

STATUTES
of the HERMANDAD de la CORREA
y de SANTA RITA de CASCIA

SECULAR DISCALCED AUGUSTINIAN FRATERNITY



Rome – 2020



ORDINE DEGLI AGOSTINIANI SCALZI

PRIORE GENERALE – prioregen@oadnet.org

Piazza Ottavilla, 1 – 00152

Roma – Italia

Tel.: +39 06 5896345 – www.oadnet.org



Prot. Reg. V; fol. 211/06

TO FRAY MARK ANTHONY GAVIOLA, OADS
BROTHER GENERAL AND ALL MEMBERS OF THE
HERMANDAD DE LA CORREA Y DE SANTA RITA DE CASCIA.

DECREE OF PROMULGATION OF THE STATUTES OF THE HERMANDAD DE LA CORREA Y DE SANTA DE CASCIA

Being able to promulgate the Manual that will regulate the life of the Hermandad de la Correa y Santa Rita de Cascia fills my heart with joy and that of all the Religious Family of the Discalced Augustinians. I believe that it is the satisfaction and joy of the members of the Fraternity is not less who awaited it with great desire.

It is the fruit of an accurate and careful work of elaboration carried out with patience and competence by the Director General of the Third Order and similar Associations, Fr. Dennis Duene RUIZ. The manual contains aside from the *Statutes* also the *Rule of St. Augustine*, an authentic wealth of spirituality that undoubtedly constitutes its Augustinian soul and justifies its apostolate.

The *Statutes* trace a serious and experienced path of lay sanctity and provide for a consecration of life that commits members to the search for holiness lived in the world for the construction of the Kingdom of God, cultivating what can foster growth in love for God, for the neighbors and for the Order. These have been adapted to the latest Church documents concerning Lay Fraternities and their relations with the religious Orders or Congregations to which they refer with.

In fact, the bond that links the Fraternity to the local religious communities of the Discalced Augustinians is very evident and strong, receiving support and formation from them, offering in turn, a specific spiritual and material collaboration according to the different situations.

There are many prayer and formation meetings as well as the initiatives indicated and other things recommended to fulfill in order to be in fact active members of the Fraternity.

Therefore, according to the provisions of no. 134 of the *OAD Constitutions* and the no. 312 of the *Code of the Canon Law*,

I PROMULGATE

the *Statutes of the Hermandad de la Correa y de Santa Rita de Cascia* attached to this DECREE.

Rome, November 13, 2019,
Feast of All Saints of the Order.

Fr. Carlo MORO
Pro-Secretary General


Fr. Doriano CETERONI
Prior General

PRINCIPAL ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AA	<i>Apostolicam Actuositatem (Conciliar Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity)</i>
Can.	Canon
cf.	confront
Const.	<i>Constitutions of the Discalced Augustinians</i>
De Civ. Dei	St. AUGUSTINE, <i>De Civitate Dei (On the City of God)</i>
De Doctr. Chr.	St. AUGUSTINE, <i>De Doctrina Christiana (On the Christian Doctrine)</i>
De Mag.	St. AUGUSTINE, <i>De Magistro (On the Teacher)</i>
De Vera Rel.	St. AUGUSTINE, <i>De Vera Religione (On true Religion)</i>
De Trin.	St. AUGUSTINE, <i>De Trinitate (On the Trinity)</i>
Dir.	<i>Directory of the Discalced Augustinians</i>
DV	<i>Dei Verbum (Dogmatic Constitution on the Divine Revelation)</i>
FC	<i>Familiaris Consortio (Apostolic Exhortation by John Paul II on the role of the Christian family in the modern world)</i>
GS	<i>Gadium et Spes (Dogmatic Constitution on the World in the Contemporary World)</i>
no.	number
OT	<i>Optatam Totius (Conciliar Decree on Priestly Formation)</i>
PB	<i>Pastor Bonus (Apostolic Constitution by Pope John Paul II on the central government of the Roman Catholic Church)</i>
Reg.	St. AUGUSTINE, <i>Regula (Rule)</i>
Rit.	<i>Rituals of the Discalced Augustinians</i>
SC	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy)</i>

* The abbreviations of the biblical books follow those proposed by the Bible of the NABRE (2011).

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PART I.

THE LIFE OF THE CONFRATERNITY

Section 1. NATURE AND END

Chapter 1 Denomination

1) With a Decree dated 13th of November 2018, the birth anniversary of the holy father Augustine and the Feast of All Augustinian Saints, under Prot. Reg. V, fol. 202/02, the Prior General of the Order of the Discalced Augustinians (OAD), the Most Rev. Fr. Dorian CETERONI, has canonically constituted the Confraternity of the Holy Cincture and of Saint Rita of Cascia (*Hermandad de la Correa y de Santa Rita de Cascia*), also called Hermandad, with its General Seat at the Sto. Niño and Our Lady of Consolation House at OAD Tabor Hill, Brgy. San Jose, Cebu City, Philippines.

2) The competent authority for the canonical erection of a Secular Fraternity is the Prior General of the Discalced Augustinian Order. For churches belonging to the Order, the consent given by the bishop for the setting up of the religious house is also valid for the setting up of the Hermandad (cf. Can. 312, §2).

Chapter 2 Nature

3) The Hermandad is a public association of the faithful of the Catholic Church, a part of the Order of the Discalced Augustinians as one of its Secular Fraternities (cf. Const. 2; Can. 303), and is governed according to the norms of *Canon Law* (cf. Can. 312-320) and with this present Statutes. It is under the direction of the Prior General of the Order of the Discalced Augustinians (cf. Can. 303; PB 111).

4) The Hermandad is also aggregated, as a Confraternity, to the Archconfraternity of the Sacred Cincture of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Consolation and of Saints Augustine and Monica which was canonically erected in the Church of Saint Augustine in Rome.

Chapter 3 Ends

3.1 Primary End

5) The objective of the Hermandad is to promote Roman Catholic devotion to Our Lady of Consolation and the Cincture, to the Augustinian Saints most specifically to Saint Rita of Cascia. It is a non-profit organization.

3.2 General Ends

6) The ultimate ends of the Hermandad are the following:

- a. to live the calling and challenges of one's baptism, to promote the greater glory of God and the sanctification of its members through the practice of piety, exemplarity,

- apostolate and faithful observance of its Statutes, thus, heeding the call of the Apostle Paul: “It is God’s will that you grow in holiness” (1Thes. 4:3; Eph. 1:4);
- b. to follow the spirituality of the holy father Augustine in the service of God and of neighbors, just like Saint Rita, who is the protectress and exemplary model of the members. The Hermandad intends to incorporate itself in the footsteps left by the different Augustinian secular fraternities that have given the Church examples of Christian witness and holiness in all times;
 - c. the Christian formation of the members and the exercise of the spiritual and temporal works of mercy; and
 - d. the sincere and generous collaboration to religious activities of the Local Church (Parish) or to a Local Community of the OAD Province where a Chapter is having its seat.
 - e. This charism is summarized in the formula: “Joyfully serving the Most High in spirit of humility”.

3.3 *Specific Ends that constitute the Consecration (Profession)*

The specific Ends that Constitute the Consecration are the **Evangelical Counsels**.

7) Holiness in the Church is manifested in the fruits of grace that the Holy Spirit produces in the faithful and is expressed in different forms (cf. LG 39). In a singular way, it is manifested in the practice of the counsels that are called evangelical (cf. LG 39). The love of God, “poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us” (Rom. 5:5), makes lay people capable of truly expressing, in their own lives, the spirit of the beatitudes (cf. AA 4). In the specific dimension of humility, characteristic of the Reform, the members, docile to the action of the Holy Spirit and in conformity with each one’s state of life, intend to express the aspiration to the fullness of charity in the spirit of chastity, poverty and obedience (cf. AA 4).

8) In the commitment of following Christ who is chaste, poor, obedient and humble, the members take the holy father Augustine, the faithful disciple of Christ who, illuminated by the grace and by the Word, consecrated himself to the service of God and of His Kingdom, as a guide and model.

9) The members incorporate themselves with joy within the members of the Secular Disalced Augustinian Fraternities (SDAF) who, in a more generous response to the impulse of the Holy Spirit, consecrate themselves to God in their specific state of life, although remaining in their condition as seculars, and profess, the vows of poverty, obedience and humility as well.

Chastity

10) The virtue of chastity basically expresses the unconditional love towards God, the love towards Jesus above all other realities. For this reason, in the full dignity of the baptismal consecration and in the fidelity to the state of celibacy, virginity or marriage, the members choose, with the help of God, to live the virtue of chastity as a testimony to the preferential love that one has for Christ.

11) The fidelity to conjugal chastity, besides being a sign of a profound love for Christ, wonderfully expresses the indissolubility of love by which Christ is united to His Church. As Christian spouses who intend to live this sacramental fullness of conjugal love, the members commit themselves to respect the sanctity of marriage, so that love may grow more and more, and may be generous and unbreakably faithful.

12) Fully convinced of human fragility, the members feel the necessity, in order to live chastely, of:

- a. trusting in God’s providence;

- b. using prudence and vigilance and not presuming of their own strength;
- c. practicing mortification and the guarding of the senses; and
- d. avoiding reading books, watching shows or frequenting environments that could compromise fidelity.

