

**RULE O. F. SAINT AUGUSTINE AND RULE OF
LIFE AND GENERAL STATUTES OF THE
SECULAR AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECTS**

**THE SACRED CONGREGATION
FOR RELIGIOUS
AND SECULAR INSTITUTES**

Prot. N. A 68 e-1/83

DECREE

The Prior General of the Order of Augustinian Recollects, whose Generalate is in Rome, has presented before the Holy See, with the consent of his Council, the Rule of Life and General Statutes for the Secular Augustinian Recollects, which constitute an original work of the Institute, humbly asking for its approval.

This Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, after having carefully examined the said Rule of Life and General Statutes, gives approval by this present Decree, in accordance with the copy which remains in its archives, having noted what by law should be noted, and extends best wishes that the Secular Augustinian Recollects, faithful to the spirit which characterizes their Institution⁴ may always fulfill with noble determinations their specific goals.

Given in Rome, the 8th day of December, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1984.

(+ J. Hamer, O.R) Pro-Perfect

(+ V. Fagiolo) Secretary

ORDER OF AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECTS GENERALATE

Prot. N. 1-4/83 (84)

Beloved Brothers:

The approval of the "Rule of Life" and General Statutes of the Secular Augustinian Recollects by the Sacred Congregation for Religious marks the culmination of a long period and of a great endeavor to conform with the directives of the Church since the Second Vatican Council.

The members of the Secular Augustinian Fraternity, as well as the religious assigned to the task, have been working firstly to reorganize the life style of the fraternities, and secondly, to formulate a "Rule of Life" which in addition to being in conformity with the norms of the Church, may be truly an inspiration and a guide for their lives in our times.

In effect, the present "Rule of Life" offers the members of the fraternity a plan for Christian living befitting their lay state and with a profound Augustinian basis. We cannot lose sight of the fact that living the Augustinian charism of genuine fraternity, of human and spiritual friendship, of dialogue and community, and of love of God, manifested principally in contemplative prayer, is the common inheritance of the Augustinian Recollect religious and all of those who through them have learned to appreciate and have tried to achieve, to the best of their ability, those values which are authentically human, and at the same time, evangelical.

I have the firm conviction and hope that this "Rule of Life" will contribute to resurgence and spiritual renewal for our secular fraternities which are not only the product of the "diffusive" communication of our own charism but also the channel through which the apostolate of the Order is extended to all the world.

May the Lord, through the meditation of Our Lady of Consolation, produce in our Secular Augustinian Recollect brothers and sisters abundant fruits of sanctity in their quest for evangelical perfection, by their living out the charism of the Order.

Rome, December 14, 1984

Fr. Javier Ruiz, O.A.R. Prior General

(L.+S.)

Fr. J. Manuel Azagra. O.A.R. Secretary General

RULE OF OUR FATHER ST. AUGUSTINE

Before all else, beloved brothers, let us love God and then our neighbor, because these are the principal commandments given to us.

CHAPTER 1

1. These are the precepts which we order you who live in the monastery to observe.

2. The main purpose for which you have come together is to live harmoniously in the house and to have one soul and one heart intent upon God.

3. And you should not call anything your own, but let everything be yours in common. Food and clothing should be distributed to each of you by your superior, not equally to all, for all do not enjoy equal health, but rather according to each one's need. For thus you read in the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, that "they had all things in common and distribution was made to each one according to each one's need" (4:32, 5).

4. Those who possessed something in the world at the time they entered the monastery should hand it over willingly so that it becomes common property.

5. Those who owned nothing in the world should not seek to have in the monastery those things that they could not have had outside. Nevertheless, they are to be given all that their health requires even if, during their time in the world, poverty made it impossible for them to find the necessities of life. However, they should not consider themselves fortunate for having found the kind of food and clothing which they were unable to find in the world.

6. And let them not hold their heads high because they associate with people whom they would not dare to approach in the world, but rather let them lift up their hearts and not seek after what is vain and earthly. Otherwise, monasteries would become profitable to the rich and not to the poor, if there the rich become humble and the poor are puffed up.

7. On the other hand, those who seemed important in the world should not look down upon their brothers who have come into this holy brotherhood from the condition of poverty. They should try to glory in the fellowship of their less privileged brothers rather than in the rank of their own wealthy parents. They should neither be conceited if they have contributed a part of their wealth to the common life, nor take more pride in sharing their riches with the monastery than if they were enjoying them in the world. For every other vice prompts people to do evil deeds, whereas

pride lurks even in good works in order to destroy them. What advantage is it to scatter one's wealth abroad by giving to the poor, even to become poor oneself, if the mind in its misery becomes prouder in despising riches than it was in possessing them?

8. Let all of you then live united in mind and heart, and mutually honor God in yourselves, whose temples you have become.

CHAPTER 2

1. Dedicate yourselves to prayer at the appointed hours and times.

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

3. When you pray to God in psalms and hymns, meditate in your heart the words that come from your lips.

4. And do not sing except what is meant to be sung: that which has not been written for singing should not be sung.

CHAPTER 3

1. Subdue your flesh by fasting and abstinence as far as your health allows. When anyone is unable to remain fasting until the mid-afternoon meal, he should nevertheless not have any food outside of the noon meal unless he is ill.

2. From the time you sit down at table until you rise, listen without interruption or discussion to what is usually read for you; not only should your mouths partake of food, but your ears also should hunger for the word of God.

3. If special treatment in the way of diet is given to those who are not strong as a result of their former way of life, others who are stronger because they have had a different manner of life must not be aggrieved or think it unfair. Nor should they think the former happier in getting something that they themselves do not get. Rather they should be thankful for their own good health, which the others do not possess.

4. And if those who have entered the monastery from a more comfortable manner of life should be given any food, clothing, bedding or covering that is not given to others who are stronger and so more fortunate, these latter, not receiving them, should consider how far the former have come down from their previous way of life in the world even though they cannot live so frugally as those of a more vigorous constitution. Nor should that which a few receive beyond the ordinary be desired by the rest, for it is not given them as an honor; it is only a

tolerance. Otherwise a detestable disorder would arise in the monastery, if the rich mortify themselves as far as they are able, while the poor are converted into fastidious weaklings.

