

Commission for the Rereading of the OCD Constitutions

# A Lamp for my Feet

Rereading the Constitutions for a Renewal of Life

## **Study Guide 3**

Constitutions 19-34 (Ch. I.2)

The Following of Christ in the Way of Religious Consecration  
(Chastity and Poverty)



General House  
Discalced Carmelites  
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## 1-A. Text of the Constitutions

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### Part I: Our Life

#### CHAPTER 2: THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST IN THE WAY OF RELIGIOUS CONSECRATION

C-019. In answer to a divine call to live the evangelical counsels<sup>1</sup>, and led by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we pledge ourselves by public vows to follow Christ more closely in the way of chastity, poverty and obedience. In this way we surrender ourselves heart and soul to God whom we love above all else, and are completely dedicated to his service<sup>2</sup>. Consecrated by God through the ministry of the Church, we are sent by him for the salvation of the world, somewhat as Christ himself was consecrated and sent by the Father (cf. John 10:36).

C-020. Thus the love of God, poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us at baptism, vivifies and sustains the

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<sup>1</sup> Cfr. W 1,2; L 35,4.

<sup>2</sup> Cfr. LG 44; PC 5.



practice of the evangelical counsels<sup>3</sup> and transforms us into the image of Christ. It prepares us for the highest union with God; it joins us to the mystery of the Church in a special way and empowers us to love as Christ loved, even to the point of laying down his life (cf. Eph 5:2)<sup>4</sup>.

C-021. Such a commitment of consecrated life postulates a fullness of the love of God and of our neighbor that goes beyond the limits of every legal and normative regulation<sup>5</sup>, and calls for a total self-denial in all things as a means of growing in and giving expression to this same love. In the Church we are called to be a sign of the radical demands of the Gospel, so that we can fulfill a prophetic mission in the world.

### *I. CONSECRATED CHASTITY*

C-022. Consecrated chastity shares in a unique way in the mysterious union of the Church with Christ, its head, and heralds his coming<sup>6</sup>. It also facilitates that freedom of an undivided heart, whereby we are enabled to give our love entirely to God and to our neighbor.

We make a vow of perfect chastity in the celibate state for the sake of the kingdom of Heaven (cf. Mt 19:12; 1 Cor 7:32- 34)<sup>7</sup>. In this way our whole being, body and spirit is put at the service of God and our neighbor, and we are made as it were a

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<sup>3</sup> Cfr. PC 6

<sup>4</sup> Cfr. LG 44; PC 1.5; ET 3-4.7. 10-11.

<sup>5</sup> Cfr. 1M 2,17.

<sup>6</sup> Cfr. LG 44.

<sup>7</sup> Cfr. PC 12; LG 42; ET 13; Sac. Coel. 20.



continuation of the virginal Christ, totally dedicated to the service of his Father and his brothers<sup>8</sup>.

C-023. As a joyous expression of the love of God, which it strengthens and whose fruitfulness it proclaims, our chastity, like that of Mary our model, should make manifest our consecration to God and our loving allegiance to Jesus Christ, adding luster as it were to the fidelity of his Spouse the Church, and preparing the way for intimate union with God.

C-024. Consecrated chastity is a precious gift entrusted to weak human beings. However, by deepening our friendship with Jesus and Mary and putting our trust in the power of God's word, we strive with quiet confidence to be faithful. In this way our human capacity to love will grow to full maturity.

Mindful of our present condition, we never act presumptuously but humble guard this gift of God by prayer, self-denial and custody of the heart and sense, without overlooking natural aids to health of mind and body.

In all this, our joyful involvement in a loving community and in the service of others will prove to be a great support and safeguard<sup>9</sup>.

## *II. POVERTY*

C-025. In order to share in Christ's poverty and in his abandonment to the loving providence of the Father, we embrace by vow the evangelical counsel of poverty which entails, besides a life which is poor in fact and in spirit, of life of

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<sup>8</sup> Cfr. LG 46; PC 1.

<sup>9</sup> Cfr. PC 12; ET 13.



labor lived in moderation and foreign to earthly riches, and a dependence on superiors in the use and disposition of goods<sup>10</sup>.

C-026. Religious with temporary vows retain the right of ownership and the capacity to acquire property. However, before first profession they are to cede the administration of their goods to whomsoever they wish and freely dispose of their use and their revenues. Before solemn profession they must renounce their goods in a form which, as far as possible, is also valid in civil law. This renunciation takes effect from the day of profession<sup>11</sup>.

