

Ratio Institutionis
Worktext

FOREWORD

Dear sisters, we present you a worktext Ratio Institutionis for our Congregation.

As you know, the development of Ratio Institutionis (formation programme inspired by charisma of Congregation) is the duty of every institute as it is written in Canon Law Canon number 659, 660 and also in the Vita Consecrata article 68.

The concrete motivation for this work was visit of Don Gambino SDB in September 2004. He gave us the scheme, according to was Ratio compiled, and he accompanied us in this work with his interest and valuable advices.

This task was entrusted to commission that was constituted during meetings with Don Gambino. Members of Commission were provincial superior and sisters working in formation. ¹The Commission had only one year and three months for this exacting work and that really wasn't much.

Sisters worked according to given scheme at their meetings and they used as an example Ratio Institutionis of other religious communities. Commission čerpala especially from Holy Bible, Constitutions, Church documents about religious life and materials about Norbertine Spirituality.

We present the text Ratio Institutionis to members of Province Chapter, so that they can critically valuate it, fill it in and improve it. After the expression of Province Chapter and after suggested amendments it will be presented to Congregation Chapter. Congregation Chapter, as our highest legislative council, can after casual amendemnts present it to Sisters as a programme which has to help every sister, performers and superiors to advance on their way of following Christ in terms of Saint Norbert. Thanks be to God for His foresight solicitude and also to sisters who accompanied us with prayers.

Vrbové, April 27, 2006

*Sr. Hermana Laliková
provincial superior*

¹ Members of Commission: *m. Hermana, s. Adriana, s. Róberta, s. Petra, s. Lujza, s. Siarda, s. Akvína*

Dear sisters,

General Congregation Chapter that held in November 2006, at its meeting voted for using the prepared text Ratio Institutionis as a worktext till next chapter.

After amendments confirmed by members of General Chapter who respect the situation of both provinces, we present this document as an instrument that supports our unity and identity.

Up to next General Congregation Chapter in 2012 we would like to devote ourselves to this document so that we could better find it out and thus it was an effective help on the way to the only goal – to be real image of Jesus Christ in spirit of Saint Norbert, Saint Augustine and the tradition of our Congregation. Thus we can entirely live and retain the present which we received thanks to our Norbertine vocation.

Ratio also shows the actual Church point of view to our sacred life what is for us always decisive. We want to be faithful to our Pope and obey him as our founder Saint Norbert did.

I would like to encourage every sister to find Ratio Institutionis out. In this way we express our personal responsibility and responsibility of both of us for our consecration because nobody lives his consecration alone but together in community which permanently shapes us.

*The title of our Ratio – **Duc in altum (Put out into deep water)** is the urgent and permanent appeal of Jesus Christ for each of us individually as it is for whole Congregation.*

Ratio should help us to realise the importance of formation on its individual stages, to make us obliging to accept influences of formation for the rest of our lives and also to realise that whole human being needs to be shaped.

Let the spirit of our fathers Saint Augustine and Saint Norbert to lead us.

Let Virgin Mary teach us to generously repeat our Fiat every day and to live our consecration to Jesus in deep joy and love as a beauty “Magnificat“.

Trnava, November 13, 2008

*Sr. Hermana Laliková
general superior of Congregation*

DOCUMENT ABBREVIATIONS

MR – Mutuae Relationes

NMI – Novo Millennio Ineunte

OPR – Ordo Professionis Religiosae

PC - Perfectae caritatis

PI – Potissimum Institutioni

RI – Ratio Institutionis

VC – Vita Consecrata

ZZK – Starting afresh from Christ

CONTENT

Foreword	3
Letter of Congregation superior.....	5
Abbreviations	6
Introduction.....	10
Table.....	11

PART ONE

ORIGINS OF FORMATION.....	13
1. God's Word.....	13
2. Church Tradition – Saint Augustine	14
3. Magistry documents about formation.....	16
4. Founder, history of Congregation, charisma.....	17
5. Constitutions, Regula of Saint Augustine	19

PART TWO

SPIRITUALITY OF NORBERTINE.....	21
1. The meaning of Norbertine identity.....	21
2. Mystical experience.....	23
3. Ascetic way.....	25
4. Mission and Norbertine apostolate.....	27

PART THREE

STAGES OF FORMATION.....	31
1. Ongoing formation..	31
<i>1.1. Content of stage</i>	
1.1.1. Goal.....	31
1.1.2. Theoretical picture.....	31
1.1.3. Situation of those in formation.....	32
1.1.4. Place of formation.....	33
1.1.5. Criteria.....	34
<i>1.2. Methodology</i>	
1.2.1. Human.....	35
1.2.2. Intellectual.....	36

1.2.3. Spiritual.....	37
1.2.4. Communitarian.....	40
1.2.5. Apostolic.....	43
2. Pastoration of vocation.....	46
2.1. Content of stage	
2.1.1. Goal.....	46
2.1.2. Theoretical picture.....	46
2.1.3. Situation of those in formation.....	47
2.1.4. Place of formation.....	48
2.1.5. Criteria.....	49
2.1.6. Means.....	50
2.1.7. Evaluation.....	51
Goals of initial formation.....	52
3. Candidature.....	53
3.1. Content of stage	
3.1.1. Goal.....	53
3.1.2. Theoretical picture.....	53
3.1.3. Situation of those in formation.....	54
3.1.4. Place of formation.....	54
3.1.5. Criteria.....	54
3.2. Methodology	
3.2.1. Human.....	55
3.2.2. Intellectual.....	57
3.2.3. Spiritual.....	58
3.2.4. Communitarian.....	59
3.2.5. Apostolic.....	61
4. Novitiate.....	63
4.1. Content of stage	
4.1.1. Goal.....	63
4.1.2. Theoretical picture.....	63
4.1.3. Situation of those in formation.....	64
4.1.4. Place of formation.....	65

4.1.5. Criteria.....	65
4.2. Methodology	
4.2.1. Human.....	66
4.2.2. Intellectual.....	68
4.2.3. Spiritual.....	69
4.2.4. Communitarian.....	72
4.2.5. Apostolic.....	74
5. Juniorate	76
5.1. Content of stage	
5.1.1. Goal.....	76
5.1.2. Theoretical picture.....	76
5.1.3. Situation of those in formation.....	77
5.1.4. Place of formation.....	78
5.1.5. Criteria.....	78
5.2. Methodology	
5.2.1. Human.....	79
5.2.2. Intellectual.....	81
5.2.3. Spiritual.....	82
5.2.4. Communitarian.....	85
5.2.5. Apostolic.....	87
PART FOUR	
PERFORMERS OF FORMATION	90
1. Holy Spirit.....	90
2. Person in formation.....	90
3. Responsible superior	91
4. Responsible formator.....	92
5. Community.....	93
GOAL OF FORMATION	95
Appendix	97
Bibliography	137

INTRODUCTION

As Saint Norbert we would like to stay closely united with ecclesiastical hierarchy and listen to life-giving voice of the successor of Saint Peter. All institutes of sacred life are encouraged to evolve Ratio Institutionis (formation programme inspired by charisma of Institute) in postsynodal apostolic exhortation *Vita Consecrata* in article 68.

Ratio is for us a huge need because it shows us the way how to lead new generations into spirituality of our Congregation. It makes clear the way how to live in various periods of our lives and how to head the entire faith maturity in Christ.

Ratio should help us:

- to see with eyes full of faith God in world that no longer perceives His presence;
- to make God's presence visible through the witness of our charism in the world.

Ratio is determined to all sisters. It is the expression of solicitude of Congregation to Sainthood and veritableness of life of its members. Despite all sisters are invited to know and live the content of Ratio, the direct responsibility for its introduction into life has general superior, provincial superior, provincial council, superiors of communities and performers.

(tu vložit' Ratio Institutionis - schému)

PART ONE

ORIGINS OF FORMATION

1. GOD'S WORD

*“If you hold to my teaching,
you are really my disciples.
Then you will know the truth,
and the truth will set you free.”*

John 8: 31-32

1. “For the main rule of religious life is to follow Christ according to Gospel doctrine, let all societies consider this to be the greatest rule.”² “It’s especially necessary so that listening to God’s word becomes a vivid reunion that allows us to gain in scriptural text the Live Word which asks us questions, guides and shapes life.”³ Right here reveals Jesus Christ himself and rises up our mind and heart: here matures faith view and teaches us to see the reality and events through God’s eyes till we reach “the mind of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 2:16).⁴ “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5). He “made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name.” (Philippians 2:7-10)

2. Every sister daily takes into her hands Holy Bible to read it, contemplate it and thus she recognizes the real image of Christ to which she has to grow up to. In our communities we also try regular community sharing about the Scripture that is a powerful and effective mean for building community life

² *PC*, 2a; See also *VC*, 94.

³ *NMI*, 39.

⁴ See. *ZZK*, 24a.

insidely. “*Christ is present in His word in our communities.*”⁵
“*Listening to God’s Word presupposes sincerity, persistence, docility and concentration. Life in our communities should be arranged so that our houses are sometimes places of volunteer silence, contemplation, education and conversations between sisters.*”⁶

3. From Scripture we gain indispensable light which we need to our individual differentiation or differentiation in community that allows us to discover Lord’s ways in signs of time. Thus we form in ourselves transcendental instinct by which we do not conform to the pattern of this world but we renew our mind so that we can test and approve God’s will – his good, pleasing and perfect will. (See Romans 12, 2).⁷

2. CHURCH TRADITION – SAINT AUGUSTINE

“Love is the fulfillment of the law.”
Romans 13:10

4. Already in first centuries of Church existed people who felt vocation to follow incarnated Word, which accepted the shape of servant, and decided to follow It. In this radical way they fulfilled demands resulting from baptism presence on Easter mystery of His death and resurrection. Thus they have become “bearers of cross” and tried to be also “holders of Spirit” – to be real religious people who with their praising, praying for others, spiritual advices and acts of mercy have become the hidden leaven of history.⁸

5. Saint Augustine excellently understood, realised and recommended the life according to apostolic statutes. For us

⁵ *Konštitúcie*, 34.

⁶ *Konštitúcie*, 35.

⁷ See. *VC*, 94.

⁸ See also, 6b.

who live according to Rule of Saint Augustine is especially important his view and understanding of religious life in terms of our formation effort. *“In his life, Rules and in his writings we can find richness of teaching and life that tries to be oriented to loving God. According to Saint Augustine teaching brotherly and sisterly harmony creates in consciousness and experience that God himself is present in community and individually in each human being and exposes in many ways in community of spirit and heart, property, prayer, living and work under the leadership of superiors who have to serve in love.”*⁹

6. According to the example of Saint Augustine we realise the importance of supporting the love to Holy Bible and rootedness in it like he expresses it: “Let Your Holy Bible be pure pleasure for me, ... Your voice is my joy.”¹⁰

We permanently want to deepen further knowledge of work and spirit of Saint Augustine as a community and also individually. We are aware of that it is one of the fundamental origins of our spirituality. “Religious life that permanently changes and grows in new forms is itself clear expression of Christ’s presence as a Gospel which still spreads during all centuries. It appears like “historical continuation of distinctive presence of resurrected Lord.”¹¹

⁹ *Konštitúcie*, 18.

¹⁰ *Vyznanie*, 11/2.

¹¹ *ZZK*, 2c.

3. MAGISTERY DOCUMENTS ABOUT FORMATION

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Romans 12: 2

7. “The actual renewal of religious institutes – as the document *Potissimum Institutioni* introduces in article 1 – depends especially on formation of its members.” The main formation goal lies in the induction into and it should help to acquire an awareness of religious identity consecrated to God through evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience in a religious institute.¹² The purpose of initial and also permanent religious formation is to plunge religious into experience of God and help them to improve it. The main goal, that the institute formation has to reach, is the mutual interdigitation of inner life and activity so that everyone in his conscience should try to achieve the priority of life in Holy Spirit.¹³ “The first task of consecrated life is to show great works that God is doing in fragile human nature of called.”¹⁴ We know according to the demands of Church Magistery documents about formation that it is important to use appropriate method, full of religious and pedagogic wisdom, what also confirms the necessity of developing our Ratio.

8. We are thankful for the richness of documents concerned to our consecrated life that our Holy Church offers us in recent decades and also our pope John Paul II. Documents

¹² See *PI*, 110 b.

¹³ See *MR*, 4.

¹⁴ *VC*, 20.

as Potissimum Institutioni, Brotherly life in community, postsynodal exhortation Vita Consecrata, Begin again with Christ, are for us permanent and inexhaustable source of inspiration and we take them in spirit of docility as it express our Constitutions: *“On the basis of our promise we have the duty to obey our Holy Father as our highest superior. We devotedly want to fulfill this duty. To deepen this docility we want to accept, study and fulfill all his instructions that are presented in documents of Holy See.”*¹⁵

4. FOUNDER, HISTORY OF CONGREGATION, CHARISMA

*“Do not neglect your gift,
which was given you.”
1 Timothy 4:14*

9. Saint Norbert, the founder of Norbertine order (our Congregation is one of its branches), is characterized especially by his unshakeable faith, humbleness, penitence and persistence. He was devoted to Church, docile to voice of Saint Peter’s successor so that the pope Inocent II. wrote to him: *“The Holy See can congratulate itself that we have such a devoted son.”*¹⁶ How gentle and touching was the devotion of Saint Norbert to Eucharist so that he was named the Eucharistic Saint.

He is also called the angel of peace because of his brilliant ability to reconcile angry people. *“Life according to the Scripture, as it showed Saint Norbert, consists of the awarness that »we live according to the Scripture and Christ is our Guider«. Subsequently we preach the Gospel in poverty and »daily bear Christ’s cross«, so that we can refill the extent*

¹⁵ Konštitúcie, 124.

¹⁶ Liturgia hodín, osobitné oficiá premonštrátskej rehole, p. 60.

of Christ's suffering on our bodies for His Body and for the Church so that we could once live with resurrected Christ."¹⁷

He recommended to his followers three things: "tidiness at the altar and at services; elimination of transgressions and negligence in chapter; care of poor and hospitality". "*This spirit of Norbert must still more and more form our thinking, our attitudes, our acts and life of individuals as well as community.*"¹⁸ What our founder has conveyed us still maintains its special up-to-dateness also nowadays. That's why we are called to continue with great and creative courage in inventive action and holiness of our founder and thus answer to signs of times which emerges in today's world.¹⁹

10. We want to understand and maintain the spirit of our founder as well as his intentions, healthy traditions in conviction that it all together creates family possession of our community. We also realise that "the basic element for unity of community is the heritage on founder and charisma as he lived it, passed it on as well as on charisma which Congregation has maintained and developed all its existence."²⁰ Deepening in knowing our founder and his charisma is for us a permanent challenge when we want to live the real and authentic Norbertine life.

11. According to words of Pope John Paul II. he presented in his message on the occasion of 850th anniversary of Norbertine order foundation, Norbertine sisters and brothers are called by God in spirit of Saint Norbert:

- to live united in liturgic prayer, personal contemplation and apostolate;
- to be real and to remain balance in witnessing of values that are eternal and transcendental;

¹⁷ *Konštitúcie*, 16.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁹ *VC*, 37.

²⁰ *MR*, 11.

- to give an example of hard work and seriousness of religious life;
- to make the sacrifice of holy service the source of your strength and joy;
- to raise the Eucharist up above all sorrows and mistakes of this world;
- to bring the truth, certainty and love to people of today and bring them closer to Jesus in Eucharist;
- always be devoted to catholic Church;
- to stay closely united with religious hierarchy and listen the life-giving voice of Saint Peter's follower as a Saint Norbert did;
- to understand and love people who they live with and testify with joy and courage the Gospel message of salvation;
- to strengthen the love to Virgin Mary in every man.²¹

5. CONSTITUTIONS, REGULA

*“All the believers were one in heart and mind”
Acts 4:32*

12. As Norbertine sisters we are led by the Rule of Saint Augustine to *“be one in heart and mind in God!”*²² In other words: common searching of God in the community where we share with faith and love and gain the encouragement and strength to generous service to Church and the world. The community of minds and hearts in God is itself the heart of the formation programme because it requires common share of life, common searching for God and apostolate. In the article 62 – 63 our Constitutions show the importance of the task of

²¹ *List generálnemu opátovi Marcelovi Van de Ven, v r. 1993.*

²² *Regula svätého Augustína, V/ 2.*

formation in Congregation in these words: *“Monastic life in our Congregation has the responsibility for the demands of Gospel, the healthy effort of human naturalness and peculiarity of vocation of each sister. Thus we consider our formation to be the first task. The formation helps us to answer God’s calling in faith, to harmoniously grow up to the fulfilled and matured individuality as a man as well as Christian, to deepen the knowing of Christian responsibility and to give with eagerness ourselves, our competences and talents into the service to fellow-sisters and to Church.”* Constitutions are for us the way to ideal love by following Christ in the spirit of Saint Norbert.

