. 1:35



CHAPTER 5

THE CALL TO RECONCILIATION AND
UNITY*Jn. 17:20-23*

Jesus prayed for his followers “that they may all be one . . . so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” The world’s faith in Jesus Christ is contingent upon the unity of his Body, for it is largely in the witness of our communion with one another that the love of God is made manifest. The Community of Jesus is committed to praying and working for a fuller expression of the unity of the Body of Christ through fellowship and reconciliation.

2 Cor. 5:18-19

RECONCILIATION

Mt. 5:24

The reconciliation we enjoy with God is embodied in our relationships with one another. The living Body of Christ on earth now moves in the shape of the church, and nothing makes for more effective action than the complete unity of the Body’s members. The influence of God’s love at work in the world is diluted by the divisions and strife that afflict the people of God. Therefore, it is in the affairs of everyday life that we seek a depth of reconciliation with each other that will reflect more clearly the gift of God’s peace to us all. Such reconciliation requires generosity of love for others, repentance for sin, and the pursuit of forgiveness and understanding. We must never let our efforts for reconciliation deteriorate, nor settle for external appearances of agreement, for we know that the integrity of our prayer for church unity is dependent upon our commitment to the members of the church in this place.

Eph. 2:14

Ecumenism: Process toward recovering the unity of all Christians, reconciling and/or transcending differences of creed, ritual or polity.

Charism: Gk. gift. Spiritual gift(s) given to individuals or groups for the good of all (1 Cor. 12:7,11). Can refer to the defining gifts which identify a particular community or movement.

ECUMENISM

The Community of Jesus finds its identity in the mainstream of the Christian tradition. In particular, we share a close sense of affinity and of fellowship with other communities who follow the *Rule of Benedict*. Because the origins of the monastic charism predate the major separations that have since divided the church, it is a particularly eloquent expression of the call to unity in the Body of Christ, and the monastery itself is especially suited to promoting peace and understanding among God's people. We are committed to furthering the ecumenical vision that has inspired so many before us, and we pray for and work toward reconciliation in the whole Body of Christ. As members of an ecumenical community, we are grateful for the truths we have been given and the examples of faith we have been shown in the traditions from which we have come. It is part of the grace given to us that we can look to the values of our many traditions for enrichment to the life and worship of this community. Drawing upon our varied backgrounds, we seek to build upon what is most commonly treasured by us all, in order to realize a unity that is greater than the differences that have historically divided church bodies and denominations.

HOSPITALITY

Our work for ecumenism and our witness to the love of God for the world are rooted in the idea that all are welcome within God's house. The ministry of hospitality compels us to make room in our hearts as well as in our community for Christ's presence

RB 53.1

Mk. 11:17

Mt. 25:40; Heb. 13:2

Rom. 12:13; 1 Pet. 4:9

Acts 3:8

PART B

PROFESSION: The act of declaring before (*pro-*) others the convictions and purposes of one's life. This part describes the meaning of vows as our commitment in response to God's call.

2 Cor. 1:21-22

Mt. 28:19-20

Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:11-12

in whatever form he comes, and especially in the person of the guest or stranger. The welcoming of visitors, therefore, is a service to be rendered by all Community members. We endeavor in various ways to receive and include guests in the life of the community without disrupting the discipline and rhythm of daily monastic life that are part of the Community's inherent identity. Guests are encouraged to join with the Community in its public prayer.

PART B

PROFESSION



CHAPTER 6

THE VOWED LIFE

The profession of vows, as with every expression of Christian commitment, derives its meaning and purpose from baptism. As the seal of the covenant that God the Father makes with his people, through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, baptism marks us as God's own forever and sets us upon a course of discipleship in his name. Though in its essence Christian discipleship is a vocation common to all believers, the vows made in the monastic life give that discipleship a distinct form. They serve to intensify our baptismal commitment to God, by which we have been initiated into the life of dying and rising with Christ, of continual renewal and transformation by the Spirit of God. By our profession, therefore, we give heed to Christ's exhortation and seek to

Jn. 12:24

follow his example: “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”

Monastic profession in the Community of Jesus is understood fundamentally as the following:

1 Jn. 4:19

A response to the call of God— Membership in the Community of Jesus is, above all, a personal response to the divine initiative, a reply of love to a call of love. We profess our vows principally as an act of faith, welcoming God’s invitation and trusting in his grace to fulfill all that he promises and to complete whatever he begins.

Ps. 119:116

An act of self-offering to God—Consecration to God calls for a life of complete dedication, following the example of Christ in his own total self-giving to the Father. As members of the Community of Jesus we make our profession in order to offer our lives to God as a continuous sacrifice of praise and worship.

Consecration: Lat. *com + sacrare*. Setting apart of a thing or person for sacred purposes. See Ex. 13:2; 2 Chron. 29:31 Rom. 12:1

Acts. 4:32

A commitment to the company of others— By means of our profession, we embark upon a spiritual path in the company of others. Much as baptism incorporates the believer into the Body of Christ, these vows incorporate us into this particular community of faith, giving expression to the love and trust that sustain our mutual support of one another. For the sake of following Christ more closely and being transformed into his image, Community members are committed to serve and to be served by each other.

Eph. 4:16

Jn. 17:16
1 Jn. 2:15-17

RB 58.17
 See "The Vows," p.55

RB 5.2; 72.11

RB Prol. 2-3; 5.1
Jn. 14:15; 1 Jn. 5:3

Lk. 1:38

An act of public witness to the world— The vowed life is a sign of the heavenly kingdom, in which the love of God is fully known and the will of God is fully accomplished. It is a portent of the life that is to come, prophetically disclosing the incompleteness of this present life and confessing a hope for what is yet to be. By making these vows, we accept a degree of separation from the world in order to announce good news to the world.

