

CHAPTER 3

THE CONSECRATED LIFE

Consecration

RCV 47-49
Form V
Can. 654

22. In response to the call of the Holy Spirit, each Brother, freely, and without any thought of turning back, bases his whole existence on the gospel in order to follow Jesus Christ. Accordingly he consecrates himself entirely to the Holy Trinity to procure the glory of God in the ministry of Christian education.

Religious consecration gives meaning to the specific commitments which it inspires and brings into unity the successive moments in the life of the Brother.

D 17
D 18
Rm 6
Can. 654

23. The call to religious profession is an invitation to the Brothers to deepen the rich meaning of their baptism and to express it by accepting the new demands that are made upon them. They strive more and more to die to sin and to live for God in Jesus Christ. In this way they are for all people witnesses to the transcendence of the Kingdom of God.

The Brothers live out their consecration in a community of the Church. Their community is for all

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Christians a special sign of the covenant between God and human beings. Such a community affirms the duty and the possibility of renewing the world in the spirit of the gospel.

B 9°
Can. 654
Can. 673

24. Religious consecration establishes an intimate communion between the person of each Brother and that of Jesus Christ. This consecration is expressed by vows of chastity, poverty, obedience, association for the service of the poor through education, and stability in the Institute.

As religious vowed to the ministry of Christian education, the first apostolate of the Brothers consists in the witness of their consecrated life.

RC ch. 33

25. The Brothers pronounce their vows, at first temporary and then perpetual, according to the following formula:

Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, prostrate with the most profound respect before your infinite and adorable majesty, I consecrate myself entirely to you to procure your glory as far as I shall be able and as you will require of me.

For this purpose I, . . . promise to unite myself, and to remain in society, with the Brothers of the Christian Schools who are associated to conduct, together and by association, schools for the service of the poor. I

promise to go wherever I may be sent and to do whatever I may be assigned by the body of the Society or its superiors.

Wherefore, I promise and vow chastity, poverty, obedience, association for the educational service of the poor, and stability in the Institute according to the Bull of Approbation and the Rule of the Institute.

I promise to keep these vows faithfully (for a period of . . . years) all my life.

In testimony thereof, I have signed. Done at... on... in the year of Our Lord...

Signature. . .

Can. 669,1

26. As a sign of their consecration, and as a witness to poverty, the Brothers wear the habit of the Institute determined in accordance with the Institute's own law.

B 18°

26a. *The habit of the Brothers is the robe and white rabat. Practical directions for the wearing of the habit may be given by the Brothers in charge of the Districts, taking local circumstances into account. These directions are submitted to Brother Superior for approval.*

Chastity

Mt 19, 11-12
D 26,1

27. Chastity, rooted in the gospel and lived in celibacy, is an expression of love totally vowed to God. It is a

gift of the Spirit. It frees the Brothers for the service of others and for the kingdom of God.

Chastity disposes the Brothers to live united together in community. It sustains them in their educational work and teaches them how to love each and every person with an unselfish and respectful love. For this reason each Brother shares in some way in the very fatherhood of God.

Can.599

28. In order to follow Jesus Christ, and as an expression of the total gift of themselves to him personally, the Brothers commit themselves by vow to live a celibate life and to renounce, from a new motive, that of the vow, every act, interior or exterior, contrary to chastity.

Consecrated chastity, a mystery of death and resurrection, of sacrifice and of fruitfulness, witnesses to the value of a life in which love places itself at the service of all.

The Brothers choose celibate chastity in a response to a call from God. They live this call progressively, developing humanly by reason of their tender regard for everyone, especially the poor.

29. In order to reinforce their fidelity to the demands of consecrated chastity, the Brothers place their confidence in divine grace and they live in an awareness of God. They recognise in the Virgin Mary,

the mother of Jesus and of all Christians, their model and their support.

30. In community the Brothers maintain a spirit of friendship and brotherhood that gives support to their affective life. They take means to preserve their physical health and emotional stability.

31. The Brothers control their senses and their emotions by a life of voluntary austerity. They act with the necessary prudence and reserve in their contacts with society.

