

**RATIO GENERALIS
INSTITUTIONIS**
of the
DISCALCED AUGUSTINIANS



Rome – 2023

PRINCIPAL ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Can.	Canon
Cann.	Canons
ch.	Chapter
cfr.	confront
Const.	<i>Constitutions</i>
Dir.	<i>Directory</i>
no.	number
nos.	numbers
OAD	<i>Ordo Augustiniensium Discalceatorum</i> (Order of the Discalced Augustinians)
p.	page
Reg.	St. AUGUSTINE, <i>Rule</i>
Rit.	<i>Ritual</i>

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

PART I.

**THEOLOGICAL, SPIRITUAL AND CHARISMATIC
FOUNDATIONS OF FORMATION**

This part has not yet been subjected to analysis by the General Definitory for approval.

PART II.

FORMATION IN ITS STAGES

Section 1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1) The path of formation develops through various stages which aim - taking into account the age and preparation at the human, cultural, religious and spiritual level - to accompany the candidates to accept the vocation to the religious life in the Discalced Augustinians.

2) Formation is distinguished in initial and ongoing.

§1. Initial formation is divided into the following stages: the Aspirantate, the Postulancy, the Novitiate, the Professed Stage and the Clerical Stage.

§2. Ongoing formation accompanies the entire life of the religious, but more specifically it is the period following perpetual profession and sacred ordination.

3) Initial formation begins with entering a community dedicated to this purpose. The formators – through community and personal meetings planned in collaboration with the religious community – carry out their formation work, integrating them with the existing study paths.

4) Care should be taken that, for each stage of the indicated and prescribed formation, the fundamental objectives are achieved before proceeding to the next stage. To access the next stages, it is not just enough to ensure that the candidates do not present “negative tendencies on the emotional, character and social level”¹ but that they have matured the choice to continue on the journey, according to right intention and true freedom, proving that they have developed the necessary skills.

5) The passage from one stage of formation to the other always takes place at the written request of the candidate to the Major Superior after having received the opinion of the formation house and according to the modalities provided for by Universal and Proper law².

6) §1. The duration of each stage is indicated by Universal and Proper law, as well as by the dispositions of the Superiors who are responsible for choosing and agreeing in advance the circumstances and dates.

§2. The Major Superior, except in particular cases to be evaluated with the opinion of the formation house, should not shorten the time of the stage but support the patient work of the formators and of the formative community.

§3. The canonical interstices should always be respected and dispensation from them should not be resorted to lightly.

¹ Dir. 89.

² Const. 85-88; Dir. 83-85.

Section 2. ASPIRANTATE

1. General Objective

7) §1. The main objective of the Aspirantate is to help those who show signs of vocation to our Order, to know better the call of God and to follow it more easily in the context of a life in common.³

§2. The fundamental objective is discernment regarding one's own call to consecration in religious life in the community of the Discalced Augustinians.

2. Guidelines

2.1 Admission

8) Admission to the Aspirantate must be preceded, without exception, especially in the case of young adults, by a suitable period of mutual acquaintance based not only on the information available but through repeated personal meetings with the vocation animators and with the community of aspirants. It is always recommended to know the candidate's family in order to meet him in his environment of origin.

9) §1. Particular emphasis should not be given to the admission of applicants for whom no particular rite is envisaged.

§2. Where, for reasons of pastoral care for vocations, it is considered to be valued, it is not perceived that it is a definitive entry into religious life but the desire to seek God's will for one's own life is highlighted; in this case, it is recommended that admission take place in the presence of the religious community.

2.2 Documents

10) Complete and updated personal documentation is required of each candidate:

- personal and religious certificates (baptism and confirmation);
- basic information on their state of health⁴;
- qualifications;
- *curriculum vitae*;
- any certificates of good conduct or similar.

11) For each aspirant, the personal form should be filled in according to modern pedagogical criteria. The documentation is to be updated always⁵.

12) §1. These documents are diligently kept in special archives and used with the utmost discretion and absolute respect towards the owners.

³ Const. 85; Dir. 83.

⁴ Medical certificates certifying good health conditions, vaccinations, a list of the main diseases, certificates of the absence of infections or sexually transmitted diseases. This documentation can only be requested but not enforced. In case of refusal to provide it, do not proceed with the reception in the community.

⁵ Dir. 91.

§2. In case of abandonment of the formation course, they are returned to the candidate or possibly destroyed.

§3. The House keeps a register of aspirants in order to keep track of their passage.