Following centuries of monastic tradition, membership in the Community of Jesus is built upon three primary vows: obedience, conversion, and stability. These themes are woven tightly together in the Benedictine tradition, inseparable elements of one's complete dedication to God and to others in adherence to a way of life that cherishes Christ above all, and prefers nothing to Christ. The two additional vows of consecrated celibacy and poverty are made by the Brothers and Sisters of the Community.



CHAPTER 7 THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE

Obedience is first rendered to God as an expression of love. The obedience observed in the monastic life is exemplified in the self-surrender of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, who, in answer to the divine calling, declared, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." Thus, to choose God's will above our own is to accept the limits of our own understanding, and to trust in and depend upon the wisdom and love

Jn. 6:38

Phil. 2:8

RB Prol. 1

RB 5.1-4; 71.1-2

Cf. RL Chap. 4,
“Authority”

of God. By yielding ourselves to God, we affirm that our lives are fulfilled only as they are lived in his service. Following the example of Christ who came not to do his own will but the will of the One who sent him, and who, although he was the Son of God, was obedient even to death, we commit ourselves to seek the will of God at all times and in all matters.

This obedience is expressed through a daily listening for God in the many and various ways his word is communicated. In the life of a monastic community, the will of God is often mediated through others, especially the Superior. Acceptance of the authority that is vested in one another and in the duly-appointed leadership signifies and strengthens personal humility and communal unity. In fact, the individual obedience of each member engenders a corporate obedience that is part of the gift that the entire Community offers to God.



CHAPTER 8 THE VOW OF CONVERSION

Mt. 5:48
Gen. 1:26

Jesus charges those who follow him to live in such a way that they reflect their divine lineage: “You, therefore, must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Lives stamped with God’s own nature in creation, though broken and distorted by sin, are meant to be restored in the image of their Creator. This is why the Transfiguration of the Lord holds such a prominent place in the Community’s life and prayer, for it not only reveals the unique glory of the Son of God, but it also proclaims that the

Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10
Mt. 17:1-8; Mk. 9:2-8;
Lk. 9:28-36

Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18

RB 58.17

Phil 2:12-13

RB 4.78; 58:7-10,
15-16; 61.5

Mk. 8:34

divine life can be borne by human flesh, and that the resplendent light of God can shine in and through the darkest regions of every human heart. God holds out the promise that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the lives of his people can be healed and changed, conformed more and more to the image of his Son, Jesus Christ. The vow of conversion, therefore, is both a confession of hope in that promise and a commitment to cooperate with God in the life-long process toward its fulfillment.

By means of the vow of conversion, we acknowledge that turning to God is more than a one-time event. We commit ourselves, by the help of God's grace, to walk in the way of the Lord and to return to that way whenever we depart from it. We are resolved to work with God as he is at work *in* us, using every means available to participate daily in that transforming work of the Holy Spirit by which a life centered in self is replaced by the new life in Christ.



CHAPTER 9

THE VOW OF STABILITY

The vow of stability is essentially the promise to persevere in the way of life to which God has called us, in the company of those with whom we are called. That way of life is none other than the way of the Cross and Resurrection. Jesus said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Through the vow of stability, we make a solemn commitment to follow Christ with

Heb. 12:1-2

patient endurance in the same way which he himself endured. This means saying a perpetual “yes” to the call of God, and affirming thereby that our commitment to a life of obedience and conversion must be renewed daily as an expression of faithfulness to that call. God himself is faithful and, as we are made in his image, we seek to model our choices after the One whose promises never fail.

RB 72

Stability also involves a commitment to persevere with others in this place. This commitment constitutes the Community itself as a stable place in which to follow Christ. All who make this profession are united together in a communion of love—love of God and of each other—a mutual bond which transcends personal preferences and individualistic ambitions. When we make this vow, we are promising to bear with one another at all times, and to be always present for one another in the pursuit of God. In full acknowledgment of our own sins and weaknesses, together we count on God’s grace to make of us what he will. Thus, by remaining steadfast in our vow of stability we persevere in the ways of God, in union with one another, and within the particular setting of this Community, until the day of our death.

RB Prol. 50; 4.78



CHAPTER 10

THE VOWS OF CELIBACY AND POVERTY

The Brothers and Sisters of the Community of Jesus make additional vows. Foregoing marriage in order to pursue a life of complete dedication to

Celibacy:

Renunciation of marriage for the sake of Christ and the gospel (see *Mk. 10:29*); associated with the

traditional evangelical counsel of chastity.

Chastity: The virtue by which human sexuality, through purity in conduct and intention, is ordered to its proper use.

Poverty: Renunciation of ownership following the example of Christ, and witnessing to the human state of dependence upon God.

God, they commit themselves to lives of chastity and consecrated celibacy. Following the example of Christ, who gave up all for the sake of his Father, they renounce all private possessions and embrace poverty, thus serving as a sign within the Community of our total dependence upon God and our need for one another. The meaning of these vows is further described in their respective *Constitutions*.

SECTION II PROCEDURES

PART C MEMBERSHIP



CHAPTER 11 CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP AND ASSOCIATION

The definitions and procedures outlined below provide the general model for all expressions of Community membership. In all cases, a request to be received at any level of membership in the Community of Jesus must be submitted to the Superior in writing. Elements specific to the Brotherhood and Sisterhood may be found in their respective *Constitutions*.

RESIDENCY

Residency in the Community of Jesus is a period of time in which persons, while seeking and pursuing God's direction for their lives, identify themselves more formally with the Community, essentially making the Community of Jesus their

temporary home. Residents participate as much as possible in the life of the Community during this period, living according to the Community's values and in the spirit of its vocation. Association with the Community as a Resident is granted by the Superior; must be reviewed and renewed annually; and will normally not extend for more than five years. In some cases, at the request of a Resident, and after consultation with the Council, the Superior may admit a Resident directly into the novitiate.

