

RATIO

GENERALIS INSTITUTIONIS

Order of the Discalced Augustinians



Rome - 2023

RATIO GENERALIS
INSTITUTIONIS
of the
DISCALCED AUGUSTINIANS



Rome – 2023



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Prot. Reg. V; fol. 240/07

TO ALL CONFRERES OF THE ORDER.

PRESENTATION AND PROMULGATION OF THE *RATIO GENERALIS INSTITUTIONIS*

Dear confreres, it is with great joy that

I PRESENT and PROMULGATE the *Ratio Generalis Institutionis*
of the Order of the Discalced Augustinians.

This document is part of the legislation of our Order; even though it performs a complementary task, the *Ratio*, long-awaited (the previous one dated back to 1965), is one of the pillars of the supporting structure of our religious family as it clearly defines a homogeneous and safe formation journey within the multi-ethnic and multicultural landscape of our Order. If properly applied by those responsible for formation (Major Superiors, Masters, and Priors of Formation Communities), it will contribute to the unity and growth of the Order in the near future.

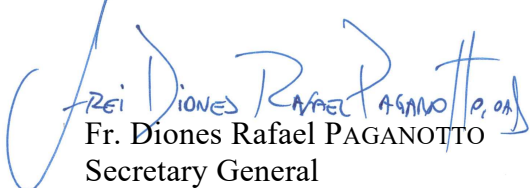
I would like to express my gratitude to Fr. Carlo MORO, Vicar General, who, in addition to dedicating much of his limited time, has identified himself with the *Ratio* and has made available all his energy and expertise to conclude the text.

The *Ratio* is divided into two parts: THE FORMATION: THEOLOGICAL, SPIRITUAL, AND CHARISMATIC FOUNDATIONS describes the fundamental notions and objectives of formation, offering an interpretation of the various moments of formation journey in the light of the Charism of the Discalced Augustinian; formation in its stages specifies the specific objectives to be achieved step by step, articulating them based on the particular aspects of the person (Mystical-spiritual, Charismatic-Augustinian, Communitarian, Intellectual-Cultural, Psycho-Affective, and Apostolic-Pastoral dimensions).

The APPENDIX illustrates the models of admission questions for the various stages and the *Decrees* that the competent authority must issue in response to them. The handwritten declarations of poverty and the models for testaments have also been reviewed.

In promulgating this important instrument for formation journey in the Discalced Augustinian religious life, I am supported by the certainty that, at any time, the General Definitory maintains the freedom to enrich it and make corrections, thus guaranteeing its continuous updating, adapting it to the needs of the times and the diverse situations that may arise.

Rome, May 22, 2023,
Feast of Saint Rita of Cascia.


Fr. Diones Rafael PAGANOTTO
Secretary General




Fr. Dorian CETERONI
Prior General

PRINCIPAL ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

can. o cann.	canon or canons
CEI	Italian Episcopal Conference
Conf.	Saint AUGUSTINE, <i>Confessionum Libri Tredecim</i>
Const.	<i>Constitutions</i> of the Discalced Augustinians, 2023
De sancta virg.	Saint AUGUSTINE, <i>De sancta virginitate</i>
Dir.	<i>Directory</i> of the Discalced Augustinians, 2023
Ep.	Saint AUGUSTINE, <i>Epistulae</i>
In Io. Ev. tr.	Saint AUGUSTINE, <i>In Johannis Evangelium Tractatus</i>
In Ps.	Saint AUGUSTINE, <i>Enarrationes in Psalmos</i>
n. o nn.	number or numbers
OT	Decree <i>Optatam Totius</i> on Priestly training, 1965
<i>Ratio</i>	<i>Ratio Generalis Institutionis</i> of the Discalced Augustinians, 2023
Reg.	Saint AUGUSTINE, <i>Regula</i>
Rit.	<i>Ritual</i> degli Agostiniani Scalzi, 2023
SacCar	Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation <i>Sacramentum Caritatis</i> of the Holy Father Benedict XVI, 2007
Serm.	Saint AUGUSTINE, <i>Sermones</i>

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

* The texts of Saint Augustin are taken from the volumes of the *Christian Classic Ethereal Library series*, available on the site ccel.org/fathers2.

GENERAL PREMISE: NATURE AND AUTHORITY

1) The general principles for formation in the Order of Discalced Augustinian (*Ratio Generalis Institutionis*) look to what is required by Universal and Proper Law regarding the formation of candidates for religious life in clerical institutes, integrating it with the richness of the doctrine and spirituality of our Holy Father Augustine, the charism and traditions of the Order, in fidelity to the universal magisterium of the Church.

2) The purpose of the *Ratio* is to contribute to the formation process of the individual, the Christian, and the consecrated religious with the specific characteristics of Augustinian spirituality, drawn from the works and experience of our Holy Father Augustine, the history of the Order, the witness of the saints, and the best traditions of the Discalced Augustinian.

3) The *Ratio* is a minor code¹ that provides certain and guiding directives for the formation of candidates for religious life in the Discalced Augustinian and all its members. It is an essential tool to ensure uniformity in the formation process. The norms and indications of the *Ratio*, duly approved by the General Definitory, enjoy the authority and authoritativeness provided by the *Constitutions*² and therefore do not allow for arbitrary changes and applications, but rather complement what is already indicated in the Proper Law.

4) The *Ratio* is divided into two parts: the first part illustrates the fundamental principles and values to be understood, transmitted, and assimilated; the second part defines the specific objectives of each stage of formation.

5) The *Ratio* necessarily requires integration at the level of the various realities of the Order in order to accommodate their specific needs. Therefore, it will be necessary for the various circumscriptions (Provinces/Commissariats) to develop their own *Ratio Provincialis Institutionis* which must be examined and approved by the Prior Provincial with the consent of his Council, and receive the final approval of the Prior General for it to come into effect.

6) §1. The *Ratio* is an element of unity and communion, and therefore must be faithfully followed by those in charge.

§2. The approval of any modifications required by particular situations, as well as any updates, is the responsibility of the General Definitory.

§3. Any practice that deviates from the principles and norms contained in the *Ratio* will be considered illegitimate.

¹ They are minor codes endowed with juridical authority, such as the *Ritual* and the *Directories* for Administration, which regulate specific and changing aspects of life in the Order.

² Const. 194, q.

PART I.

THE FORMATION: THEOLOGICAL, SPIRITUAL AND CHARISMATIC FOUNDATIONS

Section 1. FUNDAMENTAL NOTIONS

1. Formation in general

7) Basis of formation.

The golden rule of pedagogy – and specifically of Augustinian pedagogy – is love: “love God and then your neighbor”³; “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”⁴.

8) Subject of formation.

§1. It is the person who intends to consecrate themselves fully to God in religious life (as a religious brother or Priest) through the profession of vows, following the way of life of Jesus Christ on earth: to be poor, chaste, obedient, and humble, according to the charism of the Discalced Augustinian.

§2. It is the Discalced Augustinian who, built on charity, seeks communally to form one heart and one soul directed towards God, according to the teaching of our Holy Father Augustine, prioritizing contemplation and being nourished by it to evangelize according to the needs of the Church, nurtured and supported by a filial affection for the Virgin Mary that makes the Community a family.

9) Definition of formation.

It is the spiritual and educational process through which the consecrated person is progressively conformed to Christ according to the charism of the Discalced Augustinian. This process engages and involves the individual and all those who, in various ways and capacities, are called to guide, follow, and assist them.

10) Formation period.

§1. The purpose of the formation period is to create the conditions for the individual to make a conscious and responsible choice regarding being consecrated to God through the profession of vows and in the service of the people of God through ordained ministry, following the example of our Holy Father Augustine and the spirituality of the Discalced Augustinian.

§2. The formation period aims to help the person engage their whole self in becoming an authentic disciple and witness of Christ in the Church and in the world.

³ Reg. 1.

⁴ Reg. 48.

11) *Formation journey*⁵.

§1. In a strict sense, formation is divided into several stages: Aspirancy, Postulancy, Novitiate, Professed Stage, and Clerical Stage (preparation for Holy Orders).

§2. In a broader sense, formation encompasses the entirety of one's life, becoming a lifelong process of ongoing formation.

12) *Purpose of formation*.

During their formation, both the candidate and the Discalced Augustinian religious mature, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, with increasing awareness of the demands of religious consecration. They assimilate the charism of the Order and prepare themselves for the work of evangelization.

13) *Place of formation*.

The place where the formation journey takes place is always a Community:

- From the ecclesial community where one receives baptism to the particular ecclesial community where faith is nurtured and grows.
- By accepting the call, one is led to the Augustinian Community, which entrusts qualified individuals with the task of accompanying the called person on behalf of the Order.
- The Community of the Order presents the Discalced Augustinian religious to the world, sending them to serve the Community (both religious and ecclesial) to which the future Augustinian Discalced religious will belong.

2. Responsible persons and formation tools

14) The first and primary Formator is the Trinity, who works in the life of the person called, chosen from the people of God, which is the Church. The Trinity involves responsible collaborators and human means in the work of His grace. Hence, the necessity and convenience of preparing a formation plan.

15) §1. The religious directly responsible for formation are the Major Superiors, the Priors of the Communities, and the Formators of the Formation Houses established for this purpose by the Prior General.

§2. The experience of common life significantly contributes to formation.

2.1 *Major Superior*

16) It is the task of the Major Superiors to ensure that, in the formation process to which the entire Community of the Order contributes, there are no interferences and conflicts with and among the main and direct responsible⁶.

17) It is the responsibility of the Major Superiors to:

- Ensure that the *Ratio* is executed and observed.
- Coordinate proposals and decisions, avoiding arbitrary initiatives and experiments.

⁵ The objectives and specific purposes of the various stages are illustrated in the SECOND PART of the *Ratio*.

⁶ OT 5; Const. 77.

- Monitor the work of the Formators, promoting their adequate preparation and ongoing training⁷.

18) §1. It is the responsibility of the Superiors to entrust the formation of candidates to spiritually motivated, competent, suitable, and willing confreres.

§2. Avoid interfering or exerting undue influence on their work.

§3. Encourage their ongoing development and initiative, and foster the sharing of their work and challenges.

§4. Accompany them with prayer to the Father, the Master of the harvest.

19) It is beneficial for the Major Superiors to share the progress of formation through annual meetings, both to assess the implementation and updates of the *Ratio* and to understand the changes in the youth world within the context of the vocational journey.

20) The formandi who, for specific reasons, spend a long period outside the Formation House (for example, during the discernment period) should be accompanied by a religious specifically designated for this purpose.

2.2 *Master*

21) §1. The Formators specifically appointed by the Major Superiors assume the role of Master.

§2. The Master accompanies the candidate from the initial reception of the call to its full recognition, embracing all its demands.

§3. It is the responsibility of the Master to assess the vocational motivations of the formandi and to help them bear fruit with the assistance of the Community of the Order, following a process of conversion and truth.

