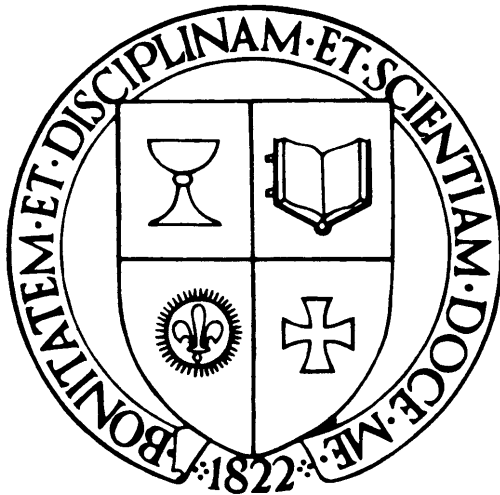


The Basilian Way of Life



**The Basic Constitutional Document
of the
Congregation of Priests of Saint Basil
(Basilian Fathers)**

Toronto, Canada
2002, 2009, 2013

PREFACE TO THE 2013 EDITION

It should be said from the beginning that no changes have been made to this, our fundamental constitutional document, and that the 2013 edition is merely a re-printing. While there were minor changes made in the 2002 edition pertaining to procedures for the selection of chapter delegates, *The Basilian Way of Life* remains unchanged since it was introduced to the Congregation in 1969 and completed in 1972. A document that defines and inspires a Christian community of disciples should reflect the constancy of Jesus Christ in the history of our salvation. Frequent changes would imply a restive spirit.

At the same time, that does not mean that our Congregation is adverse to change, or that we shrink away from growth in the Spirit. We are not the same community that we were in 1972, but our commitment to the profoundly dynamic exhortations of *The Basilian Way of Life* remains unchanged. This wonderful paradox—our commitment to constancy and change—is part of our Basilian identity. It is what grounds our ability to grow in love for one another while remaining faithful to all that has been accomplished in God’s name by our confrères who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith.

The purpose of our existence as an institute of consecrated life is the sanctification of our members in and through our common vowed life and our apostolic ministry to the Church. It is *The Basilian Way of Life* that best facilitates that sanctification and service. As such, it is a sacred document. Reading it, individually and in common, is a source of grace, but only if done prayerfully and reverently. It is also an important part of what binds each of us to one another. We have no community life without it. In a world that is becoming almost increasingly virtual, let the printed version of *The Basilian Way of Life* continue to be a tangible sign of the fraternal love that unites us in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

St. Basil, pray for us.

V. Rev. George T. Smith, C.S.B.

Superior General

October 1, 2013 Memorial of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus

A NOTE ON REFERENCES

The abbreviations used in the Footnotes for Scriptural references are common and should be readily recognized. For documents of the Second Vatican Council, the abbreviations used are as follows:

- AA* Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People (*Apostolicam actuositatem*).
- DV* Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei verbum*).
- GS* Pastoral Constitution on the church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et spes*).
- LG* Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen gentium*).
- OT* Decree on the Training of Priests (*Optatam totius*).
- PC* Decree on the Up-to-Date Renewal of Religious Life (*Perfectae caritatis*).
- PO* Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests (*Presbyterorum ordinis*).
- SC* Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum concilium*)

Other abbreviations used are:

- C. (Cc.)* A Canon (canons) of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*
- Comm.* *Communicationes*, Vatican City, 1979-
- Const.* *Constitutions of the Congregation of Priests of St. Basil*, 1956
- Reserved* ‘Reserved’ means an article has been suppressed by the General Chapter but, to avoid changing the numbering of subsequent articles, the space is now reserved for a possible additional article.
- Rule* *The Rule of the Congregation of Priests of Saint Basil*, 1962
- Superior* For a superior of a house with five members or fewer, read “*rector*.”

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THE BASILIAN WAY OF LIFE

1

The early Christians knew themselves as "followers of the Way"; they were instructed in the Way of the Lord. All Christian life must find its center in Christ our Lord, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and the authentic teaching of the Gospel is the first and essential guide for anyone who wants to follow this way of life.

2

Religious communities are called by the Holy Spirit to follow Christ in a special way, each in its own manner: there is a variety of gifts from the one Holy Spirit, and many sorts of service to be done for the one Lord. The present work, *The Basilian Way of Life*, comes from one of these religious families, the Basilian Fathers. It is an outline of our form of religious life, a guide to be used in addition to other authentic sources of instruction on the Christian life and the general directives of the Church for religious communities.

THE BASILIAN FATHERS

3

The Congregation of St. Basil, or the Basilian Fathers, is a community of priests and students for the priesthood. Ours is an active, apostolic community of simple vows, which seeks the glory of God in every form of priestly activity compatible with the common life, especially in the works of education and evangelization.

¹ Acts 9:2; 18:25-26. Jn. 14:6. Vatican II, *PC*, 2.

² I Cor. 12:4-5. Vatican II, *LG*, 43; *PC*, 1. Paul VI, *Ecclesiae Sanctae II*, 12-16.

³ *Constitutions* of 1863. *Const.*, 1-2. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 9.

ST. BASIL

4

St. Basil was a priest, a teacher, and for nine years Bishop of Caesarea in Asia Minor. He suffered from poor health all his life, and was to die, in the year 379, before he was fifty years old, but he was tireless in teaching true doctrine and working for the unity of the Church. He did not live to see the fruits of his work, but he has been recognized as one of the great Doctors of the Church. We have chosen him as our patron because of his holiness and the example he gives us, and because of two aspects of his life and teaching. Imbued with the spirit of the Gospel, he taught men and women how to live a Christian community life in the conditions of his time; and he found even in pagan learning values which, seen in the light of revelation, might contribute to a full Christian life.

THE SPIRIT OF THE FOUNDERS

5

The Basilian Fathers were founded in 1822 by a group of ten diocesan priests in Annonay, France, in order that, strengthened by their association in Christ and the Church, they might better serve God's people by their priestly work, especially in the areas of Christian education and preaching. Their spirit of devotion to work and of involvement in the Church, the simplicity of their life and their awareness of a call to deeper community life continued to animate the priests of St. Basil when they took formal vows in 1852, and these charisms still inspire Basilians today.

⁴ Cf. C. Roume, *A History of the Congregation of St. Basil* to 1864, 158.

⁵ Cf. Letter of September 15, 1832, cited in Roume, *A History*, 152-154.

THE CALL OF CHRIST

6

In the mystery of God's love we are called to follow his Son, Christ the Lord. Just as the disciples of Christ learned his way by their association with him, so we too, through our intimate and personal union with the Lord Jesus learn to love and to serve. The love he gives us is the center and well-spring of all we are and all we do. For us, to live is Christ, with whom we have passed from death to life, whose members we are, whose saving work we are called to do, and into whose kingdom we have been called by his gracious love.

7

As disciples we listen to the Lord as he speaks to us in the Scriptures, through the Church, in our community, in the signs of the times, and by his Spirit. Then, moved by the same love which has called us, we respond by giving ourselves, our time, our talents and our gifts, freely, generously, joyfully to the Lord, in the service of our brothers and of all the children of God. We are confident that he who has begun this good work in us will help us to persevere in his grace and will see that it is finished when the day of Christ Jesus comes.

8

When we dedicate ourselves to the service of God in this community we enter upon a continuing conversion of life, turning away from sin and worldly values to follow Jesus. We sanction and seal our offering by the three vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience which come to us from the common tradition of the Church as appropriate ways to profess the evangelical counsels in

⁶ Mk. 1:17. Jn. 1:35-51. Phil. 1:21. Jn. 5:24. I Cor. 12:27. Jn. 14:12. Col. 1:13.

⁷ Mt. 17:5. Mk. 9:7. Lk. 9:35. Cf. Vatican II, *DV*, 2-6. Phil. 1:6.

⁸ Mt. 4:17. Acts 3:19. Cf. Vatican II, *LG*. 44; *PC*, 5. Lk. 18:28-30. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 21.

response to Christ's call to us as Basilians. In making this profession we look to Christ to purify our hearts and give us spiritual freedom and a stimulus to our love, and above all to conform us to that kind of poor and virginal life which he chose for himself. In this way we leave all things for the sake of the kingdom, following Christ in a brotherhood of mutual love and support.

CHASTITY

9

By the vow of chastity we undertake a life, following the example of the Lord, in which we devote ourselves to the Lord's affairs with undivided hearts. This life is a gift of God and flows from his grace and our response. We respond to his love with the love he gives us in our union with his Son. In calling us to the chastity of Christ he frees us from the responsibility and cares of family life so that we can return his love in a special way by devoting our lives to his service and the service of his people.