Postulancy: From Lat. *poscere*, to ask; the preliminary stage of testing as a candidate for monastic life.

POSTULANCY

Postulancy in the Community of Jesus is a period of time during which persons enter into a process of discernment and formation, prayerfully considering their possible vocation to the Community. After consulting the Council, the Superior may admit a candidate as a Postulant, and will then inform the Chapter of this action. A Postulant must be at least eighteen years of age (with parental permission, he/she may be seventeen), of suitable character and with sufficient qualities of maturity to begin to participate further in the life of the Community. The length of postulancy is determined by the Superior, but is not normally more than three years.

Novitiate: From Lat. *novus*, new; a probationary stage of membership in monastic life.

Formation: Essentially spiritual formation; equipping in mind and heart for the living out of one's vocation. See Chap. 12.

NOVITIATE

The purpose of the novitiate in the Community of Jesus is to provide a period of preparation for profession, while further testing one's intention and suitability for membership. Under the guidance of the Superior and whomever he/she delegates, the Novice participates in a program of formation

for the sake of developing further maturity in the Christian faith and in the practice of our common life. This program includes instruction in Scripture, prayer, monastic life, the *Rule of Benedict*, the *Rule of Life*, and the history of the Community of Jesus. The Superior, after consultation with the Council, may admit a suitable candidate as a Novice. The Chapter is informed of this action, and the Novice is formally received with prayer in a rite of Reception and Blessing of Novices. A Novice must be at least eighteen years of age and, prior to admission, is required to participate in a process of vocation discernment. The length of the novitiate is determined by the Superior, but is not normally less than one year, nor more than three years.

SIMPLE PROFESSION

After consulting the Council, and with the consent of the Chapter, the Superior may admit to simple profession a Novice who has completed the novitiate. This first vow is temporary and must be renewed annually, with the consent of the Chapter. The Simple Professed member may choose not to renew his/her vows or may be asked not to renew them. Normally the period of simple profession is not less than two nor more than six years, and involves an ongoing program of formation in anticipation of Solemn Profession.

SOLEMN PROFESSION

After consulting the Council, and with the consent of the Chapter, the Superior may admit a Simple Professed member to solemn profession. This final vow is for life, and those who make this profession

constitute the permanent membership of the Community of Jesus (the Chapter). The candidate for solemn profession must be at least twenty-one years of age.

LIVING OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY

For certain reasons, it may be necessary for a member to live outside the Community for an extended period of time. In such cases, and with the consent of the Superior in consultation with the Council, a period of living outside the community may be arranged. During this period it is recognized that, for the sake of charity or obedience, a member, while retaining all the rights and spiritual responsibilities of his/her monastic profession, is temporarily unable to fulfill all of the obligations of our common life. Reasons may include:

- undertaking an apostolate in the name of the Community
- studies
- caring for poor health
- attending to the needs of a family member
- attending to personal needs

CHILDREN

Children of all ages in the Community are an integral part of our life together, lending a distinctive element to our identity as a monastic fellowship. Their lives are a sign for us of God's faithfulness and love, and a reminder to us of our call to simplicity and trust. Their participation in the life of the Community enhances many of our activities and contributes to the fulfillment of

Prov. 22:6
2 Tim. 3:14-15

our vocation. Much like a large extended family, the Community shares in the venture of raising children, offering such assistance as might be most beneficial to parents as they “train up” their children in the ways of God. In turn, children learn the value of serving God and others, and as they grow older, are provided opportunities to give of themselves for the sake of God’s love and the common good. In this way, the biblical model of the common life, which inspires the vocation of the Community, is applied to all ages.

With regard to possible membership, the children of Community members comprise a distinctive group, because their upbringing within the Community has already exposed them to the values and characteristics of our common life. By virtue of this background, we are especially committed to providing suitable time and opportunity for them to seek God’s direction for their lives. At the conclusion of their high school years they are encouraged to take a year for prayerful consideration of their vocation. Often, this year is spent living in the Community, serving in any number of capacities, and participating in the Community’s liturgical life. In other cases, it may be beneficial for a young person to spend time away from the Community as he/she considers possible directions for the future.

Upon request, and no earlier than seventeen years of age, a young person may be admitted by the Superior as a Resident of the Community. Prior to age eighteen, such admission also requires the permission of the parent(s). If the child is attending college, until the age of twenty-one, such admission

Oblate: Lat. *oblatus*, one who is offered. Applied to children in RB; now refers to non-vowed persons associated with a monastery. See RB 59.2,8. See “Oblate Covenant,” p.56.

and its renewal, will include consultation with the his/her parent(s). During this period, Residents engage in a program of formation that is arranged for their particular situation and that, in part, may be uniquely designed for each individual, depending upon his/her circumstances.

OBLATES

Oblates of the Community of Jesus are those who have entered into a covenant by which they have agreed to the principles and purposes of the Community as expressed in the *Rule of Life*, and have resolved to integrate the spirit of the *Rule* into their daily lives. While maintaining their obligations to and involvements in their own parishes and congregations, Oblates seek to participate in the Community’s life, insofar as they are able, and thereby to associate themselves more closely with our common vocation.



CHAPTER 12 FORMATION

For the sake of personal and communal maturity, we engage in various disciplines, exercises, and programs designed to heighten our attendance to the word of God and to aid in the transformation of our life together. Any aspect of formation within the Community should be viewed within the context of our call to continual conversion of life.

The Community is obliged to provide both the structures and opportunities for growth and development at the various levels of Community

life: Children and Young People, Residents, Postulants, Novices, Professed Members, Oblates. A Formation Director and any other appropriate personnel are appointed by the Superior in order to oversee these arrangements and carry out the associated tasks. The Superior takes care that the necessary time and resources are made available for formation, and periodically reviews the overall formation program of the Community. Each member also accepts personal responsibility for his/her formation, using the means available and encouraging one another in this pursuit.