C-027. By solemn profession we also relinquish the right of ownership and the capacity to acquire and possess property, and therefore we invalidly place acts contrary to the vow of poverty<sup>12</sup>. Our communities rely for support on Providence, especially through the combined work of all the brethren.

If need be, the Provincial Council may allow our communities to have a moderate stable revenue.

C-028. Whatever a religious earns by his own activity or receives as a member of the institute goes to the Order. Income from pensions, social welfare or insurance goes to the Order also, in accordance with the directives of the Norms. The same is true of all goods accruing to a solemnly-professed religious from whatever source they come<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Cfr. PC 13; ET 21; Rule; CIC can. 600; L 35,2-6; 36,20; F 15,13-15; Concepts 2,8-10; W 8 and following.

<sup>11</sup> Cfr. CIC can. 668.1 and 668.4.

<sup>12</sup> Cfr. CIC can. 668.5.

<sup>13</sup> Cfr. CIC can. 668.3 and 668.5.





C-029. Evangelical poverty demands of us a distinct life style and witness both as individuals and as communities. Like Christ we must be completely available. Sobriety and simplicity are to be evident in our life<sup>14</sup>. We must be hard-working<sup>15</sup>. There must be no sign of luxury in our houses<sup>16</sup>. We must mix with the poor and promote their advancement. Avoiding all worldliness we must always behave as true seekers of God's kingdom. Only then will we achieve and experience the freedom and dignity of the children of God<sup>17</sup>.

C-030. If we are to be true sons of St Teresa, our poverty must combine a humble, simple and fraternal way of life with an interior freedom that enables us to direct all our energies to the things of God, and strive after that total self-denial and spiritual poverty inculcated by St John of the Cross. Then we shall truly live by and bear witness to the heavenly hope that is in us, as we take our place with our Lady among the 'poor of the Lord', who look to God alone for everything and give themselves whole-heartedly to the service of others<sup>18</sup>.

C-031. In obedience to the Rule we take seriously our obligation to work. Work in its various forms -- study, apostolic activity and manual labor -- we see as a demand of poverty and of fraternal service. As we work to earn our living, we try to avoid all undue anxiety and worry. We share what we have with others, especially with the poor<sup>19</sup>, bearing witness to the Church's loving concern for them. By ridding our life of every

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<sup>14</sup> Cfr. W 2,7-8.

<sup>15</sup> Cfr. Const 9.24; MV 12; Lt 20 Sept 1576 to Fr. Gracian; Lt 12 Dec 1576 to Fr A. Mariano.

<sup>16</sup> Cfr. W 2,9; Const 32; MV 14.

<sup>17</sup> Cfr. W 19,4ff; L 35,3-6; 7M 2,7.

<sup>18</sup> Cfr. LG 55; W 16,2.

<sup>19</sup> Cfr. PC 13; GS 35.39; ET 20-21.



form of injustice we further the cause of social justice everywhere<sup>20</sup>.

Thus through us creation achieves its purpose, as we work towards a better world and share in the redemptive work of Christ.

C-032. Our provinces and communities should share with one another in a brotherly spirit and contribute generously to the needs of the Church and the poor<sup>21</sup>.

C-033. In w world in which affluence and extreme indigence are found side by side, often in violent confrontation, our quest for better ways of expressing the poverty of Christ should aim at making our way of life such that it be a striking witness to the real nature of evangelical poverty.

C-034. This common concern for fidelity to poverty should be fostered and frequently reviewed at our chapters and community meetings.

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<sup>20</sup> Cfr. ET 18.20-21.

<sup>21</sup> Cfr. PC 13.

## 1-B. Norms

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### **CHAPTER 1: THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST IN THE WAY OF RELIGIOUS CONSECRATION**

#### *I. POVERTY*

N-001. One of the duties of the Provincial Chapters is to establish concrete forms of poverty that are in keeping with austerity of life and that render a real witness to the Gospel. The conventual chapter of each community, taking account of regional conditions, should establish the way the friars are to use money for the small expenses entailed in everyday living, always with the exclusion of any personal peculium.

N-002. To make any change in the dispositions concerning administration, use or usufruct, about which our Constitutions speak in n. 26, the permission of the Provincial is necessary<sup>1</sup>.

N-003. Where civil law does not recognize the legal force of an absolute renunciation of goods, referred to in num. 26 of our Constitutions, before solemn profession our religious should draw up a will that, if possible, is valid in civil law, without prejudice to the spiritual and juridical efforts of the prescribed renunciation. If this has not been done before Solemn

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<sup>1</sup> Cfr. CIC can. 668.2.