10

In this vow we give up an aspect of human life that is natural and good, but there is much more in what we do than simple renunciation. We consecrate our chastity as an offering to the praise and worship of the most holy Trinity. By our vow of chastity we bind ourselves to remain unmarried for the sake of the kingdom of God. We also take on the obligation to observe perfectly in thought and action the chastity proper to those committed to a single life and do this in virtue of the vow.

⁹ I Cor. 7:32-35. I Jn. 4:10-11. Vatican II, *PC*, 12; *LG*, 42.

¹⁰ Mt. 19:12. Vatican II, *LG*, 44. *Const.*, 71.

11

This consecration of our chastity gives us a mission - and the strength to carry it out - to bear witness, in our common life and our friendships inside and outside the community, to the new life of the risen Christ. We should remember that chastity has stronger safeguards in a community where true fraternal love thrives among its members, and that the marks of true chastity ought not to be misogyny, excessive shyness or stern reserve but the gentleness and modesty of Christ.

12

The love of God and our neighbor which we seek by this vow is the love shown by Christ himself, whole-hearted, generous, and ready for any sacrifice for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. Deeply rooted in the mystery of the Cross, it calls for a dying to self and an opening in love to Christ and to others. It has to be seen as a strong and vigorous undertaking that challenges the standards of the world.

13

If it is lived in this way, our chastity will give a strong witness to the importance of the things of God. We ought to remember, though, that this virtue can never be presumed. We are in constant need of God's help and our own efforts to grow in our dedication.

¹¹ Vatican II, *PC*, 12, Mt. 11:29. *Rule*, 42.

¹² Jn. 13:34-35. I Cor. 13:4-7. Mt. 16:24-26. Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 13.

¹³ Vatican II, *LG*, 42. Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 15.

POVERTY

14

"Blessed are the poor in spirit." Ever since our Lord spoke these words and showed us by example what they meant, his followers have sought to win the blessings promised to the poor by simplicity of life, generosity toward those in need, and total reliance on the providence of the Father of all. In religious communities, this has given rise to a vow committing men and women to the imitation of Jesus who was poor in spirit and in the conditions of his life.

15

With the help of the vow of poverty we seek this poverty of Christ. We promise to spend our lives working for Christ and sharing what we have with him in our community, finding him present among ourselves and in all who are needy and poor.

16

Our vow of poverty is meant to free us to follow our Lord in whatever work we do for him. We take him for the one thing necessary and consequently possessions and security for ourselves assume less importance. We do this in our common life where, knowing that he is living with us, we are concerned for each other and share with each other, "bearing each other's burdens and so fulfilling the law of Christ".

17

By our vow of poverty we give up not the capacity of ownership of material goods but rather our freedom to use them. In all our

¹⁴ Mt. 5:3. Lk. 6:20. Mt. 8:20. Lk. 9:58. Vatican II, *PC*, 13.

Const., 81.

¹⁵ Mt. 25:34-46.

¹⁶ Lk. 10:41-42. Gal. 6:2.

¹⁷ *Const.*, 73.

use or disposition of material goods we bind ourselves not to act without the consent, at least reasonably presumed, of legitimate authority.

18

A Basilian may, therefore, retain the ownership of any patrimony which he had before taking vows or which comes to him under this title after vows. He may not, however, use or manage this himself. Before taking first vows a novice who has any patrimony must make arrangements concerning it according to the common law of the Church. A similar obligation applies to personal gifts or inheritances of value received later. Before final profession, each member will make a will freely bequeathing all his goods, both present and future. This will may be changed later only with the approval of the Superior General, or, in an urgent case, of the local superior.

19

"Go, sell what you have and give to the poor . . . then come follow me." In the light of these words of Jesus to the young man in the Gospel, the Superior General with the consent of his Council may give a Basilian in final vows permission to give up any patrimony he may possess or may be given in the future.

20

Everything we have, other than personal patrimony, we have in common and, apart from any arrangements made for income from personal patrimony, all that we earn belongs to the common fund and the needs of each should be met from the common fund. All salaries, pensions, stipends or other income must be turned over to the common fund. The Community will supply the legitimate needs of confreres in such matters as books, food, clothing, furniture, travel and medical care. Each of us will keep certain things for his own use, but the ownership is common. In the things we use individually, we should seek not uniformity but true simplicity. Each of us

¹⁸ Cc. 668. 1, 668. 2.

¹⁹ Cc. 668, 668. 4. Mt. 19:21. Vatican II, *PC*, 13.

²⁰ Cc. 668, 668. 4. Mt. 19:21. Vatican II, *PC*, 13.

ought to account for his use of the common funds by having the superior's approval in individual cases or for a budget over an extended period. Each house should look for prudent and charitable ways of balancing personal decisions about individual needs with accountability for what we spend on ourselves, so that we may encourage each other in the common life and preserve this life for the good of the community.

21

These same criteria of need and accountability ought also to be applied to the use of personal gifts. We have a responsibility to cherish the common life by sharing with each other the things we have.

22

Communities as well as individuals ought to be poor both in fact and in spirit if our work is to be pleasing to the Lord. Our manner of living should be simple and practical, according to our work and needs. Local communities who find themselves prospering financially ought to share their abundance with houses in need, helping them directly or through the General Treasury. The whole community, and all of our local houses, must be sensitive to the needs of the poor and should take practical steps to meet those needs.

23

Different members and different local communities may vary in what they have, what they need, and what they understand their needs to be. We should be hesitant to judge each other in these matters; to be poor in spirit is a gift from God. But since it is a human tendency to spend more if we have more, let us judge ourselves, individually and in our local communities, remembering our Lord's warning about affluence.

²¹ *Const.*, 80.

²² Cc. 600, 640; Vatican II, *PC*. 13.

²³ Mt. 19:23-26. Lk. 6:24.

All that comes from the creative hand of God is good. The Father has set man over his creation to be its steward and priest and to see that created goods, both physical and spiritual, are used for the greatest benefit of all. Our call to evangelical poverty requires that we place a proper value upon God's gifts and use them carefully, with thanksgiving and freedom, in preparing the way for God's kingdom. Not only material goods but our time, our talents and our energy ought to be generously devoted to the service of Christ and of God's children in our various apostolates. "Remember how generous the Lord Jesus was; he was rich, but he became poor for your sake to make you rich out of his poverty."

OBEDIENCE

25

Our vow and practice of obedience is a response to our Lord's words, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments". These words are addressed to all his followers; but we dedicate ourselves in a special way as individuals and as a community to spend our lives in loving obedience to Christ wherever he is to be found: in the Gospel, in the Church, in our communities, in our brothers, in the poor.

26

By the vow of obedience we bind ourselves to submit humbly to our superiors in a spirit of faith and love for God's will and in accordance with *The Basilian Way of Life* and *Basilian Customs*. We should bring all our powers of intellect and will to bear on the execution of any precepts given to us and on the fulfilment of the tasks laid upon us, realizing that we contribute in this way to the building up of the Body of Christ. We should

²⁴ Gen. 1:31. Vatican II, *GS*, 12, 34. Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 20-22. II Cor. 8:9.

²⁵ Jn. 14:15. Vatican II, *PC*, 14. Paul VI, *Ecclesiae sanctae II*, 18.

²⁶ C. 601. Lk. 22:39-44. Jn. 12:27-28. Vatican II, *PC*, 14.

Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 23. *Const.*, 61.

be imbued with the spirit of Christ's loving obedience that seeks to discern and fulfill the will of the Father in all things.

27

The first place where we should look for what the Father wants us to do is in the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God. The Gospel ought to be for each of us a daily, living source of the teaching of our Lord.

28

Our obedience commits us, as a religious family in the Church and as individuals, to listen to and obey the voice of Christ in the Church, both in the hierarchy, teaching and governing, and in the people of God whom we serve in our apostolic work, especially the poor and all who are afflicted or in difficulty. Our obedience also commits us as priests, when we are preaching the Gospel, to be careful to speak with the authentic voice of Christ.

29

Our vow commits us before God to a particular religious family; we accept its aims, its way of life, its work and the particular tasks to which our superiors appoint us. We should be ready to go wherever we are sent, willing to accept any renunciations involved. But we ought also to be free and open in making known to our superiors our interests and abilities, together with our hopes and fears about appointments. With this two-fold freedom the Community can be truly responsive to the Holy Spirit.

²⁷ Vatican II, *DV*, 25. Jn. 8:31. Heb. 2:1.

²⁸ Vatican II, *DV*, 8; *PC*, 14; *PO*, 4,6. Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 17.

²⁹ Vatican II, *PC*, 14. Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 25, 27.

Const., 67; *Rule*, 36.

