

***RULE  
AND  
CONSTITUTIONS  
OF THE  
ORDER OF SAINT CHARBEL***

This document is the complete 1996 edition of the Rule and  
Constitutions.

**On-line Version.**

January 2000

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

***TO THE JANUARY, 1996 EDITION***

***OF THE RULE AND CONSTITUTION***

Since the first foundation of the Order of Saint Charbel was inaugurated in 1988, there have been a number of changes to the Rule and Constitutions of the Order, derived mostly from the experience of its members endeavouring to live this new form of Consecrated Life.

This eighth revision of the Rule and Constitutions brings in several significant changes impacting mainly on Community Life.

- The Minor Vow of Poverty for the Third Branch now, not only calls for detachment from worldly possessions, but an unequivocal renunciation of all material wealth.
- At the local level, the Government of the Community has been restructured, and the Community Council will now have representation from all Branches of the Order with its Office Bearers being appointed from those with the skills necessary to do the job.
- The Fourth Branch is now to be for those who wish to live a Consecrated Life in the world. A Fourth Branch member may live in Community only by permission, as a temporary measure.
- During the foundation stage, because of Town Planning restrictions etc., it may not be possible to house all prospective members in Community, and in future such people are to be encouraged to join the Third Branch of the Order and to participate in Community Life as fully as possible until the opportunity arises for them to live in the Community.
- Simple principles for the guidance of members and Superiors in the settlements of disputes have been incorporated in the clauses regulating Community Life.
- The detailed treatment of Government of the Order is still in draft form only, and when ready for issue at a later stage will be included as Appendix A.
- Earlier attempts to address the question of married Clergy in the Order have been withdrawn from the document. It is still the intention of the Founder that the Order accept married laymen for training in the Priesthood, and Married Priests of the Eastern Rite Churches, as well as providing acceptance of laicised former Priests. Because these are matters of fundamental concern to Holy Mother Church, and impinge on questions of Canon Law and Traditions in the Roman and Eastern Rites of the Church, no further attempt is being made to incorporate these issues into the Rule and Constitution of the Order. Consideration of these issues will be left until competent authorities in the Roman and Eastern Rites of Holy Mother Church, are able to address them.

The changes will be implemented from the 1st January, 1996, and current members who joined the Order under earlier versions of the Rule and Constitution, will be afforded ample opportunity to adjust to the new commitments.

Members Professed under earlier versions of the Rule and Constitution, provided they are prepared to accept changes, particularly in relation to the Minor Vow of Poverty, may be permitted to renew their Vows, or alternatively, to recommence their Novitiate.

Your Brother in Christ,

**WILLIAM KAMM**

# ***PREFACE BY THE FOUNDER***

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, Our Loving Saviour.

I wish to introduce to you a Way of Consecrated Life that is deeply rooted in the Message of the Gospel of Our Loving Saviour Jesus Christ.

It is true to say that the two thousand years of history of our Living Faith has produced some of the finest lifestyles available for mankind to reach sanctification and has brought forth memorable Saints for Holy Mother Church. It is also true to say that Christ has renewed His Call to "come and follow Me". However, in each case He has done so through the establishment of a new means of Consecrated Life. Many of these Consecrated Ways of Life still exist today. The Franciscan, the Dominican, the Jesuit, the Carmelite, the Augustinian and the Benedictine Ways of Life are but a few of the many forms the Spirit of God has used to renew the Mystical Body of Christ.

Today the Call of Christ to His Bride, the Church, continues, but it is through other means. It is for this reason that I address you. Jesus and His Holy Mother, Mary, are calling mankind to a deeper commitment; calling for the laity, especially, to fulfil their lives through a Religious Life.

As mentioned earlier, in each age God has raised up new means of Consecrated Life; raised up souls to bring forth the Word of God. In each epoch of the Church's renewal a new form of Consecrated Life was founded. The Hermits, the Monks, the Enclosed Orders, the Religious Orders, the Oblates; the Congregations and Association, and Secular Institutions, were founded to re-ignite God's Spirit into the life of the Church, to encourage the people to strive for a perfect way of life.

But now, with the wealth of all these foundations, God seeks to give to His Church a new form of Consecrated Life, combining all previous expressions of the Evangelical Counsels.

It is to be noted that these various forms of Consecrated Life existed, both in the East and West. Thus, the idea of forming a new Order and a new form of Consecrated Life in our time, which combines both East and Western ideals. This, then expresses the very foundation for the growth of all forms of vocations: Priests, Brothers, Sisters, Families, Singles, and various Apostolates.

In each episode of God's Divine Plan, the situation which existed within the Church warranted such action. As we slowly come to the end of the twentieth century God is once again calling for a rekindling of Divine Love in one's heart, by a life of total dedication to God's Love.

The Order of Saint Charbel is such a lifestyle, established to fill the needs of the Church; to renew the Religious Life which has diminished; to replace the vocations which have been lost; to provide the conditions which enable the family to flourish. The Order is to be a beacon for a world plagued with division and confusion - one which has no sense of direction or stability.

The Order of Saint Charbel challenges this very strained situation with new vigour and determination. It aims to reclaim for the family that life and stability it justly deserves; to provide the essential ingredients which are necessary to foster further Religious vocations, and in a unique move, to further enhance the potential for vocations to the Priesthood, and to weld family life more firmly into the Sacramental life the Order provides for a married Priesthood, as well as the traditional celibate Priesthood.

The Order of Saint Charbel comprises four Branches:

First being the celibate Priests; Second being Religious Brothers and Sisters and the Third Branch consisting of Married people and their families (as well as Single Lay people. The Fourth Branch is for

`External' Members who wish to make a commitment to supporting the Order and living its prayer life.

Lastly, there is the Confraternity Membership which comprises: The 'Saint Charbel Houses of Prayer' and 'The Living Stones' who contribute through their sacrifices and prayers.

All these Branches strive to develop a Community of Christians helping one another to fulfil their obligations before God. The idea of Christians living together as a Community is not new. However, the Saint Charbel Order does introduce a new concept when it deals with the Laity taking Minor Vows as Lay Religious before God. This is what God is calling the Church to: for Christians to live a fully-dedicated life, consecrated to Jesus, through Mary - becoming as one with the Mystical Body of Christ. The Rule of the Order of Saint Charbel is developed through a combination of the Franciscan and Benedictine Ways of Life producing a contribution of East and Western ideals as a result, an Order which is semi-contemplative and semi-active; a life which reflects the one Christ Himself lived while on earth; a self-giving of one's life, necessary to achieve sanctification and its Heavenly reward.

In a special way the Order follows the Spirit of Mary, Our Holy Mother, for She exemplifies the Image of Christ, Her Divine Son; and, as Jesus, who is God, was submissive to His Holy Mother in all things, so too are all the Members of the Order of Saint Charbel, thus bringing all to the road of perfection - the surest and most pleasing Way to God.

The Saint Charbel Order is yet only a part of God's Plan of re-evangelising the Church, for closely linked with the Order, though with a different charism; yet which is basically a similar presentation of a new form of Consecrated life: is the Order of the Immaculate Heart, and of Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort, founded by Rev. Fr. Yves-Marie Blais in the Province of Quebec, Canada in the township of L'Avenir. Both Orders, founded for our time, have been inspired by God and are closely linked like an umbrella of singular purpose, thus providing a means for the re-evangelisation of the faithful. With the Grace of the Eternal Father, through His Divine Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit of Divine Love, and through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I place this Venerable Order of Saint Charbel into Their care and protection.

Your humble servant,

**WILLIAM KAMM**

**THE LITTLE PEBBLE**

# ***FOREWORD***

The Order of St. Charbel is a new Religious Order in the Church - an Order which sees itself living the Gospel to the fullest. It encompasses Priests, Religious and Laity in one religious life, lived in community and bound by the three Vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience - the Evangelical Counsels. As such, the Order of St. Charbel is a new form of living the Consecrated life, since it is essentially composed of four Branches:

- The First Branch is composed of celibate Priests.
- The Second Branch is composed of Religious - both Brothers and Sisters.
- The Third Branch, which comprises the Laity (married and families, or singles) take 'Minor Vows', only, according to their state.
- The Fourth Branch is similar to the old "Third Orders" that have been in existence in the Catholic Church for centuries - the Third Order of Saint Francis is one example. There is a major difference in that the Fourth Branch comprises Lay persons who live in the world, but wish to live a Consecrated life involving a real commitment in the form of a Written Promise. It involves active volunteer work; manual work at home for the benefit of the Order, and requires similar daily prayers as in Community.

The Confraternity Membership comprises: The 'Saint Charbel Houses of Prayer, Peace, Unity and Reconciliation' and 'The Living Stones' who are united in the life and merits of the Order through their sacrifices and prayers.

The structural government of the Order sees the Supreme Pontiff as Head of the Order. Then, solely responsible to the Pope, is the Prelate of the Order, who is appointed by the Pope.

The Order of St. Charbel is truly a new Gift of the Holy Spirit entrusted to the Church. The main goals of the Order are as follows:

- (a) Re-evangelisation of the Mystical Body of Christ, particularly through preaching the Word of God in its entirety, as authoritatively taught by the Magisterium, through teaching the Faith at all levels of the Church's life in the modern world.
- (b) Re-unification and reconciliation of Christianity, particularly East and West, beginning with individual persons and encompassing all ecclesial communions.
- (c) Promotion of the Family as the "Domestic Church" which, in God's plan, is the basic cell of Society and a subject of rights and duties.
- (d) Promotion of True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, which proposes consecration to Jesus through Mary, as an effective means for Christians to live, faithfully, their baptismal and Religious commitment.

It is not possible to begin this major task without, at the same time, pursuing self-sanctification in order to nourish personal union with God. The way of life promoted by the Order greatly strengthens and deepens the awareness of this need for the Love of the Father (**1 John 2:15-17**); that Love which is in the Heart of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world. The Order of Saint Charbel promotes this contemplative dimension of Religious Life through the very structure of the day. Half the day is devoted to Prayer - the other half to Work, particularly the apostolic and charitable works of the Order. Listening to, and meditating on, the Word of God is a daily encounter with the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ. The Order fully realises that devout participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the source and summit of Christian life and is, therefore, the irreplaceable centre of the daily religious exercises. The Sacrament of Reconciliation, which restores the fundamental gift of conversion

received at Baptism, is encouraged highly by the Order for personal growth in the spiritual life. There can be no contemplative dimension of Religious Life without the personal and community experience of conversion. The Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament as a special devotion of the Church, is a source of spiritual nourishment for personal prayer and a more intimate participation in the Church's life. The Order is dedicated to the prayerfulness with attention and fidelity.

By Her exceptional pilgrimage of faith, the Blessed Virgin Mary continues to "go before" the People of God and represents a constant point of reference for the Church and particularly the Order of St. Charbel. The Order has singular veneration for the Blessed Mother of God. Each member of the Order daily consecrates his life and activity to Jesus through Mary, directing filial love towards Her Who is Mother of the Church and of Consecrated souls. The Order manifests this love with the celebration of Her Feasts, promotion of Her authentic Shrines and devotions, and, in particular, daily prayers in Her honour, especially the Holy Rosary. Some of the apostolic and charitable works promoted by the Order of St. Charbel are primarily in the:

- Preaching and teaching of the Word of God.
- Caring for the sick and the unwanted.
- Sacramental and catechetical needs of the Third Branch Communities.

Preaching the Gospel has a high priority in the Order since the needs of evangelisation in the Church and the world are so great. The evangelical witness of Religious Life, bringing the Word of God to the modern world, will be the leaven to sanctify every sector of Society which is willing to receive the call to a conversion of heart. In this respect the Order of St. Charbel considers itself Missionary to the whole world. Catechesis, which often takes the form of religious instruction in the Faith, will be promoted at all levels, but beginning, always, with the family, where the Faith is nourished and supported. The Order of St. Charbel also sees itself as a living expression of the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29f). Care for the sick, unwanted, and dying, brings the tender Compassion of Christ to those who are suffering in the circumstances of their pain. The Order maintains the "preferential option for the poor" in bringing to the world of human suffering the unselfish love of neighbour for the sake of Christ, so fundamental to Christian solidarity.

Sincerely in Christ,

**REV. MALCOLM L. BROUSSARD, Jr.**

(one of the founding Priests)

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# INTRODUCTION TO THE ORDER OF SAINT CHARBEL

## WHAT IS RELIGIOUS LIFE?

When people think of Religious life they often have in mind the actual Religious themselves - the Priests, the Brothers and Sisters. However, we are all Religious; all members of the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church. But being this does not mean that we are bound to pray for many hours each day or commit ourselves to an unrealistic number of charitable works, and so on. That is not what Religious Life is all about. It is something fundamentally more basic, something much, much, more comprehensive.

What is Religious Life? The Programme of Religious Life is attaining perfection, as described in the Gospel. What does perfection mean? Our Lord Jesus Christ told us to be "perfect, just as His Heavenly Father is Perfect." (**Matt.5:48**) However, this is not possible - except by the Grace of God. Then all is possible. The goal of Religious Life is to be able to live - to the best of one's ability - a way of life which is under the heavenly, inspired guidance of the Church.

Religious Life is not only a way of life, but, more, it is based on an attitude in imitation of the Life of Christ, a Life of Perseverance. It generally takes a lifetime to finally achieve this goal.

Religious Life does not mean living a life withdrawn from the world. It is a Religious State within the Church, within the world. It is to this state that Our Lord's Words - "You are the Light for the World" (**Matt.5:14**)- can most readily be applied. In Religious Life one does not stand aside from the problems of the world. The Salvation of the World is the deepest concern of Religious. They cannot adopt the attitude that they are free from the world's harshness. They cannot be indifferent. Indeed, they are the answer, living and tangible - to the cries of human perplexity and distress.

## WHY A RELIGIOUS LIFE?

The Religious Life which exists today is organised in accordance with the Laws of the Church. These Laws are derived, primarily, from the Gospel - adopting Jesus' Way of Life and making it a norm by which to live. But why should one follow this Way? Why have so many done so in the past? It was and is the desire to imitate Christ through a personal attachment to Him. It is the answer to the invitation: "Follow Me." (**Matt.19:21**)

The source of a happy Religious Life is a personal love for Jesus and Mary which, in turn, urges Catholics to embrace a voluntary way of life of which He is the example; which He has revealed as the best means of following Him closely and of always being with Him. In any formation of Religious Life we must learn to live together as the Apostles did with Jesus; to leave all in order to follow Him; to love one another for His Sake. Thus we must live the "Evangelical Life" which is the fundamental duty of all Religious.

## GENERAL CONDITIONS

### FOR A PERFECT EVANGELICAL LIFE

1. We must mould our whole existence, our life and attitude to life, so that it is in accordance to the example set us by Christ, as portrayed through the Gospels.
2. To live the Evangelical Life well demands that one has the virtues of a child of God:-

(a) an unlimited love of the Father.

(b) unlimited trust.

(c) unconditional surrender.

3. Tied in with this is the requirement of a completely fraternal life with the desire to love all men as Jesus loves them and, following His Example, to give ourselves unceasingly for them.

4. Evangelical Life requires a conversion, a radical change of heart in thought, affections and actions.

It would be impractical to lay down a specified time in which to achieve this, as it is usually a lifelong endeavour. However, the time has come for mankind to realise that values and attitudes are changing - mostly for the worse. How many Catholics reading this could say that they are striving to follow Christ, or are they not rather motivated by the changing trends of the world? Does mankind in general heed the call, "Come follow me", or do those hearing the call reply: "No", or, "Yes I will come, but not yet"?

## **WHY A NEW ORDER?**

There are many Orders which already exist within the Church today, each with their own special characteristics which seem to cover virtually every possible situation. With this in mind, we may well ask why is there a need for a new Order - a new means of living the Consecrated Life? Surely there is one already in existence which would be sufficient even for today's needs?

The Church has gone through many rough periods in its 2000 year existence but, no matter what troubles existed in the past, it has always come through with flying colours. In most cases it was through the guidance of a particular person that the Church was shown the way. St. Anthony, St. Augustine, St. Benedict, St. Francis, St. Dominic, St. Teresa of Avila and St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, are just a few of the great souls who, through their lives, showed in what way the Mystical Body had to adapt itself. Yet again the time has come when the Mystical Body of Christ is in dire need of assistance. She needs a light - a beacon - to lead Her through the confusion that exists within Her as well as the world, today.

So, what is the Way? It is the comprehensive Religious Life of the new Orders and Congregations being established within the Church during these times - notably the Order of Saint Charbel. This Order, and these Congregations, are preparing to re-evangelise the Mystical Body of Christ. They are guiding lights, not just for Religious Priests, Brothers and Sisters, but through their Third Branches for the whole world. They provide the way by which the laity can achieve deep perfection.

What is it that makes the Order of Saint Charbel different from the Orders and Congregations which currently exist within the Church? One of the major differences is that it takes something of the spirit of the respective Rules of St. Benedict and St. Francis - combining the deeper contemplative life of the Benedictines with the practical, active, lifestyle of the Franciscans, which, together, unite a life of Prayer with a life of active Spiritual and Corporal Works. That is, a life which is half contemplative; half active. Apart from this, the Order is quite similar to the traditional Orders in approach and method except, possibly, for the fact that the lifestyle is not as regimented as were the earlier ones.

It is within the Third Branch that other significant differences become more apparent. There are many Third Branches, but never before in the history of the Church has anyone tried to implement a third branch which has the intent to make the laity live the Evangelical Counsels according to their state. Never before has anyone incorporated a Married Priesthood within a Religious Order.

## **COMMUNITY LIFE**

### **A LIFE BASED UPON THE GOSPEL**

People have been living in communities for many thousands of years. Man, by his very nature, is drawn to the community way of life in his pursuit of physical and/or spiritual security.

If this is the case, it seems only natural that the first Christians, surrounded by an overwhelming majority of more-established pagan religions, should join together in a bond of the same thoughts and desires - to live the same type of Life as that instructed by Our Lord Jesus Christ. Not only were these first Christians inspired by the Holy Ghost, but they had the Apostles to teach them - the Apostles being the very men who experienced the Gospel through their Master, Jesus Christ, at first hand, for three years. What better source could possibly exist?

So, with the Spirit and Instructions from the Apostles, the first Christians lived a common life - living with one mind - having all things in common - praying with one accord - as one in heart and soul. All things were common to them. True, they had to overcome difficulties, but they prayed, and were guided by the Holy Spirit. They lived and prayed together, thus becoming a model for all those in the future who might wish to live the Religious Life.

*"The whole community remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles; to the brotherhood; to the breaking of bread; and to the prayers. The many miracles and signs worked through the apostles made a deep impression on everyone. The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves, according to what each one needed. They went as a body to the Temple every day, but met in their houses for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly and generously; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved." (Acts 2:42-47 Quotation of Holy Father, re: Communities - L'Osservatore Romano - Ref. APPENDIX H)*

## **SAINT CHARBEL**

Saint Charbel is from the Maronite Church, which takes its name from Saint Maron, an anchorite from the vicinity of Antioch, who, in the second half of the fourth century, withdrew from the world into a monastery not far from Apamea in Syria to live with and for God, as did those men of Eastern monasticism who were thirsty for God and who were called "the intoxicated of God".

Maron was famous for his holiness and through him the Lord granted many healing graces, both physical and spiritual, to the great number of people who went to him. Maron, at the price of both his life and that of his monks, fervently defended the Catholic doctrine as solemnly defined in the ecumenical Councils held in that region, and which was defended by the Supreme Pontiff.

Maronite history is marked by loyalty to the Pope; by martyrdom in its defence and by the almost visceral love for religious freedom and tolerance. The willingness to welcome religious minorities that have made Lebanon their refuge is an essential part of the Maronite traits which have made Lebanon the homeland of minorities. Both Christians and non-Christians recognise these characteristics of the Maronite Church and her leading role in Lebanon. An eminent position has always been reserved for the Maronite Patriarch, as a symbol of national unity and as guardian of the characteristics of Lebanon.

The Maronite Church has a patriarchal structure. The Patriarch bears the title of "Patriarch of Antioch and of All the East". Antioch was the See of Saint Peter before Rome.

Saint Charbel was born Joseph Maklouf on the 8th May, 1828, the fifth child of a rather ordinary peasant family which lived in the small village of Beqa' Kafra in the Lebanese mountains.

As a child Joseph was strongly drawn towards the Religious side of life. Often he would pray and contemplate the deeper meaning of life. This did not prevent him from growing up normally, but, rather, made him a model child. However, when a child, a goal was placed in his mind and heart - to

serve God through the Priesthood. This became his prime ambition during his youthful years. Although a worthwhile ambition, his family did not agree with it, and thus he was forced to submit humbly to their will, even though inside he was drawn more and more towards a life of prayer; the life of a monk.

This urge increased more and more until, finally, he left his home and family and went to the Monastery of Our Lady of Mayfouq. Because of his true devotion he was admitted, changing his name to 'Charbel'. He was twenty-three years old.

This was the first step towards the goal destined for this young man. After finishing his first year of novitiate he asked to be transferred to the Monastery of St. Maron at Annaya. This was because he wished to detach himself from all worldly thoughts - working solely for God - and this Monastery offered better opportunities for seclusion. His request was granted.

There he portrayed a life which seems - to us, today - incredible. He prayed for hours at a time; gave himself penances which even the others thought harsh; obeyed all those around him; ate one meal a day - usually the left overs - and drank only water.

This was his life, and it was the life he lived until his death. It was the road he followed because it was the road God wanted him to follow.

Saint Charbel's life was based upon the life of Saint Anthony of Egypt, the Father of Monks. He mirrored his life upon that of Saint Anthony, abandoning family and goods - living a life in attentiveness to God. The more deeply he based his life upon Saint Anthony and the other Fathers, the more he buried himself in a life of Prayer.

Saint Charbel knew the necessity of prayer, for with true prayer one can overcome all the trials which the world can present. Hour after hour he knelt before the Blessed Sacrament, living according to the precept of the Lord: "Pray without ceasing." He venerated the Mother of God with so much love that his heart became like that of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Saint Charbel's humility and charity are something all can imitate if they wish. Not only did he, like a child, obey his superiors, but, because he saw Christ in those around him, he did his best to obey them completely also.

The Elders used to say that a monk must not judge others or revile them, be curious, jealous or backbiting, malign his neighbour in thought or word, nor look into his affairs. These are the ideals which St. Charbel followed. It was not easy, but with prayer he was able to overcome all temptations. By making these aims their own, with the help of prayer, all may follow in his footsteps.

In the Monastery at Annaya, at the end of his novitiate, he made his Monastic Profession and took the Solemn Vows of Obedience, Chastity and Poverty. This was in 1853, when he was 25 years old. From here he was sent to the Monastery of Saint Cyprian of Kfifane where he studied for six years. During his studies he was always among the first in his class, primarily because of his discipline and love for what he was doing.

After finishing his Philosophical and Theological studies, Brother Charbel was ordained a Priest on the 23rd July, 1858 at Bkerke. Afterwards he received instructions from his superiors to return to the Monastery of St. Maron, at Annaya.