PART TWO

SPIRITUALITY OF NORBERTINE

1. THE MEANING OF NORBERTINE INDENTITY

13. Close relationship between the formation and identity requires that “every consecrated person should ardently recognize the spirit of her institute, its history and mission so that she can better absorb them in individual and community dimension.”²³

14. We often meet with difficulty how to define the Norbertine spirituality. Although we don't have any typical elements as the later congregations and institutions have, it is our own that we are a community. To this existence belongs adoration as well as contemplation, our life in community and for community of Church.²⁴

According to the tradition and spirituality of Norbertine religious family sisters try to realise the intentions of their consecrated life by adoration of Christ in the Eucharist, by extraordinary veneration of blessed Virgin Mary, by common recitation of Liturgy of hours as well as by apostolic activity in penitence.²⁵

15. Norbert's religious core is community and society. As much it created a community in the history and as much it faithfully observed the Rule and Constitutions, thus it had a greater importance, name and appreciation. It works also in reverse: as it was less a community, had less of spirit and didn't observe the rules, thus it meant less for the society.²⁶ As we can see from our founder's character his charisma is besides the other also conversion, radical choice “Vita evangelica et

²³ VC, 71.

²⁴ *Prípravný text ku generálnej kapitule rádu 2000*, p. 12.

²⁵ Cf. *Konštitúcie*, 3.

²⁶ T. ŘÍHA, *Regula svätého Augustína a jej výklad*, p. 25.

apostolica” and following of Holy Bible. He appears like the angel of peace and reconciliation, reformer of clergy and Church, and he tries to be devoted to Church, to give life to the Gospel in it, to announce god’s Kingdom and to celebrate the Eucharist.²⁷

With apostolic life Norbert wanted to associate the life of asceticism, poverty and community according to the example of apostles life and the life of the initial Church as it depict the Acts of apostles.²⁸ Norbert’s mission was to move the world by great challenge of life according to Gospel and to gather as many souls gained for God in monasteries as possible.²⁹

When we want to give a true picture of the innermost foundation of great Norbert’s soul, we need to say the Name that is above all names. Jesus Christ was his main idea. He couldn’t get enough of perception, studying, bowing and loving Jesus who is the Saintliness Himself so that he could reach the mercy to resemble Him and to continue in life of Christ living in His Saints on earth.³⁰

16. “According to the example of Saint Norbert and in his spirit, instructed by experiences of history of order and according to his own knowing and needs of place and time, we would like to live according to the main Commandment of love to God and your neighbour, to worship and to serve in personal asceticism.”³¹

²⁷ *Prípravný text ku generálnej kapitule rádu 2000*, p. 7.

²⁸ T. ŘÍHA, *Svätý Norbert*, p. 60.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

³¹ *Premonstratensice vivere*, p. 2.

2. MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

17. Our religious family exists because there were many families before us that lived this special mystical experience, and it will stay to the same extent as the other stay through God's gift they will carry on in living the same mystical experience. That's why the prayer is the first activity of religious and only this prayer transforms: consecrated man gradually enters into harmony with what he contemplates and let himself to reshape.

Prayer and contemplation create the environment for acquiring God's Word as well as they rise out of listening of God's Word. With no inner love which inspires others to the Word, Father and Spirit, the view of faith can't exist (Cf. John 14:23).³² Prayer is the inseparable way how to meet God.

18. According Saint Augustine to know yourself means to listen what God wants to say: "God, speak truthfully to my heart because you alone can speak like this." The goal of inner life is not only to discover my true I and my limits but also to find the other, i.e. God, and in Him the other people. To be aspected on God can never mean the indifference to man and problems of world. No one must be so contemplative that he forgets the welfare of neighbour, and no one must be so active that he neglects the contemplation of God.

Inner life requires silence and peace. When we look around we can see that many people don't appreciate the silence maybe because they don't want to meet with themselves. Contemplation lies in searching and finding the truth. It should be led in such a way that the truth never hides before sisters what it has contemplated.

19. Looking at our founder Saint Norbert we recognize his inmost attitude. Through sorrows which caused him monasteries and exhausting activity on his long apostolic journeys, he knew how to maintain the holy fire of devotion

³² ZZK, 25.

and knowing in himself. He was the man of study, prayer and contemplation.³³ Norbert's goal was to put together active life with life of contemplation. He planned that his students will find in silence strength and knowledge in seclusion, which will allow them to work with greater freshness and effectiveness in Lord's vineyard. After then they will sometimes return back to the solitude of monastery so that they will gain new strength and equipped by this they will be able to go out again.³⁴

20. The Eucharist, in the centre of liturgic prayer, had such a place in Premontré order and in Saint Norbert's life that later tradition made Norbert an "apostle of Eucharist".³⁵

21. The centre of everyday in our life is the Eucharistic liturgy, the circle around it is the liturgic or other prayer, the next circle is work and all elements of life. We fight against the weakening of Eucharistic veneration and we try to deepen our faith in real Christ's presence in Holy Sacrament. We lead ourselves and other people to understanding of adoration, Eucharistic accompaniment, congresses. We take care of observance of liturgic rules.³⁶

22. Liturgy, where heaven and earth are united, is the peak which the whole Church heads to as well it is a source out of which flows all its strength.³⁷ *"As a Congregation which has the canonic origin, we foster common liturgical prayer as our personal vocation and we also put the emphasis on its common action."*³⁸ Liturgical prayer belongs to the rhythm of our life which is led by the heart filled with God.³⁹ Its aim is to consecrate the day as well as the whole human activity.⁴⁰ *"Listening to God's Word, sacraments, choir and personal*

³³ T. ŘÍHA, *Svätý Norbert*, p.78.

³⁴ T. ŘÍHA, *Svätý Norbert*, p.62.

³⁵ B. ARDURA, *Premonstratensi*, p. 38.

³⁶ *Premonstratensice vivere*, p.4.

³⁷ *PI*, 77.

³⁸ *Konštitúcie*, 40.

³⁹ T. ŘÍHA, *Regula svätý Augustína a jej výklad*, p. 39.

⁴⁰ *Liturgia hodín I.*

prayer, in which we can see the contemplative dimension of our way of life, present the most important form (exactly the soul) of our apostolate.”⁴¹

23. *“We display the veneration and love to Virgin Mary, our Mother, commonly and also individually. We learn from her complete devotion to God and how to serve the people. We join to Her Magnificat so that we can express our gratitude to God for all given mercies.”⁴²*

3. ASCETIC WAY

24. Ascetic way is the natural and indispensable expression of mystical experience. The contemplation of God's mystery requires being Godlike and letting him actively to change our attitudes, words, thoughts and desires – this is asceticism.

A mystic is the unselfish contemplation of what God is and what He is doing in me. Asceticism is the attempt, discreet and volitive. It is important to gain its activity and answer to it.

25. Thanks to our fathers Augustine and Norbert, the conversion becomes a constant life programme. The resistance against the change and conversion seems to be the one of the biggest problems in common life. To live in peace we have to convert ourselves constantly.

26. In formula vowed by us, we bind ourselves to conversion of life. We have to convert ourselves, come back to ideal which we find in Act of apostles, in Rule of Saint Augustine, in Constitutions and in traditions of our order.⁴³

27. Asceticism belongs to the completeness of our lives. To live like Norbertine means to live strictly, to obey some limits, to abide the order. That means to fulfill the rules

⁴¹ *Konštitúcie*, 44.

⁴² *Smernica*, 3/2.

⁴³ *Pripravny text ku generálnej kapitule rádu 2000*, p. 26.

of common and individual life and voluntarily accept the limits. We are shy of conspicuous strictness. Our attitude is not a resignation but an initiative despite a kind of risk is associated with it.⁴⁴ The life consecrated to God means an effort to live the Gospel. It's not an effort to live according the Gospel but exactly to live the Gospel. The effort to live the Gospel is not possible without penitence.⁴⁵ Thus the common life is joy which is accompanied and conditioned by penitence on earth.⁴⁶

28. *“Penitence is a part of completeness of our way of life. It can be realised also by the acceptance and differentiation of spirits and by the bearing of abnegation and disadvantages that bring the everyday work and common life.”*⁴⁷ For building up the common life we find, as the most important thing, the asceticism of language as it recommended Saint Norbert in his Speech: “Hold your tongue so that you can live unanimously, as brothers and sisters, in Lord's house without any grumbling, harming of honour of others, without envy,

29. To our religious lifestyle belongs also fast and moderation.⁴⁸ They're also kind of asceticism. Self-discipline is an examined method in this sphere how to control yourself in other spheres of life.⁴⁹

*“In the spirit of penitence we go through the painful conflicts with presence so that we would be able to make the world more Christian. We choose also various kinds of retraction which we do individually or commonly as a substitution for our misdemeanours or those of strangers.”*⁵⁰

⁴⁴ *Premonstratensice vivere*, p. 3.

⁴⁵ *Premonstratensice vivere*, p. 27.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁴⁷ *Konštitúcie*, 53.

⁴⁸ T. ŘÍHA, *Regula svätého Augustína a jej výklad*, p. 43.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.42.

⁵⁰ *Smernica*, 3/4.

30. In conversion to God and sisters helps us “*when we ask for forgiveness, forgive and do the penitence.*”⁵¹ “*Common penitential worships in our communities express the social dimension of sin and reconciliation. During these worships all sisters praise God’s mercy and confess our evil misdemeanours.*”⁵²

We still convince ourselves that it’s useful and necessary to declare our sins for sisterly life in the community. It’s a simple way of sharing and uncovering our weakness so that we could share together the power of God’s mercy in sisterly forgiveness. We can define it as a critical reflection over certain aspect of our behaviour or about the life in community in the light of God’s word and the Rule before whole community and with its help.⁵³ It’s also in the spirit of our founder Saint Norbert who recommended “the elimination of misdemeanours and negligences in Chapter”. “*We find ourselves constantly in danger that we distance ourselves from God and sisters. That’s why we try in personal as well as common life to make God visible for other people and to form ourselves to new human beings according to Gospel counsels.*”⁵⁴

4. MISSION AND NORBERTINE APOSTOLATE

31. Our main mission is to answer the impulses, that present-days and the need of Church places before us, in the spirit of Saint Norbert and healthy traditions. It’s the application of spirituality *hic et nunc* (here and now). As Saint Norbert we have to come to meet the needs of present-days and to bring in the spirit of *vita apostolica* the Gospel values to nowadays

⁵¹ *Konštitúcie*, 26.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 39.

⁵³ A. CENCINI, *Život v usmíření*, p. 138.

⁵⁴ *Konštitúcie*, 26.

world. Hereafter we want by the witness of our *communio* to prove that we know whom we believed. Simultaneously we want to bring a man to God by liturgy and to call for God's blessing on whole world. For us is very precious the thought of Saint Norbert - *vita mixta*, i.e. the connection of life in monastery or religious community together with outside apostolic activity.⁵⁵

32. The apostolate has two main levels:

Ad intra – it is the mission inwards our own community where we have to know joys and sorrows of common life. The success of initial Christians wasn't in special gifts but in that the disciples and their followers have found thanks to Jesus the mystery of community.

Ad extra – is the second level of our apostolic effectivity. They are all the activities of Congregation, province and individual communities. By these we influence the world in the spirit of mission that Church entrusts us.⁵⁶

33. We need a good preparation for apostolic work.⁵⁷ Norbertine sister must have in order to give. Eagerness for salvation of souls showed Norbert and his sons and daughters to those who have come to see them and to them who they looked out for. They have always considered this activity not as a mission of individuals but as a mission of apostolic attention.⁵⁸

34. One more characteristic of apostolate should be mentioned - apostolate in community. Nowadays there is often a tension between requirements of community life and requirements of apostolate. How can we restrain this tension? Of course we have to serve the Church as it says Saint Augustine. But at all costs? No. Not at the cost of our charisma and especially at the cost of common life. Already our common

⁵⁵ N. F. VEHOVSKÝ, *Premonstrátská spiritualita*, p. 7.

⁵⁶ *Prípravný text ku generálnej kapitule rádu 2000*, p. 17-18.

⁵⁷ *Premonstratensice vivere*, p. 4.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

life is a kind of apostolate when we live it as it founders and tradition teach us. Not only this: common life keeps in balance and stands against the individualism and solitude and thus it is in service to people as well as Church. Words like “I’ve got a lot of apostolic work” can be also an equivocation. There is a danger of excessive individualism (everybody is doing his own business, at his own territory where he is Lord himself). There are some things that help even condition our apostolate: conferences, exchange of opinions, control, common planning.⁵⁹ Norbertine apostolate was a group apostolate and thanks to this it still stays modern.⁶⁰

“For nowadays apostolic work we need a wide cooperation and mutual refilling that we are prepared for.”⁶¹ “We are ready to do whatever is good” (Cf. Titus 3:1 a 2 Timothy 3:17). We are willing to work in pastoration, to help with youth education, with providing materials for these tasks, health and social services, at exacting workplaces, to help those who need care the most and also to help at other jobs that can be united by membership to our Congregation. It is necessary to provide good conditions for our religious life so that we could responsibly fulfill our duties.”⁶² “We realise the preaching of Gospel so that we directly or indirectly bring living Christ to those who are entrusted to us. We try to be good colleagues for those we work with. We pay attention to necessary scholarship.”⁶³ “Elder and ill sisters should unite themselves with Christ who suffered for the salvation of world.”⁶⁴

35. Besides our apostolic work we shouldn’t succumb to certain dangers that can especially nowadays confuse us. So

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 38.

⁶⁰ T. ŘÍHA, *Regula svätého Augustína a jej výklad*, p. 50.

⁶¹ *Smernica*, 49/4.

⁶² Ibid., 50/1.

⁶³ Ibid., 50/2.

⁶⁴ *Konštitúcie*, 60.

that e.g. necessary professional preparation didn't become the excuse for not being disponible for mission. Thus we could loose the freshness of Gospel disponibility, spontaneity of apostle and could become just simple professionals in activity. Ask ourselves if we are ready to give up our personal professional preparation for the service to Congregation. If our consecrated life allowed to put all only in health service professionals, education or catechesis, it would mean that it made a mistake because it has changed the goal with means. Let's be awake so that we don't prefer activity before being, existence and so that we don't prefer the work of our hands before God's will.

PART THREE

STAGES OF FORMATION

1. ONGOING FORMATION

*“... he who began a good work
in you will carry it on to completion
until the day of Christ Jesus.”
Philippians 1:6*

1.1. Content of stage

1.1.1. Goal

36. The main goal of ongoing formation is to *“help every consecrated person with her development for all her life. No one can abandon the care about his personal as well as religious growth. Nobody can rely just on himself and manage his life on his own.”*⁶⁵ Ongoing formation requires permanent deepening of various aspects of specific consecration – not only apostolic but also ascetic and mystic.⁶⁶ It puts distinctive emphasis on signs of Spirit in nowadays so that we were sensitive to feel them a thus we could answer them.⁶⁷

1.1.2. Theoretical picture

37. Ongoing formation is a requirement that arises from the very nature of religious consecration. Formation proces doesn't reduce itself to initial stage of journey because regarding to the definiteness of human nature, the consecrated person would be never able to say that she has in herself

⁶⁵ *VC*, 69.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁶⁷ *PI*, 67.

completely formed a new human being, who feels like Christ in every single life situation.

That's why the initial formation should be fastened by ongoing formation thanks to which a man will be disposed to accept the formative influences through all his life.⁶⁸

The time we live in requires complete reevaluation of formation of consecrated people and this formation shouldn't be tied together just with definite period of life. Not only for that they should be much more able to join the reality (which changes very fast) but also because the consecrated life itself requires, from its substance, permanent readiness of those called.⁶⁹

“Congregation has to offer / provide – poskytnut sisters with indispensable means and within limits also with time so that they could according to their abilities to develop in spiritual, special – odborny and practical formation.”⁷⁰

1.1.3. Situation of those in formation

38. It is important that every consecrated person is formed to freedom during all of her life, at any age and time, in any environment and context, from every human being and culture. She should be open to let herself being instructed by every fragment of truth and beauty that she finds in her environment. Especially she needs to learn to let herself be formed by everyday life, the community she lives in, her sisters, ordinary as well as unique things, prayer and apostolic exhaustion, in joys and sorrows, up to death.⁷¹ In permanent formation we distinguish three stages: formation of young sister, formation of middle age sister and formation of sister in

⁶⁸ VC, 69.

⁶⁹ Cf. ZZK, 15.

⁷⁰ Konštitucie, 93.