Poverty

Med. 86,1
Mt 8,20
2 Co 8,9
PC 13
D 34,2

32. By their poverty lived according to the gospel, the Brothers become poor in order to follow Christ who was poor and in order to serve better all persons as their brothers and sisters, especially those most in need.

They are convinced that if they were to fill their hearts with the goods of this earth, they would close themselves off from God and become as strangers to the poor.

The spiritual journey of John Baptist de La Salle, their Father, as well as their solidarity with people today and the calls of the Church, motivate the Brothers to cultivate within themselves the disposition of a poor person. By such a conversion, they witness to the

fact that God is their only wealth.

The Brothers live simply as persons of ordinary means, having everything in common. They provide for the livelihood of the community through their work. They decide together the guidelines for the best use of their resources.

Ja 2, 15-16

32a. *In their everyday living the Brothers willingly share the lot of the poor. When something useful or necessary is lacking, they experience deep within themselves the meaning of the joy and peace promised in the first Beatitude. From time to time they find ways to deprive themselves voluntarily in order to help those suffering from poverty.*

RCV 97-142

32b. *Aware of the value of their work in relation to poverty, the Brothers develop their natural talents and their professional skills so as to enable others to benefit from them. At the same time, the Brothers do not allow themselves to be so preoccupied with their work that they become possessive about their goods or their talents.*

Can. 600
Can. 668,3

33. By the vow of poverty the Brothers forego the independent use and disposal of goods or objects having monetary value. They retain only the bare ownership of their patrimony as well as the right to inherit.

Whatever a Brother produces by his work, and whatever he receives as a salary, pension or donation, belongs to the Institute.

The demands of religious poverty apply equally to the community and to all the units of the District and of the Institute.

Can. 668
1-2

34. Before their first profession the Brothers hand over to someone of their own choice the administration of their patrimony and its revenue.

Before their perpetual profession the Brothers make a will, valid in civil law, by which they dispose of their personal temporal goods.

In order to change any of the dispositions already made, or to take any action whatever concerning their temporal goods, the Brothers need the permission of the Brother Visitor.

Can. 668,4
PC 13

35. In a spirit of gospel detachment, any Brother having at least five years of perpetual profession may freely renounce his personal goods.

To obtain authorisation to do this, the Brother presents his request to the Brother Visitor who then forwards it to the Superior General.

The act of renunciation will be, as far as possible, valid in civil law.

35a. *In the use of money and material goods put at their disposal the Brothers are careful to act as faithful stewards. They avoid accumulating things, and show their dependence by rendering an account of the use they have made of what they have been given.*

35b. *As they pool resources that derive from their labour, the Brothers are careful that this does not lead to collective wealth; on the contrary, they share generously with their Brothers, the Districts most in need, and also with the poor.*

35c. *The Brothers generously and with joy devote their time, their physical well-being, their security, their intellectual and spiritual gifts, to all those who may have need of them.*

Obedience

Ph 2,8
Heb 5,8

36. Obedience based on the gospel is a communion with the Holy Spirit who unites the will of the Brothers progressively to that of Christ who became obedient unto death. It is through world events, through young people, the community of the Brothers and the Superiors, through the Body of the Institute and the Church, that the Spirit manifests His purposes.


Inspired by the teaching and example of the Founder,

who submitted himself to the “Body of the Society”, the Brothers live out their obedience by their availability within a community committed to accomplishing the mission of the Institute .

37. The ordinary way in which the Spirit is revealed is through a community working together to discover the needs of the world and of the Church. Each member of the community ought to be heard, since the Spirit speaks and acts in every Brother.

Differences of age, of view-point and formation provide a rich source from which to form policies and come to decisions. It is the responsibility of the Brother Director to make the final decision concerning them.

Obedience sometimes seems difficult and it can go contrary to one’s legitimate personal convictions. The Brothers make known their problems in this regard to the community and to the superiors; if they do not find a satisfactory solution in this way, then through an attitude of faith they accept the decision of the superiors.