In professing obedience we accept our responsibility as members of a self-governing religious community in the Church. This calls for our active participation, according to our form of government, in choosing men to lead us and in making those decisions which guide our common life and work. In our community discussions it calls for us to listen with respect to what our brothers say. It also calls in a special way for our generous and prompt obedience to our superiors both local and general and to the decisions we make as a community.

COMMUNITY LIFE

31

"I pray . . . that all may be one as you Father, are in me, and I in you; I pray that they may be one in us, that the world may believe that you sent me." The Basilian way of life is life in community. Following the pattern given by Jesus for all Christian community, we take for our model the life of the Blessed Trinity, aiming at a life of openness to other persons, giving and receiving, sharing all that we are and all that we have. We are drawn into the life of the Trinity itself: "God has sent into our hearts the spirit of his Son crying 'Abba, Father'."

32

As Basilians we are called to live and express this communal nature of the Church by our commitment to each other as brothers. We are called to live according to the Gospel, following the example of the early Christian communities and the traditions of religious life in the Church. To achieve this high ideal of community life we rely on God's help and the help of our confreres.

³⁰ Vatican II, *PC*, 14; *LG*, 45. Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 23-28.

³¹ Jn. 17:21. Gal. 4:6. Vatican II, *PC*, 15.

³² Cc. 602, 607. 2. Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35. Vatican II, *PC*, 15.

33

We live together a life of faith, that is, a life of dependence on Christ our Lord present to us in the Gospel, in the Church, in each other and in those whom we serve. We must always be grateful to God for this gift of faith and ask him to keep it alive in us.

34

"Love one another warmly as brothers in Christ and be eager to show respect for one another." The heart of Christian life for Basilians is in the local house where we live together in the brotherhood bought for us by Christ on the Cross and kept alive in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. There our Basilian life is lived in the reality of local conditions and the particular work we do, and as brothers we worship together, eat together and recreate together, not in a spirit of mere conformity but striving to be united heart and soul like the early Christian community. Continual effort is required to maintain and deepen this mutual understanding. We should use modern means of communication in ways designed to further our life together in Christ, and never let them draw us apart. Friendly and open discussion of what we do together is an important part of community life, and ought to take place at regular intervals.

35

"You did not choose me; I chose you." We do not choose our confreres; they are given to us by God. We are called to live with them as brothers, finding in them the presence of Christ among us, compassionate with their faults as God our Father is compassionate, and refusing to judge or condemn them. At the same time, we realize that we too are chosen by God and given to our brothers. We must search our hearts continually for ways

³³ Vatican II, *PC*, 6.

³⁴ Rom. 12:10. Used in Rule of Leorat-Picansel of 1802, 16; also in Circular Letter of Fr. Actorie, 1863. Acts 4:32. Vatican II, *PC*, 15. Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 34, 39. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 42.

³⁵ Jn. 15:16. Lk. 6:36. Gal. 2:20. Eph. 4:25-5:2. Col. 3:1-17.

Const., 121; *Rule*, 75.

to overcome our natural selfishness and to make Christ who is present within us a real influence in our community life and work. In his love we will cherish the times of silence that are essential in our life together, yet speak whenever love calls for speech; in all circumstances he will show us the way.

36

The value of a member's contribution to our community does not depend on what he can do as measured by the world. We live together with the same call from God to strengthen each other by prayer, example and suffering. Differences in age, opinion and temperament ought to enrich rather than disturb our brotherhood in Christ. Confreres who are sick or elderly have a special call on our love and care. The climate of peace coming from our free acceptance of each other is a fruit of the Spirit and will make our houses true homes for all who live in them.

37

Community life exists not only in local houses but in the whole Congregation as well, where it is reflected in a sense of fellowship with what all Basilians are doing, an interest in the past and the future of the Community, and a willingness on the part of both individuals and local communities to make the sacrifices that will be necessary for the common good.

38

The love that binds us together in community is the love given to us by Christ our Lord when, sharing his death, we live no longer for ourselves but find new life in Christ with our brothers. We must try to be open and generous like our Lord. This should lead to other friendships and to our participation in other communities, particularly those flowing from our

³⁶ Col. 3:11. Gal. 5:22. Vatican II, *PC*, 15, Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 39-41.

³⁷ Vatican II, *PC*, 2.

³⁸ Jn. 13:34-35. Rom. 6:5-11. II Tim. 2:11. II Cor. 8:9.

apostolic work. Yet we ought to be careful not to let other friendships take the place of our community life.

39

Hospitality is a Christian virtue and a Basilian tradition. We must recognize the Lord not only in strangers and those in need, but in all those who visit our communities, recognizing the need for some silence and some areas of privacy. Basilians from other houses and Basilian associates should always be made to feel at home, with a special welcome for those prevented by studies, apostolic work or other circumstances from living in Basilian communities.

PRIESTHOOD

40

Basilians serve the Church as a community of priests. When we receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders, we are appointed to act in the name of Christ, nourishing members of the Church on the word and grace of God. This priestly mission is carried out in whatever work we do, and in every way we bear witness to the truth of the Gospel. We have a special obligation as a priestly community to live together the life, centered on the Eucharistic sacrifice and the Gospel, that we preach to others.

41

We are called as priests to build up the Body of Christ to the glory of God. To this end we are appointed to minister to the Word of God, through preaching and teaching, through the celebration of the Sacraments in which the Word Incarnate reveals and gives himself to his people, and through the witness to the Word given in priestly lives lived according to the Gospel.

³⁹ Heb. 13:2. Mt. 25:34-36. Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*,

46. *Rule*, 59.

⁴⁰ Vatican II, *LG*, 28; *PO*, 2, 14.

⁴¹ Vatican II, *PO*, 4-5.

42

Our priestly service finds its source and its highest expression in the celebration of the Eucharist over which we are appointed to preside. Here above all we serve the growth and unity of the Body of the Church, nourishing it by preaching the word of faith and especially by leading the great Eucharistic prayer whereby Christ's paschal mystery is both proclaimed and made present. All aspects of our priestly ministry come together in the celebration of the Eucharist: the gathering of the people, the worship of the Father, the preaching of the Gospel and the offering of all of life in union with the sacrifice of Christ.

43

In any diocese in which we are established Basilian priests together with all other priests and led by the Bishop form one priestly body. We bring to this body our own life and work, but we do this recognizing the leadership and authority of the Bishop and cooperating with other priests in building up the Body of Christ. Basilians wear the same clerical dress as the diocesan clergy and are subject to diocesan regulations as to its use.

44

A special bond of affection binds us to the diocesan clergy with whom we have served the Church for so many years, and from whose ranks our Community took its origin. We should be on the watch for ways of bearing witness to this bond, and should do all we can to strengthen the priestly brotherhood with all priests, diocesan and religious.

⁴² Vatican II, *LG*, 11, 28; *PO*, 5.

⁴³ Vatican II, *LG*, 28; *PO*, 7. *Const.*, 135.

⁴⁴ Vatican II, *PO*, 8. *Constitutions* of 1863, II, 2.

PRAYER

45

All life and goodness come to us from the Father through his Son, by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Both as individuals and as communities we must come to recognize that the Father, Son and Spirit dwell in us and call us to share their life. Prayer is a response to this call; it is an absolute necessity for us. The people to whose service we are called count on us to give continual praise and thanks to the Father for all he has done and to make intercession for each other and for all of those in our care. Without real prayer on our part, the life and work to which we are called will be beyond our capacity.

46

One expression of our prayer is found in public worship. In each of our houses this consists in the daily offering of the Eucharist and Morning and Evening prayers according to the Liturgy of the Hours. Priests are strongly urged to celebrate and unordained members to assist at Mass everyday.

47

In the celebration of the Eucharist, all Christians are brought together in unity by the Holy Spirit. For this reason, we ought to arrange our offering of the Eucharist so that we celebrate it whenever possible with each other, as well as with those with whom we work.

⁴⁵ C. 663. James 1:17. Eph. 3:14-19. Vatican II, *LG*, 44. *PC*, 2, 5, 6, 8. Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 42-43;

Ecclesia Sanctae II, 21. *Const.*, 102; *Rule*, 25.

⁴⁶ Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 47. *Const.*, 93; *Rule*, 26.

⁴⁷ C. 608. Vatican II, *LG*, 42; *SC*, 48. Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 48

48

All members of a house are involved in the public worship of the community, depending on it and sharing responsibility for it. All of us should take part in community prayers. In each house a special effort should be made to celebrate the community Eucharist once a week.

49

Those who are ill depend in a special way on the sacramental life of our communities. We share the compassion of our Lord himself for the sick and suffering when we pray for and attend our confreres or fellow workers who are ill, and especially when we offer them the Eucharist and the Sacraments of Reconciliation and of the Anointing of the Sick. These Sacraments may fittingly be administered in a communal ceremony which will be a sign of our concern as a community for any one among us who is ill, our trust in the power of the Lord to help us in any situation, and our desire to associate all of our suffering with the passion and death of Christ. When a confrere dies we should join in prayer for him and offer the suffrages specified in *Basilian Customs*.

