

Commission for the Rereading of the OCD Constitutions

A Lamp for my Feet

Rereading the Constitutions for a Renewal of Life

Study Guide 6

Constitutions 72-86 (Ch. I.5)

Fraternal Sharing in the Community



General House
Discalced Carmelites
Rome 2016

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Fraternal Sharing in Community

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1-A. Text of the Constitutions

Part I: Our Life

CHAPTER 5: FRATERNAL SHARING IN COMMUNITY

C-072. The life we share as brothers is built on and held together by the love of Christ; so charity must be the supreme law of our community life.

With the love poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit [cf. Rom 5:5] we must love one another as Christ taught us, and vie with each other in showing mutual respect [cf. Rom 12:10; Jn 15:12,17; Eph 5:2]¹.

C-073. Our vocation unites us as brothers in a family modeled on the community of Christ and the Apostles ('ese colegio de Cristo')². This fraternal sharing must be evident in our life of prayer together, in our apostolic work and in the loving concern we show by sharing everything we have with one another.

¹ Cfr. L 7,20-22; 1M 2,17; W 4,5.7; CONST 28.

² Cfr. W(Es) 20,1.

There should be mutual acceptance in a true family relationship, with no one being made to feel excluded. The inevitable difficulties of community life should be faced up to in truth and charity, and overcome in a spirit of humility and forgiveness, so that all grow in mutual esteem and true friendship.

C-074. The community in which fraternal charity reigns will truly experience the presence of Christ, as he vivifies and enhances it with the gift of his Spirit³. Then it will bear witness to God's all-embracing love, become a sign of universal brotherhood and a proof of the powerful influence exerted by the love, justice and peace the Gospel brings with it. y living in faith, hope, love and self-denial the community grows into a true brotherhood. It becomes, as it were, a living condemnation of every form of injustice, and makes people conscious of the demands of the righteousness proclaimed by the Gospel.

C-075. The Eucharist is the symbol and source of true brotherhood, a sign of unity and a bond of charity. This is better expressed when the whole community takes part in the eucharistic celebration. Made one in Christ and led by the Holy Spirit, they also praise and implore the Father with one heart and voice, as they celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours and devote themselves to personal prayer.

C-076. As members of the same family, we live in our own religious houses, observing a common life, and we must not be absent from the house without the permission of the competent superior, in accordance with the Norms⁴.

³ Cfr. ET 52; L32,11; 33,14; W 17,5-6; 22,7-8.

⁴ Cfr. CIC can. 665.1.



C-077. At the common table, which is a symbol of fraternal sharing, we gratefully partake of what Providence sends us, as we listen to the reading from Scripture and engage in friendly conversation.

C-078. Our community recreation is characterized by joy and simplicity⁵. We all try to be present for this and make it joyful, and so strengthen the bonds of brotherhood.

C-079. Since we belong to a family specially dedicated to our Lady, we wear the habit of her Order as a sign of our consecration⁶.

C-080. Community life requires that we come together at the stated times to foster our unity in prayer and work.

The timetable, to be drafted by the community chapter and approved by the Provincial Council, should take into account the particular needs of each house, so that the whole community can normally be present at community acts. The following community acts must be provided for in this timetable: the celebration of the Eucharist and of the Liturgy of the Hours, the hours of mental prayer, the times for meals and recreation, Chapter and other community meetings.

C-081. Since charity does not seek its own advantage but that of others [cf. 1 Cor 13:5, Phil 2:5] all should pray for one another and help one another with brotherly concern. There should be real wholehearted cooperation between the houses and the provinces⁷. Any common projects proposed by the

⁵ Cfr. F 13,5.

⁶ Cfr. PC 17; ET 22; CIC can. 669.1.

⁷ Cfr. PC 13; Lt 31 May 1579 to the Valladolid monastery, where we read: 'That is why we all wear the same habit -- to show that we help each other. What belongs to one belongs to all'.



central authority of the Order should get our willing support; in this way we shall unite all our energies in fulfilling the Order's mission at the service of the Church and of mankind throughout the world.

C-082. In a true family spirit we must show great concern for the weak and sick. The aged should be adequately provided for, and every effort made to have them share as fully as possible in the life of the community and of the province⁸.

Mindful of Christ's words: 'I was sick and you visited me' [cf. Mt 25:36], all our religious especially superiors, like St Teresa should have the spiritual and material needs of the sick very much at heart⁹. If the illness is critical, care should be taken that they receive the Anointing of the Sick and Viaticum in good time.