 **38.** By the vow of obedience, the Brothers make explicit and concrete their willingness to obey the legitimate Superiors in all they command according to the Rule in those matters that relate either directly or indirectly to the purpose of the Institute. By this vow, the Brothers are likewise obliged to obey the

Holy Father. They bind themselves in conscience to obey the orders of the Pope or those of the superiors that are given in virtue of the vow.

38a. *Since commands in virtue of the vow of obedience are very rarely given, the competent Superior should clearly state his intention to do so by some appropriate formula.*

Association for the service of the poor through education

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D 28

39. By the vow of association for the service of the poor through education, the Brothers commit themselves, as the Founder did, to conduct schools or other centres of Christian education that are accessible to the poor. At the same time they strive to develop educational methods that promote above all the social betterment of ordinary classes of people.

39a. *The solidarity among the Brothers that results from their vow of association for the service of the poor through education gives support to the apostolic activity of the Institute.*

40. The Brothers have always in view the promotion of justice in the light of the gospel and either the direct or indirect service of the poor as the preferred aspect of their ministry of education.

They work directly for the poor by providing an

education for the economically deprived, victims of social injustice, delinquents, and those neglected by the rest of society.

When the Brothers work with students from families that are more or less well off, they teach them their duties and responsibilities with regard to social justice and charity towards everyone.

The Brothers give special attention to their students who have difficulties at school, at home, or problems adjusting to society.

40a. *The District and the Regions establish a plan for the development of their apostolic works which will make the direct service of the poor more and more their effective priority.*

Such a plan includes ways to recruit or train replacements and so permits Brothers to be released for such service.

40b. *Following the example of their Founder, the Brothers, as persons and in community, look upon their intellectual and spiritual development in terms of a progressive conversion to the poor.*

40c. *By their entire life and their teaching inspired by the social doctrine of the Church, the Brothers prepare their pupils to create more just relationships among the peoples of the world.*

They help them to become involved actively in movements for justice and peace.

41. Their preferential option in favour of the poor, continually enlightened by a view of faith, helps the Brothers to recognise the inequalities to which society gives rise. In their desire to make it possible for poor people to live with dignity and to be open to the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Brothers show genuine creativity in responding to these new needs.

Stability in the Institute

B 9°

42. The Brothers consider fidelity to their vocation to be a response to God's fidelity in their regard. Aware that the Founder intended to establish a stable community that would respond to the ever-present need of education for the young, the Brothers make a vow of stability in the Institute.

By this vow they commit themselves to remain in the Institute in order to accomplish its specific mission and to live in fraternal and apostolic communion with their Brothers. They remain faithful to the Institute and to its spirit, to their Brothers, and to those they serve in their ministry.

***42a.** Aware of the difficulties that lie before them, the Brothers nevertheless commit themselves to*

the Institute in all their uniqueness as persons. They are ready to respond to the successive calls of God in the various stages of their lives.

42b. *Prayer, filial devotion to St. John Baptist de La Salle, love for the community and dedication to the work of the apostolate help to assure stability and fidelity to the Institute.*

Separation from the Institute

43. A Brother may believe that he has just reasons for leaving the Institute. He should, however, through personal prayer and reflection, weigh carefully the reasons for such a decision.

He should also seek the advice of prudent counsellors in order to guard against self-deception or temptations that could lead him astray.

B 10°
Can. 688-692

44. A Brother with temporary or perpetual vows may not leave the Institute of his own accord before being dispensed from his vows by the competent authority: namely the Brother Superior General with the consent of his Council in the case of temporary vows; the Holy See, to which the Brother Superior General will forward the request, together with his own opinion and that of his Council, in the case of a Brother professed with perpetual vows.

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Can. 684-687
Can. 694-704

45. All that concerns the transfer of a Brother to another Institute, exclaustation or dismissal, must conform to Canon Law and to the norms proper to the Institute. (cf. DA 33-44).

Can. 702

46. A Brother who legitimately leaves the Institute, or who is legitimately dismissed from it, cannot demand recompense for any work done in the Institute. Charity and equity demand that the Brothers do not lose sight of their duties with regard to those who have left the Institute.