⁷¹ ZZK, 15.

advanced age. We have to understand such division very flexibly with respect to individual proces of each sister.⁷²

1.1.4. Place of formation

39. The first responsible person for the ongoing formation is sister: no one and nothing can replace her personal belief and responsible approach to requirements of her vocation. She answers to God's devotion with the devotion of her own life.⁷³

40. Community becomes the next important place of formation. New sister learns how to live and grow among other sisters that she hasn't chosen and they have their own limits and differences. These are often hard to accpet but they represent a great gift that is needed for building up whole community. By living the beauty of sisterly life sister realises that it doesn't end in itself but there is a message which we have to announce and mission that needs to be realised.⁷⁴

41. Also religious province is a kind of formation community which needs to be formed. The spirit of province and its lifestyle, its *viability and ability* to induct its own charisma into life affect the initial as well as the ongoing formation. Primarily the province should aim at the renewal of its members, activities and structures. Plan and vision of province, its clearly defined identity, vocation criteria and other elements of provincial life are important forms of animation of the permanent formation. Each province uses the moments, menas, services and structures to animate the permanent formation.⁷⁵

Sister who is about fifty years old has the right to ask for the release from employment that she needs for her

⁷² J. GOGOLA (ed.), *Řeholní formace*, p. 155.

⁷³ Š. TURANSKÝ, *Pokoncilové požiadavky reholnej formácie*, p. 157.

⁷⁴ A. CENCINI, *Formácia dnes: Služba a tajomstvo*

⁷⁵ Š. TURANSKÝ, *Pokoncilové požiadavky reholnej formácie*, p. 159.

personal and spiritual growth and physical rest from 3 to 12 months. The place of her stay may be other community, house of her relatives or abroad.

Province leadership may offer the release from the employment for the period of 3-12 months to sister in time of her crisis or when she asks for it.⁷⁶

1.1.5. Criteria

42. We can mention these:

- the life according the Spirit (spirituality): it has to take priority because it includes the deepening of faith and sense of religious profession;
participation in life of Church in accordance with charisma of Congregation as well as the actual assimilation (aggiornamento) of methods to content of pastoral activity in cooperation with the others;
- deepening of biblical and theological science studies and to study Magisterial teachings, knowing better the culture of place where we live and work, and when it is necessary also professional and special education;
- faithfulness to our own charisma with the help of constantly deepening knowledge of our founder, history of our Congregation, its spirit, its mission and an adequate effort to live out everything on our own as well as in community.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Zápísnica z Generálnej kapituly Kongregácie 2006

⁷⁷ Cf. *PI*, 68.

1.2. Methodology

1.2.1. Human:

a) Goal

43. The goal of human formation is the permanently and deeply “knowing of ourselves and our own limits so that this knowledge could become the motive and help in effort to set ourselves absolutely free.”⁷⁸ The developed identity of woman makes the sister sensitive and attentive to needs of other people and makes her able to sacrifice herself up to extreme. This shows the attitude which allows the sister to step out of herself in order to live according Christ’s values.

b) Means

44. Means which lead to the purpose are: willingness constantly to deepen ourselves in self-knowledge, self-acceptation and interiorization of values of religious vocation. Sister that is aware of her own responsibility tries to live a simple lifestyle and to develop her human and social virtues. Sister as a religious woman realises that her religious motherhood has its beginning in the unity with Christ and leads her to full and unselfish self-dedication. She has the sense for responsibility and justice, she can willingly help as well as take the help from other people. She can manage her time well.

c) Evaluation

45. The mature sister expresses the beauty of her life, which is totally devoted to God, and the beauty of all that is drawing near to God: beauty of liturgy, chapel, environment, the way she speaks about God, how she serves him, the beauty

⁷⁸ *VC*, 71.

of common activities. Thus she is permanently opened to truth and beauty and she glows inner peace and freedom of a consecrated woman. Religious motherhood that is put into woman's heart shows itself in willingness to open herself to all people as well as to individuals, especially to God. Unambiguous unity between words and acts, trust in people and the ability to arrange relationships is one of next signs of human maturity. Sister confirms her love maturity in an open dialogue.

1.2.2. **Intellectual:**

a) Goal

46. The intellectual ability is not an isolated element of a personality. It should be integrated with other components of personality. It leads to knowledge of our own limits, to reformation of our own lacks by means of information and qualification. It also leads to thinking, confrontation and acceptance of new views as well as it helps consistently to decide. It is able to work up thoughts and arrange relationships. It's not the ability to gather the knowledge but it's criterion of differentiation, thinking and expertness in carrying out the vocation. The inability to learn from life, mental unsociability and the lack of honesty to truth are the signs and defensive attitudes that inhibit us from opening to other people and they cause the inability to live the vocation.

The goal of intellectual formation is to deepen the theological knowledge and understanding of religious life, especially according to documents of Church. It's important to pay attention to professional education according to sister's ability, requirement of time and needs of Congregation.

b) Means

47. Means that can help us to reach this goal are: theological and biblical study and study of documents of Church. It is important constantly to deepen ourselves in study of Rule, Constitutions, history of Congregation and Norbertine spirituality. The superiors, having on their minds the good of each sister and the needs of community, take care so that sisters participated in various educational courses, seminars and lectures. The study of foreign languages is a necessity because of the possibility to arrange new contacts, especially with our order. With great interest we watch the events of Church as well as world events in order to fully empathize in their needs, answer them and include them into our sincere prayers.

c) Evaluation

48. By intellectual education sister properly recognizes the nature of her vocation and its needs. Also the ability to think and conclude so that she was attentive to signs of time, recognized the calling of Holy Spirit and acquired the ability to learn from life. In all this she can live out more fully her consecration and she makes greater her dedication and faithfulness to Congregation and to the Church's Magisterium.

1.2.3. **Spiritual:**

a) Goal

49. In order to make the spiritual formation complex and evangelic – evanjeliova it has to touch, purify and change not only professed values and noticeable attitudes but also our emotions, desires, inner dispositions, plans, inclinations,

dreams, memory, fantasy and this all change into Jesus Christ's image who was given up to death for us.

The goal of spiritual formation is the creative faithfulness to God and the teachability to Holy Spirit in permanent conversion that involves whole personality: emotions, will and mind. Thus sister becomes able to distinguish what makes her more and more free and subordinate to God and she also becomes able to distinguish what is and what is not from God. It's a privilege of religious man to discover the spiritual nature of things so that she can let herself to be led by the Holy Spirit. According to Saint Paul: "...find out what pleases God" (Ephesians 5:10). This means the primacy of all spiritual in everyday life. To live our religious consecration, in the spirit of Saint Augustine and Norbert, in the way so that every sister could have a joyful life of her religious vows in community.

b) Means

50. Means that may help sister to become a spiritual being are: permanent contemplation of the Gospel, adoration, personal prayer, deeper understanding and living the Norbertine five points and deepening of charismatic identity.

The spiritual leading, religious reading, qualitative religious renewals and spiritual exercises are necessary so that sister could continue in her religious way. The environment which leads her is silence and solitude. The Working up her personal project of life is also a big help for her. In the spirit of Saint Augustine's rule and our Constitutions, every sister is led to a personal consecration through communal life. On this way it is important to share with personal experience of faith.

Liturgy, especially celebrating the Eucharist and Liturgy of hours, fill a very distinctive place in our Congregation and we accentuate its common performance. For us who "are

devoted only to God's things" it is the place and privileged mean how to praise the God in the name of Church.⁷⁹

Following Christ leads us to more conscious and concrete participation in mystery of his suffering, death and resurrection. Who serves to God should prepare himself to be tested as it remembers the Gospel. (Sirach 2:1-5; Judith 8:25-27; Isaiah 53:3-7). A great consolation may also be a qualified help of a sister whose careful and unselfish presence may lead to rediscovering of the sense of the Testament which God as first had made with us and he will never break it. Thus the tested person reaches the acceptance of clean and retraction of all. Those are the most essential expressions of following the crucified Christ.⁸⁰

c) Evaluation

51. The life in Holy Spirit has evident primacy. Consecrated person finds in it her identity and deep harmony. She becomes more sensitive to everyday challenges of Gospel and she lets herself to be led by the initial inspiration of her Institute. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, she will keep consistently her prayer life, silence and solitude as well as persistent prayer for God's gift among everyday sorrows. (Cf. Book of Wisdom 9:10).⁸¹ To religious freedom is sister led by personal distinguishing. The tension between godlike and human is a way to own identity so that God is placed in the centre as the only criterion of our life.

Thanks to spiritual formation sister matures in real and deep faith in order to believe with all her personality. Sister is called to put her life totally into God's hands in order to be free from needs to be attractive for other people and thus she could learn the attitude of "useless servant" in front of God.

⁷⁹ *PI*, 77.

⁸⁰ *VC*, 70; Cf. tiež *VC*, 38.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 71.

Exactly her “uslessness” becomes the fertile land for God’s mercy. This attracts Lord’s attention and He can let His word to be fully heard.

The authentic religious life in the spirit of our charisma focuses on Eucharist that is the centre of consecrated life – personal as well as the life in community.

52. *The main sign of our consecrated life are three Gospel counsels. Remember them as it explained our pope John Paul II:*

“Each nun has to witness God’s greatness. Everyday she has to devote enough time in order to stay in front of Lord, tell him how she loves him and mainly to let herself being loved by him.

Each nun should show in her everyday life that she has voluntarily chosen the humbleness and poverty for herself as well for common life.

Each nun should daily try to seek God’s will and her own will. Thus she should show that all human action, that is also typical for her and the community, doesn’t create the only History base but there exists God’s plan above it all which can ask the sacrifice of her will.”

1.2.4. Communitarian:

a) Goal

53. The goal of communitarian formation is life according to image of The Holy Trinity. Many people have to become the unity through sharing of all welfares they have.

Sisterly community isn’t just an instrument that serves their mission but mainly it’s a place where you can feel presence of the Lord. Remind ourselves that we have created

the community in order to care about maintenance of unanimity and to have one soul and one heart in God. As mature women we express our motherhood through the willingness to pass on our experiences to next generations as well as to accept them with sensitive heart.

When we want to be faithful to God's plan and to be respond to big expectances of the world there stands in front of us a great challenge to make the Church "a house and a school of community". Especially from us who are consecrated it is expected to be the real teachers of community.⁸²

b) Means

54. Love that conditions the common life "doesn't think just about itself" but according to the Rule it "prefers the common before own and not contrariwise. Thus the reality of common everyday life requires to "*put into common*" everything what we do.⁸³

For community life is very important a well prepared and lived out chapters of communities, province, Congregation, and the openness of sisters to a stimulus from the order as well as from the Congregation leadership and province.

Superiors, at different stages and according to their skills, are responsible for building up and strengthening of common life through many visitations to communities, organisations of meetings within permanent formation and other meetings of sisters. The leading of superiors should be such that could by sisterly dialogue invoke in sisters the participation and joint-liability. Today in changing living conditions is very important the communitarian distinguishing which means that the community, headed by its superior, constantly seeks, recognizes God's will and stays in the unity of minds and hearts.

⁸² Cf. *NMI*, 43.; Cf. tiež *ZZK*, 28.

⁸³ Cf. *Regula*, V/2.

The personal responsibility of each sister within building up of community is an active participation in community life as it expresses our Constitutions: “*Common activities as common prayer, common dining, and common work and relax deepen the integration of sisters into community as well as sister’s unity.*”⁸⁴ Don’t forget that the penitential and sister’s lectures are still actual means.

The important element of joint-liability for communitarian life is also common working out of communitarian project.

c) Evaluation

55. Our sisterly life finds its form in personal relationships of mutual respect, gratitude, service, trust, education, forgiving and encouraging.

We require from sister the attitude of teachability which plays here the active role as well as it helps her to “learn how to learn” during all her life and remain in formation state.

The communitarian formation helps sister to acquire instantaneous availability according to the image of Jesus Christ who was made a man, a humbled and obedient servant, free to give his life as a love expression. (Cf. Philippians 2:5-8). As once sister accepted the identity of servant, she is no more afraid of losing her values when she has to bow and serve, waste her time for other people, if the circumstances require from her to be around and to forget herself, to substitute when someone’s missing or to be substituted. The attitude of servant leads her to give herself without waiting a reward, it leads her to be thankful for what she has and not to complain about what she doesn’t have.

Our elder and ill sisters deserve our hearty solicitude which is the expression of our love and gratitude to them.

⁸⁴ *Konštitúcie*, 54.

Simultaneously we realise that their witness is for us a great value.

1.2.5. Apostolic:

a) Goal

56. Particular contribution of consecrated people into evangelization lies especially in the witness of life that is completely devoted to God and to neighbours according to our Redeemer's example who became a servant because of his love to man. The mission to serve is entrusted especially to community. Also various services of individual sisters have their exact place within the community. "Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many from one body, and each member belongs to all the others." (Romans 12:4-5).

According to example of our founder Saint Norbert, who was an eager apostle of that time, we especially try to build Eucharistic, Marian and liturgical apostolate. We consider him an apostle of reconciliation and peace.

For each sister it is important to accept apostolic dimension as something fundamental and constructive as a natural consequence of her self-dedication.

b) Means

57. Especially our communities should be the places of spiritual refreshment. We want to open our hearts and hands for needs of people who are necessitous, suffering and downtrodden.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Cf. *Konštitúcie*, 10.

We live the gift of charisma, which we have received, for other people. Charisma expresses the love and providence of God the Father to people, especially with the most important thing: it includes religious wisdom which we can't keep to ourselves but we want to offer it to the other people to enrich them. In this line we can see that here begins a new type of community and cooperation within different kinds of vocations and standards of living, especially between consecrated people and laics. In our Congregation we can offer laics the relationship that is mainly religious and necessary space for silence and prayer. Herewith we think especially our tertians to whom we offer also deeper participation in life of our spirituality. Our effort is to join them gradually into pastoral cooperation.⁸⁶ Laics, from their point of view, can bring into life of our religious communities valuable contribution of their experience and their specific service.⁸⁷

On the field of straight apostolate there is very important mutual and open cooperation of individual sisters as well as the knowledge of their responsibility towards the community and management. Sisters should be by superiors and other sisters encouraged to share with apostolic experience. We also try to be open-eared to needs of time and signs of time.

c) Evaluation

58. The way of consecrated person to God is in this: gradually bring to Lord all she is and all she has for the success of mission of religious family. Sister who works in apostolate realises that the apostolic mission is on the first place entrusted to society. The inner attitude of sister, at whom have been through the obedience transferred all personal tasks, is to understand herself to be charged by society. On the other hand the community has to take care of her renewal according to

⁸⁶ Cf. *ZZK*, 31.

⁸⁷ *VC*, 54.

Constitutions and it has to take her into the exploration of apostolic duties of community.

It is important to try during ordinary day to retain the balance between the community and apostolic activity. It's dangerous to lay both aspects into contrary, however, it's true that it's hard to harmonize them.

Thus independently of kind of activity or service, which consecrated persons have to fulfil, they should remember that they have to be qualified guide on the ways of religious life and within this perspective they should develop "their biggest talent, i.e. the spirit". They should divide with what we have contemplated before.

The Norbertine apostolate is from its very core group apostolate. If it's not we aren't authentic in charisma. Certainly nobody can be an apostle without that he was fully integrated into communitarian life and in all stages of formation.

2. PASTORATION OF VOCATION

„Come and you will see!“
John 1:39

2.1. Content of stage

2.1.1. Goal

59. The main goal of pastoration of vocation is:

- to help young man to find God's plan in his life and accept it with gratitude and joy;⁸⁸
- to rouse in young people the interest in knowing Jesus Christ so that they will be fascinated by his personality;
- lead and teach young people to know the right values of life (e.g. to suggest the direction that is, of course, to follow Christ and it can lead to decision to follow Christ as an apostle, a priest, a religious or nun, monk who leaves the world, or just as a laic who is consecrated in world;⁸⁹
- permanent formation of man.⁹⁰

2.1.2. Theoretical picture

60. Different historical and cultural circumstances require so that the pastoration of vocation was understood as one of the main goals of whole Christian community.⁹¹ The service for vocation is one of new and serious challenges and also consecrated life has to face them.⁹²

The best way how to help the Holy Spirit to have an effect is to do our best to rouse the vocations and especially to take care about the pastoration of youth.

⁸⁸ *Plán pastoračie povolání na Slovensku 2004*

⁸⁹ *Nové povolania pre novú Európu*, 25.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 26 e.

⁹¹ JÁN PAVOL II. *Nové povolania pre novú Európu* - príhovor k účastníkom kongresu, p. 79.

⁹² *ZZK*, 16.

The mission of consecrated life and persistence of institutes depend on faithfulness with which the consecrated people live their vocation. However they last to future to such degree as the other people will answer God's calling.⁹³

2.1.3. Situation of those in formation

61. Nowadays people are badly influenced by culture of communism and secularism. This caused the extensive disorientation in system of values. The traditional national culture dies down and it is substituted by European lifestyle.

Young people lose the most important attribute of human formation. They lose love to truth what causes the disingenuousness to themselves and relatives, community as well as to God. The consequence of this reality is disruption of creating of moral conscience.