Profession, due to a lack of pertinent legislation, it should be done as soon as possible.

N-004. In accordance with num. 28 of our Constitutions, everything that a religious acquires for the order pertains to the house in which he is conventual.<sup>2</sup> Where such acquisitions include immobile goods or derive from inheritances, legacies, donations or any other source and, in the view of the provincial council, constitute a considerable amount (an extraordinary income), the same provincial council will decide on its destiny, having taken all the circumstances of the case into consideration.

N-005. In their use of things, in the spending of money, on trips and in other such circumstances, each of the friars is conscience-bound to follow Christ's example and give a witness to God's people by living a life of real poverty.

*(The 2015 General Chapter approved the new formulation of nn. 3 and 4 of the Norms).*

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<sup>2</sup> Cfr. CIC can. 668.3.

## 2. Instructions for Personal and Communal Rereading

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### I. Lectio (Reading)

#### *Personal Reading of the Text*

1. Make an outline and observe the internal structure of the doctrine on consecrated life and the following of Christ and the norms for the three vows: theological motivations, the scope of each vow, and the internal order of each part. Evaluate the synthesis expressed in the text.
2. Observe how charity (the love of God) is the element that gives meaning to consecrated life through profession of the evangelical counsels. What relationship does the text establish between love, vows, and laws?
3. Underline the Teresian-Sanjuanist elements of consecrated life and of the evangelical counsels that appear in the text.
4. Observe how the concept of each one of the evangelical counsels goes beyond the ascetical-moral dimension and are explained from the deeper dimensions of Christian life: theological with attention to God the Father, Christological, Pneumatological, fraternal, Carmelite-Teresian, Ecclesial, Prophetic and Eschatological.

## II. **Meditatio** (Meditation)

### **First Community Meeting**

1. You are now invited to read the *Introduction* that is found in the third part of this study guide.  
It will help to give you a better understanding of the context from which it arose. You can compare the text with Chapter II, 21-35 of the Decrees of the Extraordinary Chapter OCD of 1968: *de sequela Christi*.
2. Community dialogue to deepen the practical understanding of the text. Some questions to help:
  - a. *Comparison with our life*
    1. What are the elements of a Teresian theology of consecrated life and of following Christ do the Constitutions point out? What consequences do the following expressions have in our concrete living experience: spiritual poverty, detachment, freedom of spirit, and “*desnudez*” (English: “nakedness”).
    2. Living the vows is a on-going process of freedom in order to serve the Kingdom. How are we living the vows now in this phase of our personal life?
    3. How does the necessary guidance and formation in the area of affectivity and sexuality take place in your community (province, formation program)? Are friars guided and helped in the different phases of affective maturity?

*b. Comparison with the situation of the world and the Church*

1. What do we have to do in our community to better live and manifest the communal dimension of our vows?
2. How do we live chastity so that it maintains its prophetic value in today's world?
3. How do we live religious poverty in a consumer society that surrounds us and tempts us? Do real situations of poverty and misery in our world call into question our vow of poverty?
4. How do we fulfill the common law of work, sobriety, and dependency in the use of goods?

### **III. Oratio-Contemplatio (Prayer-Contemplation)**

#### ***Personal Prayer***

1. Discover the presence of Christ and listen to his voice and his call in spiritual and prayerful reading of this chapter of the Constitutions. Reread everything in the first person singular. Where it says "we," say "I," and personalize the content.
2. Meditate on the mysteries of the life of the Lord that are referred to here, especially in order to motivate your Teresian Carmelite life. What facet of consecrated life do you feel especially identified with as a Carmelite? Be grateful for the gift and the charism of chastity and poverty.
3. Listen to the Spirit with the sentiments of Jesus and listen to his call once more to follow him. Contemplate and unite yourself to his vocation and to his gift of self. Speak to him of your weaknesses and needs in following him. Write a personal formula of profession and renew your vows.

## **IV. Actio (Action)**

### **Second Community Meeting**

1. *From the Constitutions to life:*
  - a. What would our community have to do in order to put into practice the means that help us to live better chastity and poverty?
  - b. Can we establish times of community dialogue about our lived experience of chastity and poverty? Do we feel comfortable about such conversations?
  - c. What concrete commitments can our community adopt in order to live more authentically religious poverty?
  