5. As the sick must eat less in order not to aggravate their illness, so, once cured, they are to receive all care during convalescence in order to return quickly to good health, even if they came from extreme poverty in the world. In fact, recent illness has made necessary for them what a former way of life has made necessary for the rich. But, once restored to health, let them return to that happy norm of life which is the more fitting to the servants of God according as they need fewer things. For, being well, pleasure must not be allowed to detain them on that threshold where, being sick, necessity put them. Let them believe themselves richer who are better able to bear frugality; for it is better to need little than to have much.

CHAPTER 4

1. Do not call attention to yourselves by your manners nor try to please by the way you dress, but rather by your conduct.

2. Whenever you leave the house, go together; when you arrive at your destination, remain together.

3. In walking, in standing and in all your external comportment, let there be nothing that might give offense to anyone who sees you; let all be in conformity with the consecration of your life.

4. Even if your gaze chances to fall on a woman, you should not stare at her. It is not forbidden you to see women when you leave the house; it is wrong, however, to desire women or to want to be desired by them. It is not only by touch and the heart's movement that desire is provoked, or that we are provoked to desire them, but also by the eyes. Do not say that your soul is pure if your eyes are not pure because an impure gaze betrays an impure heart. For even though nothing be said, when hearts proclaim their impurity by mutual glance and, giving free reign to fleshly desire, they take pleasure in their passion for each other, then chastity flees from their behavior even though their bodies remain free from any impure violation.

5. At the same time, he who fixes his gaze on a woman and takes pleasure in being seen by her ought not to suppose that he is seen by no one when he does so; he is always seen, and by persons who he does not think have seen him. But even supposing that it all remains hidden and is seen by no human eye, what will he do about Him who observes all from above and from Whom nothing can be hidden? Or are we to think that He does not see because His patience is as great as His wisdom? Let every religious, therefore~ refrain from desiring sinfully to please a woman, by cherishing the fear of displeasing God. Let him check the desire of looking

sinfully on a woman by remembering that God sees all things. To this end, fear of God is recommended to us where it is written: "Abominable before God is he who fixes his gaze" (Prov. 27, 20).

6. Therefore, when you are in church or in any other place where women are present, mutually safeguard your purity; for in this way God, who dwells within you, will protect you by your mutual vigilance.

7. And if you should notice in any of you such indiscreet looks as I have spoken of, you should warn him at once so that what has begun may go no further but be immediately corrected.

8. However, if after this warning or at any other time, you observe him doing the same thing, whoever happens to discover this should report him as if he were a wounded person in need of healing. First, however, it should be pointed out to a second or a third person, so that he can be proved wrong by the mouth of two or three witnesses and can be restrained with whatever firmness seems suitable. Do not think that you are being spiteful when you draw attention to this; rather you would no longer be innocent yourselves if by silence you let your brothers be lost when by reporting the matter you could have corrected them. If your brother had a wound in his body which he wished to keep secret for fear of medical treatment, would it not be cruel to keep silence and compassionate to make it known? How much greater, then, is your obligation to manifest his spiritual ailment lest he should become more corrupt at heart!

9. But before pointing it out to others by whom he could be proved to be wrong, if he denies it, you should report him to the superior if after a warning he has still neglected to reform. This is in the hope that he may be corrected more privately without anyone else needing to know about it. But if he denies it, then without his knowledge other witnesses must be brought in; from there on he will not be accused by one witness alone, but will be shown to be culpable by two or three. When convicted he must accept such correction as will help him to amend according to the judgment of the superior or of the priest whose authority embraces such matters. If he refuses to submit to punishment and yet does not withdraw of his own accord, he must be expelled from your society. Nor is this done in a spirit of cruelty but of mercy, lest perchance his poisonous example occasion the loss of many.

10. And what I have said about not staring unbecomingly should be applied carefully and faithfully to the discovery, warning, reporting, proving and punishing in the field of other sins also, with love for the person and hatred for the sin.

11. However, should one have advanced so far in evil as to have received letters or small gifts from a woman, if he freely confesses it he must be pardoned and prayed for. But if he should be found out and

proved guilty, he should be corrected more strictly according to the judgment of the priest or superior.

CHAPTER 5

1. Keep your clothes in one place under the care of one or two persons, or as many as may be needed to air them out and prevent damage from moths. Just as you are fed from a single storeroom, so you should be clothed from a single wardrobe. As far as possible, you yourselves ought not be the ones who decide what clothing is to be worn according to the season of the year, nor if one is to receive his own clothing again or something already used by another, so long as no one is denied what he needs. But if quarrels and murmurings arise among you on this account, and someone complains that he has received something that is not as good as what he had before, and he considers that it is beneath his dignity to wear what another brother had worn, then judge for yourselves how deficient you are in holy and interior adornment of the heart, arguing as you do about clothes for the body. But even if concession is made to your weakness and you receive the same clothing you put away, what you put aside must still be kept in the common wardrobe and in the care of those appointed.

2. So then, let no one work at anything for himself. All your work should be for the good of the community with greater zeal and more concentrated effort than if each one were to do his work for himself. Because charity, of which it is written that it *does not seek its own* (1 Cor. 13, 5), is understood thus: it prefers the things of the community to its own, and not its own to what is held in common. As a result, you can measure your advance in perfection by the greater care you render to things held in common than to your own; so that in all things of which transitory necessity makes use, let charity, which *abides for ever*, shine forth.

3. From which it follows that, if anyone brings to his sons or relatives who are in the monastery an article of clothing or anything else that is considered necessary, it must not be received secretly, but must be brought to the superior so that, becoming common property, it may be given to whoever needs it.