Poverty

13) The spirit of evangelical poverty conforms the members to Christ who made Himself poor for our sake and reminds them not to set their assurance and their hopes in material things, but in heavenly realities.

14) By detaching their hearts from the things of this world, the members affirm their incapacity to satisfy the desires of man and they seek more easily the Kingdom of God and the works of justice.

15) In living the spirit of poverty, the members commit themselves to:

- a. refusing the logic of consumerism, evident expression of a hedonistic and materialistic mindset;
- b. avoiding every kind of wastefulness in the purchase and use of goods;
- c. being aware of and understanding the necessities of our brothers and sisters in need, in order to share with them the goods given by God and to express the solidarity of fraternal love;
- d. removing all forms of egoism in order to facilitate the increase of charity in the hearts of others (cf. De Doctr. Chr. 3,10,16).

Obedience

16) Following the example of Jesus, who always oriented His life towards the will of the Father: “My food is to do the will of my Father” (John 4:34), Christian obedience expresses the communion of love with God. Obedience, mother and guardian of all virtues (cf. De Trin. 12), is therefore the response of love and service to God in the Spirit of Christ and in the bosom of the Church.

17) The members must express the practical form of obedience:

- a. in listening to the Word of God, which nourishes their faith and makes them perceive more easily the will of the Father;
- b. in the acceptance of the directives of the Pope and the Bishops, and in the full communion with them, since in them is present, in the midst of the faithful, the Lord Jesus, who, by means of their ministry, preaches the Word of God, administers the sacraments of faith, incorporates new members, guides and instructs the people of God in its pilgrimage towards the heavenly home (cf. LG 21);
- c. in the exercise of their baptismal priesthood, which is lived by offering the spiritual sacrifice of one’s obedient love to God;
- d. in fulfilling faithfully and generously their responsibilities towards one’s family as parents, spouses and children;
- e. in the faithful and joyful observance of the precepts of the Rule and of these Statutes;
- f. in the respect and love towards the Superiors of their communities, towards the priests who are the ministers of God and towards the shepherds who preside in charity; and
- g. in their loyalty towards the just laws of the civil community and the authorities legitimately constituted.

Humility

18) In order for them to follow Christ and clothe themselves with the same sentiments, it is necessary to learn from Him the spirit of humility: “He emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave” (Phil. 2:7). The disciples should always show the imitation and the witness to Christ’s humility and follow closely this renouncement of the Savior (cf. LG 42) in order to deserve their participation in His glory. Conscious therefore of the importance that Christ ascribes to the poverty of spirit and willingness to live this peculiar attitude of humility, they intend to express the following in their lifestyle:

- a. detachment from the spirit of the world and from all its vanities;
- b. association with the mystery of the Cross and of the suffering of Christ;
- c. generous availability to serve their brothers and sisters in humility; and
- d. the necessity of a constant and renewed commitment in the path of conversion.

Section 2. SPIRITUALITY

19) The Hermandad shares, although in its specific lay vocation, the common vocation to the fullness of Christian life and perfection of charity following the *Rule* of the holy father Augustine with his examples and spiritual teachings and the Spirituality of the Order.

20) The spirituality of the Hermandad is based on the Gospel values taught by the Lord Jesus Christ himself (cf. AA 19).

21) These Gospel values need to be actualized in the life of each member by means of apostolate in the society according to one’s activity and profession.

22) In tune of the spirit of the Reform of the Discalced Augustinians, each member lives the spirituality of the Hermandad with an attitude of charity founded on a peculiar character of humility because “only the humble walks in charity” (In Ps. 141,7).

23) Each member adores the Holy Trinity imprinted in each person and lives the spirit of the Mystical Body of Jesus through prayer and action (cf. Rm. 8:14-17).

24) Each member honors Mary, under the title of Our Mother of Consolation, as protectress and guide, to Saint Joseph as patron and protector, the holy father Augustine as father and teacher of spiritual life, the holy mother Monica as model of perseverant prayer and Saint Rita of Cascia as a constant reminder and model of following the ‘Suffering Lord’.

Section 3. LITURGICAL AND PRAYER LIFE

25) The spiritual life of the Hermandad has as its characteristic, a synthesis of both piety and apostolate. The members therefore cultivate the spirit of prayer taking from the sources of Christian spirituality and from the Augustinian tradition for the holy father Augustine teaches that “to praise God is the greatest human deed” (In. Ps. 44,9).

26) Every commitment must be sustained by the desire to open one’s horizons and heart to God in their lives. “You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until it finds rest in You” (Conf. 1,1,1).

27) The Liturgical prayer dominates the life of the Hermandad as an expression of adoration and thanksgiving in communion with the whole Church.

28) The Liturgical life has its center in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist through which the members nourish their spiritual life. It is “the Sacrament of piety, the sign of unity and the bond of love; there we find where to live and how to live” (In Jn. 26,13).

29) In the Church, this praise is expressed in a wonderful way during the liturgical worship since “it is a sacred action par excellence and there is no other action of the Church with the same title, with the same level and with same effect” (SC 7).

30) The Liturgy of the Hours is the official prayer of the Hermandad, particularly the Morning and Evening Prayer. It is praiseworthy for every member to educate himself/herself to the private recitation, or in the family, or with the community, of the Morning and Evening Prayers.

31) Each member dedicates a convenient time, every day, to perform the pious practices listed in the Particular Statutes and in particular, a prayerful meditation of the Word of God.

32) Faithful to the penitential character of the Order and to the spirit of the Rule, each member loves and practices mortification in order to participate willingly in the sufferings of Christ, to subdue one’s concupiscence and to remove egoism. In addition to the fasts and abstinences prescribed by the Church, the members observe the following penitential practices (cf. Dir. 39):

- a. fasting and abstinence from meat on all Fridays of the year and in the eves of Saint Joseph (March 19), the Annunciation of the Lord (March 25), the Conversion of our Holy Father Augustine (April 24), the Mother of Consolation (September 4), the Immaculate Conception (December 8); and
- b. abstinence from meat on all Saturdays of Advent and Lent.

Other fasts, abstinences and penitential practices can be established by the Local Chapters.

33) Each member also considers the fidelity to the Rule and to these Statutes, the trials and difficulties of life, the weight of age and all kinds of suffering, both physical and moral, as a genuine expression of penance (cf. *Paenitemini* III, a,b,c).

Section 4. APOSTOLATE

34) Fruitful apostolate is a consequence of the richness of interior life and by remembering that the “necessity of charity demands a just action” (De Civ. Dei, 19,19), the Hermandad, by sharing the shared priestly, prophetic and regal character of Christ (cf. AA 10), takes an active part in the life and action of the Church.

35) The members are catalysts of Christ’s presence in the family, in the field of profession, in their social environment, in the world of labor and education in harmony with the signs of times and the needs of the Church.

36) The family, the domestic sanctuary of the Church and the basic cell of the society, is the first field of apostolate of the Hermandad (cf. FC 55).

37) The spirit of family must reign in the different Chapters of Hermandad in order to have “a one heart and one soul” (Acts 4:32) towards God. They tend to form “one soul, the only soul of Christ” expressing the unity of hearts and the missionary dimension of apostolate coherent to the invitation of the holy father Augustine: “if you love God, bring everyone to God’s love” (In Ps. 33).

38) The Brother/Sister General with the different Local Priors/Prioress are symbols of unity. It is for this that they exercise prudence and comprehension towards the members of the Hermandad giving them sustaining help in the way of sanctification.

39) One of the apostolates of the Hermandad is to assist the spiritual initiative of the Local OAD Communities in the Province and the Local Church/Parish in whatever capacity the members may extend.

40) For the achievement of its goals, the Hermandad may collect and give offerings, buy and dispose of property including real estate, accept or make donations, accept inheritance etc. always with the necessary ecclesiastical and civil authorizations in accordance to the law (cf. Can. 319, §1-2).

Section 5. MEMBERS AND FAMILY

41) The Hermandad is composed of its consecrated members, the auxiliaries and devotees.

- a. The consecrated members are those who make their Consecration at the end of the Novitiate Formation.
- b. The auxiliaries and devotees are those who share their spiritual and material resources to the Hermandad for the promotion of Saint Rita and other Augustinian devotions. They are encouraged to live the Spirituality of the Hermandad and to participate in its socio-spiritual activities and endeavors.

42) The acceptance in the Hermandad takes place at the end of the Aspirancy formation and can be admitted to the Novitiate through the Rite of Investiture.

43) The Novitiate ends with the admission to the Simple Consecration and at the time of the Probation for a period of two years unless extended for not more than a year.

PART II.

THE LIFE IN THE CONFRATERNITY

Section 1. BASIS OF FORMATION

44) In order for the Hermandad to achieve its goal of sanctification, there is a need to give a series of formation.

45) All the work of formation is based on the Christian doctrine of man, the living image of God, luminously explained by the holy father Augustine (cf. De Mag. 11,38; De Vera Rel. 39,72).

46) The work of human, spiritual, doctrinal and apostolic formation constitutes a task of primary importance within their Local Communities.