It was here that he spent sixteen years of community life, where he became the "servant of the servants." He respected all, even the least significant in the community. He led a life of work and prayer, always choosing those tasks that were most toilsome and lowly. His continuous prayer, prolonged fasting, acts of mortification - and his union with God - made him an Angel in human form.

But this is not the end of Saint Charbel's life. The next level of achievement along his road to seeking his goal was that of solitude - the life of a hermit. He could not become a hermit immediately, however, because becoming a hermit is extremely difficult. First, a hermit must be like a piece of metal - tempered and strengthened to remove all impurities - and this is done through community life. At first Saint Charbel was refused permission to be a hermit - not because he wasn't ready, but because all Superiors discourage their members from leaving the community. It was another test along the way. However, with patience and humility, he prayed. Again he asked permission which was granted this time, but not without the help of a heavenly Miracle.

In 1875 he was authorised to enter the hermitage which was dependent upon the Monastery of Annaya. A hermit's life is most difficult, but, through prayer, Saint Charbel took all in his stride. Saint Charbel was a hermit for 23 years and he achieved his goal of living for Christ as perfectly as he could.

At 11.00 a.m. on the 16th December, 1898, while saying Mass, Saint Charbel was struck by paralysis during the Consecration. He was carried to his cell where, for eight days, still paralysed and in great pain, he kept repeating the names of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and the Apostles, Peter and Paul.

On Christmas Eve, 24th December, 1898, he died, at the age of 70 years. He was buried, but the body was not embalmed - nor placed in a coffin - which was the custom of the area.

It was only after his death that the rest of the world began to know about him. Almost immediately miracles began to happen. For 45 days and nights after he was buried a strange light flickered around his grave. Three months after his death the Patriarch, due to reports of many miracles, ordered that Saint Charbel's body be exhumed.

When the body was exhumed it was found to be floating in a watery oil. It was incorrupt and the clothes were intact. The body was reburied, in a coffin, in the Monastery. The miracles continued. Twenty-nine years after his death the tomb was again opened and the body was found to be still incorrupt.

Many thousands of people have been cured through his relics, especially the oil which still flows, even today, from his body. And the cures continue to this day!

Saint Charbel was beatified on December 5th 1965 by His Holiness, Pope Paul VI. The ceremony took place at the closing of the Second Vatican Council. On October 9th, 1977, during the World Synod of Bishops, Pope Paul VI canonised Blessed Charbel among the ranks of the Saints.

## **SO WHY SAINT CHARBEL?**

Saint Charbel is the model of this Order. He was a model of Christian unity - a man of peace - of contemplation - and of corporal works. He was the perfect example of piety, love and faith; renouncing all the riches of the world; a perfect example of chastity and obedience; a living marvel of God. He showed the world where prayer and physical works become one and the same; where prayer and contemplation were the work of God; and the work of God "to help his fellow man" become a prayer. This is the basis of the Order, amalgamating the two together - the way Christ wished us to live.

The Church in Lebanon is coming out of isolation and rediscovering the authentic expression of her apostolic faith enriched and formulated by the Eastern Fathers in the ecclesial communion which goes beyond the frontiers of Lebanon and the structure of the Churches of various rites.

## **THE PURPOSE OF THE ORDER**

Put simply, the purpose of the Order of Saint Charbel is to live the Life of the Gospel - in its fullness. This aim is identical to that of many other Orders, and it is, or should be, the objective of each and

every Catholic. It means following the instruction of Jesus Christ, Our Lord, when He said: "Come follow Me." We intend to embrace the life set down by the Order; to strive for perfection; to learn, and then show to others, Christ, so that they, also, may learn of His Love for them, and the Love of His Most Blessed Mother, Mary the Immaculate.

The Order is an example of the Light of Christ, He Who is the Light of the World. And the way to live the life of the Gospel is by living the way Christ intended - through the lifestyle of a Religious Community.

## **THE GENERAL AIM OF THE ORDER**

Generally speaking, the Order aims to bring about the Re-evangelisation of the Church, to re-live the Traditions of Holy Mother Church, ensure the unification of the between Eastern and Western Catholic Rites, to tie in the old, the true, the traditional, with a new form of consecrated life.

A prime aim of the Order of Saint Charbel is to achieve the unification of the Mystical Body of Christ. This will be realised through various degrees of implementation. The need for unification is in response to a desire described in the Holy Scriptures when Our Lord prayed to His Father that all would be as one, as He and His Father were, and are, one; that there be one flock under one shepherd. **(John 17:21)**

## **THE CHARISM OF THE ORDER**

What then is the real Charism of the Order of Saint Charbel, that it will be distinguished between other Orders? The main difference is that the Mission of Atonement is the major factor in this Order. This part of re-evangelising the Church speaks for itself. Why re-evangelise, as the Church has been evangelised already? It is because the Mystical Body of Christ needs to be renewed in a strong, determined faith - like a vow that needs to be renewed in a Profession of Faith - which is done periodically by the Religious faithful, But this must be enhanced by strong Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy in a more profound and heroic manner, especially in these times when the faith in Holy Mother Church has become lethargic, for this can be seen in the great decline in vocations.

So, part of the charism of the Order is atoning for the abuse of Grace and bringing forth new and vigorous aspirations to new heights of devotion to Jesus and Mary - constantly requested by the true Magisterium, and mostly by the Vicar of Christ.

This special charism is seen in the devotions and traditions of the Church - both East and West - thus fostering the desired unity in a more active and prominent way. For example: through the devotions to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus, the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Most Pure Heart of Saint Joseph. Furthermore, the great devotion to Saint Charbel, who originates from Lebanon paves the way for a stronger bond and unity between East and West.

It is also to foster and integrate the various traditions that are wholesome for our strong faith, handed down to us through various Fathers of the Church, from the East and West, bringing forth unity that has been sought after for many centuries.

It is to be noted that the most prominent part of the charism of this new form of Consecrated Life is the lifting of the family into the realm of a special Religious expressed vocation by taking Minor Vows; this being a strong factor of bringing forth unity in the Mystical Body of Christ for the three major forms of Consecrated Life, namely: Priests, Brothers, Sisters, Married, and Single.

People living a vowed life bring forth the fruit of a Mystical Union and Spiritual Foundation in the Mystical Body of Christ. Furthermore, the Married state of life is a Community of its very own, and by joining this special love between husband and wife into the bosom of the Community Religious life, it

too brings forth fruit that is desired and expressed in the Mystical Body. (see the teaching of the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, given about the family on the 22nd November, 1981; Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*).

Further, by incorporating a Married Priesthood within the Order, the Sacramental life of the family is enhanced, and the potential for vocations to the Priesthood, greatly expanded.

The charism of the Order of Saint Charbel can stand on two main foundations: true unity and true devotion, made up with the traditions of our faith in a spirit of atonement and reparation to God. The Order documents are self-explanatory on this factor.

## **THE FOUNDER OF THE ORDER**

Throughout the history of the Church, specially chosen people have been divinely inspired to assist humanity in their pursuit of Christ through living the Life of the Gospel.

The Founder of the Order of Saint Charbel is William Kamm, known world-wide as "The Little Pebble".

# ***PART (I)***

## ***THE RULE OF THE***

### ***ORDER OF SAINT CHARBEL***

**The Most Venerable Order of the White Cross - the Warriors of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of the Immaculate Heart of Mary - the Order of Saint Charbel, is destined by God the Father to re-evangelise the Mystical Body of Christ through the guidance of the Holy Ghost. The Third Person of the Blessed Trinity revealed to members of the Mystical Body of Christ in the following Divinely Inspired Rules:-**

## **RULE**

### **1. NATURE AND PURPOSE:**

**1.1** The Order of Saint Charbel is a new Religious Order comprising four Branches and a Confraternity. It is not a Society or Religious Community, but a New Order, which comes under the category of "*new forms of Consecrated Life*" provided for in the New Canon Law of Holy Church (**C.605**). The Order of Saint Charbel aims to bring about the re-evangelisation of the Church, to re-live the authentic traditions of Holy Mother Church, to encourage unity between Eastern and Western Catholic Rites, and to embrace aspects of the traditional monastic life in a new form of Consecrated Life.

**1.2** All members of the Order of Saint Charbel will live the Life of the Gospel through the Community Life, so as to experience the common life as lived by the first Christians and desired by God for the whole Mystical Body of Christ: to observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ by living in Poverty, Chastity and Obedience - the 'Evangelical Counsels' - according to one's state of life.

**1.3** To offer obedience and loyalty to the Pope and his Successors, and to the Holy Roman Catholic Church, and those whom he places in authority, and to humbly and faithfully observe the Teachings of Holy Mother Church in regard to Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, as laid down by the Sacred Magisterium of the Church.

**1.4** The Order of Saint Charbel embraces a new form of Consecrated Life, in which the Branch of Priests, and the Branch of Religious Brothers and Sisters, together with the Branch of Families, live in Community, sharing in common a life of Prayer and Work. The Order of Saint Charbel encompasses four Branches, and a Confraternity Membership:

**(a)** The First Branch, or Branch of Priests, includes the celibate Priesthood, both Bishops and Priests, who embrace the Evangelical Counsels as Solemn Vows.

**(b)** The Second Branch, or Branch of Religious, is made up of Religious Brothers and Religious Sisters who embrace the Evangelical Counsels as Solemn Vows.

**(c)** The Third Branch, or Branch of Families, comprises Married lay people and their families, and Single lay people who are not yet decided on a Religious or Married Vocation, who live in Community and embrace the Evangelical Counsels according to their state in life, as Minor Vows. (*For explanation of Minor Vows, See Note in Art. 2*)

(d) The Fourth Branch comprises Lay persons who wish to live a Consecrated life in the world, external to Community, and embrace the Evangelical Counsels, according to their state in life, by Promise.

(e) The Confraternity Membership comprises: The 'Saint Charbel Houses of Prayer, Peace, Unity and Reconciliation' and 'The Living Stones' who are united in the life and merits of the Order through their sacrifices and prayers.

**1.5** Together the four Branches embrace the life of the Order which - for the First and Second Branches - is regulated by contemplative prayer for one half of the day, and physical work for the other half. For the Third Branch, the commitment to prayer and physical work is conditioned by family obligations; and for the Fourth Branch Members, by their situation in the world.

## **2. THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS:**

**2.1** The Celibate Priesthood of the first Branch and all members of the second Branch are required to make profession of the Evangelical Counsels of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience as Solemn Vows, by which they are totally dedicated to God.

**2.2** All members of the Third Branch are required to make profession of the Evangelical Counsels of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, according to their state in life as 'Minor Vows'. ([See Note:](#)).

**2.3** Members of the Fourth Branch, embrace the Evangelical Counsels of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, according to their state in life by 'Promise'.

**2.4** Members of the First, Second and Third Branches are admitted to vows only after completing a period of trial and formation in three stages

(a) Upon acceptance into the Order, the applicant is admitted to a six month period of Probation or Postulancy. The candidate lives in Community and must strive to live according to the Rule and Constitutions of the Order.

(b) After successful completion of the period of Postulancy or Probation, which may be extended if necessary by the Superior, the Postulant is admitted to the Novitiate as a temporary member of the Order, and receives the Habit of the Order appropriate to the Branch he/she is entering.

(c) The Novitiate for the First and Second Branches lasts for a minimum period of one year, but may be extended, where necessary, to no more than two years. For the Third Branch, by reason of the adjustments which must be made to accommodate family life to community living, the Novitiate will usually last for a minimum period of two years, but may, in particular circumstances, be reduced to one year or extended to three years.

(d) After successful completion of the Novitiate, candidates for the First and Second Branches are admitted to temporary profession in accord with the norms laid down in Canon Law, and take Temporary Vows for a minimum of three years. During this period the Vows are renewed each year, and at the completion of the period of temporary profession the member, if ready, is admitted to perpetual profession and takes Solemn Vows, the vows being renewed every three years.

(e) If, at the completion of the three year period, the Temporary Professed Member, or his Superior, feels that the member is not ready for solemn Vows, the Temporary Vows can be extended for a further year. Further extensions can be made, but not for more than six years,

because the total time in Temporary Vows is not to extend beyond nine years.

(f) After successful completion of their Novitiate, candidates for the Third Branch are admitted to their first profession in 'Minor Vows - according to their state in life'. The Minor Vows are taken for a period of one year and renewed annually. (See Note:).

## **THE MINOR VOWS OF THE THIRD BRANCH:**

*Note: The new Canon Law makes no provision for the Evangelical Counsels to be embraced - according to one's state in life - nor for Conjugal Chastity appropriate to the married state. The term 'Minor Vow' has been introduced herein for the purpose of emphasising the less binding nature of vows, which are more appropriate to those who are married, or to those who, though single, may have a vocation to the married state. Therefore, for the purpose of clarifying the Rule, what is meant by embracing the Evangelical Counsels according to one's state in life, in 'Minor Vows', is addressed in the following clauses:*

**2.5** By Profession in Minor Vows, the member makes a public vow to observe the three evangelical counsels according to his/her state in life. It is primarily, but not exclusively, intended for married people with family responsibilities. Hence, the use of the term 'according to one's state in life'.

**2.6** The Minor Vow may be classed as 'Temporary' because, being applicable only to the Third Branch of the Order, it is taken for one year only. (*This is not the same as the Canon Law definition of "Temporary Vow" which is for a period of three years (C.655)*). At the completion of 12 months the Minor Vow is no longer binding, and must be renewed for another year. Annual renewal is required thereafter.

**2.7** The requirements for profession in the Minor Vows are the same as for the requirements of temporary profession of **Canon 656**.

**The Person must** - be over eighteen years of age: - have validly completed the novitiate; be granted admission, freely, by the Community Superior; be under no duress; the profession be received by the Community Superior or delegate.

**In addition, if Married:** the person must also have the consent of his/her spouse, and should preferably be admitted to profession in company with his/her spouse. However, there may be circumstances in which such consent will not be required.

**2.8** In taking Minor Vows, the person binds himself/herself, under pain of venial sin, to live above the strict obligations of the commandments:

(a) In the Minor Vow of Poverty; the person is called upon to detach himself/herself from worldly possessions, particularly those which might distract him/her from the primary objective of loving and serving God. In practice this requires that the person, at the time of his/her profession, transfers to the Order all title to his/her worldly possessions, but recognises the need for a family to retain, for their personal use, items of a personal nature or of sentimental value, or essential to the person's trade or skills, or to family needs.

(b) In the Minor Vow of Chastity; the person who is married, seeks with his/her spouse to embrace 'conjugal chastity', to live above the strict requirements of the Sixth and Ninth Commandments - which, of course, bind under pain of serious sin - to elevate their conjugal union to a deeply personal union of heart and soul in which the couple seek always to fulfil the Will of God.

(c) In the Minor Vow of Chastity, the person who is unmarried, though obliged to that continence observed in celibacy, seeks to perfect this in the purity of his/her life offered to God,

but is not precluded from the choice of a married vocation, or from courting with this aspiration. The person in Minor Vows should wait until their Vows are no longer binding, before marrying. The Vows may subsequently be renewed in the married state.

(d) In the Minor vow of Obedience, the person seeks to submit his/her will (as one would to God) to lawful Superiors in all decisions made or commands given in accordance with the Rule and Constitutions of the Order.

## **THE PROMISES OF THE FOURTH BRANCH:**

**2.9** Candidates for the Fourth Branch, after a brief period of instruction in the Rule and Constitution of the Order pertaining to membership in the Fourth Branch, and preparation for living a Consecrated Life in the world, may be received into the Order, provided that he/she

(a) is at least eighteen years of age;

(b) Freely petitions admission to the Fourth Branch - in writing;

(c) is prepared to make a commitment in the form of a written Promise.

**2.10** The Promise, written and signed by the member, is to:

Observe the Evangelical Counsels of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, according to one's state in life, and to:

Embrace an agreed Apostolate for the Order.

**2.11** In making the Promises, the person promises to live above the strict obligations of the Commandments:

(a) In the Promise of Poverty: the person promises to detach himself/herself from worldly possessions, particularly those which might distract him/her from loving and serving God.

(b) In the Promise of Chastity: the person who is married, seeks with his/her spouse to embrace conjugal chastity, seeking always to fulfil the Will of God in their union. The person who is unmarried, though obliged to celibacy until marriage, seeks to perfect this in the purity of his/her life offered to God.

(c) In the Promise of Obedience: the person seeks to submit his/her will (as one would to God) to his/her Lawful Superior in the Order, in any directions given in accordance with the Rule and Constitution.

## **3. OBLIGATIONS:**

**3.1** The life of prayer in the Order should reflect total dedication to God.

(a) The Holy Mass is to be the focal point of prayer life, with all members striving to attend Holy Mass, and receive Holy Communion, daily.

(b) Reverence for Our Blessed Lord in the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist is a particular charism of the Order. Priests of the Order shall - **in no circumstances** - give Communion in the hand, nor shall any member of the Order, other than a person in Holy Orders, distribute Holy Communion; furthermore, all members are required to receive Our Blessed Lord on the tongue, and, unless for disability or other serious reason, in a kneeling position.

**(c)** First and Second Branch Members are to spend one hour each day in Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament; Third Branch Members are required to do this also, to the extent family commitments permit.

**(d)** For Priests of the Order and Deacons, the Office of the Hours is mandatory in accordance with Canon Law, and all members of the Second Branch are bound to this same Divine Office. Where five or more members of the First or Second Branch reside in Community, each particular hour of the Divine Office is to be sung or recited in Community at the time assigned to it, and members of the Third Branch may participate.

**(e)** Members shall honour the Blessed Virgin Mary, looking to Her as the Mediatrix of All Graces and Co-Redemptrix, in order to come closer to Her Divine Son, Jesus Christ. The Holy Rosary shall be central to the life of prayer with members meditating upon the Mysteries of the Holy Rosary.

**(i)** First, Second and Third Branch Members are to recite (and meditate) the full fifteen-decade Rosary - with one five-decade Rosary to be recited said in Community.

**(ii)** Fourth Branch Members strive to recite (and meditate) the full fifteen-decade Rosary daily. Fourth Branch Members when living in the Community, are to say one Holy Rosary with the Community.

**(iii)** Members of all Branches are to Consecrate themselves, daily, to Jesus and Mary, after the manner of Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort.

**(iv)** Special Devotion is to be given to the Patron Saints, especially Saint Joseph and Saint Charbel.

**(f)** First and Second Branch Members are encouraged to read and meditate upon approved Private Revelations.

**(g)** Members should greatly desire to receive the Sacrament of Penance, and must frequent the Sacrament at least monthly.

**(h)** The Priests of the Order are to say one Mass daily - and, where necessary, with approval, may say more than one Mass per day.

**(i)** The Priests of the Order will adhere to an authorised Calendar of the Order, and rituals of ceremonies approved for use within the Order. The Calendar must provide for one assigned weekly Mass in honour of each of the following:

The Eternal Father,

The Blessed Virgin Mary,

The Holy Angels

The Holy Souls in Purgatory

**(j)** The Masses of all true Catholic rites - both Eastern and Western - may be said within the Order, and members are encouraged to participate in these Masses, without restriction.

**(k)** The traditional hymns and Sacred music of the liturgy are to form an important part of the life of prayer in every Community.

### **3.2** The works of the Order should reflect total dedication to God

**(a)** The apostolic work of the Order is to re-evangelise the Mystical Body of Christ; first, by living the Word of God, and then by preaching the Word of God. Re-evangelisation is fundamental to the charism of the Order. Through this preaching and good example of families and Religious, souls will be led to accept the Gift of Faith, or be reconciled to God.

**(b)** Catechesis or education in the faith is intimately bound up with the whole life of the Order. This is visibly seen by the families living an integrated life with the Religious. This close collaboration will encompass: teaching in the schools that are formed in the Third Branch; teaching Christian Doctrine in a systematic way; fostering the experience of Christian living; administering the Sacraments; integration into the life of the Order; and the missionary witness to Religious life in the various works of the Order.

## **4. FOUNDATIONS AND STRUCTURES:**

**4.1** Communities are to be formed encompassing, wherever possible, all Branches of the Order - Priests, Brothers, Sisters, Families and Singles. In its initial phases a new foundation may commence with one Branch, but is to extend to include the remaining Branches as soon as circumstances allow.

**4.2** Communities are to be formed around a farm property with the objective of achieving self-sufficiency through agricultural production and/or cottage industries.

**4.3** All Branches are to contribute to the work of achieving self-sufficiency.

**4.4** At all stages of its development, the spiritual formation of all the Branches in the Community is the responsibility of the Priests of the Order.

**4.5** It is to be noted that for the First Branch each Priest will be assigned in the Mission of Evangelisation in each Community and will take their position as Superiors of each Community. However, all Priests are subject to the Rule and Constitution of the First Branch which regulates them in the practices and customs laid out for them. There is, however, in each country or region a Community where the Major Superiors of a Province will govern; and a Motherhouse for each Province where all Priests, Novices for the Priesthood aspiring to become Priests of the Order must train. This will be called the Monastery of the Order for that Province. This House will be regulated according to the same regulations laid out for the Sisters and Brothers. This is to be written in the Rule and Constitution for the First and Second Branches when the Order grows sufficiently. The same applies to the Second Branch of the Sisters and Brothers. Their work, though somewhat different than the Priesthood fundamentally, are the same. Works of Mercy can vary greatly but are essentially the same as most foundations.

## **5. HABIT:**

**5.1** The garb of the Order of Saint Charbel is distinguished by the Dark Brown Scapular surmounted by a large White Cross on the front panel, with an embroidered emblem at the centre of the Cross, depicting the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, side by side.

**5.2** The First and Second Branch Members (Priests, Brothers and Sisters) will wear a cream coloured tunic, tied with a white cord which, for the Professed Religious of the Order, is to be knotted to signify each of the Vows taken.

**5.3** The Third Branch Members (Lay men and women) will wear a beige coloured tunic tied with a white cord.

**5.4** Men (Priests, Brothers, and Lay) will wear a hood in matching material attached to the tunic.

**5.5** Women (Sisters and Lay) will wear a White Veil. The Veil of the Professed Sisters is worn shoulder length and has a Brown Border. The Unprofessed Sisters wear a shorter veil with a Cream Border. The Professed women of the Third Branch wear a short white veil with a beige border. The Unprofessed women of the Third Branch wear a short white veil with no border.

**5.6** All members of the First, Second and Third Branch wear a 15-Decade Rosary with brown wood beads, and the Saint Benedict Crucifix, hung from the Cord.

**5.7** Members of the Fourth Branch wear the Scapular only with the women wearing in addition, a short white veil with no border.

## **6. GOVERNMENT OF THE ORDER:**

**6.1** The Supreme Head of the Order is the Vicar of Christ.

**6.2** The Supreme Moderator is the Cardinal Prelate appointed by the Pope to govern the Order. The Supreme Moderator is the Prime Authority within the Order, and the Government of the Order rests on the Authority of the Branch Priests, who are everywhere responsible for the spiritual welfare of Members of all Branches. From the Branch of Priests, the Supreme Moderator appoints the Major Superiors, who by their Office, are responsible for both the Spiritual and Temporal welfare of the Members in their charge.

