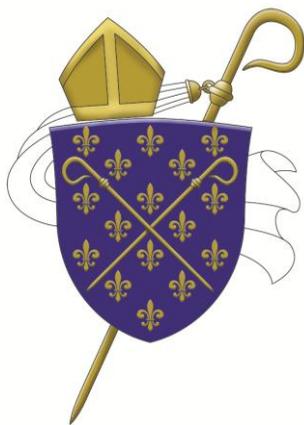


# **RATIO GENERALIS INSTITUTIONIS**

*Ordinis Praemonstratensis*





## 1. Introduction.

The following of Jesus Christ finds its origin in a call received from Him. Jesus “*summoned those whom he wanted*” (Mk 3,13). This following means a communion of life and mission with Jesus Christ. He appointed his disciples “*that they might be with him*” (Mk 3,14). Discipleship means mission and living for others. Jesus summons his disciples “*that they might be with him and he might send them*” (Mk 3,14).<sup>1</sup> And from the beginning of this calling Jesus begins to form his followers. He teaches his disciples, he speaks to them and introduces them gradually to a deeper understanding of truth; he questions and listens, admonishes (Mk 8,33) and corrects (Mk 9,33s.). Jesus commands and sends out his apostles (Mk 6,6s.), and when they return he gathers them together for a time for rest, exchange and evaluation (Mk 6,30). Jesus is master and teacher, example, model, and companion, always accompanying his disciples. The time of formation involves a strict, defined, intensive and challenging master-disciple relationship which involves every aspect of life and living together, including a separation from all previous relationships. Jesus formulates the nature and goal of this fellowship with Him: “*Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me*” (Mk 8,34).

In a similar way we learn from our Founder Saint Norbert, that he actively sought out disciples and followers, that he formed them with great effort and by his own example during the time when he was with them at Prémontré. In the *Vita A* we read:

*“He had with him about thirty novices, both clerics and lay. Gathering these together with others whom he had earlier assembled, morning and evening he preached the saving word, encouraging them with comforting words not to fall away from their good intention and the voluntary poverty which they had undertaken. Whatever he taught them he demonstrated through his own works as an eagle calls its*

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1 Cfr. KASPER, WALTER, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*. Freiburg 2009, S. 218-221.

*young to flight. His exhortations were not about the earth nor did they hold out anything earthly but, as a dove after taking wing, he flew to rest, and, for the most part caught up in ecstasy, made his hearers take flight ...*

*But Norbert, who was prudent and circumspect, lest his holy institute falter in the future and the foundation, which he intended to place on solid rock, totter, advised them that without a structure of life and without a rule and without the instructions of the Fathers, the apostolic and evangelical precepts could not be completely observed.. The confreres, like sheep following their shepherd in simplicity, promised to obey him in all the things he proposed.”<sup>2</sup>*

*Vita Consecrata* lays the accent on a holistic formation which comprises the whole person in his totality and underlines the necessity of an ongoing formation “which never ends”. It sets forth the main and central goal of formation: the preparation of each candidate for the total dedication to God in the imitation of Christ for the service of the mission, to say “Yes” to the call of the Lord and to accept the personal and dynamic growth of his vocation. Formation is a way of ongoing and progressive assimilation of the mind of Christ toward his Father, of embodying the life of Jesus in oneself, and of total dedication to him.<sup>3</sup>

As Pope John Paul II stated there is in every consecrated life also a sovereign and decisive action of the Holy Spirit: “When, in his Church, Jesus Christ calls men or women to follow him, he makes his voice heard and his fascination felt by the inner action of the Holy Spirit. He entrusts to the Spirit the task of making his call understood and of awakening the desire to respond to it with a life entirely dedicated to Christ and his kingdom. The Holy Spirit nurtures the grace of vocation in the depths of the soul, making way for his grace to achieve its aim. He takes the lead in fostering vocations and guides consecrated souls on the

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2 *Vita A*, in: *Communicator* Vol XII, Nr. 2 June 1996, cummul. issue 26, S. p-58, here p. 28.

3 POPE JOHN PAUL II., *Vita Consecrata* 65-71.

way of perfection. He is the author of the generosity, patience and fidelity of one and all.” (General Audience, March 22, 1995).

## 2. Sources of the Norbertine Order.

The first English edition of the Constitutions mentions that we are to follow or accommodate “*the norms contained in the Instruction ‘Renovationis Causam’ January 6, 1969, and in other future documents concerning formation*”<sup>4</sup>. The Church as such has a high interest in the quality of formation.