4. Your clothes are to be washed at the discretion of the superior, either by yourselves or by people employed for that purpose, so that an excessive solicitude for clean clothing may not cause interior uncleanness of the soul.

5. Nor ought the bath be denied to anyone, when called for by sickness. Let it be done without complaining on the advice of the doctor, in such wise that, even though the sick person be reluctant, he must do, at the command of the superior, what has to be done for his health's sake. On the other hand, if he wants it and it is perhaps not expedient, he should

not yield to his craving; for sometimes, even though a thing be harmful, it is believed good because it is pleasant.

6. Lastly, whenever a servant of God has a hidden pain and reports it, he is to be believed without hesitation. But if there be no certainty that what he wants will cure his pain, a doctor should be consulted.

7. Do not go to the public baths or to any other place that necessity might dictate except in twos or threes. A brother who has to go out should not choose his own companions, but should go with whichever brother the superior orders.

8. The care of the sick, whether during their convalescence or when suffering from any weakness, even if there is no fever, should be entrusted to some particular brother, so that he may obtain from the dispensary what he sees each one needs.

9. Those who have charge of the storeroom, or the clothes, or the library must serve their brothers without grumbling.

10. Books are to be requested at a definite time each day, and those who ask for them outside the time should not be given them.

11. Those who have charge of clothes and shoes should give them without delay to those who have need of them.

CHAPTER 6

1. Do not have quarrels, or at least bring them to an end as quickly as possible, lest anger develop into hatred –a straw into a beam– and turn the soul into a murderer. For thus you read: “*Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer*” (1 John 3, 15).

2. Whoever has harmed another by abuse or evil speaking or by a serious charge, must seek to remedy the damage he has done as soon as possible; and the one offended must pardon him without hesitation. But if they have offended one another, they should forgive each other's offense, remembering the prayer which, because you repeat it so often, ought to be said with all the more sincerity. The brother who is often prone to anger but prompt to ask pardon of one whom he admits having offended, is better than another who, though slow to anger, is slow also to ask forgiveness. He who is never willing to ask pardon or who does not make the request with sincerity is in the monastery to no purpose even if he is not dismissed. Be sparing, then, in the use of harsh words; but if they have escaped your lips, do not hesitate to apply the balm of healing with those same lips that have inflicted the wounds.

3. When, however, requirements of discipline oblige you to speak forcibly in correcting your subjects, even if you feel your criticism has been too severe, you are not bound to ask pardon of them, lest the manifestation of excessive humility in their regard should undermine the

authority requisite for their government. Instead, you must ask pardon from the Lord of all, who knows the depth of your affection for those whom you may have corrected with unwarranted severity. Your love for one another must be spiritual, not carnal.

CHAPTER 7

1. Obey your superior as a father, with respect for his office, so that you do not offend God in him. Be especially obedient to the priest who has responsibility for all of you.

2. It is chiefly the responsibility of the superior to see that all these precepts are observed. If anything is not complied with, he should not let it lapse through negligence, but should take care that the matter be amended and corrected. He must refer to the priest who has greatest authority over you anything that exceeds his own competence and power.

3. Your superior should not regard himself fortunate in exercising authority over you, but rather in serving you with charity. Before you he is to take precedence with honor, but before God he is to prostrate himself at your feet in fear. Before all he must show himself as a model of good works. He should restrain the restless, support the wavering, comfort the weak, be patient towards all. He should cheerfully embrace regular discipline and know how to inspire respect. And, although both are necessary, he should strive to be loved by you rather than feared, remembering always that he will have to tender an account to God for every one of you.

4. For this reason, obey him promptly out of consideration not for yourselves only, but for him also; for the higher his position of authority among you, the greater must his danger be.

CHAPTER 8

1. May the Lord grant that you observe all these precepts with love~ as lovers of spiritual beauty exuding the fragrance of Christ in the goodness of your lives, not as slaves under the law, but as free men under grace.

2. And so that you may see yourselves in this little book as in a mirror, and not neglect anything through forgetfulness, let it be read once each week. And if you find that you have complied with the things that are written, give thanks to the Lord, the giver of all good things. But when any one of you finds himself wanting in some point of observance, let him be sorry for the past and be on his guard for the future, praying that his offenses be forgiven and that he may not fall into temptation.

SECULAR AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECTS RULE OF LIFE

INTRODUCTION

1. God has created man in his image and likeness in order for him to share in His divine life. Through baptism, we are made one with Christ and are called to sanctity according to the Apostle Paul: "It is God's will that you grow in holiness" (1 *Thess.* 4, 3; *Eph.* 1, 4). And each Christian, according to his own particular gifts and graces, must, without hesitation, walk the path of living faith, which both enkindles hope and works of charity.¹

2. This journey toward the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity in Christ, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has stirred within the Church a body of men and women who, through their example, teachings, and charism have initiated an admirable diversity of religious families that are a sign of the immense richness of God's gifts and of the manifold grace of Christ.²

3. One of these religious families is the Order of Augustinian Recollects, "which the mercy of God brought into being by sending his Spirit"³ and which promotes among the faithful, laity or clergy, the living of the Augustinian ideal, motivating them to live the union of hearts and minds and to make the spirit of St. Augustine a practical reality in the Church and world today. For this, the Order puts at the disposal of the faithful his spiritual patrimony of doctrine and evangelical life, and offers them his fraternal and spiritual assistance

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE FRATERNITY

4. The Augustinian Recollect Secular Fraternity receives Christians who, called by the Holy Spirit to the perfection of charity, commit themselves to live the Gospel according to the experience and spirituality of the Order of Augustinian Recollects.

Its members have full membership in the Augustinian family and share in its ideal, its graces and its richness. They are sons and daughters of the Augustinian Recollection in the fraternal communion of its spiritual

¹ Cf. LG 41.

² Cf. PC 1.