**6.3** Throughout this Rule and the Constitutions of the Order, the name `Major Superior' is used as a collective term (for the sake of brevity and simplicity) to describe the Superior of a Country / Region / Province / Vicariate, which may be erected by the Supreme Moderator for the good government of the Order, and:

(a) it is the Supreme Moderator of the Order who appoints the Major Superior. The Major Superior is a Bishop of the Order.

(b) It is the intention of this Rule, that, as the Order grows and the needs of its good government dictate, the Supreme Moderator be free to erect such levels of government, Country, Region, Province or Vicariate (eg. military chaplains), as he deems fit.

**6.4** The Community Superiors are appointed by the Major Superior to govern the spiritual and temporal life of all Branches as a Community at the local level. In a New Foundation, which may initially comprise Lay people only, the Major Superior may appoint a layman of the Third Branch to oversee the Community as Temporary Superior, but the Major Superior remains directly responsible for the Spiritual life of its members.

**6.5** The Supreme Moderator will appoint a General Council to assist him with the management of the Order. It will have representation from each Branch of the Order. The General Chapter of the Order is called by the Supreme Moderator.

**6.6** The Major Superior will appoint a Council to assist him with the management of the Order in the Region or Province he governs. It will have representation from each Branch of the Order. The Chapter of the Order for the Region or Province he governs, is called by the Major Superior.

**6.7** The Community Superior is to be assisted by a Community Council made up of representatives of Priests, Brothers, Sisters and the Families and Singles of the Third Branch. The role of the Council is to facilitate the orderly management of the Community.

**6.8** At the local level there is to be a Council for each of the Branches established in the Community, with appointed Superiors, who are to be responsible to the Community Superior for the welfare of the members under their care:

A Superior and Council for Priests.

A Superior and Council for Brothers.

A Superior and Council for Sisters.

A Superior and Council for Families (Third Branch and other Lay Members who may be living in the Community).

**6.9** The Major Superior may appoint Superiors, appropriately qualified, to control the Houses of Formation for the First and Second Branches, Seminaries and other designated establishments for specialised formation.

**6.10** The Supreme Moderator may appoint, as he deems fit, Mother(s) Superior, at Regional or Provincial level, with delegated powers to assist with the good government, and to direct the spiritual formation of all Religious Sisters, and to further assist him in this task he may also appoint a Superior General (Sisters).

**6.11** The Major Superior may appoint Mother(s) Superior with delegated powers to assist with the good government and to direct the spiritual formation of groups of Houses of the Religious Sisters under his control.

**6.12** The full details concerning the Government of the Order will be inserted at a later stage, in appendix 'A'.

## **7. ADMINISTRATION OF TEMPORAL GOODS:**

**7.1** The Order, its Provinces and Communities, as juridical persons by law, are capable of acquiring, possessing, administering and alienating temporal goods.

**7.2** The Administration of temporal goods is the responsibility of the respective Superiors.

## **8. ADMISSION:**

**8.1** Admission to the Third and Fourth Branches is at the approval of the Community Superior in consultation with the Superior of the Third Branch.

**8.2** Admission to the Brothers and Sisters of the Order is at the approval of the Community Superior in consultation with the Superior for the Brothers or the Mother Superior, as appropriate.

**8.3** Admission to formation for the Priesthood is at the approval of the Major Superior with the discernment of the Community Superior.

**8.4** All Priests from all Catholic Rites are to be accepted into the Order subject to the approval of the Supreme Moderator. A period of formation within the Order is to be undertaken by the candidate.

*NOTE: It is intended in the future to provide for admission of Married Men to the Priesthood of the Order, the admission of Married Priests of other Catholic Rites, and acceptance of laicised former Priests. This matter is not dealt with at this time.*

## **9. FORMATION:**

**9.1** The formation of the Brothers and Sisters of the Order, is the responsibility of the Major Superior and is to be undertaken in a Monastery/Convent designated for this purpose, under the guidance of a Superior appointed for this purpose by the Major Superior.

**9.2** The formation of candidates for the Priesthood is to be conducted in Seminaries especially assigned for the purpose, and is to be the responsibility of a Superior specifically appointed for this purpose by the Supreme Moderator of the Order.

**9.3** The formation of the lay members in the Third and Fourth Branches is to be effected in the Community of their admission, and remains the responsibility of the Community Superior.

## **10. DEPARTURE AND DISMISSAL:**

**10.1** Appropriate procedures are to be set in place for the dismissal, or the departure, of members, recognising that Religious in Solemn Vows will only be permitted release with the approval of the Supreme Moderator, and subject to the full processes defined in Canon Law.

**10.2** Dismissal or departure of members in Minor vows is subject to the approval of the Major Superior.

***PART (II)***  
***CONSTITUTION***  
***OF THE***  
***FIRST AND SECOND BRANCHES***  
***OF THE***  
***ORDER OF SAINT CHARBEL***

This Constitution gives expression to the application of the Rule of the Order to the First and Second Branches.

**Formation of candidates for the First and Second Branches is to take place in Monasteries / Convents established for this purpose in Communities designated by the Major Superior who will appoint Superiors for each stage of the formation.**

**1. ADMISSION**

**1.1** Persons seeking entry into the First or Second Branches must go through an admission procedure, applying through the Superior of a local Community.

**1.2** Aspirants to the Order:

(a) must be of a sufficient level of maturity.

(b) must be aware of their obligations.

(c) must freely petition admission.

(d) must have the right intention.

(e) must have adequate physical health.

(f) must have the necessary intellectual, moral and spiritual formation to lead the Fraternal and Apostolic way of Life.

**1.3** The Community Superior or the Postulant Master or Mistress can ask for any documents, references etc., to validate the aspirant's case. A Baptismal Certificate, together with a health certificate, should be presented by the aspirant.

**1.4** There are no restrictions in terms of age. However, it is recommended that the entrance age for youth be no less than seventeen years, due to the age requirements of the Novitiate.

**1.5** If the applicant satisfies admission criteria he/she will be sent to a House of Formation where

admission into the Postulancy will be effected after a brief orientation period of a month or more, as necessary, by the Postulant Master/Mistress in consultation with the Community Superior there.

## **2. POSTULANCY**

**2.1** The duration of the postulancy is six months. During this time the postulant experiences the Life of the Order, abiding by the Rule and Constitution of the Order.

**2.2** Upon acceptance, postulants receive a list containing the materials which are necessary for their stay within the Community. Also, they shall be given a costing for their stay within the Community as a postulant.

**2.3** Before entry into the postulancy, aspirants must be reasonably free from all worldly commitments, especially financial and family responsibilities. However, they should not completely sever their ties with the outside world, as re-entry after an unsuccessful postulancy could be difficult.

**2.4** If, for some reason, the postulant must leave the postulancy temporarily during these six months, the Postulant Master must determine whether the postulancy period must be renewed or extended.

**2.5** If a postulant's behaviour is in direct confrontation to the behaviour fostered within the Community, the Postulant Master, after consulting the Community Superior, may terminate the postulancy.

**2.6** If the Postulant Master/Mistress feels that the duration of the postulancy is inadequate for an individual, the period of postulancy may be extended, at the discretion of the Postulant Master/Mistress.

**2.7** Postulants should be advised against donating goods or financial sums to the Order as, if they find their calling unjustified, they should have the means readily available to be assimilated back into the world.

## **3. NOVITIATE**

**3.1** Upon the satisfactory completion of the postulancy, the aspirant is admitted into the Order as a novice, undertaking training for the Life of the Order. To be admitted to the Novitiate, the aspirant must be over the age of eighteen (18) years.

**3.2** This acceptance of the new novice occurs through a robing ceremony, where the novice receives the Habit of the Order [Appendix B]. The novice is given the option of exchanging his Baptismal Name for a Religious name. This name then becomes written within the annals of the Order.

**3.3** After the investiture with the Habit, the new novice commences his/her Novitiate in a monastery/convent designated for this purpose. The Novitiate will normally be a minimum of one year duration, but may be extended to two years maximum.

**3.4** The formation of the novices is entrusted to a Novice Master / Mistress who, in close co-operation with the Superiors of the Order and the novices, foster religious harmony and the spirit of the Order, providing the best possible learning experiences.

**3.5** Novices are expected to live fully the life and ideals of the Order; to live the Evangelical Counsels. They are to study the Rule and Constitutions of the Order, to learn the 'practice of the Vows'. They are to study the Teachings of the Church and the Traditions, always remembering the main ideal of fostering a deeper union with Jesus Christ, and have permission to read unapproved Private Revelations, provided they are not contrary to the Teaching of the Church.

**3.6** While it is expected that the novices spend, ideally, most of their time within the Community atmosphere, the Novice Master / Mistress may allow contact between family and other persons if it is seen to be appropriate.

**3.7** An absence from the Novitiate for more than three months, whether continual or intermittent, renders the Novitiate invalid.

**3.8** In cases of absence of less than three months, after consultation with the relevant Superior, the Novice Master / Mistress will decide if the absence should be made up and, if so, the length of time the Novitiate is to be prolonged.

**3.9** A novice may freely leave the Order and, for a just reason, may be dismissed from the Order by the relevant Superior.

**3.10** Upon the completion of the Novitiate the novice is professed.

## **4. PROFESSION**

**4.1** The Celibate Priesthood of the First Branch and all members of the Second Branch are required to make profession of the Evangelical Counsels of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience as Solemn Vows, by which they are totally dedicated to God Who is supremely loved. **(C.573); Redemptionis Donum, 9)**

By Profession of the Vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience the members:

- dedicate themselves to God in a special way - directly and entirely.
- are conformed to the Life of Christ more closely under the action of the Holy Spirit.
- are united in a special way to the Church and Her Mission.

**4.2** At the completion of the Novitiate the novices make a simple temporary profession for three years. However, during this time the vows are renewed yearly.

**4.3** The Vows are taken in a public Profession Ceremony. At the completion of the ceremony the candidate is no longer a novice but a fully recognised member of the Order. After this Profession, the member may wear the Three Knots in the cord of the Habit, signifying the three Vows.

**4.4** At the completion of the Ceremony a newly Professed male member formally approaches the Community Superior to seek permission to commence studies for the Priesthood, or alternatively to declare his wish to remain a Religious Brother.

**(a)** Following Temporary Profession, those selected for training for the Priesthood commence their Priestly studies in a House designated for that purpose, where they continue also their formation for life in the Order.

**(b)** Those selected for further training as Religious Brothers also continue their formation for life in the Order.

**4.5** After the three year Temporary Profession, members concerned take Perpetual Vows, with the vows being subsequently formally renewed every three years. This is a Solemn Profession.

**4.7** If the completion of the three year period, the Temporary Professed Member, or his Superior, feels that the member is not ready for Solemn Vows, the Temporary Vows can be extended for a further year. Further extensions are not to exceed a total of nine years.

## **PROFESSION: POVERTY**

**4.8** The Evangelical Counsel of Poverty, in imitation of Christ - Who, for our sake, was made poor when He was rich - (**2 Cor.8:9**) entails a life which is poor in reality and in spirit, sober and industrious, and a stranger to earthly riches.

**4.9** Members should remember that they are only pilgrims through this life and, as such, the goods that they provide for themselves are really provided for them by God, for the purpose of sustaining their simple life, and to help them carry out the works of the various Apostolates of the Order.

**4.10** Goods should not be retained unless necessary for the support of life, and members should avoid any semblance of avarice. Prior to Profession, therefore, the member is to either dispose of his/her material possessions to family, or to donate them to the Order. In the case of the latter, a "Deed of Gift" duly signed and witnessed, is to be made out, listing the property and/or moneys involved.

**4.11** Members ought willingly to bear the Poverty of Religious Life lived in Community and the inconveniences stemming from it.

**4.12** Since the Member's Life of Poverty should bear relation to the social condition of the people in whose midst they dwell, the Members should gladly live among the poor and bring them a living witness to the Gospel by sharing their sorrows and struggles, by working - as circumstances permit - to assist them in their human development and to raise their aspirations to the hope of Eternal Reward.

**4.13** The Order itself may own temporal goods, but not the members. Hence, any compensation for work, or donation given to members, must be given to the Community Superior.

**4.14** In keeping with the Life of Poverty and Community living of the Order, a prudent and moderate use of money is permitted to members under the authority and control of the Superior.

**4.15** Members are discouraged from begging, unless it becomes absolutely necessary after they have done all they can to amend the situation which makes it imperative.

**4.16** All members are permitted to own exceptional personal items of parental or religious value owned before entrance into the Order, provided these items do not interfere with the common good. In instances of doubt, the Superior will decide each case.

## **PROFESSION: CHASTITY**

**4.17** The Vow of Chastity for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven (**Matt 19:12**) which the member professes, is an outstanding gift of Grace. It frees the heart of a person in a very special way. As Saint Paul writes: "But I would have you be without solicitude. He that is without wife, is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord; how he may please God". (**1Cor.7:32-35**). In this way, celibacy is a sign of that magnificent marriage established by Christ and to be manifested fully in the future when the Church has Christ as Her only Spouse.

**4.18** By the Vow of Chastity, members not only renounce marriage but also pledge themselves to avoid every external or internal offence against purity.

**4.19** The member who is striving seriously to observe the Chastity he has professed must have faith in the Words of Our Lord, and, trusting in God's help, not to over-estimate his own strength, but practice mortification, and keep guard over his senses and avoid idle curiosity. Neither should he neglect the natural means which promote health of mind and body. Let all, Superiors especially, remember that Chastity is guarded more securely when true brotherly love flourishes in the life of the Community. (**Perfectae Caritatis, Art.12**)

**4.20** Since this observance of perfect continence touches, intimately, the deepest needs of human nature, novices should neither present themselves for, nor be admitted to, the Vow of Chastity unless there is suitable proof that they possess the emotional maturity required.

**4.21** To preserve angelic purity, each member must seek great help in the Eucharist and also look to the Pure Heart of Mary, as Model and Helper in this precious virtue.

**4.22** Any difficulties arising from dealing with outsiders should be manifested in all simplicity and trust to the Confessor, or, if the member so desires, to the Superior. But all exterior temptations and dangers affecting themselves or others should always be mentioned at once to the Superior.

**4.23** Let them have a deep fraternal love for all members. They may find that sharing their ideas and hopes with certain members leads them closer to God. But they must never allow such friendship to become exclusive; merely sentimental.

## **PROFESSION: OBEDIENCE**

**4.24** Through the Vow of Obedience members fully surrender their own wills to God, offering themselves so that their will may become one with the Divine Will, after the example of Jesus Christ Who came to do the Will of His Father. Thus, in a spirit of Faith, members make a commitment to seek out and do God's Will on a daily basis in the light of the Rule and Constitution and the Directives of their Superiors. The observance of the Rule and Constitution is the shortest way to Sanctification and the eventual attainment of Eternal Life. However, these do not oblige, by themselves, under pain of sin except through the obligations of the Vows. Any wilful violation of these Rules is, necessarily, a sin - mortal or venial - for the obedience shown to Superiors is given to God, Who is in them, and governs them and enlightens them. Any contempt shown to Superiors passes on to Our Divine Master, Who has said of Superiors: "He who hears you, hears Me: he who rejects you, rejects Me." (**Luke 10:16**)

**4.25** The members are bound to obey the Pope as their highest Superior, and those whom he appoints.

**4.26** Members shall obey their Superiors in all things provided, of course, that their commands are not contrary to the Rule, Constitution, Church Teachings and a member's own correct conscience.

**4.27** Superiors commanding in the Name of Our Lord ought to imitate, in their governing, the qualities and virtues of Our Divine Master, requesting of their subjects only things that are reasonable, moderate and normally possible.

**4.28** Members, in virtue of the Vow, are obliged to fulfil the orders of legitimate Superiors imposed "in the Name of Holy Obedience". Only in rare cases, and with all prudence and caution, should Superiors command in virtue of Holy obedience, and then in matters of grave importance. Such formal precepts must be given in writing, or at least in the presence of two witnesses.

## **5. COMMUNITY LIFE**

**5.1** "And all that believed were together, and had all things in common". (**Acts 2:42-47**) Through a common life, Members are united with the same purpose; the same ideals; the same spiritual, and legal, bonds.

**5.2** All should strive to support the Community through their God-given talents and their supporting charity towards one another.

**5.3** The Priests, Brothers and Sisters form part of an extended family, with the Community as their

home. Together with the Branch of Families there are many activities they will share in common, and every member must endeavour to cultivate harmonious, mutually supportive, relationships with other members of the Community, to learn from each other, and to promote unity in all activities, irrespective of personal preferences and prejudices, likes and dislikes.

**5.4** The nature and discipline of Community Life means that members are to perform certain activities in common. A suitable schedule for Community activities - taking into consideration the half active - half contemplative life for the Religious of the Order - will be established in each Community.

**(Appendix D: Sample Schedule - Community Activities).**

**5.5** Activities and chores within the Community should be done gladly, and shared equally among members, with a cooperative spirit needed in every aspect of Community life:

- in preparing meals, eating together, accepting graciously the food we are given - setting aside personal preferences, unless for health reasons.
- in clearing up, washing up and cleaning kitchen and dining facilities.
- in sharing the less pleasant tasks - like garbage disposal, cleaning of toilets, servicing of drains, sewage systems and the like, so essential to Community hygiene.
- by accepting tasks we are allotted, whether they be menial, maintenance tasks, office work, or farm work - without complaint.

**5.6** Members should avoid judgements, words or conduct that could disturb peace, charity, and the duties of Community living. All should be ready to forgive and forget, and strive to work together as brothers and sisters in Christ. (*"...Guard against foul talk; let your words be for the improvement of others, as occasion offers, and do good to your listeners, otherwise you will only be grieving the Holy Spirit of God, Who has marked you with His Seal for you to be set free when the day comes. Never have grudges against others, or lose your temper, or raise your voice to anybody, or call each other names, or allow any sort of spitefulness. Be friends with one another, and kind - forgiving each other as readily as God forgave you in Christ."*) **(Ephesians 4:29-32)**

**5.7** When problems do arise between members, they should endeavour to resolve the difficulty in an amicable manner, remembering Our Lord's Words: *"...to forgive seventy times seven ..."* But, if the problem persists, it is to be brought to the Superior of the Branch (Priests, Brothers or Sisters) by the Parties concerned. The Superior deals with the matter in the following way:

- He/She will first listen to each member separately.
- He/She will then hear any witnesses to the matter in dispute.
- He/She will then bring the parties together, at which meeting, the truth should come out, and any misjudgments become clear, with the matter resolved by reconciliation.
- If the matter is not resolved in this way, it is to be brought to the Community Superior by the Superior of the Branch. The Community Superior may consult with the Superiors to reach a decision, and, if he considers it necessary, impose a penance on the offending parties. As St. Bonaventure tells us: *"..Faults should not go unpunished in order that the erring brother may be cleansed from his sin and not be punished more severely by God later on .."* **(Ref. The Virtues of a Religious Superior - St. Bonaventure)**
- If the matter should continue to be intractable, it may be referred by the Community Superior to the next higher authority.
- It is to be understood that any problems between members should be first dealt with by their immediate Superior, and only referred by him/her to a higher authority if the matter cannot be resolved.

**5.8** Members are to respect the privacy of one another.

**5.9** Silence, which is the delight of the contemplative, may be imposed in enclosures and other nominated areas at particular times of the day to facilitate prayer, reflection and study.

**5.10** Cleanliness must be adhered to, and all members must work to ensure that their surroundings are as clean as possible. This cleanliness also applies to personal hygiene of all members.

**5.11** As there may be many families in the Community with many children, the Religious has a special duty of care. Although the discipline and correction of children is first the responsibility of parents - when a parent is not present and a child or children need correction, the Religious, especially, have a clear responsibility to admonish or correct. However, it would be better not to interfere or try to correct a child in the presence of a parent, unless the parent is distracted, when it would be preferable to try to bring the matter to the parent's attention.

## **6. PRAYER**

**6.1** Prayer should become a way of life, with members always bearing in mind the Patron Saint of the Order, Saint Charbel, who showed how a life of prayer and work became as one, totally dedicated to God.

**6.2** The daily life of the First and Second Branches of the Order consists of one half day spent in prayer and half the day in work.

**6.3** The Mass is to be the focal point of the Prayer Life, with all members attending at least one Mass daily, and encouraged to become daily Communicants.

**6.4** Members are to spend one hour in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament each day.

**6.5** When Communicating, members are to receive the Blessed Sacrament on the tongue whilst kneeling, and Priests of the Order shall - under no circumstances - give Communion in the hand.

**6.6** Members are to daily Consecrate themselves to Jesus and Mary.

**6.7** Members shall strive to honour the Blessed Virgin Mary, looking to Her as the Mediatrix of All Graces, in order to come closer to Her Divine Son, Jesus Christ. Members shall daily recite the fifteen-decade Rosary, and shall set aside the appropriate time to accomplish - with piety and fidelity - the practise of meditating on the Mysteries of the life of Jesus and Mary. At least one Rosary must be said in Community.

**6.8** Members should greatly desire to receive the Sacrament of Penance, and must frequent the Sacrament at least monthly.

**6.9** The Priests of the Order shall recite the Exorcism Prayer of Saint Michael, daily.

**6.10** For Priests of the Order, and Deacons, the Office of the Hours is mandatory in accordance with Canon Law, and all members of the Second Branch are bound in this Divine Office. Where five or more members of the First or Second Branch reside in a Community, each particular hour of the Divine Office is to be sung or recited in Community at the time assigned to it.

**6.11** Special devotion should be given to the Saints - especially Saint Joseph and Saint Charbel.

**6.12** Priests of the Order are to say one Mass daily. Where necessary they may offer additional Masses, subject to approval. The Priests will adhere to the authorised Calendar of the Order and Rituals of Ceremonies approved for use within the Order.

**6.13** The Masses of all true Catholic Rites may be said within the Order, and members are encouraged to participate in these Masses, without restriction. **(Ref. Appendix C - Recognised Catholic Rites)**

## 7. FAMILY AND SOCIAL LIFE

**7.1** Once within the Order members, always holding in special respect and honour their parents and relatives, should pray for them.

**7.2** Members should not, however, become excessively involved with the affairs of their relatives, but may, through the guidance of their Superiors, prudently and charitably assist those truly in need.

**7.3** Members should be careful in judging the need to leave the Community in order to assist parents and relatives, and must have their Superior's approval to do so.

**7.4** In some circumstances, ill or elderly relatives could be provided with temporary accommodation and care within the Community, provided there are no other reasonable alternatives, and provided also that this does not impose an undue burden on the Community.

**7.5** Relatives wishing to visit members in the Community should be made welcome, provided the permission of the Superior has been given. Visitors should not visit private quarters in Religious Houses.

**7.6** Members must remember that they have joined a Religious Community; that this should be the centre of their existence, and religious discernment must be followed in all socialising with family, Community, or the outside world.

**7.7** Members wishing to socialise outside the Community should follow the directives and discernment of their Superiors.

**7.8** Members in the Postulancy and Novitiate stage should not leave the Community unless absolutely necessary, and unless accompanied by professed Community members.

**7.9** Members of the First and Second Branches should freely intermingle with the Third Branch Community Members, provided the Rules regarding privacy and Community living are adhered to.