47) The integral human formation of the person is the foundation of an authentic Christian education. In this work of formation, the members should be guided in perfecting their character, in cultivating good human relations, in opening to the communitarian dimension, in attributing great importance to those virtues that are required in social relations, such as sincerity, sense of justice, faithfulness to one's words, gentleness in behaving and charity in conversing (cf. OT 11).

48) Spiritual formation should always tend, as to a constant reference point, to the primacy of interior life:

- a. to the participation in the Paschal Mystery of Christ, which must be deepened through meditation and sacramental life; and
- b. to the living awareness of the mystery of the Church, in which they are called to form the "whole Christ".

49) In the work of spiritual formation, the love and the spirit of the Order should be inculcated, together with the dimension of contemplative life and of personal and communitarian prayer.

50) Beside the spiritual formation, adequate doctrinal preparation is needed, according to the diversity of ages, conditions and degrees of learning (cf. AA 29). While keeping in mind these demands, the following should be taken care of:

- a. Biblical, catechetical and liturgical instructions;
- b. guidance in the study and knowledge of St. Augustine's thought, of the great teachers of the Order, of the Order's history and spirituality; and
- c. education to moral, social and professional consciousness.

51) The formation includes Aspirancy, Novitiate and the Probation. The permanent formation concerns all the consecrated members of the Hermandad.

52) The formation is permanent and is always updated according to the needs and directives of the Church and the signs of times.

53) While sharing in the Church's mission, their apostolic formation acquires a special character from the secular nature itself that is proper to the laity (cf. AA 29).

54) The members must learn to fulfill the mission of Christ and of the Church by living based on the faith in the divine mystery of Redemption, which reveals to them the infinite love of the Father. Moved by the Holy Spirit, who vivifies the people of God and leads all men to love God the Father and, in Him, the world and all men, the members need to learn how to see, judge and do everything in the light of faith, and to enter, in this way, into the active service of the Church (cf. AA 29).

55) As mature and responsible persons, the members share responsibility for their own formation and are expected to collaborate actively with the opportunities and graces of the process.

Section 2. STAGES OF FORMATION

Chapter 1 Admission and Aspirancy

56) For the admission to the Hermandad, it is required:

- a. to manifest a serious intention to become a member with a lively desire of perfection and apostolate and accepts without reservation the Holy Rule of Saint Augustine and these present Statutes of the Hermandad;
- b. that one has attained the legal age of 18; and
- c. that one has the freedom and possibility to participate in the formation programs and socio-religious activities of the Hermandad and gives good example of a Christian life;

57) Prior to being admitted to the Novitiate with the Rite of Investiture, the candidate must undergo a period of Aspirancy of not less than six months of formation. For some serious reasons, the modules of formation could be given accumulatively to the candidates.

58) The selection and acceptance to the period of Aspirancy resides with the General Master/Mistress of Formation, followed by written information to be submitted to the Brother/Sister General, and the formation will be taken care of by his/her Team of Formators.

59) Those who are below the age of eighteen years but not less than thirteen years old will be considered as Junior members of the Confraternity under the auspices of Our Mother of Good Counsel (also called *Cofradia de la Madre del Buen Consejo*).

Chapter 2 Novitiate

60) The acceptance to the Novitiate with the Rite of Investiture with the penitential habit, after the evaluation and recommendation of the General Master/Mistress of Formation with his/her Team of Formators, resides with the Local Prior/Prioress with the consent of his/her Local Council through secret voting. The Novitiate Investiture is to be made before the Local Prior/Prioress or of his/her representative.

61) The Novitiate is not less than two years and not more than three years of formation with the purpose of giving the essential elements of Christian Doctrine, Piety and Human Development according to the Modules prepared by the Office of the General Director of the Secular Fraternities in Rome.

62) A Junior member who reaches the legal age and having been assiduous in the participation of the life of the Hermandad may be dispensed of the minimum two-year period of Novitiate, with a motivated deliberation of the Local Council, but must undergo the Investiture in order to be admitted to the last year of formation required prior to the admission to the Probation.

63) The topics of the Modules must be founded on the Word of God, the Magisterium, the Augustinian Spirituality and these Statutes.

64) The Formation is being actualized through the following means:

- a. monthly formation class with the celebration of the Holy Mass, Local Chapter Meeting and Fellowship;
- b. annual Advent and Lenten Recollection;
- c. Biennial General Assembly with Religious Tourism and Team Building;
- d. Thursday devotion; and
- e. personal and communitarian regular apostolate.

Chapter 3 Consecration

65) At the end of the Novitiate, the member is now a candidate for the Simple Consecration with the admission to the probation in view of the Solemn Consecration.

66) With the Simple Consecration, the member tends towards the fullness of charity in the love of God and of neighbor.

67) The Simple Consecration requires human and spiritual preparations that permit the candidate to a free and responsible response.

68) Upon the expiry of the terms of the Simple Consecration, which cannot be less than two years, the member either emits the Solemn Consecration or renews the Simple Consecration for a fixed term. The time, however, which runs from the end of the Novitiate to the Solemn Consecration, must not exceed five continuous years.

69) The General Council may decide, with proper justification, the advancement of the term or the extension of the period of the Novitiate and the time of the Simple Consecration of a member.

70) The Rite of Simple and Solemn Consecrations are to be made before the Brother/Sister General or of his representative with the Local Prior/Prioress of the candidate/s, the Provincial Director and the Local Director as witnesses. The Simple Consecration, its eventual renewal and the Solemn Consecration are emitted according to the Ritual and with the following formula:

I, (spiritual name), in the presence of the Holy Trinity; in honor of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Mother of Consolation, to Saint Joseph, to the holy father Augustine and the holy mother Monica, and of our patroness, Saint Rita of Cascia, I freely and voluntarily consecrate myself to the Lord in the Hermandad de la Correa y de Santa Rita de Cascia, a Secular Fraternity of the Order of the Discalced Augustinians, and I pledge to live my consecration with the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, obedience and humility for two years (until death) according to the spirit and laws of the Confraternity. Deo gratias et Mariae!

Section 3. RELATIONS WITH THE ORDER OF THE DISCALCED AUGUSTINIANS

71) The Hermandad, which wants to be a ferment of Christian life among the faithful, shares the spirituality and the apostolic action of the First Order. It belongs, therefore, to the Discalced Augustinian Family (cf. Const. 2), enjoys the spiritual benefits granted to it and participates in the merits done by the religious of the same Family.

72) It is regulated by its own Statutes, enjoys its own autonomy, it is connected in deep communion with the Superiors and the religious of the Order of the Discalced Augustinians, and it is vitally inserted in the local Church.

73) The communion with the Order of the Discalced Augustinians is expressed:

- a. by fraternal relations of collaboration, which permit the common growth and the reciprocal spiritual enrichment;
- b. by the theological, spiritual and pastoral assistance guaranteed by the religious of the First Order; and
- c. by the obedience to the directives of the Prior General, of the Major Superiors within the limits of their jurisdiction, and of the Directors at the various levels.

74) The Major Superiors are the persons responsible for and the promoters of the Secular Fraternities. For the good of the whole Augustinian Family and the adequate expression of the charism of the Order, they should encourage the religious to work for the growth of the Secular Fraternities and assist it spiritually.

75) It is the duty of the Prior General, with the opinion of his Council, to nominate the General Director of the Secular Discalced Augustinian Fraternities to which the Hermandad belongs to and is under its general direction. Within the limits of his jurisdiction, the Major Superior provides, with the opinion of his Council, for the nomination of the Provincial Director. The Local Director, in the spirit of the Order's tradition, is the local Prior of the religious house to which the community of the Secular Fraternity refers. He can delegate this task, if he deems it convenient, to another religious priest of his community.

Section 4. RIGHTS AND SPIRITUAL BENEFITS

76) The rights and spiritual benefits of a member of the Hermandad are as follows:

- a. to participate in the life and activities of the Hermandad according to these present Statutes;
- b. to participate in the spiritual benefits of the Discalced Augustinian Family;
- c. to gain Plenary Indulgences on the following days of the year provided the member fulfills the usual conditions of going to confession and communion, saying a prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father and renewing the Consecration to observe the commitments to the Hermandad (Rit. 702-710):
 - i. on the day of enrollment (Investiture);
 - ii. on the day of Simple Consecration;
 - iii. on the day of Solemn Consecration;
 - iv. Solemnity of the Resurrection of Our Lord;
 - v. Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Consolation (September 4 or 1st Sunday of September);
 - vi. Solemnity of the holy father Augustine (August 28);
 - vii. Feast of the Conversion of the holy father Augustine (April 24);
 - viii. Feast of Saint Monica (August 27);
 - ix. Feast of Saint Rita of Cascia (May 22);
 - x. Feast of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino (September 10);
 - xi. Feast of All the Saints of the Order (November 13);
 - xii. Feast of the Holy Family;
 - xiii. Anniversary of the Reform (May 19);
 - xiv. General Assembly.

Section 5. FRATERNAL CORRECTION

77) Fraternal correction is a way for the Hermandad to exercise, according to the clear indications of the Gospel and the *Rule* of the holy father Augustine's burning charity towards the brethren (cf. Math. 18:15-18; Reg. 26-28).