C-083. In accordance with the demands of christian charity [cf. Rom 12:9-13] we welcome guests, especially our own confreres, and treat them in such a manner that they are made to experience the fraternal charity of a truly christian community.

C-084. We live in close union with our brothers who have died in Christ. As we wait with them in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior [cf. Tit 2:13], we continue to offer suffrages for them both at Mass and in our personal prayer. C-085. Through dialogue in chapter and at community meetings we try to foster a deeper fraternal sharing, we evaluate the way in which we

⁸ Cfr. CIC can. 619.

⁹ Cfr. CONST 23 where she writes: 'Sick Sisters must be cared for with the greatest love and indulgence and compassion... the Mother Prioress must give close consideration to this; Sisters who are in good health should go without necessities, rather than that sick Sisters should be without certain comforts'; MV 11; R 9,2.



live up to our contemplative and apostolic ideal, we try to be genuinely helpful to one another and, in the spirit of the Rule, offer each other the charity of fraternal correction.

C-086. Our commitment to a life of fraternal sharing has to be constantly renewed. We are already God's children and truly brothers. But until what we are destined to be is fully realized [cf. Jn 3:2], we shall always fall short of being perfect witnesses to the riches of divine life that we share. We must therefore strive to live up to our vocation and seek to achieve the unity that Christ prayed for [cf. Jn 17:11,21-23]. If we do this in all humility and meekness, patiently bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace [cf. Eph 4:14], we shall anticipate in some fashion the perfect community of our heavenly home, which will be ours when Christ comes again.



1-B. Norms

Part I: Our Life

CHAPTER 4: FRATERNAL SHARING IN COMMUNITY

N-035. [a] In brotherly love, the individual friars should foster common aims and methods in order to make the sharing of things by all a reality.

[b] Real brotherhood in poverty demands that we claim nothing as our own and that we take care of community things. We should be solicitous for the interests of others, honestly live after the manner of the poor and make available or give up the things intended for our use.

N-036. The orderly arrangement of community acts should be looked upon as the concrete method of pursuing our vocation and providing for the common and individual good. Whatever their nature, they ought to contribute to this twofold end. Therefore the way of life should undergo review at set times, especially at chapters and community meetings, lest necessary elements disappear from it.

N-037. [a] The chapter itself should undergo renewal and adaptation in the spirit of the Rule and with a sense of evangelical brotherhood.

[b] A community chapter should be held at least once a month. Following an exhortation, a brotherly exchange should take place, with the superior as the moderator, regarding matters that affect the community, as, for example:

- the concrete way in which the community, through mutual collaboration, is pursuing our contemplative and apostolic vocation in the Church;

- brotherly corrections made in a family spirit to help one another, without prejudice to the

superior's right to admonish the community or the individual religious;

- the administration of the community's goods, at least on occasion, as well as the good order of the house, so that the community may be kept informed about these matters and be able to express its opinion, without prejudice to the rights of the competent authority.

N-038. Keeping to n. 77 of the Constitutions concerning reading from Sacred Scripture, each community, after taking its situation into account, will decide what to do about the silence to be kept at the community meal.

N-039. Each community will provide appropriate prayers before and after meals.

N-040. The well-being of the common life requires the cooperation of everyone among themselves and with the superior.

In the assignment of duties it is for him to arrange things for the common good, taking into account the capacity and aptitude of each one. And it is for the individual friars to keep to the proper



order in the community, letting the superior know of each one's activities and departures from the house.

N-041. The habit of our Order is brown in color, consisting of a long tunic with a belt, a scapular and hood. On certain occasions a white mantle and hood are also worn.

In regard to the use of the religious habit, it is for the Provincial Chapter to issue suitable norms without prejudice to the requirements laid down by lawful authority.

N-042. While observing n. 70 of the Constitutions in regard to cloister it is for the Major Superior to determine for each house the cloister boundaries. It should include, in addition to the friars' cells and adjacent places, the other areas destined for community use, unless it is necessary to place some of these outside of the cloister. It is for the same superior to grant exceptions to the law of cloister. The local superior can do this in more urgent cases.

N-043. [a] For traveling and staying outside the cloister, our friars need the permission of the competent superior.

In some circumstances this permission may be general.

