

CONSTITUTION
of the
Adorers of the Blood of Christ

The Generalate
Via Beata Maria De Mattias, 10
00183, Rome Italy

CONTENTS

Decree of Approval
Letter of Promulgation

Community of Consecrated Love

1. Our Vocation in the Church
2. Our Life in Apostolic Community
3. Following Christ In Vowed Commitment
 - Religious Profession
 - Consecrated Virginity
 - Gospel Poverty
 - Redemptive Obedience

Community of Adoring, Redeeming Love

4. Our Sharing in the Paschal Mystery
5. Our Life in Adoration
6. Our Life in Mission and Ministry

Community of Faithful Love

7. Authority and Social Structures in Our Congregation
 - General Norms
 - General Government
 - Participation in Election
 - General Assembly
 - General Administration
 - Provincial Government
 - Overall Norms
 - Provincial Assembly
 - Provincial Administration
 - Local Government
8. Vitality of Our Congregation
 - Vocation and Formation
 - Withdrawals
 - Continuing Growth

Appendices

Preface of the 1857 Constitution

Decree of Praise of the Constitution

CONGREGATIO
PRO INSTITUTIS VITAE CONSECRATAE ET SOCIETATIBUS VITAE APOSTOLICAE
Prot. n. R. 9-1/91

DECREE

This Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, by virtue of its authority to erect, guide and promote institutes of consecrated life, after careful consideration of the Constitutions presented by the Adorers of the Blood of Christ, acceding to the request of the Superior General and her Council, herewith approves, within the limits of canon law, and enclosed constitutions. May the generous living of these constitutions encourage all the Sisters of the Institute to an ever deeper commitment to their consecrated life in accordance with the spirit of Maria De Mattias so that the Congregation may become that "credible witness of God's tender love, of which the blood of Jesus is vibrant sign and unending covenant pledge" (Art. 2).

Given at Rome, June 7, 1992

Feast of Pentecost

(Signed) Eduardo Cardinal Martinez Somalo
Prefect

+ Francisco Javier Errazuriz Ossa
Secretary

Protocol No. 211/92

Dear Sisters,

With heartfelt gratitude to God who constantly renews with us the Covenant, of which the Eucharistic Chalice is eloquent sign, I officially promulgate this Constitution of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ. It has been approved by the Church in a decree of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, dated June 7, 1992.

The grace experienced at the origins of our Congregation by Maria De Mattias and the early Adorers, a grace lived "from generation to generation," is renewed for us today in this Constitution.

The power and strength of the Spirit, Fire of Love, is baptizing us anew in the sign of Blood, enabling us to live our charism as effective witnesses of the living presence of the adoring and redeeming love of Jesus for the human family which is experiencing so much poverty and bloodshed today.

"In this Constitution we Adorers of the Blood of Christ set forth our vision of the way in which God calls us to holiness in apostolic service" (Life Charter, 5).

May Mary Most Holy, whom we contemplate standing beside the Cross, invoke the Spirit with us and for us, so that, as in the Pentecost miracle, each of us as well as the entire Congregation may be renewed in our decision for a life of radical love whether it brings us joy or costs us pain. Such radical love means a life poured out for all, in adoration, sharing and solidarity, perhaps to the point of bloodshed. Thus we will be witnesses of the Blood of Jesus, sign of obedience and fidelity for the coming of God's Reign.