The next missing element of upbringing is a little emphasis on emotional maturing. Contemporary family is in crisis. Many young people come from broken families and the consequence of this is their emotional fragility. The reason is a fear related to the lack of confidence, inability to accept the commitments for all life, hesitancy in searching of their profession.

The inadequate religious upbringing didn't give young any intellectual certainty in the truth of faith teaching. Young people do not know how to ground their faith rationally, they do not know how to defend themselves against ridicule, and they do not have an adequate confidence and certainty in truth of their opinion because there was nobody who would pass it down to them.

Internet, mobile, music, films etc. are seductive temptations for youth. On the one hand it positively influences young people: extension of horizons, nearly unlimited field of acquiring of new information, facilitating of possibilities of

⁹³ VC, 64.

communication, on the other hand it lowers their ability to communicate effectively. Because of great amount of information they can't critically distinguish real values from those unreal ones. Young man is then large-minded but skin-deep with weak will and unstable identity.

In common young people are open for spiritual values if these are given to them in the way that is appropriate to their culture.⁹⁴

2.1.4. Place of formation

62. The task to help the vocations should be realised so that it could become more common work of whole Church. Thus it requires active cooperation of shepherds, religious, families and pedagogues, because this service is a part of whole pastoration of each local Church.⁹⁵ Especially families need to be encouraged to live as real domestic Church in order to claim various vocations, accept them and be accompanied them.⁹⁶

The active presence of consecrated persons may help Christian communities to become the laboratories of faith, places of searching, thinking and meeting, places of community and apostolic service where all people may feel like participators in building up God's Kingdom among people.⁹⁷

63. Each of our communities in our Congregation is a place for pastoraion of vocation. The renewal of our communities is necessary for real pastoral activity. New vocations require communities that are certain in their identity, and happy that they can through their lives express the charisma with renewed strength for the service to God, Church and to the whole world. It is important for young people to find

⁹⁴ *Plán pastorácie povolání na Slovensku 2004*

⁹⁵ *VC*, 64.

⁹⁶ *Ecclesia in Europa „Cirkev v Európe“*, 40.

⁹⁷ *ZZK*, 16.

friendly atmosphere in community. This atmosphere may help them to recognize God's plan that is hidden in their hearts.⁹⁸

So that Church could show its right face to today's man, it urgently needs such communities which by their existence itself contribute to new evangelization. Thus they in concrete way present the fruit of "new commandment".⁹⁹

Each community and all members of institute are called to take on themselves the task of contact with young, pedagogy of following Christ according to Gospel and handover of charisma. Youth expect that someone will offer them the right way of life according to Gospel and that he will initiate them into great spiritual values of human and Christian life.¹⁰⁰

64. The concrete responsibility for vocation promotion has a sister – vocation animator who is appointed by province superior and approved by the province council for one electoral term. She has a help of pastoration team which constitutes from sister responsible for formation in province, formator in basic formation and other sisters who have some experiences in this field of work and are designated by the province council. Sister who is responsible for vocation promotion prepares twice a year (at spring and autumn province council) a report for province leadership.

2.1.5. Criteria

65. Pastoration of youth should be divided according to age and it should be completely adapted to different life situations and demands of children, adolescents and youth.¹⁰¹

Young being has to be led in three stages:

- to become a man or woman (human accompanying);

⁹⁸ *CIC*, 10.

⁹⁹ *VC*, 45.

¹⁰⁰ *ZZK*, 17.

¹⁰¹ *Ecclesia in Europa „Cirkev v Európe“*, 62.

- to become a disciple (pastoral accompanying);
- to become an apostle (spiritual accompanying).¹⁰²

We don't have to be afraid of being demanding in consideration of their spiritual growth. We should encourage them to make serious decisions. In this way they will be able to resist the temptations of culture which offers often just temporal values or values that are contradictory to the Gospel. They will be able to express the Christian way of thinking in all fields of life – in entertainments and amusements.¹⁰³

2.1.6. Means

66. The first task of pastoration of vocations is still the prayer.¹⁰⁴ Every Thursday there's a mess served for vocations in formation house in our province and in the other communities within limits there are served messes and adorations every first Thursday. Elder and ill sisters through acceptance of their suffering and permanent prayer do the essential service in field of pastoration of vocation.

67. The calling of Jesus: "Come and you will see!" (John 1:39) remains till now the greatest principle of pastoration of vocation.¹⁰⁵ It requires the development of new and deeper ability to meet each other; to offer some characteristic ways of following Christ and holiness through the witness; resolutely and clearly preach the freedom which rises out from life of poverty where the only treasure is God's Kingdom; depth of love of life in virginity which wants just one heart that of Christ; consecrating and renewing strength that is hidden in obedient life which only goal is to fulfil God's will for the salvation of the world.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² *Európsky kongres o povolaniach 2005, Zborník prednášok*, p. 22.

¹⁰³ *Ecclesia in Europa „Cirkev v Európe“*, 62.

¹⁰⁴ *ZZK*, 16.

¹⁰⁵ *VC*, 64.

¹⁰⁶ *ZZK*, 17.

68. In the effort to reach this goal in pastoration of vocation we regularly invite young people to our communities – summer stayings, monthly meetings, spiritual renewals before Christmas and Easter. We offer them the participation in life of community: in mess, adoration, liturgical prayer, teaching how to work with Gospel – *Lectio Divina*, religious leading and personal conversations. Simultaneously they are led in practice of silence and knowing of our charisma.

In human formation we invite them to participation in physical work, responsibility, cooperation and creating the conditions of mutual communication and community.

We also participate in various activities within pastoration of vocation abreast of – in dioceses and local Churches.

The top of formation is that young man became the apostle himself – the one who preaches, lives and helps other people.

2.1.7. Evaluation

69. The educational plan of way to vocation is the way that heads to *maturity of faith* as pilgrimage to *state of integrity* of believer who is called to decide about himself and about his life *freely and responsibly* according to the truth of mysterious *God's plan that is prepared* for him.¹⁰⁷

Young man needs to be motivated by great ideals, to have in front his eyes something that exceeds him and is above his possibilities, something worth to give life for it.¹⁰⁸ When we introduce Christ with his right face to young people, they take him as an emphatic answer and they are able to accept his message even though it's de challenging and marked by the cross.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ *Nové povolania pre novú Európu*, 34.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁰⁹ *NMI*, 9.

Goals of initial formation:

70. *We have to encourage young people to reach high ideals of radical following of Christ and deep requirements of holiness with respect to vocation, that exceeds them and maybe it exceeds also the initial intention, which has brought them to enter certain institute. Thus the formation needs to have some characteristic features of consecration to radical following of Christ.*¹¹⁰

*Formation means the participation in Father's activity that through the Holy Spirit creates in hearts of young people the knowledge and attitude of Son.*¹¹¹ *We help the candidate to find God as a loving Father. Then in Novitiate she carries on with developing the relationship with Christ as her fiancé and in juniorate in the consciousness of Holy Spirit's activity.*

*If this is the goal of consecrated life, then the process which has to prepare her, must have a total character. It must be the formation of whole personality including the entirety of her being, all aspects of her identity, her action and intentions. It's clear that, with respect to effort to transform whole personality, the formation effort will never end.*¹¹²

¹¹⁰ ZZK, 18.

¹¹¹ VC, 66.

¹¹² Ibid., 65.

3. CANDIDATURE

*“So they went and saw where
he was staying...”
John 1:39*

3.1. Content of stage

3.1.1. Goal

71. The main goal of candidature is to recognize God and his personal love to called person, to know better herself and her answer to God’s calling as well to experience the life in community. Called person should also learn the basic religious manners (participation in common activities such as prayer, houseworks, responsibility, and order).

3.1.2. Theoretical picture

72. Into the candidature should be taken girls who already live according to their baptismal duties and adequately to their age¹¹³ and they fulfil the requirements for acceptance according to CIC 641-645.

The evolution of today’s youth is very fast from many points of view. Simultaneously the appropriate psychological maturity (especially emotional) and young faith life often based on just an elementary theological knowledge and doesn’t correspond to a proper development. The process of human, emotional, spiritual and maturation of faith life of today’s youth is slower.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ *PI*, 34.

¹¹⁴ J. GOGOLA (ed.), *Řeholní formace*, p. 99.

3.1.3. Situation of those in formation

73. We can't ask from candidate, who is waiting for religious life, to be immediately able to take all religious duties but she has to be considered to be able get through them step by step. In order to consider this capacity, it is appropriate to provide the candidate with enough time and necessary means to attest her. This is the purpose of preparation phase before entering the Novitiate.¹¹⁵

3.1.4. Place of formation

74. In our Congregation is the candidature in progress in one of our communities so that candidates don't participate in entire common life of community.¹¹⁶ *"We use stated ceremony when we accept the candidate. The candidature usually lasts from six months up to two years. According to a progress in formation the province superior announces to a candidate how long will her candidature last."*¹¹⁷

The beginning of candidature takes place on 8th September at common liturgy of Vespers. The candidate is entrusted into *"care of an able sister and for each sister we specify the formation programme and the probation length. After the probation every candidate has to do the spiritual exercises which last for five days."*¹¹⁸

3.1.5. Criteria

75. *"The purpose of postulate is to evaluate the appropriateness and vocation of candidate for religious life – we provide her with possibility to participate step by step on*

¹¹⁵ *PI*, 42.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹¹⁷ *Smernica*, 73/1.

¹¹⁸ *Konštitúcie*, 73.

our life. In this phase we explore if the candidate has physical and moral qualities as well as human maturity which are necessary so that she could take upon her the religious duties. We also have to clear up if there is a chance that she will reach the expected goal during her Novitiate and temporal vows."¹¹⁹

3.2. Methodology

3.2.1. Human:

"mercy builds up on nature"

a) Goal

76. Education begins with human formation and consists in realisation of own dignity. This consciousness and appreciation of dignity is expressed by the acceptance and evaluation of our personality, pluses and limits as well. So that the candidate was able develop human sphere she has to know herself, main motivations of her life and her emotions.¹²⁰ The balance of emotional life means the sexual balance which supposes to accept the other gender with full respect his or her differences.¹²¹ Very important are also human relations that need to be satisfactory.¹²²

Thus human formation of candidate must allow her to reach the degree of maturity that the religious vocation requires.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 72.

¹²⁰ J. GOGOLA (ed.), *Řeholní formace*, p. 54.

¹²¹ *PI*, 43.

¹²² J. GOGOLA (ed.), *Řeholní formace*, p. 54.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 100.

b) Means

77. Means that help candidate, who is accompanied with the candidature master, to mature in human sphere are: knowledge of own personality, pluses and minuses, own past and emphasize good human virtues. Leading to mutual respect and acquiring the rules of distingue behaviour. The candidate is gradually led to mature in competence and independence to decide freely. She learns to hold a dialogue in which has its own place also the accpetnace of sister's reproval.

Openess and trust are layed before her as a necessary condition for her future human growth. The integration into houseworks of community helps her to acquire ordinary skills and teaches her to cooperate and to be responsible. The candidature master helps her to discover he own gifts and talents and to develop them for the good of community. She realises the importance of helping the candidate with the change from secularly to religious life. According to needs we take on the psychologist.

c) Evaluation

78. Good indicator is willingness and courage to begin the way of self-knowing and self-accepting, to discover own immaturity and childish attitudes which make the vocations less authentic and free. Self-control and personal commitment of the candidate is a good sign of progress in her human formation. Also the accpetance of her past, the ability to forgive and accept the forgiveness which in the end will lead her to be gratitude for her own lifestory. All this is possible only in a fundamental attitude of being open to formation.

3.2.2. Intellectual:

a) Goal

79. Education to a new form of life requires at first adequate educational equipment so that we could help the candidate to gain a true view of herself with respect to her vocation and help her to gain integrity. If this educational fundament was missing, the lack of motivation to live out the vocation can appear later. All can break down in consequence of lack of fundament. There are three goals that need to be reached: to know the values of religious vocation, to appreciate them and to change the hierarchy of values in life.¹²⁴

The goal of intellectual formation in candidature is to saturate our mind and heart, show wisdom as well as beauty. Know visible God's marks in our life through intellect and with humility accept that the presence of god exceeds our rational knowledge.

b) Means

80. Means, which allow candidate to reach the intellectual formation, are the study of Catechism of Catholic Church and brief introduction to the history of Congregation and charisma.

Through the education to critical selection and difficulties we implant into her the ability to see daily experiences in the light of Gospel. The basic condition of her participation in liturgical prayers is the need to initiate her into the liturgical year and liturgical books.

It's important so that she was cognizant of the sense of religious life and its position in Church.

“Candidates are taught to openness of our life style and about what from this life belongs only to us. We go over

¹²⁴ J. GOGOLA (ed.), *Řeholní formace*, p. 60.

Catechism and the introduction to religious life with them in the way that fits their education."¹²⁵

c) Evaluation

81. In evaluation we emphasize how we helped the candidate to understand the values of religious life, how she appreciates them and whether the time of her candidature helped her to change the hierarchy of values in her life in right way. Increasing ability to decide according to Gospel values and the ability to understand and consider everyday events are also the signs of her intellectual maturation.

3.2.3. **Spiritual:**

a) Goal

82. The goal of spiritual formation of candidate is to continue in knowing Jesus Christ as well as to find God's plan with her life and to accept it generously and with gratitude. It is important to encourage and support the candidate to live what she believes in, so that it could be concretely reflected in her attitudes, acts and thinking. To experience the feeling to be loved by God is the privileged way of building up spiritual human being.

b) Means

83. Religious life of the candidate is developed by means that are presented to her in appropriate way. It is especially the study and contemplation of Gospel and we teach her how to connect it with her everyday life. Through accepting the authority at various stages – the candidature

¹²⁵ *Smernice, 73/2.*

master, superiors, Church authority - we help her to realise that she needs help on her spiritual path. Search and discover God's truth and will is possible only in faith and humility.

Candidate is also led into the life of prayer, silence, sacramental life which helps her to strengthen the life of faith. To love liturgy and understand its function is for the candidate very important step towards our spirituality. Reading bibliographies of Saint Augustine and Saint Norbert acquaints candidate in basic features with our spirituality and charisma.

Function of the candidature master is also to help the candidate find the value of sacrifice and the bigness of self-denial out. She helps her to work through to conviction that the Lord our God has the right to have her and that he is worthy of her entire love to Him. The evolvment of personal project under supervision of the candidature master gives also the uniform line to all religious life.

c) Evaluation

84. We expect from candidate in religious life that she will grow up to more personal relationship with God. This is displayed by love to prayer, adoration and by deepening of faith view.

At the end of candidature is a candidate able, with certain clarity and certainty, to realise her vocation. She expresses her life choice by resolute leaving the world.

3.2.4. **Communitarian:**

a) Goal

85. The goal of communitarian formation is to acquire the initial knowledge about common life. It has to show the candidate that a community is a gift which requires the answer, patient effort and the fight to overcome everything that

stands in the way of unification. When we gradually let her to participate in life of community, we help her to set herself free from subjectivism and wrong understanding of self-realisation.

The way from old man oriented on himself to new one who gives himself to other people is long and hard. It constantly requires the conversion and willingness to change. Just through this you can reach the joy from common life. Simultaneously it's necessary to help the candidate acquire the ability to face up to solitude that she needs for deeper contact with Christ.

According to our spirituality, the common life is for us basic norm and it is our task to witness that Church is a community of brothers and sisters. It needs world which is stricken by individualism as well as it needs the candidate who has come from this world.

b) Means

86. Privileged place of common life is community. Here candidate can find the sorrows and joys of life, she learns here to live with those who have God placed beside her, and she has to accept their positive virtues as well as their differences and limits. She learns to share with received gifts for the good of all people.¹²⁶ Here she acquires basic religious manners: participation in common activities, prayer, dining, relaxation, houseworks, responsibility and respecting the daily schedule. She learns how to live under authority of superiors, how to accept the reproof, commendation and encouragement. We lead her to be attentive towards needs of other people.

The active participation in the tasks of community teaches her how to synchronize individual needs with those of community and it leads to respect for common rules. Through all this we try to develop well relationships that are characteristic for life in community.

¹²⁶ Cf. *VC*, 67.

c) Evaluation

87. Candidate has to have clear knowledge that self-realisation of consecrated person to God is realised on the way of community.

Formation of candidate has to be oriented to awareness of sacrifice as it requires common life, and to accept it with fixed stare at joyful and real relationship between sisters.¹²⁷ We should not forget that solitude and emptiness that have been caused by the rejection to love with human love become now the school of greater love to God and people.¹²⁸

The basic criteria are also the growing ability to cooperate, spontaneous participation to community initiative and creativity. Candidate gradually knows that every Christian effort builds up on human weakness and that community cannot exist without any forgiveness and reconciliation.¹²⁹ Just like this we can feel the joy which is the shining witness of that the religious community lives according to the Gospel.¹³⁰

3.2.5. Apostolic:

a) Goal

88. The main goal is to show the candidate that our common life is the first form of apostolate. We want also to show her that the most important expression of mission is not only external works but especially the presence of Christ by personal witness in the world.¹³¹ We participate on Christ's mission through coexistence in community due to mission.