[b] Without prejudice to n. 76 of the Constitutions, when there is question of a prolonged absence from the house, the Provincial Superior, with the consent of his Council and for a just reason, may grant to a religious permission to live outside of a religious house, but not beyond a year, unless it be for health reasons, to pursue studies or to exercise an apostolate on behalf of the Order¹.

¹ Cfr. CIC can. 665.1.



[c] It belongs to the Provincial Chapters to decide on norms for travel which must then be communicated to the Definitory.

[d] When any friar will be living within the territory of another province for some time, the Provincial of this province is to be advised beforehand.

[e] In granting permissions, superiors must keep in mind not only the demands of the common life of each house and the good of all the individual religious but also witness to spiritual retirement and the spirit of poverty. They should be careful lest the brethren be deprived of the support of common life for a lengthy period².

N-044. In order to look after the sick and aged friars more effectively with charity and foresight, suitable means such as retirement insurance for sickness and old age should be made use of in a spirit of poverty throughout the entire province or region.

N-045. For the sake of charity towards our own who have fallen asleep in Christ, as soon as any friar dies, even a novice, the superior of the house will let the Provincial know; he in turn will inform the superiors of each of the houses of his province and the Superior General; the General will promptly advise the Order so that the assigned prayers may be said for the deceased.

[a] Upon notice of the death of any friar, even of a prelate taken from the Order, he should be remembered at the community Mass and the name of the deceased said aloud in the Canon in accordance with the rubrics. He should also be remembered by name at Evening Prayer in the intercessions

² Cfr. CIC can. 665.1.

where the dead are mentioned. Furthermore, one Mass must be applied for him in all the houses of the Order.

[b] For the General or a Definitor, a community Mass in accordance with the rubrics should be celebrated in all the houses of the Order and each priest should apply a Mass for him.

[c] For the Pope or the local Bishop, a community Mass should be celebrated.

[d] On All Souls of the Order, all the Masses should be applied for our dead.

[e] Also for all our dead and for our relatives and benefactors, once a month, except during Advent, Lent and Eastertime, our communities should celebrate a Mass and Office of the Dead in place of the office of the day on one of the days when the rubrics allow a votive Mass³.

[f] The Provincial Chapter will decide the suffrages for all the members of the province, for the fathers and mothers of the religious and for the nuns under the jurisdiction of the province.

N-046. [a] In every house there should be a book in which the dead of the Order are recorded.

[b] In addition, there should be in every house a book for the dead of the community in which a biographical sketch of each one's life should be written. This sketch should be sent to the provincial house as well, to be kept there, and a copy sent to the General.

³ IGLH 245.

2. Instructions for Personal and Communal Rereading

I. **Lectio** (Reading)

Personal Reading of the Text

1. Notice how fraternal communion is rooted in the love of Christ and points to its evidence in the text (CC 72-73).
2. Explain the value of fraternal communion as a prophetic sign (CC 74).
3. Make a list of the practices of normal religious life which the text recommends in order to live and strengthen fraternal life in community. Do not overlook what it says about putting these realities into practice (CC 75-80. 85; NA 35-43).
4. What recommendations does this chapter give with regard to living in communion with each other beyond the boundaries of the local community to which we belong (CC 81; NA 43-46)?
5. What categories of people does the text indicate as being the privileged recipients of our fraternal love? What are the recommendations in respect of this (CC 82-84)?
6. Take note of the way the path to permanent renewal of fraternal community is proposed (CC 86).

II. Meditatio (Meditation)

First Community Meeting

1. You are now invited to read the Introduction, which is to be found in Part 3 of the Study Guide.
Being aware of the context in which it arose will aid understanding; if you can, compare the text in the *Constitutions*, Ch. 5 (n. 72-86) and the *Norms*, Ch. 4 (n. 35-46) on Fraternal Sharing in Community with Ch. I.1.VII (Community Life) from the *Decrees of the Special General Chapter OCD* of 1968.
2. Community discussion in order to deepen practical understanding of the text. Some questions follow to assist with this:
 - a. *Comparison with our life*
 1. How do you perceive the life of fraternal charity in your community? Are you aware of its origin in Christ and in the gift of the Holy Spirit? Is there authentic fraternal cordiality in a spirit of belonging to a family and in friendship, as well as care of the weakest members of the community? How are intergenerational and individual conflicts managed?
 2. How is dialogue experienced in community meetings and in other encounters in daily life? Do they reflect the ideal of our vocation, the common good and the good of each member of our community? (cf. *Amoris Laetitia* 136-141).
 3. How would you describe your community's communion with other communities in the Province? Does your community manifest, in specific ways, its communion with the other realities of the Order: nuns, secular Order and the congregations and groups of the Teresian Carmel?