With affection and hope,

(Signed) Sister Giuseppina Fragasso, ASC
Superior General

Rome, Pentecost Sunday
June 7, 1992

**COMMUNITY
OF
CONSECRATED LOVE**

Chapter I

OUR VOCATION IN THE CHURCH

- Our Call** Let us give thanks with joy to God, who ¹ has graciously called us to fulfill our baptismal consecration by committing ourselves to following the Lord Jesus in a life of adoration that impels us to apostolic service. As ecclesial women we respond to God's call to holiness through vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience publicly received in the Church. We share life in community with others called to the same apostolic congregation of Adorers of the Blood of Christ, founded by Maria De Mattias.
- Our Spirit and Charism** To be Adorers of the Blood of Christ ² means to be wholly consecrated to the adoring and redeeming love of Jesus Christ, who shed his blood to free us from sin and reconcile us in love. Accordingly, our congregation itself must become "a living image of that divine charity with which this blood was shed, and of which it was and is sign, expression, measure and pledge." ¹ If we remain humbly open and pray with confidence, the Spirit of God who worked powerfully in the heart of Maria De Mattias will continue to pour into our hearts the fullness of charity. The spirit of our congregation will thus be all love and charity - "charity toward God and toward our dear neighbor." ² Our congregation will then become an ever more credible witness of God's tender love, of which the blood of Jesus is vibrant sign and unending covenant pledge.
- Our Mission** Our corporate mission in the Church is to ³ collaborate with Christ in his work of redemption. We accomplish this mission by witnessing to God's love and ministering that love to others, especially the poor, the oppressed, and the deprived. Through our varied ministries of evangelization and human development, our prayer, and our sharing in the cross of Christ, we participate day by day in the building up of the body of Christ, so that all creation can move toward "that beautiful order of things which the great Son of God came to establish in his blood." ³ We serve in joy and simplicity, confident that the Spirit will sanctify us as we minister to others, identifying us more and more in likeness to Christ crucified and risen.
- Our Relationship With Mary** Mary most holy, woman of the new covenant and first adorer of the mystery of the blood of Christ, shows us how to live in adoration and service. She will be with US as virgin mother, friend and intercessor as we follow Christ in his paschal mystery.
- Our Guide To Life** In this constitution we Adorers of the ⁵ Blood of Christ set forth our vision of the way in which God calls us to holiness in apostolic service. It is our guide to living the gospel according to the special charism God gives us in the Church. By our religious profession we pledge ourselves to be guided by the constitution. Together we go forward in hope, in creative fidelity to God, and in covenant relationship to our sisters throughout the world.

Chapter II

OUR LIFE IN APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY

- One in Christ** Christ Jesus, who has brought us together⁶ as adorers of his saving blood, is the radiant Center of our life in community. We believe that he lives among us and is active in our midst. Made one in him by Baptism and Eucharist, and by our religious consecration and charism, we are called to grow together toward unity in life and love, as Father, Son and Spirit are one. As the quality of our presence to one another becomes more loving, our community life itself will be a prophetic sign of what the whole Church is called to become: a communion of love in which people of every tribe and tongue and nation are united.
- Building Community** Each of us is called by the Lord to⁷ contribute toward building a genuine faith communion among us. Therefore, we try to live together as sisters and friends, loving each other as Christ has loved us. Such love implies accepting one another with our differences, honest communication, gentleness, and reverence. With a listening heart we try to understand and respond to what the other is sharing. We will respect each other's need for times of prayer, quiet, solitude and leisure, and we readily participate in the ordinary interchanges of daily community life, accepting the joys and difficulties of building community as a sharing in the paschal mystery.
- Personal and Community Growth** All of us are responsible for creating in⁸ community a liberating climate of peace and openness that fosters wholeness and holiness and that enables us to celebrate together the joy of being redeemed. By our mutual trust we help one another toward an authentic self-acceptance and interior freedom, which are basic to both personal and community growth. We try to be sensitive to the needs of our sisters and to temper our own needs in order to meet theirs, remembering the Lord's word that it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
- Mindful that Christ has reconciled us with his blood, and recognizing our own need for forgiveness, we will give reconciliation a priority in our community living, forgiving one another's human weakness by supporting each other in doubts and difficulties. We are grateful for one another's giftedness and appreciative of the concern others have for us. As women covenanted together in vowed commitment, we encourage each other to daily fidelity in radical gospel living in the spirit of the beatitudes. Living in community in this way, we help each of our sisters to grow into that unique image of God which our Creator calls her to become.
- Community For Mission** As an apostolic community we try⁹ continually to become a Eucharistic faith communion of persons existing for mission in the Church and society. Together we seek a clearer apostolic vision through sharing information, insights and discernment. By our understanding and encouragement we support each other in facing the challenges of ministry. We will never forget that our love for one another in community is itself a primary apostolic witness. From our local community we reach out in love, interest and prayer to all other Adorers throughout the world, as well as to our families from whom we have been separated by the gospel call of Christ. We share joyfully with all God's people the love that bonds us together in the Lord, a love expressed in a ministry that frees them to grow in communion with others.