2. *From Daily Life to the Constitutions*
  - a. Do the Constitutions express with sufficient and necessary transparency the doctrine and norms about chastity and poverty and how they must actually be lived?
  - b. Does the actual formulation of this chapter of the Constitutions and the correspondent section of the Norms respond to the contemporary problems/questions regarding these vows?
  - c. Are there new aspects of the theology of the vows, of Church teaching, and of our Saints that should enter into the text of our laws? Suggest some doctrinal formulations or practices that help to live these ideals.

*The contributions of this “Action” section must be written, collected, and sent to the contact person of the circumscription who will synthesize the work of the communities and send them to the international commission (email: [constocd@gmail.com](mailto:constocd@gmail.com)) in the month of July of 2016.*



## **3. Introduction to Chapter I.2 of the Constitutions (1)**

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### **STRUCTURE**

After the introductory part of the entire second chapter of the Constitutions entitled, “The Following of Christ in the Way of Religious Consecration” (CC 19-21), four paragraphs follow. What is of interest to us of those four paragraphs in this study guide are the first two on consecrated chastity (CC 22-24) and on poverty (CC 25-34). Each evangelical counsel will be analyzed on both the doctrinal and practical level.

There are three numbers dedicated to the evangelical counsel of chastity: the Christological motivation and the scope (n. 22), the Carmelite-Teresian aspect (n. 23), and the means to live consecrated chastity (n. 24).

Consecrated poverty is treated broadly in ten numbers: the Christological motivation and scope (n. 25); the canonical aspects of religious poverty (ns. 26-28); poor and simple style of life (n. 29); spiritual poverty and the Teresian-Sanjuanist aspects of poverty (n. 30); poverty and work (n. 31); poverty and common goods (n. 32); poverty as witness and new forms of poverty (n. 33); poverty and communal dialogue (n. 34).

### **Commentary**

The second chapter of the Constitutions connects well with the first chapter on Carmelite-Teresian spirituality, all centered on union with God. The concept of religious consecration through the profession of the

evangelical counsels reveals precisely our total and radical belonging to God and our radical dedication to the Kingdom.<sup>1</sup>

The text of the chapter presents the Christological character of consecration by means of the evangelical counsels. (Later on, the Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* (ns. 17-19) will speak of their Trinitarian character). The chapter contemplates consecrated life as gift and commitment to the evangelical life and the liberating character of the evangelical counsels. The Teresian-Sanjuanist aspect of consecrated life and the understanding of the evangelical counsels separately is not lacking, something that cannot be disregarded since there does not exist a religious life in general, but individual institutes that live according to their own charism.

### **Introduction – CC 19-21**

In light of n. 19, God's call consists in following Christ chaste, poor, and obedient (becoming configured to Him) and is lived out through correct behaviors in various areas of life. It is concretized in offering to God, inspired by a great love, mind, heart and body, and in being sent for the salvation of the world, living fully the same sentiments of Christ's life,<sup>2</sup> and in this way his "living memory."<sup>3</sup> The chastity, poverty and obedience of Christ are three essential aspects of his way of living for God and for human beings. In assuming them by means of profession, God consecrates us through the ministry of the Church<sup>4</sup> and confides a mission to us, since consecrated life is inseparably united to mission.<sup>5</sup> *Vita Consecrata* explains in n. 30 that our "new and special" consecration is a deepening of our baptismal consecration

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. LG 44; PC 1. 5; VC 1.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. ad es. LG 42; VC 9. 18.

<sup>3</sup> VC 22.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. CIC, can. 607, 2; can. 654.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. VC 72.

and confirmation, and priestly ordination for religious clerics. It also explains the pneumatological aspect of consecration.<sup>6</sup>

Religious consecration is a gratuitous gift of God that requires a faithful response to live the evangelical counsels fully and radically, with “the greatest perfection possible” as St. Teresa of Jesus said.<sup>7</sup>

This whole life project is possible thanks to charity (CC 20-21) which plays a primordial role when it comes to living the three vows and our entire life project. Saint Teresa said that “true perfection consists in love of God and of neighbor...Our Rule and Constitutions are nothing more than a means of observing them better.”<sup>8</sup> True love also demands giving oneself with a spirit of sacrifice. Evangelical self-denial is a means and proof of charity. Lastly, the love of God and of others makes consecrated life a prophetic sign legible in the Church and the world.

Before entering further into specific contents, it is helpful to point out that in the appendix of the Constitutions we find the formula of profession of the three evangelical counsels in the Teresian Carmel. We see that the reference to human mediation in living our personal dedication to God in religious life remains intact. This can be underestimated today, given the typical tendency to individualism in many geographical areas. With globalization it is extending even more.