- b. Comparison with the situation of the world and the Church*
1. In what tangible ways does your community fulfil its call to be a prophetic sign of fraternity, charity, evangelical justice and peace to the people around us? Is the idea expressed in *Evangelii Gaudium* truly present in it: "Let everyone admire how you care for one another, and how you encourage and accompany one another" (EG 99)?
 2. In a society where we experience individualistic tensions, but which are also communitarian (which aim to fully suppress the individual in favour of the community), how can we guarantee a balance between personal and communal aspects?
 3. New generations - who seek out new communities who are appearing in the Church - place great value on fraternal living. What does this indicate to us as a community and as an Order?

III. Oratio-Contemplatio (Prayer-Contemplation)

Personal Prayer

1. "In its primary mystical component, every authentic Christian community is seen in "itself a theological reality, an object of contemplation". It follows that a religious community is, above all else, a mystery which must be contemplated and welcomed with a heart full of gratitude in the clear context of faith" (CNU 12). In silence, contemplate this theological dimension and embrace the presence of Christ and the Trinitarian mystery in your particular community. Adore this divine presence in your house and fraternity: "The community in which fraternal charity reigns will



- truly experience the presence of Christ” (CC 74): seek him in your house, in your brothers, in your tasks and relationships, not only in the liturgy... listen to Him and adore Him in each brother.
2. Offer a simple prayer for a moment for each brother in the house. Seek the virtues in each brother of the house who stimulates your fidelity, bless God for them and thank Him for them.
 3. Read and meditate on this Teresian text: “If things of this sort against charity continue, such as little factions, or ambition, or concern about some little point of honor [...] think and believe that you have thrown your Spouse out of the house and have made it necessary for Him to go in search of another dwelling, since you threw Him out of His own house. Cry out to His Majesty. Seek a remedy”. (CV 7,10) Do you think that “you have expelled Christ from your house” at any time? Ask Him for forgiveness for those occasions.
 4. Carry out a detailed *examen of conscience* for those occasions based on CC 73:
 - So that each of the religious feels embraced by the others with *sincere affection*.
 - So that a *familial way of dealing* with each other blossoms. So that everyone, one and all, by *overcoming* the occasional difficulties due to Gospel renunciation of themselves and
 - *forgiving* their reciprocal offences,
 - may they establish among themselves a *current of friendship* and mutual appreciation,
 - while carrying out *truth in love*,
 - with sincerity and understanding...

5. Give thanks to God and bless Him with particular gestures which you find in your community of:
 - Evangelical happiness and simplicity,
 - equality,
 - openness,
 - friendliness and
 - gentleness in familial dealings.

Actio (Action)

Second Community Meeting

1. *From the Constitutions to life:*
 - a. Chapter 5, 86 reminds us that we need constantly to be renewing our fraternal life, in order to attain to a “school of Christ”. What could we do better to nourish fraternal life? Do we need to be more attentive to the communal Eucharist, communal prayer and to each other? Reading the Word of God and our saints together? The organisation of communal periods of relaxation, etc?
 - b. How can we face the inevitable difficulties of community life with a spirit of humility and pardon? How can we enable the community to grow in its capacity for mutual forgiveness of each other?
 - c. Does the community have a plan for life and an apostolate shared with everyone? Why? If there is one, is it possible to evaluate or verify it? In community life, is there a balance between work, prayer and encounter? If it is not so, what are the reasons why this is not happening and how could the problem be solved?

2. From Daily Life to the Constitutions

- a. Do you think that the text presents the dimensions of communal life in a complete and harmonious way? Would you change or add anything?
- b. Many communities, especially the smallest, do not think they could survive with a daily timetable established according to the principles indicated in the *Constitutions* due to the numerous apostolic activities they have to carry out. With this in mind, do you think it is opportune to study more flexible possibilities of practicing communal acts as an Order or do you think that communities should coordinate their apostolic activities with the demands of monastic life at all costs, also taking into account the possibilities for exemption from religious discipline which our laws offer (cf. CC 176. 212; NA 21. 197 § i. 226 § b)? Give reasons for your response.
- c. In our *fluid* society, our relationships also suffer from a deep weakness. What elements could be emphasised or added to improve them, also taking into account human science, above all taking into account the formation of future generations?