¹²⁷ *BŽS*, 24.

¹²⁸ J. GOGOLA (ed.), *Řeholní formace*, p. 512.

¹²⁹ *BŽS*, 26.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹³¹ *VC*, 72.

That means – learn how to cooperate from own conviction, serve to other people, to be loyal to community in deciding despite these decisions don't correspond with my own opinions.

b) Means

89. Means that help the candidate to understand our apostolate are: to acquaint with the life and mission of our Congregation and actual activities of sisters. It's also important for candidate to meet sufferings and human poverty. We occasionally let her to participate in smaller part of apostolic service.

c) Evaluation

90. For candidate it is essential to realise the primacy of personal witness and life in community as a privileged place of our apostolate.

To be generously at sisters and apostolic duties disposal and the growing interest in tasks of our Congregation are clear sign of integration of candidate into our Norbertine community.

4. NOVITIATE

“... they spent that day with him.”
John 1:39

4.1. Content of stage

4.1.1. Goal

91. The goal of Novitiate is the entire integration to such form of life as it has God’s Son accepted and presented in Gospel.¹³² For Norbertine novice is Novitiate time of exploring, verification of her vocation and recognition of religious life in which she gradually gets to know the dead and resurrected Christ and how to live in the unity with Him according to Rule of Saint Augustine “*be one in mind and heart that is walking towards God.*”¹³³ Simultaneously according to the spirit of Saint Norbert novice acquires the identity if Norbertine sister.

4.1.2. Theoretical picture

92. In the beginning of consecration to religious life is calling of God who bows to called person with great love. This love is absolutely unselfish, personal and unique.¹³⁴ Only of an love which has fiance relationship character and it takes hold of entire emotional side of human being, it will motivate and support the retractions and crosses with which will meet everyone who wants to “lose his life” (Cf. Mark 8:35) for Christ and Gospel. Such personal answer is an inseparable part of religious consecration.¹³⁵

93. Novices have to be led to foster human and Christian virtues; they should be led through prayer and self-

¹³² *PI*, 45.

¹³³ Cf. *Regula*, 1.

¹³⁴ *PI*, 8.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

denial to put themselves on the way of a greater perfection; they should enlighten each other how to contemplate the mystery of salvation, how to read the Gospel and how to meditate it; they should prepare themselves for fostering of divine cult in sacred liturgy; they should enlighten themselves about the character and spirit of Congregation, about its goal and discipline, history and life, and fulfill themselves with love to the Church and its consecrated shepherds.¹³⁶

4.1.3. Situation of those in formation

94. Novitiate is a part of fundamental structure of religious life and is a lead in to life of our Congregation. It has an exceptional pedagogical significance: it's the lead into a new style of existence and action and thus a proper beginning of consecrated life gains an unique basic value which has positive influence on entire existence.¹³⁷ *“Novices participate in our common life so that they gradually grew into the life of Congregation and showed the willingness to be integrated into the Congregation.”*¹³⁸

Novices gain religious clothes and a new name just right in profession because “it's an old tradition to give religious clothes after finishing the probational period because religious clothes are the sign of consecration”.¹³⁹ *“Novitiate lasts two years in our Congregation.”*¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Ibid., 46.

¹³⁷ Š. TURANSKÝ, *Pokoncilové požiadavky rehoľnej formácie*, p. 124.

¹³⁸ *Konštitúcie*, 74.

¹³⁹ *OPR*, 5; Cf. *PC*, 17.

¹⁴⁰ *Konštitúcie*, 77.

4.1.4. Place of formation

95. “So that the Novitiate was valid it is necessary to be realised in house that is stated by law...”¹⁴¹ It’s necessary to remember that this place needs to offer the novice:

- training in practising of longer prayer, solitude and silence;
- favourable atmosphere to rooting oneself with Christ;¹⁴²
- spiritual atmosphere, strictness of life and apostolic enthusiasm that will attract her for following Christ as it corresponds with the extremeness of her consecration;¹⁴³
- knowledge of apostolic reality of Congregation (without being distracted by integration);
- help of experienced experts in formation.

In the end all sisters of Congregation “should try to cooperate in novice education by exemplary life and prayer” (CIC, 652,4). Mutual acceptance of sisters in love contributes to “the foundation of environment which helps to spiritual progress.”¹⁴⁴

4.1.5. Criteria

96. On the entrance to Novitiate all canonical condition about validity and licitation must be firmly kept with respect to both, the candidate and the Authority with competence to accept people. It enables to avoid later incommodities.¹⁴⁵

Candidate who wants to enter the Novitiate needs to:

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 76.

¹⁴² *PI*, 50.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 27.

¹⁴⁴ *ET*, 39.

¹⁴⁵ *PI*, 49.

- reach moral certainty that God calls her to consecrated life, common life of sisters with openness to mission of our Congregation,¹⁴⁶
- clearly show that she wants to accomplish the life project of Congregation and that she has appropriate qualities for it;
- freely ask the province superior that she wants enter the Novitiate;
- be at least 18 years old.¹⁴⁷

The candidate is accepted into Novitiate after she has been conceded by province superior with agreement of province council taken to be able to take on herself the duties of Norbertine religious vocation.¹⁴⁸

4.2. Methodology

4.2.1. Human:

a) Goal

97. Goal of human formation in Novitiate is to carry on in knowing yourself. Helping novice to know and accept herself is associated with confrontation of values so that she realised who she is and accepted it with all her heart and soul. We gradually lead novice to be mature in independence and able to decide freely. By entrusting of certain tasks to her she develops the sense for initiative and responsibility.

We lead novice to more deeply know develop the qualities characteristic for woman and thus to assert them fully in her consecration.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. *Konštitúcie*, 74.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 72, 73, 75.

b) Means

98. One of the main means of human formation of novice is to allow her to meet the obstacles as it brings everyday life in community. Cooperation which communitarian life requires from her leads her to be able to cross her own point of view and accept other people, common decisions as well as the authority of superiors. Through her participation in organization and preparation of communitarian holidays, liturgy, relaxation etc. she gets the opportunity spontaneously express and develop her own creativity. A very important function of Novice master is also to cleverly use various methods for the development of communication abilities and other qualities that are characteristic especially for woman – selflessness, kindness, gentleness, considerateness, sense for beauty, ability to create home atmosphere etc

c) Evaluation

99. The fundamental ability for novice is to freely decide in the light of real values and the ability to overcome the problems and sorrows of ordinary day. She is able to take over the responsibility for work and tasks which presupposes an active and creative attitude.

Novice master evaluates also Gospel freedom of novice towards modern communism, secularism as well as her sensitivity to social problems.

The criterion of human maturing is also some balance of emotional life and right receiving and reliving – pre- and post-natal of own femininity.

4.2.2. Intellectual:

a) Goal

100. Goal of intellectual formation of novice is to bring her to knowledge of the deepest reasons of personal consecration in order to be rightly prepared to answer the challenges of this world. It's about offering of solid and choicely select the content in educational or practical sense.

Formulation of this programme and its putting into practice has to pay attention to inner integrity of education and synchronization of various disciplines. We help novice to realise that they're not various scientific disciplines but just one which she has to learn: science of faith and Gospel. Intellectual formation protects the novice from temptation of critical racionalism on the one hand and pietism¹⁴⁹ and fundamentalism¹⁵⁰ on the other hand.

A novice has to realise who she should become otherwise she may deprive her religious identity, for her to become too general and wrong imitation of others.

b) Means

101. The main mean of intellectual formation in Novitiate is daily education and personal study under the supervision of Novice master. During this time we talk with novice about Holy Scripture in preparation for to candidature, she deepens her understanding and practising of spiritual life. The preparation for her consecration by vows is the study of Gospel counsels. So that she was instructed about the spirit and function of Congregation, we go through the Rule and Constitutions with her. Step by step we familiarize her with the history of Congregation and whole Order. The preparation for

¹⁴⁹ *Pietism – emphasising of emotional and moral side of religion*

¹⁵⁰ *Fundamentalism – aversion towards innovation*

her full participation into the celebration of liturgy is, except her daily participation in liturgy, also the theoretical and mystagogical preparation.

Novice master helps her to understand more deeply the Church documents that relate especially to religious life, appreciate them and put them into life. Beside this we respect the educational level of individual novices and we pay attention to each of them.

c) Evaluation

102. At the end of the Novitiate we expect from novice solid knowledge in sphere of religious life and if she knows how to work with the Holy Scripture and make it useful for her life. She is adequately enlightened about the nature and obligation of Gospel counsels as they are presented by our Rule and Constitutions. She has to know the history of Congregation and of whole Order and endeavour herself to deepen the personal way of living the charisma and spirituality of Congregation. She concentrates on the celebration of Eucharist, confession, common prayer and Liturgy of hours.

In awareness of responsibility for own formation novice expresses the willingness and remains opened towards further education.

4.2.3. **Spiritual:**

a) Goal

103. Spiritual formation has to hit the heart of novice deeply so that her every attitude and act, in majestic moments of life as well as in everyday routines, proved her absolute and joyful belonging to God.¹⁵¹

Novitiate is time of personal experience of Jesus Christ as “your Lord” and the only Teacher who has the words of life

¹⁵¹ VC, 65.

a who as the only can tell me the truth about my life. It's the time of exams that she tried on herself because old man hasn't died yet and the new one is still young, weak and unsure. It's the time of doubts and dark but on the other hand the time of sincere adhesion to Christ. It's necessary to bring novice into courageous acceptance of the mystery of cross. It's not just the time of knowing as in candidature but it's the time of experiences. For acceptance of duties of Gospel counsels and fully self-devotedness according to spirit of Congregation novice prepares herself through personal experience of through poverty, chastity and obedience in community. To dress into Christ requires to get rid of self-sufficiency and egoism and treat according to Spirit.¹⁵²

b) Means

104. Strict and difficult lifestyle, which arises from radical following of Christ, requires certain asceticism. This, among others, includes also that the novice is brought into the practice of silence and solitude that is a kindly environment for meditative study of Holy Scripture and personal prayer.

The other mean is the celebration of liturgy according to spirit and charisma of Congregation. We support the habit and the interest to draw near to great authors of religious tradition of Church and not to limit herself only to religious reading which is in at the moment.¹⁵³ It's important to prepare novice step by step for separation from world, things, people and secularly habits. Just through this she will be able to reach deep and live cognition of Jesus Christ.

The concrete way of novice how to deepen her religious life is:

- regular and well prepared spiritual renewal;
- enthusiastic participation and faithfulness to adoration of Eucharistic Christ;

¹⁵² J. GOGOLA (ed.), *Řeholní formace*, p.132.

¹⁵³ Cf. *PI*, 47.

- development of personal project;
- lead-in into practice how to confess sins;
- sharing of religious life;
- participation in daily service in sacristy, preparation and celebration of holidays and novenas.

The most important mean of formation still remains regular and frequent personal conversation.

c) Evaluation

105. Spiritual maturity of novice is shown by the authenticity of her everyday attitudes. Spiritual high supposes spiritual deepness. Novice ability to communicate her personal faith experiences and personal relationship with Christ is also very important sign of her maturation.

Novice master observes if novice is free to separate herself from secular habits. It's important to see her practice of longer prayer, if she can stay in solitude and silence. Gradually gained balance between prayer and labour, the ability to synchronize success and failure are good signs of her religious life.

The readiness to accept the duty of temporal vows is a personal, radical and free answer of novice towards love of Jesus. The desire to become a member of Congregation points out to that she has come to know the charisma and spirituality of our Congregation. Novice expresses her personal responsibility for spiritual growth by willingness to let herself being led by Novicemaster.

Novice master has to examine and then evaluate, in the light of Holy Spirit's fruit, the progress of the one whom she is responsible for and consider whether the called one has the necessary capacity that are required from her.

4.2.4. Communitarian:

a) Goal

106. Goal of communitarian formation in Novitiate is to help novice to realise that the religious community is a place where the daily and patient transfer from “I” to “you” should be realised, from my task to task of community, from searching of “what is my” to searching of “what is Christ’s”.¹⁵⁴ Novice should realise that love in community is a kind of service as it expresses our Rule. *When you read about love that “it doesn’t think about just itself”, we should understand it in that way that it prefers common before personal and not contrariwise. According to how ardently we take care about common things as they were personal thus you understand whether you hold on in love.*¹⁵⁵

Mutual love and real unity requires the ability to accept other sisters as they are without any appraisal and the ability to forgive “seventy-seven times”. When we want to create one heart and one mind it’s necessary to give all to community: material welfares, religious experiences, talents and thoughts.

b) Means

107. Formation of novice has to head towards the awareness of sacrifice, as it requires common life, and novice has to accept it with sight fixed at the joyful and real relationship between sisters.¹⁵⁶ The celebration of common prayer, dining, activities and relaxation belong to common life.

Novice is raised to hold communitarian dialogue in heartiness and Christ’s love, she learns how to accept the diversity of sisters as richness and integrate different views and

¹⁵⁴ BŽS, 39.

¹⁵⁵ Regula, V/2.

¹⁵⁶ BŽS, 24.

ways of thinking.¹⁵⁷ We lead her to intervene into service for the others, houseworks for community, care of ill sisters with the help of Novice master and sisters who are responsible at various positions. Very important are also moments of personal and common relaxation - trips, sport and culture. The unity which we are called to is the unity that establishes on the forgiveness and reconciliation. Thus we lead novice to be able to forgive and ask for forgiveness. Necessary mean of common life is the disponibility for permanent conversion. Novice learns the practice of confession and we help her to accept lectures of other sisters as an expression of solicitous love. We teach her to understand the function of authority in building up the community and accept it in faith.

With the help of Novice master novice gradually understands that common life is also a kind of asceticism when it is lived in love, simplicity of our life-style, healing strictness and sensitivity towards communitarian effort.¹⁵⁸

c) Evaluation

108. Novice ability to participate in creating of familiar and friendly atmosphere in community is a very important sign of her growth. She tries in Christ's spirit to transfer daily conflicts and disagreements in that way so that they were a great opportunity for her growth. She knows how to ask for forgiveness as well she generously forgives. She is pleased by the richness of her fellowsisters and she tries to uderstand them and accepts their differences. She joyfully participates in common activities of community – prayer, dining, work, relaxation. She expresses certain grade of inner balance and peace which is necessary for life in community. She realises and in faith accepts the function of authority at every level.

¹⁵⁷ ZZK, 18.

¹⁵⁸ RI - OSA, p. 55.

4.2.5. **Apostolic:**

a) Goal

109. Goal of apostolic formation of novice is the awareness of common mission that has been entrusted to Congregation. According to Constitutions it's our effort to build up in love the religious and human community. Novice prepares herself to cooperate on common mission according to her gifts. In awareness of that our apostolate has to form a team she is led to cooperation and mutual filling in.

b) Means

110. We help novice to understand that preach Jesus Christ is possible not only through words but also through prayer and common life as it did initial Christians who were one in mind and heart and did the good. Thus we lead her so that her life became a witness as well. She learns how to serve, work and bear the sorrows in service and we occasionally integrate her to apostolic activities of community. This allows her to be rightly opened to other people, to listen more and to be attentive to their needs.

Novitiate practice in the second year is the time when novice tests if our way of life, connection between common life, prayer and apostolic service is acceptable for her in the future and if there grows the feeling of belonging to Congregation inside her. It's the time to initiate her knowledge, acquired through studies, into practice. We observe that she has learned how to use the communicative means that are nowadays often used also as a mean of apostolate.

Novice prepares herself for unconditional dedication of her entire personality, in the spirit of fiance love, to Christ and with Christ beside her to all people to whom He sends those

who have consecrated their lives to Him according to Gospel counsels.¹⁵⁹

c) Evaluation

111. The acquirement of the sense for apostolate consists of three stages: a) stage of vocation; vocation that we understand as an interiorization of God's offer whereby the apostolate gains theocentric dimension; b) stage of assimilation to Christ through permanent contact with him because the deeper is the experience of God the more effective is the apostolate; c) stage of mission: imitate Christ by engaging in favour of people and problems of the world. The enthusiasm for service together with desire to participate in mission of our Congregation is a certain sign of eager love and witnessing about inner life with Christ.

We observe novice's ability to cooperate with others. Novice master helps her to evaluate her Novitiate practice and its contribution for personal maturation.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. *PI*, 55.

5. JUNIORATE

*“...and followed Jesus, ...”
John 1:40*

5.1. Content of stage

5.1.1. Goal

112. Goal of juniorate is to deepen and develop the formation acquired in Novitiate by courageous practising of what junior binded herself to. That means “to strengthen her inner motivation for authentic following of Christ by Norbertine way of life and prepare her to be able fully commit herself to God by following Christ in service.”¹⁶⁰

Juniorate is also the time of deepening human, Christian and religious formation and guaranteeing the theological and professional preparation. Common life, where junior is fully integrated to, supports gradual maturation of her personal responsibility at every stage.