Specific elements of the Community's formation include:

- a program of Christian education for children and young people
- regular spiritual conferences by the Superior or someone designated to give such conferences
- occasional conferences or studies on scriptural, theological, monastic, liturgical, and other subjects
- annual retreats for the Household members, the Brothers, the Sisters, and other groups
- annual personal retreats and periodic quiet days



CHAPTER 13

SEPARATION FROM THE COMMUNITY

PASTORAL SOLICITUDE

The Superior will act with pastoral solicitude towards those who choose to leave the Community. Above all, the Superior is to act with concern for

the welfare of the one who is leaving as well as for that of the whole Community.

DEPARTURE OF A RESIDENT, POSTULANT OR NOVICE

A person may leave at any stage of his/her residency, postulancy or novitiate, and may be asked to leave by the Superior, after consultation with the Council.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

When a required distancing from the Community is judged necessary, a leave of absence may be granted or imposed for a specified period of time. By this is meant permission to live outside the Community without completely severing one's ties. The request for a leave of absence by the member is normally submitted to the Superior in writing, stating the reasons for the request, and such a request may be granted by the Superior with the consent of the Council. The imposition of a leave of absence by the Superior, with the consent of the Council, is also made in writing, stating the reasons. When a leave of absence is either granted or imposed, the terms shall be clearly set forth in writing, and signed by both the member and the Superior. The terms may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- the member remains under vows
- the member does not live within the Community
- the member does not attend meetings of the Chapter

- the member must make his/her own living and working arrangements
- the Community is not liable for any debts, obligations, actions, or omissions of any kind incurred by the member
- in the case of a Brother or a Sister, he/she may not wear the habit
- the defined period of time, normally not more than three years, is to be determined by the Superior in consultation with the Council. It may be extended only with the consent of the Council.

At the conclusion of the defined period of a leave of absence, the Superior, in consultation with the Council, will determine arrangements for a member's return, or an extension of the defined period, or the member's dispensation from vows. With the approval of the Superior and the consent of the Council, arrangements may be made for a member on leave of absence to return before the end of the defined period.

NON-RENEWAL OF / DISMISSAL FROM SIMPLE PROFESSION

At the end of any year of simple profession a member may elect not to renew his/her vow. Also, the Superior can, with the consent of the Council, exclude a member from either renewing his/her profession or from making further profession. Before the end of that period, and with the consent of the Council, the Superior may also dismiss a member under simple profession. Such dismissal may occur at the request of the member or at the request of the

Superior. An appropriate document showing the release from Community obligation will be signed by both the departing member and the Superior, after which the Chapter will be informed.

DISPENSATION FROM SOLEMN PROFESSION

Separation from the Community by any Solemn Professed member is a matter of great seriousness. It is expected that such a decision will normally occur only after a significant period of serious prayer and consideration. To that end, the Superior and/or others delegated by the Superior to do so, should offer whatever help they can. Above all other considerations, the spiritual welfare of the member and the integrity of the Community must be uppermost. The process of dismissal may be initiated by either the member or the Superior:

Initiation by the member: It is strongly recommended that the Solemn Professed member who requests dispensation from his/her vows do so in writing, stating the causes that make the separation seem necessary. The weighty causes leading to the desire for separation from the Community include the following: conviction that one has lost the vocation and can no longer live the life with integrity; grave familial obligations resulting from sickness or death to which adequate response cannot be made from within the Community; the lifestyle of the member is no longer congruent with the nature and purposes of the Community. After seeking counsel and advice from experienced persons, the member should consider asking for a leave

of absence before coming to a final decision. The request for dispensation may be granted by the Superior with the consent of the Council.

Initiation by the Superior: After consultation with the Council, a warning may be given by the Superior that a dismissal is being considered, including the reasons. Such a warning is to be given in writing or in the presence of two members of the Council. A solemnly professed member may be dismissed for grave reasons including the habitual neglect of the obligations of one's profession, illegitimate absence, obdurate disobedience, or grave scandal. With the consent of the Council, the Superior may dismiss the member when it becomes apparent that such reasons persist.

At the conclusion of either process as stated above, the Superior will issue a dispensation from vows, releasing the member from all obligation to the Community, and shall inform the Chapter of such action.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the case of any Resident, Postulant, Novice or Professed Member who separates from the Community, no compensation for any goods or services rendered will be given, and no charges will be made for goods or services received from the Community, with the following exception: if scholarship aid has been given by the Community during the time of membership or affiliation, it is expected that the Community will be reimbursed

according to the agreement made at the time of the granting of such scholarship. In the case of a Brother or Sister in solemn profession, medical insurance or similar cost coverage will be provided by the Community for a period of one year. In all cases, and at the discretion of the Superior and with the consent of the Council, arrangements may be made at the time of separation to provide financial assistance. Such arrangements, if made, would be based upon the values of charity, equity, and justice.

EXPULSION

In the case of serious scandal or grave imminent harm to the Community, a Professed member (Simple or Solemn) can be immediately expelled by the Superior with the unanimous consent of the Council.

READMISSION

A person who has legitimately left the Community may be readmitted by the Superior with the consent of the Council. The terms for such readmission may include a waiting period or some form of probation.

RELEASE FROM THE OBLATE COVENANT

An Oblate, at his/her own request or at the request of the Superior, in consultation with the Council, may be released from the Oblate Covenant.

PART D
GOVERNANCE:

Describes the exercise of authority and the structure of government.

Rule of Benedict:

Lat. *regula*, standard, pattern. 6th c. code attributed to Benedict of Nursia for the ordering of community life; one of many such rules, RB eventually became the chief basis for monastic practice in the West to the present time.