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) in the month of January of 2017.

3. Introduction to Chapter I.5 of the Constitutions

STRUCTURE

Chapter 5 of the *Constitutions*, continuing with a concise definition of the fundamental elements of the charism, begun in Chapter 4 and which will continue in Chapter 6, deals with communion among the brothers. It is composed of fifteen points, the material for which finds a parallel development in the NA 35-46.

The chapter can be divided up in the following way: it begins with a doctrinal orientation (CC 72-74), which is followed by a series of numbers which describe the structures on which our common life is founded (CC 75-80), ending with a section with an exhorted call to promote communal sensitivity (CC 81-86), even beyond the confines of the immediate local community.

Commentary

The call to communion is obviously not exclusive to consecrated life. It is born of the divine will for all human beings to form a single family, expressed in the commandment to love one's neighbour, which is inseparable from the love of God and expresses, in a mysterious way, certain similarities with the Trinitarian mystery which inspires it¹.

Equally, religious life has always been understood in reference to the primitive community just as it was described in the book of the Acts of the

¹ Cf. LG 9; GS 24; CNU 9; VC 41.

Apostles², in which the group of believers “were of one heart and soul”³, underlining the importance of fraternal community life.

Holy Mother lived out her call to an authentically fraternal life with particular intensity and left her unstinting effort as a particular stamp of the Teresian reform, because communities were always to be comprised of brothers and friends, a space in which *all must be friends, all must be loved, all must be held dear, all must be helped*⁴ so that prayer must be authentic *and so that service to the Church and to men is thus fulfilled and accomplished*.

On every occasion, the afflictions and confrontations, which she herself experienced, are raised, giving way to an increased motivation for the religious community to be a prophetic sign that “dialogue is always possible and that communion can bring differences into harmony”⁵.

CC 72-74

In establishing the call to fraternal life in community from the Biblical-theological viewpoint, the *Constitutions* chose the commandment of love as the basis for the call in the exercise of charity as the supreme norm of community life (CC 72). One can find an echo here with PC 15, which, nonetheless should be made complete, for example, with that which is stated in GS 24: “God, who has fatherly concern for everyone, has willed that all men should constitute one family [...]. For this reason, love for God and neighbour is the first and greatest commandment [...]. Indeed, the Lord

² Cf. Acts 2:42-47; 4:32; VC 45.

³ PC 15 (cf. Acts 4:32).

⁴ Cf. CV 4, 7.

⁵ VC 51

Jesus, when He prayed to the Father, that all may be one [. . .], implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the unity of God's sons in truth and charity”.

In fact, this Trinitarian basis of fraternal life in community, understood more in the form of gift than as labour, is present in the most recent documents of the Church, such as VC 15 and CNU 9.

According to the will of St. Teresa, communities have to be formed like small *schools of Christ*⁶ (CC 73). This number is not explicitly detailed in the Teresian indications for community life beyond the quotation cited, although the numbering of the areas in which fraternal communion must be manifest, which will be developed further on, appears to have the claim to evoke said indications.

When taking the model for community and family into account, which St. Teresa proposes, it is appropriate to remember that, as our *Constitutions* state further on, she breaks with the limitations of the natural local community, but extends it also to the nuns; on this particular aspect, so specific in our family, we find no development in our laws, just the reference to the necessary spiritual attentiveness (cf. CC 103).

This doctrinal enumeration ends with the recognition of fraternal communion and community as witness to the love of God for men, sign of universal fraternity, denouncing the injustices of this world and the proclamation of the justice of the Gospel (CC 74), in what could be termed an *anthropological-theological foundation*.

⁶ Cf. CE 20, 1.

CC 75-80

In the second part of this chapter, we find, as said before, the structures which lay the foundations for communal life, first of all pointing to the Eucharist occupying the first place (CC 75) and recommending community celebration of the same⁷. Common life, logically, requires the presence of the brothers in the religious house, which is everyone's house (CC 76), and absences from it are regulated as stated in NA 43 (cf. NA 40). This call responds to an obvious motivation: respect for family life in the Teresian manner of which our communities wish to be a reflection, as confirmed in CC 73.