2.3 *Studies*

13) §1. Ensure that applicants have obtained superior secondary school diplomas⁶.

§2. Aspirants who have obtained a qualification mentioned in §1 are to be sent to study philosophy.

14) o the regular continuation of studies, the Aspirantate combines programs and activities aimed at verifying and promoting the particular vocation, taking care of psycho-affective maturity, intellectual abilities and pastoral sensitivity.

15) When for different circumstances they find themselves together – especially in the initial phases of the Aspirantate and Postulancy – candidates of different ages and maturities, the Major Superior should evaluate, if necessary and possible, to identify the formative communities most suitable for welcoming the candidates, in compliance with the established objectives.

2.4 *Psychological Evaluation*

16) §1. Each aspirant will have to undergo at least two annual interviews with a psychological consultant in order to foster a better awareness of his personality, of his limitations and to avoid the presence of serious psychological difficulties that can impede or hinder his path.

§2. Interviews are not a selection tool but a help, both for the person and for the formator.

§3. Candidates will be asked for a permission-to-divulge to allow the professional in charge to report to the formator and the Major Superior about them, in compliance with confidentiality and professional ethics.

§4. Where there is a need for psychological or therapeutic support, considerations are to be made on how to proceed on a case-by-case basis.

2.5 *Minor Seminaries*

17) In some Provinces of the Order, what was once called the Minor Seminary is still a valid experience; young people can be welcomed in these structures who show interest in religious life and wish to live a time of community experience, during the age of secondary education⁷.

18) The Minor Seminary is an experience of Christian life certainly useful for the human and religious growth of the person; however, it requires particular attention from the religious who are assigned in its care.

⁶ Dir. 86.

⁷ Each Province will adapt this measure according to the educational background of the countries in which the Order is present. The stage of the Aspirantate takes place during secondary school studies and includes the years in which Philosophy studies take place.

19) The objective of the Minor Seminary experience is to live a joyful community life in which to practice the Christian life and prayer, to mature as free people under grace.

20) The work of formators will be more pedagogical and educational and, although open in hope to the possible call to religious life and to the sacred ministry, it is aimed at giving a human and Christian formation with the richness of Augustinian spirituality.

21) §1. It is an experience that also involves the aspirant's family, thus also promoting pastoral care for them.

§2. Aspirants maintain constant contact with family members; especially they are allowed to spend a period of family holidays, unless particular reasons suggest otherwise⁸.

22) §1. For communities of aspirants of school age, it is good that the Provinces make every effort to develop a precise formative program taking into account the social context, civil and ecclesiastical laws, and the requisites required by the school.

§2. The religious community that will take care of this reality is to be chosen with careful attention, the religious are to be serene and joyful people, balanced and sensitive to educational work.

23) §1. In implementing the formation program, the evolutionary maturity of the candidates should be taken into account, who may be in particularly delicate phases and exposed to crisis which are characteristics proper of growth.

§2. In these cases, the judgment of the educators will take into account above all the rectitude of the candidates, their desire for perseverance, docility, sincere sharing with those directly responsible.

2.6 Aspirants residing outside the formative community

24) §1. Ordinarily, applicants must reside in the formative community at the beginning of the formation course.

§2. In an extraordinary way, if there are adult candidates who, although desirous to embrace religious life, are not yet in the conditions to do so, they should be accompanied in such a way as to lead them to spirituality and studies while still residing outside the community.

25) Candidates in an extraordinary way, before being admitted to the postulancy, must in any case have lived for no less than six months in the community.

26) It will be the responsibility of the Major Superior with the Formator to define the way of accompanying non-resident aspirants in the community.

2.7 Dismissal

27) Although the period of the Aspirantate is followed by the postulancy and the novitiate which prepare more directly for definitive choices, one should absolutely avoid holding back those who, although it does not present obvious contraindications, it does not show signs of a vocation to religious life.

⁸ Dir. 87.

3. Educating for poverty in the spirit of *Rule*

28) Young candidates are to be educated to a sober lifestyle, to sharing, to coexistence with brothers from different social backgrounds and living conditions, avoiding any form of favoritism or exception to mortify vanity, envy and jealousies.

29) Adult Aspirants, once admitted to the Aspirantate, are initiated into Augustinian poverty according to the spirit of the *Rule* which requires the sharing of goods and economic participation in the needs of the community according to the possibility and generosity.

30) The formators should evaluate together with the Major Superiors and aspirants how to direct the management of the possible economic resources of the candidates.