50

In our acts of public worship we listen to God speaking to us and we respond to him. We must be careful in our public worship and community prayer not to take what we do for granted. The whole community should be concerned to see that our worship is performed in a way that gives glory to God and supports the faith of all who take part.

51

The Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, St. Basil, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. John Bosco are special patrons of the community, and their feasts are occasions of special prayer. The feast of the Presentation of Mary and that of St. Basil should be days of particular celebration.

⁵⁰ Vatican II, *SC*, 33.

⁵¹ *Const.*, 5; *Rule*, 103.

52

From time to time the Superior General will call on the members for special prayer for the needs of the Congregation. Local communities are encouraged to plan other forms of common prayer from time to time, such as scripture services to fit the liturgical seasons or the great feasts of the Church, services designed to accompany the Sacrament of Reconciliation or on the occasion of the death of a member of the house, shared prayer, and other forms of community prayer in times of special need. In a particular way, the annual retreat, so important for our spiritual development, should provide enrichment to our prayer.

53

We are called to follow our Lord and share his friendship. If we are to be united with him in the way we live and in the work we do, each of us must endeavour to make his personal prayer the center of his daily life.

54

We have many resources for our prayer: the knowledge that God is truly our Father, that Christ is our model and teacher, that we have the Holy Spirit to encourage and enlighten us and the life-giving Word of Scripture; the sacramental life that begins in us in Baptism and is nourished in the Eucharist and strengthened by the frequent recourse to the Sacrament of Reconciliation expected of us as religious; the assurance of the protection of the Mother of God, to whom Basilians have always had a special devotion; the daily pastoral teaching of the liturgy of the Church; the ways of prayer that have been taught us by the saints; the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

⁵² *Const.*, 100; *Rule*, 106.

⁵³ Mt. 4:19. Jn. 15:15. Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 42-45.

⁵⁴ Vatican II, *PC*, 6.

55

Our prayer will be unworthy if it is careless or superficial. We ought to come to God with the best we can offer, the full attention of our minds and the deepest affection of our hearts. It will be difficult to do this, in any form of prayer, without giving time daily and generously to meditative prayer. An hour of daily personal prayer should be seen as minimal.

56

Our Lord's emptying of himself led him to greater suffering and humiliation than other men experience. He gave us the same pattern for our lives when he said: "If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me." Our Community has never imposed specific practices of penance on us but has always encouraged us to follow Christ by working hard and by undertaking other practices as our zeal, moderated by prudence, may suggest. It is in our life of prayer that we can learn to understand and to accept whatever is to be the cross for each of us, and to find ourselves by emptying ourselves.

57

"Pray all the time," St. Paul tells us, "asking for what you need, praying in the Spirit on every possible occasion." We cannot think about God all the time, but we should try to bring our whole day into our life of prayer, so that we commune habitually with God.

⁵⁵ Paul VI, *Ecclesiae sanctae II*, 21.

⁵⁶ Phil. 2:5-11. Mt. 17:24.

⁵⁷ Eph. 6:18.

Liturgical, communal and private prayer are expressions of and nourishment for that habitual prayer which consists of living in the presence of God, sharing by the power of the Spirit the Father's design to bring all into oneness in the glory of the Risen Christ. Prayer in this fundamental sense is a dimension of the life of Faith - a deeply personal opening up of oneself to God who is present in the life of the individual and the life of the world. This communion in faith is what inspires the Christian called by the Father to collaborate in the mission of Christ to make all things new.

OUR APOSTOLIC WORK

The Church was founded to bring all men to share in Christ's saving redemption by spreading his kingdom everywhere for the glory of God the Father, so that the whole world may be brought into true relationship with him. Every activity of the Mystical Body directed toward this goal is part of the apostolate, and all its members share in it. Bishops teach, sanctify and govern in the name of Christ and by his power; the laity are called by God to be a leaven in the world. In our work we cooperate with both of these apostolates in such a way that mutual respect and growth in Christ result.

As a religious community dedicated to the apostolate we are joined in a special way to the mystery of the Church in her role as a sign and an instrument of intimate union with God and of unity for all humanity. To bear witness is at the heart of our existence and meaning as a community. Our apostolic work shapes the texture of our life and observance.

⁵⁸ Eph. 1:10. Rev. 21:5.

⁵⁹ Vatican II, *AA*, 2; *LG*, 20.

⁶⁰ Vatican II, *LG*, 44; *PC*, 8. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 9.

61

It is not for ourselves alone that we are called to be "followers of the Way". That call to salvation, given to us when we were baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Spirit, is also a call to personal mission and ministry in the Church. The vows of chastity, poverty and obedience have always been seen in the tradition of the Church as a special consecration of this baptismal call, to be lived out in communion and community with others so consecrated in Christ. Our vows, our community life and our priesthood are meant not only to make us more faithful followers of the Way, but also to give us our own apostolate in the Church.

62

"The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve"; ministry is essential to our life in Christ. By all the gifts bestowed on us we minister to one another when we pray, when we listen, when we rejoice and suffer with our brothers, and in every way in which we live our vowed life faithfully in the very heart of the Church's mission. Thus ministry permeates our lives; it never ceases, even when we are ill or aged.

63

Each of us has his own work to do and, since it is God's work, we must do it as well and as prayerfully as we can, even when we are not able to see the results of our work. The time may come when, because of illness or suffering of various kinds, we may be unable to do any active work. When this happens we should see it as a call from the Lord to serve our confreres and God's People in a way which makes our common work all the more valuable and which will bring blessings on the Congregation and those we serve. "Never give in then, my dear brothers, never admit defeat, keep on working at the Lord's work always, knowing that, in the Lord, you cannot be laboring in vain."

⁶¹ Acts 9:2; 18:25-26. Vatican II, *LG*, 44.

⁶² Mk. 10:45.

⁶³ I Cor. 15:58.

64

The first work of our Congregation was that of Christian education and preaching, and we have always been a teaching community. With this as our starting point we have adapted ourselves to serve God's people in many different branches of education and research - especially in schools, colleges, universities, graduate studies and publication - as well as in other forms of priestly work, particularly in parishes and missions. Whatever apostolic work we do, we are doing a single work of service, "building up the Body of Christ". None of our apostolates is better or more important than the others. "It is all one who does the planting and who does the watering.... We are fellow workers with God."

65

Our founders made it their special concern to serve the poor in their need for Christian education. We must do all we can to see that our schools do not exclude the poor, and in all of our apostolates that we do not compromise with any form of social injustice. We must be sensitive ourselves and ready to awaken the consciences of others to the drama of human misery and to the demands of social justice made by the Gospel and the Church.

66

A Basilian does not choose for himself what apostolic work he will do; we work together as a community. If any one of us wishes to propose new apostolates, or changes and adaptations of present ones, he should bring his ideas to the appropriate community body, be it the local community, the Superior General with his Council or, in the case of major changes of the apostolate, the General Chapter. We must also keep in mind the need of consulting with the local Bishop in the planning of our apostolic activities.

⁶⁴ Eph. 4:12. I Cor. 3:8-9. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 96-98.

⁶⁵ Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 18.

⁶⁶ Vatican II, *PC*, 8, 14; *LG*, 45. *Const.*, 135-137. *Rule*, 108.

We ought to be ready and open in listening to new proposals. Gathered together like the apostles and elders of the early Church, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, the community will be able to decide what work should be done. What we ought to take into account, when new apostolates or adaptations are proposed by our members or requests for our services are made from outside the Community, are the needs of the Church, our particular Basilian charisms and resources, our prior commitments and the compatibility of the proposed work with community life.

VOCATION TO OUR WAY OF LIFE

In the Gospel, Jesus said to his apostles and disciples, "Go and teach all nations." We too have been given a share in this mission. Rejoicing in this, therefore, and remembering the words, "The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest," we should pray and be actively concerned that the Lord may send new labourers into the part of the harvest to which he has called us.

Both as a Community and as individuals, we should try to encourage vocations to our way of life. A young man's awareness that God is calling him to become a Basilian usually develops in and through the conditions of his own life. His family, his parish, his friends and all those who influence him will have some part in his decision. The example, encouragement and invitation the Basilians give him may well be decisive factors in the action of God's grace upon him. "Religious should not forget that the good example of their own lives affords the highest recommendation for their community, and the most appealing invitation to embrace the religious life."

⁶⁷ Acts 15:6, 28.

⁶⁸ Mt. 28:19; 9:37-38. *Rule*, 319.

⁶⁹ Vatican II, *PC*, 24; *PO*, 11.