22) The Master, aware of their delicate and irreplaceable mission, and conscious of the ever-evolving challenges presented, particularly by the youth world, keeps themselves continuously updated on the developments of society and the new generations. However, they avoid improvisation or unjustified and opportunistic concessions to the trends of the times.

23) In addition to educational and moral competence, the Master should ensure the continuous availability of their time and presence, avoiding taking on additional offices or pastoral responsibilities that would distract them from their primary task.

24) It is the task of the Master to gradually guide the formandi in discovering and fulfilling their own vocation. Therefore, it is required that the Master consistently and convincingly witness their own journey of continuous search and friendship with God, demonstrating coherence and serenity. The Master should also be capable of accompanying the formandi with authority and competence.

25) §1. The Master, in agreement with the Superiors and in accordance with the guidelines of the *Ratio*, organizes the orderly personal and communal growth of the formandi, in which the Superiors, fellow Religious, Spiritual Director, Confessor, Teachers, etc., all contribute.

⁷ DICASTERY FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, *Directives Concerning the Preparation of Seminary Educators* (1993), nn. 22-42.

§2. The role of the Master can be compared to that of parents who, for the education of their children for whom they are primarily responsible, seek the expertise of competent and experienced individuals.

26) The Master, following the teaching of our Holy Father Augustine, should focus more on being loved than feared, without neglecting the discipline required by the observance of norms and rules⁸.

27) The Master should prioritize their own ongoing development by participating in study meetings and fostering the exchange of experiences with other educators. They should also refrain from pursuing paths or methods of formation that are outside the official guidelines and norms.

28) §1. The Master should foster trust that opens the door to dialogue. They should help the formandi reflect and work on their temperament, strengths, weaknesses, and learn to positively interpret any negative experiences.

§2. Appropriate accompaniment cannot disregard knowledge of the environment and family in which the formandi have lived.

29) The willingness to be receptive to the formative proposals and the stimuli offered by the Master is a significant indicator of one's readiness for service and self-giving.

30) §1. The Master should strive to ensure that the formandi also grow in mutual acceptance, understanding, collaboration, fraternity, and communion.

§2. The Master should educate the formandi in mutual responsibility, the care of common belongings, and the experience of working and leisure time together. To achieve this, they should promote regular moments of instruction, meeting, and dialogue.

31) §1. The Master should ensure that the formandi have appropriate opportunities for leisure, relaxation, play, and recreation.

§2. They should encourage activities such as outings together, excursions, cultural activities, and tourist visits to explore the beauty of the places where they live. It is important to plan vacation times together and for individuals, without discriminating against anyone and with moderation.

2.3 Prior

32) The Prior, as the animator of fraternity among the religious, should strive to ensure that common life in the Formation Houses proceeds in an orderly manner, respecting the rhythms of prayer and work. They should coordinate with the Master to ensure the appropriate involvement of the formandi and Professed in meeting the Community's needs.

33) The Prior should not interfere in the work of the Master but should assist them in every possible way. The harmony between them is one of the most significant examples to be offered to the formandi.

⁸ Reg. 46.

2.4 *Religious Community*

34) §1. The religious living in the Formation House participates in the formation process according to the modalities established by our Proper Law.

§2. It is the primary task of the Community to offer an authentic witness of religious life and to live in joyful and committed common life, in a serene and familial atmosphere.

§3. The Local Community and the Province are the portion of the Church in which the vocation of the consecrated person is recognized and nurtured.

35) All the confreres of the Community should be attentive to helping the formandi to deepen their understanding of their vocation and to commit themselves to respond to it appropriately, with generosity, constancy, perseverance, and joy.

36) While recognizing the shared responsibility of mutually forming one another through the example of witness, fraternity, and benevolent admonition, it is important to reaffirm the hierarchy of responsibility regarding formation.

37) §1. The Local Chapters *Quoad Mores*, aimed at expressing an opinion regarding the suitability of candidates, are of great utility for discernment and for the Major Superiors in the admission to Profession, Ministries, and Holy Orders.

§2. Their purpose is consultative and not decisive regarding the choices to be made about the candidates, which fall under the authority of the Major Superior with the assistance of their Council, in accordance with the modalities established by the Proper Law.

2.5 *Spiritual Director*

38) The Spiritual Director is like a father who accompanies the disciple in their Christian spiritual journey with discretion and wisdom. He guides the disciple in self-knowledge and discernment, supports him in difficulties and crises, offers counsel in decision-making, and provides illumination to help him make responsible and free choices, in the light of the Gospel.

39) The Spiritual Director is essentially a witness and educator of faith who accompanies the candidate to help him respond to the plan that the Lord has for him.

40) However, the role of the Spiritual Director as a spiritual companion also requires him to be appropriately trained and updated in the principles of psychology and pedagogy. In addition to theological and ascetical preparation, he should possess the ability to listen, understand, and engage in dialogue.

41) The responsible of the formation should ensure that each candidate “has a Director of his spiritual life whom he has freely chosen and to whom he can confidently open his conscience”⁹.

42) §1. In the asceticism journey that everyone must undertake, the presence of the Confessor is essential. He is the minister of the sacrament of reconciliation and healing that flows from God’s mercy.

§2. The formandi should be educated to approach this sacrament with regular frequency and fidelity.

⁹ Can. 246, §4.

§3. The Formation House should propose a suitable Priest to serve as a Confessor, while respecting the full freedom of each individual to prefer other Priests.

43) The Formators should scrupulously adhere to what is prescribed by the *Code of Canon Law*, which states: “the Master of Novices and his associate and the Rector of a Seminary [...] are not to hear the sacramental confessions of their students [...] unless the students freely request it in particular cases”¹⁰; furthermore, it states: “when decisions are made about admitting students to orders or dismissing them from the seminary, the opinion of the Spiritual Director and Confessors can never be sought”¹¹. This norm also applies to the *Quoad Mores* chapter approvals provided for by the Proper Law.

44) These appropriate provisions, which safeguard the conscience of the disciples and the Spiritual Director and Confessor, suggest that they be chosen preferably from outside the Community of the Formation House.

2.6 *Psychologist and Consultant*

45) A proper and comprehensive formation, in some particular cases, requires the support and consultation of trained, qualified, and trustworthy individuals such as psychologists, sociologists, and doctors. Their expertise should be utilized to prevent or address any anomalies or deficiencies.

46) During the Aspirancy period, a series of annual interviews with a specialist should be conducted to establish a psychological profile of the formandi. This will help the formandi to identify their strengths and weaknesses and guide the attention of the Master towards certain aspects.

47) §1. The interviews with specialists are not intended for selection purposes but rather contribute to the formation and discernment process regarding the suitability of the formandi.

§2. The necessary consent will be obtained from the specialists so that they can share suggestions and indications with the Major Superior and the Master for a better orientation of the formation journey.

§3. If the formandi are unwilling to attend the interviews with specialists, it may be grounds for interrupting the formation process, as it indicates a lack of willing participation in the means offered by the Order for human and spiritual growth.

48) The interviews with consultants are offered as a necessary integration to the formation journey. It is not the role of these professionals to express judgments of vocational suitability, but rather to support self-awareness, assist in recognizing one’s own weaknesses, and stimulate authentic personal growth from a human perspective.

49) §1. If significant difficulties arise that require regular psychological or psychotherapeutic support, the competent Superiors should evaluate the appropriate course of action, potentially involving the candidate’s family as well.

§2. If a Simple or Solemn Professed requires psychotherapeutic support, he should be duly assisted, with periodic meetings with specialists to assess their progress.

§3. It is important to seek the assistance of psychologists or psychotherapists who are well-prepared and respectful of the vocational choice of the formandi.

¹⁰ Can. 985.

¹¹ Can. 240, §2.

50) In the event of abandonment or interruption of the formation journey, personal documentation, especially that which has been shared with professionals with the authorization of the formandi, should be duly returned to them or otherwise destroyed.

3. Formation places

3.1 Formation Houses

51) The importance and necessity of ongoing formation are evident, and therefore, every religious Community is a “house of formation” for the benefit of each of its members. However, it is required that certain Houses be appropriately designated and equipped for the formation of formandi at all stages as outlined.

52) The importance of the selection of Formation Houses is established by the *Constitutions*, which reserve to the Prior General and his Definitory the authority to establish, suppress, transfer, and change the location of these Houses¹².

53) §1. Wherever possible, choose Houses with spacious areas suitable for physical activity and contact with nature, providing an environment that allows for moments of recreation both indoors and outdoors.

§2. The location, furnishings, equipment, and social context are important and require attention and care, but the most crucial factor in formation always remains the Community of individuals who reside in the House and those who, in various capacities, interact with it.

3.2 Study Institutes and International/Interprovincial Formation Houses

54) The cultural preparation of the formandi follows, in the progression of different stages of age and learning, the study plans specific to various Universities or Faculties that provide philosophical and theological preparation for Holy Order or pastoral and catechetical work.

55) Ensure that this foundational philosophical and theological formation is supplemented with specific courses on the theological and spiritual doctrine of our Holy Father Augustine, the charism and history of the Augustinian Order, and our particular Augustinian family.

56) The Order can erect Study Institutes and International/Interprovincial Formation Houses under the direct authority of the General Curia or Interprovincial authorities.

57) §1. When authorizing and approving the establishment of Study Institutes of Philosophy and Theology, ensure that the norms and guidelines of the competent ecclesiastical authorities are respected, and, if applicable, those of civil authorities as well.

§2. The *curriculum* of Study Institutes should include the teaching of theological, pastoral, and spiritual doctrine according to the Augustinian tradition, as well as courses that prepare for ministries that are in line with our way of life, such as preaching, spiritual direction, parish ministry, teaching, etc.

¹² Const. 72.

§3. The Study Institutes should not only possess the corresponding academic qualifications but also have appropriate spiritual, teaching, and pedagogical formation.

§4. The competent Superiors should ensure that the activities of the Study Institutes are carried out by the assigned religious with responsibility and appropriate autonomy. They should particularly oversee the orthodoxy of teachings, the suitability of professors, financial management, the growth of the library, the efficiency of the administration, and the updating of archives.

58) §1. International/Interprovincial Formation Houses can accommodate formandi upon request from their respective competent Superiors. The same applies to those who are sent by their respective Superiors for the completion or further development of their studies at ecclesiastical universities.

§2. The attainment of Master or Doctorate degrees should not be left to the individual initiative of the religious, but should be appropriately agreed upon with the competent Superiors in accordance with the mission of the Order.

§3. International/Interprovincial Formation Houses should be governed by a specific *Statute* that must be approved by all competent Superiors.

4. General Direction for Studies and Formation

59) At General and Provincial levels, there should be religious appointed by the competent Superiors to oversee the implementation of what is prescribed and indicated in the *Ratio*.