Chapter III

FOLLOWING CHRIST IN VOWED COMMITMENT

Religious Profession

Commitment In Love In making our religious profession by the ¹⁰ public vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, we are responding in faith to the charism given us by God and affirmed by the Church. We live our three vows as a single reality, committing our entire being to the Lord in a radical response of love that is deeply personal and freely made. We celebrate our profession during the Eucharist in the midst of God's people to whose service we commit ourselves through our vows.

Fidelity and Witness We dare to commit ourselves to God ¹¹ forever because of our confidence in the Holy Spirit who supports us in our weakness. In the very uncertainty of life's unfolding, our faithful God will constantly renew his call and empower us to continue to follow Christ, poor, virgin and obedient. Through the choices and renunciations that fidelity to our vows entails, God will give us a growing interior freedom. The more faithfully we live our profession, personally and in community, the more our lives will become a sign of that fullness of joy, love and liberation which the Lord promises to all who seek him. The Virgin Mary, who lived in obedience to the Lord and in simplicity among God's poor, shows us how to live our vows in the spirit of the beatitudes as we minister among others.

Consecrated Virginity

Charism of Virginity The charism of virginity is the gift of the ¹² Spirit enabling us to follow Jesus, virgin, by inviting us to share his undivided love of the Father and his self-giving love of others. In response, we freely make a public vow of chastity by which we surrender the natural right to marriage and family and embrace life-long celibacy for the sake of the kingdom. We dedicate our womanhood to a deep love of Jesus and of others for his sake.

Divine Friendship Trusting in the power of the blood of Jesus, ¹³ we will grow continually in our free and creative response to the gift of Christ's friendship. Conscious that Christian celibacy is a special sharing of the paschal mystery, we Adorers accept readily the ongoing renunciations involved in our decision to live without the intimate joys of husband and family, holy as these are. We will be faithful in giving time to being fully present in adoring love before the God of our life, accepting the solitude consequent on our vow of chastity as a sacred space for deepening communion with the Lord. Such union will enable us to risk sharing ourselves with others in genuine love. By our celibacy we are called to be signs of resurrection and of the union of Christ with his Church and witnesses to the liberating power of Christ's love.

Loving Relationships In faithfulness to our call, we try to ¹⁴ incarnate Christ's love for all. Our love then is personal, non-possessive and open to everyone, a love that is empowering to good because it is freely given without seeking response. We will be open to wholesome friendships with our sisters and with others. Within our community we do all we can to foster the growth of each of us toward womanly maturity in celibate love. As apostolic women we live in awareness that, the more truly virginal our love is, the more those among whom we minister come to know God's free and faithful love.

Gospel Poverty

Charism of Poverty The charism of poverty is the gift of the ¹⁵ Spirit enabling us to share in the poverty of Jesus by inviting us to enter into the mystery of his self-emptying for love of us. In response, we freely surrender to God by our public vow of poverty the natural right to possess and control earthly goods independently. With trust in a provident God, we promise to become poor in spirit, to live simply, to share goods in community, and to make our own the concerns of the poor.

Poverty of Spirit Finding our security in God, we will be ¹⁶ able to adapt ourselves more readily to life's changing situations and to accept all that leads to detachment and freedom of heart. We try to accept in humility and peace the adversities of life and our own limitations, believing that in our very weakness we can experience God's power at work in us. We share with those in need our possessions, our talents and our time, mindful that to be poor means to be servant of all. In a spirit of adoration we learn to appreciate the beauty and goodness of all created things.

Solidarity With The Poor In faithfulness to the Spirit, like Maria de Mattias ¹⁷ we will let the cry of the poor find a responsive echo in our hearts, loving them with Christ's own love. We endeavor to become more aware of and more sensitive to the needs of individuals and of society, conscious that action in behalf of justice and charity is a basic dimension of the redeeming mission entrusted by Christ to his Church.

Simplicity and Interdependence To give credible witness to the liberating ¹⁸ poverty of Christ in the world today and to grow toward poverty of spirit, we live in evangelical simplicity, personally and as community. We give over to the community whatever we earn or receive as gift, and accept from the community what is necessary in a spirit of grateful dependence and responsible stewardship. So that others may share in the good things of this earth, we seek for our own needs as little as possible. If at times we are lacking even what is necessary, let us rejoice in the Lord Jesus, who offers us this opportunity for a more intimate sharing in his own poverty.