31) It is up to the formative community, with the opinion of the Major Superior, to establish the modalities of economic contribution of the aspirants to the needs of the formative community, by consulting even the candidates themselves.

4. Articulation of the objectives

32) Mystical-spiritual Dimension:

- formation in community prayer (Liturgy of the Hours and Meditation);
- support active and fruitful participation in the liturgy in its various expressions, as nourishment for one's faith;
- encourage personal prayer;
- practice spiritual direction;
- educate in Christian discernment;
- promote knowledge of the Bible and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as irreplaceable sources of orientation and growth;
- educate in sincere and filial devotion to Mary through the daily practice of the Rosary and other activities;
- take care of the practice of human and Christian virtues, particularly humility and service.

33) Charismatic-Augustinian Dimension:

- introduce Augustinian spirituality through the reading of our Holy Father Augustine (biography, selected pages, etc.);
- deepen the knowledge of the saints most dear to our tradition (Saint Monica, Saint Nicholas of Tolentino, Saint Rita, Saint Thomas of Villanova and the Venerables of the Order).

34) Communitarian dimension:

- educate to a form of common life (community hours, common services, care of the common good and of one's own person, willingness to collaborate), material sharing, co-responsibility in the custody of community assets and economic contribution according to the possibilities;
- respect to the authority;
- be docile to the correction and to the proposed guidelines;
- trust in Divine Providence,
- be educated in sobriety and participation in the material needs of the Community.

35) Intellectual-cultural Dimension:

- complete the cycle of studies (especially secondary) and obtain the titles of a higher degree;
- start the cycle of studies in Philosophy for the achievement of a bachelor's or diploma in Philosophy that can give access to theological studies;
- participate to socio-cultural activities;
- initiate music and musical instruments, especially those used for liturgical accompaniment;
- learn and practice the Italian and English languages;
- have a basic knowledge of Latin;
- read and know some Augustinian texts.

36) Psycho-affective Dimension:

- do psychological evaluation interviews to get to know one's strengths and weaknesses, to ascertain the existence of difficulties that can compromise perseverance;
- hold group meetings aimed at self-knowledge, the capacity for fraternal sharing, knowledge of the dynamics of interpersonal relationships;
- take care of sincerity, respect, trust, generosity, the ability to question oneself, to confront and collaborate;
- hold cycles of meetings dedicated to sexual education in the light of Christian doctrine.

37) Apostolic-pastoral Dimension:

- involve in the pastoral activities of priests (parishes, chaplaincies, schools and educational institutes under the responsibility of the Order);
- experience active service in favor of the weakest or in the social sector;
- participate in vocational promotion.

Section 3. POSTULANCY

1. General Objective

38) The Postulancy is the period following the Aspirantate and has the purpose of verifying, in view of admission to the novitiate, the free and conscious will to choose the religious life.

2. Guidelines

2.1 Admission

39) For admission to the Postulancy, the candidate's written request, the favorable opinion of the Chapter of the House of Aspirancy and the consent of the Major Superior are required.

40) The application cannot be submitted before the last year of philosophical studies.

41) Taking into account the provisions of no. 10, even for postulants there is no proper admission rite but it is preferable to formalize their entry in the presence of the formative community.

2.2 Duration

42) The duration of the postulancy is fixed in the *Constitutions* and in the *Directory*.

3. Educating for Consecration

43) During the postulancy the program begun in the Aspirantate (nos. 32-37) continues, deepening the theological and spiritual aspects of consecration in its various types, presenting the history of religious life in its various historical forms and the role of life consecrated in the Church.

44) The multiple opportunities for stimuli and invitations, the repeated aids and tools offered require the candidates to demonstrate that they accept what is proposed and are willing to adapt it, albeit gradually, with a coherent lifestyle.

45) Because the candidate, at the end of the postulancy, "he can be admitted to the novitiate is necessary that he has an aptitude for community life, sincere faith, adequate human and spiritual preparation, and discretionary and affective maturity"⁹.

46) §1. Responsible superiors should keep in mind that the Aspirantate and the postulancy are distinct stages of the formative journey and that they may possibly require, depending on the number of candidates and the needs of the Houses, diversity of methods, schedules, personnel, communities, environments.

⁹ Const. 89.

§2. The office of the Master of Aspirants is compatible with that of the Master of Postulants.