Our participation at the common table is also a sign of fraternal life and is not limited to the fact that we share food, the gift of Providence, but it is also a space for sacred reading and friendly conversation with brothers (CC 77), which continues into recreation, an essential element of the charism handed down to us by St. Teresa (CC 78).

As to references to the habit, it is not a sign of poverty for us, but one of belonging to the same family (CC 79). In NA 41 we find a detailed description of the same and the competencies of the provincial Chapter to give norms for its use, without prejudice to those required by the legitimate authority.

This section ends with the mandate for the making of a timetable which coordinates common life, helps it to be expressed and allows the religious to participate normally in common acts, indicating those of greatest importance, which should be stipulated in the timetable: Eucharist, Liturgy of the Hours, hours for mental prayer, meals and recreation, chapter and

⁷ As we saw before in the previous chapter of the *Constitutions* (Cf. N 18).

community meetings. The timetable should be approved by the provincial Council (CC 80; cf. NA 36).

CC 81-86

This section, more exhortative in character, begins by calling religious to mutual help with prayer and work. Collaboration cannot be limited to the area of the local community nor to the Province. It needs to be aware of and to support the initiatives of the general Chapter and the Father General, together with his Definitory, the supreme authority in the Order (CC 81). The Norms summarise this collaboration, referring to goods held in common and care of the house (NA 35).

We are equally called to love of the weakest of our brothers, in order to live out the communal spirit in accordance with the call of the Lord to attend to Him in the most destitute⁸ and in the spirit of fraternity received from St. Teresa. This call includes spiritual attention to the most gravely ill (CC 82; NA 44). Charity with our brothers also includes the important task of praying for the deceased of the Order - remembering them in every community with an individual entry in the book of the deceased of the community - and their relatives (CC 84; NA 45-46).

Finally, it exhorts us, in virtue of our being a fraternal community, to practice hospitality (CC 83) and dialogue (CC 85; cf. NA 37), so as to constantly renew the ideal of fraternal communion (CC 86).

In view of the real problems of communion and communication existing in our communities, between communities and the Provinces and with the supreme authority of the Order, it does not seem appropriate to pass

⁸ Cf. Mt 25:31-46

through these points as if through a wish list still less viewing them as utopian objectives. On the contrary, they constitute a good point of departure for a realistic *community examination of conscience*, which can always improve, in respect of the need for the necessity to aspire to be 'one' in keeping with Christ's supplication".

We have to be aware of the importance of interpersonal communion in the building of community: "There is a felt need for more intense communication among religious living together in the same community. The lack of or weakness in communication usually leads to weakening of fraternity: if we know little or nothing about the lives of our brothers or sisters, they will be strangers to us, and the relationship will become anonymous, as well as create true and very real problems of isolation and solitude"⁹.

The question of the relationship between individual freedom and communal responsibility should not be forgotten¹⁰; it should not be conceived in purely ascetic terms of renunciation or as the limitation of the individual's possibilities for action, but rather as an option of identifying oneself with a certain way of life and above all, as belonging to a particular family. It is ultimately a choice of faithful love, which has its origins in the person and in a particular community fabric.

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⁹ CNU 29, 32.

¹⁰ Cf. ib. 21-28.

4. Prayers

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

Opening Prayer

God, our Father,
We beseech you through our community gathered together in Jesus' name.

“By your Holy Spirit,
gather all who share this one bread and one cup
into the one body of Christ”.

Lord Jesus,
You are here in the midst of us,
For we have come together in your name.
Give us an attentive, humble and generous heart,
so that we know how to walk in truth and grow in love.
Make it so that here we *all help one another, all love one another*, all respect one another.
Make us aware of the caste we have come from,
ever faithful to the charism of St. Teresa, Our Mother,
but at the same time being able to help to renew our religious ideals,
and be ready to *strive to advance always from good to better*.

Give us peace in this Teresian fraternity
to be witnesses and bearers of her in our world,
beset with so much violence, hatred and suffering.

Come Holy Spirit to our community
and render it able to radiate the joy of the Gospel
and to attract new disciples.

Help us, so that following the example of the first community,
“We may be devoted to the Apostles’ teaching and fellowship,
to the breaking of bread and prayers” (Acts 2,42).

Final prayer

Lord, we recognise that our vocation is a gift from you,
that each brother is a grace bestowed by you,
that our community belongs to you and is not of our doing.

Through your Holy Spirit, you achieve, sustain and guide
our fraternal life in community.