Redemptive Obedience

Charism of Obedience The charism of obedience is the gift of ¹⁹ the Spirit enabling us to share in the obedience of Jesus to his Father by inviting us to continue his salvific mission to this world through our apostolic congregation. In response, we make a public vow of obedience by which we freely surrender to God our energies of mind and will, promising to embrace the Father's will as it is expressed in the constitution and as it is mediated through those who exercise authority in our congregation. As we grow in freedom of heart through our obedience, we become more identified with Jesus, who was obedient even unto death so that the total human family might become one as a new covenant people.

Discernment In Community In and with community we promise to ²⁰ search with listening hearts for God's will in the many ways it is made known to us and to obey it readily. Each of us is responsible for sharing what we believe will be helpful in this discernment. We must listen to our sisters with love and respect, and help create a climate that favors dialogue and response to the Spirit present in community.

Apostolic Obedience We respond in ready obedience to the ²¹ decisions of those in authority, whether these decisions be for individual sisters for the community. An authentic apostolic obedience motivates us to approach our assigned ministry with initiative, a sense of responsibility, and the belief that ours is truly a ministry of the Church. With confidence in the Spirit who empowers us, to be more deeply identified with Jesus in his filial obedience, we try to obey in faith and joy, even when that which we are asked is difficult. As we experience authority and obedience in community we endeavor to live as Jesus taught us, seeking to carry out God's will here on earth as it is in heaven. In this way we become a prophetic sign of freedom and unity in obedient love, and a sign of the final destiny of the world made wholly subject to the Father.

Chapter IV

OUR SHARING IN THE PASCHAL MYSTERY

Paschal Mystery in Our Charism

Our charism as Adorers of the Blood of ²² Christ is deeply rooted in the death-resurrection mystery of Jesus. Ours is a paschal identity, signed in the blood of the Lamb. As a congregation we are to bear witness in hope and joy to the living presence in our world today of Christ's adoring, redeeming love, which gives meaning to human suffering and can render it powerfully liberating and life-giving.

Our Paschal Reality

Each Adorer is called to accept in a loving ²³ and decisive way, with Jesus, the daily cross of physical and mental sufferings that are inevitable in life and are an irreplaceable condition of human and Christian growth. By the light of the Spirit we try to see how these experiences form that "precious cross" by which we are personally invited to share even more fully in the risen life of Jesus crucified. The more we grow in Christ's attitude of humble and loving surrender, the more readily we will be able to adore and thank God in the midst of life's difficult situations.

Paschal Community

As we live the paschal mystery together in ²⁴ community, we try to bear each other's burdens gladly and to live so as never, add to another's burden. We support our sisters, sensitive to the pain each experiences in the Spirit's purifying and transforming power at work in her. Strengthened by the power of the blood of Christ, we encourage each other understand that the foolishness of the cross is indeed the wisdom of God. As paschal women we learn to celebrate the mystery of our call to give life to one another through our own daily dying and rising, grateful for each new gift of sharing the cross with Jesus.

Paschal Mission

Like the seed that comes to fruitfulness ²⁵ through its own dying, we are to live the paschal mystery in our ministry, completing in our own lives the sufferings of Christ for the sake of his Church. We are called to share our Redeemer's struggle against the powers of darkness and sin, that we may share his victory. Remembering how he opened to humanity the way to glory by dying apparent failure, surrounded by the ingratitude and hostility of those he came to save, we can understand better why the Father at times invites us also to drink this chalice. The more we accept our own pain with peace and joy, the more compassionate we will be in ministering to others in their needs and sorrows, helping them to accept in hope the healing and life-giving value of their cross.

Paschal Glory

Like Maria De Mattias, we will deepen our ²⁶ faith and hope through loving contemplation and sacramental celebration of the paschal mystery. Sharing her vision, we will be able to share also her desire to embrace with peace and courage the crosses accompanying illness, aging and death. We hope one day to join her in the company of God's new covenant people, forever giving thanks and adoration to Jesus, Lord of glory.