RB Prol. 45; 3.7

PART D
GOVERNANCE

CHAPTER 14

THE RULE OF BENEDICT

Together with the Scriptures and the *Rule of Life for the Community of Jesus*, the *Rule of Benedict* is one of the primary documents by which the Community's life is formed and governed. As the original expression of the Benedictine charism, it is the charter for monastic living, a primary record of those principles upon which our common life has been established. For this reason it holds a privileged place in the Community of Jesus.

By means of his *Rule*, Benedict articulated a way of life in accordance with the teaching and example of Jesus, providing practical structure for living out spiritual principles. As an interpretation of the gospel, the *Rule of Benedict* describes a way for us to fulfill our calling to follow Christ and serves to constitute the Community of Jesus as a "school for the Lord's service."



CHAPTER 15

THE RULE OF LIFE OF THE
COMMUNITY OF JESUS

As a historical document, the *Rule of Benedict* must be applied with creative fidelity to present circumstances and lived out under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the *Rule of Life for the Community of Jesus* is, in part, an application of *Benedict's Rule* to the Community of Jesus, one

means by which this ancient teaching is brought into our contemporary lives.

The sources for the *Rule of Life for the Community of Jesus* are the following: the fundamental teachings contained in sacred Scripture, the inspirational principles articulated in the *Rule of Benedict*, and the particular charism evidenced in the founding and establishing of the Community of Jesus. This *Rule of Life* has been adopted by the Chapter as the authoritative document for governing our life and defining our structure. When we make our profession we commit ourselves to live by its direction and instruction. Thus, it is an objective norm to be applied to all Community members. The Chapter may amend or alter the *Rule of Life* in accordance with the procedures outlined in Chapter 22.



CHAPTER 16 THE SUPERIOR

The Superior of the Community of Jesus, referred to as either the Prior or Prioress, generally fulfills the role assigned to the “abbot” in the *Rule of Benedict*.^{*} In the Benedictine tradition, the Superior, as a fellow member of the Community, is the primary human representative of God’s authority in the Community, and the principal bearer of governance in the name of God. Though identifying various duties is inherent to a description of the office, the Superior is first the person to whom has been entrusted the primary responsibility for leadership. As such, the vocation of the Superior is essentially one of faithful service

See RB 2, 3, 27, 64.

^{*}The Latin term “prior” is one way to refer to the leader of the monastery—usually translated as “superior,” and meaning the “first,” or, the “one who is placed before or over” a community (see RB 6.7; 7.41; 20.5; 43.19; 63.10; 68.4; 71.4). Before the time of Benedict it was a common term used to designate the head of the monastery, and it is still in use today.

in dedication to the will of God and to the good of the Community:

RB 2.38; 63.2-3
Heb. 13:17

The will of God— As all authority comes from God, the Superior is first accountable to God in the exercise of the office. The Superior, as God's faithful servant, is to seek the will of God in all matters, as best it can be discerned, and strive to do it. Therefore, all decisions pertinent to the office must be based upon prayerful consideration of the teachings of sacred Scripture, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the instructions of the *Rule of Benedict*, the particular charism of the Community of Jesus as it is expressed in the *Rule of Life*, and the counsel of others. In this way, though the responsibility of decision-making is shared in various ways with the Community, the burden of primary responsibility falls upon the Superior.

RB 2.4; 64.9,20

Mt. 20:25-28

The good of the Community— The Superior exercises authority in a spirit of service, following the example of Jesus and, in all things, aims toward what is good for the Community and its individual members. Therefore, it is the duty of the Superior to build a fellowship in which God and his will are sought and loved above all; to discern the essential needs of the Community, together with the best direction for meeting those needs; to foster the membership's living and working together for the glory of God and the common good; to be a symbol and focus of our common striving for love and communion in the Spirit of God; to preserve, maintain, and

interpret the charism of the Community; and to watch over the life of the Community to see that in all things it conforms to the provisions of this *Rule of Life*.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SUPERIOR

The Superior's primary responsibilities may be characterized as the following:

RB 2.30-34

Shepherd—Out of love for all, and with the encouragement and correction which proceed from that love, the Superior cares for the souls entrusted to his/her charge and serves to assist each member in his/her conversion to God. Even while seeking the good of the Community as a whole, the Superior remains cognizant of the individual good of the members, and endeavors to promote their welfare and maturity in the faith.

The Superior bears primary responsibility in all aspects of vocation discernment, the stages of membership, and the ongoing formation of Community members. For the sake of providing spiritual direction and counsel, the Superior may hear the confessions of Community members, and is charged to maintain the confidentiality of all such communications. In all direction given, the Superior prays for discernment and understanding of the will of God, so that the obedience the Superior asks of another will not be understood as submission to his/her own will, but to the Spirit of God who leads them both.

Caring for the personal needs of others requires a spirit of patience and wisdom as well as perseverance and fortitude. Therefore, watching over the flock in his/her charge, the Superior also

must seek the means necessary to be personally strengthened in the spiritual life, and to progress in the Christian pilgrimage, so that all help the Superior offers to others issues from a life of genuine prayer and devotion to God.

RB 2.11-15

Teacher— By word and example, the Superior seeks to instruct the Community in the ways of God. The Superior aims for the pre-eminence of truth in all aspects of the Community's life, and to that end must see that the membership is nourished and strengthened in the word of God.

RB 64.9

In order faithfully to teach others, the Superior must him/herself be a student of Scripture and the tradition of the Church. By providing regular conferences to part or all of the Community, by leading periodic retreats and study days, by overseeing the various aspects of an ongoing formation program for all ages represented in the Community, and by promoting individual study and research, the Superior serves to advance the Community's understanding of and conformity to the truth of Christ. Moreover, by the living witness of the Superior's own example, the Community is instructed effectively in observance of all the values inherent to the Community's life, and in personal fidelity to the word of God.