## 8. APOSTOLIC WORKS

**8.1** The main Apostolic work of the Order is to re-evangelise the Mystical Body of Christ by, firstly, living the Word of God, and then by preaching the Word of God.

**8.2** Re-evangelisation or the continuous proclamation of the Gospel is fundamental to the charism of the Order. It concerns the salvation of souls. Through the preaching of the Priests and the good example of the families and Religious, souls will be led to accept the Gift of Faith, or be reconciled to God. (**Evangelii Nuntiandi, 5**).

**8.3** Catechesis or education in the faith is intimately bound up with the whole life of the Order. This is visibly seen by the families living an integrated life with the Religious. This close collaboration with the Branch of Families for the education of the children in the Order is to encompass:

- teaching Christian Doctrine in a systematic way in the schools that are formed for the children of the Third Branch;
- preparation of children for the reception of the Sacraments;
- administering the Sacraments;
- integration of children into the life of the Order; and
- the missionary witness to Religious life in the various works of the Order. (**Catechism of the Catholic Church,6**)

**8.4** Assisting parents of the Third Branch with the general education of children in the Community Schools by taking responsibility for the running of Community Schools, and in consultation with the parents, directing all aspects of the school curriculum, and by fostering sports and physical training programs for the general well-being of the Community children.

**8.5** Re-unification of East and West through fostering the visible bonds of communion: Profession of the one Faith; Divine Worship in the Sacraments; Apostolic Succession through the Sacrament of Holy Orders; maintaining the fraternal charity of God's family through participation in the way of life of the Order. (**Catechism of the Catholic Church, 815**)

**8.6** Promotion throughout the world of the Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, according to Saint Louis Marie De Montfort.

**8.7** The Order also strives to care for the neglected members of the Mystical Body of Christ - especially the unwanted; youth neglected within society, and in a special way take care of unwanted babies and children who have contracted diseases eg. - A.I.D.S., and those who are abandoned in Hospitals, with no family environment. A "House of the Holy Innocents" may be formed for this purpose; also, to help mothers to retain their children, rather than procure an abortion.

**8.8** The Ministry of Preaching is entrusted in a special way to the Priests of the Order. They should zealously administer the Sacraments so as to promote among the faithful a life of reconciliation and union with the will of God - the Sisters and Brothers also taking part in preaching.

**8.9** Members should take an active role in teaching, particularly catechetics, reaching out, as much as possible, to the whole world.

**8.10** Members should be suitably prepared for their Apostolic Work, and adequate care must be taken to ensure that these works which are undertaken will not encroach on the duties of everyday life.

**8.11** Within Communities where a Retreat House is present, members are responsible for it and the apostolate associated with it.

**8.12** Members of the First and Second Branches are to bear in mind the special affiliation that they have with the Third Branch. They must provide the Spiritual Guidance and Sacraments necessary for the Community.

**8.13** The Sacred Shrines associated with the Order are to be governed by suitable rules specifying the nature, purpose and administration, for the benefit of the pilgrims.

## **9. FORMATION OF FUTURE PRIESTS**

**9.1** Whenever possible, the Supreme Moderator will name someone in each country who will be responsible for training future Priests. If this is not possible in the new Foundations, candidates for the Priesthood are to be sent to the most appropriate formation centre.

**9.2** The Order will possess its own formation centres for the Priesthood and the Professors will be selected meticulously.

**9.3** The Professors will faithfully follow all the teachings of the Church and of the Sovereign Pontiff, remembering always that they have taken a vow of fidelity to him.

**9.4** Students in theology will have a well defined prayer life, together with the Priests who will be teaching them.

**9.5** They will maintain a work life which is appropriate to their studies and the requirements of the Order.

**9.6** The Professors will be informed of this so they can keep a good balance between the tasks related to the studies and work life of the Order. They will be under the local Superior, with whom they will work in close collaboration regarding this matter.

**9.7** The future Priests will be specifically trained to guide well, direct well, and to know how to organise their lives accordingly. They will there-fore know how to serve well, so they can guide well later on.

**9.8** The program of studies will cover the basic subjects required by the Catholic Church. Options will be then established according to the needs of the Order and to the capabilities.

**9.9** The authorities of the Order for the Branch of Priests will also establish the basic criteria for acceptance of candidates to the Priesthood.

## **CONDITIONS FOR ACCEPTANCE**

**9.10** In all Western countries, candidates will study basic Latin so they can read the Mass and the Blessings of the Roman Ritual, and administer the Sacraments.

**9.11** They will also learn, if possible, a living language other than their mother tongue.

**9.12** They will have to learn the principal elements of philosophy so they are better equipped to read and understand certain theological texts essential to the life of faith.

**9.13** They will have to supply proof of their ability to succeed in their studies by their previous studies; if not, they will complete pre-requisite courses.

**9.14** The candidate will have to supply proof of emotional stability and firmness of character.

**9.15** They will have had to demonstrate a balanced piety and have a stable prayer life - which the Superiors can confirm and follow - during the two-year formation period (Postulate and Novitiate).

**9.16** Also to be verified is the supernatural calling to the Priesthood, and that the candidate's response to this call is free and personal. For this reason it is appropriate that the candidate list all his motives, written in a letter to his immediate Superior which, after acceptance, is to be passed to the Superior responsible for the formation of future Priests.

## **THEOLOGICAL STUDIES**

**9.17** Courses on each of the Sacraments will be given, as well as the Liturgy for each Sacrament, in order to ensure their proper administration and to enable the future Priests to readily explain them to the faithful.

**9.18** The Old and the New Testaments of the Bible will be studied so that the candidates learn to preach and teach well.

**9.19** Courses on spiritual and mystical life will be given so they can counsel all members and faithful who consult them about their faith life.

**9.20** Well structured Mariology courses will give them all the elements of a well-understood and lived

Marian faith life.

**9.21** Courses on the hierarchical and mystical Church will give them a good understanding that the Church has a double foundation: the Apostles and the Prophets. They will also study Canon Law.

**9.22** The Liturgy and the life of prayer are to form the basis of unity between acquired knowledge and the practice of prayer.

**9.23** The traditional hymns and music of the liturgy are to form an important part of the life of prayer in the Community.

**9.24** Since the members take part in a consecrated life, courses in the constant pursuit of sainthood will be given so this can be fostered in members of all Branches. Teachers will refer to official Church texts and to spiritual and mystical authors. Should a student wish to learn more thoroughly about an author, or a form of spirituality, he will be directed to the corresponding option in the form of a tutorial where a Professor will guide him in doing the appropriate research (for example, he will be able to study more thoroughly the Marian spirituality of Saint Louis Marie de Montfort, Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, Saint Francis, Saint Dominic, Saint Ignatius, etc.)

**9.25** A course in Church history will help them understand the most important stages in the development of the faith such as obstacles and oppositions encountered by the Church, which come from ideological or anti-Catholic movements (e.g. Freemasonry, Socialism, Atheism, Modernism, etc.) as well as the goals of certain Councils.

**9.26** A specialised course will be given on the body of Apparitions, Miracles already approved by the Church, and a study of the criteria for discernment will be offered to help students well understand current Apparitions, because of the crucial importance these Apparitions have for future times, and so that the student becomes acquainted with the mystical life of the Church.

**9.27** Examinations are to be prepared by the Professors concerned and will be approved by the Moderator's Council of which the formation delegate is a member.

**9.28** When candidates come from other Orders or Communities, the course requirements, the course programmes, and the examinations, will be handed to their Superior.

**9.29** The cost of courses for future Priests will be established in writing so that eventual benefactors may contribute to the study programmes, to the required documentation and to the cost of studies, so that candidates to the Priesthood be free of debt at their ordination. Their families will also be advised of the support to be given to them, according to their means.

**9.30** A fund will also be created to help the Seminary, just as a fund will be created to help other training schools established by the Order.

**9.31** The local Superiors will have at heart to pray regularly for the different vocations and the future Priests, reminding all the members that it is the Will of Jesus, Himself, that they pray to Him to send workers for His harvest.

**9.32** Finally, the missionary spirit will be developed and constantly maintained by a course given on Evangelisation, as well as by continuous prayer intentions related to missions in other countries. Some members and future Priests will also be formed to go to missions in other countries.

**9.33** Priests entrusted with the formation of future Priests and Professors will be familiar with all the official documents of the Church on this subject, and will take upon themselves the corresponding requirements.

**9.34** Future Priests will receive a technical formation in different areas of practical work, according to their talents, their abilities, and the needs of the Order. They will get practical experience to be able to better lead and direct others.

## **10. TRAINING OF THE SECOND BRANCH**

**10.1** The formation of members of the Second Branch continues after the completion of the Novitiate and Temporary Profession. Those who choose to remain as Brothers or Sisters of the Order dedicate their God given talents to serving the Community and the Order in skilled, semi-skilled or non-skilled work, as well as committing themselves to the contemplative life.

**10.2** To assist with the continuing Spiritual formation and the development of the Consecrated Life, members will be trained in the mystical life, from the writings of the Fathers of the Church, the Saints, and the varied Messages from the different Apparitions containing precious teachings.

**10.3** Both Sisters and Brothers, after Profession, as well as undergoing deeper formation in the Consecrated Life, are also to undertake training in various trades, aimed at helping Communities with the skills essential to future self-sufficiency. Some will be selected for training in areas such as cooking and food preparation, building, agriculture, horticulture, viticulture, animal husbandry, etc., with others being selected for training in the teaching, medical and the medicinal use of herbs, nursing, veterinary, accounting and even legal disciplines.

**10.4** Eventually the Order will have in its possession schools, training establishments and various Houses of Formation. Until such services are available within the Order, the necessary training will need to be undertaken in the civil training and institutional centres. In this regard, Superiors will always take steps to ensure that the Consecrated life of the Member undergoing such training is not inhibited in any way.

**10.5** Qualified teachers and others with the skills which must be developed within the Order will be chosen, according to their competence, to plan, develop and implement the various courses which will be needed.

**10.6** For each member of the Second Branch a plan is to be progressively prepared by his/her Superiors in consultation with teachers, professors or skilled artisans of the Order, as well as the member, covering the ongoing requirements for Spiritual Formation, and the directions for his/her training in temporal skills.

**10.7** Superiors will recognise the multiplicity of skills and experience which the Third Branch members will bring into the Order with them, and will take steps to ensure that these are availed-of for the future training of members of the Second Branch.

**10.8** Every Community should strive to establish a good Reference Library containing - as well as the most important Theological, Mystical and Spiritual Formation writings - Teachings of the Church, Scriptural Studies, History and Liturgy, reference works in the medical, scientific, engineering, building, farming, etc., so essential to teaching of the temporal skills necessary to the good function of the Order and the development of its Apostolic works.

**10.9** The Priests remain responsible for spiritual formation of all the Order's members by appropriate - and well coordinated - teachings, or conferences, retreats, homilies, and structured courses.

**10.10** It is not expected that the Priests of the Order can deal with the technical and professional fields, although some may be able to. Properly trained Sisters and Brothers will be essential to the temporal welfare of the Order and its Apostolic Works.

**10.11** All members will have to take to heart their own training, to always better love and serve, while progressing on the way to holiness.

**10.12** Each Superior and Council President must always have in mind that a solid spiritual formation, and training in the appropriate sectors of a member's task in which he is engaged, is a key to success; to keep harmony and charity. When members know what they do - and why - they also have at heart the work they do, and for which they feel responsible.

## **11. LINE OF AUTHORITY**

**11.1** All Communities will have a Priest as Community Superior. However, the Community Superior's role and Authority is strictly accountable to the Major Superior. All are accountable to the Supreme Moderator.

**11.2** The Community Superior, in Consultation with members of the Community, appoints the Community Council, which is responsible for the development and management of the Community property - its buildings, facilities, farm production and industry, subject always to the authority of the Community Superior. The Community Council will be formed from representation of all Branches in the Community, with its Office Bearers drawn from those with the skills necessary to fulfil the appointed tasks.

**11.3** The Community Superior, in consultation with the Major Superior, appoints the Superiors of the Branches of Priests, Brothers and Sisters, which may be in the Community. The Superior can be a Priest, a Religious Brother, or Sister, as appropriate, and is responsible to the Community Superior for the welfare and formation of the members in his/her care:.

- The Superior of the Branch of Priests in the Community convenes the Council of Priests to assist him with this task.
- The Superior of the Brothers in the Community convenes the Council of Brothers to assist him with this task.
- The Mother Superior of the Sisters in the Community convenes the Council of Sisters to assist him with this task.

## **12. THE COMMUNITY AND BRANCH COUNCILS**

### **THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL:**

**12.1** The Community Council has responsibility for the overall supervision of the planning, administration, finances and management of the Community and its farm production and industry. Membership of the Community Council will be drawn from all Branches in the Community. The Community Superior appoints all the members of the Community Council.

**12.2** The Office Bearers of the Community Council will also be appointed by the Community Superior from members of all Branches with the requisite skills, and may include - but not necessarily so - such officers as Chairman, Secretary, Financial Officer, Farm Manager, Project Managers. The Branch Superiors will also sit on the Community Council.

**12.3** The Community Superior will be present at all Council meetings, but may delegate control of the meeting to a Chairman. The meetings will usually follow a consultative pattern, and decisions should be reached unanimously. The community Superior will not normally go against a majority of the council, but if a division of opinion exists the Community Superior will make the decision.

### **THE BRANCH COUNCILS:**

**12.4** The Superior over each of the Branches of Priests, Brothers and Sisters is appointed by the Community Superior to look after the particular needs and formation of the members of that Branch.

**12.5** To assist with this task, the Superior of each Branch will convene a Branch Council - a Council for Priests; a Council for Brothers; a Council for Sisters. The Branch Superior may appoint Office Bearers to assist with the orderly preparation for - and control of - meetings, such as a Secretary to record the deliberations and decisions of meetings, and, if warranted, a Treasurer to manage any funds the Branch Council may be given to discharge its responsibilities.

**12.6** The Superior of the Branch will be present at all meetings, which will usually follow a consultative pattern with decisions being reached unanimously.

### **THE COUNCILS DURING THE FOUNDATION STAGE:**

**12.7** During the Foundation Stage, if there are insufficient members of the three Branches in the Community, the functions of both the Community Council and Branch Councils, including the Family Council, may be combined in the Community Council, under direction of the Community Superior.

*More information concerning the Function, Operation, and composition of the Community Council, and the Branch Councils, will be provided at a later stage in Appendix A, - Government of the Order*

# ***PART (III)***

## ***CONSTITUTION***

### ***OF THE THIRD BRANCH***

#### ***OF THE***

##### ***ORDER OF SAINT CHARBEL***

### **INTRODUCTION**

This Constitution gives expression to the application of the Rule of the Order to the Third Branch, and compliments the Constitution of the First and Second Branches. The Third Branch is primarily for families but also for Single Laity who wish to live the Consecrated life of Minor Vows.

It is to be well understood that the Constitution of the Saint Charbel Third Branch does not, of itself, oblige under pain of sin. With regard to violations of the Rule and Constitution the following points should be remembered.

- If a provision of the Constitution, which at the same time is prescribed by Divine or Ecclesiastical Law, is violated - e.g. any Minor Vows - the violation is a sin, even though the Constitution does not bind under pain of sin.
- Even though the Constitution does not bind under pain of sin, a violation of the Constitution, if deliberate, may easily be, at least, a venial sin because of a sinful motive.
- If a member violates the Rule or Constitution with formal contempt, the member is certainly guilty of sin.

The determinants of mortal sin are threefold:

- the matter must be grave.
- the member must have sufficient knowledge.
- the member must have sufficient freedom.

If any one of these are absent, there is no mortal sin.

### **1. GENERAL APPLICATION OF THE RULE**

**1.1** To observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ by living in a spirit of poverty, without attachment to property, and in Chastity - according to each individual's state of life - and under Obedience.

**1.2** To offer obedience and loyalty to the Pope and his successors, and to the lawfully appointed Superiors of the Order of Saint Charbel

### **2. LINE OF AUTHORITY**

**2.1** All Communities will have a Priest as Community Superior, except for the provision (Part (1)

Section 6.4) for the appointment of a Lay Member from the Third Branch as a Temporary Superior during the Foundation stage. The Community Superior's role is strictly accountable to the Major Superior. All are accountable to the Supreme Moderator.

**2.2** The Community Superior in consultation with members of the Community, appoints to the Community Council - which is responsible for the development and management of the Community property, its buildings, facilities, farm production and industry, subject always to the authority of the Community Superior. The Community Council will be formed from representation of all Branches in the Community, with its Office Bearer drawn from those with the skills necessary to fulfil the appointed tasks

**2.3** The Community Superior, in consultation with the Major Superior, appoints the Superior (customarily called President) of the Third Branch, or Branch of Families, which includes any Internal Members of the Fourth Branch and Single Lay people who may be living in the Community. The Superior can be a Priest, a Deacon, a Religious Brother or Sister, or Lay Man or Woman, and is responsible to the Community Superior for the welfare of the members in his/her care.

**2.4** The Superior of the Branch of Families convenes the Family Council to assist him/her with this task

**2.5** For an outline of the Role, Responsibilities, and Operation of the Community Council and the Family Council, see Article 12

**2.6** Members are bound to respect the Office of Superior; to endeavour at all times to separate the person from the Office, recognising that we are all sinners before God, but that by virtue of his Office the Superior represents Christ Our Lord

### **3. THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS**

#### **IN THE THIRD BRANCH:**

**3.1** A Catholic would be wrong to regard the strict observance of the Commandments as a sufficient ideal or an uppermost limit. A fervent Catholic will endeavour to live on a plane which is above that of grave necessity. However, there are no fixed obligations for the Catholic who seeks to live on this plane to seek 'perfection' - except that his or her life must be a life of love for God. In a Religious life, however, the obligation to perfection is fixed and definite, even while retaining its unlimited character of love. For a Member of the Third Branch of the Order the place above the lowest level becomes the practice of the Minor Vow, in which one chooses to bind oneself, under pain of venial sin, not to fall below this plane, but to strive for perfection.

*"....Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust of it; but he who does the Will of God abides forever..." (1 John 2:15-17)*

#### **THE MINOR VOW OF POVERTY**

**3.2** Poverty is that virtue which impels the heart to detach itself from temporal things, whereas the Minor Vow of Poverty is an Evangelical Counsel which calls a person to:

- renounce his worldly possessions.
- acquire or dispose of nothing without the consent of Superiors.
- be content with what they have been given - housing, clothing, sustenance.
- rejoice in growing detachment.

**3.3** For Third Branch Members - particularly for those who are married and have children, or who are preparing a home for the rearing of children - the Minor Vow of Poverty calls for detachment from material possessions, but not the renunciation of all possessions. This means that in taking the Minor Vow of Poverty - the married couple bind themselves, under pain of venial sin, to live above the strict obligations of the First, Seventh and Tenth Commandments. The couple seek henceforth to live above this minimum level, on a plane where the will to love and serve God always takes precedence, in "*...a life poor in spirit, industrious and sober in style, dependent and limited in the use of property...*" (Canon 600.), where their possession and use of material goods is assessed differently; where, governed by a higher love, they seek perfection in their detachment from the world. This means that:

(a) Members should try always to recall that they are merely pilgrims through life; that they are but stewards for all things given by God!

(b) Members should regard the goods which they have acquired through their own means, or those with which they have been provided through the Community, as primarily for sustaining their simple life, and for carrying out the various Apostolic Works of the Third Branch of the Order.

(c) At the completion of their Novitiate, Members presenting for Profession in Minor Vows renounce the right to acquire or dispose of their temporal goods, and transfer to the Order title to all their temporal possessions.

(i) At Profession, the Member will enter into a legally binding Agreement with the Order, in which he/she - or both, jointly, in the case of a married couple - transfer title to all their worldly possessions such as property, investments, cash reserves, vehicles, tools, equipment, and machinery, which will be accepted by the Order as a gift - with the right to the use of the funds so accumulated.

(ii) The member, or married couple, will be required to provide an inventory of all their worldly possessions at the time of Profession, and which will form part of the Agreement.

(iii) Each member, at Profession, will be required to make a Will which is to recognise the Order as beneficiary in his/her, or in the case of a married couple, their estate.

(iv) Alternatively, a member or couple - when approaching the time of Profession - may make a gift of part of their estate to their children or close family who are not in the Order and to whom they have an obligation, transferring the balance to the Order in accordance with 3(c) (k) - (iii) above recognising the need to make over sufficient of their worldly possessions so that they may not be a financial burden on the Order.

(v) Any debts the member or married couple may have at the approach of their Profession are to be cleared by the sale of their goods, before the Agreement is prepared and signed.

(vi) Should a member or married couple subsequently leave the Order, they will be recompensed in full in accordance with this Agreement, subject to the normal lawful allowances for depreciation, wear and tear, etc. If the actual goods they entered with are no longer available, the member or couple will be recompensed in equivalent depreciated value.

(vii) When a member, or family, builds a house on Community Property, it is to be understood that the house becomes the property of the Order, and the member relinquishes all title to it.

**(d)** The Order, in turn, grants to the member, or family, the unlimited and exclusive use of items of a personal nature, or of sentimental value owned before Profession, and items such as tools and equipment essential to a person's trade or skill. This unlimited and exclusive use of certain goods would extend to clothing and personal effects of family members, and even to such items as refrigerators, washing-machines, vacuum cleaners and the like, which are conducive to healthy and neat housekeeping.

**(e)** In keeping with the life of Poverty and Community living of the Order, a prudent and moderate use of money will be permitted to Professed Members, under the authority and control of the Superior. Furthermore, members will be permitted to hold limited cash reserves, again under the authority and control of the Superior, to cater for the day to day health care of family members, and the continuing provision of essential clothing, footwear, and personal hygiene of their family.

**(f)** Those members who, after Profession, continue working outside the Community are required to give to the Order any salaries, wages, stipends, or compensation received for work done. The same applies to those members who are in receipt of Government pensions, Social Security and Welfare payments, and to members' business proceeds, annuities, superannuation, life insurance endowments, gifts and donations.

**(g)** Those members who, after Profession, may be permitted to either continue with, or undertake, a new project or business enterprise will do so either for or on behalf of the Order, for the Community self-sufficiency - and all assets and profits of the enterprise remain the property of the Order.

**(h)** Professed Members may be permitted to retain, for their personal or family use, non-essential items such as libraries of good books, records, tapes, compact discs, videos, and all the equipment necessary for these items. However, they need to reflect carefully on the manner in which they may be used, for, if these possessions become distractions from the Vowed objective of serving God before all else, they can be a potentially dangerous obstacle to the attainment of perfection.

**(i)** Members' personal memorabilia, photographs, family heir-looms, and all those personal items, even jewellery, which are part of the family heritage - particularly where these items have come down through several generations and might reasonably be expected to pass down to your children in the future - must be retained and treasured, though always with that spirit of detachment, in which the member sees oneself as a careful custodian rather than exclusive owner.

**(j)** The Community must live a 'common life' in which - as an ideal - all things are held in common, and therefore no members or family must be in need while others have a surplus. Christian charity must always be an overriding consideration.