Chapter V

OUR LIFE IN ADORATION

Adoring Love	Our title, Adorers of the Blood of Christ, ²⁷ reminds us of our call to be a community of apostolic religious whose lives are permeated by the spirit of adoration. We are to be contemplative women who glorify the Lord and reverence his presence in those among whom we minister. Adoration is for us a love relationship with the Holy One in whom we are made one with the communion of saints. To grow in adoration means that our entire person, in all of our relationships and circumstances, in all our sinfulness and giftedness, becomes ever more fully surrendered with Jesus to the Father for the coming of the kingdom.
The Blood of Christ in Our Worship	In our whole life, especially at Eucharist ²⁸ and other prayer, we adore Christ the Lord who has redeemed us with his blood. Like Maria De Mattias, we give a priority, personally and in community, to contemplation of the mystery of redemption, reflecting on its centrality in salvation history, and offering the precious blood for the needs of the Church and the world. We also give special place to Mary, Woman of the new covenant, who shares so lovingly with Jesus in his saving work.
The Sacraments in Our Worship	We join our adoration with that of the ²⁹ entire priestly people of God in celebrating the paschal mystery in the sacraments. At the very center of our lives is the Eucharist, which is the source, the nourishment and manifestation of our communion in love and faith with the Church and with one another. In celebrating this covenant renewal we offer ourselves in adoration with Jesus, embracing in our thanksgiving and intercession all God's people, especially those among whom we minister. We respond gratefully to the invitation to partake of the blood of Christ in the Eucharistic chalice, wherein is joy in the Spirit and pledge of eternal life. Aware that we stand always in need of conversion and pardon, we will often worship the Lord in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, where forgiveness of sin is celebrated and broken unity is restored through the power of Jesus' blood. As we encounter our risen Savior in this sacrament and in the Anointing of the Sick, we will allow the healing power of his Spirit to touch deeply into the core of our being to renew us in love.
Atmosphere For Adoration	Realizing that the Spirit speaks to us both ³⁰ in the silence of our own hearts and in dialogue with others, we will do all we can to create in our community an atmosphere that enables each sister to live in a spirit of adoration. We need to be mindful that our attitude toward one another and toward our ministry affects the quality of both our community and our personal prayer. We will try to make room in our hearts for the Lord in inner quiet and watchfulness walk humbly in God's presence.
Personal Prayer	Each of us has a right and responsibility ³¹ to give time to prayer daily. As we listen to the Lord's message in the scriptures, we will let his word penetrate our innermost selves so that It can purify our hearts and illumine the way we perceive and respond to ourselves and others. Conscious that growing toward wholeness in adoring, redeeming love is a lifelong journey, we seek to answer God's constant call with courage and hope. We will be faithful in prayer as we journey forward through dullness and joy, distraction and awareness, desert darkness and radiant light toward total union with our God.
Prayer in Community	As a community we celebrate together ³² the Church's morning and evening praise. We also pray together at other times, in varying and creative ways, such as breaking and sharing with one another the Lord's word, praying spontaneously, celebrating Christian feasts and seasons, or simply being together in silent, grateful adoration and intercession.
Prayer and Ministry	Responding to our call to adoration, we ³³ become a joyous witness to God's compassionate love and a sign of hope. Our prayer is enriched as we participate in the redeeming of the world through our ministry. Urged on by the Spirit, we remain restless until Christ's transforming charity touches the life of every person and the whole of society. Growing

steadily in faith and love, both at prayer, and in ministry, we will experience the living God constantly active in and through our service among others.