Leadership of junior master helps her to understand gradual and more mature understanding of the holy vows values as a freedom and duty for all her life.

5.1.2. Theoretical picture

113. In today’s culture-historical situation it’s possible to see the growing relativisation, secularisation and rejection of real religious values. That’s why it’s necessary to offer the junior a valuable formation programme which may help her to mature in faith and live in attitude of permanent conversion before God and people.

It’s important especially to form believers: people, who believe, hope and love, trust in God, people who are not afraid to depend on him and are willing daily fulfill his will.

¹⁶⁰ VC, 65.

Such faith is developed in junior especially through listening to Gospel, the first root of Christian spirituality. “She strengthens her personal relationship to live God as well as to his saving and sanctifying will.”¹⁶¹

114. The second fundamental mean is liturgy – celebration of Eucharist and Liturgy of hours. “Above all this stands the Eucharist in which is entire spiritual good of Church, i.e. Christ our paschal Lamb and live Bread who through his body, relieved by the Holy Spirit, gives life to people.”¹⁶² Eucharist is the heart of consecrated life: personal and common. Eucharist is also associated with permanent effort to convert and necessary purification in confession.

115. With respect to integral formation of entire personality, the formation process has to stimulate those in formation to follow Jesus Christ more generously, try to assimilate to him the best they can,¹⁶³ and totally to sacrifice themselves.

5.1.3. Situation of those in formation

116. *“After Novitiate life in order continues with the time of temporal vows – by juniorate.”*¹⁶⁴ *“The period of temporal profession lasts three years in our Congregation. After these three years province superior and province council can prolong this time for the next three years. The length of temporal profession shouldn’t exceed six years. Only in very special cases it is possible to prolong it up to nine years.”*¹⁶⁵

Juniorate is a very delicate and hard time because it’s marked by the transition from Novitiate (where everything helped the formation: closed place, daily education, constant

¹⁶¹ VC, 94.

¹⁶² Ibid., 95.

¹⁶³ Cf. VC, 22.

¹⁶⁴ Konštitúcie, 81.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 83; CIC, 655, 657,2.

presence of Novice master), into more opened way of life with active participation in mission of our Congregation.

117. Junior may have first problems at harmonization of religious and common life, work and studies. This can make her feel disorientated and lead her to crisis. Thus juniorate requires special attention as well as stability and sensitivity in spiritual accompanying and formation structures. It's important to help junior to accept responsibility for her own decisions, lead her into the life of community where it is necessary to give, take and share with all you've got, you are and you know.

5.1.4. Place of formation

118. The first place for junior formation is the community where she lives and works. The community helps her by the witness of life, faith and authentic living of consecration. Important is her active participation in life and apostolate of community.

119. An irrecoverable place has also monthly meetings of juniors. There they gain theoretical knowledge, according to formation plan, that is transmitted by the team of sisters and called specialists. It's the time of their mutual sharing, common solving of problems, dialogues and personal conversation with junior master.

5.1.5. Criteria

120. Formation has to be systematic, accommodated to comprehension of juniors, spiritual, apostolic and practical. Junior must realize that she is the first who is responsible for her growth. We can just help her to discover and grow in her responsibility at all stages. "Religious has the primary responsibility to say YES to calling he heard and to accept all

consequences of this answer which is not just rational answer but especially it is the life answer.”¹⁶⁶

121. Novicemaster and superiors of communities do not form from “above” but they share in common life with juniors and form them through theoretical lessons as well as by the witness of their life. This should be realized in open, confident and friendly atmosphere where they respect each personality is and encourage her through personal or communitarian dialogue.

5.2. Methodology

5.2.1. Human:

a) Goal

122. Goal of human formation of junior is to require the inner freedom to be able to give herself and to acquire the ability to realistically know and accept herself. We help her to mature in understanding of her past and all negative experiences as a place of meeting God with herself. Who has never accepted his past is condemned to repeat it. We expect from junior responsible and creative approach to work.

We help her to appreciate own femininity as a value which apart from the other is characterised by the ability to make good relationships in community and with people and it shows her appropriate emotional maturity. Truly love your vocation means to love as a human being who wants to be a pure sign of God’s love in every relationship, the one who won’t assault or control anyone but who is good-hearted and tries to find the best for the other.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ *PI*, 29.

¹⁶⁷ *BŽS*, 37.

b) Means

123. Way of love begins with self-acceptance and when the junior deepens herself in gratitude. The moment she realises God's hand in her personal history, she gives different importance to it and sees it through God's eyes. Through the concrete participation in duties of community, where she works, grows her sense for responsibility. We help her to grow to be able to distinguish, ask and accept the advice.

The important mean of human formation of junior is the rightly development of her femininity. That means that she learns to share with her feelings, render love and sensitivity, unselfishness, reverence and gentle behaviour and to develop her intuition towards needs of other people. All these natural affections of woman need to be directed otherwise the desire for contact with others, gentleness, sensitivity and unselfishness won't paradoxically help her in her religious life but they become a serious problem.

With respect to junior remember that she still hasn't passed the phase of her own development in order to be ready to be initiated in such critical problems.

c) Evaluation

124. The sign of human maturity of junior is that she discovered innumerable signs of God's love in her past and it made her to be thankful. Now she's able to accept herself the way she is and to give herself to God and people. She's able to distinguish, actively participate in life of community where she in her responsibility fulfils the given tasks. She accepts the authority, she's able to ask for an advice and accept it, and she is opened to dialogue.

She shows her femininity through making mature relationships within the community as well outside it, through

the unselfishness, sensitivity and intuition in everyday situations.

5.2.2. **Intellectual:**

a) Goal

125. Juniorate is the time of development of personal abilities and gifts also through studies. Thus it's necessary to encourage the junior to search and understand her faith in serious, systematic and deep study and to share with her knowledge. Study should lead to real knowledge of Christ and to practical realisation of what she has learned so that it could become the abundant source of human and spiritual growth. Such adequate theological formation has to help the junior to grow in confidence of her vocation in our Congregation.

Study mustn't serve for wrong understanding of self-realisation nor for reaching individual goals but it has to serve the requirements of apostolic focus of her religious family in accordance with needs of Church.¹⁶⁸

b) Means

126. Programme of theological studies is built-up so that there hasn't been omitted anything what might help junior to understand the faith and Christian life within the Church: history, liturgy, canonic law, study of CCC, documents of Church, Holy Scripture, theology of consecrated life.

“We teach sisters with temporal vows biblical, dogmatic and moral theology, liturgiology and pastoral theology. Religious theology is taught to the extent which is appropriate to the grade of education and abilities of sisters

¹⁶⁸ *PI*, 65.

according to needs of apostolate they are or will be engaged in.”¹⁶⁹

According to needs and possibilities of Congregation juniors participate in various courses, seminars and support themselves in studies of foreign languages therethrough they develop own abilities. Study of Norbertine historical and spiritual sources helps junior to deepen the sense of belonging to Congregation as well as to understand our charisma. She learns to meet the attitudes of Church towards actual questions and thus she searches and finds God in historical reality.

Junior master appeals to personal responsibility of junior and helps her with the organisation of her own study.

c) Evaluation

127. Practical consequence of the study is creativity and the ability to work, share with personal values and competencies as well as the care of poverty of community. Thereby junior transmits her knowledge from studies into life what is expressed by growing unity of life and prayer. The study opens also the growing ability to evaluate her strong as well as weak points. It's the essential mean of preparation for deeper understanding of personal consecration, life in community and apostolate, whether now or in the future.

5.2.3. Spiritual:

a) Goal

128. Goal of spiritual formation is to help junior to give herself completely to Christ according to our charisma and prepare herself to take her final vows. Everyday she lives in the authentic relation with God in faith and love through prayer and service, she becomes Christlike and gradually adopt this

¹⁶⁹ *Smernica*, 88/1.

way of life. In order to incorporate oneself into community, the junior is led to be able of deep discernment in the light of Gospel, Rule, Constitutions, and requirements of common life and documents of Church. When people recognise and choose something they simultaneously choose a certain religious reality. To recognise in religious terms is the ability to distinguish what is and is not from God. It's a kind of spiritual prudence, the privilege of a religious man who discovers in mercy the spiritual nature of things so that he is led by God's Spirit: "...find out what pleases the Lord" (Ephesians 5:10).¹⁷⁰

Junior as a religious woman is the one who according to the image of Virgin Mary fulfils Father's will, is eager in obedience, strong in poverty and in her fertile virginity willing to accept the life.

b) Means

129. Main mean of spiritual formation of junior is the deepening of her personal consecration. The effort to conversion and desire for holiness is fostered in her. The stable means of renewal and deepening of spirit is the religious leadership, mostly renewals, exertitions – exercicie, evolmnet of personal project of life. Prayer, adoration and sacramental life require daily effort on this way. We emphasize the common practising of liturgical prayer in our Congregation. We introduce such prayer to junior as a personal vocation of consecrated people to praise the Lord and pray for others.

Attentive listening to Gospel strengthens the personal relationship with live God and his saving and consecrative – sanctifying will. Gospel is the food for life, prayer, it supports us on everyday way, it's the substance of the unity of community and its unanimity, inspiration for permanent renewal and apostolic creativity.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ J. GOGOLA (ed.), *Řeholní formace*, p. 449.

¹⁷¹ ZZK, 24.

Challenge to spiritual growth can also be the crisis you you rightly go through. Understanding of own cross should take the junior to identification of herself with Christ's cross and it persuades her that she is following the crucified Christ.¹⁷² Thus she begins to take part in paschal mystery of Jesus Christ. There is one special thing that may affect spiritual life of junior.

This time is characterized by the expansion of communicative means and it requires vigilance concerning the misshapen ways of their use. There's no need to underrate problems that may arise from it for consecrated life but we have to subject them to clear distinguishing. It's important to form good habits by using these means as well as to evaluate them in accordance to God's plan and in freedom as if not engrossed in them cause its present form to pass away. (Cf. 1 Corinthians 7:31) Mind of consecrated being has, thanks to mercy, the strength to distinguish and follow the way of Holy Spirit. In religious formation of junior is very essential to unmask the spirit of this world.¹⁷³

One of the main functions of junior mastery is to help with distinguishing.

c) Evaluation

130. Junior through her spiritual formation matures to the attitude which is described by Saint Paul in his letter to Philippians 3:8,10 "I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus... that I may gain Christ... I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection." Religious life makes her more faithful in prayer and adoration and it deepens her faith view. Personal distinguishing in the light of Gospel, Rule, Constitutions, and

¹⁷² Cf. J. GOGOLA (ed.), *Řeholní formace*, p. 145.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 451.

documents of Church leads junior to inner freedom. Such freedom helps her rightly use all communicative means.

She lives her woman identity according to the image of Virgin Mary, who knew how to meet the needs of people and help them, and above all bring Jesus to them. The top of this time of formation is an explicit and free wish of junior to take her final vows.

5.2.4. Communitarian

a) Goal

131. Goal of communitarian formation in juniorate is to fully participate in life of community where junior lives as well as to deepen her knowledge that the community is a place where she becomes a sister. She personally contributes to growth of community through her attitude of sharing with all she is and has. It means her responsible approach to personal vocation, work, and studies as it brings ordinary life.

We support the sense of belonging to community in her which is expressed by willingness, sense of joint liability for communitarian function. We help her to understand that important mean of building community is the practising of asceticism, to give up herself, forgive and ask for forgiveness.

Communitarian formation requires the ability to integrate yourself into community, overcome individualism, subjectivism and relativism, open yourself to variety and support the unity through personal sacrifice.

b) Means

132. Basic mean is the community of sisters where she lives in joy and personal service. In practice it means to participate in daily activities in community, in work, services

and prayers. Such community helps the dialogue and mutual responsibility.

Junior has to have creative attitude that is not only the attitude of consumable recipient of community. The attitude of mutual responsibility for spiritual growth, openness and preparedness to accept the gift in other being, the ability to help as well as to accept help, to be able to substitute someone else as well as to give up her place to someone else. Significant mean of building up the community remains the confession and castigations of sisters. Junior actively participates in involvement of communitarian project and is jointly liable for its realisation.

c) Evaluation

133. In the community of sisters everybody feels the responsibility for faithfulness of others.

Junior shares life with other people in atmosphere full of understanding and mutual help, she observes tiredness, tribulations as well as loneliness. She is aware of that the quality of sisters' life influences the persistence in vocation of individual sisters. She shows active participation and personal responsibility in fulfilling of given tasks without any need of outer encouragement. She does it just thanks to her own gifts and by acknowledgement of her limits in willig cooperation. She understands the importance of common life according to charisma, she accepts the reality of such life and acquires the conditions of progress respecting differencies in other people.¹⁷⁴

She tries to fulfil the message of Saint Augustine in our Rule: *“Especially care about the observance of unanimity. That’s why you constituted one community. Be one in mind and heart in God.”*¹⁷⁵ For all that she mustn’t forget that our

¹⁷⁴ Cf. *PI*, 60.

¹⁷⁵ *Regula*, 1/2.

common weakness is the way God is coming to meet us halfway.

5.2.5. Apostolic:

a) Goal

134. Goal of apostolic formation of junior is to grow in concrete integration of her religious consecration and apostolic activities in such a way so that the apostolate becomes the source of personal consecration, growth in common life and in love for her mission in service to Church and people. Junior constantly tries to actively contemplate and to be contemplative in action according to way which has Saint Norbert shown us. As a Norbertine sister she should foster a sense for community and groupwork in every apostolate.

This witness is valuable especially now when we can see the need for renewal of Christian fibre in society, when we have to face the individualism, practice mutual responsibility with the example of our life in concrete creativeness on personal or common level. Inspired by gratitude and not egoism she strenuously prepares herself for preaching of Gospel, gives witness about her personal faith and practices the authentic love to Church.

She should acquire this attitude: “Because you say so, I will let down the nets.” (Luke 5:5).

b) Means

135. Junior more and more participates in apostolic experiences. Such participation mustn't be performed as her own mission but in the name of Congregation. She learns how to search and find God in activities, apostolate and in people. She needs to understand that not only prayer is the spirit of

apostolate but apostolate arises from prayer.¹⁷⁶ *“In our life there are various types of apostolate according to the situation. We especially emphasize eucharistic, Marian apostolate, apostolate of liturgic and pleading prayer, apostolate of sacrifice.”*¹⁷⁷

Junior doesn't forget that own example and hospitality, as it showed Saint Norbert, is also a kind of our apostolate.

Tendency to emphasize more the apostolic activity than common life or prefer diversity before unity influenced life in many institutes insomuch that it many times has become exactly a choice instead it was an inseparable part of religious life.¹⁷⁸ We help junior to understand this danger and encourage her to retain permanent openness for needs of community.

c) Evaluation

136. Junior is prepared for every good work which God has given her through superiors.

We have to accept the critical analysis of world and neighbour as well as of us to make the apostolate useful. It's always necessary to realise that: it's very important to listen what the other think about our apostolate; the ability to unify religious life and apostolate; making an effort for permanent renewal so that we do not live out of reality; willingness to accept the leadership in apostolate especially in initial years. Don't forget that the primal place in our religious life has the contemplation in action, i.e. the ability to synchronize religious life with apostolate and studies.

The attitude of openness to God and reality that is expressed by hearty hospitality is an attitude which breaks all barriers that limit the love of Gospel. Hearty hospitality is a free space in heart where can everybody enter and become a

¹⁷⁶ VC, 67.

¹⁷⁷ Smernica, 3/5.

¹⁷⁸ BŽS, 59 e.

friend. So that we could love like this we have to be poor, i.e. have enough space for God and human being in heart.¹⁷⁹

For all that junior still has in respect that personal contribution of consecrated persons into evangelization lies especially in witness of life that is completely devoted to God and neighbours according to the example of our Saviour who due to love to man took the very nature of a servant.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Cf. J. GOGOLA (ed.), *Řeholní formace*, p. 482.

¹⁸⁰ *VC*, 78.

PART FOUR: PERFORMERS OF FORMATION

1. Holy Spirit

137. Creator and author of formation is God – Trinity: Father who creates the image of his Son in man through the Holy Spirit.¹⁸¹ He gives initiative to religious for all his life: “God who calls you is faithful and he will do it”. He acts in hiddenness of heart in each of us in order to show himself in apparent fruit: it’s the Spirit of truth who “teaches”, “suggests” and “leads”.