³ Cf. FV, proem.

goods, and are called to the mission of service to the Church and the world according to their own secular condition .⁴

a) Vocation and Charism

5. The goal of the Christian is charity,⁵ and St. Augustine particularly stresses to us this great commandment of love: “Before all else, dear brothers and sisters, let us love God and then our neighbor, for these are the principal commandments given to us.”⁶

6. Following the example of St. Augustine, the brothers and sisters thus desire to love God unconditionally,⁷ for Himself alone. This is the love that unites hearts and souls in a communion of brethren and is disseminated among all men in order to win them and unite them in Christ within the Church.⁸

7. Love, both divine and human, must always be the center and the heart of our life. If you always act according to love, then you will always act rightly, as St. Augustine teaches: “Love and do what you will: if you are silent, be silent for love; if you cry out, cry out for love; if you correct, correct with love; if you pardon, pardon for love. Let the root of love be there within you. Out of this root only good can come.”⁹

8. But as this affective and effective love “is only attained with perfection by one who denies and mortifies himself,”¹⁰ we must arrange our lives under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, advancing in the active and dynamic process of the Recollection, by which man, dispersed and scattered by the wound of sin, enters within himself where God is already waiting for him and, illuminated by Christ the Interior Master, without whom “the Holy Spirit can neither instruct nor illuminate anyone,”¹¹ realizes the renewal and restoration of the image of Christ, which he carries stamped on his soul.¹²

9. Our vocation as Secular Augustinian Recollects leads us to seek and announce God and his kingdom, according to the charism of the Order, and to make every effort to make the union of hearts and minds in

⁴ Cf. Const. OAR, 113.

⁵ Cf. FV, proem.

⁶ Regla, introduccion.

⁷ En. in ps. 55, 17; PL 36, 658.

⁸ Cf. Const. OAR, 6.

⁹ In 1 Ioan. 7, 8; PL 35, 2033.

¹⁰ FV, proem.

¹¹ Contra serm. arian. 32; PL 42, 705.

¹² Sermo 90, 10; PL 38, 566.

God a reality, as described by St. Augustine in his works and sealed with the example of his life.

Thus we are both entitled and obliged to have St. Augustine as our guide and model, through his life as well as his doctrine, in order to follow Christ and orient our apostolic commitment.

10. Conscious of this charism, we must live as did the primitive community of Jerusalem, always open to the workings of the Holy Spirit, since it was He who made from the souls of the Apostles and the faithful a single soul, and from so many hearts, a single heart.¹³

b) Mission and Commitment

11. Our mission of love is universal, without boundaries. "If you wish to love Christ," St. Augustine tells us, "extend your love throughout the world, since the members of Christ are dispersed throughout the whole world".¹⁴ "Exhorting, bearing up with them, praying, discussing, giving reasons, but gently, amiably, win all for the love of God."¹⁵ Thus we can make those words of the Saint our own: "My ambition is that we together may live with Christ ... I do not wish to be saved without you."¹⁶

12. We must love the Church as the mother who engenders us and nurtures us for eternal life.¹⁷ Guided by her Magisterium and strengthened by the Sacraments, we can reach the perfection to which we are called,¹⁸ finding ourselves with the Lord in his mysteries and living an intense and mature liturgical spirituality in prayer and ecclesial worship.¹⁹

13. Like St. Augustine, we must make every effort to illuminate our mind and strengthen our will with frequent reading and assiduous study of the Holy Scriptures.²⁰ They are the source of fruitful prayer, and lead us to share the benefits of personal contemplation with the brethren.

14. In harmony with St. Augustine's thinking, we must consider our work, not as a burden or simply as a means of subsistence, but as a cooperation with the creator in shaping the world and as a service to the human community.²¹ We strive, therefore to achieve excellence in our

¹³ *Collatio cum Max.* 12; PL 42, 715.

¹⁴ *In 1 Ioan.* 10, 8; PL 35, 2060.

¹⁵ *En. in ps.* 33, sermo 2, 6-7; PL 36, 311.

¹⁶ *Sermo* 17, 2; PL 38, 125.

¹⁷ *Sermo* 244, 2; PL 39, 1512.

¹⁸ *Sermo* 96, 9-10; PL 38, 588, 589.

¹⁹ *FV* 1.

²⁰ Cf. *Const.* OAR 76.

²¹ Cf. *GS* 67.

particular skill or profession, and to act charitably and fairly at all times. We must practice all the virtues that social relations call for with sincerity, honesty, courtesy, fortitude, a spirit of justice; for without them one cannot lead an authentic Christian life.²² And in our public life we must always act in accord with our faith.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

15. In order to advance on the way to holiness with both determination and joyfulness, it is necessary to live always in union with Christ. He is our ultimate goal and our only way. His mysteries sanctify us and from them is born the sure norm of our behavior: "Christ the man is your way; Christ the Lord is your fatherland"²³; thus, "to love Christ perfectly"²⁴ is the principal obligation of our lives.

16. We must see Christ in every man and woman, but especially in the poor: "Turn your attention to Christ who lies in the street. Direct your gaze at Christ who is hungry and suffering from the cold, Christ who is a stranger in need."²⁵ St. Augustine tells us. "Bear witness to Christ in every way you can; He speaks in you, He lives in you."²⁶

17. Our Augustinian Recollect charism requires us to live an attitude of conversion and interiority and to open, morning and evening each day, the doors of our heart to the Lord²⁷ as St. Augustine did after his conversion. This attitude makes us discover the greatness of the eternal values present within us and which keep us restless and in tension; because God, in creating us in his own image, destined us to enjoy the infinite good, which is God Himself, "because you have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."²⁸

18. Sin disfigured the image of God impressed on each of us, but grace has begun its reconstruction in baptism. To perfect that image, however, God requires our lifelong, deliberate, and generous collaboration; for, as Augustine says: "He who made you without your help, will not justify you without your cooperation."²⁹

²² Cf. AA 4.

²³ Cf. MAI (Wilmart XI 2, 695).

²⁴ FV 1.

²⁵ Sermo 25, 8; PL 38, 171.

²⁶ Cf. MAI (Guelferb. XIX 2, 503).