**(k)** In the Minor Vow of Poverty the member seeks also to use appropriately, and with care, material goods owned by the Order or other members, and to use Community resources only within the Community, unless permission is granted to do otherwise. (For example: a register will be kept listing all tools, recording their usage and return; and for large items of equipment and machinery, log books will be kept, recording usage and maintenance.)

**(l)** Members should dress simply and with dignity, when not required to wear the habit. They should not indulge in the excessive or unnecessary use of cosmetics or make-up, nor should they resort to the vanity of self-adornment.

## **MINOR VOW OF CHASTITY:**

**3.4** To persevere in the Virtue of Chastity, the person in Minor vows will seek the virtue of humility, which will help them to beware of flattery, and all affectation or vanity in dress and appearance, to be distrustful of self, and - so through dependence on Grace - gain the Divine assistance without which one cannot remain chaste. ".....*God resists the proud, but He gives His Grace to the humble .... and ... Love is the guardian of virginity, but love dwells in humility....*" (St. Augustine)

**3.5** There are, in all, twelve principal means of preserving the Virtue of Chastity:

- Guard the senses.
- Avoid idleness: - rise early and start your day immediately with prayer.
- Avoid occasions of sin: - people; places; books; TV or videos etc., which may stimulate unhealthy images, conversations, thoughts.
- Temperance: - particularly in drinking.
- Prudence in all social contact.
- Christian modesty in dress and deportment.
- Physical exercise.
- Frequent Confession: - opening one's conscience frankly to our Confessor.
- Frequent Holy Communion.
- Humble devotion to and dependant trust in, Our Lady, the Queen and special Protectress of virgins.
- Fidelity to the Rules of our Order.
- Mortification and Prayer

## **CONJUGAL CHASTITY FOR MARRIED COUPLES:**

**3.6** For Third Branch Members who are married, the 'Minor Vow' of Chastity relates to 'conjugal Chastity'. This means that, in taking the Minor Vow of Chastity, the married couple bind themselves, under pain of venial sin, to live above the strict obligations of the Sixth and Ninth Commandments, which of course bind under pain of serious sin. In Minor Vows, the couple seek henceforth to live above this minimum level, on a plane where their conjugal acts are assessed differently, for they must be governed by that higher love which spontaneously embraces the Evangelical Counsel of Chastity - to seek perfection in their conjugal union - by the 'practice of the vow' to elevate their conjugal union to a deeply personal union of heart and soul in which they seek always to fulfil the Will of God. This implies the following:

**(a)** The couple will seek always to keep in mind that their enjoyment of each other - though primarily for the begetting of children - ("two are joined to become one flesh") is also for the strengthening of their bond of love.

**(b)** The couple will seek always to embrace the Will of God in trust, not confining their union to those times when conception is unlikely.

**(c)** The couple will seek always in their conjugal union to be open to procreation, and to accept with love any children which God's Holy Will may grant them.

**(d)** If medical or other serious reason suggests that it would be prudent for a mother to have a rest from child bearing, the couple should seek to abstain from marital relations, by mutual consent, for the time necessary, as a form of self-denial which expresses a deeper and more spiritual love for each other.

**(e)** The couple should seek to avoid all forms of arousal which might precipitate self-gratification as a motive for their conjugal union. The mutual desire for each other should arise from their love for each other, in which arousal is always born within a deep mutual respect

for the dignity of whole person, body and soul.

(f) The couple should strive to reflect that God is intimately involved in their conjugal union, thus praying that God will Bless their love with the creation of another soul.

(g) The couple will strive to deport themselves always with dignity, dressing in modest and dignified clothing that reflects their deep respect and love for each other,. (See 8.0 Dress Regulations)

## **"CELIBATE" CHASTITY FOR SINGLES:**

**3.7** For Third Branch Members who are unmarried, the `Minor Vow' of Chastity relates to `Celibate Chastity'. This means that, in taking the `Minor vow' of Chastity, the single person binds himself or herself (under pain of venial sin), to live above the strict obligations of the Sixth and Ninth Commandments, which of course bind under pain of serious sin. In his/her Vow, the person seeks henceforth to live above this minimum level, on a plane where their celibacy is governed by a higher love - to seek perfection in the consecration of their celibacy to God in preparation for either a future Married Vocation or a Religious Vocation. This implies the following:

(a) The single person in the Minor Vow of Chastity, will seek always to remember that their Chastity - indeed, their Virginity - is a treasure which they wish to bring untarnished to their future Spouse, (their earthly spouse in a Married Vocation or their Heavenly Spouse in the Religious Vocation.)

(b) The single person in the Minor Vow of Chastity will seek not only to preserve celibate chastity - which, after all, is mandated by the Commandments - but to cultivate purity of mind and heart by avoiding occasions and circumstances where offences against purity are treated as normal behaviour - even if this means not watching your favourite TV show, or not watching certain films or attending some shows at the theatre, or not going swimming at the beach, or perhaps avoiding certain company.

(c) The single person in the Minor vow of Chastity will continually seek the Grace of God, to overcome temptations against holy purity by rejecting an evil attraction, immediately, resolutely, and without anxiety, trusting in the help of Our Blessed Mother.

(d) The single person in the Minor Vow of Chastity is not hindered in any way in his/her aspiration toward marriage, nor toward a Religious vocation in the First or Second Branch.

(e) The Minor Vow of Chastity does not preclude courting, for those who intend to embrace the Married Vocation. However, prudence must be exercised when `keeping company' to avoid situations that may arouse or inflame mutual desire. Restraint needs to be exercised at all times for the sake of mutual respect and love, and in the much greater desire to always do the Will of God. A kiss, a hug, or a brief embrace are good healthy ways for a courting couple to show their love for each other, but it must be an expression of love, not a gratification of sexual desire. Kissing and cuddling, or fondling or any form of sexual arousal, belong to marriage and should be avoided. Such behaviour, would not only be a breach of the Vow, but might also be seriously sinful.

(f) Single persons in Minor Vows who wish to marry may wait until their Minor Vows embracing celibate chastity have lapsed, or may apply for a dispensation through the Order, and then - at the time of their marriage - renew their vows, embracing conjugal chastity.

## **MINOR VOW OF OBEDIENCE:**

**3.8** The practice of Obedience teaches us to be submissive to one another, to curb our own will - our own inherent assertiveness. It is in such submissiveness that the virtues of humility, meekness and charity are nurtured.

**3.9** Obedience is really the first of the Virtues, because it is obedience which calls us to all the other virtues. Obedience really becomes one with Charity: "...*he that keepeth his word, in him - in very deed - the charity of God is perfected; and by this we know that we are in Him....*" (1 John 2:5)

*".....In a rational creature, obedience is, as it were, the mother and guardian of all the virtues..." (St. Augustine)*

*".....All acts of virtue come under obedience, inasmuch as they are contained in a precept...." (St. Thomas Aquinas)*

**3.10** Obedience is the Virtue which inclines the will to comply with the will of another who has the lawful right to command. The Evangelical Counsel of Obedience, undertaken in the spirit of faith and love in following Christ, "...who was obedient even unto death...." obliges submission of one's will to lawful superiors, who act in the place of God, when they give commands that are in accordance with the Rule and Constitution of the Order. (Canon 601) The extent of Obedience is as wide as the 'authority' which commands it. Thus, obedience to God is without limit, while obedience to human beings is limited by higher laws that must not be transgressed, and by the competency or authority of the one who commands.

**3.11** There are two aspects to obedience: There is the physical response - the execution of a command; then there is the motive for obeying; - the motive may simply be, because it is logical and reasonable, or because the consequences of refusal may be unpleasant. However, there can be a higher motive - the supernatural motive to obey without question, without counting the cost, even in things that entail hardship and go against one's preferences: - to do so cheerfully and without complaint, even with joy to be able to imitate more perfectly our Divine Model; to obey; precisely because it is commanded by a lawful Superior, who acts in the place of God.

**3.12** In taking the Minor Vow of Obedience, the member binds himself/ herself, under pain of venial sin to seek henceforth to live above the minimum level; to unite oneself to that humble submission of Jesus; to submit his/her will (as one would to God) to lawful superiors, in all decisions made or commands given which are in accord with the Rule and Constitution of the Order, the Moral Law and the Teachings of Holy Church. This means that:

(a) The Member, once Professed is no longer free to do as he/she pleases, but must endeavour to subordinate his/her will to life under the Rule and Constitution of the Order; - to follow the particular requirements governing day to day life in the Third Branch.

(b) The Member is not bound to obedience when an instruction or directive is:

- Contrary to Faith and Morals;
- in conflict with the Rule and Constitutions of the Order;
- Likely to be injurious to one's health;
- Likely to seriously compromise the discharge of one's Christian duty to one's spouse or family.

The matter should not be left there but should be discussed with one's Superior, so that the issues are clarified; so that from a better understanding the instructions or directives may be readily complied with or, if found necessary, the instruction or directives modified.

(c) No Member is above the Rule and Constitution of the Order. Consequently, no Superior is above it either. Indeed the Superior is more dutifully bound to the Articles of the Rule and

Constitution and to have goodwill in all his actions, for the sake of his own sanctification and the edification of all members. Moreover, the Superior, commanding in the Name of Our Lord, ought to imitate in his governing, the qualities and Virtues of Our Divine Master, requesting only those things that are reasonable, moderate, and normally possible.

**(d)** The Member should endeavour to comply with all commands of a Superior as long as he commands lawfully - (refer to Appendix E "Line of Grace" which deals with the question of "lawful" command) even if he knows the command may not achieve the result intended or that there is a better way to do it. *"...Obedience lovingly undertakes to do all that is commanded it, with simplicity and without considering whether the command is good or bad, provided that the person who orders has authority to order, and that the command serves to unite our mind to God..." (St. Francis de Sales)* In other words, the Superior may err in commanding, but we make no mistake in obeying!

**(e)** The Member will seek to be prompt in obedience; - for love, which is the prime mover of perfect obedience, should make us obey with readiness.

**(f)** The Member will seek to obey without reservations; - for to make a choice to obey in some things and disobey in other things is to forfeit the merit of obedience; to show that we submit in what pleases us, and therefore that our submission is not supernatural.

**(g)** The Member will seek to obey with perseverance; - *"...for to do a thing cheerfully which we are commanded to do only once, costs nothing; but when our Superior says to us: you will do that always, and all through your life, there lies the virtue and there also the difficulty..." (St. Francis de Sales)*

**(h)** The Member will seek to obey with cheerfulness; *".....for God loves a cheerful giver..." (2 Cor.9:7) "....In those things that entail hardship, obedience cannot be cheerful unless it is animated by love. Nothing is painful to him who loves, because he thinks, not of the suffering undergone, but of the person for whose sake he suffers. Now, if we see Our Lord in the person of him who commands, how can we fail to offer - with our whole heart - the trifling sacrifice that He demands, Who died a Victim of Obedience for our sake. (Tanqueray - Obedience the Greatest Freedom)*

## **4. ENROLMENT INTO THE THIRD BRANCH**

### **ADMISSION:**

**4.1** Admission into the Third Branch is effected by the Community Superior in consultation with the Superior of the Family Council.

**4.2** All who wish to join the Community must:

**(a)** have the right intention.

This is the most important requirement of all! Joining simply to escape from problems existing in society is not a valid reason. This is, after all, a Religious Order. Thus, all members should make their peace with the world first.

**(b)** be of a sufficient level of maturity.

**(c)** feel they have a vocation to the Third Branch.

(d) be aware of their obligations by studying the documentation, the Rules and Constitution of the Order, particularly as there are legal contracts to be entered into at the end of their Novitiate.

(e) freely petition admission in writing;

in the case of those who are married, both partners must be equally willing to join.

Single parents with children may be accepted.

In families, children over the age of 18 years must make separate application.

(f) have adequate physical health.

(g) have minimal outside family responsibilities:

- Aspirants may be requested to defer joining the Order, if their doing so would place in serious difficulty other members of their family.
- Aspirants may also be requested to defer joining the Order if they are needed to look after sick or aged relatives, unless alternative arrangements can be made.

**4.3** The steps to be followed petitioning admission are:-

(a) Make a hand-written, signed and dated request to the Superior of the Community for admission as a Postulant to the Third Branch.

(b) Write clearly the motives for your petition, including document-ary evidence of Baptism, and any supporting documentation to claims made in the Application.

## **PROBATIONARY PERIOD OR POSTULANCY:**

**4.4** Upon acceptance into the Order the candidates with their family, are admitted to a six month period of Probation or Postulancy. The candidate lives in Community and must strive to live according to the Rule and Constitutions of the Order.

**4.5** The probationary period will allow both the candidates and the Community a trial time to determine the candidate's suitability for Religious Community living.

**4.6** The existing Community should assist new candidates to be assimilated into their new environment.

**4.7** During this probationary period all candidates are encouraged to engage in Community activities as much as possible. They should, to the best of their ability, live and abide by the Rule and Constitution.

**4.8** If a candidate's behaviour is in direct confrontation with the behaviour fostered within the Order, and this behaviour is deliberate and with ill intent towards the Community, the Community Superior will terminate the individual's probationary period.

**4.9** If for some reason the candidate must leave the Community temporarily during the six-month's period, the Community Superior may extend this period of probation.

**4.10** Since candidates are not yet full members of the Community, they should, to the best of their ability, provide for family expenses so that they will not be a drain on the Community. This will vary from Community to Community, and the Community Superior will ensure that the Candidates are fully aware of any contributions necessary for their upkeep.

**4.11** During the probationary period candidates should neither sell their goods nor completely separate themselves from the outside world.

**4.12** During this Probationary period, what possessions they have are theirs, and it is up to the candidates to determine if the community has the right to use their private property.

**4.13** During this probationary period the Community will not accept goods or financial remittance from the candidates unless it is absolutely necessary, and it is in the free will of those candidates if they so desire - and only then with a written and signed Agreement.

**4.14** At the end of the six months probationary period the candidates come together with the Community Superior and the Superior of the Family Council to discuss their progress.

**4.15** Issues at stake would include:

- the suitability of the candidate for assimilation into Community life.
- the development of the candidate's personal Religious life.
- problems which may be of serious concern to candidates.
- the cause of any problems experienced and in what way these problems can be solved.
- the assimilation of the Rule and Constitution and its practical implementation.

**4.16** After this discussion and evaluation the Community Superior, in consultation with the Superior of the Branch of Families, determines whether the candidate is considered ready to make application to enter the Novitiate.

## **5. NOVITIATE**

**5.1** Once accepted by the Community Superior after completing their probationary period, candidates now enter the Novitiate and are invested with the Habit of the Third Branch. (See Appendix B)

**5.2** The Novitiate lasts for a usual minimum period of two years, because of the adjustments which must be made to accommodate family life to Community living, but may - in special circumstances - be reduced to one year, or extended to three years.

**5.3** The Novices are under the spiritual guidance of their Superior, who not only nurtures growth in holiness but guides them in a way that ensures inner peace, which in turn leads to harmony within the Community.

**5.4** During their Novitiate the Novices are expected to participate fully in all aspects of Community life.

**5.5** Since this is a continuation of the training and assimilation stage, Novices' possessions are still classed as private, and nothing they own can be judged to be Community property.

**5.6** Since the Novices are not full members of the Order, they should, if they are able to, pay for their food and other necessities.

**5.7** If a Novice is absent from the Community for more than three months, whether the absence is continual or intermittent, the Novitiate becomes invalid, and must be recommenced.

**5.8** If a Novice's behaviour is in direct confrontation with the behaviour fostered within the Order, and this behaviour is deliberate and with ill-intent towards the Community, the Superior may terminate the individual's Novitiate.

## **6. PROFESSION**

**6.1** After living the three Evangelical Counsels for the two years the Novices should now be ready for Profession in the Minor vows, and will be interviewed by the Community Superior concerning their readiness for this step. They will each make application in writing, formally requesting permission to make their profession, setting out their motives.

**6.2** The Community Superior will instruct each individual as to what Minor Vows entail. Before any person takes Vows they must satisfy the Community Superior by proving that they realise what Minor Vows mean, and how they will affect their future life within the Order. The individuals to be professed must not take Minor Vows simply because the Rule states it to be necessary, or because other members in the Order have Professed their Minor Vows.

**6.3** These Minor Vows are a promise to God, binding them to live a more dedicated and regulated life. By the Profession of the Minor Vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, the professed members:

- (i) dedicate themselves in a special way directly and entirely to God.
- (ii) are conformed to the life as shown through the example of Our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the Charism of the Order.
- (iii) are united in a special way to the Church and Her Mission.

**6.4** The Minor Vows are Simple.

**6.5** The Minor Vows are public, and are taken before a representative of the Order.

**6.6** Minor Vows are termed 'temporary' because they are taken for one year's duration, and at the completion of the year the Minor Vow becomes no longer binding, and must be renewed for a further year.

**6.7** The Minor Vows are no longer binding if those concerned leave the Order permanently, to return to life in the world.

**6.8** Temporary Vows as specified under Canon 655 are taken for three years. However, due to this being a Third Branch, this is not applicable; thus the duration of the Vows is for a period of twelve months only. At the completion of this twelve month Temporary Profession, the Minor Vows are again renewed, and will be renewed each year for the whole of the member's life within the Order. Under no circumstances are the members of the Third Branch of the Order permitted to make Perpetual Profession.

**6.9** Only an individual reaching the age of 18 years may take Minor Vows.

**6.10** For each person professing Minor Vows a form, supplied through the Order, must be filled out, and this must be sent to the Order's Registrar for purposes of record, signed and witnessed.

**6.11** At Profession the candidate or couple will enter a legally binding Agreement with the Order, in which he/she - or both, jointly, for a married couple - transfer title to all their worldly possessions to the Order. The Agreement is to contain an inventory of all items for which title is to be transferred: property, investments, cash reserves, vehicles, tools, equipment and machinery etc.

**6.12** In practice the Agreement - signed and witnessed by the Candidate or couple before a public Notary or Justice of the Peace, or equivalent - will declare the interest of the Order in all their

possessions - as described in 6.11. This does not necessitate the immediate legal transfer of property titles, bank accounts, shares etc., but must declare the Order's prior interest for ultimate full transfer.

**6.13** If the member or couple decides to leave, and property titles have already been placed in the name of the Order, they will be recompensed to an equivalent of the current value of the assets concerned.

## **7. LIFE IN COMMUNITY**

**7.1** The Members of the Third Branch must realise that they are part of an extended family and the Community is their home. Together with all other members of the Community - Priests, Brothers and Sisters - there are many activities they will share in common, and every member must endeavour to cultivate harmonious, mutually supportive, relationships with other members of the Community; to learn from each other, and to promote unity in all activities, irrespective of personal preferences and prejudices, likes and dislikes.

**7.2** A co-operative spirit is needed in every aspect of Community life:-

- in preparing meals, eating together, accepting graciously the food we are given - setting aside personal preferences, unless for health reasons.
- in clearing up, washing up and cleaning kitchen and dining facilities.
- in sharing the less pleasant tasks, like garbage disposal; cleaning of toilets; servicing of drains, sewage systems and the like, so essential to Community hygiene.
- in commencing all communal activities on time, be it prayer, work or play - with all members playing their part by striving for personal punctuality.
- by accepting the tasks we are allotted - whether they be menial, maintenance tasks, office work, or farm work - without complaint.

**7.3** Members should avoid judgements, words or conduct that could disturb peace, charity and the duties of Community living. All should be ready to forgive and forget, and strive to work together as brothers and sisters in Christ. *"Guard against foul talk; let your words be for the improve-ment of others, as occasion offers, and do good to your listeners, otherwise you will only be grieving the Holy Spirit of God Who has marked you with His Seal for you to be set free when the day comes. Never have grudges against others, or lose your temper, or raise your voice to anybody, or call each other names, or allow any sort of spitefulness. Be friends with one another, and kind, forgiving each other as readily as God forgave you in Christ"* (Ephesians 4:29-32)

**7.4** When problems do arise between members they should endeavour to resolve the difficulty in an amicable manner, remembering Our Lord's Words: *".....to forgive seventy times seven..."* But, if the problem persists, it is to be brought to the Superior of the Branch of Families by the parties concerned. The Superior deals with the matter in the following way:

- He will first listen to each member separately.
- He will then hear any witnesses to the matter in dispute.
- He will then bring the parties together, at which meeting the truth should come out and any misjudgments become clear, with the matter resolved by reconciliation.
- If the matter is not resolved in this way it is to be brought to the Community Superior by the Superior of the Branch of Families. The Community Superior may consult with the Community Council to reach a decision and, if he considers it necessary, impose a penance on the offending parties.
- As St. Bonaventure tells us: *".....faults should not be permitted to go unpunished, in order that the erring brother may be cleansed from his sin and not be punished more severely by God later on..."* (Ref. *The Virtues of a Religious Superior. St. Bonaventure, p24, 1921 edition*)
- If the matter should continue to be intractable it may be referred by the Community Superior to the next higher authority.

- It is to be understood that any problems between members should be first dealt with by their immediate Superior, and referred by him to a higher authority only if the matter cannot be resolved.

**7.5** Each Community will develop a daily schedule for Community activities which will incorporate the Third Branch's application of the prayer-work relationship (See Sample Schedule - Appendix D). There will be scheduled times for Community prayer, which all Third Branch Members are required to attend, although it is recognised that the care of young children will often preclude this.

**7.6** Members must respect the need for privacy between members and various family groups, for Community living does not mean living in a manner in which no one has any privacy. Also Third Branch Members are bound to respect the privacy of certain enclosures, etc., e.g.: in Houses for Priests, Brothers, and Sisters - and there will be curfew times at which all visiting members must leave and return to their domicile.

**7.7** Respect for all property must be maintained. Tools, equipment and machinery should be used only by those competent to do so, and if a member borrows tools, etc., the articles must be returned to the place where they are kept, in the same condition as found - and if an item is broken, report must be made.

**7.8** Guests of Third Branch Families - and all visitors must - as far as possible, be made aware of the basic nature of the Community so that from a better understanding, they might respect the Community's Chapel, its Shrines, customs, dress code, and the privacy of other members.

**7.9** As there may be many families in Communities with many children, every member has to exercise a duty of care. Although the discipline and correction of children is first the responsibility of the parents, when a parent is not present and a child or children need correction, other members have a responsibility to admonish or correct. However, no member should interfere, or try to correct a child, in the presence of a parent unless the parent is distracted. It would be better to try to bring the matter to the parent's attention.

**7.10** Simple common sense suggests that if every family entered Community life with their pets there would be chaos. Certain animals such as working dogs (sled-dogs, sheep dogs, cattle dogs etc.) may be kept by the Community for a specific purpose, but will be restrained as in any farm situation. A few neutered cats may also be kept by the Community where they serve a specific purpose in the control of rodents. In general, it is preferable that pets which have no useful function be given away or disposed of before a family joins the Community. In certain cases, for the sake of children, a long standing pet of no specific use may be permitted, but only on condition that the animal is effectively controlled and restrained, and with the understanding that the pet, when it dies, is not to be replaced.