4. Articulation of the Objectives

47) Taking into account what has already been indicated in nos. 32-37, in the Postulancy the orientation already matured by the candidate of being prepared for consecration in view of becoming a Discalced Augustinian religious should be kept in mind.

48) Mystical-spiritual Dimension:

- know the *Rule* of our Holy Father Augustine;
- read selected passages on the theme of the community.

49) Charismatic-Augustinian Dimension:

- deepen the typical Augustinian devotions.

50) Community Dimension:

- live opportune community moments of religious consecration.

51) Intellectual-cultural Dimension:

- complete the cycle of studies in Philosophy for the attainment of the bachelor's or diploma in Philosophy;
- know the history of religious life from its origins up to today;
- deepen the peculiarities of Augustinian religious life.

52) Psycho-affective Dimension:

- have serenity in approaching the choice of specific consecration;
- demonstrate joy and progressive identification with the vocational objectives.

53) Apostolic-pastoral Dimension:

- experience active service in favor of the weakest or in the social sector;
- participate in the vocational promotion.

Section 4. NOVITIATE¹⁰

1. General Objective

54) The objective of the Novitiate is to consciously embrace the choice of consecration which is expressed with religious profession according to the charism, laws and spirituality of the Discalced Augustinians, to know the rights and duties deriving from it and the commitment to witness through a coherent lifestyle.

55) The Novitiate is the time set aside for the direct experience of consecrated life in the Discalced Augustinians. According to Universal and Particular Law it must have a duration of at least one whole year (365 days) for its validity. For admission to the Novitiate, a written request from the candidate is required, the opinion of the Chapter of the Postulancy House and the consent of the Major Superior.¹¹

2. Guidelines

2.1 Admission

56) The Rite of Admission to the Novitiate foresees, according to the ritual of the Church, a celebration without particular solemnity with the Rite of Investiture¹².

57) The importance, the function, the methods of its management, the requisites required for its validity are precisely indicated in Cann. 641-653 of the *Code of Canon Law* and in nos. 92-96 and 100 of the *Constitutions* and 94-99 of the *Directory*.

2.2 Procedure

58) The novice should learn to refer to the Code of the *Constitutions* and the *Directory* which, with the approval of the Church, is recognized as a valid instrument of interpretation and application of the Gospel according to the spirituality and the *Rule* of our Holy Father Augustine.

59) 1. The novice learns to experience the beauty and necessity of prayer for which he practices prolonged, frequent and constant times dedicated to being with God through the confrontation with his Word, Eucharistic adoration and meditation.

§2. He becomes familiar with the official prayer of the Church and community prayer; makes daily participation in the Eucharistic celebration the irreplaceable source of communion with Christ; he regularly approaches the Sacrament of Reconciliation through which he receives forgiveness, the strength of conversion and perseverance, grows in the

¹⁰ The scarcity of indications regarding this stage is due to the abundance of indications already present in Universal and Proper Law, in the documents of the Magisterium on formation and on Consecrated Life in general. We therefore refer to those sources: CIC (Book II, Third Part); JOHN PAUL II: *Vita Consecrata*; CIVCSVA: Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes; Fraternal Life in Community; *Starting Afresh from Christ*; *Constitutions* and *Directory* of the Order.

¹¹ Const. 92-93.

¹² *Rito della Professione Religiosa*, LEV 1975; however, depending on the place and circumstances, it should be evaluated whether the ceremony can be celebrated in the presence of the faithful trying to emphasize the vocational aspects: the value of the search for God, of one's vocation in the Church, of prayer for those who want to understand the will of the Lord in their life.

knowledge of his own weaknesses and possibilities; he rediscovers, every day, the exemplary and maternal role of the virgin Mary and undertakes to honor her with the daily recitation of the rosary.

60) §1. The novice's process of maturation and growth is manifested through a gradual process of conversion that pushes him, even at the cost of arduous asceticism and renunciation, but welcomed because motivated, to practice a particular lifestyle made up of docile and transparent relationships with formators; of respect and collaboration, of hospitality, esteem and possible forgiveness towards the confreres; of generosity and availability towards all; of courage and patience in opposition; of sobriety, modesty and balance in the use of clothes, food, means of communication, and the various tools and comforts of which contemporary society abounds; correction of some aspects of one's character and habits.

§2. The symbol of all this is "patience", the black scapular worn by the novices on the day of their dressing.