70

Local communities should frequently discuss the possibilities of vocations among those with whom they work. Local superiors and their councils will see that encouragement and direction are given to any young man who shows signs of a vocation.

71

In counselling young men who are considering whether they are called to the Basilian life, and in recommending candidates to the Superior General, we should avoid uncritical leniency of judgment on the one hand and a demand for perfection on the other. There are qualities that mark a desirable candidate, and we should look for these.

72

First of all, a candidate should have a strong faith in God and a recognition that Basilian life is an expression of that faith. This ought to show itself in devotion to the Church and particularly to the Eucharist, and in a desire for prayer as the necessary means and basis for the Christian life.

73

From faith springs apostolic love and a desire to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ. A candidate should be eager to do the work of the Church as a Basilian priest, with a personal conviction that this is the best way for him to take part in that work.

74

He should have a desire not only to be a priest, but also to live in community. He should be aware of the call in the Gospel to a life of

⁷⁰ Vatican II, *OT*, 2. *Rule*, 320-321.

⁷¹ *Rule*, 322.

⁷² II Tim. 1:5. Vatican II, *LG*, 44.

⁷³ Lk. 12:50. II Cor. 8:16-17.

chastity, poverty and obedience, and ought to have some understanding of Basilian life as a response to this call.

75

A candidate should also show evidence of physical health and emotional stability. If he is to devote himself to a life of service he must be able to get along with other people. And he should possess sufficient intellectual ability to meet the demands of our apostolate.

ASSOCIATES

76

Before he enters the Novitiate, a candidate should, through a period of association, a sort of postulancy, come to know something of Basilian life, and we should come to know him. Many candidates will already know some Basilians and be acquainted with at least some areas of our apostolate. The associate program is intended to deepen this knowledge and acquaintance, and to strengthen a candidate's resolution to join us in our life and work. Application to become an associate may be made toward the end of high school or at any later time. The right to admit candidates to the associate program belongs to the Superior General with the consent of his Council.

77

When an associate has had suitable educational preparation, and it is judged that he has had sufficient acquaintance with the Community and the Community with him, he may apply for the Novitiate. This application can also be made by those who reach the same point of educational preparation without having formally joined the associate program.

NOVICES

78

The novitiate year is the formal initiation into religious life. It involves a mature decision on the part of the candidate to direct his life in a definite way.

79

The primary concern of the Novitiate is the spiritual growth of the individual candidate before God and in community with his brothers. The novice undertakes to discern his vocation, to develop his life of prayer in accordance with the demands of an active religious life, and to learn to live with his brothers the life of religious chastity, poverty and obedience. He will be aided in this task by the prayers of the Basilian Community and by the guidance of the Novice Master.

80

To assist the novice in his spiritual growth as a man of prayer, a program is provided which includes Scripture, liturgy, spirituality, theological instruction on the religious life and the vows, and study of the history, traditions and customs of the Congregation, and *The Basilian Way of Life*. During the novitiate year the opportunity for apostolic work will also be provided. This work will not take precedence over the other purposes of the novitiate. The complete program of the Novitiate will always be under the direction of the Novice Master, who will be a priest in perpetual vows appointed by the Superior General with the consent of his Council.

81

The right to admit candidates to the Novitiate belongs to the Superior General with the consent of his Council. They will take care to accept only those giving proof of the qualities and elements of maturity necessary for

⁷⁹ *Const.*, 33.

⁸¹ *Const.* 10, 12.

commitment to Basilian religious life. If it is judged necessary, they may seek the advice of other persons qualified to judge these matters.

82

The requirements for valid admission to the Novitiate are those set forth in the common law of the Church and in *Basilian Customs*.

83

For a novitiate year to be valid it must last at least twelve months spent in the novitiate house. The year may be interrupted by planned periods of apostolic activity supervised by the novice master with the approval of the Superior General, as described in the common law and *Basilian Customs*. The time spent in these periods will be added to the twelve months, with the total duration not to exceed two years. Legitimate absences for other reasons which cumulatively or continuously exceed three months render the Novitiate invalid. If such absences total more than fifteen days, this time must be added to the length of the Novitiate.

84

At the conclusion of the Novitiate, with the recommendation of the Novice Master, the Superior General with the consent of his Council will formally call a candidate, who is judged to be ready for incorporation into the Community, to become a professed member of the Congregation. The candidate will then publicly commit himself to the religious life through temporary vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. For a good reason, the time of Novitiate, unless the limit of two years has already been reached, may be extended by the Superior General with the advice of his Council.

85

⁸² Cc. 641-645. *Const.*, 13.

⁸⁴ C. 655.

⁸⁵ *Const.*, 56.

The following formula is to be used in making temporary or perpetual profession: The one who is to take vows says aloud, "For the honour of God, and moved by a firm resolve to consecrate myself more fully to Him and to follow Christ more closely in my whole life, here and now in the presence of Father N....., Superior General (or delegate of the Superior General), I, N....., vow for three years (or: forever) chastity, poverty and obedience in the Congregation of Priests of Saint Basil, according to *The Basilian Way of Life* and *Basilian Customs*. I give myself with my whole heart to this religious community, so that by the grace of the Holy Spirit and the help of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I may seek perfect charity in the service of God and the Church." And the Superior General, or his delegate, before whom the profession is made, replies, "By the authority entrusted to me, I accept your vows in the name of the Church for the Congregation of Priests of Saint Basil. I commend you earnestly to God, that you may fulfill your dedication, which is united with this Eucharistic Sacrifice."

SCHOLASTICS

86

A scholastic is an unordained member under vows preparing for the life of a Basilian priest. His preparation should include experience in all the elements of Basilian life and is intended to supply the member with resources for the life and work of a Basilian priest, for spiritual growth and fidelity to the Gospel, as well as methods of study and learning that will allow his education to continue throughout his Basilian life. The Master of Scholastics, who will supervise this program and have a special care for all the scholastics wherever they may be appointed, will be a priest in perpetual vows appointed by the Superior General with the consent of his Council.

87

⁸⁶ Cc. 659-661. Vatican II, *OT*, 4.

⁸⁷ Vatican II, *OT*, 8-9.

The community life of the local houses to which scholastics are appointed is a most important influence on their spiritual growth and their knowledge and appreciation of our religious life and our work for God's people.

88

For their theological studies in preparation for the priesthood, scholastics will follow a seminary program appropriate to the nature of our Community and approved by the Superior General with his Council, in accordance with the common law of the Church and in keeping with the Program of Priestly Formation approved by the Episcopal Conference. In this, they and those who teach and guide them will look for ways of deepening their understanding of the teaching of Christ and the Church and of growing more like Jesus in the ministry of the Word, of worship and sanctification, and that of serving as shepherd in the flock of Christ.

89

Discipline is an essential element in the life of every Basilian. We learn as scholastics how to obey and how to live together, but the discipline we require is primarily internal and personal. The life of a Basilian must not be characterized by outward conformity without internal consent and understanding.

90

Those charged with the formation of scholastics help them by prayer, direction and supervision to discern clearly and answer freely the call of God to serve him. They ought to be ready to advise a member to withdraw from the Congregation if there are signs that he should pursue his Christian vocation outside of our Community.

91

When the period for which a member has taken temporary vows has elapsed, the Superior General with the consent of his Council may call him

⁸⁸ Vatican II, *OT*, 4.

⁸⁹ Vatican II, *OT*, 11.

⁹⁰ Vatican II, *OT*, 6.

to renew his temporary vows, or, if he has been three years in vows, may call him to final profession. The period in temporary vows must not exceed nine years.

92

Before the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, calls a member to renewal of vows, final profession or Orders, he will see that the member's local community is consulted in some way.

WITHDRAWAL AND DISMISSAL

93

We are called to give ourselves to this life in a lifelong commitment. Nevertheless, the Church recognizes certain legitimate reasons for withdrawal, not only before, but even after final profession and ordination. Moreover, under other circumstances, the Superior General, acting collegially with his Council, may have to dismiss a confrere from the Congregation. In every case of withdrawal or dismissal, the common law of the Church and the prescriptions of *Basilian Customs* should be carefully followed.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

⁹³ Cc. 686-704. Paul VI, *Cum admotae*, Nov. 6, 1964, n. 14.

94

All Basilians ought to be personally concerned about continuing their education beyond ordination, especially in their own apostolate and in the areas of theology, Sacred Scripture, liturgy and spirituality. We should also be zealous to recognize special pastoral needs and to acquire the skills necessary to meet them as well as we can.

95

Each confrere must be personally concerned about his own spiritual growth. He should provide adequate time for his own study and reading, assessing his needs for personal and priestly development realizing the necessity of competent spiritual direction.