As we can see in *Vita Consecrata*, which speaks of “*the necessity of a complete and updated ratio*”, the Church clearly and explicitly asks that each Institute of Religious Life have such a *Ratio Institutionis*.<sup>5</sup> Already in many Congregations and some of our own canonries there exists such a *Ratio Generalis*.<sup>6</sup> Even though some houses already have such written formation programs, it seems necessary to have a common *Ratio Generalis Formationis* for the whole Order, to give essential orientation and guide-lines for the important task of the formation of our young people.

Another motivation is the greatly increasing diversity of candidates who are coming into our canonries with very different backgrounds, ages, education, professions, lifestyles, and ecclesiastical and human socialization. Sometimes candidates come with problematic backgrounds such as broken families, patchwork families, experiences of abuse, or limited experience due to, for example, a one-child-situation, and so on. This all brings new challenges and requires differentiated programs adapted to each candidate.

In our Constitutions we have Appendix V with the *Ratio Institutionis* for the novitiate. Chapter V, entitled “*Concerning formation which leads us to the unity with our confreres on the way to God*” (Const. 140-185) begins:

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4 *The Day of Pentecost, Constitutions of the Canons Regular of Prémontré*, De Pere 1971, nr. 106.

5 POPE JOHN PAUL II., *Vita Consecrata*, 68.

6 Cfr. *Ratio institutionis ‘Duc in altum’*, Kongregácia sestier premonštrátok (Slovenská provincia), engl. Text. Vrbove 2006; *Leitfaden zur Ausbildung in der Prämonstratenserabtei St. Marien*, Windberg 2006; *De Pere Formation program*, 2006; *Daylesford formation plan; Formation Policy St. Norbert Abbey Jamtara* 2006.

*“In order that religious life in our Order may be truly responsive to both the demands of the Gospel and the aspirations of human nature, as well as to the particular character of each individual vocation, candidates are to be initiated gradually but surely into our way of life”* (n. 140).

The follow phrases from the Constitutions describe the main scope of formation (n. 141):

- To help the candidate to respond faithfully to his divine vocation so that he may grow harmoniously into a mature human and Christian person.
- To be present to the candidate so that he may sincerely develop a sense of Christian responsibility and may learn to dedicate himself, his qualities, and his talents to his confreres and the Church in the apostolic activity.

Fundamental and for all common and obligatory elements are mentioned in n. 143:

- Introduction into religious and community life in the light of the particular charisma of the Order and his history of the Order
- Introduction in the Holy Scripture
- Introduction in the Liturgy and Theology
- Introduction in a sense of apostolic mission (cf. Appendix V)
- to educate the novices and juniors in the ‘Spirit of the Constitutions’ (n. 181).

N. 144 of the Constitutions, in a goal-oriented way, covers the content and aim of formation:

- To prepare the candidates actually and concretely for the life which they will be leading afterwards;
- The candidate should grow toward human and Christian maturity, with opportunity given to develop and manifest a sense of personal responsibility and freedom;
- They should be allowed a gradual participation in contributing to the progress of the community and afterwards helping to arrive at community decisions.

- To learn how to develop, to mobilize and engage all their talents and potential in the service of the community and church ministry (n. 145).

Nothing is said about the contents of formation during postulancy (n. 150), and nothing about content and themes in the time of the Juniorate (n. 161-165) except the remark that before ecclesiastical studies one should be properly educated in the ‘lower disciplines’, especially in the humanities and sciences, as preparation to begin higher studies (n. 168), and the short reference to training juniors according to the mind of Constitutions (cf. n. 181).

For the philosophical and theological studies the houses - in the case of houses of studies - have to follow the ecclesiastical laws and instructions ‘in the sense of the Second Vatican Council’ in this form, that the students “*at the same time may be aided in deepening and penetrating their own life with faith*” (n. 173).

The last three chapters in this section on formation speak about ongoing formation. Arguments for the necessity of ongoing formation include:

- the development in the sciences, especially in the ecclesiastical sector
- the progress of the human society
- the demands and necessities of the apostolate (n. 182).

The quality of this ongoing formation includes not only intellectual training and education, but also “*the human development of the whole person*” (n. 183).

Higher and postgraduate studies (licentiate, doctorate, habilitation) at a university are recommended ‘in certain cases’ (n. 185).