Chapter VI

OUR LIFE IN MISSION AND MINISTRY

- Sharing Christ's Redemptive Mission** Gifted by the Spirit with an apostolic ³⁴ vocation, we Adorers gladly spend our life energies in ministry as we collaborate with Christ Jesus in his redeeming work. Our corporate mission, like that of Maria De Mattias, is to witness to God's love in our own lives and to "lead others to the knowledge and love of Jesus crucified." ⁴ Charity, therefore, is to be the beginning, the center and the goal of our ministry among ourselves and others with whom we share the good news of salvation.
- Ecclesial Dimensions of Our Mission** We minister as ecclesial women, sent in ³⁵ obedience by our congregation, aware that it is in and through the Church that we share in Christ's saving mission. In our ministry, we willingly collaborate, both corporately and singly, with the universal and the local Church as well as with others. We strive to create Church by forming ecclesial communities. We make our own the hopes and joys, the griefs and anxieties of all people, especially the poor and oppressed. Through living and announcing the gospel of love, justice and peace, we share in the transformation of the world. We seek to grow throughout our lives in our sense of mission, knowing in faith that, not only through our labors but also through our vowed consecration, our life in community, our prayer, our suffering and our death, we are enabled by the Spirit to share in the building of the kingdom.
- Ministries of Our Congregation** Our apostolic goal is to share the fruits of ³⁶ redemption with others, especially the poor, through works of evangelization and charity. Mindful of the self-giving love which impelled Maria De Mattias to be wholly consumed in varied ministries for her "dear neighbor," our apostolic services, are diversified according to the real needs of others and our own giftedness. As diaconal women we encourage one another to be available and responsive as we discern together in docility to the Spirit the ministries to which the Lord calls us. We rejoice in the success of our sisters, sustain one another in times of discouragement and help each feel that hers is a community apostolate, whether she serves together with other Adorers, a corporate commitment or is the only Adorer involved in her ministry.
- Loving Those We Serve** We are to have a gracious reverence for ³⁷ the human dignity and divine destiny of those among whom we minister, letting the gentle courtesy of Christ be evident in our manner toward all. Whatever our ministry, we seek to empower others to develop their own human potential and to respond freely and fully to the promptings of the Spirit. We are grateful to those we serve, remembering that even as we give service to them we receive from them much that helps us to grow toward maturity in Christ.
- Apostolic Holiness** We can expect to grow in holiness and ³⁸ apostolic love through our ministry the more we seek to remain united with Jesus in his spirit of sacrifice and loving obedience. Aware in faith that the Spirit is creatively at work in us and in those we serve, we try to minister in joy and simplicity, with confidence and singleness of purpose so that our presence to others becomes liberating and reconciling. Grateful for the privilege of sharing in the Lord's work, we seek in prayer, especially in the Eucharist, the vision and strength to sustain the risks and tensions of ministry. We should remember that we influence others more by the living witness of our own commitment to the Lord than by what we do or say.

Chapter VII

AUTHORITY AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES IN OUR CONGREGATION

- Authority In Our Congregation** As a group of apostolic religious women ³⁹ whose way of life has been approved by the Church, our congregation has authority to organize and govern itself for the achievement of our shared vision and goals. We believe that the authority uniting us in ecclesial bonds of faith and love is embodied in visible human structures. We journey together into the future, confident that through our love and obedience in community the Spirit of God will guide our life and mission in the Church.
- Our Social Structures** All Adorers form a single international ⁴⁰ congregation in which, with all our diversity, we are united in oneness of heart and soul, through sharing the same charism. As a congregation we are organized into provinces to facilitate mutual sharing of resources for life and mission. Within our own province we are assigned to local community, where we are committed to witness joyfully to the adoring, redeeming love of Jesus.
- Sharing Responsibility in Community** In obedience all share responsibility for ⁴¹ seeking and carrying out God's loving plan for us as adorer apostles. With hearts open to the Spirit and to one another, we strive to develop the values of collegiality, subsidiarity and accountability as guiding principles toward harmony and gospel vitality in our social structures and in the exercise of authority among us. Each shares in some way in the process of decision making and in establishing policies for our life and apostolic mission personally in the local assembly, and through our representatives in the provincial and general assemblies.
- Authority As Service** Authority in the congregation at the general, ⁴² provincial and local levels provides visible leadership for promoting unity and for expressing our shared vision in faithfulness to our charism. Through prayer, dialogue and prophetic call, the sisters entrusted with this authority lead us in discerning what God wants for each and for all; and they render the service of making final decisions. They encourage us in living our consecration as apostolic adorers, and with gentle firmness they call us to fidelity. As Christ was among his disciples as friend, they are to be among us as sister and friend, serving in real communion with all members. They seek so to exercise authority that, through them, God's personal love for each of us is revealed.
- Our Norms** Aware of our own need for continuing ⁴³ conversion, and with loving concern for others, all of us will follow the norms agreed upon, as they are set forth in the constitution, the bylaws and other policies and decisions of the congregation, province or local community. In order to remain open to the Spirit, we should regularly re-examine these norms and adapt them to changing circumstances in such a way as to foster creative fidelity to the initial charism of Maria De Mattias.