²⁷ Cf. Conf. X 40, 65; PL 32, 806-87.

²⁸ Ib. 1 1; PL 32, 661; GS 21.

²⁹ Sermo 169, 11, 13; PL 38, 923.

19. This renewal will be more perfect the closer we approach God through knowledge, and especially through love. Thus it is necessary that we always return to ourselves to study and know ourselves. This knowledge of self will lift us up to knowledge of God, if we act in an attitude of prayer, of supplication: "O God, ever the same, let me know myself, let me know Thee. This is my plea".³⁰ Augustine explained this admirable synthesis of his program of interiority as follows: "Do not wander outside. Return to yourself, for in the interior man dwells the truth. If you find that your own nature is changeable, go beyond yourself... Go where the light of reason is enkindled".³¹ This is the transcendent Augustinian interiority, the principle of all piety, the way that brings us directly to contemplation, to the co=unity, and to the apostolate.

20. Our spiritual life has as its model and patroness the Virgin Mary, under the title of Consolation, "sign of certain hope and consolation for the pilgrim people of God."³² Knowledge and love of Mary will help us to know better and to live with greater love the mystery of Christ and His Church. Mary is the prototype of the life in faith: she is the perfect believer who opens herself to the Word of God and allows it to enter her whole being. Model of fidelity and hope, Mary continues, "by her love, to cooperate in the birth of the faithful in the Church."³³ Model of the Church, she teaches us how to be totally Christ's, and in Him, totally servants of mankind. Assumed into heaven, she continues to obtain for us the gifts of eternal salvation: grace, consolation, good counsel, help, freedom.³⁴

LIFE OF APOSTOLATE

21. Our baptismal consecration calls us to propagate the truth of the Gospel in the society in which we live, according to our particular ecclesial vocation.³⁵

We ought not forget that we have been made participants in the priestly, prophetic, and royal role of Christ³⁶ to exercise the apostolate in our work, to evangelize and sanctify mankind, to perfect the temporal order and saturate it with the spirit of the Gospel. We are apostles, then, by virtue of the very essence of the Christian vocation, in such a way that, living in the world and in the midst of its temporal affairs, it is our duty and

³⁰ Solil. II 1, 1; PL 32; 885.

³¹ De vera relig. 39, 72; PL 34, 154.

³² Cf. Const. OAR, 29-30.

³³ De sancta virg. 6; PL 40, 399.

³⁴ Cf. LG 62.

³⁵ Cf. LG 33ss.

³⁶ Cf. LG 31; PO 2.

task to work toward the renewal of the temporal order in justice and brotherhood, and to work effectively so that the spirit of the beatitudes³⁷ will shine forth in the world.

22. Our Augustinian Recollect charism directs us toward certain preferred goals, but this does not limit our activity to areas proper to the Order. We can and must feel vitalized by its spirituality to animate the liturgical, spiritual, and missionary life of the parish and other communities and apostolic movements, in close collaboration with the diocesan pastorate.

23. We who by baptism are likened to Christ, “the new man” (*Col.* 3, 10), have to make our life a continual witness of our awareness that we are children of God, and brothers and sisters to all men and women, working for the extension of the Kingdom and managing our temporal affairs for the glory of the Creator.³⁸

24. In the celebration of the Eucharist, foundation and summit of the community, and “soul of the apostolate,”³⁹ as well as in liturgical celebrations, we must find the inspiration and the energy we need to make our life a witness of communion with God and all mankind.

25. Our more specific apostolate consists in working so that unity and peace, both fruits of love, be a reality in the family, the Church, and the world. These observances must drive us to defend justice and denounce, according to Gospel values, all injustice, for the cause of peace and justice cannot be separated.

26. It is necessary that we take it as our own obligation to restore the temporal order and act in a direct and concrete way in this order, guided in it by the light of the Gospel and the mind of the Church moved by Christian charity; that we cooperate in this work with our special knowledge and our own responsibility; that we seek everywhere and in all things the justice of the kingdom of God. We must make every effort to establish a temporal order which, while entirely observing its own laws, is in agreement with the ultimate principles of Christian life, and adapts itself to the various circumstances of places, times and peoples.⁴⁰

27. Those members called to married life should remember that living the sacrament of matrimony includes a special call to be witnesses to the paschal presence of the Lord; they must therefore show an ever greater spirit of love and service as a tangible expression of their sacramental union.

³⁷ Cf. AA 4-5, 7; LG 31, 34.

³⁸ Cf. LG 31.

³⁹ AA3.

⁴⁰ Cf. AA7.

COMMUNITY LIFE

28. It is none other than “the love poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit” (*Rom. 5, 5*) that has brought us together to live the ideal of the primitive Christian community of Jerusalem, following St. Augustine.⁴¹ We pledge ourselves to make every effort to live in harmony and to have one mind and one heart intent upon God, being concerned about serving one another's needs in every respect⁴². The union of mind and heart requires us to “honor one another in God” whose temples we are.⁴³

29. Our fraternity is basically a group of persons who share faith, hope, and charity. Our prayer, both personal and common, is not only an act of piety, but a way of life. Dialogue with God is the summit and source of dialogue with our brothers and sisters. Thus, we have certain times of prayer in common, with members of the fraternity. Moreover, conscious of the fact that we are the Church, we participate in liturgical prayer as well.

30. It is not enough to have the intention of forming a fraternity or community. It is necessary that we take part in the meetings of the fraternity for the sake of promoting our common relationships and encouraging one another in the fulfillment of our ideals. As far as possible, each local fraternity should try to meet at least once a month to celebrate the Eucharist and participate in other activities that are found to be suitable for the vitality of the group. The General Statutes will dictate the norms of the meetings on the general or regional level. The particular Statutes will concretize the norms of the local meetings.