60) It is their responsibility to:

- Inform and update their respective Major Superiors on the progress of formation.
- Suggest participation in courses and conferences for further development.
- Enhance knowledge, coordination, and collaboration among the fellow religious directly involved in formation.
- Coordinate study plans and access to Master and Doctorate degrees.

61) Through other suitable and appropriate activities, supported by the participation and collaboration of fellow religious, everyone should strive to ensure that the gift of the vocation to consecrated life is increasingly appreciated and embraced.

Section 2. OBJECTIVES OF FORMATION

62) *Main formative objectives.*

- §1. Clarify vocational motivations through ongoing discernment.
- §2. Foster spiritual growth both individually and through communal liturgical life, cultivating a spirit of service and collaboration, in order to embrace the Augustinian way of life according to the spirituality of the Discalced Augustinian.
- §3. Engage in dialogue with the complexities of the world to develop a deep awareness of the Church's evangelizing mission.

63) *Specific formative objectives.*

- §1. The educational effort, beyond the stages of the formation journey, aims to focus on the human development of the formandi by assessing their right intention, their ability to judge and choose, their sincerity and generosity in relationships with individuals and the Community, their balanced emotional development, and their willingness to internalize, engage in dialogue, and socialize.
- §2. Following the initial discernment, a process of maturation ensues, which involves "purifying and consolidating motivations, adopting an appropriate lifestyle, channeling emotions towards vocational objectives, and remaining faithful to the decision made"¹³.

64) *Specific spiritual objectives.*

The formation period is the necessary and suitable ground for the growth of confidence in the Lord. The good character dispositions of the formandi constitute the necessary and suitable ground for the growth of the seeds of all Christian virtues, which shine most brightly in the human life of Jesus Christ and which the constant Tradition of the Church encourages us to live. Some of these virtues are the object of vows: chastity, poverty, obedience, and humility. These virtues, more than any others, are the fruit and expression of charity.

1. Anthropological vision and method

65) The method that every Master must adopt in formation is based on a sound Christian anthropology and the foundations of Augustinian spirituality, succinctly illustrated in the nos. 1-10 of the *Constitutions*.

66) The reference method remains the person of Jesus Christ as presented by the apostle Paul: a service to the Father in the total self-giving with a spirit of humility and joy¹⁴.

67) The guideline of love and respect informs all the interventions indicated and suggested by the pedagogy that takes into account the various environmental, cultural, and personal situations of the formandi.

68) A valid pedagogical method is simultaneously an authentic tool of asceticism, while the acceptance of internal and external discipline offers individuals the opportunity to live rightly, respecting themselves and others both within and outside the Community.

¹³ CEI, *La Verità vi farà liberi*, n. 508; our translation.

¹⁴ Phil. 2:1-4.

2. Religious consecration in the Discalced Augustinians

2.1 Theological and Christological characteristic

69) The inspirer, guardian, and ultimate guide of every vocation to special consecration is the Father who calls to the *Sequela Christi*.

70) §1. The Son is the way and the truth and the life. He is the model and the inner teacher who leads to the discovery of the call and educates to respond to it worthily.

§2. It is in Christ that God reveals Himself as Trinity, a relationship lived in total self-giving and communion. It is in the divine family that the principles of every particular vocation and its realization are found. Only through Christ do we enter into the life of the Trinity in the Holy Spirit, being enabled to manifest and participate in it with our brothers and sisters.

71) §1. For us, Discalced Augustinian, the Son of God who became a servant even unto death on the cross is the model of humble discipleship in service to the Father for the good of the Church.

§2. Consequently, the first place of service is the Community, following the example of the early Church in Jerusalem, united in the breaking of the bread, in praise and in the listening of the Word, in the sharing of material and spiritual goods, open to the poor and the needs of the people of God¹⁵.

2.2 Charismatic characteristic

A) CHARISM IN THE RELIGIOUS CONSECRATION

72) §1. The charism of the Discalced Augustinians is summarized by the formula: “Joyfully serving the Most High in spirit of humility”¹⁶.

§2. The charism combines the theme of service to God with that of joy and humility, drawing inspiration from the apostle Paul: “If there is any encouragement in Christ, any solace in love, any participation in the Spirit, any compassion and mercy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing. Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but [also] everyone for those of others”¹⁷.

§3. The charism is also found in the *Rule* and in the spirit of humility that characterized the life and thought of our Holy Father Augustine. In particular, the Discalced Augustinians look to the *kenosis* of Christ¹⁸ as a model of spirituality to live out the vow of humility, the essence of which is to not aspire to or actively seek ecclesiastical positions and offices.

73) Humility is the soul of the process of conversion to Christ (baptism), in all dimensions of the person (consecration with vows), in the specific ecclesial reality (the religious family of the Discalced Augustinians), with a heart open to the mission wherever one is called to serve.

¹⁵ Acts 2:42-47.

¹⁶ Const. 3.

¹⁷ Phil. 2:1-4.

¹⁸ Phil. 2:6-8.

74) Joy is the expression of fully embracing one's identity in Christ and as a consecrated person, of sharing in the wonders accomplished by grace in the lives of the called and the Church, and of generously giving and consuming love.

75) Formation journey of those who desire to choose religious life in the Discalced Augustinians aims to embrace certain values that will be subject to vigilant discernment:

- Full availability to the love of God and the pursuit of encounter with Him in communal and personal prayer.
- Constant listening to and meditation on the Word of God.
- Serene integration and participation in fraternal life in Community, practicing all the virtues it requires, with particular attention to balanced emotional growth.
- Self-denial and selfless generosity in service, with a spirit of humility, lived with joy both in common life and in pastoral action.

76) The assistance to grow in love¹⁹ accompanies those who are called to follow Jesus Christ as religious in the Community of the Discalced Augustinians. Indeed, love is the only valid and fulfilling motivation for discipleship, as it aims to harmonize every further desire and pursuit decisively, and to concretely organize one's lifestyle according to the *Rule*, Proper Law, and the directives of the Superiors.

B) CHARISM IN THE HOLY ORDER

77) The Order of the Discalced Augustinians is a clerical Institute whose members are religious clerics and brothers. This choice is based on the life of our Holy Father Augustine, who initially dedicated himself to prayer and study in the Community of Tagaste. Only later, after a clear manifestation of God's call, did he become a Priest and Bishop.

78) Therefore, formation journey and the charism take into account the mission that arises from both religious consecration and Holy Order and their exercise.

79) The clerical nature of the Order does not allow the religious brothers to assume government Offices, but this does not diminish the choice of a life of total consecration to God according to the charism. It does not exclude them from witnessing the primacy of the Kingdom of Heaven and living the common life to the fullest.

80) The formation for those called to the ordained ministry prepares them to be dispensers of the Gospel message, of grace through preaching and administration of the sacraments, as well as for the governance of the Order with the full exercise of active and passive voice.

C) CHARISM IN THE FORMATION STAGES

81) The charism of the Discalced Augustinians applies in a distinct way to each stage of formation.

82) §1. In the initial formation (Aspirancy and Postulancy), the candidate is invited to be "joyfully serving the Most High" by fully accepting their Christian identity as a child in the Son, received through Baptism, and becoming more aware of it until they choose to live it more radically.

§2. The initial formation is the time to discern the call to consecration, from the acceptance in the Aspirancy to the decision to begin the Novitiate.

¹⁹ Reg. 1; 48.

83) §1. In the formation for particular consecration (Novitiate and Professed Formation), the candidate is invited to be “joyfully serving the Most High” by accepting his call to follow Jesus Christ in a form of life similar to His.

§2. The formation for particular consecration is the time to mature in belonging to the Discalced Augustinians’ religious family.

84) §1. In the formation for service in the ordained ministry, the candidate is invited to be “joyfully serving the Most High” in His mystical body, the Church, by accepting to receive Holy Order and serving the Order’s community through government offices and the ecclesial community in pastoral service.

§2. The formation for service in the ordained ministry is the time to prepare for the *munus* of sanctifying, teaching, and governing, especially in connection with the sacrament of Holy Order.

2.3 *Communitarian characteristic*

85) §1. Love for the universal Church, the local Church, and one’s own Community is expressed in multiple forms and has a well-stated theological foundation in the thought of our Holy Father Augustine: “We have therefore the Holy Spirit if we love the Church; but we love the Church if we stand firm in its union and charity”²⁰.

§2. This love is manifested through worthy conduct, as our Holy Father Augustine exhorts: “He that would live has where to live, has whence to live. Let him draw near, let him believe; let him be embodied, that he may be made to live. Let him not shrink from the compact of members; let him not be a rotten member that deserves to be cut off; let him not be a deformed member whereof to be ashamed; let him be a fair, fit, and sound member; let him cleave to the body, live for God by God: now let him labor on earth, that hereafter he may reign in heaven”²¹.

86) Christian and religious education is based on love and aims to correct natural selfishness - often presumptuous - by promoting sociality, synodality, participation, collaboration, subsidiarity, benevolence, gratuitousness, forgiveness, and communion, which are characteristic of those who intend to live their belonging to the Church. The *Rule* reminds that: “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”²².

87) §1. The Community welcomes the gift of personal calling and recognizes and promotes it.

§2. The reception, evaluation, and promotion of the candidate (religious consecration and Holy Order) are determined by the judgment of the Superiors with the consent of their Councils, according to universal and Proper Law, which includes the opinion of the religious communities in which the candidates live.

§3. All these Communities contribute to attesting the suitability of those who wish to become part of the Order of the Discalced Augustinians.

²⁰ In Io. Ev. tr. 32,8.

²¹ In Io. Ev. tr. 26,13.

²² Reg. 31.

88) §1. The approval required by universal and Proper Law is to recognize the suitability and seriousness of the candidates.

§2. The evaluation of the suitability and seriousness of the candidates must avoid any superficiality or improvisation, refraining from personal viewpoints and following scrupulously the criteria indicated by the Superiors.

3. Articulation of objectives

89) Each candidate is called to adequately develop the different dimensions of their person in the light of Christian and Augustinian spirituality. These dimensions include: Each candidate is called to adequately develop the different dimensions of their person in the light of Christian and Augustinian spirituality. These dimensions include:

- Mystical-Spiritual dimension;
- Charismatic-Augustinian dimension;
- Communitarian dimension;
- Intellectual-Cultural dimension;
- Psycho-Affective dimension;
- Apostolic-Pastoral dimension.

3.1 Mystical-Spiritual dimension

A) PRAYER

90) The prayer, understood as a personal response to God that attracts, reaches its fullness when it involves the Community, which has as its essential reason to “intent upon God in oneness of mind and heart”²³.