Altogether the Constitutions embody the important elements and fundamental goals of the formation process for the regular canonical life and retain their validity and orientation for each kind of formation policy in our Order.

### **3. Ratio Generalis Institutionis.**

Nevertheless, the Constitutions are more oriented to juridical elements of formation regarding the novitiate and admission to vows, and to regulations and procedures of the formation process. Therefore, it would be most helpful also to provide detailed directions and comprehensive contents for the whole formation process in the form of guidelines and recommendations for the distinct phases and steps of formation. Such a *Ratio Generalis* is conceived as a useful framework, a basic guideline and helpful orientation from which each Canonry could develop its own formation program, discussing and establishing its own *Ratio Institutionis* adapted to the special needs and circumstances of the Canonry. It is recommended that those communities with lay brother vocations draw up special guidelines for the formation of lay brothers with their own particular needs and requirements.<sup>7</sup>

The first goal of our religious life, and therefore of our formation program, is described in the Rule of Augustine (I,2) right from the beginning:

*“The first purpose for which you have come together is to live in unity in the house and to be of one mind and one heart on the way to God.”*

All endeavors in formation and education, all forms of guiding and accompanying should support this common growth toward unity and a common moving forward with, *“one mind and one heart on the way to God”*.

In the same light the Constitutions, n. 83 (*Common Exercise*), treat of our common exercises, that they are designed *“to increase the integration of the confreres into the community and to foster the fraternal union among members of the same family.”*

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<sup>7</sup> Cfr. The Protocol of the Norbertine Order’s Definitory Meeting 2011-II, 8.4: Magister Meeting.

Constitutions n. 142 states: *“The entire community has a real and active role in forming candidates so that the living faith and sincerity of life of each of the confreres, whether they live in the community or outside of it, are to contribute greatly to the process of formation.”*

Our communities are the first place of formation notwithstanding the special role of the masters of formation and the final responsibility of the prelate. Each confrere is responsible, through his own personal life and his serious striving for authenticity, perfection and sanctity, for an authentic spiritual climate in the community. The candidates can only learn what they experience and see in the community, and the religious life-style and the specifically canonical atmosphere of the house may help them in their discernment and choices.

Constitutions, n. 141, formulates the paramount scope of formation thus: *“To help the candidate to respond faithfully to his divine vocation, so that he may grow harmoniously into a mature human and Christian person”*. Herein lies the accent on this double aim of growing as a human being, as a person, as a man, and developing the original vocation expressed at baptism to become more and more embodied in Christ, in his life, death and resurrection. In regard to the great difference of the candidates in age, educational and cultural background, and professional past, a measure of flexibility is necessary to accommodate or individualize the formation program to the specific situation and condition of the candidate.<sup>8</sup>

### **3.1. Acceptance of Candidates.**

The acceptance of new candidates in a time of declining vocations is a special and delicate task. Even though the candidates are fewer, a very careful selection and a cautious process of examination as well as a probation period should be planned; not in the sense of mistrust, but with responsibility for the demanding call of religious life. Each house should have a plan and process for the accurate screening and testing of

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8 Cfr. the Formation program of De Pere, June 2001.

aspirants or candidates. This could be followed up in a gradual way, with a process in which several confreres are involved, at least the vocation director, the novice master and the superior. In the end, the whole community can and should have a voice regarding the admission of candidates, sharing their thoughts and communicating their impressions concerning them.

*Admission procedure - recommendations:*

- Talks and interviews with those responsible for vocations and some other selected confreres
- Psychological screening and physical examination and testing
- A hand-written autobiography (curriculum vitae)
- Documents: baptismal certificate, confirmation certificate
- Full academic transcripts
- Questionnaires on religious, ecclesiastical and relational background
- Proof of the financial situation of the candidate (no hidden debts)
- Interviews with people from the candidate's relational environment (family, friends, priests, etc.)
- Talk about behavior, inclination, sexual orientation, antecedents ('aids test')
- Testing of the candidate's real motivations and internal intentions to join the canonry
- The testimony of other persons; letters of recommendation; character witness; police check
- Communal evaluation and exchange before the decision.