RB 64.7-8,17

Administrator— In addition to directing the Community's spiritual life, the Superior is also the chief manager of all administrative matters. As such, the Superior oversees the Community's organizational tasks and structures, coordinates the activities related to them, and supervises all those practical obligations pertaining to his/her office. The Superior delegates authority to those who

assist in these tasks, appointing and nominating various officers in accordance with the procedures outlined in this *Rule of Life*. The Superior may also appoint others to serve under his/her direction in order to carry out various administrative duties. By means of such administration, the Superior aims to achieve goals with care and efficiency, while at the same time developing leadership among the members and enabling the gifts and talents of the members to be put to effective use for the welfare of the entire Community. Under the provisions of this *Rule of Life*, the Superior determines the agenda for and convenes and presides at all meetings of the Chapter and the Council. Under the provisions of the By-Laws, the Superior works with the Board of Directors in managing the business affairs of the Community.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COMMUNITY

As persons who live in the monastic tradition, members of the Community of Jesus have consciously and prayerfully chosen to submit themselves to a life of obedience to God. Community members, having made this choice and having confirmed it through the profession of vows, are responsible to respect and value highly the office of the Superior. Remembering that God has entrusted to the Superior the charge of leadership, Community members seek to exercise a spirit of humility and respect in accordance with the honor due to the office, knowing that surrender to God is profoundly expressed in obedience to human authority given by God.

Before God, and seeking the guidance of his

Holy Spirit, Community members bear certain solemn responsibilities with regard to the Superior: in wisdom to choose a Superior to lead and help them toward the fulfillment of the sacred vocation that all have undertaken together; in honesty to share freely with the Superior the joys and sorrows, achievements and faults, hopes and fears, that are common to our spiritual journey; in love to encourage, support, advise, cooperate with and possibly correct the Superior, knowing that he/she cannot single-handedly make the Community what it professes and desires to be; in faith to see the love of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in the Superior's dealings with them; in humility to know that, as a Community is bound together in one body, the success of the Superior represents the success of all, and the failure of the Superior represents the failure of all.

ELECTION

The Superior is chosen by the Community in accordance with the "Procedures for the Election of a Superior of the Community of Jesus." The Superior is elected by an eighty percent majority of the Chapter of Election. The term of service is eight years, and he/she may be re-elected for consecutive terms of four years. In the event that the office of Superior becomes vacant before the end of a term, the Subprior(ess) becomes the temporary Superior until an election can be held.

REMOVAL

For grave reason and for the welfare of the Community, it may be the judgment of the Council and the Board of Directors that the Superior be removed from office. Valid reasons include:

- repeated serious violations or disregard of the *Rule of Life*;
- mental or physical incapacity to perform his/her required duties;
- habitual neglect or dereliction of duty
- malfeasance or grave scandal due to culpable behavior

A vote to recommend removal must be approved by eighty percent of the remaining Council members. Such recommendation must then be approved by an eighty percent majority vote of the Board of Directors. This action, together with the reasons for taking it, must then be ratified by an eighty percent majority vote of the Chapter. Upon such ratification, the Subprior(ess) serves as temporary Superior until an election can be held.

CHAPTER 17
THE SUBPRIOR(ESS)

DUTIES

The Subprior(ess) of the Community of Jesus generally fulfills the role assigned to the “prior” in the *Rule of Benedict*.^{*} The Subprior(ess):

- carries out responsibilities delegated by and under the supervision of the Superior;
- presides over the Community, including meetings of the Chapter and Council, when

RB 65

^{*}In his *Rule*, Benedict uses the Latin term *praepositus* to refer to the abbot’s lieutenant, the second-in-command of the monastery. This is the term usually translated as “prior.”

- the Superior is absent or impeded, or when delegated to do so by the Superior;
- assumes the duties of the Superior upon his/her death, resignation, or removal, until a new Superior is elected.
- serves as a member of the Council.
- may hear the confessions of Community members and is charged to maintain the confidentiality of all such communications.

ELECTION

Because the Subprior(ess) may be called upon to preside over the Community in accordance with this *Rule of Life*, the office is filled by election rather than by simple appointment or ratification. The Subprior(ess) is nominated by the Superior and elected by the Chapter. In the case of a non-election, the Superior will withdraw the name and make another nomination. The term of office is two years, or, in the case of filling an unexpired term, until the completion of that term. The Subprior(ess) may be re-elected for consecutive terms of two years.

Chapter:

Lat. *capitulum*. The formal assembly of the monastic community. The name is derived from the practice of gathering to hear the reading of a chapter of the Rule.

Acts 15:28

Rom. 12:4-8; Eph. 4:1-16

1 Cor. 12:4-7



CHAPTER 18

CHAPTER

As the office of the Superior represents the presence of Christ leading the pilgrim Community, the Chapter is a sign of Christ's presence within the united Community. The Chapter represents the church acting as one body, in accord with the leading of the Holy Spirit and with the variety of gifts given to all of its members. The Benedictine tradition

RB 3; 71.1

teaches that the counsel of the membership is to be sought in all important matters. The Chapter, then, is one sign of the mutual obedience exercised by all for the sake of the common good.

COMPOSITION

The Chapter is made up of all Solemn Professed members of the Community of Jesus. Therefore, a decision made by this body represents the highest authority of the Community. Simple Professed members may attend the meetings of Chapter and participate in its deliberations, though without vote. At the discretion of the Superior, the meeting of Chapter may be limited to Solemn Professed members only. Also, at the recommendation of the Superior, the Chapter may permit others to attend and/or address the Chapter, but without vote. The Chapter constitutes the voting membership of the corporation as described in the By-Laws of the Community of Jesus, Inc.