91) §1. Our Holy Father Augustine prefers to speak of prayer as a desire that arises from love and nourishes love: “And see ye what longings there are in the hearts of men: one longs for gold, another longs for silver, another longs for possessions, another inheritance, another abundance of money, another many herds, another a wife, another honors, another sons. You see those longings, how they are in the hearts of men. All men are inflamed with longing, and scarce is found one to say, My soul has thirsted for You. For men thirst for the world: and perceive not themselves to be in the desert, where their souls ought to thirst for God”²⁴.

§2. Educating in prayer means educating in desire and love for God, remembering that the first and irreplaceable guide for prayer is the “Inner Teacher”, that is, the Spirit that ignites in us the desire and prays in us²⁵.

92) §1. It is essential in formation journey to celebrate the liturgy together, the official prayers or those recommended by the Church, as well as what is required or advised by our Ritual²⁶.

§2. The uniformity of the celebration of liturgical rites visibly manifests the unity of heart and mind; communal prayer manifests and supports communion through testimonies, sharing, exhortations, and participatory reflections.

²³ Reg. 3.

²⁴ In Ps. 63,3.

²⁵ Rom. 8:26-27.

²⁶ Const. 20.

§3. Common prayer is expressed through the Liturgy of the Hours, meditation, and the Mass. Therefore, wisely, the *Rule* prescribes having a suitable place, established hours and times, harmony, and retreat. Hence the importance of teaching to care for the *decorum* of the chapel, fidelity and punctuality in prayer, and liturgical formation.

B) SACRAMENTS

93) The *Constitutions* reserve a chapter for LITURGICAL LIFE and affirm that: “it puts the witness of the contemplation of divine things and of constant union with God in prayer”²⁷.

94) §1. A valid and effective formation in personal prayer is nourished by a genuine liturgical spirit, with the gradual reading and knowledge of the Bible, with the regular and attentive celebration of the sacraments, with constant reference to the Spiritual Director, with regular confession, and devout exercises.

§2. Those responsible for formation must lead the formandi to draw more abundantly and appropriately from these sources; at the same time, the formandi must be prepared to become competent and faithful communicators of what they receive.

95) The essential role of liturgy in the Christian life and prayer is testified by the attention given to it by the Second Vatican Council and is reminded by our Holy Father Augustine when he affirms that the Sacred Scripture, common participation, the celebration of the mysteries, and preaching all contribute to igniting in us the desire for God²⁸.

96) The sacraments are the primary source that nourishes communion with God.

97) §1. Baptism is the first sacrament and marks the beginning of new life in Christ.

§2. Baptism is the foundation of religious consecration.

§3. It is good to encourage religious to remember and celebrate the date of their baptism.

98) §1. The Eucharist nourishes and satisfies the soul; therefore, formandi and religious should value the Mass, Eucharistic communion, personal and communal adoration, avoiding any superficiality that may arise from habit.

§2. The Eucharist is the bread of life: “O mystery of piety! O sign of unity! O bond of charity! He that would live has where to live, has whence to live. Let him draw near, let him believe; let him be embodied, that he may be made to live”²⁹.

§3. In the Eucharist, moreover, “the prophetic witness of consecrated men and women shines forth in a particular way, as they find in the Eucharistic celebration and adoration the strength for the radical following of Christ in obedience, poverty, and chastity”³⁰.

99) Reconciliation is an irreplaceable source of grace; therefore, formandi and religious should be formed, according to their age and maturity, with appropriate instructions and the choice of qualified Confessors, and be prepared to celebrate it regularly and fruitfully.

²⁷ Const. 11.

²⁸ Conf. X,40,10.

²⁹ In Io. Ev. tr. 26,13.

³⁰ SacCar 81.

C) COMMUNION OF THE SAINTS

100) Every Catholic, and every religious in particular, nurtures filial devotion and trust towards the Virgin Mary, who is the first disciple and consecrated one because she entrusted herself completely, saying, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord”³¹.

101) Mary is a model of fraternal life in Community, as evidenced by her presence in the cenacle among the disciples, both fearful and trusting. “She nourishes the life of the heart with delicate affections and makes the Community a family”³²; She is a splendid example of humility, hiddenness, and service.

102) Mary is the mother by express command of the dying Jesus³³, and every Christian needs a mother who is a dispenser and guardian, a point of reference and refuge, capable of understanding and support in all stages of their life.

103) The Augustinian tradition looks to Mary as the Mother of Grace and Mother of Consolation³⁴. These titles highlight and confirm that Jesus is the first source of grace and consolation, and they remind us that Mary is the first and privileged channel of this gift.

104) §1. The close relationship between the Mother and Jesus is also expressed through the prayer of the Rosary, which presents Mary as the one who can best lead us to the knowledge and love of Jesus through the meditation of the Gospel scenes or mysteries of His earthly life.

§2. The practice of the Rosary, recommended by the *Directory*, should be appropriately explained and instilled with the necessary gradualness required by the maturity of the formandi³⁵.

105) §1. Even the saints guide and assist in the journey that leads to the mountain of God.

§2. The entire Church and various religious families have always looked to Saint Joseph as a model of a righteous man who plans his life by trusting in the word of God and collaborates, providing for the fulfillment of His plans.

3.2 *Charismatic-Augustinian dimension*

106) Meditation of the works of our Holy Father Augustine, in a spiritual way, is an ideal tool for assimilating the spirituality, passion, and faith that animated him, in order to relive his teachings and pastoral love in the present day.

107) It is necessary and beneficial to remember the example and intercession of the saints and Augustinian confreres who are particularly close:

- Saint Nicholas of Tolentino: a prototype of the renewal of Augustinian life, to whom the Discalced Augustinians have dedicated their first Convents and Houses.
- Venerable Servant of God Fr. Giovanni da San Guglielmo: an example of harmony between the austerity of life and the contemplative recollection, with constant exercise of preaching.
- Venerable Servant of God Fr. Carlo Giacinto Sanguinetti: tireless in apostolic ministry, devoted to Mary, and faithful to fraternal life in Community.

³¹ Luk 1:38.

³² Const. 10.

³³ John 19:26.

³⁴ Const. 10.

³⁵ Dir. 11.

- Venerable Servant of God Fra Santo da San Domenico: a lover of the Eucharist, humble, and charitable towards all.
- Venerable Servant of God Fra Luigi Chmel: a model of patience and endurance in union with the Crucified Christ.

108) The roots that transmit the necessary nourishment for the growth and maturity of every religious are diverse and differentiated. Therefore, formation journey must give due importance to these roots, avoiding neglect or severance, but continually rediscovering and revitalizing each of them. Other devotions, especially those mentioned in our *Ritual*, should be appropriately valued and practiced.

3.3 *Communitarian dimension*

109) There are many situations, opportunities, and tools that impact the growth of individuals: the environment in which one lives, the groups and people one associates with, the readings, the means of social communication, recreational and leisure activities, etc. It is the duty of the Master to teach how to use them in a manner consistent with the lifestyle required of those who consecrate themselves to God in the Order of the Discalced Augustinians.

110) Impulsive and egocentric temperaments that easily create tensions, conflicts, divisions, and jealousies are considered contraindicated for religious life in the Discalced Augustinians, especially if they are resistant to attempts at correction.

111) However, it should not be ignored, and even less hidden, that the journey is constantly slowed down and hindered by emotions and impulses that risk compromising the achievement of the goal and common life.

112) Transparency, self-control, and ascetic exercise are necessary to prevent the practice of virtues from becoming impossible and frustrating. Therefore, special care and vigilance are increasingly necessary in interpersonal relationships and communication tools such as readings, shows, the internet, the use of cell phones, and others. Aware of human frailty, our Holy Father Augustine dedicates the entire Chapter IV of the *Rule* to the theme of modesty and prevention.

3.4 *Intellectual-Cultural dimension*

113) §1. Only human beings are capable of creating culture, which is the result of their intelligent interaction with the surrounding world.

§2. Culture is received, transmitted, and renewed; each culture has its specific dignity as a reflection of the human being who relates to nature, others, society, and oneself.

§3. Culture reflects that restlessness which, in Augustinian terms, is the search for truth and for God. Consequently, part of formation occurs through experience and study.

114) §1. Many cultural forms do not oppose the Christian vision of life and the world. They should be known, appreciated, and defended because they promote the evangelization of entire peoples and nations. However, there are others, along with certain lifestyles, that are openly incompatible with the message of Jesus.

§2. Formandi must be guided so that, in contact with different cultures, including their own, they can distinguish, discern, choose, and act accordingly in the light of the Gospel and revealed truths.

A) CHALLENGE OF INTERCULTURALITY

115) §1. Interculturality is the interaction among different cultures. It is a challenge and an opportunity to bear witness to the Gospel and the Kingdom of Heaven.

§2. The multiethnic and multicultural composition of religious communities is a new and significantly important aspect of consecrated life. Indeed, interculturality is now a charism with which Institutes have enriched themselves, sometimes reluctantly.

§3. The exchange between different cultural heritages enriches individuals, despite the difficult experience of intercultural mediation and encounters/conflicts between people marked by limitations and sin.

§4. Interculturality is a process, sometimes arduous and painful, but open to the logic of the Gospel. In some parts of the world, where nationalism and fear towards migrants resurface, the multiethnic coexistence of religious communities serves as an example of communion founded on faith and charity.

116) The Discalced Augustinians embrace interculturality as a value and a richness; the variety of cultures promotes integration in formation communities, the welcoming of candidates from various provinces, mutual understanding, the composition of multiethnic and multicultural communities, and the overcoming of a monoethnic face of the Order.

117) The Discalced Augustinians, due to the exchanges between Provinces in a spirit of fraternal collaboration, live this new charism that is a source of cultural enrichment for the religious and an increase in evangelizing action.

118) The vast network of communications and relationships, whether occasional or stable, facilitates encounters between different cultures. However, in order to emerge from these encounters enriched rather than harmed, it is necessary to have a clear perception of one's personal, religious, and charismatic identity.

B) CHALLENGE OF TECHNOLOGY

119) Culture, in its positive and negative aspects, is now easily accessible through increasingly widespread and sophisticated means of communication. These tools objectively serve as valuable aids for informing and educating, offering equal opportunities for learning on a global level. However, their influence on the relational level is a cause for serious concern. Technology can, in fact, be a source of addiction, isolation, hindrance to interpersonal dialogue and sharing, and can become the sole form of recreation and an opportunity to easily circumvent the obligations arising from vows.

120) Own identity is recognized through interiority, which requires reflection, silence, generosity, prudence, communal dialogue with mutual respect, and finally, study approached with a critical and humble spirit. Only through this path, which is not always easy, can one free oneself from the superficiality of trends and the slavery of conformity.

C) CHALLENGE OF STUDY IN AN AUGUSTINIAN LIGHT

121) Love for truth requires love for study, as our Holy Father Augustine demonstrated through his own life.

122) §1. Cultural and intellectual growth in the Order primarily occurs through philosophical and theological study programs. All those who intend to embrace religious and priestly life must pursue these studies, paying attention to the formative paths of each candidate.