### **3.2. Pre-novitiate (pre-formation or affiliate) program.**

In many houses – after first contacts, visits and discussions and admission procedures – the formation begins with a time of probation. This may take the form of an 'Affiliate Program', or a time of aspirancy or postulancy. The duration differs between some months and two years. The goal and contents of this period depend very much on the age of the candidates and the form of recruitment. Thus, it could include elements

such as finishing school decrees, language studies, or a general introduction or initiation into the Christian life in the form of catechesis as well as an integration in the broader community of the Church. During this time there occurs an initial acquaintance with the community, with the house atmosphere, the lifestyle and the common exercises, accompanied by talks, discussions and spiritual guidance.

*Aims (purpose):*

- The pre-novitiate program of aspirancy and/or postulancy is a time for the candidate to experience his first deeper contacts with the community and have the opportunity to integrate himself into the various aspects of religious and community life. At the same time this could be opportunity to complete any classes, degrees, or other educational programs, to undertake necessary language studies, etc. Normally for the purpose of an ordained ministry a college level degree is to be obtained, while for lay brothers some professional training is sufficient.
- Opportunities for discernment and further spiritual growth need to be provided.

*Contents:*

If necessary this period could be organized as a *Propaedeuticum*, an introduction into a (deeper) Christian way of life, including:

- The imparting of a greater familiarity with the Bible (*lectio divina*)
- A review the Catechism of the Catholic Church, education in the faith
- An introduction into the life of the Church, the sacramental life (Eucharist, confession)
- An introduction into the liturgical life of the Church (ecclesiastical year, liturgy of hours)
- An introduction into the life of prayer – meditation, contemplation, devotion, rosary, adoration
- Learning to give and to take, to receive and to share
- To reflect about experiences in human relations

- The effort to obtain a proficiency in other languages and knowledge of ancient languages (Latin, Sanskrit).

### **3.3. Initial formation: The canonical year of novitiate.**

Here we can refer, in the first place, to Appendix V: “*The plan of the formation of novices in the first year of the canonical novitiate*”. The novitiate brings a deep and consequent separation from the former parental background, a time without outside obligations, duties, and tasks, in order to be open and free to grow in one’s new community, in the spiritual and religious life – to be free for God (*vacare Deo*). In some houses, at the end of the canonical novitiate there follows the simple vows. This requires a special accent on the discernment process and the vows.

#### *Aims:*

- To learn how to live as a religious in consecrated life in regard to the three vows of poverty, obedience and celibacy
- To discover the deepest sense of vocation: called by the Lord, and to answer this call
- An introduction to, and practice in, the life of the monastery
- A knowledge of the origins and sources of religious life
- A knowledge of the history and spirituality of our canonical Order
- A knowledge of the history and traditions of the canonry
- A growth in freedom and generosity that comes from self-discipline
- A growth into the house community with all its benefits and challenges
- To develop one’s ability for community life
- To awaken and foster a love and responsibility for the house and the community
- A growth in a mature human affectivity

*Contents:*

*a) Religious and spiritual life:*

- Introduction to the documents of the Church
- The history of religious life
- The vows and the formula of profession
- Introduction to the study of the psalms,
- The reading of the Scripture
- Private prayer (prayer, meditation, *lectio divina*)
- Different schools of spirituality
- Learning of the *vita canonica* – spiritual and historical elements

*b) The roots of our life as Norbertines:*

- The Augustinian tradition
- The rule of St. Augustine
- The history and spirituality of the canonical life
- St. Norbert and the history of his Order
- The Constitutions

*c) Specifically on one's own canonry:*

- History of the house
- Lifestyle and customs of the house ('Book of customs' of the Canonry)
- Limited pastoral activity (for example, guiding tours through the abbey church)

*d) Living together:*

- Foster interpersonal skills in a practical way by living and observing
- Living celibacy and sexuality in a mature form
- Living together in peace and charity
- Practicalities of common life (living, eating, praying together)
- Living the Gospel with one another – Bible sharing, living the Word of God
- Reflecting on boundaries, liberty and restrictions

- Clarity in human relations and living together, dialogue with the confreres
- Some work in the house (cleaning, other small services) – manual labor

*e) Personal discernment process*

- Self-reflection and self-knowledge, self-assessment and self-control
- Regular meetings with the magister
- Spiritual guidance: to share in confidence one's spiritual life and inner journey
- To deal with criticism, correction, restrictions, loneliness.

### **3.4. Second year of novitiate.**

In many houses the novitiate lasts for two years. After the canonical first year, there typically begins a new program of studies either in the house or outside. Also in this second year the accent lies on vocation discernment as the novice approaches first vows.<sup>9</sup> The novice master arranges for regular individual meetings and is always open to talk or meet with the novice.