DUTIES OF CAPITULARS

The individual Chapter member (Solemn Professed) is identified as a “capitular.” It is the duty of each capitular:

- to attend all meetings of the Chapter unless, for valid reasons, he/she is unable to do so. Notification of absence should be made to the Scribe.
- to seek the will of God and the good of the Community, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in all discussions, decisions, and elections.
- to aim for the formation of the common mind of the Community. Dialogue, prayer,

Capitular:
Lat. pertaining
to a chapter.

Eph. 4:3

- and reflection are all necessary elements in this process toward discernment and unity. Ordinarily, therefore, a vote is taken only after it appears that a consensus has been attained.
- to express thoughts with honesty and humility, avoiding all rancor, bitterness, or divisiveness. There should be no false unanimity nor any competitive striving to have one's own way. Discussions are to be frank and open, each capitular endeavoring to "maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."
 - to maintain complete confidentiality with regard to all Chapter deliberations and decisions. Actions of Chapter may be made known by the Superior or those delegated to do so.

PROCEDURES

Ordinarily, the Chapter will meet monthly, though it is desirable that meetings be held more frequently and regularly. The Chapter may be convoked by the Superior, the Subprior(ess) at the Superior's direction, the Board of Directors of the corporation, or at the request of at least two-thirds of the Council membership. Requests by capitulars for a meeting of the Chapter are to be made to the Superior or the Council. In all official votes or elections of the Chapter, each capitular is entitled to one vote. Two-thirds of the capitulars shall constitute a quorum. Ordinarily, and unless otherwise stated in the *Rule of Life* or determined by the Chapter, decisions are to be made by a simple majority vote of the capitulars present at a meeting of the Chapter.

Adequate advance notice must be made for all meetings of the Chapter. Information pertinent to certain agenda items should also be made available in advance, in order to provide the background necessary for important decisions.

In addition to conducting the business of the Community, the Chapter may also receive a teaching conference from the Superior, or from someone the Superior has designated to do so.

AGENDA

It is the responsibility of the Superior, who may consult with the Council, to set the agenda for all meetings of the Chapter. Every capitular, department, or committee is free to propose business for the Chapter to the Superior. Except for items brought by the Superior, new business is not normally brought to Chapter without advance inclusion on the agenda. However, the Chapter may decide to consider new business. When possible, the agenda is to be made available to the capitulars in advance of the Chapter meeting.

ACTIONS OF THE CHAPTER

All matters relevant to the life of the Community constitute proper material for consideration by the Chapter. Actions in relation to these matters may be considered under the following categories:

- the Chapter *receives* information.
- a vote of the Chapter *ratifies* decisions and appointments made by the Superior and/or the Council.
- the Chapter *elects* the Superior, Subprior(ess), and Board of Directors.

Extraordinary:

Outside the usual and ordinary course of operations.

Onerous:

Substantial restrictions on use or disposition.

- the Chapter is *consulted* in matters that, in the judgment of the Superior and/or the Council, call for consideration by the capitulars. In such consultative matters, the Chapter may extend voting rights to simple professed members. Though not required to act in accordance with such counsel, the Superior and/or the Council should only for the most serious reasons act contrary to it.
- the *consent* of the Chapter is required in the following matters:
 - to admit candidates to simple and solemn profession
 - to re-admit a Professed member (Simple or Solemn) who has left legitimately
 - to extend or abbreviate the period of novitiate or simple profession outside the normal limits as defined by the *Rule of Life*
 - to make extraordinary expenditures according to the Financial Norms
 - to contract extraordinary debts
 - to dispose of valuable artifacts of the Community
 - to accept and administer endowments, legacies, or gifts to which onerous conditions are made
 - to undertake or relinquish extraordinary commitments for which the Community is responsible
 - in all other matters defined by the By-Laws and/or the *Rule of Life* that require the consent of the Chapter

The Superior and/or Council are required to act in accordance with such decisions of the Chapter.

RB 3.12-13; 21; 65.12

Ex. 18:13-26;
Acts 14:23; 15:6,22



CHAPTER 19 COUNCIL AND DEANS

Monastic tradition provides for a council of “seniors” and the appointment of “deans.” This model of leadership, illustrated in both the Old and New Testaments, is based upon the principle that authority and responsibility may be shared by the Superior for the sake of managing the life of the Community and strengthening its governance.

The Community of Jesus has at least five Deans, with representation from: the Household members (one man, one woman), the Brothers, the Sisters, and the clergy. The primary ministry of at least one of the Deans should involve work outside the Community property. Together with the Superior and the Subprior(ess) the Deans constitute the Council. Each Dean must be a Solemn Professed member, nominated by the Superior and elected by the Chapter. For the sake of keeping united both spiritual and temporal matters in the government of the Community of Jesus, election to the position of Dean also constitutes election to the Board of Directors. Together with the Chairman of the Board of Directors, they serve as the Executive Council of that Board.

DUTIES

Deans may be delegated a degree of responsibility for the care of a portion of the Community in accordance with the directions of the Superior. Also, for the spiritual well-being of individuals and the Community, Deans may hear the confessions of Community members, and are

charged to maintain the confidentiality of all such communications.

The Council is to meet regularly to assist the Superior in exercising responsibility for all aspects of the Community's life. Meetings of the Council may be called by the Superior, or by any three members of the Council. The Council:

- acts in an advisory capacity to the Superior, offering honest and sincere advice for the sake of God's will and the common good.
- is convoked by the Superior, by a member of the Council at the Superior's direction, or at the request of at least one-half of the Council members.
- considers all matters of business according to the agenda set by the Superior.
- shall regularly report its deliberations to the Chapter, through the Superior or the Superior's delegate.
- may be obliged by the Superior to observe confidentiality regarding matters that come before it.