3. Educating for Religious Consecration

61) §1. The Novitiate prepares directly for the profession of vows and to become a member of the Order of Discalced Augustinians. It requires constant and serious commitment in candidates and formators, especially in the Master: for this reason, studies are excluded, even theological and philosophical ones - as well as other activities - which do not have direct reference to the formation of novices¹³.

§2. On the contrary, the Master, also availing himself of the collaboration of other religious, should regularly intensify the instructions and conferences, community meetings, exercises aimed at verifying the suitability and good will of the candidates.

62) It is the primary concern of the Master and his collaborators to lead the novices to a personal and profound experience of God's love, through community and personal prayer. They should be educated to personally cultivate assiduity to prayer and their own spiritual growth. Only through this acquisition, in fact, can the desire to respond with the full gift of oneself grow, with the practice of vows and virtues.

63) The candidate should be guided to radically embrace the Evangelical Counsels and the Vow of Humility. The novice does not passively adapt to the stimuli received but is encouraged to interact, to get involved and to confront with each other.

4. Chapters of Approval

64) Superiors who, according to Universal and Particular Law, are called to admit to profession must have the moral certainty not only that the candidate has no contraindications but that he is in possession of the will, the intention and the requisites required to respond consciously and freely to religious life among the Discalced Augustinians.

65) In the Chapters of Approval referred to in n. 96 of the *Constitutions*, the Master should try to consider the various aspects of the life of the novices: piety, character, merits,

¹³ Can. 652, §5; Const. 106, §2.

limitations, moral qualities and all the aspects that can contribute to a more complete evaluation.

5. Articulation of the Objectives

66) Mystical-Spiritual Dimension:

- to integrally participate in the Liturgy of the Hours according to the community schedule;
- to venerate in a particular way the Virgin Mary with the regular recitation of the Rosary;
- to avail with constancy the spiritual direction and confession;
- to learn how to practice an asceticism of progressive renunciation to embrace a lifestyle that is poor, sober, simple and trusting in Divine Providence, observing modesty and balance in the use of clothes, food, the means of communication, giving up tools and conveniences that abound in society;
- to cultivate personal moments of prayer in solitude and recollection.

67) Charismatic-Augustinian Dimension:

- to know the *Rule*, the charism, the *Constitutions* and the *Directory*; assimilating its juridical and spiritual value for one's life;
- to practice the devotional and penitential practices proper to the Order (the Advent/Lent Challenge; the Chapters of Peace, to be grateful for the benefits received and more);
- to practice meditation with more intensity according to the Augustinian tradition;
- to know the subject matter and spirituality of the Vows, the history of the Order and the meaning of the Rite of Religious Profession; to learn how to take care of the religious habit and wear it consistently.

68) Communitarian Dimension:

- to cultivate docile and transparent relationships with formators;
- to practice respect and a proactive attitude of collaboration, acceptance, esteem and eventual forgiveness towards the confreres;
- to develop generosity and availability towards all; courage and patience in opposition;
- to renounce one's personal autonomy to foster a climate of fraternity and family with the confreres;
- to be ready to correct some aspects of one's character and habits;
- to educate in making oneself available for common work and the needs of the house with generosity and a spirit of service, overcoming the simple sense of duty.

69) Intellectual-Cultural Dimension:

- to know the fundamental documents of the Magisterium of the Church and the main texts of the Magisterium on Consecrated Life;
- to learn the history of the Order, its spirituality and charism;
- to read the works of our Holy Father Augustine and get to know his thought more deeply;
- to get to know the most significant figures in the history of the Augustinian Order: saints and venerable confreres.

70) Psycho-Affective Dimension:

- to allow oneself to be accompanied in the knowledge of oneself, of one's own emotions in the light of the lifestyle of the Novitiate community;
- to educate in the fraternal sharing of one's thoughts, points of view;
- to take care of the capacity for dialogue and to love silence and withdrawal, to safeguard one's own spaces of solitude.

71) Apostolic-Pastoral Dimension:

- to live pastoral experiences and vocational promotion, offering one's own testimony of life;
- to collaborate with priests for liturgical service and animation for which they are prepared and instructed with care, without affectation and in compliance with liturgical norms.

Section 5. PROFESSED STAGE

1. General Objective

72) The objective of the Professed Stage is to consolidate more and more their identification and belongingness to the religious Order, cultivating their consecration with perseverance in the light of what they have learned in the Novitiate and integrating it with theological studies.

73) As an effective member of the religious community, the professed participates regularly in common life, assuming the tasks that will be entrusted to him by Superiors with responsibility, cultivating a sense of belongingness to the Order and to the community in which he is inserted.