*Aims:*

- The integrated studies of philosophy and theology
- This second year can help by presenting the challenge of study time outside the community along with all the questions of vocation and discernment, but now more in the academic world and/or with the unprotected modern/post-modern world. This time can help to deepen and strengthen the discernment process in regard to first vows

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<sup>9</sup> Cfr. *Abbey of Daylesford formation plan*: "The second year novitiate builds the same values and goals of the first year; it will involve a continuation of one's studies, participation in outreach ministries of the community and preparation for the temporary vows."

- Ongoing growth in community life and fuller involvement in the community
- To become more familiar with ‘living history’, i.e., with the seniors of the community
- Looking for an optimal balance of studies and living together
- Participation in outreach ministries of the community
- Preparation for temporary vows (time for reading, reflection, retreats).

*Contents:*

- Begin initial pastoral experiences: guided tours of the house, working with youth movements, catechesis and preparation for confirmation, social interaction with the elderly, with the sick, with the disabled, and so on.
- confronting the academic and scientific world with all its discussions, disputes and arguments, seeking the truth and conviction concerning his own position and decisions
- regular meetings and contact with the spiritual director / confessor / magister
- Preparation for and installation as lector and acolyte, training for these ministries if it is foreseen in this phase.

### **3.5. Juniorate.**

This is normally the time in simple vows, between first profession and solemn profession; it is normally three years; but the period of simple vows can be extended. This time is typically concerned mainly with studies but also some other activities and training. At the end of this time, after a final decision of the junior and acceptance by the community, solemn vows are professed. Besides the retreats in the community, special retreats in preparation for these vows are most fitting.

*Aims:*

- Philosophical and theological formation
- Competence in speaking a second language is recommended
- Deepening one's vocation and ongoing formation<sup>10</sup>
- Carrying on and deepening the foundational formation of the novitiate
- Clarifying and deepening one's relationship to God, to the community, to oneself
- It should be a concrete experience of living the vows
- This is the main period of study for the juniors/seminarians, either in their own abbey or outside. However, it is necessary that the formation of this period is not limited only to intellectual formation in philosophy and theology in preparation for priestly ordination, but it should include an ongoing reflection on Norbertine spiritual values such as *communio*, conversion and living the vows;
- There should be some pastoral responsibilities and pastoral internship in order to grow in pastoral experience
- It should be a time when the juniors are given some material responsibility in the house, as well as some areas of their own responsibility (practical tasks and works in the church, house, library, infirmary, garden, farm, cars, house skills...)

*Contents, methods:*

- Regular talks with the formation master, including feedback regarding duties and common life
- Regular retreat, at least once a year; maybe once with the 30-day 'Ignatian retreat'
- Common reading/discussion of books about spirituality
- Articles about Order's spirituality (e.g., *Communicator*, *Communicantes*, *Aliança* and the other canonry-periodicals and newsletters, journals and magazines) and the Order's liturgy

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<sup>10</sup> "The period of temporary profession focuses upon continued growth and development on the part of the junior as he continues his relationship to the Order and as he gradually advances toward full incorporation." in: *Abbey of Daylesford formation plan*.

- To create and promote a ‘sense of the Order’ through various initiatives, visits to important sites, feasts and opportunities, to instill in the juniors an awareness of belonging to a worldwide Order and to implant in them an identification with the own canonry and a zeal for our Norbertine Charism
- To support various meetings (national and international meetings of the Order’s Juniors), visits, contacts, and friendships within the Order, also through all the possibilities of modern means of communication
- The necessity of ongoing spiritual guidance (by a spiritual director and/or confessor)
- Especially for lay-brothers, an ongoing formation program adapted to their own conditions and needs
- Deeper reflection about the vows, profession, dedication and final self-offering/sacrifice
- Critical reflection about the situation and identity of one’s own community
- Guidance (“Leitfaden”) concerning personal prayer and confession
- Knowledge of modern communications and media that can take advantage of their great apostolic and academic potential, but also the development of discipline in their use

### **3.6. Continuing Formation after Ordination**

With ordination there is normally an entrance into ordained ministry and the apostolate of the canonry on a new and different pastoral level. After an intensive period of study, attaining a degree in theology, the diaconal ministry and Ordination to the Priesthood, this time is markedly different, challenging, and very demanding. It needs, therefore, expert guidance and assistance, regular direction and evaluations. This requires professional accompaniment and open ears on the side of the superior. The Constitutions, n. 182-185, speak explicitly about ‘continuing formation’:

*Aims:*

- To grow in a spiritual attitude and in pastoral skills through specific pastoral formation programs
- For lay-brothers: to grow in and to learn more about professional skills which support their tasks and responsibilities

*Contents and requirements:*

- Permanent spiritual guidance by a mentor after profession and ordination
- Supervision and/or other forms of feedback and reflection regarding professional experiences on the pastoral field, personal feelings and ‘processing strategies’ (a supervised Internship)
- Regular education/conferences about growth in human maturity and stability, and how to stabilize normal human relations
- Communication with someone regarding personal developments, struggles, crises
- Importance of the practice of regular confession
- Importance of sporting activity, relaxation, leisure time

### **3.7. Life-long learning**

In our very fast changing times it is necessary to be, and to remain, up to date, to invest time in ongoing formation, to read continuously specialized literature, to be open to the questions of the present time, the problems, the ‘fears and hopes’ of the people, to observe the trends and movements in society and in the Church, in philosophy and theology, in science and technology, in art and literature. This is the personal task of each individual confrere but also of the community as a whole, which, therefore, also has the task to promote different forms of formation and to create a communicative, intellectual, open-minded climate.

*Aims:*

- “*Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope*” (1 Pe 3,15).
- Constitutions 182 -185.

*Methods/realization:*

- Personal studies, reading and care for continuing formation
- Personal and/or communitarian retreats, religious exercises
- Regular days of recollection and conferences
- Study-weeks and seminars in the community's own spirituality centers
- Participation in work-weeks, congresses, symposia, meetings of the Order
- Importance of the library including the most recent publications of books and periodicals
- Special qualified training for teaching

## 4. Important documents of the Church: sources and instructions.

### 4.1. Apostolic documents

- POPE JOHN PAUL II, *Novo Millenio Ineunte*, Rome 2001
- POPE JOHN PAUL II, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation 'Vita Consecrata'*, Rome 1996
- POPE JOHN PAUL II, *Tertio Millenio Adveniente*, Rome 1994.
- Vatican Council II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church 'Lumen Gentium'*, 1964
- Vatican Council II, *Decree on the adaption and renewal of religious life 'Perfectae Caritatis'*, 1965.

### 4.2. Official documents (CICLSAL, USG)

- *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes 'Potissimum institutioni'*, CICLSAL, Rome 1990
- *Essential elements in the Church's teaching on religious life. As applied to Institutes dedicated to works of the Apostolate*, CICLSAL<sup>11</sup>, Rome 1983
- *Instruction 'Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor – Fraternal life in community'*, CICLSAL, Rome 1994
- *Instruction 'Starting afresh from Christ'. A renewed commitment to the Consecrated Life in the third millennium*, CICLSAL, Rome 2002. *'Verbi Sponsa'. Instruction on the Contemplative Life and on the Enclosure of Nuns*, CICLSAL, Rome 1999
- *Instruction 'The service of authority and obedience'*, CICLSAL, Rome 2008.
- *'Passion for Christ, passion for the mankind' - International Congress about Consecrated Life*, USG/UISG, Rome 2004

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11 CICLSAL = Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

### 4.3. Priesthood

- *Circular Letter, concerning some of the more urgent aspects of spiritual formation in seminaries*, Congregation for Catholic Education, Rome 1980
- *Directives for mutual relations between bishops and religious in the Church 'Mutuae Relationis'*, Congregation for Bishops and CICLSAL, Rome 1978
- KRENIK, THOMAS W. – KRENIK, D., *Formation of Priestly Celibacy: A Resource Book*. National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), 1999.
- LÉONARD, ANDRÉ, *Jésus et ton corps. La morale sexuelle expliquée aux jeunes*. Éditions Mame, Paris 1996.
- POPE PAUL VI, *Encyclical letter 'Sacerdotibus coelibatus'*, Rome 1967
- POPE JOHN PAUL II, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation 'Pastores dabo vobis'*, Rome 1992
- *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*. Congregation for Catholic Education, Rome 1980.