## **1. Consecrated chastity – CC 22-24**

The text (CC 22), that alludes to the Code of Canon Law<sup>9</sup>, does not present consecrated chastity in a negative way, as a renunciation of marriage, but in positive terms as sexual continence on the level of thoughts,

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<sup>6</sup> Concerning this, see also: VC 19.

<sup>7</sup> D 1, 2. Cfr. *Life* 35.4.

<sup>8</sup> 1M 2, 17

<sup>9</sup> Cf. can. 599.

desires, and actions in order to dedicate oneself totally, body and soul,<sup>10</sup> to the cause of the Kingdom of heaven. In virtue of chastity, the consecrated person surrenders his own humanity to the virgin Christ who is present in an invisible way in the world so that it can be of service to the world and the Church. The text also highlights the ecclesial and eschatological character of consecrated chastity (union with Christ the head and with his mystical Body). It also stresses the liberating meaning of this evangelical counsel in order to live universal love with an undivided heart. The motivation of chastity is strongly Christological.

In this context, it is necessary to point out that after our Constitutions were written, the magisterium of the Church added the Trinitarian<sup>11</sup> and the communitarian<sup>12</sup> dimension of consecrated chastity, without forgetting the anthropological<sup>13</sup> questions that have a relationship with the prophetic dimension of consecrated life.<sup>14</sup>

The description of the Carmelite Teresian dimension of chastity (n. 23) is sober, without explicit references. Hardly does it speak of the Virgin Mary and of other themes of a Christological, ecclesial-spousal character, or of union with God, charity, and spiritual fruitfulness. The Constitutions of the Discalced Carmelite nuns are more developed in this aspect and enriched with Teresian and Sanjuanist texts.<sup>15</sup>

Consecrated chastity has an important place in the experience of fraternal love. In particular, Saint Teresa notes its necessary exercise in what we can call the little treatise on mutual love in community (*Way*, 4-7) or the mystical space of the gift of self that we find in the Fifth Dwelling Places (5M

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 7, 34.

<sup>11</sup> VC 21.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. CNU 44.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. CNU 37 that treats of affectivity of religious.

<sup>14</sup> CF. VC 87-88.

<sup>15</sup> See Carmelite Nuns Constitutions, 27.

3,7-12). Her famous saying “the more holy a nun is the more sociable she is with her sisters” (Way, 41.7) illustrates the maturity of the chaste person and their capacity to love. We must not forget that the *Romances* and the *Spiritual Canticle* of St. John of the Cross are works where he dedicates special attention on the spousal dimension of the spiritual life. In brief, the reality remains the same in the masculine branch of the Order.

Lastly, in order to help practice chastity (CC 24), diverse supernatural or natural methods are indicated. Among those principally highlighted are those in conformity with the teachings of the Church’s magisterium.<sup>16</sup> Among the natural means alluded to in the text, without indicating them, are: a healthy and balanced life, mental and psychological health, physical exercise and healthy sports – all that favor mental and physical health and can comply with our way of life.

## **2. Consecrated poverty – CC 25-34**

In n. 25 of the Constitutions, first highlighted is the Christological motivation of consecrated poverty. We embrace it because it forms part of the earthly life of Christ,<sup>17</sup> and he himself reminds those he has called to follow him of it.<sup>18</sup> The life of poverty is intimately related to confidence in divine providence recommended by the Master.<sup>19</sup>

The basis of the scope of poverty that is described in this number is from the Code of Canon Law in relation to effective and affective poverty, real (that is, manifested in dedication to work, sobriety, and in dependency of superiors in using and disposing goods), and spiritual (detachment from material goods in order to dedicate oneself to the things of the Kingdom). We

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. PC 12; ET 13.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Mt 8, 20.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Mt 19, 21; Mk 10, 29-30; Lk 18, 29-30.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Mt. 8, 20.

need to note the change with respect to the preceding meaning that contemplates poverty, in the first place, as dependence on superiors in the use of goods. Considered this way, at times poverty has been confused with obedience: it is sufficient to obtain permission from superiors to justify whatever option in relation to goods. Today we tend to emphasize that before any permissions, there is the personal responsibility of the religious who must opt for poverty and distinguish the necessary from the superfluous.

In what refers to the details related to the fraternal sharing of common goods,<sup>20</sup> specifying them in n. 28, the chapter on fraternal sharing (n. 73; Norms 35) takes this up.