§2. It is the duty of the Superiors to ensure that these programs are scrupulously followed.

§3. Those responsible for formation should ensure that the study programs provide a rich and secure knowledge base, and that the formandi demonstrate interest in learning and the ability to apply the acquired elements, going beyond the mere duty of academic work.

§4. Study is not only the acquisition of tools for the exercise of ordained ministry but is also part of the spiritual search. This is especially true for topics related to spirituality, philosophy, and theology in their various branches.

123) In the Discalced Augustinians, studying is not aimed at academic careers, intellectualism, or distancing oneself from common life, service, love for the Church, and love for one's neighbor. While pursuing specialized study paths (Degree, Specialization, Master, Doctorate), the needs of the Order and the particular Church in which one is inserted should always be kept in mind.

124) The inclination towards intellectual work must be actively cultivated by all religious through reading, studying the Sacred Scripture and the Fathers of the Church (especially Augustine), personal updating, and through the opportunities provided by the Order, the particular Church, and the universal Church.

125) §1. All religious are required to complete the first cycle of philosophical and theological studies.

§2. Clerical religious are asked to develop their skills in view of the Holy Order and for the good of the Order, with a focus on biblical sciences, patrology, canon law, and spiritual theology.

§3. Depending on the stage of formation, certain study paths should be favored over others.

3.5 Psycho-Affective dimension

A) FORMATION FOR THE VOWS: CHASTITY

126) Chastity has its attraction in the example of Jesus and in the invitation that He extends to those who want to follow Him more closely. Therefore, candidates for religious life should be carefully formed in this state³⁶, the matter of which is indicated in the Proper Law³⁷.

127) §1. The virtue of chastity is broader than the vow that excludes the exercise of sexuality and calls for the choice of celibacy in the Church.

§2. The virtue of chastity tends to orient towards a greater love that opens up to the fruitfulness of spiritual fatherhood and recalls, through transparent and serene witness, the fullness of the Father that will only be fulfilled at the end of one's life: "for You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You"³⁸.

128) Just as in interpersonal relationships, only those who love are faithful, so fidelity to consecrated celibacy is sustained by the love for and of God. The love for God within us is not the result of our choice or will, but a gift that God has poured out and nurtured in our hearts. Consequently, fidelity is also a gift and a responsibility. It is a gift to be

³⁶ OT 10.

³⁷ Const. 24-26; Dir. 13-15.

³⁸ Conf. I,1,1.

received, guarded, and nurtured, as our Holy Father Augustine proposes³⁹. The saint also reminds us that humility is the best guardian of chastity because the humble, aware of their own insufficiency, can appreciate the gifts⁴⁰.

129) A proper formation in chastity and celibacy is, first and foremost, an education in loving according to the vocation and gift received from the Holy Spirit, who chooses some to be witnesses of the fully self-giving, gratuitous, and universal love that is in God and born from God. Chastity gives wings to the love that moves our feet towards the Lord and our brothers and sisters⁴¹.

130) The ability to embrace the vow of chastity freely for the good of the whole Church is nourished by the charity infused by the Holy Spirit and facilitated by a growing emotional maturity that finds its concrete ground of verification, testing, and growth in the relational dimension.

131) Attracted by the virtue of chastity and consecrated celibacy, religious make the vow, aware that they are not undergoing any diminishment, but convinced that they are being empowered to love in a greater way. They commit themselves to making this love known and appreciated through unconditional, serene, and generous fidelity.

132) The formation in the practice of chastity requires clarity regarding the different aspects of the person it involves. It should not be taken for granted that the formandi have received comprehensive sexual education in light of the Church's doctrine. Nor should it be excluded that the formandi have never engaged in sexual activity, consummating sexual relationships. It should also not be excluded that each person fully accepts their own sexuality and corporeality.

133) Sexuality, an integral part of the somatic and psychic structure of the human being and closely connected to their maturation, if accepted serenely, leads to the development of all its positive potential for the purposes proposed by the received and embraced vocation. In this transformative journey, it is necessary to proceed with the delicacy and gradualness suggested by the knowledge of the fundamental notions that allow us to understand the various processes of evolution and maturation that accompany the growth of the formandi. Sexuality is to be considered a divine gift.

134) Taking into account what has already been stated regarding the risks of inappropriate use of media⁴², moments of awareness of affective dynamics, especially in the early stages of formation, should be encouraged. Education should focus on silence, autonomy, and emotional freedom, as well as fostering a healthy relationship with food and maintaining a proper balance between sleep and wakefulness. Further signs of emotional maturity include academic performance and mood variability.

135) The growth of a healthy self-esteem, the ability to recognize one's own and others' qualities, gratitude, forgiveness, and fraternal correction should be fostered.

136) While emotional maturity is undoubtedly fostered by an open relational style that is willing to share, engage in dialogue, and offer constructive criticism, it also requires the ability to experience solitude, frustrations, and the challenges of pastoral work and common life. Habitual gratification of emotional needs can lead to dependence on places

³⁹ Serm. 343.

⁴⁰ De sancta virg. 51,52.

⁴¹ In Ps. 33,2d,10.

⁴² *Ratio* 119.

and people, while the lack of gratification can lead to isolation, conflict, and negative forms of compensation with serious repercussions on perseverance.

137) The beauty that enhances and makes chastity consecrated delicate requires the utmost care in preparing the formandi for a conscious, free, challenging, and inspiring choice, not devoid of risks but rich in rewards. It is an irrevocable choice because it is total and faithful.

138) The tools experienced, useful, and necessary are fundamental for perseverance: a solid spiritual life, regular and transparent dialogue with the Spiritual Director, and proper and active openness and participation in common life.

139) Formation in chastity will prioritize different aspects depending on the stages of formation:

- In the initial formation (Aspirancy and Postulancy), greater emphasis should be placed on aspects related to the affective and psychological dimensions. This includes sexual education in accordance with the Doctrine of the Church, understanding the value of marriage, and critically examining contemporary cultural aspects related to this area.
- In the formation for particular consecration (Novitiate and Professed Stage), greater emphasis should be placed on spiritual, moral, and canonical aspects related to the vow of chastity.
- In the formation for service in ordained ministry (Clerical Stage and Ongoing Formation), greater emphasis should be placed on aspects related to practical self-discipline, relational skills, and self-care.

140) The common mindset in the environments in which we live and work often considers as beautiful and good what selfishly pleases and satisfies. Consequently, what appears to be gratifying is produced, advertised, and spread, disregarding any moral norms. This is facilitated by the lack of a true anthropology that opposes the subjective and arbitrary definition of one's own sexual identity, detached from any connection with biological reality and the truth of behaviors.

141) Considering the issues that have emerged in recent years in the Church, it is even more necessary to do everything possible to help the formandi in their healthy and robust growth in emotional and sexual maturity.

B) FORMATION FOR THE VOWS: POVERTY

142) Poverty is the virtue by which God is recognized and appreciated as the supreme good, for the attainment and full possession of which one is willing to reorder, at the cost of renunciations and detachments, their relationship with every other true or presumed good.

143) The life of Jesus is a splendid example of choosing what matters most: the Kingdom of Heaven. He asks his followers to leave and abandon, to follow Him, even the most beloved people and things. When sending them on a mission, He recommends and commands them not to seek or expect reward or gain.

144) The history of the Church demonstrates how the practice of poverty has benefited the spread of the Gospel, while wealth and power have, on the contrary, been detrimental.

145) Everyday experience teaches how effective the witness of poverty is in a society that is constantly tempted to prioritize material possessions and equate them with goodness and happiness.

146) Augustinian poverty is founded on sharing, and its model is the first Community of Jerusalem⁴³. In fact, our Holy Father Augustine is very determined and demanding towards his clergy⁴⁴, to the extent that in the *Rule* he prescribes: “call nothing your own, but let everything be yours in common”⁴⁵.

147) §1. Humility and harmony in the Community are born and nurtured through renunciation and sharing⁴⁶.

§2. Prioritizing the common good over personal advantage and being able to renounce one’s own fleeting needs nourish what truly matters: charity⁴⁷.

§3. The practice of poverty is a source of true communion for formandi who come from different regions or countries, or from certain realities marked by poverty.

148) To live the virtue of poverty and the spirit of the vow, it is necessary to free oneself from the ideal of life proposed in a society of well-being: producing to possess, possessing to consume, and consuming to enjoy. Therefore, it is necessary to educate, with determination, towards a sober lifestyle, both personally and communally, avoiding the risk of nullifying the spiritual value of poverty and betraying the expectations of those who await solidarity and witness from religious who declare themselves poor by choice.

149) The formation in poverty will prioritize different aspects depending on the stages of formation:

- In the initial formation (Aspirancy and Postulancy), emphasis will be placed on the willingness to share material and spiritual goods freely, the sharing of choices regarding the use of personal assets, love and respect for common things, the rejection of waste and unnecessary goods, transparency in the use of money and receiving donations.
- In the formation for particular consecration (Novitiate and Professed Stage), there will be a focus on full transparency regarding personal properties, knowledge of the object of the vow and the requirements before making Simple and Solemn Profession, transparency and education in accounting for the administration of money, avoiding administrative autonomy, and educating in the sharing of received goods.
- In the formation for service in ordained ministry (Clerical Stage and Ongoing Formation), after Solemn Profession, there will be an emphasis on sharing the fruits of one’s work and received offerings, the preparation of legal documents related to the Professed’s goods, the preparation of financial reports, keeping accounting records, and instruction on the Offices of the Economo and administrator of the Order’s goods.

150) §1. Work, in its various expressions, has effective educational value and should be carried out in the light of the professed poverty.

§2. Even the most modest and seemingly insignificant work should be performed with responsibility and dedication.

⁴³ Acts 4:34-35.

⁴⁴ Sermon. 355; 356.

⁴⁵ Reg. 4.

⁴⁶ Reg. 30.

⁴⁷ Reg. 31.

§3. Work contributes to the harmony and beauty of one's environment and the world; it sustains the Community and helps those in need; it fosters an awareness of the value and transience of material things; it fosters trust in Providence⁴⁸.

151) If idleness is the father of all vices, work is the source of virtues: diligence, punctuality, mutual respect, self-control, patience, subsidiarity, collaboration, and sharing.

152) Work reveals the potential and limitations of individuals. It can lead to service and generosity, as well as pride and presumption. It can foster respect for rules and Community, but also independence and protagonism. It can enable people to share each other's burdens, but it can also fuel greed and selfishness.

C) FORMATION FOR THE VOWS: OBEDIENCE

153) Obedience expresses the willingness to accept and collaborate with the salvific will of God revealed and realized by Jesus Christ.

154) Obedience, instead of suppressing intelligence as it is often said, leads to freedom and personal responsibility. This is because the religious entrust themselves to a will, different from their own, that brings about the full realization of human dignity according to a plan conceived with the love of the Father.