### 4.4. Psychology, Sexuality, Sexual abuse

- AU, WILKIE AND CANNON, NOREEN. *Urgings of the Heart: A Spirituality of Integration*, Paulist Press, NJ. 1995
- FITSGIBBONS, RICHARD P. – BISSONNETTE-PITRE, LYNNE B. (Editors), “Responding to the Abuse Crisis.” in: *The Linacre Quarterly* (Journal of the Catholic Medical Association), August 2011, Vol. 78 no. 3.
- “*Instruction Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations with regard to Persons with Homosexual Tendencies in view of their Admission to the Seminary and to Holy Orders*”. Congregation for Catholic Education, Roma, 2005
- MAY, GERALD. *Addiction and Grace*, Harper Collins, New York 1988
- POPE JOHN PAUL II, *Litterae Apostolicae Motu Proprio datae quibus Normae de gravioribus delictis Congregationi pro Doctrina Fidei reservatis promulgatur*, Vatican 2001

- ROHR, RICHARD, *Breathing Under Water: Spirituality and the Twelve Steps*. St. Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati, Ohio 2011
- SCICLUNA, CHARLES, *Sexual abuse of Children and young people by Catholic priests and religious: description of the problem from a Church perspective* (manuscript)
- ZOLLNER, HANS –CUCCI, GIOVANNI, “*The Church and Pedophilia: An Open Wound*”.

## 5. Literature about Order's Spirituality.

Here are listed only a selection of some important sources, publications and books. The continual exchange of the novice masters regarding a literature 'pool' could help enhance and complete this list regularly. It will also be necessary to develop literature lists for the different languages.

### 5.1. Order's History

- ARDURA, BERNARD, *The Order of Prémontré, History and Spirituality*, 1995.
- BACKMUND, NORBERT, *Monasticon Praemonstratense I-III*
- DE CLERCK, DONATIAAN, *De canonici regolares van Prémontré. Beknopt historische overzicht* (manuscript).
- DE CLERCK, DONATIAAN, *Hagiologion*, Windberg 2014 [German], 2001 [Dutch], 2005 [French], [(English in manuscript, consult Canonry of Orange)].
- PETIT, FRANÇOIS, *Spirituality of the Premonstratensians: The Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*. Cistercian Publications, 2011 (translated in English by Victor Szcurek).

### 5.2. St. Augustine (for selection)

- AGAËSSE, PAUL, *L'Anthropologie chrétienne selon saint Augustin*. Médiasèvres 2004
- KUGLER, HERMANN JOSEF, *Über allem die Liebe. Die Augustinusregel als spiritueller Wegweiser*. Augsburg 2008
- PAPT BENEDICT XVI, *Leidenschaft für die Wahrheit. Augustinus*. Augsburg 2009
- VAN BAVEL, TARSICIUS JAN, *Augustinus von Hippo. Regel für die Gemeinschaft*. Würzburg 1990
- VAN BAVEL, TARSICIUS JAN, *Von Liebe und Freundschaft. Augustinus über das christliche Leben*. Würzburg 2009
- VAN DER MEER, FRITS, *Augustine the pastor*

### 5.3. St. Norbert

- *Vita A*, in: *Communicator* 26/1996
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## **6. Questionnaire.**

This questionnaire can serve as an example in the selection and screening of new candidates. It can be adjusted according to the specific needs and customs of the religious community in question.

### **6.1. Your personal history**

- 6.1.1. What was the composition and situation of the family in which you were raised?
- 6.1.2. What are the professional activities (occupations) of your parents and the other members of your family?
- 6.1.3. Describe your relationship with your parents and the other members of your family.
- 6.1.4. Where did you grow up, and have you lived elsewhere?
- 6.1.5. What do you look back on in your childhood in the family where you grew up?
- 6.1.6. What education have you received (from primary school to the present day)? What are the qualifications or diplomas that you have thereby achieved?
- 6.1.7. Have you already been professionally active? What is your current occupation?
- 6.1.8. What hobbies or pursuits do you have in your free time?
- 6.1.9. Are you a (former) member of any specific organisation, youth movement, association, etc.? Do you have a circle of friends, a social life?
- 6.1.10. What is your sexual orientation?
- 6.1.11. Have you dated in the past, or had a committed relationship? How long have you lived in celibacy?
- 6.1.12. Describe some of your good character traits.
- 6.1.13. Describe some of your bad character traits.
- 6.1.14. What are you good at? What are your best skills?
- 6.1.15. What are you definitely no good at? What can you absolutely not do?