**7.11** Responsibility to parents takes special place. The need may arise where Community members may have to leave the Community, temporarily, to attend to sick relatives. Similarly, sick or aged parents may need to live in the Community with their families. There are no problems with this, as there are no problems with family members visiting the Community for limited periods of time, provided that their behaviour complies with the guidelines of this Article 7. The length of the stay would have to be determined by the Superior. Things which would have to be examined would include:

- how the stay is being financed;
- how it affects family commitments to the Community;
- how it affects the family's attitude to the Community;
- and how, and in what way, the visit affects other members of the family.

## **8. DRESS REGULATIONS**

(For Religious Habit refer to APPENDIX B)

**8.1** The Habit is to be worn by all Novices and Professed Members when within the Community, unless work requirements dictate a more appropriate clothing. The Habit need not be worn when in the privacy of one's house.

**8.2** Modesty and decorum are necessary to foster self respect which promotes the dignity of the person.

When not wearing the Habit all Third Branch Members are to comply with the following dress code:

**WOMEN:**

- No see-through, or tight, clothing
- Trousers, slacks or jeans may be worn for manual work, or for activities which require greater freedom of movement, but a long, loose-fitting tee-shirt or short skirt, or 'lap-lap' should be worn over.
- Long skirts - 5 inches from ground
- Long petticoats under clothing
- No sleeveless tops; no shorts
- Neatness in attire, especially
- Head covering in Chapel

**MEN:**

- No tight clothing
- No shorts
- No jogging attire
- No long hair
- No sleeveless tops

**8.3** Adolescents are to comply with the same dress code, but young children are to be dressed at the parent's discretion, recognising, at all times, the need for modesty and decorum.

## **9. LIFE OF PRAYER**

**9.1** The Community Chapel is the focal point for all Community Prayer.

**9.2** Members should, where possible, come together for Community Prayer. It is through Community Prayer that the Community will be strengthened and unified - remembering the Words of Our Lord: "*Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them*". Developing a fervent interior life must take precedence over everything else. They must do all for the greater Glory of God.

**9.3** The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the highest act of Worship we can give God and should be the centre or focal point of Community Living. All should attend Mass daily, if at all possible.

**9.4** Members of the Third Branch are to pray the full fifteen decade Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mediatrix of all Graces. One five decade Rosary shall be said as a Community.

**9.5** Members are to consecrate themselves and their families, daily, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, according to the way of Saint Louis Marie de Montfort.

**9.6** Members are to recite the Holy Wounds Chaplet at 3.00pm daily, in remembrance of Our Lord's

Crucifixion.

**9.7** There are many different devotions and practices in Holy Mother Church. Members are urged to:

- Where possible, spend one hour in Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament each day.
- daily read and meditate upon the Sacred Scriptures.

**9.8** All members of the Order of Saint Charbel must, unless physically indisposed, receive Holy Communion kneeling. Holy Communion must be received on the tongue, as this is the most reverent manner in which to receive Our Lord and King. When it is impossible to receive the Blessed Sacrament kneeling, then, and only then, may members receive while standing, but only on the tongue. No member is ever to take Holy Communion in the hand.

**9.9** The Community Superior - or, if he is a Priest, or Deacon, the Superior of the Branch of Families, or his delegate - is the Spiritual Director of the Third Branch.

**9.10** The Order of Saint Charbel allows Priests from all true, recognised, Catholic Rites to say Mass within the Order. Set out in APPENDIX C are the recognised Catholic Rites. Priests of any of these Rites are permitted to say Mass for the Order, and members are encouraged to attend.

**9.11** In order that they might grow in Purity of Heart and draw closer to Our Lord Jesus Christ, members should frequently receive the Sacrament of Penance.

## **10. SOCIAL LIFE**

**10.1** Members are free to receive visits from family and friends, or to go and visit them in turn, but such visits should not impact on the prayer and work commitments of members without the permission of the Superior. On recreation days (such as Sundays, or declared special holidays) it would be necessary still to inform the Superior or his delegate of their intentions.

**10.2** Every Community should endeavour to establish recreation facilities and areas for entertaining guests, and visitors should be encouraged to join in with Community recreation, prayers and even work.

**10.3** When Members receive guests or have family gatherings, it is to be understood that after 11.00pm, out of respect for other Community Members, there must be careful control of noise level.

**10.4** There are no restrictions in the socialising of members with other members in the Community provided it is done in moderation, and according to any lawful directives imposed by the Community Superior. The right to privacy must be respected

## **11. APOSTOLIC WORKS**

**11.1** The main Apostolic Work entrusted to the Order of Saint Charbel is the re-evangelisation of the world - especially the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ. It aims to do this by members firstly living the Word of God, then their imitation of the Life of Christ, showing others how they can do this also.

**11.2** During the initial stages of growth the Works of the Community will centre around the Community. They are:

- (a) Daily Prayer
- (b) Agricultural and related works

(c) Development and maintenance of garden, shrines etc.

(d) House building/maintenance and construction/care of the other buildings on the property.

(e) Light industry for the support of the members.

(f) Administration

**11.3** The Works of the Community will be determined and co-ordinated by the Community Council under the authority of the Community Superior. The activities chosen - and the rosters for their execution - will involve all Branches of the Community and are to be accepted by all members.

**11.4** The operation of the farm and the industry of the Community are also under the jurisdiction of the Community Council and - although primarily the charge of the members specifically appointed to this task - will, from time to time, involve all members.

**11.5** In a situation where a Community consists of only a few Religious, the Order should be responsible for their upkeep.

**11.6** When a Community is reasonably established its works will extend to the outside world, and all members of the Community will be required to participate in accordance with their particular skills or gifts. These works will embrace the whole spectrum of the Seven Corporal Works of Mercy and the Seven Spiritual Works of Mercy, as taught by the Church

## THE SEVEN CORPORAL WORKS

- to feed the hungry,
- to give drink to the thirsty,
- to clothe the naked,
- to give welcome to strangers,
- to visit the sick,
- to visit the imprisoned,
- to bury the dead.

## THE SEVEN SPIRITUAL WORKS

- to convert the sinner,
- to instruct the ignorant,
- to counsel the doubtful,
- to comfort the sorrowful,
- to bear wrongs patiently,
- to forgive injuries,
- to pray for the living and the dead.

## 12. THE COMMUNITY AND FAMILY COUNCILS

### THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL:

**12.1** The Community Council has responsibility for the overall supervision of the planning, administration, finances and management of the Community and its farm production and industry. The Third Branch will have representation on the Community Council, but its membership will actually be drawn from all Branches in the Community. The Community Superior appoints all the members of the

Community Council.

**12.2** The Office Bearers of the Community Council will also be appointed by the Community Superior from members - of all Branches - with the requisite skills, and may include, but not necessarily so, such Officers as Chairman, Secretary, Financial Officer, Farm Manager, Project Managers. The Branch Superiors will also sit on the Community Council.

**12.3** The Community Superior will be present at all Council meetings, but may delegate control of the meeting to a Chairman. The meetings will usually follow a consultative pattern, and decisions be reached unanimously. The Community Superior will not normally go against a majority of the Council, but if a division of opinion exists the Community Superior will make the decision.

### **THE FAMILY COUNCIL:**

**12.4** The Superior (or President) of the Branch of Families is appointed by the Community Superior to look after the particular needs of the members of the Third Branch.

**12.5** To assist with this task the Superior of the Branch of Families will convene a Family Council. He may appoint Office Bearers to assist with the orderly preparation for, and control of, meetings - and, if warranted, a Treasurer to manage any funds the Family Council may be given to discharge its responsibilities. A Welfare Officer may also be appointed.

**12.6** The Superior of the Branch of Families will be present at all meetings, which will usually follow a consultative pattern with decisions being reached unanimously.

### **THE COUNCILS DURING THE FOUNDATION STAGE:**

**12.7** During the Foundation Stage, if there are insufficient members of other Branches in the Community, the functions of both the Community Council and the Family Council may be combined in the Community Council, under direction of the Community Superior.

*More information concerning the Function, Operation, and composition of the Community Council, and the Family Council, will be provided at a later stage in Appendix A, Government of the Order*

## **13. RE-ESTABLISHMENT**

**13.1** If at any time a family or individual wishes to leave the Community all should be done to assist them in assimilating back into society. Those in the Postulancy and Novitiate take with them all they brought into the Community..

**13.2** Professed members of the Third Branch who decide to leave may take all their personal possessions with them - and, in accordance with the Legal Contract made, the Community will reimburse them for the value of the money and goods transferred to the Order. The Community will also determine what further assistance may be given to make the transition into general society as easy as possible

**13.3** It is to be clearly understood that if members leave the Community, the Minor Vows they have taken are no longer binding.

## **14. THIRD BRANCH SINGLE LAITY:**

**14.1** The Third Branch Single Laity is primarily to meet the needs of single people who have turned eighteen (18), live within families of the Third Branch, and who have not, as yet, made a decision on

their vocation, e.g.: Religious or Married.

**14.2** They have the choice of remaining in a family unit environment or they may live together with others of their age, in separate homes for men and women.

**14.3** Other Single Lay people from outside who have not as yet decided to live in a married state - or have not yet decided to join the Priesthood, or Religious Brothers or Sisters - may also enter in the Third Branch Single Laity.

**14.4** There is no Postulancy or Novitiate in the Singles group, unless desired by those concerned.

**14.5** If the Single person desires to more fully follow the prayer life of the Order they may join the Fourth Branch in which case they must follow Constitution of the Fourth Branch, and its expression of the Rule of the Order.

**14.6** If the Single person desires to fully embrace the Consecrated Life of the Third Branch he/she is to complete the Postulancy and Novitiate to the extent determined by the Community Council, and is to wear the Habit of the Third Branch.

**14.7** It is not exclusively for those who have just turned eighteen (18), but is also open to those of more mature age who wish to live in the Community, having not, as yet, decided to live out their vocation.

**14.8** The Single Laity will follow the daily life of the Third Branch in as much as prayer and work is concerned. They are permitted to work outside the Community, but in that case will be required to contribute to their upkeep. They are also to:

- (a) attend daily Mass if possible
- (b) say at least one Rosary in private
- (c) join in Community prayers and works

**14.9** The Single Laity will live together, in separate houses for men and women, with duties and a schedule worked out for them.

**14.10** The Community Superior watches over the spiritual welfare of the Single Laity and guides them as he does for all other members of the Third Branch.

**14.11** The main purpose of the Singles Group within the Third Order is to foster various vocations - whether it be the Priesthood, Brothers or Sisters, or even the married life - and to provide a House of Guidance for young people who might otherwise stray onto the wrong road. With the help of the other two Branches the Superior is able to encourage vocations and guide souls to a fulfilled life of dedication, in either the Religious or Married state.

## **CODE OF DRESS**

**14.12** THE CODE OF DRESS FOR THE SINGLE LAITY IS:

### **FOR WOMEN:**

- you must dress with care (hair well combed; if long, tied back)
- wear a veil in the Chapel of the Order and for all prayers.
- no slacks, in general, except for special types of work.

- always wear modest attire

**FOR MEN:**

- short, clean hair.
- clean clothing in the Chapel of the Order.
- always dress with care and modesty

**14.13 BOTH HOUSES OF MEN AND WOMEN WILL BE GOVERNED BY STRICT RULES AS FOLLOWS:**

- (a) No partying after 11pm.
- (b) Common code of ethics regarding the watching of television and videos.
- (c) Cleanliness
- (d) Restrictive alcohol intake; restrictive smoking habits; visiting youth are to respect dress code.
- (e) No formal vows or promises other than to abide by - and follow - the Rules set out in general.

# **PART (IV)**

## **CONSTITUTION**

### **OF THE FOURTH BRANCH**

#### **OF THE**

### **ORDER OF SAINT CHARBEL**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1** The Fourth Branch of the Order of Saint Charbel is similar to the old "Third Order" that has been in existence in the Catholic Church for centuries (e.g. Third Order of Saint Francis). However there is a major difference in that the Fourth Branch involves a real commitment in the form of a written promise.

**1.2** The Promise, written and signed by the member, is to:

- Observe the Evangelical Counsels of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience according to one's state in life, and to:
- Undertake an agreed Apostolate for the Order entailing either active volunteer work in the Order or manual work at home for the benefit of the Order, or alternatively, for those who are unable to carry out physical work by reason of age or infirmity, a life dedicated to Intercessory Prayer for the intentions of the Order.
- Follow the same daily prayer life as is required of Members of the Third Branch..

**1.3** Membership of the Fourth Branch is a Consecrated Vocation. That is, it is a personal and free response to the Call of God. There are certain duties and responsibilities as well as rights and privileges that make this new form of consecrated life meritorious, and foster holiness in the likeness of Our Saviour Jesus Christ.

#### **2. MEMBERSHIP**

**2.1** The Fourth Branch provides for those who live in the world, but wish to be united to the prayers and merits of all the members of the Order, and thus multiply their own merits and increase those of the Order. The whole Membership is thus united in, and through, prayer, and the whole Church benefits from the Graces obtained, which spread even further for the good of souls here on earth and in Purgatory.

**2.2** The Catholic Church has always believed that the faithful gain many spiritual advantages by uniting in this way and encourages them to do so. As a matter of fact, the Graces obtained are more effective and the merits multiplied by those of all other members. In sickness and during trials, as well as at death, a whole Community keeps us in their prayers and allows us to share in their merits.

**2.3** The Fourth Branch Members are affiliated to a particular Community of the Order, and become actively involved in the prayer and work of the Community, under the guidance of the Community Superior.

**2.4** The Fourth Branch is open to any person over the age of eighteen (18) years and is primarily intended to foster the prayer life and apostolic works of the Order among the members of the laity who are unable to live within a Community for reasons of distance, finance, health, etc.

**2.5** Fourth Branch Members, married or single, who wish to live in Community, but are not ready, or are unable, by reason of impediments, to take the Vowed Life of the Third Branch, may be permitted to stay or even to live for an extended period in a Community, provided they are prepared to live according to the daily rules of the Community.

**2.6** Members of the Fourth Branch who are permitted to live in a Community must Promise to live according to the daily schedule of the Third Branch, endeavouring to embrace the life of prayer and works of the Third Branch. (Ref. Third Branch Constitution).

### **3. EVANGELICAL COUNSELS IN THE FOURTH BRANCH**

**3.1** For a Catholic, the mere observance of the Commandments is not a sufficient ideal, and a fervent Catholic, motivated by love for God, will always endeavour to live on a plane which is above that of grave necessity, with no specific obligation to do so. For the Vowed Religious, however, the plane above the lowest level of grave necessity becomes the practice of the `Vow', in which one chooses to bind oneself under pain of sin not to fall below this plane. For the Lay Catholic, living and working in the world, it is possible to also bind oneself (although not under pain of sin), by `Promise', to a fixed and definite commitment to seek perfection, even while retaining its unlimited character of love. It is this `Promise' to observe the Evangelical Counsels which distinguishes the Fourth Branch of the Order of Saint Charbel.

*".....Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world; and the world passes away, and the lust of it; but he who does the Will of God abides forever ....." (1 John 2:15-17).*

#### **THE PROMISE TO OBSERVE THE EVANGELICAL COUNSEL OF POVERTY:**

**3.2** For Fourth Branch Members, particularly for those who are married and have children, or who are preparing a home for the rearing of children, the Promise to observe the Evangelical Counsel of Poverty calls for detachment from material possessions, but not the renunciation of possessions. This means that in making the promise of Poverty, the person binds himself or herself (although not under pain of sin) to live above the strict obligations of the First, Seventh and Tenth Commandments. The person seeks henceforth to live above this minimum level, on a plane where the will to love and serve God always takes precedence, where their possession and use of material goods is governed by a higher love, and they seek perfection in their detachment from the world. This means that:

**(a)** All members should try always to recall that they are merely pilgrims through life; that they are but stewards for all things given by God!

**(b)** All Members should regard the goods which they have acquired as primarily for sustaining a simple life, and to assist them to fulfil the Will of God.

**(c)** Members must be careful, in their diligence to observe their Promise of Poverty, not to deprive their family of the essentials needed for dignified family life.

**(d)** In the promise of Poverty, the member, when visiting or working in a Community will always seek to use appropriately and with care, material goods owned by the Order or

other members.

(e) Members should dress simply and with dignity, when not required to wear the Scapular. They should not indulge in the excessive unnecessary use of cosmetics or make-up, nor should they resort to the vanity of self-adornment.

(f) Members, who are permitted to live in a Community, although free to dispose of their temporal goods as they choose, should not do so in an independent manner, without considering the possible impact on the Community.

(g) Members, who are permitted to live in a Community, although free to purchase non-essential temporal goods, should consider first whether the items may be a distraction or a hindrance to their Spiritual Development, and seek direction from their Spiritual Director.

## **THE PROMISE TO OBSERVE THE EVANGELICAL COUNSEL OF CHASTITY:**

**3.3** To preserve the Virtue of Chastity, we should seek the virtue of humility, which will help us to beware of flattery, and all affectation or vanity in dress and appearance, to be distrustful of self, and so through dependence on Grace gain the Divine assistance without which none can remain chaste. "...God resists the proud, but He gives His Grace to the humble .. and .. Love is the guardian of virginity, but love dwells in humility ..." (St. Augustine).

**3.4** There are, in all, twelve principal means of preserving the Virtue of Chastity:

- Guard the senses
- Avoid idleness: rise early and start your day immediately with prayer;
- Avoid occasions of sin: people, places, books TV or videos etc., which may stimulate unhealthy images, conversations, thoughts;
- Temperance: particularly in drinking;
- Prudence in all social contact;
- Christian modesty in dress and deportment;
- Physical exercise;
- Frequent Confession: opening one's conscience frankly to our Confessor;
- Frequent Holy Communion;
- Humble devotion to and dependent trust in Our Lady, the Queen and Special Protectress of virgins.
- Fidelity to the Rules of our Order;
- Mortification and Prayer

## **CONJUGAL CHASTITY FOR MARRIED COUPLES:**

**3.5** For Fourth Branch Members, who are married, the `Promise' of Chastity relates to "Conjugal Chastity". This means that in making the Promise of Chastity, the married couple bind themselves although not under pain of sin), to live above the strict obligations of the Sixth and Ninth Commandments, which of course bind under pain of serious sin. In their promise, the couple seek henceforth to live above this minimum level, on a plane where their conjugal acts are governed by a higher love - to seek perfection in their conjugal union - to elevate their conjugal union to a deeply personal union of heart and soul in which they seek always to fulfil the Will of God. This implies the following.

(a) The couple will seek always to keep in mind that their enjoyment of each other -

though primarily for the begetting of children - "two are joined to become one flesh" - is also for the strengthening of their bond of love.

**(b)** The couple will seek always to embrace the Will of God in trust, not confining their union to those times when conception is unlikely, but seeking always in their conjugal union to be open to procreation, and to accept with love any children which God's Holy Will may grant them. The couple should strive to reflect that God is intimately involved in their conjugal union, thus praying that God will Bless their love with the creation of another soul.

**(c)** The couple should seek to avoid all forms of arousal which might precipitate self-gratification as a motive for their conjugal union. The mutual desire for each other should arise from their love for each other, in which arousal is always born within a deep mutual respect for the dignity of the whole person, body and soul.

**(d)** If medical or other serious reason suggests that it would be prudent for a mother to have a rest from child bearing, the couple should seek to abstain from marital relations by mutual consent, for the time necessary, as a form of self-denial which expresses a deeper and more spiritual love for each other.

**(e)** The couple will strive to deport themselves always with dignity, dressing in modest and dignified clothing that reflects their deep respect and love for each other; to be edifying in conversation, upholding always the sanctity of Christian Marriage.

### **CELIBATE CHASTITY FOR SINGLES:**

**3.4** For Fourth Branch Members, who are unmarried, the 'Promise' of Chastity relates to "Celibate Chastity". This means that in making the Promise of Chastity, the single person binds himself or herself although not under pain of sin, to live above the strict obligations of the Sixth and Ninth Commandments, which of course bind under pain of serious sin. In his/her Promise, the person seeks henceforth to live above this minimum level, on a plane where their celibacy is governed by a higher love - to seek perfection in the consecration of their celibacy to God in preparation for either a future Married Vocation or a Religious Vocation. This implies the following:

**(a)** The single person in his/her Promise of Chastity, will seeks always to remember that their Chastity, indeed their Virginity, is a treasure which they wish to bring untarnished to their future Spouse - (their earthly spouse in a Married Vocation or their Heavenly Spouse in the Religious Vocation).

**(b)** The single person will seek not only to preserve celibate chastity, which after all is mandated by the Commandments, but to cultivate purity of mind and heart by avoiding occasions and circumstances where offences against purity are treated as normal behaviour, even if this means not watching your favourite TV show, or not watching certain films, or attending some shows at the theatre, or not going swimming at the beach, or perhaps avoiding certain company.

**(c)** The single person will continually seek the Grace of God to overcome temptations against holy purity, rejecting an evil attraction, immediately, resolutely and, with anxiety, trusting in the help of Our Blessed Mother.

**(d)** In the Promise of celibate chastity, the single person will seek the virtue of humility, which will help them to beware of flattery, and all affectation or vanity in dress and appearance, to be distrustful of self, and so through dependence on Grace gains the

Divine assistance without which none can remain chaste. "...God resists the proud, but he gives His Grace to the humble ... and ... Love is the guardian of virginity, but love dwells in humility ..." (St. Augustine)

(e) The Promise of celibate chastity, does not preclude courting, for those who intend to embrace the Married Vocation. However, prudence must be exercised when 'keeping company' to avoid situations that may arouse and inflame mutual desire. Restraint needs to be exercised at all times for the sake of mutual respect and love, and in the much greater desire to always do the Will of God. A kiss, a hug, or a brief embrace are good healthy ways for a courting couple to show their love for each other, but it must be an expression of love, not a gratification of sexual desire. Kissing and cuddling, or fondling or any form of sexual arousal belong to marriage and should be avoided. Such behaviour would not only be a breach of the Promise, but might also be seriously sinful.

(f) At the time of Marriage the Promise of "celibate chastity" is dispensed and may be renewed as a Promise of "Conjugal Chastity".

## **THE PROMISE TO OBSERVE THE EVANGELICAL COUNSEL OF OBEDIENCE:**

**3.5** The practice of Obedience teaches us to be submissive to one another, to curb our own will - our own inherent assertiveness. It is in such submissiveness that the virtues of humility, meekness and charity are nurtured.

**3.6** Obedience is really the first of the Virtues, because it is obedience which calls us to all the other virtues. Obedience really becomes one with Charity.

"...he that keepeth His Word, in him in very deed the charity of God is perfected; and by this we know that we are in Him ..." (1 John 2:5)

"...In a rational creature, obedience is, as it were, the mother and guardian of all the virtues..." (St. Augustine)

"...All acts of virtue come under obedience, inasmuch as they are contained in a precept ..." (St. Thomas Aquinas)

**3.7** Obedience is the Virtue, which inclines the will to comply with the will of another who has the lawful right to command. The evangelical Counsel of Obedience, undertaken in the spirit of faith and love in following Christ, "...who was obedience even unto death ..." entails submission of one's will to lawful Superiors, who act in the place of God, when they give commands that are in accordance with the Rule and Constitution of the Order. (Canon 601) The extent of Obedience is as wide as the 'authority' which commands it. Thus, obedience to God is without limit, while obedience to human beings is limited by higher laws that must not be transgressed, and by the competency of authority of the one who commands.