Because you have gathered us,
with our Mother, St. Teresa,
*“Let us praise You very much, and give You thanks
for your will having brought us together (W 8, 1).*

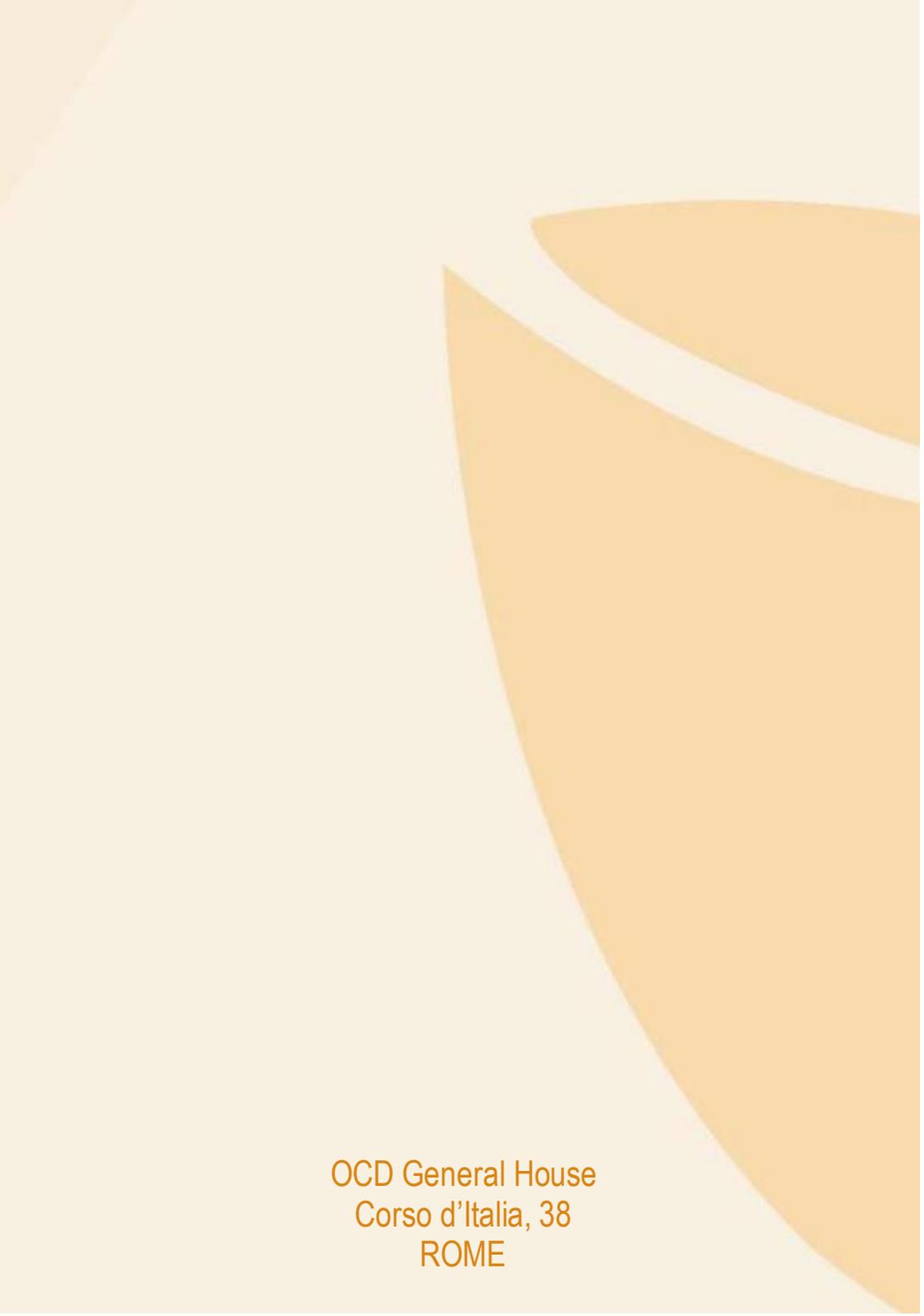
You dwell in us,
and our house should be “a small school for Christ”,

a “little dwelling corner for God and an abode in which Your Majesty delights” (*Life* 35,12).

We know that you are always taking care of us,
“*You will sustain us*” (*Way* 2,1).

Allow us, then, to persevere united in prayer
with Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

Amen.



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