155) In educating about obedience, it is important to underline the understanding that God manifests His will through the inner movement of the Spirit and through various external mediations such as legitimate authority, dialogue, and communal discernment. In fact, our Holy Father Augustine states in the *Rule*: "the Superior should be obeyed as a father with the respect due to him so as not to offend God in his person"⁴⁹.

156) It can happen that what is asked or commanded causes suffering because it does not align with personal plans and ideas, or because what is requested – or who requests it – seems unconvincing. "Those who find themselves in such situations now should not forget that mediation by its nature is limited and inferior to that to which it refers, even more so if it deals with human mediation in relation to the divine will; but one should remember that every time one finds oneself faced with a command given legitimately that the Lord requests obedience to the person in authority who, at that moment, represents Him"⁵⁰.

157) The role of authority is necessary and irreplaceable in the Community. It maintains order, prevents the dominance of some over others, encourages understanding and collaboration, and fosters harmony and charity.

158) Obedience needs to be accompanied by inner motivations of faith and humility. The candidate who obeys does not simply carry out tasks, but actively participates, allows themselves to be involved, gives and builds themselves and the Community.

159) The formation in obedience will prioritize, at all stages of formation, docility towards Superiors and the Master, and respect for authority, especially in public, in the spirit of the *Rule*.

⁴⁸ Const. 35; 272.

⁴⁹ Reg. 44.

⁵⁰ DICASTERY FOR INSTITUTES OF CONSECRATED LIFE AND SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE, *The Service of Authority and Obedience* (2008), n. 10.

160) It is important for religious to understand the ways in which authority is exercised and the circumstances in which obedience is practiced.

D) FORMATION FOR THE VOWS: HUMILITY

161) §1. In the virtues practiced by Jesus, we find the clearest manifestation and most effective realization of His total dedication to the Father and to His brothers and sisters through a life of obedience, chastity, poverty, and humility. Following the example of Christ, all religious make the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience the object of their Profession, according to the provisions of their *Statutes*.

§2. According to their tradition, the Discalced Augustinians have added a fourth vow, that of humility, initially codified in the formula of Profession as a commitment to “not aspire”, for a more radical exercise of humility and commitment to common life.

162) §1. Humility is an existential and essential virtue for Christian perfection because, as our Holy Father Augustine says, it identifies with “the humble Jesus”⁵¹.

§2. The imitation of the *kenosis* of the Lord⁵² and the evangelical self-emptying is achieved through gradual and constant formation in asceticism, discretion, and silence.

163) The value of humility does not lie in the mortification of one’s nature and the gifts that enrich the person, but in the reduction of any excessive selfishness that hinders charity from fully expressing itself. Where there is humility, there is love. This is the path traced and indicated by Christ⁵³.

164) Humility adopts the attitude of a mother who is the queen of the house not because she commands everyone, but because she serves everyone. Our Holy Father Augustine teaches this in the *Rule* when he says, “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”⁵⁴. In our Communities, the Local Superior is called the Prior, because they are the one who goes first and leads the way.

165) The scope and spirit of the vow of humility are well explained by the traditional formula of “not aspire”. This expression indicates a state of mind in which one refrains from striving, directly or indirectly, to obtain something. “Not aspire” impartially and respectfully regulates the information, discussions, and exchanges of opinions that generally precede the provision of Offices and Appointments⁵⁵.

166) Even though the vow of humility made by the Discalced Augustinians was formalized later, in the early years of the Reform, it fully corresponds to the Augustinian spirituality and the tradition of our religious family.

167) The formation in humility will prioritize, at all stages of formation, the positive aspects of the vow that enable growth and fulfillment, despite apparent mortification and reduction.

168) §§1. The discipline required for the practice of humility, instead of generating frustration and consequent anguish and sadness, promotes respect and acceptance for

⁵¹ Conf. VII,18,24.

⁵² Phil. 2:1-11.

⁵³ Ep. 118,3.22.

⁵⁴ Reg. 46.

⁵⁵ Const. 41-43.

others and is therefore an irreplaceable factor in enriching communion within the Community.

§2. Humility indeed diminishes excessive self-focus and opens up to generous availability; it generates benevolence, joy, security, and hope; it educates in the serenity of judgment; it combats every prejudice; it predisposes to receive with gratitude and to formulate admonitions and corrections with delicacy; it opens up to conversion; it builds peace and harmony; it also predisposes to service where one is called to exercise ministry and to love the specific reality in which obedience has sent.

3.6 *Apostolic-Pastoral dimension*

169) Apostolate is everything that contributes to the growth of the Kingdom of Heaven in society, in the Church, and in the Community. All Christians, especially religious, are called to apostolate.

170) The first apostolate and the first testimony that society and the Church ask of religious is the consistency with the Gospel style that they have publicly professed to follow. This lifestyle is concretized in the practice of vows and in the harmony of fraternity within the Community, and it anticipates, albeit imperfectly, the future condition of the Kingdom of Heaven.

171) Apostolate is born from the love of God, it is nourished by a deep union with Him, and it is expressed through prayer, testimony, and works that are carried out according to the characteristics of the religious family, the directives of the Superiors, the choices of the Community, and personal gifts and inclinations.

172) The formandi should be prepared to harmonize, for a fruitful exercise of apostolate, the requirements indicated in the *Constitutions* and practice the witness of common life⁵⁶.

173) The various forms of apostolate required by the signs of the times and the indications of the Church find ample space in the nature and purpose of the Discalced Augustinians. Therefore, a gradual integration of the formandi into activities deemed suitable for their age and preparation should be ensured. Everything should be carried out under the careful guidance of the Master and without any detriment to studies and common life.

174) Apostolate is a call made by the Lord through the Superiors, and they may ask a religious to carry out a ministry that is not fully in line with their preparation or personal inclination. The ministry should be carried out by the religious without a spirit of competition or independence.

175) The religious called to exercise a pastoral ministry must give witness to docility to the Bishops, who are the primary responsible for pastoral action. The religious Priests should be integrated into the pastoral care of the local Church, even if they are not in charge of souls.

176) The Professed (in Clerical Stage) should receive formation and education to understand the relationship that exists between the Bishops and the religious according to the provisions of the Church, and to offer their collaboration with the Ordinary, the diocesan clergy, other religious families, and the laity.

⁵⁶ Const. 53-65.

177) The apostolate of religious must also pay close attention to the care of vocations, particularly to consecrated life and the priesthood, which contribute in a special way to the growth of the Kingdom of Heaven.

178) To make every form of apostolate effective, let us instill what Pope Saint Paul VI wrote: “modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses”⁵⁷. Along the same lines, Pope Benedict XVI adds: “consequently, in order to foster vocations to the ministerial priesthood and the consecrated life, and to be more effective in promoting the discernment of vocations, we cannot do without the example of those who have already said ‘yes’ to God and to his plan for the life of each individual”⁵⁸.

⁵⁷ PAUL VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), n. 41.

⁵⁸ BENEDICT XVI, *Message for the 47th World Day of Prayer for Vocations*.

PART II.

THE FORMATION IN ITS STAGES

Section 1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

179) 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.

180) 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 Solemn Profession and Ordination.

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

182) 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 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.

183) 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 law.

184) §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.

Section 2. ASPIRANTATE

1. General Objective

185) §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.⁵⁹

§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

186) 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.

187) §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

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

- personal and religious certificates (baptism and confirmation);
- basic information on their state of health⁶⁰;
- qualifications;
- *curriculum vitae*;
- any certificates of good conduct or similar.

189) For each Aspirant, the personal form should be filled in according to modern pedagogical criteria. The documentation is to be updated always⁶¹.

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

⁵⁹ Const. 85; Dir. 83.

⁶⁰ 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.

⁶¹ 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*

191) §1. Ensure that applicants have obtained superior secondary school diplomas⁶².

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

192) The regular continuation of studies, the Aspirantate combines programs and activities aimed at verifying and promoting the particular vocation, taking care of psycho-93affective 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*

194) §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*

195) 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 education⁶³.

196) 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.

⁶² Dir. 86.

⁶³ 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.

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

198) 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 ministry, it is aimed at giving a human and Christian formation with the richness of Augustinian spirituality.

199) §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 otherwise⁶⁴.

200) §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 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.

201) §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

202) §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.

203) 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.

204) 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

205) 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.

⁶⁴ Dir. 88.

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

206) 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.

207) 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 house according to the possibility and generosity.

208) The Formators should evaluate together with the Major Superiors and Aspirants how to direct the management of the possible economic resources of the candidates.

209) 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

210) Mystical-Spiritual dimension:

- formation in common 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.

211) 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).

212) Communitarian dimension:

- educate to a form of common life (schedule, common services, care of the common good and of one's own person, willingness to collaborate), material sharing, co-responsibility in the custody of common goods 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.

213) 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.

214) 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.

215) 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

216) 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

217) 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.

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

219) 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

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

3. Educating for consecration

221) 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.

222) 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.

223) Because the candidate, at the end of the postulancy, "he can be admitted to the novitiate is necessary that he has an aptitude for common life, sincere faith, adequate human and spiritual preparation, and discretionary and affective maturity"⁶⁵.

224) §1. Superiors should keep in mind that the Aspirantate and the postulancy are distinct stages of formation 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.

⁶⁵ Const. 89, §1.

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

4. Articulation of the Objectives

225) 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.

226) Mystical-Spiritual dimension:

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

227) Charismatic-Augustinian dimension:

- deepen the typical Augustinian devotions.

228) Communitarian dimension:

- live opportune common moments of religious consecration.

229) 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.

230) Psycho-Affective dimension:

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

231) Apostolic-Pastoral dimension:

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

Section 4. NOVITIATE⁶⁶

1. General Objective

232) The objective of the Novitiate is to consciously embrace the choice of consecration *Ration* 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.

233) 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.⁶⁷

2. Guidelines

2.1 Admission

234) The Rite of Admission to the Novitiate foresees, according to the ritual of the Church, a celebration without particular solemnity with the Rite of Investiture⁶⁸.

235) 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

236) 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.

237) 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 common prayer; makes daily participation in the Eucharistic celebration the irreplaceable source of communion with Christ; he regularly approaches the Sacrament of Reconciliation through

⁶⁶ 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: *Code of Canon Law* (Book II, PART III); JOHN PAUL II: *Vita Consecrata* (1996); DICASTERY FOR INSTITUTES OF CONSECRATED LIFE AND SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE, *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes* (1990); *Fraternal Life in Community* (1994); *Starting Afresh from Christ* (2002); *Constitutions* and *Directory*.

⁶⁷ Const. 92-93.

⁶⁸ *Rite of the Religious Profession* (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.

which he receives forgiveness, the strength of conversion and perseverance, grows in the 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.

238) §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

239) §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 Novices⁶⁹.

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

240) 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 common 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.