96

The General Council, local superiors, and other confreres ought to do what they can to foster and encourage the efforts of individual members to grow intellectually and spiritually. It is part of our community life to help each other in these matters.

97

Well before the age when they expect or may have to retire from their present work confreres should begin to prepare for new forms of priestly and apostolic ministry. Personal initiative is important here, but information on new forms of apostolic work should be available in good time to those approaching the age of retirement. They should be offered every assistance in preparing for continuing fruitfulness in the service of Christ.

⁹⁴ C. 279. Vatican II, *PC*, 18; *PO*, 19. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 98.

⁹⁵ Cc. 662-664. Vatican II, *PC*, 12-13, 18-19.

⁹⁶ Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 38-39. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 69-71.

⁹⁷ Vatican II, *PC*, 3.

GOVERNMENT OF THE CONGREGATION

98

The Congregation of St. Basil, a clerical institute of pontifical right, is a self-governing religious community in the Church.

99

The will of God, whose love has been shown to us in his Son, is the principle of all authority in the Community. When the Church approves our Congregation, accepts our vows, joins us in effective community and authorizes our apostolic work, it does so with this divine authority. We accept God's will in the teaching and governance of the Holy See, recognizing the obedience we owe, in virtue of our vow, to the authority of the Pope. We recognize God's will also in the guidance which bishops in their own dioceses give to our work according to the common law of the Church. We live by it as we all share in the government of our Community.

100

Our government exists to serve the particular needs and purposes of our community, to help us to live the life and do the work of Basilians, and to relate Community policies to the needs of the Church and the directives of the Church's government at various levels.

⁹⁸ Cc. 573-578, 580-589.

⁹⁹ Cc. 590, 593, 601. Vatican II, *LG*, 45; *PC*, 14.

¹⁰⁰ Vatican II, *PC*, 14.

101

Within the Community superiors are called to serve their confreres in a special way. It is their task to decide what must be done and to require the doing of it. They must, therefore, make it their care to discern the will of God and to be docile to it. They will find it manifested in the guidance of the hierarchy, in *The Basilian Way of Life*, in the decrees of General Chapters and in *Basilian Customs*, in the advice they seek from their confreres, and, in a most important way, in prayerful meditation on the Gospel.

102

All who are charged with the service of government must listen to those whom they serve. On both the general and local levels suitable channels of communication must be maintained so that we may have the sort of government appropriate to brothers, sons of God made free by Christ.

103

More than any other organ of government, the General Chapter expresses the fact that all the members have a share in and a responsibility for the welfare of the whole community.

THE GENERAL CHAPTER

104

The General Chapter is held at the expiration of the term of office of the Superior General or whenever the office of Superior General becomes vacant. An extraordinary General Chapter may be called whenever the

¹⁰¹ Cc. 617, 618. Vatican II, *PC*, 14. Paul VI, *Cum Admotae*, Nov. 6, 1964, 13.

¹⁰² Vatican II, *PC*, 14.

¹⁰³ Vatican II, *PC*, 14. Paul VI, *Ecclesiae sanctae II*, 18.

¹⁰⁴ *Const.*, 210, 213. Paul VI, *Ecclesiae sanctae II*, 18.

Superior General with the consent of his Council judges it to be seriously advisable. The membership of the Chapter is partly *ex officio* and partly elected. The number of elected members will never be less than the number of *ex officio* members. The General Chapter should represent the whole Community as effectively as possible, and shall be constituted as follows:

i) *Ex officio* members: The Superior General, the General Councillors, the immediate past Superior General.

ii) Other Delegates: These shall be chosen or elected by a method to be determined by the General Chapter as specified in *Basilian Customs*.

iii) The selection of the delegates is (ii) may be modified only by a two thirds vote of the General Chapter.

105

The Superior General and his Council must see to it that careful preparations involving the whole Community are made for the General Chapter so that a consensus reached in the Chapter may reflect the intentions of as many Basilians as possible.

106

The work of the General Chapter is to review the state of the Congregation and plan for its future, to make new laws or modify existing ones so that the Community may better fulfill its mission, and to elect the Superior General and the General Councillors.

107

In all its legislative activity the General Chapter may act only within the stipulations of the general law of the Church. The Chapter must see that its

¹⁰⁵ Paul VI, *Ecclesiae sanctae II*, 18.

¹⁰⁶ Vatican II, *PC*, 4. Paul VI, *Ecclesiae sanctae II*, 1.
Rule, 336.

¹⁰⁷ Cc. 631-633. Vatican II, *PC*, 4.

members and the whole Community have a clear understanding of the authority which its legislation is given by the general law or by the confirmation of the Holy See.

108

In the meeting of the Chapter, when the time comes for the session for the election of the Superior General, the Superior General himself, or, if he be impeded, the Vicar General will preside.

109

In the election of the Superior General, a ballot, in order to be a valid vote, must unambiguously designate one person who has passive voice, that is, a priest at least thirty-five years of age and in perpetual vows. If, when the first ballot has been taken and counted, one candidate has received an absolute majority of the valid votes, the president of the Chapter (or, if he be the one elected, his Vicar) proclaims the election; otherwise, he proclaims the result of the ballot and calls for another ballot. If three such ballots prove ineffective, a fourth ballot is taken in which only those who have received ten or more votes on the third ballot have passive voice. Should it happen that this would reduce the number having passive voice to one or none, then the one or ones having the next highest number of votes will continue to have passive voice as well. On the fourth and each subsequent ballot the one receiving the lowest number of votes will lose passive voice for the next ballot. In case of a tie for the lowest number of votes, another ballot will be taken with the same names on the ballot and, if the tie persists, then the one of those tied who is junior by first profession, or if they are the same by profession, then the one junior by age, will cease to have passive voice. The voting shall proceed in this manner until the Superior General is elected by an absolute majority or until on the final ballot only two names remain with passive, and in this case not active, voice. If on that ballot a tie occurs, another ballot will be taken, and if the tie persists, then the one senior by profession or age, as above, will be declared elected.

¹⁰⁸ *Const.*, 237.

¹⁰⁹ Cc. 164-183, 626. *Const.*, 235-249.

110

Under the presidency of the Superior General, the election of the Vicar General will be held, and when that is completed, that of the Second Councillor, and when that is completed, that of the Third Councillor, and when that is completed, that of the Fourth Councillor. The procedures will be the same as in the election of the Superior General save that the requirements for passive voice are that one be a priest at least thirty years of age and in perpetual vows.

111

The Chapter cannot change or give an authentic interpretation to *The Basilian Way of Life*; this is reserved to the Holy See. For serious reasons, the Chapter, by a two-thirds majority, may propose such changes or interpretations for submission to the Holy See.

112

Decisions and decrees of the General Chapter remain in force until the next General Chapter, when they can be confirmed or changed.

113

The decisions of the General Chapter should be known, welcomed and effectively implemented by the whole Community and by each member. Unless we do this, even the wisest decisions will be ineffective. Only by looking steadily at the law, and actively putting it into practice, will we be happy in what we do.

¹¹⁰ C. 631.2. *Const.*, 254-260.

¹¹¹ Vatican II, *LG*, 45. Paul VI, *Ecclesiae sanctae II*, 8.

Const., 267.

¹¹² *Const.*, 266.

¹¹³ Cf. James 1:25.

THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

114

The Superior General is elected by the General Chapter for a four-year term. He may be re-elected for a second term, but not for more than two successive terms. This election may be carried out at any time during the Chapter and in whatever manner the Chapter decides, the general law being observed.

115

In exercising the task of government confided to him, the Superior General serves the whole Community and each member of it. He should pray to the Father for his brothers and give himself generously to them, following the example of Christ our Lord. In return all of us owe the Superior General respect, love and true obedience.

116

The Superior General will pray daily for the welfare of the whole Community and all its members, living and dead, and will also remember living and deceased relatives of members as well as friends and benefactors. He will see that the Eucharist is offered daily for these intentions.

117

He will have a special concern for the associates, novices and scholastics, and will take an interest in their progress and formation.

¹¹⁵ Vatican II, *PC*, 14. Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 25-29.

¹¹⁶ *Const.*, 281.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Vatican II, *OT*, 5. *Rule*, 346.

118

He will carefully supervise the economic administration of temporal goods in the Community. In doing this he will always respect the duties and offices of the Treasurer General, local superiors and others.

119

The Superior General should be open to all the needs and concerns of the Community, and accessible to all its members. Like Christ, he "will not break the bruised reed", but will have a special concern for confreres troubled with personal decisions and problems. On the other hand, he will not hesitate to rebuke faults and to take what action is called for to safeguard the community against the destructive influence of the incorrigible.

120

Fraternal correction is a condition of our life together and a special concern of superiors. It is a necessary part of the office of the Superior General. He should always be kind, gentle and understanding, but he must also be firm.