78) Mindful of biblical wisdom which indicates the extreme weakness of human nature and the need for continual conversion to the spirit of the Gospel, the Hermandad believes that it is essential to do a regular process of self-renewal.

79) It is difficult to operate effectively in the construction of the building of fraternal charity without putting first in our hearts the intimate conviction that springs from the Gospel: "how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye while in your eye there is a beam?' Hypocrite, first take the beam out from your eye and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother" (Mt. 7:4-6).

80) When in good conscience and when serious flaws are noted in some members, it is an obligation to intervene, in secret, with great prudence and discretion to warn and correct them. This form of intervention is animated by a spirit of deep humility and love for the good of the individual and of the whole community.

81) It is the duty of those responsible at different levels to monitor the conduct of the members and act with caution within each community, so that serious deficiencies and forms of behavior that are not favorable to the evangelical witnessing to the laity and to the Augustinian spirit are avoided.

82) Where there is the repeated refusal for calls and warnings, it is necessary to take appropriate measures suggested by love which is also expressed through virtues of Christian fortitude for a member guilty of serious misconduct in the pertinacity to never desist from his/her reprehensible behavior.

Section 6. LEAVING THE CONFRATERNITY

83) In the event that a member takes a position contrary to Christian faith, to morality and to his/her own duty as a member, he/she must be convoked and be helped by the Prior/Prioress and by his/her Council and likewise by the Local Director. The member must be invited with all charity to repent and not give any bad or scandalous example anymore. If, despite of everything, the member continues in the bad conduct, he/she must be expelled from the Hermandad according to the norms of Can. 316, §1-2.

84) During the period of Aspirancy and the Novitiate, the candidate may freely leave the Hermandad.

85) After the necessary time of the Novitiate, the Local Prior/Prioress with his/her Council can deny a candidate's request for the Simple Consecration for a just cause. The Local Chapter then decides by secret balloting, whether to extend the candidate's formation for another year or to advise him/her to be enrolled among the auxiliaries or devotees.

86) A member who has made the Simple Consecration and Final Consecration and wishes to leave the Hermandad may do so by writing a letter of dismissal addressed to the Brother/Sister General. After the necessary process, the Brother/Sister General then forwards the request to the Prior General of the Order asking for the dispensation of one's Consecration.

PART III.

GOVERNMENT OF THE CONFRATERNITY

Section 1. AUTHORITY IN THE CONFRATERNITY

87) A member elected for a position in the Hermandad has to exercise his/her office with the spirit of service and charity.

88) The general governance of the Hermandad resides in the office of the Brother/Sister General assisted by his/her Council and by the spiritual guidance of the Provincial Director appointed by the Prior Provincial.

89) The local governance of the Hermandad resides in the office of the Local Prior/Prioress assisted by his/her Council in each Local Chapter and by the spiritual guidance of the Local Spiritual Director.

Section 2. ELECTIONS

90) All consecrated members of the Hermandad who have made the Consecration have the right to vote and to be elected to any of the offices and assignments (active and passive voice) provided by these Statutes.

91) The election, in order to be valid needs the absolute majority of the members who have the right to vote with the active and passive voice.

92) All the election of offices and of higher importance must be done in secret balloting.

93) The Oath of Office of the elected Officers must be done before the Brother/Sister General of the Confraternity or his/her delegate and the Provincial Director and/or the Local Director. The whole process must be done preferably before the Holy Relic of Saint Rita of Cascia.

Section 3. GENERAL ASSEMBLY

94) The General Assembly of the Hermandad is the supreme legislative and elective organ which shall be convened by the Brother/Sister General every two years. It shall reflect the spirit of unity of the Hermandad.

95) The participants of the General Assembly are the:

- a. Brother/Sister General;
- b. General Councilors;
- c. Priors/Prioresses of Local Chapters;
- d. Councilors of the Local Chapters;
- e. Provincial Director; and
- f. Spiritual Directors of different Local Chapters.

96) The presence of the Provincial Director and the Local Directors are not elective.

97) Faculties and tasks of the General Assembly are:

- a. to elect the President, the secretary and two assistants for the works of the Assembly;
- b. to report, examine and discuss the moral and financial status of all the elected Offices and Appointments both at the Provincial and Local levels;
- c. to discuss the different topics regarding the life and growth of the Hermandad;
- d. to study well the best ways to attain the goal of the Hermandad in its actual state;
- e. to take into consideration the eventual proposals and declarations of the participants for the good of the Hermandad;
- f. to elect the Brother/Sister General and the members his/her Council namely the:
 - i. Assistant General;
 - ii. Secretary General;
 - iii. Assistant Secretary General;
 - iv. Treasurer General; and
 - v. Assistant Treasurer General.

The majority required for the election is absolute. In case of a tie, the oldest candidate by consecration shall be elected. If the date of their profession is the same, the criterion of seniority according to birth is applied.

98) It is the task of the President of the General Assembly:

- a. to declare the opening and closing of the General Assembly;
- b. to guide the work and to moderate the discussions;
- c. to open the balloting and to announce the election results.

99) The task of the offices elected at no. 97,f ends with the proclamation of the new Brother/Sister General of the Confraternity, with the closing of the General Assembly and the signing of the minutes prepared by the Secretary.

100) The new Brother/Sister General will gather the elected Council for the nominations of the General Office.

Section 4. THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Chapter 1 The General

101) The Brother/Sister General is the overall responsible and moderator in actualizing the finalities of the Hermandad and to promote the good of the Hermandad of which he/she has its legal representation.

102) He/She is elected at the General Assembly. His/Her election is perfected with the acceptance and the promulgation of the election on the part of the Prior General of the OAD through the General Director of the Secular Fraternity.

103) The Brother/Sister General is the head of the Hermandad and he/she serves as its guide and representative in norm of these Statutes and Particular Statutes.

- a. For the Office of the Brother/Sister General, it is being asked that one should be a consecrated member with no less than thirty years of age and with exemplarity of life and gift in prudence.
- b. In order to be elected for the second term, it is necessary to have the majority of votes; and for the third term, an absolute majority in the first balloting. If this is not obtained, the candidate can no longer be elected to this office at the same General Assembly.

104) The Brother/Sister General has the obligations of:

- a. serving the Hermandad according to the tasks and faculties determined in the Statutes;
- b. conserving the integrity of the spirituality of the Hermandad and to update it continuously;
- c. visiting personally (Pastoral Visit); or through a delegate, the different Local Chapters most especially during the Rites of Investiture and of Consecrations;
- d. keeping a careful watch on the initial and on-going formation of the members; and
- e. presenting his/her report on the actual state of the Hermandad to the General Assembly.

105) The Brother/Sister General must keep constant communication with the different Local Priors/Prioresses and its members.

106) In the event of vacancy of one of the offices in the Council, he/she will have to arrange for the appointment of the substitute until the next General Assembly.

Chapter 2 The Members of the General Council

107) The Brother/Sister General is assisted by his/her Council in governing the Confraternity.

108) The Council is composed of the elected and appointed members. The following are the elected members: the Assistant General, the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary General, the Treasurer General, the Assistant Treasurer General. Likewise, the following are appointed members: the General Master of Formation, the Prefect General of Discipline, the Provincial Director who help the Brother/Sister General in directing the Confraternity in promoting and maintaining the unified goal and fidelity to its spirit and the Auditor General.

109) The Provincial Director of the Secular Fraternity may always intervene if he deems it appropriate without the right to vote as he is a member of the Council by right.

110) The tasks of the Council are:

- a. to give consent and opinion under the norms of the Statutes and the Particular Statutes;
- b. to provide for the elections and appointments in case of renouncement and of new offices;
- c. to prepare and process questions to be discussed by the General Assembly;
- d. to decide on administrative acts of considerable importance.

111) The General Council must have an Annual Ordinary Meeting to be held every May, after the Feast of St. Rita and Extraordinary Meetings for grave and urgent matters.

2.1 The Assistant General

112) The Assistant General is a member of the General Council.

113) The Assistant General has the obligation of:

- a. serving the Hermandad according to the tasks and faculties determined in the Statutes;
- b. helping towards the conservation of the integrity of the spirituality of the Hermandad and to update it continuously;
- c. visiting, upon the request of the Brother/Sister General, the different Local Chapters;
- d. representing the Hermandad in the name of the Brother/Sister General when needed;
- e. fulfilling the duties of the Brother/Sister General in case of absence or illness. In the event of renunciation, removal or death of the Brother/Sister General, he/she takes over in governing the Hermandad until the next General Assembly.

2.2 *The Secretary General*

114) The Secretary General helps the Brother/Sister General in his/her work. It is his/her task:

- a. to transcribe the minutes and produce the Acts of the meeting and record diligently all that concerns the Confraternity;
- b. to keep the minutes of Council Meetings;
- c. to keep in order all the documents of the Hermandad in the General Archive;
- d. to update the list of the members; and
- e. to write and update the history of the Hermandad.

115) The Secretary General shall be helped by the Assistant Council Secretary in fulfilling his/her work.