**3.8** There are two aspects to obedience: there is the physical response - the execution of a command; then there is the motive for obeying. The motive may simply be because it is logical and reasonable, or because the consequences of refusal may be unpleasant. However, there can be a higher motive - the Supernatural motive - to obey without question, without counting the cost, even in things that entail hardship and go against one's preferences: - to do so cheerfully and without complaint, even with joy to be able to imitate more perfectly our Divine Model; to obey precisely because it is commanded by a lawful Superior, who acts in the place of God.

**3.9** In making the Promise of Obedience, the member binds himself/herself (although not under pain of sin) to seek henceforth to live above the minimum level; to unite oneself to that humble submission of Jesus; to submit his/her will (as one would to God) to lawful Superiors, in all decisions made or commands given which are in accord with the Rule and Constitution of the Order, the Moral Law and the Teachings of Holy Church. This means that:

**(a)** The Member who resides in Community (either as a temporary visitors or living in a Community by permission) is not free to do as he/she pleases, but must endeavour to subordinate his/her will to life under the Rule and Constitution of the Order; to follow the particular requirements governing day to day life in the Third Branch.

**(b)** The Member, when residing in a Community, conforms himself /herself cheerfully to the demands of the daily prayer and work routine.

**(c)** All Members promise to obey the lawful instructions of Religious Superiors within the Order, on matters which concern their Spiritual Life.

**(d)** All Members, while visiting or residing in a Community, promise to obey the lawful directives of the Community Superior.

**(e)** Members are not bound to obedience by their Promise on matters which are outside the jurisdiction of the Rule and Constitutions of the Order. For example, the Fourth Branch Member, living in the world, although endeavouring not to be "of the world", has to meet business, work, family, schooling, and many other obligations which must, of necessity, take precedence over work and prayerlife as members of the Order. In such matters, instructions or directives given by a Superior must be considered in the light of other obligations.

**(f)** A Member is not bound to obedience by his/her Promise, where the instruction or directive is:

- Contrary to Faith and Morals;
- In conflict with the Rule and Constitutions of the Order;
- Likely to be injurious to one's health;
- Likely to seriously compromise the discharge of one's Christian duty to one's spouse or family

The matter should not be left there, but should be discussed with the Community Superior, or the Spiritual Director, so that the issues are clarified, so that from a better understanding the instructions or directives may be readily complied with or, if found necessary, the instructions or directives modified.

**(g)** A Member should endeavour to comply with all commands of a Superior as long as he commands lawfully, (Refer to Appendix E, "Line of Grace" which deals with the question of "lawful" command) even if he knows the command may not achieve the result intended or that there is a better way to do it. "...Obedience lovingly undertakes to do all that is commanded it, with simplicity and without considering whether the command is good or bad, provided that the person who orders has authority to order, and that the command serves to unite our mind to God..." (St. Francis de Sales) In other words, the Superior may err in commanding but we make no mistake obeying!

**(h)** The Member will seek to be **prompt** in obedience; for love, which is the prime mover of perfect obedience, should make us obey with readiness.

**(i)** The Member will seek to obey **without reservations**, for to make a choice to obey in some things and disobey in other things is to forfeit the merit of obedience, to show that we submit in what pleases us, and therefore that our submission is not supernatural.

**(j)** The Member will seek to obey with **perseverance**, "...for to do a thing cheerfully which we are commanded to do only once, costs nothing; but when our Superior (or perhaps our Community Council) says to us: you will do that always, and all through your life, there lies the virtue and there also the difficulty..." (St. Francis de Sales)

**(k)** The Member will seek to obey with **cheerfulness**, "...for God loves a cheerful giver .." (2 Cor.9:7) "...In those things that entail hardship, obedience cannot be cheerful unless it is animated by love. Nothing is painful to him who loves, because he thinks not of the suffering undergone, but of the person for whose sake he suffers. Now, if we see Our Lord in the person of him who commands, how can we fail to offer with our whole heart the trifling sacrifice that He demands, who died a Victim of Obedience for our sake" Tanguerey - Obedience the Greatest Freedom)

#### **4. OBLIGATIONS OF THE FOURTH BRANCH:**

**4.1** Endeavour to follow the daily prayer of the Third Branch, but principally:

- the meditated 15-decade Rosary in its entirety.
- Consecration to Jesus, through Mary, after the manner of Saint Louis Marie de Montfort.
- daily Mass (as often as possible)

**4.2** Fourth Branch Members are required to wear the full length Scapular of the Order, when visiting or staying with a Community of the Order. Women are required to also wear the small white veil. Members are required to purchase this Scapular - price (\$50.00) - payable to the Order of Saint Charbel. (See Appendix B)

**4.3** Participate, if possible, in an annual retreat.

**4.4** Confession at least once per month.

**4.5** Members are to volunteer one day a week in the Order, or at least 2 or 3 days a month (if not too far away) or 1 to 2 weeks in a row per year (according to work conditions) or do manual work at home (sewing, drawing, etc.). If other arrangements must be made, it will be necessary to meet with the Superior of the Community to which the Member is affiliated, and prepare, in writing, an agreed alternative commitment.

**4.6** As an alternative to 4.5, the Member may embrace an agreed apostolate such as promoting an evening of Marian prayer or the Rosary, or the publication put out by the Order, or in the case of an aged or infirm member, an apostolate of prayer, or indeed any other form of apostolate to be defined, written up and confirmed with the Superiors of the Order.

**4.7** The Dress code for the Fourth Branch Members is as follows:

##### **FOR WOMEN:**

- you must dress with care (hair well combed; if long - tied back)
- wear a veil in the Chapel of the Order.
- no slacks, in general, except for special types of work.
- always wear modest attire

**FOR MEN:**

- short, clean hair.
- clean clothing in the Chapel of the Order.
- always dress with care and modesty.

The Scapular must be worn by Members as laid down in 4.2.

**4.8** Members will be required to pay an annual fee of \$50.00. This fee must be made payable to the Order of Saint Charbel. If possible, they should also contribute to good works as defined by the Order (missions, vocations, works of the Branch of your choice). If desired, contributions can be made in several instalments.

**4.9** The Member is to respond to the Superior of the Community with which he/she is affiliated, who will arrange for spiritual direction, if needed.

**4.10** Members will be issued with a membership card, denoting their commitment to the Order. The card will carry the expiration date, and a new card will be issued each year on payment of the annual contribution.

**4.11** Members may make no commitment in the name of the Order, unless duly commissioned to do so in writing by the Order. One can promote the Order, and its apostolic works, but one should never constrain other directly.

**4.12** Each time the Member comes and spends time in the Order, he/she is committed, by virtue of his/her Membership of the Fourth Branch, to also make a contribution to cover his/her keep. Such a contribution will always be less than the fixed daily contribution requested of visitors, and may be adjusted according to the means of the member.

**PART (V)**  
**MARRIED PRIESTHOOD**  
**OF THE**  
**ORDER OF SAINT CHARBEL**

- 1.** It is the intention of the Founder, that the Order accept Married laymen of the Third Branch of the Order, for training as Married Priests of the Order, and to accept Married Priests of the Eastern Rite Churches into the Order, with their families.
- 2.** It is also the intention of the Founder, that the Order accept Laicised former Priests, who wish to recommence their Priestly Ministry, for retraining and appointment in the Order.
- 3.** Because these are matters of fundamental concern to Holy Mother Church, impinging on questions of Canon Law and Traditions in the Roman and Eastern Rites of the Church, no attempt is being made at this time to write these issues into the Rule and Constitutions of the Order.
- 4.** Consideration of these matters will be left until Competent Authorities in the Roman and Eastern Rites of Holy Mother Church, are able to address them.

# **PART (VI)**

## **CONFRATERNITY**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

#### **OF THE**

#### **ORDER OF SAINT CHARBEL**

*The Order of Saint Charbel Confraternity Membership is divided into two major sectors:*

#### **1. SAINT CHARBEL HOUSES OF PRAYER**

**1.1** The Saint Charbel House of Prayer, Peace, Unity and Reconciliation is an Apostolate on its own, and very much integrated with the Four Branches of the Order of Saint Charbel.

**1.2** The Prayer Houses originated from private revelation at the public messages from Our Lady given to the Little Pebble at the Holy Grounds, Nowra, New South Wales, Australia, on 13th July, 1985. This 'Great Plan' of Heaven, for the Prayer Houses was to bring peace, and to hold back the chastisement.

**1.3** What is promoted in these Houses of Prayer are prayers of traditional significance, namely: First Saturday Devotions, and love for the Blessed Sacrament.

**1.4** Each Saint Charbel House of Prayer has a registration number, a special Patron Saint - and three Angels: one from the Seraphim, one from the Virtues, and one from the Archangels - to protect each house from all danger, and cast out the demons.

**1.5** Many Graces are bestowed upon those who attend these Saint Charbel Houses of Prayer, Peace, Unity, and Reconciliation. These Prayer Houses will be the extension of the Holy Grounds where Our Blessed Mother can reach all of mankind to bring them back to Her Divine Son. There will be many cures and conversions, and many petitions will be answered.

**1.6** Where possible, as in many such houses, this devotion is held in Churches, Monasteries, and Convents. In this case groups and individuals register themselves - and unite all their prayers and good works - with the Order of Saint Charbel.

#### **2. LIVING STONES:**

**1.1** The Living Stones were inspired by several Nuns in Poland, to be Living Prayer Houses, similar to the Saint Charbel Houses of Prayer, Peace, Unity and Reconciliation. This inspiration came through the desire to be involved in the Houses of Prayer due to restrictions laid by the Rule of the Order, or pressure from their Superiors.

**1.2** On 6th January, 1990, at the Saint Charbel House of Prayer, Peace, Unity and Reconciliation, at Nowra, Our Lord spoke these words:

**1.3** *"My Heart is overflowing with Mercy and Love for the human race. I have offered the world, the Church and mankind, many ways to come to Me. Become Living Stones of Prayer, My sweet children - Temples of My Spirit, that you may be likened to My Most Holy Mother - a House of Prayer in your*

*hearts; a Temple of Prayer, Sacrifice and Penance. Let Me build upon your souls and your hearts the New Jerusalem, for you shall be Living Stones in the world. The world will find me once again in My Living Stones - upon the earth - and the New Temple of My Heart in your souls will be built upon the earth."*

**1.4** A registration number is sent to all the souls who desire to unite their spirit in this holy work, and Our Lord promised very great Graces for souls who engage themselves in this apostolate.

**1.5** All those who involve themselves in this Mission of reparational prayer - as Living Stones - will have their names permanently engraved in the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, never to be erased.

## **OTHER WORKS**

### **3. MASS LEAGUE**

It is to be noted that the Order of Saint Charbel has many other Apostolic Works - one being the Saint Charbel Mass League for the Living and the Dead. If you desire to have your name or family enrolled into the Mass League, please write to:

**The Saint Charbel Order Mass League,  
P.O. Box 815, NOWRA. 2541 - N.S.W., AUSTRALIA**

### **4. SAINT PHILOMENA CENTRE:**

The Saint Charbel Order also has a store for Religious Items - the Saint Philomena Centre. You may write to obtain a catalogue to:

**The Saint Philomena Centre,  
P.O. Box 815, NOWRA. 2541 - N.S.W., AUSTRALIA**

### **5. APOCALYPTIC ARK MAGAZINE:**

A quarterly Magazine - the Apocalyptic Ark - is published by the Saint Charbel Order Fathers. The purpose of the magazine is to explain the progress of the Mission and how it relates to Church and global affairs. It is an expressed need of the people to know what is truly happening at the Apparition sites around the world, and how they are inter-connected with Our Lady's Plan for Redemption. You can obtain a subscription by writing to:

**The Apocalyptic Ark Magazine,  
P.O. Box 815 Nowra 2541 - N.S.W., AUSTRALIA**

For anyone seeking information about the External Membership, and the Confraternity, please write to this address:

**The Order of Saint Charbel  
P.O. Box 815, NOWRA. 2541 - N.S.W., AUSTRALIA**

# **APPENDIXES**

## **TO THE RULE AND CONSTITUTIONS**

### **OF THE**

### **ORDER OF SAINT CHARBEL**

#### **APPENDIX A**

##### **GOVERNMENT OF THE ORDER**

###### **INTRODUCTION**

This document will consider the application of the Rule of the Order of Saint Charbel to matters of Government of the Order. As such it will form part of the Constitutions of the Order, although it is not intended to be limiting in any way to the authority conferred by 'The Rule' upon the Supreme Moderator appointed to govern the Order.

The document is intended for use as a guide to assist members of the Order, and aspirants, to better understand the structure and exercise of authority within the Order.

*The Document is in draft form at present and will be included at a later stage.*

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#### **APPENDIX B**

##### **HABIT OF THE ORDER OF SAINT CHARBEL**

###### **1. THE SCAPULAR:**

**1.1** The garb of the Order of Saint Charbel is distinguished by the dark brown Scapular surmounted by a large white Cross on the front panel, with an embroidered emblem at the centre of the Cross, depicting the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary side by side. (Ref.R 4.1)

**1.2** The Scapular is to extend three (3) inches short of shoulder width and to hang nine (9) inches above the ground front and back..

**1.3** Novices and Professed of the First, Second and Third Branches, (Priests, Brothers, Sisters and Lay Men and Women) all wear the Scapular of the Order.

**1.4** Members of the Fourth Branch when within the Community, wear the Scapular of the Order.

**1.5** Postulants do not wear the Scapular of the Order.

###### **2. THE TUNIC**

**2.1** The First and Second Branch Members (Priests, Brothers and Sisters) wear a cream-coloured tunic tied with a white cord.

**2.2** The Third Branch Members wear a beige coloured tunic tied with a white cord.

**2.3** The tunic is to be the same design, with a zipper in the front from the collar to the waist - for both men and women - except for a high collar on the women's tunic. The bottom of the tunic is to be hemmed to stand five (5) inches above the ground.

**2.4** The tunic is to be loose fitting and worn with a cord tied around the waist, with the ends hanging level with the bottom of the Scapular - to the left for the men and to the right for the women. Only the Professed Religious wear knots in the cord, signifying the Vows taken.

**2.5** Tunics are to be worn by: Novices and Professed of the First and Second Branches, and Novices and Professed of the Third Branch.

**2.6** Tunics are NOT worn by Postulants of the Order.

**2.7** Tunics are NOT worn by the members of the Fourth Branch, who wear the Scapular only.

### **3. THE VEIL**

**3.1** Novices of the Religious Sisters of the Second Branch, and Lay Women of the Third Branch, wear a short white Veil hanging to shoulder length, with a rounded shape at the bottom edge. The Sister's veil has a cream-coloured border, and the Lay Women's veil has no border.

**3.2** Professed lay women of the Third Branch wear the same short white veil as the Novices in the Third Branch, but with a beige border, colour matched to the tunic.

**3.3** Professed Sisters in Temporary Vows wear a short white veil with a brown border (colour matched to the Scapular). The veil is worn shoulder length, with a rounded shape at the bottom edge.

**3.4** Professed Sisters in solemn vows wear a long white veil with a brown border. The veil is worn hanging to mid back, with a rounded shape at the bottom edge.

**3.5** The Mother Superior wears the same veil as in 3.4, but hanging to the waist.

### **4. THE HOOD**

**4.1** Male Novices and Professed of the First, Second and Third Branches, wear the Hood in matching material to their Tunic, and attached to the tunic by press-studs or velcro strips.

**4.2** The Hood is worn over the back of the Scapular.

### **5. THE ROSARY**

**5.1** All Postulants, Novices, and Professed, Priests, Brothers and Lay members of the Third Branch wear a fifteen (15) decade brown wood Rosary with the Saint Benedict Crucifix.

**5.2** The men wear the Rosary hung on the cord of the Habit on the right side.

**5.3** The women wear the Rosary hung on the cord of the Habit on the left side.

### **6. DRESS REQUIREMENTS**

**6.1** For colder climates, additional clothing will be essential, and no restrictions are placed on the clothing worn under the Habit for the reasonable comfort of the member.

**6.2** Members have two options in regard to footwear: either shoes or sandals may be worn, depending on the climate.

**6.3** Professed Members will always wear the full Habit in the Community. When travelling outside the Community, Religious will wear whatever is permissible in the country, but preferably clerical dress. If clerical dress is not permissible, the clothing worn must be modest and dignified, in keeping with the Sacred Calling. Lay members, when travelling outside, should also dress in a modest and dignified manner, remembering their calling.

## **7. THE CLOAK**

**7.1** In colder or temperate climates it may be necessary to wear additional clothing over the Habit for protection against cold, snow and rain. To effect a standard in these conditions, a cloak is proposed as an addition to the Habit.

**7.2** The cloak should be brown, to match the colour of the Scapular, and made of thick, warm material, preferably wool or wool blend. It is to go over the shoulders, with tie, hook or button at the top, and reaching to five (5) inches above the ground.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **RECOGNISED CATHOLIC RITES**

#### **1. LATIN RITE**

The Novus Ordo Mass may be said in either the vernacular or in Latin, according to the Roman Missal.

The Tridentine Mass may be said according to the 1962 Roman Missal, as laid down by the Holy See.

#### **2. EASTERN-RITE CHURCHES**

There are 21 Eastern-Rite Churches. They are listed below according to the five Mother Churches from which they were generated. (see L'Osservatore Romano, No.45, 5/11/90)

##### **I Alexandrian**

1. Coptic (Patriarchate)
2. Ethiopian (Patriarchate)

##### **II Antiochian**

3. Malankar
4. Maronite (Patriarchate)
5. Syrian (Patriarchate)

##### **III Constantinopolitan or Byzantine**

6. Albanian
7. Byelorussian
8. Bulgarian
9. Greek
10. Hungarian

11. Italo-Albanian
12. Melkite (Patriarchate)
13. Romanian
14. Russian
15. Ruthenian
16. Slovak
17. Ukrainian
18. Yugoslavian

#### **IV Armenian**

19. Armenian (Patriarchate)

#### **V Chaldean**

20. Chaldean (Patriarchate)
21. Malabar

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## **APPENDIX D**

### **SAMPLE SCHEDULE FOR A COMMUNITY**

*This sample schedule is only a suggested possibility. It is to show the concept of a blend of Prayer and Work in a typical day for the Community. Each Community will vary from this schedule according to the local needs and circumstances.*

#### **1. FIRST AND SECOND BRANCH**

In order to foster the spirituality of the Order, the Religious will structure their day according to the simple program: One-half Day of prayer and one-half Day of work. This is completely flexible, and adapted for the individual Religious to choose.

#### **TIME: ACTIVITY**

**6:00am** The day begins.

**7:00am** Mass for the Religious - and any other members desiring at this time.

**9:00am** Morning Prayer for all Community members, in which they dedicate the coming day to God. The first Community Rosary could be said at this time.

**9:30am** Work time begins for those Religious desiring to work at this time.

#### *HALF-DAY WORK / HALF-DAY PRAYER*

*The Religious may freely choose to work or pray at this time from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm*

**12:30pm** Clean-up time for those Religious working from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm.

**1:00pm** Eating together, where possible, for all Branches.

**2:00pm** One-half Day Work / One-half Day Prayer begins:

#### *HALF-DAY WORK / HALF-DAY PRAYER*

*The Religious may freely choose to work each Day at this time, from 2:00pm to 5:30pm.*

**5:30pm** Clean-up time for Religious working from 2:00pm to 5:30pm.

**6:00pm** Evening Meal, together where possible - for all Branches.

**6.30pm** Mass if required.

**7.15pm** Mandatory Community Prayer by all Branches. Prayer ends with Benediction when possible.

**8.00pm** Close for all.

**9.00pm** Night Prayer for Religious. All Religious are to leave the Third Branch areas before this time, and vice versa.

The word `all' means those who are available, as from time to time certain Religious may be involved in activities which cannot be left unattended. All Religious are expected to attend Community Prayers unless some cause intervenes.

## **2. THIRD BRANCH**

**6.30am** The Third Branch begins its day between 6.30.am and 7.00.am. Children are made ready for school; preparations begin for the coming day's activities. Some members would have already been up even earlier to begin work on the farm - on tasks such as milking. **[In practice there is much flexibility, and no obligation for everyone to strictly rise at this time. Every Community is different according to local circumstances.]**

**8.30am** Morning Mass for families.

**9.00am** All members of the Third Branch gather together in the Chapel for morning prayers. The first Community Rosary could be said at this time.

**9.30am** Work begins and the children go off to school, with the adults attending farm and domestic activities.

**12.noon** Mass for those unable to attend earlier, followed by Community Prayers.

**1.00pm** Eating together, where possible - for all Branches.

**2.00pm** Work continues and school resumes.

**3.00pm** The members of the Community stop whatever they are doing in order to recite the Holy Wounds Chaplet or similar prayer.

**3.30pm** Work continues, and school concludes for the day.

**5.30pm** Work concludes for the day.

**6.00pm** Evening meal together, where possible - for all Branches.

**6.30pm** Evening Mass, if required.

**7.15pm** Mandatory Community Prayer by all members of the three Branches. Prayers end with

Benediction when possible.

**8.00pm** Close for all.

(1) The word "all" means all those who are available, as no doubt some individuals, from time to time, will be involved in activities which cannot be left unattended.

(2) Because of work commitments, family members are not obliged to attend the same Mass, thus ample opportunity is given for all concerned.

(3) All members are expected to attend Community Prayers.

(4) On two Saturdays each month the days are to be free for families to work in their own household. Other Saturdays are to be Community work days.

(5) All Sundays are free, except for Mass and Rosary. The exceptions to this will be Easter, Lent, Christmas, Special Feast Days - where the Sundays concerned are days of prayer.

(6) After Holy Mass, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is to have the highest place in every member's devotions, and it is the wish of the Supreme Moderator of the Order that Perpetual Adoration be undertaken in every Community as soon as numbers permit.

(7) The times of Community Prayer during the day are not to exceed half an hour each.

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## APPENDIX E

### NEW FOUNDATIONS

#### 1. INITIAL SETTING UP OF THE COMMUNITY

**1.1** The Rule of the Order requires that Communities be formed encompassing, wherever possible, all Branches of the Order - Priests, Brothers, Sisters, Families and Singles. It is self evident however, that a new foundation will probably commence with one Branch, and most probably with a group of lay people joining together and pooling their resources to initially establish the Community. It is envisaged that in this pooling of resources the fledgling Community could purchase all lands and build the homes for its founding members.

**1.2** The Rule also requires that Communities be formed around a farm property, with the objective of achieving self-sufficiency through agricultural production and/or cottage industries.

**1.3** A new Community might be founded in the following way:

(a) Several families could sell existing properties and by pooling their resources, purchase a farming property with several homes on it, or with the scope to site new homes on it, or alternatively:

(b) One person or family might buy a property, or allow their own property to be used as a foundation for the new Community.