31. Our Augustinian life of fraternity requires that we carefully cultivate the values of friendship. Friendship begets and nurtures loyalty and trust, sincerity and mutual understanding. We rejoice in the qualities and triumphs of our brothers and sisters as if they were our own, uniting our forces in the common task, while each discovers his full potential through union with the rest.⁴⁴ Thus, in a communion of love, we pursue our goal as friends, brothers and sisters, not only to share with the others what we are, but to receive from them what God has given or will give them,⁴⁵

32. The secular condition of the fraternity does not prohibit that some members may live in community. Indeed, our Augustinian charism requires us to be recognized as experts in community life and its spirit and

⁴¹ Cf. *Sermo 356, 1; PL 39, 1574.*

⁴² *Regla, 1, 2.*

⁴³ *Ib. I, 8.*

⁴⁴ *Const OAR 18. 41*

⁴⁵ Cf. *En. in ps. 38, 4; PL 36, 416; Ep. 73, 10; PL 33, 250; Solil 1 12, 20; 13, 22; PL 32, 880, 881.*

to offer to the world an example and witness of our kind of life. This is realized in a more radical way, when a group of Secular Augustinian Recollects commit themselves to live in community.

FORMATION

33. The formation of the Secular Augustinian Recollect is a lifelong process. It is initiated with the vocation, it impels him to be faithful to the call and the mission received from God, as well as aiding him to become the perfect person in Christ, according to the charism of the Order.⁴⁶

The goals of our formation are to:

- reach the fullness of human potential through personal and common experience;
- believe and obey God;
- penetrate interior life more deeply;
- respond to the demands of conversion;
- fulfill the mission of being leaven of the kingdom;
- study the realities of the world and discover answers through one's own identity.

34. Our formation, faithful to the Augustinian Recollect spirit, should be continually renewed, adapting itself to the age, condition, and ability of the members. It should be the product of personal reflection, community dialogue~ and sound theological, moral, and social instruction, imparted by the Spiritual Director and duly chosen brothers and sisters.⁴⁷

35. We arrange to study St. Augustine and the great masters of the Augustinian Recollect Order, and become steeped in the knowledge of the Order's history and spirituality, so that our lives correspond to the name we bear. Thus we strive to instill the Augustinian Recollect spirit in our temporal occupations and collaborate better in the activities of the whole Augustinian Order, such as in parishes, schools, and other apostolic endeavors.⁴⁸

36. St. Augustine invites us to seek the Absolute Truth and Good, and by arousing in our brother a dissatisfaction with what he is, to help him to achieve what he is not. The charism of St. Augustine makes us protagonists of our formation- –"He who made you without your help will not justify you without your cooperation"— animating us to keep to our

⁴⁶ Cf. Const. OAR, 117.

⁴⁷ Cf. AA 29; Documento "La formacion de los laicos.

⁴⁸ Cf. AA 4; Const. OAR 136-137; 256-257.

purpose, to form our will in the liberty of charity, and to persevere until the end.⁴⁹

37. His Rule invites us to persevere in prayer, which is adoration, presence, dialogue, and friendship with the Lord. It animates our life and fills it with supernatural content, always keeping our heart oriented toward God.⁵⁰

To this end, the Secular Augustinian Recollect constantly endeavors to cultivate the spirit and practice of prayer; he makes every effort that daily meditation on the Word of God, above all in the sacred liturgy, and the practice of spiritual readings chosen from the best Augustinian sources, nourish within him “the eminent science of Christ” (*Phil* 3, 8).

38. The Liturgy, perennial participation in the paschal mystery, must be the summit of our life and at the same time the source of our energy,⁵¹ the Eucharist being the sacrament of piety, the sign of unity and the bond of charity that St. Augustine asks of us.⁵² Our liturgical life is manifested, above all, in the participation in the Eucharist and in the celebration of the Liturgy of Hours. For this, and as much as possible, the Secular Augustinian Recollect shall participate daily in the Holy Mass, and recite, joining the Church's praise of the Father in Christ, the offices of Lauds and Vespers, adding whenever possible the praying of compline before retiring.⁵³

39. The Secular Augustinian Recollect very highly appreciates the sacramental life of the Church, and especially the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which he approaches frequently in the spirit of love and conversion, knowing that through it we return to the Father who loved us first (1 Jn. 4, 19), to Christ, who sacrificed himself for us (cf. Gal. 2, 20; Eph. 5, 25), and to the Holy Spirit, who has been poured out upon us.

40. Our spiritual life has Mary as its mother and mistress. From her we learn to receive the Word and the mysteries of God and to make ourselves the instruments of His saving grace.⁵⁴ Thus, interiorly committed to an intense Marian life, we express it exteriorly, honoring Mary each day with some act of particular or common devotion, such as the Rosary, the “Benedicta tu,” etc.

⁴⁹ En. in ps. 122, 12; PL 37, 1639; Sermo 169, 15, 18; PL 38, 926.

⁵⁰ Cf. Const. OAR 65, 123, 146.

⁵¹ Cf. sc 10.

⁵² Cf. In Ioan. ev. tract. 1 6, 13; PL 35, 1613.

⁵³ Cf. Const. OAR 71.

⁵⁴ Cf. ib. 78, 152.

41. As children of St. Augustine, we must make every effort to promote and practice the traditional devotions of the Church and the Order, celebrating with special solemnity the feasts of St. Augustine, of All Saints of the Order, and the other Augustinian feast days.

42. Attentive to the voice of God, the President and the Council should stimulate the personal and common fidelity of the brethren, and encourage them to be witnesses to the realities that they are living, without obscuring these realities or changing their meaning.⁵⁵ helping the brethren to better respond to their vocation as laymen, determined to build up the kingdom of God within themselves and in the world, according to the Augustinian Recollect spirit and charism.

43. The local community, in a double mission, first must renew itself, examining its fidelity to God, improving its fraternity and the internal and external witness it gives; secondly, it must form the brethren by endeavoring to teach, to correct, to animate and to share in the Lord all that is necessary, in a constant action of encouragement and periodic review.⁵⁶

GOVERNMENT AND CORRESPONSABILITY

44. The local fraternity is the basic unit of the Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity and each one has its own moral and juridical personality within the Church.