74) The formation will take care to verify the way in which the professed lives his consecration, alternating moments of common formation with individual colloquiums with the Master.

2. Guidelines

2.1 Admission

75) Once the Novitiate has been completed and the religious profession of temporary vows has been made, according to the ritual of the Church and our Particular, the candidates continue their formation as a community in the Professed House¹⁴ under the guidance of the Master and the designated persons.

2.2 Procedure

76) §1. In the period following the first religious profession, care should be taken to harmonize the ideal embraced with a mature development of one's personality.

§2. It is crucial that this development is favored while respecting authority and according to a sense of responsibility.

§3. Personal freedom must not lead to neglect or contrast with the characteristics of our religious family and consistency with the values professed.

77) §1. It is a constant concern to remember that the first and most effective form of apostolate and ministry is the constant witness of fidelity to the Gospel lived in community, with the generous and joyful practice of the virtues professed by vow, so that everything that can hinder or simply obscure the lifestyle marked by vows and healthy virtues including those of simplicity, essentiality, reserve, concentration, industriousness.

§2. The transformation brought about by the consecration must, in a word, transpire - without ostentation - from every behavior and action including clothing and objects of common and private use.

¹⁴ Cann. 654-658; Const. 108-111.

3. Theology Studies

78) With Simple Profession, the theological studies and practical exercises begin to prepare oneself for ministerial life also through pastoral commitments in parishes or in the Diocese.

79) §1. Even those who intend to be religious brother coadjutors should commit themselves to the theological studies and be accompanied to appreciate the value of their choice of life, bearing witness to the beauty of fraternal life conducted according to the evangelical ideal and Augustinian spirituality.

§2 Major Superiors are to consider whether to propose to them other courses of study, even at a non-academic level, taking into account the skills of the professed.

4. Educating for Religious Consecration in the Discalced Augustinians

80) It must be under the care of the formators to avoid that the necessary trust in the personal responsibility of the professed by reason of their choice of life, scholastic needs and pastoral commitments - does not lead to an autonomy that could jeopardize the Order, the religious lifestyle, transparency and spontaneity in communication, and, finally, regular participation in common life which requires fidelity to prayer times and other daily commitments.

81) Moments of recreation and free time in common should be promoted and taken care of; the professed should be taught on how to program their activities, guaranteeing the right balance between personal and shared spaces. We must not fail to inculcate that, as we read in n. 57 of the *Constitutions*: “The first field of apostolate for us Discalced Augustinians must be the community”. This should also be understood in the sense that every activity or simple personal action must never ignore or mortify the brothers of the house.

82) The ability and willingness to grow in mutual understanding, communication, collaboration, communion is a determining element for judging the progress of the professed also in view of Solemn Profession and eventual Priestly Ordination. Depending on the place, the opportunity to include the professed in ecclesial movements should also be considered¹⁵.

83) During the course of their formation, the professed are to be prepared to receive and exercise, according to the norms of the competent ecclesiastical authority, the Ministries of the Lectorate, the Acolytate and of the Catechist.

5. Solemn Profession

84) §1. In view of Solemn Profession and at the end of the first cycle of theological studies, the professed lives an experience of common and pastoral life in a community of the Order that welcomes him for a year.

¹⁵ Although the reality of ecclesial movements is a great wealth for the Church, they too carry out their own specific charism. This can also be a reason for some confusion among the professed. Therefore, the professed must be helped to always have a clear mind of their own charismatic identity as Discalced Augustinians.

§2. This stage (Year of Discernment) is provided for by the Proper Law of the Order¹⁶.

§3. Within three months of the end of the year, the professed must manifest with a written request that he wishes to emit the Solemn Profession in order to be admitted and adequately prepared for the Rite.

85) The Solemn Profession is the natural but not obvious goal of Simple Profession therefore, to be admitted to it, it is essential that the candidate has given serious and verifiable proofs of total adhesion, interior and exterior, to what consecrated life in our Institute proposes and demands.

86) Only with this moral certainty validated by the coherent conduct of the professed and by his conscious and free request can Solemn Profession be made.

87) §1. 1. The above conditions must be validated through the Chapter Approvals¹⁷ prescribed by Universal and Proper Law, the written request of the interested party and admission by the competent Superior.

§2. The Quoad Mores Chapters are celebrated by the religious community to which the professed has been sent, be it the community of the House of Formation or another (i.e. Year of Discernment).