138. This inconspicuous but decisive presence of God’s Spirit requires two main attitudes:

- humility of the one who confides into God’s wisdom;
- knowledge and practice of spiritual distinguishing so that she recognized the presence of Spirit in all aspects of life and history as well as in human intermediation. We mean by this the openness for spiritual leading, that is encouraged by desire to see the things inside herself clearly, and willingness to be open for advices and to let herself being led with the aim to know God’s will.¹⁸²

2. Person in formation

139. Religious alone is as the first responsible to answer YES to calling he’s heard and so that he accepted all the consequences of this answer that is not a rational but the life answer. His way suggests the journey of God’s people from Book of Exodus as well as slow understanding of apostles who were “slow-witted and sluggish in heart to believe” but whose hearts finally burnt when the resurrected Lord let them

¹⁸¹ A. CENCINI, *I sentimenti del Figlio*, p. 41-50.

¹⁸² *PI*, 19.

to meet him. 140. For the one in formation it is important to devote herself to Holy Spirit in order to be able to devote herself to his mediators: who knows how to devote to Spirit is no more afraid of sharing with one stage of her journey with older sister in faith.

141. She has to appeal strongly to her own conscience and responsibility so that she acquired the values of religious life and life rules which are presented by her formator.¹⁸³ Very important is also the attitude of teachability which helps her to “learn how to learn” through all her life and remain in permanent formation.¹⁸⁴

142. The main internal condition which activates the formation disposibility is so that every human being could know his identity in being like Christ, have his feelings and try the attractiveness of such vocation and let himself to be tightened by the mystic beauty of Jesus Christ.

3. Responsible superior

143. *“Organisation of formation as a unit is the business of province superior. She can entrust sister who is a member of province council to evolve the formation programme. On behalf of the unity is important the contact between those who work in this sphere in all Congregation. Direct management is always given to the certain sister who bears then full responsibility.”*¹⁸⁵

Because we consider formation our first task, formators have to meet regularly and share their experiences and make plans. Meeting of province superior, provincial council and formators hold three times a year:

¹⁸³ PI, 29.

¹⁸⁴ A. CENCINI, *I sentimenti del Figlio*, p. 41-50.

¹⁸⁵ *Konštitúcie*, 95.

- beginning of September – reassessment and actualization of formation plans;
- in January – current evaluation of individual terms of formation and sisters in formation;
- in May – evaluation joined by decision how to continue with the formation or take over the duties.

144. Province superior cares about the education of formators. They have to attend courses and other possibilities in the field of formation.

145. When there is a formation team next to personal responsibility of formator its members have to work as one unit and they should be aware of their common responsibility. “Under the leadership of superior they have to form narrow community between them and one family with those in formation in thinking as well as acting.” Necessary is also the unity and constant cooperation between formators on individual stages of formation.¹⁸⁶

4. Responsible formator

146. *“Sisters, to whom has community entrusted the direct responsibility for formation of religious youth, have to have appropriate education and experience in those relevant fields so that they could loyaly do their office.”*¹⁸⁷

Formators have to be experienced in searching God so that they could accompany on this way. When they attentively watch the influence of mercy they also have to warn of the obstacles, even the small ones, but above all they have to show the beauty of following Christ and the value of charisma within which this following is realised. They should join together the light of spiritual wisdom with science that is acquired through

¹⁸⁶ *PI*, 32.

¹⁸⁷ *Konštitúcie*, 94.

human methods which help in vocation distinguishing as well as with formation of new, authentically free human.

147. The main mean of formation is regular and often personal conversation.¹⁸⁸ Task of formator is to distinguish in initial phase of formation the veritableness of religious vocation and help the religious correctly hold their personal conversation with God and simultaneously help them to find the ways God wants them to go.¹⁸⁹ The most significant function of formator is to help interiorise the values of consecrated life and those necessary for following Christ.

148. Formator is the most convincing when she is able to declare her faith as well as not only to educate people but let herself to be educated. Thus we can say that formator improves in her permanent formation by accompanying someone on God's ways.

149. Model and patron of formator is John the Baptist who shows and gives testimony about Jesus Christ. He doesn't tighten people to himself but prepares them to know the One who will come without being personated. He becomes less in order he could become greater in hearts of apostles.¹⁹⁰

150. Formators in initial formation monthly inform the province superior about the progress of formation.

5. Community

151. *“Whole community has to participate in formation of sisters. They have to be aware of that the live faith and convincing life of individual fellowsisters in and outside community contribute much to progress of formation.”*¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ VC, 66.

¹⁸⁹ PI, 30.

¹⁹⁰ A. CENCINI, *I sentimenti del Figlio*, p. 41-50.

¹⁹¹ *Konštitúcie*, 65.

Remember that this is much more convincing than theoretical education.

Those in formation should find spiritual atmosphere, strictness of life and apostolic vigorosity in their communities. They should acquire them to be able to follow Christ as it corresponds to the exclusiveness of their consecration.¹⁹²

152. The community will be such as its individual members create it. The community has its own requirements. Before it will serve as a mean of formation it deserves to be treated in love, for what it is in religious life, as it understands Church.¹⁹³

Community accompanies on the way of growth and does the best so that we didn't grow alone but in community and we could share with the same faith, charisma, joy arising from the awareness that we belong to God. In this sense is community considered a mother, new family, own home where is the table always set in order to eat together the bread of community till the end of life.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² *PI*, 27.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁹⁴ A. CENCINI, *I sentimenti del Figlio*, p. 41-50.

GOAL OF FORMATION

The goal of entire formation process, as it is expressed in this Ratio Institutionis, is to be the live image of Jesus Christ.

In the spirit of Saint Norbert, the Norbertine sister is a woman with deep relationship with God, who is sustained by adoration of Eucharistic Christ, deep listening to Gospel and liturgical prayer.

As a real and steady in advocating of values, that are eternal and transcendental, she is an example of religiousness and authority or religious life.

All this is performed in life of community with permanent effort to be one in heart and soul in God. "According to the teaching of Saint Augustine has the unity in our communities overgrow into love that embraces all people."¹⁹⁵

„Let Virgin Mary teach us to be completely devoted to God and service for people.“¹⁹⁶ Our religious life finds in her „Fiat“and „Magnificat“all its devotion to redeemable God’s performance and joy from it.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ *Konštitúcie*, 47.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. *Smernice*, 3/2.

¹⁹⁷ *PI*, 20.

APPENDIX

Compulsory religious reading:

CANDIDATURE:

Obligatory religious reading should help candidate:

- to deepen her self-knowledge and create healthy relationships;
- to understand the vocation in general and especially the calling to consecrated life;
- it should lead her into life of prayer and teach her how to read and contemplate the Gospel;
- to deepen the knowledge about Jesus Christ and expand her faith through:
 - reading at least one of the “biographies of Jesus Christ”
 - reading of selected articles from Catechism of Catholic Church about sacraments, virtues, faith, Trinity, etc.

Notes:

- candidate should have been already reading mentioned courses during the accompanying in distinguishing of her vocation;
- candidate should create her own reading programme (books, articles, selected chapters) with the help of formator who has to check her progress and understanding of that reading at their meetings;
- reading should be accompanied with some written work that arises from synthesis, reflection and searching (e.g. at Internet).

Goal: to know our founder, history and spirituality of the order.

NOVITIATE:

Novice master suggests novice the list of reading in order to help her:

- to know Saint Augustine and Saint Norbert and historical background they lived in;
- to understand their spirituality and Norbertine spirituality;
- to know the history of Congregation;
- to familiarize with religious life and vows

Goal: to read the most important writings of our founder, some studies – studie about spirituality of Congregation and some writings written by Saint Augustine as well as some about him.

JUNIORATE AND ONGOING FORMATION:

Sisters after vows should continue in their formation so that they:

- could deepen the understanding of Norbertine spirituality;
- know contemporary life and mission of Congregation

They should do this through reading of:

- informative bulletins published by congregation and province;
- official documents of Congregation (reports from general and province chapter, letters from highest superiors) related to:
 - o consecrated life
 - o Saint Augustine, Saint Norbert and religious fathers

Goal: reading that supplements the close relationship and knowing of Saint Augustine and Saint Norbert, the spirituality and history of Congregation.

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CANDIDATURE

You have just darkened the door of community of Norbertine sisters. There's a time of formation before you which will help you to strengthen yourself in vocation to consecrated life as a Norbertine sister. This time will help you also to prepare yourself for the Novitiate. During this time you'll set off the way of growth which helps you to understand yourself better. The time of candidature is aimed to distinguish your motivations and dispositions (tendency, nature, temperament) that have formed your desire for consecrated life.

Before you bind yourself to consecrated life it is very important to test the power of your desire to follow Christ and your competence for the life in Congregation. The possibility to live with us in community provides you with the best means and place for formation. At the end of candidature you should know whether you want to enter the Novitiate. The community, where you will be, and the formator, who will lead you, will express their opinion whether you are competent for consecrated life as a Norbertine sister.

Questionnaire for entering the candidature

First name and surname _____

Date and place of birth _____

Permanent address

Schools attended / Profession

First name and surname of your father _____

Date of your father's birth _____

Employment of your father _____

First name and surname of your mother _____

Date of your mother's birth _____

Employment of your mother _____

Number of siblings and their names

Other people who live with you in one household

You have said that you are seriously interested in entering the Congregation of Norbertine sisters. In order to know you better, please, answer these questions:

/form of conversation/

1. What has influenced and motivated you to decide that you want to consecrate your life to God? When did you thought about it for the first time?
2. How did you know or who did you tell about Norbertine sisters?
3. What's your knowledge and idea about religious life?
4. What is your contemporary religious knowledge and how did you acquire them?
5. Which schools have you attended and what are you doing now? Are you studying or working? Where?
6. Do you speak any foreign languages or have you got any other special, artistic or technical competence?
7. What are your interests and hobbies?
8. Briefly write the most important events in your life that have influenced you positively and when it was (hollidays, meetings, etc.).
9. Describe the moments that have left negative experiences in your life and when it was (death, experiences of fear, horror, uncertainties and other).
10. Have you ever asked for entrance to other religious society before?
11. Have you already talked to your parents about your plans? What was their attitude?
12. Briefly describe your family: what's your relationship with parents and siblings or with those you live in one household. What do you consider to be positive and negative in your family? What type of upbringing did you have?
13. What's your health state? Did you suffer any serious disease in the past?
14. Does any serious psychical or nervous disease occur in your family?
15. Have you ever been engaged in parish? How?
16. Have you ever belonged to any community?

17. How do you arrange contacts with people?
18. Are you aware of that by entering to religious community you'll be obliged also to common life?
19. According to your opinion when will you be able to enter the candidature?

- **When entering the candidature the candidate has to bring:**

- affirmation about baptism and confirmation
- recommendation from priest
- health card
- curriculum vitae with giving reason for entering the community
- copy of birth certificate and identity card
- copy of school certificate of finished education

- **Entering the candidature:**

- conversation about principles and programme of candidature, about entrance ceremony (superior of province and the candidature master), let the candidate to say her opinion
- one day spiritual renewal
- entrance ceremony to candidature within Vespers
- candidate obtains the medal of Saint Norbert and Holy Scripture

- **You need to arrange:**

- provision of health insurance
- deregistration from local doctor and dentist
- registration to local doctor and dentist
- temporary address

- **During the candidature:**
 - we explain basic priorities in candidature
 - she gets month pocket money of amount 10 euro, we explain the significance and use of pocket money
 - she writes a diary of religious reading according to recommended literature
 - she has the spiritual renewal few times a year – it is prepared by Novicemaster
 - visits to home: All Saints, Christmas, before Easter, two weeks before Novitiate – beginning of July, in serious cases
 - psychological examination
 - common final evaluation of candidature (superior of province, the candidature master and candidate) – programme, content of education, common life, knowledge about our Congregation, positives, negatives, suggestions; we observe her knowledge and understanding

- **After the end of candidature it is necessary to submit written evaluation that was worked out by the candidature master and it has to help:**
 - candidate in her development
 - Congregation in distinguishing of vocation
 - candidate writes self-evaluation

- **Novicemaster of candidate:**
 - her first task is to be with candidates – at prayer, dining, work
 - she regularly reports on formation of candidates to superior of province
 - she cooperates with Novice master

- she has regular conversations, at least once in two weeks
- at the end of candidature she assesses the ability of candidate for entrance to Novitiate and writes evaluation with clear attitude – yes or no.

/for candidate/

Personal evaluation after the end of candidature

/Conversation or in writing/

When you look back on the time spent in candidature you can say what has influenced you and what have you discovered (positive and negative). Use the following aspects:

1. The life of prayer

SPIRITUAL LIFE

Did the time of candidature help you with life of prayer?

How?

CHARISMATIC DIMENSION

What does fascinate you the most in life of Saint Norbert?

What do you like on our charisma?

2. Human maturity

Can you control your behaviour and moods better?

Do you aim your competences in the service towards others?

Can you accept when the other point your mistakes out?

Do you appreciate others and can you accept also their failings?

Do you get on with accepting yourself, working on yourself and growing?

3. Common life and apostolate

RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Was the contact with sisters enrichening?

Was the contact with other sisters a source of difficulty?

What do you think you might bring into the community life?

PARTICIPATION IN HOUSEWORKS

How did you participate in them?

Voluntarily or it was a necessity?

APOSTOLIC DIMENSION

How did you reveal the apostolic dimension of community?

How did you participate in it?

How do you imagine your future activity in Congregation?

4. Work

How do you experience work?

How do you speak about it in community?

Which new dimensions did it gain for you?

5. Deepening – studies

Has the received study helped you to mature in your vocation so that you now want to enter the Novitiate?

Which questions did it invoke in you?

6. Responsibility

Do you feel personal responsibility for your formation?

Do you have the sense for responsibility at work?

7. Own way

Do you ask yourself questions about how you live and how do you imagine your life?

Do you have any expectations you couldn't realise?

Why?

Date, sign

Evaluation after the end of candidature

Sister who is responsible for this phase of formation evolves her evaluation. It arises from what she has found on candidate during the time of candidature. Her evaluations include, except personal details of candidate, the information according to following points:

1. Human maturity

- physical health
- psychical balance and emotional maturity appropriate to her age
- the ability of making a sound judgement
- the ability to arrange relationships, to be opened towards other people in community
- the ability to make decision and take all its consequences

2. Maturity in life of faith

- life of prayer
- the sense for apostolic service in accordance with our charisma, disponibility
- appropriate religious knowledge needed for the beginning of Novitiate

3. Recognizing the vocation

- motivations of vocation
- stability in desires
- deepening of relationship with Christ
- answer freedom
- to be tightened by Congregation and charisma

At the end of evaluation the the candidature master writes clear attitude to entrance of candidate into Novitiate.
She writes the date on the evaluation and signs it.

NOVITIATE

Now as a novice you want to live the middle stage between life you lived up to now and the life of sisters. This time includes the transitional loss of certainties, strong points and it may leave in you the feeling of lostness and vulnerability. Take the advantage of this privileged period for deepening, discerning and confirming your vocation to Norbertine religious life.

With the help of your Novicemaster you will be led to experience God deeper, to have greater love towards Jesus Christ and to follow him in poverty, chastity and obedience. You will face the challenge – in community dimension – to develop your understanding of giving yourself to Christ in service to your sisters.

- **Entering the Novitiate:**
 - preliminary conversation before entering the Novitiate – the superior of province, the candidature master, novice master, candidates
 - spiritual exercises
 - meeting with parents – goal, function of Novitiate, function of parents
 - acceptance ceremony into Novitiate during the Vespers
 - when there are elder novices in Novitiate they hand over the Novitiate to younger novices
 - social and health security / provision – zabezpečenie - religious students

- **Novitiate – practical notes:**
 - spiritual renewal for parents
 - Open day for parents
 - monthly spiritual renewal
 - pocket-money
 - reading diary
 - there's a trip on one day in month
 - common vacation

- **Beginning of education:**
 - familiarisation with the rules of Novitiate – superior of province, Novicemaster, novices
 - explain the main priorities in Novitiate
 - Novitiate day for community
 - in the second year of Novitiate novices participate in novice practice in one of our communities
 - novices are introduced into practice of confession

- **Novicemaster:**
 - her prime task is to be with novices at prayers, dining and when it is possible also at work
 - she monthly reports to superior of province about the formation of novices
 - she holds regular conversations with novices once in two weeks

- she relaxes as well she reads the Holy Scripture with sisters of community
- at the end of Novitiate she considers if novices are able and well prepared for the second year of Novitiate or for temporary vows and then she writes the evaluation with clear attitude – yes or no

/for novice/

Self-evaluation after the end of canonical year of Novitiate

/conversation also face to face/

These questions will help you to evaluate your canonic year of Novitiate:

1. Have you deepened your personal relationship with Christ?
2. Which experience did you come to in your spiritual life?
3. How have you developed prayer life?
4. How did you feel in silence and solitude?
5. How do you feel when you had to leave the life you lived before, all the people and things? What about your relation with family?
6. Have you succeeded in deepening your life of faith during this time?
7. What have you discovered in spirit and charisma of our Congregation and by studying our Constitutions, history of Congregation, life and writings of Saint Norbert?
8. Which attitudes have you built up in coherence with charisma of Congregation?
9. How did you contribute to life of community in Novitiate? Was it by your approach, relationships in community or by active participation in everyday life?
10. What do you want or expect from community?
11. Which of your expectations were not fulfilled?
12. Which tribulations have you experienced?
14. On which questions didn't you find the answer?
15. What knowledge have you acquired about yourself?
16. Which areas would you like to work on more?
17. Did you realise any progress during the Novitiate?
18. Are you sure that God calls you after this year of Novitiate?
19. What reasons urge you to continue Novitiate formation?