2.3 *The Assistant Secretary General*

116) The Assistant Secretary General helps the Secretary in his/her work. It is his/her task:

- a. to diligently keep and update the members' master list;
- b. to collate and archive the filled-out membership forms, members' photos and documentations (documents and photographs) of Hermandad activities; and
- c. to send greetings appropriate to the occasion to all the officers of the Confraternity.

117) In the absence of the Secretary General, he/she shall facilitate, moderate, and take the attendance and minutes of any meeting.

118) In the event of renunciation, removal or death of the Secretary General, he/she takes the office until the next General Assembly.

2.4 *The Treasurer General*

119) The Treasurer General attends to the administration of the finances and properties of the Hermandad according to the directives of the Brother/Sister General. He/she has the task of:

- a. providing the funds for the ordinary expenses of the Secretariat of the Hermandad and of the Brother/Sister General while the extraordinary expenses must be authorized expressly by the Brother/Sister General with the consent of the Council;
- b. preparing the quarterly financial report, and annual financial report;
- c. submitting the quarterly financial report to the General Council;
- d. submitting the annual financial report to the General Assembly; and
- e. keeping in order the records of administration of finances and properties of the Hermandad.

2.5 *The Assistant Treasurer General*

120) The Assistant Treasurer General assists the Treasurer General in his/her duties. He/she has the task of:

- a. collecting financial statements from all the Chapters and filing the same;
- b. keeping the said files updated;
- c. countersigning any disbursement by the Treasurer General and in case of extraordinary expenses, a signature of another Council officer is needed that serves as a validation;
- d. collecting monthly dues paid by each Chapter to the Council; and
- e. rendering assistance to the Treasurer in preparing the quarterly and annual financial report.

121) In the event of renunciation, removal or death of the General Treasurer, he/she takes the office until the next General Assembly.

2.6 The General Master/Mistress of Formation

122) He/she is appointed by the Brother/Sister General, having heard the opinion of the Provincial Director, from among three people suggested by members of the General Council.

123) He /she has the most delicate task of the Confraternity for from his/her skill and living witness, in harmony with the spirit of the Order depends the greater part of the spiritual growth of the members.

124) Thus, he/she must be gifted with equilibrium and proven virtue and should be an expert in the matters of faith and Augustinian spirituality.

125) He/she is to be helped and supported by the Provincial Director in actualizing the Modules of Formation prepared by the Office of the General Director of the Secular Fraternities and of the General Secretariat on Formation.

126) He/she has the task of:

- a. giving instructions on the Christian formation of the members;
- b. inculcating the spirit of the Order;
- c. sharing the necessary knowledge and love to the Holy Rule, the Statutes and Particular Statutes; and
- d. forming Local Masters of Formation.

2.7 The Prefect General of Discipline

127) He/she is appointed by the Brother/Sister General, after having heard the opinion of the Provincial Director, from among three people suggested by members of the General Council. He/she has the task of:

- a. assisting the Brother/Sister General in overseeing and monitoring the behavior of members to ensure they adhere to the recommended norms and accepted values of the Hermandad;
- b. encouraging the members to have a more and active participation;
- c. supporting the Local Chapter Prefects of Discipline in finding ways to rally and motivate members who have grown lukewarm, distant or discouraged;
- d. evaluating disciplinary cases related to Hermandad members;
- e. calling the attention of the General Director of the Secular Fraternities for any serious deficiencies or abuses of the General Council.

2.8 The Auditor General

128) He/she is appointed by the Brother/Sister General from among three people suggested by members of the General Council. He/she has the task of ensuring that the financial statement and other related financial documents of the Confraternity are in order.

129) He/she does not participate in the General Council but may be called to report to the Council on the part of the Brother/Sister General.

2.9 *The Provincial Director*

130) The Provincial Director is appointed by the competent OAD Prior Provincial with the opinion of his Council.

131) He is the direct responsible of the spiritual life and health of the Confraternity:

- a. he participates at the General Council meeting and coordinates with the local directors in its activities approved by the same body and favors the animation and communion of the different local Chapters of the Hermandad;
- b. he is the responsible, together with the General Master/Mistress of Formation, in disseminating the Modules of Formation to the respective Local Directors and Masters/Mistresses of Formation of each Local Chapter;
- c. he participates both in the General Assembly and in the Ordinary and Extraordinary General Council meetings without active or passive voice;
- d. he must promote harmony among the members and takes interest in their Christian and Augustinian formation.

132) It is his task to transmit to the Office of the General Director of the Secular Fraternities, a report on the spiritual and apostolic life of the Hermandad.

Section 5. THE LOCAL CHAPTER

Chapter 1 The Foundation of a Chapter

133) The competent authority for the foundation of a Local Chapter is the Brother/Sister General of the Confraternity with the consent of his/her Council. For Churches belonging to the Order, the consent given by the bishop for the setting up of the religious house is also valid for the setting up of the Hermandad (cf. Can. 312, §2).

134) However, for the erection of the Hermandad in other churches or places, the written consent of the local bishop is required (cf. Can. 312, §1).

135) Each Chapter must have no less than ten (10) members and the same number is a prerequisite for a foundation of a new Chapter.

136) For the foundation of a new Chapter, the following procedures must be observed:

- a. a Request Letter must be addressed to the Brother/Sister General from the interested individuals;
- b. the Brother/Sister General summons his/her Council for the approval of the said request;
- c. for an affirmative result, the Brother/Sister General then writes a Letter to the Director General of the Secular Fraternities informing him of the result of the deliberations of the Council and asks for a Letter of Affirmation for the foundation of a new Chapter;
- d. after having received the Affirmation Letter, the process of Formation then starts under the guidance of the nearest Chapter.

137) After the completion of the necessary time of formation, the Brother/Sister General then schedules a meeting and election of officers for the new Chapter with the following offices:

- a. Prior/Prioress;
- b. Assistant Prior/Prioress;
- c. Secretary;
- d. Treasurer;

- e. Master/Mistress of Formation (appointed);
- f. Prefect of Discipline (appointed); and
- g. Auditor (appointed).

138) The Oath of Office of the newly-elected Officers must be done before the Brother/Sister General of the Confraternity or of his/her delegate and preferably before the Holy Relic of Saint Rita of Cascia.

139) The newly-founded Chapter will then propose a name for their Local Director. For Parish-based Chapters, the Parish Priest stands automatically as their Spiritual Director unless he delegates it to another priest.

140) A monthly contribution from each Chapter will be allocated to the General Council for Council funds and to help defray the travel costs of the Brother/Sister General or of his/her representative and of the Provincial Director's visitation.

141) A Chapter fellowship together with the families of members should be included in the Chapter's calendar of activities.

Chapter 2 The Prior/Prioress

142) The Prior/Prioress promotes the spiritual life of the Hermandad and helps the members to rediscover their inner longing for God and for the service of their neighbors and to take care of the concerns of the local Chapter. He/She must be:

- a. a consecrated member of the Hermandad with no less than 25 years of age; and
- b. living an exemplary life, with zeal and dedication and with an organizational capacity;

143) He/She governs his/her Chapter with the consensus of his/her local Council and has the obligation to inform the Local Director of any activities his/her Chapter organizes;

144) He/She searches for funding and focuses, as well as, follows up on programs and Chapter activities.

145) In the event of vacancy of one of the offices in the Council, he/she will call for a Local Chapter meeting to cover the vacancy through an election of the substitute.

Chapter 3 The Council of the Local Chapter

146) The Local Chapter is composed of the following:

- a. the Prior/Prioress;
- b. the Assistant Prior/Prioress;
- c. the Secretary;
- d. the Treasurer;
- e. the Master/Mistress of Formation (appointed);
- f. the Prefect of Discipline (appointed); and
- g. the Auditor (appointed).

147) The Local Council must gather for a meeting once a month to discuss any approvals, initiatives and activities of the Chapter.

3.1 The Assistant Prior/Prioress

148) The Assistant Prior/Prioress helps the Prior/Prioress in the effort of taking care of the concerns of the local Chapter. He/She must be:

- a. a consecrated member of the Confraternity with no less than 25 years of age; and
- b. living an exemplary life, with zeal and dedication and with an organizational capacity.

149) He/She represents the Prior/Prioress in any activities in which the Prior/Prioress is unable to attend;

150) He/She also has the task of following up on the membership of the Chapter, visiting the members and preparing a membership report to the Prior/Prioress.

151) In the event of renunciation, removal or death of the Prior/Prioress, he/she takes over in governing the Local Chapter until the next Local Chapter Council meeting.

3.2 *The Chapter Secretary*

152) The Secretary together with any formally installed Assistant Secretary of the Chapter have the following important tasks of:

- a. writing faithfully and diligently the minutes of the meeting and producing its Acts;
- b. keeping all the Chapter documents in order;
- c. periodically updating the list of members;
- d. disseminating information to all the members of the Chapter's activities;
- e. keeping all members updated of any birthday, anniversary and any other recurrences of the members of the Chapter;
- f. taking proper documentations of any activity;
- g. assisting the Office of the Treasurer in reminding members of any past-due balances;
- h. keeping the General Council constantly updated by providing the General Secretary with the required and proper documentation.

153) In the event of renunciation, removal or death of the Secretary, the Prior/Prioress will call for a Local Chapter to cover the vacancy through an election of the substitute.