In an analogous way, as was mentioned regarding the evangelical counsel of chastity, we have to complete it, as suggested in recent ecclesial documents, with its Trinitarian,<sup>21</sup> communitarian,<sup>22</sup> anthropological and prophetic dimensions.<sup>23</sup>

In numbers 26-28, as also in Norms 2-3, we find the canonical aspects of the vow of poverty in an institute of solemn vows like ours. Solemn profession is characterized as the renouncing of personal property and the ability to administer and possess it. Not only does this mean the renunciation to use goods of personal property freely or usufruct them, for this ceases with profession of temporary vows.

Given that many times civil law does not recognize the renunciation to possess goods, in n. 26 ways of using them are indicated (“as far as possible.”) In the same way, Norms 3, a formula that was definitively written in the General Chapter of 2015,<sup>24</sup> affirms that in order to respond at least partially to the disposition of the Constitutions, n. 26, in what refers to the

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. ET 21.

<sup>21</sup> VC 21.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. CNU 44.

<sup>23</sup> VC 87. 89.

<sup>24</sup> *It is Time to Walk*, p. 49.

civil effects related to the solemn vow of poverty, one must sign a will before solemn profession, and it must be done as soon as possible in case it was not signed beforehand. It is understood that this will is in favor of the Order. In this way, we avoid situations in which religious have died with credit cards or bank accounts in their name, maintained with reason or without it.

Given the great role that evangelical poverty played in the Teresian Carmel, n. 29 speaks of the particular style of life marked by poverty in light of the writings of St. Teresa. In line with the preceding number, n. 30 offers a spiritual framework of poverty from the perspective of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross.

N. 31 alludes to n. 29 and develops correctly, in light of the Carmelite Rule and the magisterium of the Church,<sup>25</sup> what the relationship between poverty and work mean, an important element in the spirituality of poverty.

Considering the sharing of goods within the ideal of consecrated poverty, it is helpful to remember that our laws offer some complementary norms that look for the good of the missions<sup>26</sup> or some questions that correspond to provincial government.<sup>27</sup>

The task of seeking new forms of poverty, mentioned in n. 33, come from the magisterium of the Church<sup>28</sup> and adapt to the new needs of society, always in view of offering legitimate testimony to Gospel values.

The conclusive number (34) advises us to discuss frequently the theme of poverty during our community meetings. This stresses the importance of this Gospel value for consecrated life. If we return to the history of the crises in religious life, we notice that they often began due to a lack of poverty. In line with this number of the Constitutions, the Norms speak of the Provincial

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. PC 13; GS 35. 39; ET 20-21.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. CC 94; Norms, 64-65.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Norms, 258.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. PC 13; ET 16-18; VC 89-90.

Chapter, as well as the conventual chapter of each community, in keeping with an austerity of life (N. 1), as well as the sensitivity of each friar in living a life of real poverty (N. 5).

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## 4. Prayers

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*Each meeting will begin with an invocation to the Holy Spirit and will end with a prayer. Here we propose some models.*

### Opening Prayer

Holy Father, we give you thanks for the gift of our consecrated life in the Teresian Carmel, and now that you have invited all of us to walk towards you, grant that in the night we seek you through faith, hope, and love. Accompany with your grace so that we can witness that You are the only source of love and freedom.

*Savior Jesus, only Word of the Father, again you say to us: "You, follow me." Give us joy and freedom in following you. "We want to undergo, Lord, all the works that come to us and have them as a way of imitating you in some way. Together we walk, Lord. Wherever you go, wherever you pass, I will go."*

*Holy Spirit, love poured out into our hearts. Fill us with your joy and your consolation. Help us to overcome difficulties and raise us with confidence after our falls. Give us courage and strength in the face of the challenges of our time and grant us the grace of bringing to our brothers and sisters the knowledge of the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ "from whom comes all our good." (VC 111)*

## **Closing Prayer**

### ***Final invocation to the Virgin Mary***

To you, our Mother, who desire the spiritual and apostolic renewal of your sons and daughters in a response of love and complete dedication to Christ, we address our confident prayer. You who did the will of the Father, ever ready in obedience, courageous in poverty and receptive in fruitful virginity, obtain from your divine Son that all who have received the gift of following him in the consecrated life may be enabled to bear witness to that gift by their transfigured lives, as they joyfully make their way with all their brothers and sisters towards our heavenly homeland and the light which will never grow dim. We ask you this, that in everyone and in everything glory, adoration and love may be given to the Most High Lord of all things, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

(Saint John Paul II, VC 112)





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