§3. The Quoad Mores Chapter is equivalent to a scrutiny on the qualities of the professed and its purpose is to offer the Major Superior an evaluation that is the fruit of daily life in the community to help him decide on admission to Perpetual Profession or to Sacred Orders.

88) §1. Before Solemn Profession, the juridical acts necessary for the transfer of goods of which the simple professed still owned should be taken into consideration and be completed¹⁸.

§2. There shouldn't be any negligence in verifying that there are no financial constraints in place at the time of the Profession (bank accounts or property owned in the name of the professed; sums of money or debts).

6. Articulation of the Objectives

89) Mystical-Spiritual Dimension:

- to serenely accept one's own identity as a consecrated person expressed through a coherent lifestyle;
- to be available to discuss with the formator and to share one's uncertainties or difficulties;
- to be faithful to personal prayer, spiritual direction and sacramental confession;
- to be joyful in practicing the choice of life;
- to increase liturgical skills in order to be able to competently guide any celebrations.

90) Charismatic-Augustinian Dimension:

- to consistently live one's consecration with regular participation in prayers and communitarian moments;

¹⁶ Dir. 101.

¹⁷ For the *Quoad Mores* Chapters, refer what is indicated in the First Part.

¹⁸ Const. 105.

- to wear the habit with serenity, a sign of one's consecration.

91) Communitarian Dimension:

- to be jointly responsible for the care and maintenance of common things;
- to be generous in carrying out their duties, overcoming the simple sense of duty;
- to be available to the humblest services;
- to be open to sharing one's thoughts and ideas, respecting others, accepting suggestions;
- to get to know some offices in the community (Sacristan, Archivist, Treasurer);
- to actively contribute to a climate of fraternity by cultivating the ability to be with everyone, not to create factionalism, groups and divisions;
- to not be easy to gossip, chat and disrespectful words;
- to be calm and moderate in speaking, avoiding offensive and inappropriate words.

92) Intellectual-cultural dimension:

- to undertake theological studies¹⁹;
- to participate in update encounters on religious life, having a deeper knowledge of Proper and Canon Law.

93) Psycho-Affective Dimension:

- to be available for confrontation;
- to demonstrate the ability to manage conflicts, anger and internal tensions;
- to be able to know how to ask for help, to present one's limitations and to confess one's incapacities;
- to endure frustration, fatigue in studying;
- to manage their own failures;
- to accept their own psychosexual dimension;
- to have an orderly lifestyle (day-night rhythms; balanced relationship with food; personal and environment hygiene).

94) Apostolic-Pastoral Dimension:

- to undertake pastoral experiences in the parish or in groups with the supervision of some more experienced priest or religious;
- to participate in vocational animation;
- to become involved in the catechesis of children;
- to collaborate with other priests.

¹⁹ The professed generally begin their theological studies after the Novitiate and finish them before Solemn Profession.

Section 6. CLERICAL STAGE: PREPARATION FOR SACRED ORDERS

1. General Objective

95) §1. The time following Solemn Profession is dedicated to preparation for Sacred Orders: the Diaconate and the Presbyterate.

§2. This time can be spent in a Formation House dedicated to this purpose or in an ordinary religious community.

§3. Having completed the theological preparation through the first cycle of studies, the professed exercises the diaconate in view of the priesthood.

2. Guidelines

96) It is necessary to inculcate that the exercise of the priestly ministry carried out by the religious must be enriched according to the charism of one's own Institute which favors some forms of apostolate and distinguishes all the others.

97) §1. The aspirants to the priesthood integrate what they have learned in theological studies with the Augustinian doctrine.

§2. As regards to any eventual specializations, each Major Superior should keep in mind what is indicated in nos. **xxx** (see above) and proceed, having consulted those directly concerned, with far-sightedness based on the needs of the apostolate and mission.

98) Practical exercises regarding possible future ministry activities must also be favored but they must never hinder the application to study, the demands of life in common and formation as a whole (Can. 660, §2).

3. Legal Issues

99) §§1. With the Sacrament of the Diaconate and the Presbyterate, the religious assume new responsibilities and obligations in the Church for which scrupulous fidelity is required for the preparation and exercise of these ministries according to the norms of ecclesiastical authority.