3.3 *The Chapter Treasurer*

154) The Treasurer, together with his/her Assistant, must be experts in the administration of finances and properties. It is their tasks:

- a. to take care of the properties and finances of the Local Chapter;
- b. to monitor, keep records, and provide the Chapter with a list of receivables;
- c. to act as Collectors and keep the cash;
- d. to sign for the disbursement of funds when needed, countersigned by the Assistant Treasurer and another authorized Chapter officer;
- e. to operate under the directives of the Prior/Prioress with regards to the ordinary expenses;
- f. to remind and collect the dues of the members of the Local Chapter;
- g. to prepare and present a monthly financial report during the Chapter's Local Council monthly meeting; and
- h. to periodically provide the General Council with a Financial Statement.

155) In the event of renunciation, removal or death of the Treasurer, the Prior/Prioress will call for a Local Chapter to cover the vacancy through an election of the substitute.

3.4 *The Chapter Master/Mistress of Formation*

156) He/she is selected from among three people nominated for the position by officers of the Local Chapter, with the final approval given by the Brother/Sister General.

157) He/she has the most delicate task of the Confraternity, for from his/her skill and living witness, in harmony with the spirit of the Order, depends the greater part of the spiritual growth of the Local Chapter members.

158) Thus, he/she must be gifted with equilibrium and proven virtue and should be expert in the matters of faith and Augustinian spirituality.

159) He/she is to be helped and supported by the Council Master of Formation and the Local Director in actualizing the Modules of Formation prepared by the Office of the General Director of the Secular Fraternities and of the General Secretariat on Formation.

160) He/she has the task of:

- a. giving instructions on the Christian formation of the members;
- b. inculcating the spirit of the Order;
- c. sharing the necessary knowledge and love for the Holy Rule, these Statutes and Particular Statutes.

3.5 The Chapter Prefect of Discipline

161) He/she is selected from among three people nominated for the position by officers of the Local Chapter. He/she has the task of:

- a. aiding the Prior/Prioress in overseeing and monitoring the behavior of members to ensure they conform to the recommended norms and accepted values of the Confraternity;
- b. helping in encouraging the members to have more participation;
- c. drawing up a plan, in coordination with the Prior/Prioress and Assistant Prior/Prioress, of finding and establishing ways to motivate members who have grown lukewarm, distant or discouraged;
- d. updating the General Prefect of Discipline;
- e. evaluating disciplinary cases related to Hermandad members;
- f. calling the attention of the General Prefect of Discipline for any serious deficiencies or abuses of the Local Chapter.

3.6 The Chapter Auditor

162) He/she is appointed by the Chapter Prior/Prioress from among three people suggested by members of the Local Chapter and is tasked with ensuring that the financial statement and other related financial documents of the Chapter are in order.

163) He/she does not participate in the Local Chapter but may be called to report to the Local Chapter on the part of the Prior/Prioress.

3.7 The Local Director

164) The Local Director is the spiritual guide of the members of the Chapter, most especially those who are in formation:

- a. he encourages the members in the fulfillment of their duties, accompanying them in their commitment to live according to the purpose of the Hermandad;
- b. he promotes and inspire the members in their activities and apostolates;
- c. he attends the Local Chapter's meetings and gives proper guidance in the decision makings but without active or passive voice;
- d. he participates in the General Assembly without active or passive voice.

165) For the Parish-based Chapters, the Parish Priest is automatically the Spiritual Director of the group unless he delegates it to another priest.

PART IV.

THE STATUTES AND THE PARTICULAR STATUTES

166) These Statutes embody the fundamental laws of the Hermandad and has Particular Statutes attached with the scope of concrete applications for them.

167) These Statutes cannot be modified without the authorization of the General Assembly. Changes can be proposed but will be subject for the final approval of the Prior General of the Order of the Discalced Augustinians (cf. Can., 314).

168) The Particular Statutes shall be elaborated by the General Council of the Fraternity and approved by an absolute majority of the members.

169) For what is not provided for by these present Statutes or by the Particular Statutes, the norms of Canon Law and those issued by the Ecclesiastical Authority will be in force.

170) The authentic interpretation and possible exceptions of these Statutes and of the Particular Statutes rests under the competence only to the Prior General of the Order through the Office of the General Director of the Secular Fraternity. Every member must have a copy of the Constitution for them to study, to meditate, to put into practice and to live its true spirit.

171) These Statutes are an expression of the Will of God for every member of the Hermandad; its observance is for the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ and of the brethren and must not be the motive for scrupulosity.

EPILOGUE

May the Lord grant you to observe all these precepts in a spirit of charity as lovers of spiritual beauty, giving forth the good odor of Christ in the holiness of your lives, not as slaves under the law, but as free men under grace (Reg. 48).

ATTACHED FILE

THE RULE OF SAINT AUGUSTINE¹

Section 1. INTRODUCTORY COMMENT TO THE RULE

This brief commentary on the *Rule* of the holy father Augustine tries to grasp its inspiration and doctrinal content to highlight how it is an effective norm of life, not only for the Discalced Augustinian religious who live the life of apostolic fraternity in the monasteries, but also for the brothers and sisters of the Secular Order.

The first impression that the reading of the *Rule* arouses is that of being in front of a work written by a man who, in the search for the most authentic needs of the person, finds true wisdom and tries to encapsulate its principles in a short and balanced way. By the exemplary model of life of the first community in Jerusalem, Augustine reaffirms the inspiring principles that are always valid for those who respond to the call of God by conforming to Christ in continuous conversion and in the commitment of evangelical witness.

In the *Rule*, Augustine re-proposes the Gospel as the supreme norm of life so that in it his spiritual children should try to see, understand and live the spirit of Christ by referring to his wonderful experience.

The Augustinian *Rule* is short, but rich in content; its precepts, not many but essential, give religious life a sure and strong orientation. The result is a spiritual framework that is both deeply human and authentically evangelical.

Charity

It is easy to condense the Gospel message into the new commandment of love and Augustine embodies this basic principle in his *Rule* to say clearly that charity is the end, the means and center of religious life.

Some affirmations of the *Rule* are illuminating by the way: “First of all love God and then your neighbor [...] have one soul and one heart only reaching out to God [...]. Let the only one that persists remain: charity” (Reg 1; 3; 31).

In these meager and sculptural phrases Augustine outlines in substance the purpose of religious life, not only of the monk, but also of those who, while remaining in the world, want to express themselves in harmony with the principles of Christian life: the fullness of the love of God and of neighbor.

The holy father Augustine is deeply aware that the cornerstone of the Christian life is the perfection of charity and even if he inserts other prescriptions and directives in the *Rule*, these are only a means to achieve the true end.

¹ Obs. The text of the critical edition is that proposed by Fr. Luca Verheijen, OSA (La règle de saint Augustin, Paris 1967, I, pp. 417-437) with the addition of two variants that belong to the commonly accepted text: no. 1 and the words: “Quod si aliquis rem sibi collatam celaverit, robti iudicio contemnetur” in no. 32. To make reading and quotation easier, chapter titles and progressive numbering of the text were added.

It is evident that in order to achieve the goal of religious and Christian life, there are indispensable means and Augustine suggests them with wise graduality.

Living unanimously and having only one heart reaching out to God is the most exact way to get to the heart of charity in its essential prerogatives: a constant push towards God, a living awareness of the presence of God in the community, a profound sense of the Church.

They are expressions that would require a long comment and it is therefore convenient to state only their fundamental principle in the construction of the building of love.

The true life of communion and love extends according to the *Rule*, to the gospel principle of fraternal correction, which constitutes the sincere spirit of help of the brother to the brother to draw ever closer to God in the unity of love.

Speaking of community life for the monks, Augustine also insists on the diversity of situations, gifts and functions to be linked to the unity of love: it is a very valid principle in any context of spiritual affinity, which it does not pretend, as in life of the Secular Order, the system of common life in the strict sense, but openness to participation, dialogue, service, the spiritual union of hearts.

Another means of arriving at charity is the brake on private love, which the holy father Augustine inculcates in putting common things before one's own and which, in the context of the life of an Augustinian Secular Fraternity, could be made explicit in this way: renouncement of selfishness, to one's own advantage, to live: not exclusively for oneself, but for others, and this, both in relationships between persons and persons, as in relationships between a group and another group, the refusal of individual and collective selfishness.

Other means of achieving the goal of charity for Augustine are the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, obedience and a peculiar spirit of humility.

Chastity

If chastity in religious life, as stated in the text of the *Perfectae Caritatis* (Reg. 12,1) recalls "to all the faithful that marvelous union worked by God and which is fully manifested in the future century, for which the Church has Christ as her Spouse", the dimension of this virtue wants to emphasize to all the faithful the essential movement of life and Christian holiness: the love of Jesus above all other reality.

This is the authentic sense that guides the soul of Augustine and which becomes the criterion for living the spirit of charity also for the Secular Augustinians: their conjugal love must be great, generous, indissolubly loyally faithful, capable of truly translating the demanding love of Christ and the Church.