45. Each local fraternity is canonically erected by the competent authority, thus constituting a basic cell of the whole fraternity, and, consequently, a visible sign of the Church, a community of love.

46. It belongs to the Prior General with the consent of his Council to interpret with a practical declaration the Rule of Life and General Statutes of the fraternity. Their official interpretation as well as any modification in them belongs to the Holy See. The fraternities, nevertheless, on their different levels, have the right to present, for the consideration of the same, amendments they deem desirable.

Other units or organizations on the regional, national or international level in accordance with the present Rule of Life, their usefulness and desirability having been determined, may also be instituted with the previous approval of the Prior General and the consent of his Council.

47. The Major Superiors have the mission of supervising the good progress of the Fraternity in their respective areas.

⁵⁵ Cf. *ib.* 255, 258.

⁵⁶ Cf. *ib.* 260

In the fulfillment of their functions, they can be aided by the Secretariat of the Apostolate, whose commitment shall be to cultivate mutual relations between the Order and the Fraternity and to promote and maintain their vitality through common projects.

48. Petitions for admission to the Augustinian Recollect Secular Fraternity are to be made to the local fraternity.

The Statutes will indicate the time of initiation, the age for making the Promises, along with everything referring to admission, formation, and leaving the fraternity.

49. For expenses incurred by the fraternity, all the members shall make a contribution according to their means. The local fraternities shall make an adequate contribution to the expenses of the Councils on higher levels.

50. The Councils of the various levels are to ask the superiors of the Order to name Spiritual Directors who are competent and duly prepared. The visitation by the Major Superiors to the Fraternities shall be an occasion of special importance in the life of the Fraternity.

51. Although we are all responsible for the life of the fraternity and the perfection of the brothers and sisters, each Fraternity is stimulated and directed on its respective level, by the President and the Council, in accordance with the General and particular Statutes. Their service is temporary and it is a commitment of availability and responsibility toward each of the brothers and sisters and ends with the Fraternity itself.

52. The President and the Council must stimulate fraternal life with determination, promote peace in the community and encourage the brethren toward the common good. They should always keep in mind their spiritual, intellectual, and material qualities, and learn to recognize the will of God in them.

53. Love and the good of the Fraternity and the Augustinian Recollect family ought to move us to aid the brothers and sisters in all their needs, including the use of fraternal correction full of love and understanding.⁵⁷

54. May the Lord grant that we, motivated by love, may observe all these things as lovers of spiritual beauty and fraternal living, not as slaves under the law, but as free men.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Cf. Regla 4, 7-9; 6, 2-3.

⁵⁸ Cf. Regla 8, 1.

GENERAL STATUTES

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FRATERNITY

1. The Augustinian Recollect Secular Fraternity may be established canonically by:

- the Prior General, in the entire Order;
- the Priors Provincial, in their Provinces;
- the Local Priors, with the permission of the Prior Provincial, in their houses.

2. The enrollment and dismissal of members of the fraternity belong to the Major Superior and the local Prior as his customary delegate.

Likewise, it belongs to the Major Superior to dispense from the Promises those members who, by previous written petition, have asked to abandon the fraternity.

It belongs also the Major Superior to receive individual and independent members into the fraternity. Those brothers and sisters must follow the present Rule of Life and the Statutes in all things except what concerns community life.

STRUCTURE OF THE FRATERNITY

3. The Major Superior shall look after the smooth functioning of the fraternities under his responsibility.

4. The responsibilities of the Spiritual Director are to:

- guide the fraternity spiritually, above all, those who are in formation;
- encourage the brethren in the fulfillment of their duties, accompanying them in their commitment to live according to the purpose of the Fraternity.
- promote and inspire the Augustinian Recollect spirit and charism in all its activities;
- attend the meetings of the Council. His consent is necessary for the admission to the Promises and the election of the Director of Formation.

5. The local Fraternity, comprised of the brothers and sisters who have made the Promises, elects their President and three Councilors, who, in agreement with the Spiritual Director, elect the Director of Formation.

The President, the three Councilors, and the Director of Formation comprise the Council of the Fraternity, which, in turn, names the Secretary and the Treasurer.

The Council of the Fraternity, as well as the officers named by it, serve a term of three years, and can always be reelected.

6. The principal responsibilities of the local Council are to:

a) promote and guide the Christian and Augustinian maturing of the brothers and sisters;

b) admit the candidates to the trial period;

c) assign a substitute for one of its members when necessary;

d) convoke the local community for triennial elections;

e) remit to the Superior those cases that exceed its competency;

f) examine accounts at least once a year;

g) meet every month to deal with the business of the fraternity, unless the particular Statutes state otherwise.

7. The principal duties of the President of the Fraternity are to:

a) preside over the meetings of the Council and of the Fraternity;

b) keep alive the spirit of friendship and community among the brothers and sisters;

c) encourage and promote the apostolic activities of the Fraternity;

d) insure an observance of the Rule of Life and the Statutes;

e) promote the common good among the brethren;

f) represent the Fraternity in its relations with other communities or with the Order.

8. It is the duty of the Director of Formation, among other things, to:

a) coordinate with the Spiritual Director the formation of the Fraternity;

b) prepare the candidates in their formation according to the norm of No. 16;

c) instruct them in the demands of a committed Christian life;

d) make a report to the Council before the admission to the Promises;

e) know the Rule of Life and its application in daily life;

f) substitute for the President whenever necessary, unless there is a vice-President.

9. The principal duties of the Secretary are to:

a) take care of and organize the archives of the Fraternity;

b) record the minutes of the official acts of the Council and of the Fraternity;

c) keep the books of the meetings of the Council and of the Fraternity up to date.

10. The principal responsibilities of the treasurer are to:

a) keep and administer the assets of the Fraternity under the direction of the President with his Council;

b) manage the accounts of the funds of the Fraternity;

e) make a report at least annually to the President with his Council.