121

The Superior General exercises his authority according to the laws of the Church and of the Congregation. He may grant dispensations in disciplinary matters. He may, with the consent of his Council, issue regulations for the whole Community or part of it, supplementary to the legislation of the General Chapter. Such regulations unless revoked will be binding until the next Chapter.

¹¹⁸ C. 636. *Const.*, 280.

¹¹⁹ Is. 42:3. Mt. 11:28-30; 12:20. Lk. 15:1-7. *Rule*, 216, 217.

¹²¹ *Const.* 272, 283-285.

122

The authority of the Superior General to govern and administer the Community applies to all the houses and to every member. It is not an absolute authority. He must act according to the limitations set to his office by the Gospel, the law of the Church, *The Basilian Way of Life* and *Basilian Customs*, and by the policies set by the General Chapters. Thus he shares his authority in many ways with the General Councillors, local superiors, and others. If, beyond this, he delegates his authority in any particulars, the limits of such delegation should be clearly defined.

123

The Superior General does not confer, nor, except where it is provided in the common law of the Church, can he withdraw, the rights of members to active and passive voice in the Community.

124

The Superior General has the right and duty to appoint the members of the Community to offices and charges throughout the Congregation and in each of the houses, to transfer the members from one house to another and to visit each house, either personally or through delegate, every three years. In carrying out these rights and duties he will be careful to consult in appropriate ways the members involved as well as his Council.

125

The matters in which the Superior General must seek the consent or ask the advice of his Council are specified in *Basilian Customs*. He will always keep the members of the Council appropriately informed.

¹²² Cc. 133, 617-620, 622. *Const.*, 272. Vatican II, *PC*, 14.

¹²³ *Const.*, 287.

¹²⁴ Cc. 596, 617, 627. *Const.* 279. Cf. 138, 145 below.

126

The Superior General may resign or be removed from his office and authority. If he feels he should resign, he will state his reasons to the Holy See. Should his removal seem necessary, the General Councillors will report the matter to the Holy See and abide by its decision.

127

In case of the death, resignation or removal of the Superior General, the Vicar General will govern the Community until the election of a new Superior General. The Vicar will convoke a General Chapter as soon as possible, and in any case, within six months. In the meantime, he will introduce no innovations except for a grave cause and with the consent of his Council.

THE GENERAL COUNCIL

128

The Council of the Superior General is made up of four Councillors elected by the General Chapter.

129

Reserved.

130

General Councillors may be given by the Superior General with the consent of his Council delegated responsibility for certain aspects of Community concern, but should also strive to know the needs and problems facing the whole Community. They are not Major Superiors, but where it is

¹²⁶ *Const.*, 292-293.

¹²⁷ *Const.*, 291.

¹²⁸ C. 627.

appropriate they may be delegated by the Superior General to represent the Community in Conferences of Major Superiors.

131

If the Vicar General dies, resigns, or becomes incapable of office before the expiration of his term, the Second Councillor will take his place, and so on. If a vacancy in the Council is caused in this manner, or if a Councillor dies, resigns, or becomes incapable of office, the General Council shall elect another member endowed with the requisite qualities, who is to remain in office until the next General Chapter of election and who holds the last place.

132

The Superior General will meet regularly with the whole General Council to discuss issues confronting the Community and to make decisions and appointments as needed.

133

The Superior General is the highest authority in the Congregation in an ordinary way. He is assisted in the government of the Congregation by the members of the General Council. The Superior General and his Council will meet at least five times a year at regular intervals.

134

The First Councillor will be Vicar General. Whenever the Superior General is impeded from performing any of the functions of his office and the matter cannot wait, the Vicar General may act in his place. He should, as soon as possible, inform the Superior General of the action he has taken.

¹³¹ *Const.*, 304.

¹³² Vatican II, *PC*, 14. *Const.*, 295.

¹³³ *Const.*, 294.

¹³⁴ *Const.*, 257.

135

Reserved.

136

Each local house in the Community will be officially visited at least every two years.

137

General Councillors will try to visit frequently the houses of the Community. Members have a right to be consulted about matters which directly concern them, such as their appointments, and those who govern have a duty to consult them. This cannot mean, however, that each of us will decide for himself what he will do; it is rather a way to have better information when community decisions are made, and a way in which to harmonize community aims and individual talents and aspirations.

THE GENERAL CURIA

138

The other officials of the general administration are appointed by the Superior General, with the consent of his Council. Among them, the Secretary General and the Treasurer General exercise functions of special importance in the Community. In doing the work of these offices they have the right to expect the cooperation of all Basilians, in the same way as do the Superior General and the General Councillors.

139

The Secretary General must be a priest of at least thirty years of age and in perpetual vows. The Vicar General may not be named to this position.

¹³⁶ Cc. 628. 1, 628. 3. *Const.*, 275.

¹³⁷ Vatican II, *PC*, 14. Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 25.

¹³⁹ *Const.*, 255.

140

Not only the Congregation as such but also individual houses have the right to acquire, possess and administer temporal goods, whether these be movable or immovable.

141

All the goods, both movable and immovable, of the whole Congregation are to be administered by the Treasurer General under the direction of the Superior General and the watchful eye of his Council.

142

When it is a question of alienating goods whose value exceeds the amount established by the appropriate national episcopal conference, or of contracting debts and obligations beyond this sum, or of alienating any precious objects belonging to the Congregation, the contract is invalid unless the beneplacitum of the Holy See is first obtained. In other cases, the written permission of the Superior General, with the consent of his Council suffices.

143

Meetings of the whole Community, or portions thereof, are important channels of communication and consultation. They are to be held whenever the General Chapter recommends or when the General Council sees a special need.

¹⁴⁰ Cc. 634, 635. *Const.*, 308.

¹⁴¹ Cc. 636, 1273, 1280, 1281. *Const.*, 309.

¹⁴² Cc. 1291, 1292.2, 1295 with due regard for C. 638.3.

Comm. 12 (1980), 177-182. Paul VI,

Pastorale munus,

Nov. 30, 1963; *Cum admotae*, Nov. 6, 1964.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

144

The local government of a Basilian community aims to coordinate the efforts of all its members in the creation of an atmosphere which will foster the Christian life lived in accordance with the evangelical counsels, *The Basilian Way of Life* and *Basilian Customs*. It has a concern for the spiritual and physical well-being of its members in the context of the common good of the local community and the entire Congregation.

145

Superiors in houses of six or more, and rectors in smaller houses, are appointed by the Superior General with the consent of his Council, after consultation with the members of the house. Normally appointments of superiors and rectors are made for three years and may be renewed for another three. Only rarely will they be renewed for a third three-year term.

146

Superiors of houses of six or more members will be assisted in the government of the house by two councillors elected annually by the local community. Houses of four or five members will elect one councillor. For houses of three members the General Council will appoint one councillor. For houses of only two members no councillor need be appointed. The superior or rector must obtain the consent or seek the advice of his council in certain matters, as specified in *Basilian Customs*.

¹⁴⁴ Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 25-26; 33-36.

¹⁴⁵ C. 624. *Const.*, 341-344. C. 505. Paul VI, *Cum admotae*,

Nov. 6, 1964, n. 19.

¹⁴⁶ C. 627.1.

147

Everyone of us shares responsibility for community life in his own house but this responsibility falls in a special way on local superiors. They must be generous, impartial, mindful of the common good, patient with our human weakness, and ready to act when action is called for. Their care for the community should follow the example of Christ's service to his disciples. We owe them not only obedience but respect and support.

148

To function effectively as servant of the community, the local superior must make every effort to be aware of the strengths, weaknesses and needs of the community and of its individual members. In order to do this, he must be available and ready to listen openly and without prejudice, and then to act with kindness and understanding.

149

The superior should listen not only to the individual confrere but to all members together. These in their turn must be willing to listen to the superior and to each other in seeking the will of God for the community. The actions and decisions of the superior should, in this way, take into account the opinions of the members of the community. At the same time, the superior should be ready to use his authority to preserve the freedom of an individual member. For this reason, discussions of issues in the local community should never result in votes which will be seen as binding on the superior, except in the case of the election of the local councillors. The local council, in matters on which it has a deliberative vote, can, of course, limit the action of the superior.

¹⁴⁷ Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 23-29. Rule, 458.

¹⁴⁸ Vatican II, *PC*, 14.

¹⁴⁹ C. 619. Vatican II, *PC*, 14.

150

The local superior must make himself familiar with *The Basilian Way of Life* and *Basilian Customs*, and see that they are effectively lived in his community. In applying them, however, he and all members should be motivated by prudence and charity rather than by a mere adherence to the letter of the law. The superior should be ready to use his authority to dispense the members of his local community in particular cases and for a time from the observance of any disciplinary article in these documents.