**1.4** Because of the members' financial vulnerability in this early stage, the Community should be securely bonded. Members joining to form a Community in this way should have a legally binding contract drawn up to ensure that none of the parties to the venture can withdraw their resources (i.e. land, property, equipment, farming implements, or money) from the Community for a specified period, e.g. five years, even if they wish to leave. This commitment should only be dissolved if all the parties

agree to cancel the contracts made.

**1.5** In this initial stage, all members who have contributed to the establishment of the Community should have an equal say in its growth and in Community decisions. Knowledge, spirituality, finance or property should not provide any pretext for precedence.

**1.6** Once a property has been obtained, representatives from each of the founding families should come together to form the initial Community Council. The first step of the Council should be to apply, in writing, to the Major Superior of the Order in the Region (or to the Supreme Moderator of the Order if there is no regional establishment of the Order), for acceptance of their proposal to form a Community of the Order of Saint Charbel. If approval is given for the new Community - until a Superior can be appointed - an experienced member of the Order from another Community may be delegated to assist the new Community Council in its initial task of preparing a development program for the Community. This program will address the following issues:

- (a) Priorities for building works; organising the farm or industry; family needs; the need for outside work; and income of members.
- (b) Application of the Rule and Constitution to the extent practicable in the particular circumstances, so that each member of the new Community may begin to live, as fully as possible, the prayer life and apostolic work of the Order.
- (c) The necessity for establishing a Community Chapel, even if it is very rudimentary in its first stage, as a matter of highest priority, so that Community Prayer life might flourish from the outset.
- (d) The Branches of the Order the founding members might enter. Initially many may opt for the Fourth Branch, but it must only be with the intention of embracing the Novitiate of the Third Branch as soon as circumstances permit.
- (e) Spiritual Direction of members, and Formation in the life of the Order.

**1.7** Because of the planning constraints on rural properties prevalent in many countries - and perhaps, financial limitations - there may be difficulties in housing all the families on the property. It may be necessary therefore for some Community members to live in nearby towns, until such problems are resolved. The Supreme Moderator of the Order has determined that this should not be a barrier to families entering the Novitiate of the Third Branch. Families in this situation are encouraged to join the Third Branch and embrace Community life as fully as the circumstances permit.

## **2. INVOLVEMENT WITH CHURCH AUTHORITIES**

**2.1** The Order of Saint Charbel is a new form of Consecrated life and looks upon the Supreme Pontiff, Pope John Paul II, as its highest authority. It does not come under the jurisdiction of any local Ordinaries, rather it is governed through the Order's own governmental structure (which does include Bishops).

**2.2** Before establishing a Community, a representative of the Order must advise the local Bishop. The Diocesan Bishop's permission is not necessary in establishing the Community, but out of courtesy to his position, he must be notified. Each Community should try to work cooperatively with the local Church Authorities.

**2.3** Even in its infancy, the Community must be governed by the Supreme Moderator through the Major Superior and the appointed Community Superior - who may, temporarily, be a layman.

**2.4** Initially, members of the Community may have to receive the Sacraments from local Church Authorities, so there should be good and close communication between the two.

## **3. CIVIL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**3.1** When initiating a Community, adequate research should be made into the regulation and laws of Federal, State and Local Authorities.

**3.2** Items which may require investigation include:

- land zoning for planning purposes.
- water / sewerage, and other environmental factors.
- electricity
- housing / accommodation and regulations governing the same.
- animal husbandry.
- crops
- cottage industries

**3.3** For taxation purposes, all financial documentation must be initiated immediately and kept regularly up-to-date to provide ready access for Governmental bodies and officials belonging to the Order.

#### **4. FARM COMMUNITY**

**4.1** Self sufficiency is one of the objectives of Community life and the Order, and it is expected that in most cases the new Community will be established on a rural property, with farming as the primary means of support.

**4.2** The farm should be large enough to feed at least twelve families and some twenty or so Priests and Religious of the Order. However, a larger agricultural production, and/or cottage industry, could produce goods which might be sold or bartered. It is unlikely that every Community can produce the whole spectrum of its day to day needs, and bartering will become a part of Community life.

**4.3** Adequate research into potential crop growth and management of property should take place. The need for cottage industries must be examined with a view to their practicability and financial viability.

**4.4** The Community must look on itself as a close-knit family, and should initiate this family-type concept in its approach to farm life.

**4.5** All members of the Community should take an active interest in the planning and implementation of the farm Community.

**4.6** The necessity may arise for several members to supplement the income of the Community by working outside.

#### **5. COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP**

**5.1** If it is not feasible to set up a Co-operative or an Incorporated Association representing several families to own the land, it would be preferable that Community property be in the name of one family, until the property is transferred to the Order.

**5.2** During the early stages, there should be a clear distinction made between Community property and private property. Lists should be made to determine what belongs to each individual family, what belongs to the Community, and what is donated by families to the Community.

**5.3** What is bought by Community funds for the Community remains the Community's and does not belong to those who may have assisted in the purchasing.

**5.4** The Community cannot claim the right to obtain any individual's private assets, whether financial

or in property.

**5.5** When members come into the Community, what is brought into the Community for family use remains their private property and continues to remain theirs indefinitely. However, this does not mean that Community members cannot borrow each other's private property; but if goods are borrowed, it should be clearly understood that they are to be for either Community use or private use. In this way, if equipment is used for a Community project it is the Community which is responsible; if an individual uses another member's property for personal use, the individual is responsible.

**5.6** All materials in the Community should be catalogued with a system of checks being available, so that all materials are accounted for.

**5.7** Materials in the Community stockpile should not become one individual's, indirectly, through persistent use, but should always belong to the Community.

**5.8** Materials should not be abused by the inexperienced. Similarly, while materials are classified as 'Community' they should be treated as if they were 'private', and utmost care should be taken so that materials return in the same condition as when taken etc.

**5.9** All records of ownership of material possessions should be properly documented, for the protection of the family as well as the Community.

## **6. POOLING OF RESOURCES**

**6.1** Materials that are not essential in the private life of the individual may be pooled together for the whole Community to use, but a record should be kept of all such items. It is to be noted that members living in the Community are not required to pool their resources until the period of their Novitiate is completed. If they choose to do so during their Novitiate, it must be pointed out to them that these resources may not be available, should they wish to leave the Community.

**6.2** Each family should have something to offer the Community, and the resources are not material items only, as knowledge, experience and skills are of equal, or possibly more, worth.

**6.3** The Community must not become dependent upon affluent new members to secure resources for development. During a new member's Postulancy or Novitiate their material possessions remain their own.

**6.4** It is recommended that at all times some mode of transport be always available on the Community property in case of emergency situations.

## **7. HEALTH CARE BENEFITS**

**7.1** Most countries have National or Private Health Care Benefit facilities. During the Postulancy and the Novitiate all members should retain the upkeep of private benefits, since there is always the possibility, that during this period, they may wish to leave the Community.

**7.2** Until the Community is self-sufficient, it will not be in a position to cover costs of members' medical, dental and other treatment - and even after their profession it may be necessary during the formative stages, for all Community members to retain some form of Health cover.

**7.3** Each Community should have some sort of medical stockpile in the form of a medical cabinet. It would be extremely beneficial to the Community if a number of its members were trained, and became proficient, in administering First-Aid.

## **8. INSURANCE**

**8.1** Although we may live in Community and trust in the protection of God, we must use common sense while living in an imperfect world, and prudence suggests that appropriate measures be taken to insure the infant Community from possible natural disasters in order to prevent financial ruin resulting from crop destruction - or destruction of buildings and/or equipment.

**8.2** The Community should have an adequate insurance cover for essential material assets, as well as sufficient cover for public liability. This is especially important if large numbers of pilgrims may be visiting Community Shrines or Chapels.

**8.3** The Community should also make adequate preparation for the future by retaining a stock of food, fuel, tools and workshop supplies; spare parts for machinery, and so on.

## **9. UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS AND PENSIONS**

**9.1** Professed members of the Order should not receive any form of government unemployment assistance.

**9.2** Individuals who wish to join the Community and whose sole source of income is through government unemployment assistance, may be permitted to do so during their postulancy and Novitiate.

**9.3** Unemployment Benefits may be received by members, provided they seek employment as prescribed by the law of the land. However, once a Community becomes self-sufficient, the member is not permitted to remain on Unemployment Benefits, as this would constitute defrauding the Government.

**9.4** It is permissible for elderly or disabled members receiving pensions to retain these for their personal use during their Probationary period and Novitiate, but when Professed they will be required to pay this to the Order.

## **10. WORKING OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY**

**10.1** The need may arise for several members to work outside the Community so as to gain the financial support to assist self-sufficiency. Ideally the Community should be self-sufficient, but from time to time - especially during the foundation stage - the need may arise to obtain goods which the Community cannot provide.

**10.2** Postulants and Novices may also need to work outside the Community to support their families.

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## **APPENDIX F**

### **THE MARONITE CHURCH**

The Maronite Church takes its name from Saint Maron, an anchorite from the vicinity of Antioch, who, in the second half of the fourth century, withdrew from the world into a monastery, not far from Apames in Syria, to live with and for God, as did those men of Eastern monasticism who were thirsty for God.

### **SAINT MARON**

Maron was famous for his holiness and, through him, the Lord granted many healing Graces, both

physical and spiritual, to the great number of people who went to him. Maron, at the price of both his life and that of his monks, fervently defended the Catholic doctrine, as solemnly defined in the ecumenical Councils held in that region, and which was defended by the Supreme Pontiff.

## **HISTORY OF THE CHURCH**

Maronite history is marked by loyalty to the Pope; by martyrdom in its defence and by the almost visceral love for religious freedom and tolerance. The willingness to welcome religious minorities that have made Lebanon their refuge is an essential part of the Maronite traits which have made Lebanon the homeland of minorities. Both Christians and non-Christians recognise these characteristics of the Maronite Church and her leading role in Lebanon. An eminent position has always been reserved for the Maronite Patriarch, as a symbol of national unity and as guardian of the characteristics of Lebanon. The Maronites are theologically, liturgically and spiritually of Syrian-Antiochean tradition. Before Arabic, their language today, they used to speak and pray in Syriac.

The Maronite Church has a patriarchal structure. The Patriarch bears the title of "Patriarch of Antioch and of All the East". Antioch was the See of Saint Peter before Rome.

## **RELIGIOUS ORDERS**

There are three monastic Religious Orders in the Maronite Church which trace their origins to Saint Anthony the Great:

- the Lebanese Maronite Order with about four-hundred (400) monks;
- the Maronite Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary with about one-hundred-and-fourteen (114) monks;
- and the Antonian Maronite Order with about one-hundred-and-twenty (120) monks;

There is also a Religious Congregation of the Maronite-Lebanese Missionaries (Kreimists) of patriarchal right, with approximately fifty (50) Religious. The Religious also offer pastoral ministry in the parishes, and in the houses of religious formation; their cultural activity has greatly developed in recent years. The Holy Spirit University of Kaslik, run by the Lebanese Maronite Order, is the seat of a pontifical faculty of theology.

## **RELIGIOUS ORDERS FOR WOMEN**

The Maronite Religious Orders of women are:

- the Antonine Sisters
- the Religious of the Lebanese Maronite Order
- the Sisters of the Holy Family
- the Sisters of Saint Therèse of the Child Jesus, and
- the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist

Candidates for the Priesthood of the diocesan clergy are prepared in the patriarchal seminary of Ghazir, founded at the end of the last century by the Society of Jesus. Other candidates are prepared in the diocesan seminary of Saint Anthony in Karm Saddè in the Archdiocese of Tripoli.

## **APPENDIX G**

(unofficial translation from French)

### **THE GRACE OF VOCATION**

Pope John Paul II

*Solemn Eucharistic Celebration for the opening of the Synod on the Consecrated Life. All forms of consecration reunited by the same calling: the Living Word of God*

## EXCERPT

We could [say] that the horizon of the Kingdom of God has been revealed to us and continues to be revealed to individuals, through the bias of vocations to the Consecrated Life.

Have we not assisted, in these last years, this marvellous flourishing of Secular Institutes and Societies of Apostolic life that do so much good for the Church? We are also assisting in the birth of new forms of consecration, in particular in the midst of movements or ecclesial association; forms which express, in a closer way, our present culture, the constant tension of the religious life, pulled by contemplation of the mystery of God and the mission towards our brothers.

It must be that the members of the religious Communities and Institutes of Consecrated Life inspire themselves on the primitive Church model (cf.Ac.2,42), to engage themselves in a renewed burst, nourished by the teachings of the Gospel, and to the Sacred Liturgy and, especially, to the Eucharist - and to perseverance in prayer, and in communion with the Holy Ghost, so as to be only one heart and only one soul. (cf.Perfectae caritatis.15.)

(excerpt from the *L'Osservatore Romano* - October 4th, 1994 No. 40(2335))

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## APPENDIX H

### SELF-SUFFICIENCY

*Dear Members of the Order of Saint Charbel:*

*I wish to address the issue of achieving self-sufficiency within each Community in the Ordeer. What does this mean? Each member and each Community must be able to be sustained and maintained on all levels -- that is: financially, and with all requirements such as food, employment, accomodations, etc., in such a way that the Order need not depend upon the outside world for anything other than those items which are impossible for us to make or grow. It is also essential for all concerned that no member of the Order need be dependant for income outside the Order, because this would defeat the purpose.*

*There are many ways in which self-sufficiency can, and must be, achieved -- taking into account the three Evangelical Counsels which must govern the spirit and the heart of each soul who enters the Order. In a special way we refer to the Vow of Poverty. You are fully assured that the Order cannot expand unless these measures are strictly adhered-to.*

#### ***To Set-up A Community***

*The Rule & Constitutions should be consulted and fully understood right at the outset (see APPENDIX A in particular). A Community of Third Branch members may be formed with only one family -- or several members of the Order -- being involved, but it is desirable to have more join-in as soon as possible, so as to spread the financial burden.*

#### ***Helpful Hints:***

- 1. A property which can be utilised as a small farm -- around five acres -- should be jointly owned at first, then later transferred to the Order. The property should have some living accomodations available so that greater expenditure is not immediately necessary*

*for this purpose. (Mobile homes -- or similar means -- are suggested as a temporary way of increasing accomodation).*

*2. All income is to be pooled so that expenditures can be controlled for the benefit of the whole.*

*3. Communities are to seek ways of producing goods and items which will utilise the work force within, using the talents of all. 'Small Cottage Industries' are a good way of expanding self-sufficiency, eg.: crafts; farming, large or small -- anything that will bring in an income. But one of the quickest ways of becoming self-sufficient is through purchasing, or establishing, grocery stores -- nearby, in a village or town -- where you will also be able to sell your own products: fruits, vegetables, home crafts, etc.*

*The purpose of acquiring such stores and/or establishing industries is so that all members are working for the Order -- even though this is in the outside world -- and all finances are constantly retained or recycled into the Communities. All who are in the 'outside workforce' of the Order should be based on rotating shifts so that the time spent by each in the 'outside world' is minimised, ensuring that the spirit of the Order is not diminished, or lost, by such exposure to the worldliness out there.*

*Upon the establishment of cottage industries and generation of farming produce has been achieved by the Community a small store can be built on the Community property; thereby, much time and travel is saved. There are many regulations drawn-up on how this can be achieved; see the Rule and Constitutions.*

*It is to be understood that self-sufficiency can only come about if all members are willing to sacrifice all for the Order and its spirit. Once the Order has achieved some degree of self-sufficiency the stores can be sold, provided that the projected -- and necessary -- income for the maintenance of the Community has been achieved. Eventually all Communities will be able to barter their goods with each other; thus the self-sufficiency will have reached its ultimate purpose.*

## APPENDIX I

### THE POPE HAS SPOKEN

#### New Forms of Evangelical Life

### VITA CONSECRATA

#### Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father John Paul II

#### 'The Consecrated Life'

Given in Rome, on 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1996

#### EXTRACT

**62.** The Spirit, who at different times has inspired numerous forms of consecrated life, does not cease to assist the Church, whether by fostering in already existing Institutes a commitment to renewed faithfulness to the founding charism, or by giving new charisms to men and women of our own day so that they can start institutions responding to the challenges of our times. A sign of this divine intervention is to be found in the so-called new Foundations, which display new characteristics compared to those of traditional Foundations.

The originality of the new communities often consists in the fact that they are composed of mixed groups of men and women, of clerics and lay persons, of married couples and celibates, all of whom pursue a particular style of life. These communities are sometimes inspired by one or other traditional

form adapted to the needs of modern society. Their commitment to the evangelical life also takes on different forms, while, as a general rule, they are all characterized by an intense aspiration to community life, poverty and prayer. Both clerics and lay persons share in the duties of governing according to the responsibilities assigned to them, and the apostolate focuses on the demands of the new evangelization.

If, on one hand, there is reason to rejoice at the Holy Spirit's action, there is, on the other, a need for discernment regarding these charisms. A fundamental principle, when speaking of the consecrated life, is that the specific features of the new communities and their styles of life must be founded on the essential theological and canonical elements proper to the consecrated life. (*cf. Canon 573*) This discernment is necessary at both the local and universal level, in order to manifest a common obedience to the one Spirit. In dioceses, Bishops should examine the witness of life and the orthodoxy of the founders of such communities, their spirituality, the ecclesial awareness shown in carrying out their mission, the methods of formation and the manner of incorporation into the community. They should wisely evaluate possible weaknesses, watching patiently for the sign of results (*cf. Mt 7:16*), so that they may acknowledge the authenticity of the charism. In a special way, Bishops are required to determine, according to clearly established criteria, the suitability of any members of these communities who wish to receive Holy Orders.

Worthy of praise are those forms of commitment which some Christian married couples assume in certain associations and movements. They confirm by means of a vow the obligation of chastity proper to the married state and, without neglecting their duties towards their children, profess poverty and obedience. They do so with the intention of bringing to the perfection of charity their love, already "consecrated" in the Sacrament of Matrimony. (*cf. Gaudium et Spes, 48*) However, by reason of the above-mentioned principle of discernment, these forms of commitment cannot be included in the specific category of the consecrated life. This necessary clarification regarding the nature of such experiences in no way intends to underestimate this particular path of holiness, from which the action of the Holy Spirit, infinitely rich in gifts and inspirations, is certainly not absent.

In view of such a wealth of gifts and creative energies, it seems appropriate to set up a [Commission](#) to deal with questions relating to new forms of consecrated life. The purpose of this [Commission](#) will be to determine criteria of authenticity which will help discernment and decision-making. Among its other tasks, this [Commission](#) will evaluate, in the light of the experience of recent decades, which new forms of consecration can, with pastoral prudence and to the advantage of all, be officially approved by Church authority, in order to be proposed to the faithful who are seeking a more perfect Christian life.

New associations of evangelical life are not alternatives to already existing Institutions, which continue to hold the pre-eminent place assigned to them by tradition. Nonetheless, the new forms are also a gift of the Spirit, enabling the Church to follow her Lord in a constant outpouring of generosity, attentive to God's invitations revealed through the signs of the times. Thus the Church appears before the world with many forms of holiness and service, as "a kind of instrument or sign of intimate union with God, and of the unity of mankind". (*cf. Lumen Gentium, 1*) The older Institutes, many of which have been tested by the severest of hardships, which they have accepted courageously down the centuries, can be enriched through dialogue and an exchange of gifts with the Foundations appearing in our own day.

In this way the vigor of the different forms of consecrated life, from the oldest to the most recent, as well as the vitality of the new communities, will renew faithfulness to the Holy Spirit, who is the source of communion and unceasing newness of life.

**65.** The Synod Assembly paid special attention to the formation of those who wish to consecrate themselves to the Lord, and recognized its decisive importance. The primary objective of the formation process is to prepare people for the total consecration of themselves to God in the following of Christ, at the service of the Church's mission. To say "yes" to the Lord's call by taking personal responsibility for maturing in one's vocation is the inescapable duty of all who have been called. One's whole life must be open to the action of the Holy Spirit, traveling the road of formation with

generosity, and accepting in faith the means of grace offered by the Lord and the Church.

Formation should therefore have a profound effect on individuals, so that their every attitude and action, at important moments as well as in the ordinary events of life, will show that they belong completely and joyfully to God. Since the very purpose of consecrated life is conformity to the Lord Jesus in his total self giving, this must also be the principal objective of formation. Formation is a path of gradual identification with the attitude of Christ towards the Father.

**84.** The prophetic character of the consecrated life was strongly emphasized by the Synod Fathers. It takes the shape of a special form of sharing in Christ's prophetic office, which the Holy Spirit communicates to the whole People of God. There is a prophetic dimension which belongs to the consecrated life as such, resulting from the radical nature of the following of Christ and of the subsequent dedication to the mission characteristic of the consecrated life. The sign value, which the Second Vatican Council acknowledges in the consecrated life, is expressed in prophetic witness to the primacy which God and the truths of the Gospel have in the Christian life. Because of this pre-eminence nothing can come before personal love of Christ and of the poor in whom he lives.

The Patristic tradition has seen a model of monastic religious life in Elijah, courageous prophet and friend of God. He lived in God's presence and contemplated his passing by in silence; he interceded for the people and boldly announced God's will; he defended God's sovereignty and came to the defense of the poor against the powerful of the world (cf. 1 Kg 18-19). In the history of the Church, alongside other Christians, there have been men and women consecrated to God who, through a special gift of the Holy Spirit, have carried out a genuinely prophetic ministry, speaking in the name of God to all, even to the Pastors of the Church. True prophecy is born of God, from friendship with him, from attentive listening to his word in the different circumstances of history. Prophets feel in their hearts a burning desire for the holiness of God and, having heard his word in the dialogue of prayer, they proclaim that word with their lives, with their lips and with their actions, becoming people who speak for God against evil and sin. Prophetic witness requires the constant and passionate search for God's will, for self-giving, for unending communion in the Church, for the practice of spiritual discernment and love of the truth. It is also expressed through the denunciation of all that is contrary to the divine will and through the exploration of new ways to apply the Gospel in history, in expectation of the coming of God's Kingdom.

**85.** In our world, where it often seems that the signs of God's presence have been lost from sight, a convincing prophetic witness on the part of consecrated persons is increasingly necessary. In the first place this should entail the affirmation of the primacy of God and of eternal life, as evidenced in the following and imitation of the chaste, poor and obedient Christ, who was completely consecrated to the glory of God and to the love of his brethren. The fraternal life is itself prophetic in a society which, sometimes without realizing it, has a profound yearning for a brotherhood which knows no borders. Consecrated persons are being asked to bear witness everywhere with the boldness of a prophet who is unafraid of risking even his life.

Prophecy derives a particularly persuasive power from consistency between proclamation and life. Consecrated persons will be faithful to their mission in the Church and the world, if they can renew themselves constantly in the light of the word of God. Thus will they be able to enrich the other faithful with the charismatic gifts they have received and, in turn, let themselves be challenged by the prophetic stimulus which comes from other sectors of the Church. In this exchange of gifts, guaranteed by full harmony with the Church's Magisterium and discipline, there will shine forth the action of the Holy Spirit who "gives [the Church] a unity of fellowship and service; he furnishes and directs her with various gifts, both hierarchical and charismatic".