The Council may be *consulted* by the Superior in any matter affecting either the spiritual or the temporal welfare of the Community. The Council's *consent* is required in the case of certain actions.

Consultation with the Council is required for:

- the appointment of officers
- admitting candidates at all levels of association and membership in the Community
- dismissing Residents, Postulants or Novices
- releasing Oblates from the Oblate Covenant

Consent of the Council is required for:

- extending or abbreviating the period of novitiate or simple profession outside the normal limits as defined by the *Rule of Life*
- granting or imposing a leave of absence, or extending the leave of absence beyond the limits defined by the *Rule of Life*
- dismissal from temporary vows
- dispensation from solemn vows
- re-admitting a Resident, Postulant, Novice, or Professed member (Simple or Solemn) who has left legitimately, and determining any probationary period to be required upon the person's return
- making extraordinary expenditures, according to the Financial Norms
- accepting and administering endowments, legacies, or gifts to which onerous conditions are made

The Superior is required to act in accordance with such decisions of the Council.



CHAPTER 20 OFFICERS OF THE CHAPTER

The Superior delegates responsibility for various aspects of the Community, in both spiritual and temporal matters, by the appointment of certain officers of the Chapter. Appointments are made by the Superior in consultation with the Council and subject to the ratification of the Chapter. Chapter officers perform certain duties defined by and under the direction of the Superior. Such officers may include these:

Scribe

Bursar

Groundskeeper

Archivist

Guestmaster

Formation Director

Senior Brother(s) and Sister(s)

Any other officers needed to carry out the mission and business of the Community.



CHAPTER 21

TEMPORALITIES

Community members regard themselves as stewards of everything received. For the sake of the common good, they take responsibility for the proper use of Community goods and properties and make privately owned homes and possessions available for Community use. The needs of the Brothers and Sisters are met by the Community; married and single members arrange for their own financial support. Household members contribute to the Community according to their means and abilities.

In addition to adopting an annual budget, the Chapter establishes other norms for financial transactions, including those which may be deemed “extraordinary” and those that require the authorization of the Chapter.



CHAPTER 22

RATIFICATION AND AMENDMENT OF
THE *RULE OF LIFE*

The *Rule of Life* for the Community of Jesus becomes effective with its adoption by a vote of eighty percent of the capitulars present at a meeting of the Chapter. Amendments and alterations may be proposed to the Council for consideration by any capitular. With the approval of the Council, and with sufficient time provided for study and consideration, such amendments or alterations are to be brought to the Chapter. An eighty percent vote of the Chapter is required for the adoption of any such changes to the *Rule of Life*. Amendments and alterations to the Appendices may be made by a simple majority vote of the capitulars present at a meeting of the Chapter.

THE VOWS

SIMPLE (FIRST) PROFESSION

HOUSEHOLD MEMBER

I, _____, for the glory of God, and intending to consecrate myself more fully to him, and to follow Christ more generously all my life, with my brothers and sisters as witnesses and in the presence of the Prior/Prioress, promise to live a life of worship, obedience, and love. I renew my commitment to Jesus Christ, and embrace my call to a way of life according to the *Rule of Life* of the Community of Jesus. With my whole heart I give myself to this religious community, to seek perfect charity in the service of God and the church, by the grace of the Holy Spirit and the prayers of all the faithful in heaven and on earth.

BROTHER/SISTER

I, _____, for the glory of God, and intending to consecrate myself more fully to him, and to follow Christ more generously all my life, with my brothers and sisters as witnesses and in the presence of the Prior/Prioress, promise to live a life of worship, obedience and love. I renew my commitment to Jesus Christ and relinquish my right to own, to marry, and to choose, according to the *Rule of Life* the Community of Jesus and the Constitution of the Brotherhood / Sisterhood. With my whole heart I give myself to this religious community, to seek perfect charity in the service of God and the church, by the grace of the Holy Spirit and the prayers of all the faithful in heaven and on earth.

RENEWAL OF SIMPLE PROFESSION

I, _____, for the glory of God, with my brothers and sisters as witnesses, and in the presence of the Prior/Prioress, renew my first profession, committing myself to Jesus Christ, giving myself to this community, and promising to live a life of worship, obedience and love, according to the *Rule of Life* of the Community of Jesus, (Brothers and Sisters add) and the Constitution of this Brotherhood / Sisterhood.

SOLEMN (FINAL) PROFESSION

HOUSEHOLD MEMBER

I, _____, for the glory of God, and for the fulfillment of his will in my life, solemnly promise to follow Jesus Christ as a permanent member of the Community of Jesus. I commit myself to him, and to you, my brothers and sisters, promising before God and his church, to live a life of obedience, conversion, and stability, according to the *Rule of Life* of the Community of Jesus. I make this solemn vow by the grace of God alone, and in the faith of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church, that I may forever belong to God in a holy life and a holy love.

BROTHER/SISTER

I, _____, for the glory of God, and for the fulfillment of his will in my life, solemnly promise to follow Jesus Christ as a Brother / Sister of the Community of Jesus. I give to him my freedom to own, to marry, and to choose, promising before God and his church to live a life of obedience, conversion, and stability, according to the *Rule of Life* of the Community of Jesus and the Constitution of this Brotherhood / Sisterhood. I make this solemn vow by the grace of God alone, and in the faith of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church, that I may forever belong to God in a holy life and a holy love.

OBLATE COVENANT

I, _____, for the glory of God, do solemnly promise and covenant before God and these witnesses, to live faithfully as an Oblate of the Community of Jesus, God being my helper. I ask Jesus to use this promise to further the work of sanctification in me, that I may be wholly his. May the Holy Spirit assist me to fulfill this promise faithfully.