11. Other duties and responsibilities of both the President and the Council shall be established by the particular Statutes.

12. The Council of the Fraternity can establish other local offices of direction or service, if it is judged to be useful or desirable.

ADMITTANCE TO THE FRATERNITY

13. All Catholics are eligible for membership in the Augustinian Recollect Secular Fraternity if they meet the following requirements:

a) that they be of the age established in the particular Statutes;

b) that they arrange to obtain a Christian formation according to the Augustinian Recollect charism, which will help them to live Christ's call to holiness and to be his witnesses in the world.

14. It is the decision of the President with the consent of the Council to admit the candidates to the trial period. Likewise, he must give his consent for admission to the Promises as well as for the dismissal of members from the fraternity.

15. Before Profession the candidate must pass a period of formation, of no less than a year, under the direction of the Director of Formation.

16. During this Trial Period the candidate must:

- know well the Gospel, the Rule of St. Augustine, the Rule of Life and the Statutes of the Fraternity;

- consider whether he can fulfill the demands of the Fraternity;

- live more intensely the Christian vocation, especially in prayer and in the fulfillment of his duties;

- participate in the meetings and other activities of the Fraternity, as determined by the Director of Formation;

- maintain contact with the President and the Council in order to review his progress in the fraternal life and in the activities of the community.

17. Once the Trial Period has ended, and the consent of the Council has been obtained, the Candidate shall make his promises before the competent authority, in accordance with the Ritual of the Fraternity.

The Promises carry with them the obligation to be faithful to one's baptismal consecration and to strive for evangelical perfection in the spirit of the evangelical counsels and the beatitudes according to the Rule of Life of the Fraternity.

PARTICULAR STATUTES

18. The particular Statutes or Regulations of each Fraternity shall be elaborated by the Council, and approved by an absolute majority of the brothers and sisters.

19. The particular Statutes, among other things, shall include:

- the frequency of both general meetings and meetings of the Council;

- the particular way of living the Rule of Life and the General Statutes in the local community;

- the functions of the offices that have been established by the Council, as well as the duration of those offices;

- the spiritual, apostolic, and social commitments of the Fraternity, on both the particular and community levels;

- the duty and manner of promoting the Fraternity.

ADMITTANCE TO THE TRIAL PERIOD

1. The Rite of Admittance to the Trial Period in the Secular Fraternity is made within the Celebration of the Word and is conducted in the meeting place of the fraternity, in a church, or in another appropriate location. The Rite is presided over by the Spiritual Director.

2. The Celebration begins appropriately with the greeting of the Celebrant and an appropriate introductory rite.

Next the readings are given, which can be taken from the lectionary of Profession or from St. Augustine or other Augustinian authors.

During the Homily, the Celebrant will explain that we are all called to holiness, and how the Christian, embracing the cause of the Fraternity, finds the assistance and motivation to attain it and to become a witness of Christ.

3. After the Homily, the President of the Fraternity asks the candidates:

Brothers and Sisters in the Lord, do you -wish to dedicate yourselves during this Trial Period to the fulfillment of the purpose of the Augustinian Recollect Secular Fraternity?

and the candidates respond:

Yes we do.

4. Once the candidates have answered, the President of the Fraternity says:

And I, N. _____ President of this Fraternity of Secular Augustinian Recollects, admit you to this Trial Period and declare you candidates for the Augustinian Recollect Secular Fraternity.

He then presents the candidates with the Rule of St. Augustine and the Rule of Life and Statutes of the Fraternity.

5. Immediately the Celebrant begins the Prayer of the Faithful, in which the intentions of the candidates and the Augustinian Recollect family are especially prayed for.

After the prayer, the Our Father is recited, and appropriate prayer is added.

6. The Rite is concluded with the greeting of the brothers and sisters, according the the custom of the place, and an appropriate song.

RITE OF THE PROMISES

7. The Rite of the Promises of the Secular

Augustinian Recollects is conducted within the celebration of the Mass. If possible, the local Prior presides over the Eucharistic celebration. If rubrics permit, the Votive Mass of St. Augustine is said.

8. After the Gospel, the Celebrant addresses the candidates with these or similar words:

Brothers and Sisters in the Lord, what do you seek?

The Candidates respond individually or together:

Moved by the grace of God and having lived the Trial Period in which we have come to know your Rule, we humbly ask that we be permitted to make our Promises to God and become part of the Augustinian Recollect family.

The Homily is then given, in which the nature and way of life of the Secular Augustinian Recollects shall be explained.

9. When the Homily is finished, each candidate approaches the Celebrant and makes the Promises according to the following form:

Trusting in the grace of the Holy Spirit and after imploring the protection of the Virgin Mary and the intercession of our Father St. Augustine, I solemnly renew my baptismal promises and before you, brothers and sisters, I freely promise to God always to seek the perfection of the Christian life in the spirit of the evangelical counsels and the beatitudes, according to the Rule of Life of the Secular Augustinian Recollects and the spirit of the Rule of St Augustine. With filial confidence I entrust these my promises to Mary, Queen and Mother of Consolation.

The Celebrant accepts the Promises with these words:

And I, in the name and place of our Prior General N. _____ accept your promises as a Secular Augustinian Recollect, declare you a member of this Fraternity and a child of the Augustinian Recollect family, and make you a participant in all its spiritual benefits.

10. Where custom prevails, the new members can now be given, as a sign of belonging to the Fraternity, the belt, a medal, or an appropriate badge.

If it seems appropriate, the President of the Fraternity may confer this gift saying:

Receive this belt (medal badge, etc.) as a distinctive sign of our Fraternity. May it always remind you faithfully to fulfill your obligations as a Secular Augustinian Recollect.

11. The celebration continues with the Prayer of the Faithful, in which the intentions of the new brothers and sisters and the rest of the Augustinian Recollect family are especially remembered.

It is appropriate that the new brothers and sisters present the offerings for the Eucharist. The sign of peace may be given to the brothers and sisters, according to the custom of the place.

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