151

Local communities exist within the broader Community. Any decisions made at the local level which depart from the general practice in the Congregation are subject to the approval of the Superior General and his Council. Any local decisions which will affect the future of the local house or institution in a significant way should be submitted beforehand for approval. Similarly, any decision of the General Council which affects a local house or its members should not be made without prior consultations with the local superior.

152

When a confrere dies, the local superior will promptly notify the next of kin and the Superior General. Unless the Superior General provides otherwise, it is the right and duty of the local superior to make the funeral arrangements.

¹⁵⁰ *Const.*, 351, 352, 465.

¹⁵¹ *Rule*, 1, 3, 4.

OUR WAY OF LIFE

153

The people of God have here no lasting city, but seek the city which is to come. Our way of life as Basilians gives us a measure of freedom from the cares of earthly existence. It ought to reveal more clearly to all believers the heavenly goods which are already present in this age, and to witness to the new and eternal life given to all by the redemptive work of Christ, life beginning now but to be fulfilled in our future resurrection and the glory of the heavenly kingdom. Our way of life is for us a closer imitation and new expression of the life in which Jesus did his Father's will. We accept the obligation to follow the norms of this document thereby expressing in a Basilian way the reality of Jesus Christ as Lord and the power of the Holy Spirit working so marvellously in the Church.

¹⁵³ Vatican II, *LG*, 44.

PREFACE TO THE 1983 EDITION

The Congregation of St. Basil was founded at Annonay, France in 1822. It received the Decree of Praise from the Holy See, September 15, 1837 and the Decree of Approbation November 23, 1863. The Constitutions were approved for seven years, September 11, 1913. They were finally approved by the Holy See, October 14, 1938 for the Congregation of Priests of St. Basil of Toronto. On June 14, 1955 the Congregation of Priests of St. Basil of the Diocese of Viviers was re-united with the Toronto branch thus ending the division which occurred in 1922 and the constitutions were thereby adopted by the whole Basilian Congregation.

After Vatican II the Basilian Fathers undertook the arduous task of reworking the documents according to the norms of that Council. ". . . let constitutions, directories, custom books, books of prayers and ceremonies and such like be suitably re-edited and obsolete laws being suppressed, be adapted to the decrees of this sacred synod".¹⁵⁴

The Basilian Chapter of 1967 took up this challenge especially as it was spelled out in the *Motu Proprio Ecclesiae Sanctae*.¹⁵⁵ The Chapter commented specifically: "We would like to have a moving document, capable of inspiring those who read it, and reflecting the simplicity and unpretentiousness which we feel to be part of our Basilian tradition" (Chapter reports, p. 224).

A preliminary version of what was referred to as the *Basic Document in Ecclesiae Sanctae* (12-13) appeared in 1969 and was completed in 1972. From that time on, and especially at the Chapters of 1973 and 1977, we spent a good deal of time discussing and revising the document. Various Chapter and Editorial Committees examined and often incorporated the suggestions of each house. This process guaranteed that *The Basilian Way of Life* would be a truly Basilian product. Very special mention must be given to Father F. A. Black who intelligently, patiently and kindly shepherded this basic text through its various revisions while ensuring that it retained the spiritual verve and evangelical simplicity of his original work. To him and to Father T. J. Hanrahan, who as Superior General was

¹⁵⁴*Perfectae Caritatis* #3.

¹⁵⁵(cf. Chapter Reports 1967, Part VI pp. 221-227)

tireless in his efforts and attention to the production of *The Basilian Way of life*, our whole Community owes boundless gratitude.

This now is the definitive text of *The Basilian Way of Life* submitted to Rome and approved by the Holy See on May 12, 1983. The text of the approval follows. The final version is identical in substance to the sixth edition published in 1980 with certain changes or additions requested by the Holy See. In particular, the constitutional elements from *Basilian Government* are now found at the end of the original text of *The Basilian Way of Life*. As far as our *Basic Document* is concerned then, the work begun some sixteen years ago has finally reached a blessed and joyful conclusion.

Let us pray now that this document never be allowed to be a dead letter among us. It has already been the source of spiritual renewal and dynamism for confreres, associates, other religious and lay people. I hope that it will always be read and treated with reverence. May it along with *Basilian Customs* according to the divine plan become a living bond of unity and shared aspiration in the entire Basilian family.

V. Rev. U. E. Paré, C.S.B.
General

Superior

PREFACE TO THE 2000 EDITION

It is an honour for me to present the 2000 edition of *The Basilian Way of Life*. This edition of our Basic Constitutional Document is an important expression of the ongoing renewal of the Congregation which began following the Second Vatican Council. A high point in this renewal was the gathering of the entire community at the synod assembly which occurred in July 1996, at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, New York. Symbolic of the intention of Basilians to follow more closely the spirit of our founders, this synod in many respects set the agenda for the 1997 General Chapter. At the Chapter, final approval was given to the proposed amendments to *The Basilian Way of Life*.

The approved amendments to the original 1983 edition are found in the following articles: 104, 110, 128, 129 (eliminated), 130, 131, 135 (eliminated), and 143. In addition to these changes, some minor changes were made to improve the text and the footnotes according to observations made by the authorities in Rome with whom we were in consultation. In a letter dated February 26, 1999 (cf., Prot. n. 42251/97), the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life gave official approval to all the changes which have been incorporated into this edition of *The Basilian Way of Life*.

On behalf of the whole community, I would like to express our gratitude to Fathers William H. Irwin, C.S.B., Secretary General, Peter J. M. Swan, C.S.B., and Daniel J. Zorzi, C.S.B., for the excellent work they have done in preparing this document for publication. With their assistance, an index was added and several improvements were made to the footnotes. In the 2000 edition, the footnotes refer to the 1983 Code of Canon Law (unlike the 1983 edition of *The Basilian Way of Life* which makes reference to the 1917 Code). The footnotes now include references to Pope John Paul II's Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata*. I am also grateful to Father Frederick A. Black, C.S.B., the Basilian who was instrumental in preparing the original 1983 edition, for several helpful suggestions for the 2000 edition which he submitted to me shortly before his death.

Since it was first published in 1983, *The Basilian Way of Life* in its evangelical simplicity has guided and strengthened Basilians as we seek to follow more faithfully the way of the Lord Jesus.

During the Jubilee of the Year 2000, we have crossed the threshold of the third millennium and join with all believers in proclaiming that now is the time of the Lord's favour. Let us pray that this new edition of *The Basilian Way of Life* will be a fresh source of inspiration for our Congregation and unite us ever more deeply in our common mission of education and evangelization.

V. Rev. Ronald P. Fabbro, C.S.B.
General

Superior

November 21, 2000, Presentation of Mary

PREFACE TO THE 2002 EDITION

The General Chapter of 2002 approved a change to *The Basilian Way of Life*, article 104. This change gives our general chapters greater authority than we have had in the past to adapt the method of selecting chapter delegates. In a letter, dated December 5, 2001 (Prot. n. T 67-1/2001), the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life gave final approval to the chapter's proposed revision of article 104.

The 2002 edition of *The Basilian Way of Life* incorporates this change to article 104. Let us pray that through our fidelity to *The Basilian Way of Life* God will continue to bless our community, and may all of us come "to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

V. Rev. Ronald P. Fabbro, C.S.B.
General

Superior

March 19, 2002, Solemnity of St. Joseph

PREFACE TO THE 2009 EDITION

After the *Basilian Way of Life* was introduced to the community in 1969 and completed in 1972 the community was given opportunities to fine tune

the document. No changes have been made to this, our basic document, since the 2002 edition—this 2009 edition is simply a re-printing. The change in 2002 was procedural involving the selection of chapter delegates. Since the definitive text was approved by the Holy See in May 1983 nothing substantive has been done to the text. All of the General Chapters since the publication of the 1983 edition have stated emphatically that the *Basilian Way of Life* is indeed the **Basilian way of life** and there is no other.

The final report from the Task Force on Identity, Vision and Mission published in May 2008 indicated that:

“Identity is not an issue at this time. It is adequately expressed in *Basilian Way of Life*.”

That same task force report recommended that the Superior General and his Council reaffirm to the entire Congregation the importance of regular reading and study of the *Basilian Way of Life*. This preface is being written to reaffirm that the *Basilian Way of Life* describes who we are and what we have to do as we live and work together. **Read and study this document in community and in private, but always prayerfully.** Let us pray for one another that we may be faithful to our way of life and that God will single out young men who are ready to generously dedicate themselves to the *Basilian Way of Life*.

V. Rev. Kenneth J. Decker, C.S.B.
General

Superior

May 24, 2009, Ascension of the Lord

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