Poverty and Obedience

In the same ascent to evangelical perfection, the values of poverty and obedience are outlined, signs of preferential love for the Lord. This love, voluntarily embracing poverty and obedience goes to the limit; it does not hesitate to sacrifice certain human values and to call into question the very possession of goods and the free disposal of oneself.

If the Discalced Augustinian religious tends to achieve this goal in the life of consecration, the Secular Augustinian must draw the most obvious teaching: to escape the temptation of attachment to earthly goods and creatures, to perceive the relative value of the world and the absolute value of Christ and his love.

Humility

Humility assimilates perfectly to Christ, meek and humble of heart, who relieves oneself from the dominion of pride, source of sin and rebellion.

The humble man easily finds the way that leads to the love of God: he recognizes his nothingness in front of the Creator, he repudiates the spirit of ambition and vainglory, he does not seek and dodges positions and honorific positions, concentrates all his commitment in the service of God and of brothers & sisters.

The *Rule* also proposes some norms as indispensable means of support on the path to perfection: prayer, asceticism, study and work.

Prayer

As for the value of prayer, Augustine specifies its need and its interiority.

Prayer is necessary because man alone cannot accomplish anything, but by entrusting himself to God in the prayer of praise, thanksgiving, adoration and supplication, he obtains what is indispensable for perseverance in faithfulness and salvation.

The note of the interiority of prayer wants to underline the constant attitude of the human heart towards God: Man feels a need, deeply rooted in his being, that he is made for God, who seeks God, who loves Him and wants to possess Him.

Asceticism

Asceticism or penitential practice, highly recommended by Augustine in the *Rule*, is the way necessary for an authentic spiritual purification. In order to dominate the passions of the old man and conform himself to the suffering Christ, the way of penance is always actual and demanding. It is no coincidence that the spirit of the Reform of the Discalced Augustinians accentuates its value and the Second Vatican Council recommends it and reminds it to religious and lay people: "Let everyone remember that [...] with penance and spontaneous acceptance of the efforts and penalties of the life, with which they conform to the suffering Christ, they can reach all men and contribute to the salvation of the whole world" (AA 18).

Study and Work

The study and work recommended by Augustine in the *Rule*, if they are necessary for the spiritual and cultural toning of his monks, constitute a necessity also for those who share their spirituality in the secular condition.

The study refers both to secular subjects because it is a source of culture and progress and of the formation for the apostolate, which "presupposes an integral formation suited to the disposition and conditions of each. The lay person, in fact, knowing the contemporary world well, must be a member of his own society and at the level of its culture" (AA 29).

"In addition to spiritual formation, a solid doctrinal preparation is required [...] according to the diversity of age, condition and talent. Nor should the importance of general culture be neglected together with practical and technical training" (AA 29).

Studies, in the mind of Augustine and the Church, has a specific reference to the knowledge of scripture to "learn the sublime science of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:8). The laity must remember that "ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ" (JEROME, *From the prologue of the Commentary on Isaiah*, no. 1).

Heartfelt is in this regard the recommendation of Vatican II: "the faithful must wholeheartedly come closer to the reading of Sacred Scriptures [...] may it be through pious reading, both by means of initiatives suitable for this purpose and other aids [...] Remembering, however, that

reading the Holy Scripture must be accompanied by prayer, so that the conversation between God and man can take place” (DV 25).

Work must be seen as a means of sanctification and collaboration at the completion of divine creation. Even more it should be known that, as the Second Vatican Council recalls, “[...] by offering his work to God, man associates himself with the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, who has given work a very high dignity, working with His own hands at Nazareth” (GS 67).

The work, in a correct Christian conception, becomes a work of contribution to the building up of society and an instrument of apostolate and Christian presence in the living environment and in the various domestic, social and professional activities (cf. AA 13).

Epilogue

As one can see, everything flows, according to the spirit of the *Rule*, into the need of the apostolate: Augustine reminds his children of the commitment of Christian witness because the authenticity of love is found in the apostolic service for the building up of the Kingdom of God. While giving these norms, Augustine, taking up a theme so dear to the apostle Paul, underlines, in the conclusion of the *Rule*, that one should not be slaves of the law, but free under grace. It is an important affirmation that wants to make his spiritual children understand the functionality of the *Rule* itself: it is necessary to grasp the spirit of the law, to penetrate its meaning, to discover the reason why it was given. The law will be authentically observed if the behavior of the recipients satisfies that intention of love that gave rise to the pre-inscriptions of the *Rule*.

Section 2. THE RULE OF SAINT AUGUSTINE

Chapter 1 Purpose and Basis of Common Life

- 1) Before all else, dear brothers, love God and then your neighbor, because these are the chief commandments given to us.
- 2) The following are the precepts we order you living in the monastery to observe.
- 3) The main purpose for you having come together is to live harmoniously in your house, intent upon God in oneness of mind and heart.
- 4) Call nothing your own, but let everything be yours in common. Food and clothing shall be distributed to each of you by your superior, not equally to all, for all do not enjoy equal health, but rather according to each one's need. For so you read in the *Acts of the Apostles* that they had all things in common and distribution was made to each one according to each one's need (Acts 4:32-35).
- 5) Those who owned something in the world should be careful in wanting to share it in common once they have entered the monastery.
- 6) But they who owned nothing should not look for those things in the monastery that they were unable to have in the world. Nevertheless, they are to be given all that their health requires even if, during their time in the world, poverty made it impossible for them to find the very necessities of life. And those should not consider themselves fortunate because they have found the kind of food and clothing which they were unable to find in the world.

Chapter 2 Humility, Respect and Love

7) And let them not hold their heads high, because they associate with people whom they did not dare to approach in the world, but let them rather lift up their hearts and not seek after what is vain and earthly. Otherwise, monasteries will come to serve a useful purpose for the rich and not the poor, if the rich are made humble there and the poor are puffed up with pride.

8) The rich, for their part, who seemed important in the world, must not look down upon their brothers who have come into this holy brotherhood from a condition of poverty. They should seek to glory in the fellowship of poor brothers rather than in the reputation of rich relatives. They should neither be elated if they have contributed a part of their wealth to the common life, nor take more pride in sharing their riches with the monastery than if they were to enjoy them in the world. Indeed, every other kind of sin has to do with the commission of evil deeds, whereas pride lurks even in good works in order to destroy them. And what good is it to scatter one's wealth abroad by giving to the poor, even to become poor oneself, when the unhappy soul is thereby more given to pride in despising riches than it had been in possessing them?

9) Let all of you then live together in oneness of mind and heart, mutually honoring God in yourselves, whose temples you have become.

Chapter 3 Prayer

10) "Be assiduous in prayer" (Col. 4:2), at the hours and times appointed.

11) In the Oratory no one should do anything other than that for which was intended and from which it also takes its name. Consequently, if there are some who might wish to pray there during their free time, even outside the hours appointed, they should not be hindered by those who think something else must be done there.

12) When you pray to God in Psalms and hymns, think over in your hearts the words that come from your lips.

13) Chant only what is prescribed for chant; moreover, let nothing be chanted unless it is so prescribed.

Chapter 4 Moderation and Self-Denial

14) Subdue the flesh, so far as your health permits, by fasting and abstinence from food and drink. However, when someone is unable to fast, he should still take no food outside mealtimes unless he is ill.

15) When you come to table, listen until you leave to what is the custom to read, without disturbance or strife. Let not your mouths alone take nourishment but let your hearts too hunger for the Word of God.

Chapter 5 Consideration and Discretion

16) If those in more delicate health from their former way of life are treated differently in the matter of food, this should not be a source of annoyance to the others or appear unjust in the eyes of those who owe their stronger health to different habits of life. Nor should the healthier brothers deem them more fortunate for having food which they do not have, but rather consider themselves fortunate for having the good health which the others do not enjoy.

17) And if something in the way of food, clothing, and bedding is given to those coming to the monastery from a more genteel way of life, which is not given to those who are stronger, and

therefore happier, then these latter ought to consider how far these others have come in passing from their life in the world down to this life of ours, though they have been unable to reach the level of frugality common to the stronger brothers. Nor should all want to receive what they see given in larger measure to the few, not as a token of honor, but as a help to support them in their weakness. This would give rise to a deplorable disorder - that in the monastery, where the rich are coming to bear as much hardship as they can, the poor are turning to a more genteel way of life.

18) And just as the sick must take less food to avoid discomfort, so too, after their illness, they are to receive the kind of treatment that will quickly restore their strength, even though they come from a life of extreme poverty. Their more recent illness has, as it were, afforded them what accrued to the rich as part of their former way of life. But when they have recovered their former strength, they should go back to their happier way of life which, because their needs are fewer, is all the more in keeping with God's servants. Once in good health, they must not become slaves to the enjoyment of food which was necessary to sustain them in their illness. For it is better to suffer a little want than to have too much.

Chapter 6 Safeguarding Chastity

19) There should be nothing about your clothing to attract attention. Besides, you should not seek to please by your apparel, but by a good life.

20) Whenever you go out, walk together, and when you reach your destination, stay together.

21) In your walk, deportment, and in all actions, let nothing occur to give offense to anyone who sees you, but only what becomes your holy state of life.