241) 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

242) 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.

243) 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,

⁶⁹ Can. 652, §5; Const. 95, §2.

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

5. Articulation of the Objectives

244) Mystical-Spiritual dimension:

- to integrally participate in the Liturgy of the Hours according to the 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.

245) 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.

246) 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.

247) 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.

248) 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.

249) 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

250) 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.

251) As an effective member of the 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.

252) 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

253) 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 House under the guidance of the Master and the designated persons.

2.2 Procedure

254) §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.

255) §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, consecration, 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.

3. Theology Studies

256) 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.

257) §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

258) 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.

259) 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.

260) 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 considered⁷⁰.

261) 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

262) §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.

⁷⁰ 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 Order⁷¹.

§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.

263) 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.

264) 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.

265) §1. 1. The above conditions must be validated through the Chapter Approvals 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 Community to which the Professed has been sent, be it the Community of the Formation House 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 Solemn Profession or to Holy Orders.

266) §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 completed⁷².

§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

267) 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.

268) Charismatic-Augustinian dimension:

- to consistently live one's consecration with regular participation in prayers and communitarian moments;
- to wear the habit with serenity, a sign of one's consecration.

⁷¹ Dir. 102.

⁷² Const. 32.

269) 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.

270) Intellectual-Cultural dimension:

- to undertake theological studies⁷³;
- to participate in update encounters on religious life, having a deeper knowledge of Proper and Canon Law.

271) 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).

272) 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.

⁷³ The Professed generally begin their theological studies after the Novitiate and finish them before Solemn Profession.

Section 6. CLERICAL STAGE: PREPARATION FOR HOLY ORDER

1. General Objective

273) §1. The time following Solemn Profession is dedicated to preparation for Holy Order: Diaconate and Presbyterate.

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

274) 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.

275) §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 our Proper Law and proceed, having consulted those directly concerned, with far-sightedness based on the needs of the apostolate and mission.

276) 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 whole⁷⁴.

3. Legal Issues

277) §§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.).⁷⁵

278) 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.

⁷⁴ Can. 660, §2.

⁷⁵ Cost 112-114; Dir 109-112.

279) 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.

280) 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 Solemn Professed coadjutor brother to the permanent diaconate.

281) 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

282) 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.

283) Charismatic-Augustinian dimension:

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

284) 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.

285) 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.

286) Psycho-Affective dimension:

- to be able to carry out the liturgical service without unnecessary protagonism;
- to respect the liturgical rules without excesses and devotionals;
- 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.

287) 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

288) “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”⁷⁶.

2. Guidelines

289) 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.

290) 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.

291) 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.

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

293) 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, meetings, days of retreat, annual spiritual exercises, conferences, conventions, etc.

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

295) 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.

⁷⁶ Const. 114, §1.

APPENDICES

296) The access to the various stages of formation is preceded by the written request of the candidate, which must be submitted to the Major Superior of the jurisdiction of the Order to which the formative Community belongs. The request is an act that attests to the candidate's free will to proceed in formation journey; it is essential starting from admission to the Postulancy.

1. Postulancy

1.1 *Candidate: Request for admission*⁷⁷

I, N. [full name],
son of N. e N. [parents' full names],
born in ... [City/Province/Country]
on ... [month/day/year],
baptized in the Parish/church... [name],
on ... [month/day/year],
confirmed in the Parish/church... [name],
on ... [month/day/year],
thanking God for the gift of the call to religious life,
ASK you, Fr. N. [Major Superior],
Prior Provincial of the Province ... [name of the Province]⁷⁸,
having completed the time of Aspirancy
from the year ... to the year ... [indication of chronological extremes],
to be admitted to the Postulancy in the Order of Discalced Augustinians.
I commit myself to being docile to the action of the Holy Spirit
in order to respond fruitfully to the divine call.
I ask for your blessing to be faithful to God's will.
In faith.
[place, date, candidate's signature]

⁷⁷ Const. 90.

⁷⁸ Or: "Commissary of the Commissariat ..." [name of the Commissariat]; this possibility obviously applies to all other forms.

1.2 Major Superior: Act of the commencement of the Postulancy⁷⁹

Today, ... [*month/day,/year*]
in the Community ... [*name of the religious Community*]
in ... [*City/Province/Country*]
the Aspirant N. [*full name*]
HAS BEGUN the Postulancy in the Order of the Discalced Augustinians,
being free from canonical impediments
and having spent the period of Aspirancy
in the Community(s) [*name of the religious Community*]
from the year ... to the year ... [*indication of chronological extremes*].
The rite of admission was presided over by Fr. N.,
assisted by Fr. N. e by Fr. N. as witnesses.
In faith.
[*place, date, signatures = Postulant, President of the Rite, and both witnesses*]

⁷⁹ Const. 220, a. A signed original copy must be kept by the Major Superior, along with a copy of the civil and ecclesiastical documents of the Postulant.

2. Novitiate

2.1 Candidate: Request for admission⁸⁰

I, N. [full name],
son of N. e N. [parents' full names],
born in ... [City/Province/Country]
on ... [month/day/year],
baptized in the Parish/church... [name],
on ... [month/day/year],
confirmed in the Parish/church... [name],
on ... [month/day/year],
thanking God for the gift of the call to religious life,
ASK you, Fr. N. [Major Superior],
Prior Provincial of the Province ... [name of the Province],
having completed the year of Postulancy
from ... [month/day/year] to ... [month/day/year],
to be admitted to the Novitiate in the Order of Discalced Augustinians.
I commit myself to being docile to the action of the Holy Spirit
in order to respond fruitfully to the divine call.
I ask for your blessing to be faithful to God's will.
In faith.
[place, date, candidate's signature]

⁸⁰ Const. 92, §1, c.

2.2 Major Superior: Act of the commencement of the Novitiate⁸¹

Today, ... [month/day/year]
in the Community ... [name of the religious Community]
in ... [City/Province/Country]
the Postulant N. [full name]
HAS BEGUN the Novitiate in the Order of the Discalced Augustinians,
being free from canonical impediments
and having spent the year of Postulancy
in the Community(s) [name of the religious Community]
from ... [month/day/year] to ... [month/day/year],
as well as the spiritual retreat from ... to ... [month/days/year]
in the Community ... [name of the religious Community].
He received the religious name of Fra N. of ...
The rite of Initiation to religious life was presided over by Fr. N.,
assisted by Fr. N. [Local Prior] and by Fr. N. [Master of Novices] as witnesses.
In faith.
[place, date, signatures = Novice, President of the Rite, and both witnesses]

⁸¹ Can. 643; Const. 92-93; Dir. 95, §3. The act must be transcribed in a specific *Register*; a signed original copy must be kept by the Major Superior, along with a copy of the civil and ecclesiastical documents of the Novice.

3. Simple Profession

3.1 Candidate: Request for admission⁸²

I, Fra N. [full name] of ...,
son of N. e N. [parents' full names],
born in ... [City/Province/Country]
on ... [month/day/year],
baptized in the Parish/church... [name],
on ... [month/day/year],
confirmed in the Parish/church... [name],
on ... [month/day/year],
thanking God for the gift of the call to religious life,
ASK you, Fr. N. [Major Superior],
Prior Provincial of the Province ... [name of the Province],
having completed the year of Novitiate
from ... [month/day/year] to ... [month/day/year],
to be admitted to the Simple Profession for four years
in the Order of the Discalced Augustinians.

I commit myself to being docile to the action of the Holy Spirit,
living the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, obedience and humility,
observing the *Rule*, the *Constitutions* and the *Directory*,
following the dispositions of the Superiors,
in order to accomplish the ideal of evangelical perfection in this Order.

I ask for your blessing to be faithful to God's will.

In faith.

[place, date, candidate's signature]

⁸² Can. 656, §4; Const. 101, d; Dir. 100.

3.2 Candidate: Declaration of the transfer of use and usufruct of goods⁸³

I, ... [full name],
in the fullness of my faculties,
freely and according to the provisions of the universal
and Proper Law of the Order of Discalced Augustinians,
grant the use of my movable
and immovable property⁸⁴
to ... [full name].
[place, date, signature]

3.3 Candidate: Handwritten testament⁸⁵

Today, ... [month/day/year],
in accordance with the *Code of Canon Law* and our *Constitutions*,
and before making my Simple Profession in the Order of Discalced Augustinians,
I, ... [full name],
born in ... [City/Province/Country]
on ... [month/day/year],
appoint ... [full name],
my universal heir of the goods I possess.
[place, date, signature]

⁸³ The *Code of Canon Law* prescribes that during Simple Profession, the Religious does not lose the right of ownership but only the right to freely use or administer their goods by transferring the management to whomever they wish. Therefore, at the time of Solemn Profession, it is necessary for the Religious to indicate in writing the names of those to whom they intend to entrust the use and administration of their movable or immovable property. In case of transfer of usufruct, it is necessary to draw up a public deed with a notary.

⁸⁴ In case of usufruct, it is necessary to explicitly indicate what will be transferred and its specific characteristics, such as a house, land, car, etc.

⁸⁵ Can. 668,1,4; Const. 29-30; 32.

3.4 Candidate: Simple Profession formula

The formula should be transcribed in the *Register of Professions* and can be found in the *Constitutions* (Const. 107) and in the *Ritual* (Rit. 357).

3.5 Major Superior: Act of realization of the Simple Profession⁸⁶

Today, ... [month/day/year]
in the Community ... [name of the religious Community]
in ... [City/Province/Country]
the Novice Fra N. [full name with religious name]
HAS MADE the Simple Profession in the Order of the Discalced Augustinians,
being free from canonical impediments
and having spent the year of Novitiate
in the Community(s) [name of the religious Community]
from ... [month/day/year] to ... [month/day/year],
as well as the spiritual retreat from ... to ... [month/days/year]
in the Community ... [name of the religious Community].
The rite of Simple Profession was presided over by Fr. N.,
assisted by Fr. N. [Local Prior] and by Fr. N. [Master of Novices] as witnesses.
In faith.
[place, date, signatures = Professed, President of the Rite, and both witnesses]

⁸⁶ Can. 656, 3°; Const. 100; Dir. 101, §1. The act should be issued by the competent Major Superior on the occasion of the Solemn Profession.

4. Renewal of the Simple Profession

4.1 Candidate: Request for admission⁸⁷

I, Fra N. [full name] of ...,
thanking God for the gift of the vocation to religious life and
having made the Simple Profession on ... [month/day/year],
ASK you, Fr. N. [Major Superior],
Prior Provincial of the Province ... [name of the Province],
to be admitted to Renewal of my Simple Profession
for ... [indicate the exact time]⁸⁸
in the Order of the Discalced Augustinians.
I commit myself to being docile to the action of the Holy Spirit,
living the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, obedience and humility,
observing the *Rule*, the *Constitutions* and the *Directory*,
following the dispositions of the Superiors,
in order to accomplish the ideal of evangelical perfection in this Order.
I ask for your blessing to be faithful to God's will.
In faith.
[place, date, candidate's signature]

4.2 Candidate: Formula for the Renewal of the Simple Profession

The formula should be transcribed in the *Register of Professions* and can be found in the *Constitutions* (Const. 107) and in the *Ritual* (Rit. 372).