§2. It is not good to dispense easily from these *Rules* and indications, therefore what is prescribed or simply recommended should be faithfully observed (age, curriculum of studies, discernment year, documentation, etc.²⁰

100) With the Presbyterate the solemn professed is formally assigned to a family (House) and from that moment he will be able to fully exercise his active and passive voice. The professed are adequately instructed on what the exercise of the voice entails, on the importance of voting in the Chapter and what is foreseen for the acceptance of an ecclesiastical office in the Order.

101) It will be the duty of the Major Superior, with the opinion of his Council, to judge on the expediency of inserting deacons into a community other than that of the Professed House and of providing for their insertion into the community and into the ministry.

²⁰ Cost 112-114; Dir 109-112.

102) It is still up to the major superior, in compliance with ecclesiastical norms and what is requested in no. 223, and of the *Constitutions*, to admit a solemnly professed coadjutor brother to the permanent diaconate.

103) The exercise of the ordained ministry is always subject to the authority of the local Superior of the community to which one belongs and to the pastoral directives of the diocesan Bishop.

4. Articulation of the Objectives

104) Mystical-Spiritual Dimension:

- to know and meditate on the meaning of the Sacrament of the Holy Orders in order to grow in one's identification with Christ the High Priest;
- to serenely accept the obligations deriving from the ordained ministry;
- to increase liturgical skills to be able to competently guide any celebrations.

105) Charismatic-Augustinian Dimension:

- to learn how to draw up community Registers (administration, registration of documents, writing of minutes) and their correct filing.

106) Communitarian Dimension:

- to know and take care of the liturgical furnishings;
- to be available for the liturgical service to improve one's competence;
- to take care of the sacristy and the altar;
- to be available for the service of liturgical animation and for the role of master of ceremonies;
- to be transparent in the sharing of offerings received through the ministry exercised;
- to take care of the administration of the Mass intentions and of their registration.

107) Intellectual-Cultural Dimension:

- to know the *Rules* relating to the exercise of the active and passive voice in the Order;
- to know the *Roman Missal* and the *Prenotanda* that contains the liturgical norms for the valid and correct celebration of the respective sacraments;
- to know the *Book of Blessings* and other instruments at the service of the liturgy;
- to participate in the updating encounters for the clergy in particular on the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Eucharist;
- to know the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the Catechisms prepared by the National Episcopal Conferences.

108) Psycho-Affective Dimension:

- to be able to carry out the liturgical service without unnecessary protagonism;
- to respect the liturgical *Rules* without excesses and devotionisms;
- to have a sober and not affected style in preaching and liturgical gestures;
- to have a good ability to interact with the faithful both during and outside the celebration;
- to be gentle and courteous kind.

109) Apostolic-Pastoral Dimension:

- to take care of the preaching and the preparation of the homily;
- to be a vocational animator.

Section 7. ONGOING FORMATION

1. General Objective

110) “The formation of religious is a lifelong commitment. Therefore, in order to constantly and progressively adapt to the needs of their vocation, the religious should always be docile disciples of Christ, ‘the interior teacher in the school of the heart’, and commit themselves to diligently perfecting their spiritual, doctrinal, Augustinian and technical culture”²¹.

2. Guidelines

111) The care and concern to preserve and increase one’s cultural and spiritual heritage require constant and perennial application and are a duty towards oneself, the Church, the Institute and society itself in constant change.

112) Ongoing formation, in the name of fidelity and renewal, allows us to establish and consolidate constructive dialogue with society because it protects us from the danger of anachronistic closures and from yielding to easy compromises with the superficiality of fashions.

113) Before being considered as a function of the ministry to be carried out, ongoing formation must be seen as an instrument of growth and maturation that allows the person to face positively the ever-new situations with which one is confronted every day.

114) Ongoing formation is required, in particular, by the Augustinian charism which is characterized by a profound interiority and consequent openness to dialogue and communion.

115) There are many valid and indispensable means of ongoing formation: daily meditation, *Lectio divina*, study and reading, spiritual accompaniment, updating on the documents of the Universal and Particular Church, community meetings, days of retreat, annual spiritual exercises, conferences, conventions, etc.

116) It is the concern of Major and Local Superiors to encourage to a regular and active participation in the abovementioned means.

117) With ongoing formation, specialization in some specific areas should also be encouraged and promoted. In choosing them, while taking into account personal predispositions, one must look at the needs of the ministry, the founding lines of the charism, the needs of the Institute called to provide, with competent and qualified personnel, the spiritual and cultural education of its candidates and religious. It follows that the choice and methods of specialization courses are subject to the indications, decisions and authorizations of the competent Major Superiors.

²¹ Const. 114, §1.

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