Date, sign

/for novice/

Practice in Novitiate

1. During this time explore if our way of life, connection between common life, prayer and apostolic service may be acceptable for you in the future and if there's a growing tendency of belonging to Congregation.
2. In your own responsibility deepen your spiritual life.
3. Learn how to appropriately change the prayer, activities and relaxation.
4. Open concrete requirements of life up for yourself according to Gospel counsels.
5. For necessary permissions ask your superior.
6. Take this time seriously as a possibility to put all the knowledge you have learned into practice.
7. Explore if you can rightly divide your time between the prayer, activities and life in community.
8. Discover your strengths, limits and weaknesses.
9. Think about the impressions and experiences of everyday life. Evaluate them and talk about them in personal conversation with your superior and fellowsisters in community.

/for novice/

Self-evaluation of novice after the second year of Novitiate

According to next questions think about experiences you acquired in the second year of Novitiate.

1. What kind of work did you do and how did you like it?
Would you like to do it in the future?
If not, what do you incline most to?
2. What differences do you see between the life in Novitiate and life of community where you lived your experiment?
3. What did speak to you in life of individual sisters?
4. How was your relationship with the superior and fellowsisters?
5. What experiences have you got with yourself in acquainting into life according to Gospel counsels?
6. Can you imagine yourself living in the community, where you lived your novice practice, after the first profession?
7. What would you like to say?

Date, sign

/for superior/

Criteria of novice evaluated by superior after the end of her novice practice

1. Competences of novice

- human, spiritual, practical
- physical and psychical preconditions
- openness and preparedness to learn new things
- independence and readiness to take the responsibility

2. Spiritual life

- participation in common prayer
- personal prayer, relationship to the Eucharist
- sharing of spiritual richness with others

3. Behaviour in community

- ability and readiness to arrange relationships
- willingness to accept the authority
- courage to express own opinion and ask
- effort to participate in the life of community

Will you be able to accept the novice after her first profession into your community?

Date, sign

Criteria of novice evaluated by Novicemaster

Novicemaster evolves detailed evaluation of novice for whole period she was in Novitiate. The evaluation is unemotional and it points out the reality in positive and negative respect.

Part one:

- personal details
- evaluation of the first and second year of Novitiate
- fulfillment or failure to fulfil the presented programme

Part two:

1. Personality of novice

- appropriate human maturity
- appropriate psychical maturity
- growth in activities
- ability to organize and utilize the time
- initiative
- desire for knowledge
- independence
- ability to adapt

2. Spiritual life

- unification with Christ
- growth in spiritual life
- sacramental life
- common and personal prayer
- love to Eucharist
- desire for religious knowledge
- reflection of spiritual life in activities

3. Common life

- ability to live common life
- interest in other people in community
- forgive and make a clean start
- relationship with authority

4. Life according to vows

- ability to keep the poverty, chastity and obedience
- convincing attitude to selected way to live according to Gospel counsels

5. The spirit of apostolate

- enthusiasm for the charisma of Saint Norbert
- willingness to take over certain services and responsibility

6. Attachment to Congregation

- love to Congregation
- understand the necessary distance from family, relatives and other acquaintances

Say everything you consider important and necessary. Express your clear attitude of admission novice to vows.

Write the date on the evaluation and sign it.

/for novice/

Reflexion of Novitiate

1. Did those two years of Novitiate help you to understand and make clear the selected way of life in following Christ?
 2. Do you think that you've been adequately involved into theology of consecrated life, our Constitutions, charisma and spirituality of our Congregation?
 3. Have you deepened your identity by better knowing of Holy Scripture, our Constitutions and charisma of our Congregation?
 4. What relationship have you acquired to Christ? Have you found in him the only ideal for that you are able to leave everything?
 5. Has this period help you in your spiritual development to:
 - strengthen your faith?
 - understand the liturgy and sacraments better?
 - make sure yourself of the importance of personal prayer?
 - practice the asceticism in your life?
 - foster sober devoutness to Virgin Mary?
 6. Have the novice and sister's community provide you with the possibility to:
 - get to the heart of matter with regards virtue of chasity, to live it out selflessly and transparently
 - love and be loved?
 - develop in yourself the emotional maturity?
 - feel stable?
 - form your own attitudes?
 - discover the value of being involved and disponsible?
 - train yourself in poverty?
 - learn how to independently and responsibly work?
 - cooperate?
 - share with your feelings, spiritual experiences as well as with material goods
 7. Have you experienced the atmospehere of simplicity, joy and heartiness in the Novitiate community?
 8. Did you have the possibility to experience the joy from communitarian life?
 9. Were all the formation dialogues with magistra and spiritual leading contribution for you? To what degree and in what?
- What would you suggest to the future?

JUNIORATE

When you end the Novitiate and take a vow you are asked to strengthen your consecration during the juniorate time. It's the time of taking roots and developing of all that you've already discovered about religious life. Through still growing integration of yourself into the life and mission of Congregation you'll find the definite obligation as a Norbertine sister.

Juniorate is the time when you deepen yourself and grow in faith, when you learn to be stable and patient. This time will also prepare you for future function according to your personal competences and gifts as well as according to needs of Congregation.

- **Juniorate – practical notes:**
 - after junior takes temporal vows she is fully integrated into the community;
 - she is in charge of the local superior;
 - she participates in apostolic activities of community and province – summer girl’s activities, meetings with youth, spiritual renewals for girls etc.;
 - if there is a necessity to repeat the temporal vows, junior has to prepare herself for two weekends and then she has the spiritual exercises;
 - before the final vows she prepares herself for month and then she has the spiritual exercises.

- **Education during juniorate:**
 - juniors meet themselves once a month at formation meeting;
 - also other sisters help her with the education under the leadership of Novicemaster;
 - time of juniorate is used as well for the further education according to personal gifts and needs of province;
 - we occasionally invite the specialists from various fields of study to our juniorate meetings.

- **Novicemaster and her tasks:**
 - Junior master has a personal conversation with each junior every month;
 - she monthly informs (after junior meeting) the superior of province about the formation;
 - she visits juniors in community twice a year;
 - she writes an evaluation about each junior to superior of province and council of province once a year;
 - at the end of juniorate she considers the competence of junior to take her final vows and writes the evaluation with clear attitude – yes or no.

Juniorate

During the juniorate your task will be to deepen everything what you've learned and familiarized with in Novitiate and to willingly integrate yourself into the community and participate in mission which the Congregation will entrust you with.

So that you can humanly and spiritually grow and mature in identity of Norbertine sisters in the stage of juniorate, our Congregation offers you this help:

- through the junior Novicemaster who will accompany you and to whom you can always with trust turn to;
- through monthly meetings of juniorate;
- through the superior of community where you live and act;
- through the spiritual guide whom you can choose after the conversation with junior Novicemaster. This guidance should help you to let yourself being formed by the Spirit of Jesus Christ and to be free for the life in community and service to other people;
- Congregation will provide you with an adequate education if it is necessary for your personal maturation or the work you do.

We expect cooperation and willingness from you:

- take a responsible approach to your own formation;
- accept accompanying of juniormaster and open yourself for guiding;
- actively and regularly participate in meetings of junior sisters;
- respect the authority of your superior and think with her about experiences in community; it's important to be honor her, to be obedient and to have a dialogue with her;

- in the spirit of our Constitutions you should try to integrate yourself into the life of community which has been assigned to you;
- regularly use the spiritual leading. You have to talk over the change of spiritual leader with the junior Novicemaster;
- if it is important for you, you should be able to ask the superior of province for any help or other necessary education;
- you should be prepared for the transfer during the juniorate and accept new function that will be given to you so that you could grow in disponibility and acquire new pieces of knowledge.

Before every renewal of vows think about your positive or negative experiences in life of community and explore whether you are able and you want to walk the way in Congregation. Equally sisters that are responsible for your formation (junior Novicemaster, House superior) and the community, where you live, will write the report about their experiences they acquired with you in the community and their opinion whether you can renew the vows and take the final vows.

After 3 or 6 years (Constitutions – p. 83) all this should help you to come to clear decision for the final obligation in lifelong profession or you want to choose other way of Christian life. If you or the Congregation find some serious reasons for prolongation of juniorate, it is possible up to 9 years (constitutions – p. 83).

When you've come to the decision that you want to take the final vows in our Congregation ask the superior of province who, together with her council, will explore your application, the evaluation of junior Novicemaster, the House superior. The superior of province with the agreement of province council will decide about your definitive integration into the Congregation.

/for junior/

Self-evaluation of junior

/Conversation or in writing/

Human formation

1. Did the whole process of initial formation help you to achieve an appropriate maturation?
2. You've arranged a lot of relationships within the sisterhood and friendship. Are these built up especially on the mighty, live and personal love to Jesus Christ?
3. What's your relationship to yourself and to others? How do the relationships help you to develop the ability to listen and hold a dialogue?
4. Do you like the companionship of other people and are you willing to sacrifice yourself for others?
5. That you live the vow of obedience shall be seen in that you grow in gentleness and freedom of heart. Do you improve?
6. Did this time help you to know better yourself and face up to your past?
7. Did you learn how to associate the human endowments with virtues?
8. Are you sure that with openness, generosity and permanent work you can fight down the egoism and individualism?
9. Are you willing to know and accept
 - the objective truth which awakens and leads to peace;
 - the freedom which leads to service and joy;
 - the hope which opens, leads to the experience and gives the sense of life?
10. How did you learn to solve the critical moments?
11. Did you check in conflicts and trials the value of vocation – what does it mean to live for Christ?
12. How did you use the possibility of personal conversations

with junior Novicemaster for your growth?

13. Did you succeed in making a certain persistence in spite of human fragility and weakness?

Intellectual formation

1. Did you deepen yourself enough in the knowledge about
 - the Holy Scripture
 - the theology of consecrated life
 - our Constitutions and its use in concrete life
 - the founder and works about him
 - the history of Congregation
 - necessary theological knowledge
 - the theory necessary for your work in the apostolate?
2. Are you aware of that every knowing has to make you to be more opened and sensitive for God's things and people of this world?

Spiritual formation

1. Is Jesus Christ the centre of your life? Have you ever experienced his real love and leading? Did you reveal it in common and personal prayer?
2. Were you looking for help and presence of Jesus during the day?
3. Does the personal love to Christ help you to find his image in people?
4. Are you aware of that as much as you come near to God, you come nearer to people and vice versa
5. Have you ever experienced the helping mercy of God in hard day events?
Did all the tribulations and sorrows help you to strengthen the motivation of choice and make clear your orientation and attitudes?
6. How did the time of juniorate help you to develop the life of faith?

7. How did the love to sacraments and liturgy develop in you?
8. Are the critical situations challenge for you or they threaten or discourage you?
9. Do you succeed in ordinary situations of the day to discover God's activity?

Charismatic formation

1. What does it mean to you to belong into the Congregation of Norbertine sisters?
2. What relationship did you acquire to Congregation and its mission?
3. Do you feel the fellowship - solidarity to Congregation?
4. Which idea does direct you in your life?
5. What is our spirituality and charisma? Is it recognizable in the life of our Congregation?
6. How do you perceive the character of Saint Augustine and Saint Norbert in your life?
7. What has spoken to you most about their lives?
8. How do you know and how did you accept the historical evolution of our Congregation?

Communitarian formation

1. Do you feel good in the community of sisters?
2. Are you willing to talk to the superior, formator and fellowsisters?
3. Did you find the reconciliation and were you able to forgive in the community?
4. Did you bring the joy and peace into the community?
5. Don't you need to hide something before the community?
6. Does the more real, active and responsible love towards your religious community grow in you?
7. Did you learn the conditions of balance, healthy and

creative adaptability?

8. Are you able to share with spiritual gifts and experiences with others?

Apostolic formation

1. Do you like your apostolic activity in profession you do or do you desire any other apostolate?
2. When in apostolate do you think about that you mustn't be too active to forget God and too contemplative to forget the people?
3. Do you know what does it mean to be responsible?
4. Can you use the theory and your experiences in practice?
5. Are you aware of that we can be apostolically useful only when we truly live our consecration?
6. Does the focus of our Congregation give you the space for initiative and creativity?

Date, sign

Criteria for the evaluation for Novicemaster of juniors

Part one

- personal details
- attitude of junior sister during this stage to her own formation
- the identity of junior sister

Part two

1. Human maturity

- the ability to live the femininity and properly love
- the ability to control your feelings and integrate the sexuality with the orientation to self-giving
- self-knowledge, self-acceptance and interiorization of values
- disposition to lead in an integrative way all events of every day life and to experience them in such a way your religious consecration cut through all your being

2. Christian maturity and maturity of vocation

- life of faith
- contemplation
- love to Jesus in the Eucharist
- the ability to interiorize the Gospel and associate the prayer with activity
- disponovanost' pre asketický život
- openness for the needs of Church and the world

3. Vows

- knowledge and awareness of value of consecrated chastity and abnegation that are related to this vow; a good life of relationships

- free and independent using of material values
- disponibility and willingness, in the spirit of obedience, to put all your talents and knowledge into the service of Congregation

4. Common life

- active and responsible cooperation at various tasks of common life
- balance and cheerfulness at common living and work
- openness for sisterly and calm dialogue and confrontation
- acceptance of other people
- the ability to accept, understand and live what the fellowship requires
- share with the life of faith but also with the life of personal tribulations and problems

5. Mission and apostolate

- willingness and ability to do the apostolic activity of Congregation
- to participate and feel the joint liability for the mission of Congregation
- the ability to live soulfully, bravely, courageously and creatively
- disponibility to improve your professional qualification and the study according to the needs of Congregation, not for a personal interest

State everything you consider important and necessary and express your clear unambiguous attitude towards the admission of junior to her final vows.

Date, sign

ONGOING FORMATION

Do you understand that the final vows do not mean the end of formation? Different experiences of life and apostolate will reveal before you new horizons. Now you will continue in personal formation and you'll be attentive to the message of Saint Augustine and Saint Norbert. The permanent formation is necessary so that you were loyal to the mission you've accepted. Thus, step by step, you'll become the formator of generations that will come after you.

- **Ongoing formation – practical notes:**
 - after sister takes the final vows she continues in permanent formation
 - she is aware of that the privileged place of formation is community where she lives
 - she let herself being formed by everyday life, sisters, ordinary things, prayer and apostolic tiredness, in joy as well as suffering till the death
 - by distinctive way she let herself being formed by liturgical year which teaches her to experience the mysteries of God's Son again

- **Meetings within ongoing formation:**
 - there are meetings of sisters in several groups once a year
 - meetings are organised by the superior of province and province council
 - each concrete group is animated by two sisters
 - we occasionally invite the specialists from various fields of study to our meetings
 - at the end of each meeting we do individual as well as common evaluation

- **Those responsible for ongoing formation:**
 - the superior of province has the total responsibility for permanent formation
 - the concrete responsibility is given to one sister from the province council
 - the personal responsibility of a sister is in her openness to accept the formation stimulations from community and province

/for sister/

Evaluation of ongoing formation

Personal responsibility

1. In awareness of my personal responsibility do I care about my spiritual growth – prayer, liturgy, adoration, Gospel, life in God's presence?
2. Does my ability to learn from life grow? (communication, willingness to listen, accept and converse)
3. Do I mature in the ability of personal distinguishing?
4. Do I learn to accept my work, tasks and mission as an important place of my permanent formation?

Communitarian responsibility

1. Am I convinced that already the life in community, which is unified in Christ and opened to requirements of age, can form?
2. Do I try to create family spirit in community through supporting common meeting, willingness to listen and converse?
3. How do I contribute to the environment of faith and prayer that strengthens inner motives, helps radically to live the Gospel and give yourself in service?
4. Do I admit the need of good organisation of common work, communitarian project and its regular verification?
5. Am I opened to distinguishing in community?
6. How great is my participation and responsibility for common prayer, sharing with God's word, penitential worship, relaxation?
7. Am I opened to the leadership of superiors? How do I accept the stimulations from advices of province and Congregation?

8. Am I aware of the importance of Chapter of community and do I actively participate in it?

Provincial responsibility

1. How do I evaluate the organisation of permanent formation in general?
2. Did the leadership of province help you to understand the importance and necessity of permanent formation?
3. Does the superior of community help you with your formation?
4. How do you prepare yourself and up to what degree are you opened to the visitations of superiors?
5. Are you aware of special importance of different sisters' meetings oriented to building the unity and mutual relationships?

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