⁸⁷ Can. 656, §4; Const. 103, §3.

⁸⁸ It is not valid to include circumstantial references (e.g., “until the next Provincial Chapter” or “until the feast of Saint Rita”) or generic expressions (e.g., “until the Solemn Profession”); the time of renewal must be defined precisely.

5. Solemn Profession

5.1 Candidate: Request for admission⁸⁹

I, Fra N. [full name] of ...,
son of N. e N. [parents' full names],
born in ... [City/Province/Country]
on ... [month/day/year],
baptized in the Parish/church... [name],
on ... [month/day/year],
confirmed in the Parish/church... [name],
on ... [month/day/year],
thanking God for the gift of the call to religious life,
ASK you, Fr. N. [Major Superior],
Prior Provincial of the Province ... [name of the Province]⁹⁰,
having made the Simple Profession on ... [month/day/year]
*and renewed on ... [month/day/year],
to be admitted to the Simple Profession for all my life
in the Order of the Discalced Augustinians.

I commit myself to being docile to the action of the Holy Spirit,
living the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, obedience and humility,
observing the *Rule*, the *Constitutions* and the *Directory*,
following the dispositions of the Superiors,
in order to accomplish the ideal of evangelical perfection in this Order.

I ask for your blessing to be faithful to God's will.

In faith.

[place, date, candidate's signature]

⁸⁹ Const. 103, §1.

⁹⁰ Or: "Commissary of the Commissariat ..." [name of the Commissariat]; "Prior General of the Order of the Discalced Augustinians" or the qualification of the Delegate who receives the Profession.

5.2 Candidate: Handwritten declaration of poverty⁹¹

I, ... [full name], a member of the Order of Augustinian Discalced, declare under my personal responsibility that, by my express will and conscious acceptance of the Statutes of my Order, I have solemnly renounced any right to acquire any property rights over immovable or movable goods, and to receive compensation in money or other material goods for mandates, management, services, assignments, work, practices, of a civil, administrative, or commercial nature, entrusted to me by the Order.

Starting from the moment of my Solemn Profession, all rights, credits, claims, actions, of a patrimonial nature, that are registered in my name or otherwise attributable to me, are exclusively the property of my Order, which I expressly acknowledge as the sole holder. I hereby irrevocably authorize my Order to carry out any necessary procedures in the appropriate venues for the recognition of its exclusive ownership.

In faith.

[place, date, signature]

5.3 Candidate: Solemn Profession formula

The formula should be transcribed in the *Register of Professions* and can be found in the *Constitutions* (Const. 107) and in the *Ritual* (Rit. 394).

⁹¹ Dir. 17, §2. To comply with what the *Constitutions* prescribe, the following declaration, valid for all civil purposes, shall be compiled, in which the Religious declares to administer properties exclusively owned by the Order, Province, or House to which they belong. A copy shall be kept by the Religious and another one in the Provincial Archive.

5.4 Major Superior: Act of realization of the Solemn Profession⁹²

Today, ... [month/day,/year]
in the Community ... [name of the religious Community]
in ... [City/Province/Country]
the religious Fra N. [full name with religious name]
HAS MADE the Solemn Profession in the Order of the Discalced Augustinians,
being free from canonical impediments
and having completed the period of Simple Profession,
as well as the spiritual retreat from ... to ... [month/days/year]
in the Community ... [name of the religious Community].
The rite of Solemn Profession was presided over by Fr. N.,
assisted by Fr. N. [Local Prior] and by Fr. N. [Master of Professed] as witnesses.
In faith.
[place, date, signatures = Professed, President of the Rite, and both witnesses]

⁹² Can. 656, 3°; Const. 101-102; Dir. 101, §3. The act should be issued by the competent Major Superior on the occasion of the Solemn Profession.

6. Ministries

6.1 Candidate: Request for admission to the Lectorate

I, Fra N. [full name] of ...,
giving continuity to my formation in the Order of Discalced Augustinians,
attending ... [indication of studies],
and having made a diligent discernment towards the Ordained Ministry,
ASK you, Fr. N. [Major Superior],
Prior Provincial of the Province ... [name of the Province],
to be admitted to the Ministry of Lector.
In faith.
[place, date, candidate's signature]

6.2 Major Superior: Act of institution of the Lectorate

Today, ... [month/day/year]
in the Community ... [name of the religious Community]
in ... [City/Province/Country]
HAS BEEN INSTITUTED in the Ministry of Lector
the religious Fra N. [full name with religious name].
The rite of institution was presided over by Fr. N.,
assisted by Fr. N. and by Fr. N. as witnesses.
In faith.
[place, date, signatures = Professed, President of the Rite, and both witnesses]

6.3 Candidate: Request for admission to the Acolyte

I, Fra N. [*full name*] of ...,
giving continuity to my formation in the Order of Discalced Augustinians,
attending ... [*indication of studies*],
and having made a diligent discernment towards the Ordained Ministry,
ASK you, Fr. N. [*Major Superior*],
Prior Provincial of the Province ... [*name of the Province*],
to be admitted to the Ministry of Acolyte.
In faith.
[*place, date, candidate's signature*]

6.4 Major Superior: Act of institution of the Acolyte

Today, ... [*month/day/year*]
in the Community ... [*name of the religious Community*]
in ... [*City/Province/Country*]
HAS BEEN INSTITUTED in the Ministry of Acolyte
the religious Fra N. [*full name with religious name*].
The rite of institution was presided over by Fr. N.,
assisted by Fr. N. and by Fr. N. as witnesses.
In faith.
[*place, date, signatures = Professed, President of the Rite, and both witnesses*]

7. Diaconate

7.1 Candidate: Request for admission⁹³

I, Fra N. [full name] of ...,
son of N. e N. [parents' full names],
born in ... [City/Province/Country]
on ... [month/day,/year],
baptized in the Parish/church... [name],
on ... [month/day,/year],
confirmed in the Parish/church... [name],
on ... [month/day,/year],
having made the Solemn Profession
on ... [month/day,/year]
in the Community ... [name of the religious Community]
in ... [City/Province/Country],
thanking God for the gift of the call
to priestly life in the Order of Discalced Augustinians,
being free from canonical impediments,
ASK you, Fr. N. [Major Superior],
Prior Provincial of the Province ... [name of the Province],
to be admitted to the Sacrament of the Order of the Diaconate.
I commit myself, with God's help,
to consecrate my whole life to the service of Christ in the Church,
so that my ministry may be a sacrifice of praise for the salvation of the world.
I ask for your blessing to be faithful to the commitments of the Holy Order.
In faith.
[place, date, candidate's signature]

⁹³ Can. 1034, §1; Const. 113, b.

7.2 Major Superior: Letters of dismissal for the Diaconate⁹⁴

Most Reverend,
after a serious discernment regarding Fra N. *[full name and religious name]*,
a religious belonging to the Province ... *[name of the Province]*
who made the Solemn Profession of vows on ... *[month/day/year]*,
I present him to be admitted to the Order of the Diaconate.
I certify that there is no canonical impediment in this regard
and the candidate possesses all the requisites required by the *Code of Canon Law*
to access the Order of the Diaconate.
The scrutiny for the approval of the candidate, in accordance with the law,
took place on ... *[month/day/year]*
and all documents are in my possession.
Therefore, I address the aforementioned religious to you, Most Reverend,
Bishop of ... *[name of the Diocese]*, or another Bishop delegated by you,
with the approval of our religious Province ... *[name of the Province]*,
for the conferment of the Order of the Diaconate.
In faith.
[place, date, signature and stamp of the Major Superior and the Secretary]

7.3 Bishop: Certificate of Diaconal Ordination⁹⁵

The Bishop will deliver to the new Deacon an authentic certificate of the Ordination that has taken place.

⁹⁴ Can. 1015, §1; Const. 113, d; Dir. 113.

⁹⁵ Cann. 1053-1054.

8. Presbyterate

8.1 Candidate: Request for admission⁹⁶

I, Fra N. [full name] of ...,
son of N. e N. [parents' full names],
born in ... [City/Province/Country]
on ... [month/day/year],
baptized in the Parish/church... [name],
on ... [month/day/year],
confirmed in the Parish/church... [name],
on ... [month/day/year],
having made the Solemn Profession
on ... [month/day/year]
in the Community ... [name of the religious Community]
in ... [City/Province/Country],
ordained Deacon
in ... [name of church, Parish, Shrine]
in ... [City/Province/Country]
on ... [month/day/year]
by the hands of Msgr. ... [name of the Bishop],
Bishop of ... [name of the Diocese],
thanking God for the gift of the call
to priestly life in the Order of Discalced Augustinians,
being free from canonical impediments,
ASK you, Fr. N. [Major Superior],
Prior Provincial of the Province ... [name of the Province],
to be admitted to the Sacrament of the Order of the Presbyterate.
I commit myself, with God's help,
to consecrate my whole life to the service of Christ in the Church,
so that my ministry may be a sacrifice of praise for the salvation of the world.
I ask for your blessing to be faithful to the commitments of the Holy Order.
In faith.
[place, date, candidate's signature]

⁹⁶ Can. 1034, §1; Const. 113, b.

8.2 Major Superior: Letters of dismissal for the Presbyterate⁹⁷

Most Reverend,
after a serious discernment regarding the Deacon Fra N. [full name and religious name],
a religious belonging to the Province... [name of the Province]
who made the Solemn Profession of vows on... [month/day,/year]
and received Diaconal Ordination on ... [month/day,/year]
by the hands of Msgr. ... [name of the Bishop],
Bishop of ... [name of the Diocese],
I present him to be admitted to the Order of the Presbyterate.
I certify that there is no canonical impediment in this regard
and the candidate possesses all the requisites required by the *Code of Canon Law*
to access the Order of the Presbyterate.
The scrutiny for the approval of the candidate, in accordance with the law,
took place on ... [month/day,/year]
and all documents are in my possession.
Therefore, I address the aforementioned religious to you, Most Reverend,
Bishop of ... [name of the Diocese], or another Bishop delegated by you,
with the approval of our religious Province ... [name of the Province],
for the conferment of the Order of the Presbyterate.
In faith.
[place, date, signature and stamp of the Major Superior and the Secretary]

8.3 Bishop: Certificate of Presbyteral Ordination⁹⁸

The Bishop will deliver to the new Priest an authentic certificate of the Ordination that has taken place.

⁹⁷ Can. 1015, §1; Const. 113, d; Dir. 113.

⁹⁸ Cann. 1053-1054.

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