- 6.1.16. Have you suffered in the past, or do you suffer today, from some physical or mental health condition (e.g. chronic sickness, hereditary disease, allergy, disability, mental illness, depression, addiction ...)? Do you take medication?

## **6.2. Your faith journey**

- 6.2.1. What progress have you experienced thus far in your life on your journey of faith?
- 6.2.2. Who or what has played an important role, or has been of great significance in your faith journey?
- 6.2.3. What does Christ mean to you?
- 6.2.4. Describe your relationship, from the past to the present time, with the Catholic Church.
- 6.2.5. How, and to what extent, were you as a member of the faithful actively involved in the life of the Church (e.g. Sunday Mass, church feasts, pilgrimages ....)?
- 6.2.6. Are you (or have you been) active in one way or another in the operations of the local parish (e.g. as an altar boy, member of the church council, catechesis, faith groups, the liturgy ...)?
- 6.2.7. Are you (or have you been) connected with ecclesiastical organisations or spiritual movements in the Church?
- 6.2.8. What place does prayer have in your personal life, and in what manner do you express it?
- 6.2.9. How have you deepened your personal understanding of the Catholic faith (e.g. the Catechism of the Catholic Church, YouCat, reading the Holy Scriptures, courses, books and articles, ...)?

## **6.3. Your calling**

- 6.3.1. Were you, in the recent or distant past, a candidate or member of a diocesan seminary or religious community?
- 6.3.2. Do you currently have other contacts in the context of your current discernment process?

- 6.3.3. Do you currently have (or in the recent past have had) a spiritual director?
- 6.3.4. Why do you think God is calling you to the consecrated life?
- 6.3.5. What do you think is essential to the consecrated life? What is here of fundamental importance to you?
- 6.3.6. Do you also feel called to the priesthood? How do you see the combination of this vocation with that of the consecrated life?
- 6.3.7. Who or what has played an important role in the development and growing awareness of your calling?
- 6.3.8. Why do you feel drawn to our order and, more specifically, to our abbey community? Detail the elements that attract you.
- 6.3.9. How did you find out about our abbey community? How did you first get acquainted with us?
- 6.3.10. How do your relatives, friends, colleagues, and others in your immediate surroundings react regarding your vocation? Have they been informed about your discernment process?
- 6.3.11. What difficulties, uncertainties or apprehensions do you experience in your discernment process?

#### **6.4. Your calling**

- 6.4.1. Do you have debts or financial obligations?
- 6.4.2. Do you bear (legal) responsibility for any third parties (e.g. guardianship, ...)?
- 6.4.3. Do you own real estate or significant property (house or apartment, land, car ...)?
- 6.4.4. Have you been involved in the past with the police or court system?

## **7. Conclusion.**

We know that the entrance into a religious community is a great challenge and demands a total gift of the candidate. One can only enter accepting all the consequences of this totality, embracing the experience, demands, sacrifices and joy of all three vows, and with life-long dedication – or not enter at all. This ‘all or nothing’ may seem, today, untimely and old-fashioned, but it remains ever true.<sup>12</sup> Such a step by a young man into our Order does not come automatically; it has to overcome many hurdles. From the candidate’s side, this demands a high spiritual motivation, and from the community’s side a great attraction and radiation. It is a great responsibility for each community to accept young people for education and formation; it is of the greatest importance to form and accompany such highly motivated people in taking up this way of perfection and sanctity in the discipleship of the Lord. For each community, therefore, the formation of formators and the ongoing qualification of novice masters is a very important task, one which must be of primary concern to the superiors. The best confreres should be nominated for this ‘job’ of formation. But the community as such also plays an important role in the formation process, in the acceptance of candidates, in accompaniment through prayer for vocations and for the confreres in formation, through respectful contact, attentive interest, and shining example, with cautious care and unobtrusive nearness, avoiding both harmful interference and also overprotection. Formation is a spiritual and internal process, and the essential ‘formator’ and Master is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Lord, who is calling and drawing, choosing and forming. The process of formation has the ultimate goal of helping the candidate to respond to this call, to follow this voice, to make a fundamental life decision to follow Jesus Christ, to become more and more intimately one with him and to be like him in the nearly 900-year old tradition of the Canons Regular of Prémontré.

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12 KIECHLE, STEFANN „Mut zur Lebenshingabe. Zur Situation des Ordensnachwuchses in Deutschland“, in: *Herder Korrespondenz* 58 (2004) 7, S. 336-340.