22) Although your eyes may chance to rest upon some woman or other, you must not fix your gaze upon any woman. Seeing women when you go out is not forbidden, but it is sinful to desire them or to wish them to desire you, for it is not by the sense of touch or passionate feeling alone but by one's gaze also that lustful desires mutually arise. And do not say that your hearts are pure if there is immodesty of the eye, because the unchaste eye carries the message of an impure heart. And when such hearts disclose their unchaste desires in a mutual gaze, even without saying a word, then it is that chastity suddenly goes out of their life, even though their bodies remain unsullied by unchaste acts.

23) And whoever fixes his gaze upon a woman and likes to have hers fixed upon him must not suppose that others do not see what he is doing. He is very much seen, even by those he thinks do not see him. But suppose all this escapes the notice of man - what will he do about God who sees from on high and from whom nothing is hidden? Or are we to imagine that he does not see because he sees with a patience as great as his wisdom? Let the religious man then have such fear of God that he will not want to be an occasion of sinful pleasure to a woman. Ever mindful that God sees all things, let him not desire to look at a woman lustfully. For it is on this point that fear of the Lord is recommended, where it is written: An abomination to the Lord is he who fixes his gaze (cf. Pr. 27:20)

24) So, when you are together in church and anywhere else where women are present, exercise a mutual care over purity of life. Thus, by mutual vigilance over one another will God, who dwells in you, grant you his protection.

Chapter 7 Fraternal Correction

25) If you notice in someone of your brothers this wantonness of the eye, of which I am speaking, admonish him at once so that the beginning of evil will not grow more serious but will be promptly corrected.

26) But if you see him doing the same thing again on some other day, even after your admonition, then whoever had occasion to discover this must report him as he would a wounded man in need of treatment. But let the offense first be pointed out to two or three so that he can be proven guilty on the testimony of these two or three and be punished with due severity. And do not charge yourselves with ill-will when you bring this offense to light. Indeed, yours in the greater blame if you allow your brothers to be lost through your silence when you are able to bring about their correction by your disclosure. If your brother, for example, were suffering a bodily wound that he wanted to hide for fear of undergoing treatment, would it not be cruel of you to remain silent and a mercy on your part to make this known? How much greater than is your obligation to make his condition known lest he continue to suffer a more deadly wound of the soul.

27) But if he fails to correct the fault despite this admonition, he should first be brought to the attention of the superior before the offense is made known to the others who will have to prove his guilt, in the event he denies the charge. Thus, corrected in private, his fault can perhaps be kept from the others. But should he feign ignorance, the others are to be summoned so that in the presence of all he can be proven guilty, rather than stand accused on the word of one alone. Once proven guilty, he must undergo salutary punishment according to the judgment of the superior or priest having the proper authority. If he refuses to submit to punishment, he shall be expelled from your brotherhood even if he does not withdraw of his own accord. For this too is not done out of cruelty, but from a sense of compassion so that many others may not be lost through his bad example.

28) And let everything I have said about not fixing one's gaze be also observed carefully and faithfully with regard to other offenses: to find them out, to ward them off, to make them known, to prove and punish them - all out of love for man and a hatred of sin.

29) But if anyone should go so far in wrongdoing as to receive letters in secret from any woman, or small gifts of any kind, you ought to show mercy and pray for him if he confesses this of his own accord. But if the offense is detected and he is found guilty, he must be more severely chastised according to the judgment of the priest or superior.

Chapter 8 The Care of Community Goods

30) Keep your clothing in one place in charge of one or two, or of as many as are needed to care for them and to prevent damage from moths. And just as you have your food from the one pantry, so, too, you are to receive your clothing from a single wardrobe. If possible, do not be concerned about what you are given to wear at the change of seasons, whether each of you gets back what he had put away or something different, providing no one is denied what he needs. If, however, disputes and murmuring arise on this account because someone complains that he received poorer clothing than he had before, and thinks it is beneath him to wear the kind of clothing worn by another, you may judge from this how lacking you are in that holy and inner garment of the heart when you quarrel over garments for the body. But if allowance is made for your weakness and you do receive the same clothing you had put away; you must still keep it in one place under the common charge.

31) In this way, no one shall perform any task for his own benefit but all your work shall be done for the common good, with greater zeal and more dispatch than if each one of you were to work for yourself alone. For charity, as it is written, is not self-seeking (cf. 1Cor. 13:5) meaning that it places the common good before its own, not its own before the common good. So, whenever you show greater concern for the common good than for your own, you may know that you are growing in charity. Thus, let the abiding virtue of charity prevail in all things that minister to the fleeting necessities of life.

32) It follows, therefore, that if anyone brings something for their sons or other relatives living in the monastery, whether a garment or anything else they think is needed, this must not be accepted secretly as one's own but must be placed at the disposal of the superior so that, as common property, it can be given to whoever needs it. But if someone secretly keeps something given to him, he shall be judged guilty of theft.

Chapter 9 Treatment of the Sick

33) Your clothing should be cleaned either by yourselves or by those who perform this service, as the superior shall determine, so that too great a desire for clean clothing may not be the source of interior stains on the soul.

34) As for bodily cleanliness too, a brother must never deny himself the use of the bath when his health requires it. But this should be done on medical advice, without complaining, so that even though unwilling, he shall do what has to be done for his health when the superior orders it. However, if the brother wishes it, when it might not be good for him, you must not comply with his desire, for sometimes we think something is beneficial for the pleasure it gives, even though it may prove harmful.

35) Finally, if the cause of a brother's bodily pain is not apparent, you make take the word of God's servant when he indicates what is giving him pain. But if it remains uncertain whether the remedy, he likes is good for him, a doctor should be consulted.

36) When there is need to frequent the public baths or any other place, no fewer than two or three should go together, and whoever has to go somewhere must not go with those of his own choice but with those designated by the superior.

37) The care of the sick, whether those in convalescence or others suffering from some indisposition, even though free of fever, shall be assigned to a brother who can personally obtain from the pantry whatever he sees is necessary for each one.

38) Those in charge of the pantry, or of clothing and books, should render cheerful service to their brothers.

39) Books are to be requested at a fixed hour each day, and anyone coming outside that hour is not to receive them.

40) But as for clothing and shoes, those in charge shall not delay the giving of them whenever they are required by those in need of them.

Chapter 10 Asking Pardon and Forgiving Offenses

41) You should either avoid quarrels altogether or else put an end to them as quickly as possible; otherwise, anger may grow into hatred, making a plank out of a splinter, and turn the soul into a murderer. For so you read: "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer" (1Jn. 3:15).

42) Whoever has injured another by open insult, or by abusive or even incriminating language, must remember to repair the injury as quickly as possible by an apology, and he who suffered

the injury must also forgive, without further wrangling. But if they have offended one another, they must forgive one another's trespasses for the sake of your prayers which should be recited with greater sincerity each time you repeat them. Although a brother is often tempted to anger, yet prompt to ask pardon from one he admits to having offended, such a one is better than another who, though less given to anger, finds it too hard to ask forgiveness. But a brother who is never willing to ask pardon, or does not do so from his heart, has no reason to be in the monastery, even if he is not expelled. You must then avoid being too harsh in your words, and should they escape your lips, let those same lips not be ashamed to heal the wounds they have caused.

43) But whenever the good of discipline requires you to speak harshly in correcting your subjects, then, even if you think you have been unduly harsh in your language, you are not required to ask forgiveness lest, by practicing too great humility toward those who should be your subjects, the authority to rule is undermined. But you should still ask forgiveness from the Lord of all who knows with what deep affection you love even those whom you might happen to correct with undue severity. Besides, you are to love another with a spiritual rather than an earthly love.

Chapter 11 Governance and Obedience

44) The superior should be obeyed as a father with the respect due to him so as not to offend God in his person, and, even more so, the priest who bears responsibility for you all.

45) But it shall pertain chiefly to the superior to see that these precepts are all observed and, if any point has been neglected, to take care that the transgression is not carelessly overlooked but is punished and corrected. In doing so, he must refer whatever exceeds the limit and power of his office, to the priest who enjoys greater authority among you.

46) The superior, for his part, must not think himself fortunate in his exercise of authority but in his role as one serving you in love. In your eyes he shall hold the first place among you by the dignity of his office, but in fear before God he shall be as the least among you. He must show himself as an example of good works toward all. Let him "admonish the unruly, cheer the fainthearted, support the weak, and be patient toward all" (1Thes. 5:14). Let him uphold discipline while instilling fear. And though both are necessary, he should strive to be loved by you rather than feared, ever mindful that he must give an account of you to God.

47) It is by being more obedient, therefore, that you show mercy not only toward yourselves but also toward the superior whose higher rank among you exposes him all the more to greater peril.

Chapter 12 Observance of the *Rule*

48) The Lord grant that you may observe all these precepts in a spirit of charity as lovers of spiritual beauty, giving forth the good odor of Christ in the holiness of your lives: not as slaves living under the law but as men living in freedom under grace.

49) And that you may see yourselves in this little book, as in a mirror, have it read to you once a week so as to neglect no point through forgetfulness. When you find that you are doing all that has been written, give thanks to the Lord, the Giver of every good. But when one of you finds that he has failed on any point, let him be sorry for the past, be on his guard for the future, praying that he will be forgiven his fault and not be led into temptation.