Chapter VIII

VITALITY OF OUR CONGREGATION

- Conditions of Vitality** The continuing life and growth of our ⁴⁴ congregation come from the power of the Holy Spirit, who gives us our vocation to adoring, redeeming love. By the gift of freedom, however, the Lord makes us responsible for fulfilling his divine plan for us. Hence our growth and vitality depend on our creative faithfulness as a congregation to our mission in the Church and the world, on the quality of our relationships with each other and with persons gifted with other vocations in the Church, and on each Adorer's response to God's continuing call. Our vitality is also affected by the docility to the Spirit of those women whom the Lord invites to share our charism.
- Welcoming New Members** All of us show loving concern for any woman ⁴⁵ who seems called to live out her baptism through following Christ as an Adorer. We receive graciously as our sisters those admitted to the congregation, helping them feel at home among us through the joyous witness of our fidelity in prayer, our love in community and our zeal in ministry. We appreciate the enrichment for the Church that can come from our mutual sharing of personal qualities and spiritual gifts.
- Initial Formation** Under the guidance of sisters appointed to the ⁴⁶ ministry of formation, each province will provide for the integral human and spiritual development of new members. Through the opportunities for growth made available in the successive phases of their initiation, we encourage them to become vital community members who gladly share our apostolic spirituality. All of us should support them through the years of their formation by our prayer, example and encouragement.
- Continuing Growth** Having responded to the Lord's call by our ⁴⁷ profession of vows, we are to continue in the process of integrating our lives, so that we may each attain that unique paschal identity with Christ to which the Lord invites us. With reverence for the vocation God has given us, we do all we can to promote one another's growth toward wholeness and holiness. By our mutual love we continually create that climate in which the fruits of the Spirit can come to maturity in our lives.
- Fidelity In Vocation** Each of us is responsible for constant ⁴⁸ faithfulness to the vowed commitment by which we are covenanted together as adore apostles. Amid the changing realities of our lives the Lord will always be with us. We thank God daily, especially in the Eucharist, for the gift of being called to this congregation founded by Maria De Mattias. With confidence in the blood of Christ, we ask for ourselves and for one another the grace of fidelity. Thus we help each other reach the perfect fulfillment of our destiny when through death we shall enter fully into the paschal joy of the Lord, made one forever with all God's people in the love of Father, Son and Spirit.

Statutes

Chapter I

OUR VOCATION IN THE CHURCH

1. Our is a Pontifical Congregation, of which the official title is Adorers of the Blood of Christ (Adoratrices Sanguinis Christi). The official initial are A.S.C.
2. We are permanently incorporated into the congregation through our permanent vows; temporarily, through our temporary vows.
3. The constitution, consisting of Life Charter and Statutes, is normative for our entire Congregation. The constitution can be revised and modified by the General Assembly after adequate consultation with the sisters of the congregation, and always in faithfulness to our charism and in responsiveness to the call of the Church and the realities of the times. Proposed changes are then submitted by the General Superior to the Apostolic See for approval.
4. That we may appreciate our identity as a congregation and draw life for the future from our roots in the past, we are all to study and reflect on our congregation's history, and on the life and writings of Maria De Mattias and others through whom God has formed our apostolic congregation in the Church.

Chapter II

OUR LIFE IN APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY

5. Ordinarily all of us are to live with other Adorers in a community to which we are assigned by the Provincial Superior.
6. In our local community we will set goals and plan our life together, taking into account the needs and reality of our apostolic ministry as well as the human and spiritual needs of members and of community as a whole. To foster union of mind and heart, the community plan should assure to all members the opportunity to come together frequently for prayer, meals, recreation and other sharing; and also times of silence necessary for reflection, study and rest. Each sister is to share actively, according to her ability, in planning and in realizing community goals.
7. Community planning should include regular and frequent meetings, according to provincial norms, in which we review and evaluate our life together in the light of the gospel and our apostolic vocation as Adorers of the Blood of Christ as expressed in our constitution.
8. In courtesy and mutual trust we are accountable to one another and to local authority for brief absences from the local community. Permission for sisters to live away from a community of Adorers for reasons of apostolic ministry, study, health or for other just causes maybe granted by the provincial superior with the consent of her council, according to canonical norms.
9. When we receive others as guests in our homes, we will welcome them with Christian hospitality, while at the same time reserving the space needed for community. We will respect one another's need for quiet and privacy and the need to grow together in communion among ourselves. Most of us have contacts with many persons and other communities. We will share the enrichment of these associations with one another as far as we can, while showing active interest in and support of our sisters in these relationships.
10. Norms and policies should be established as needed at the provincial and local levels regarding visits to parents and relatives, vacations, use of means of communication, hospitality to guests, travel and absence from community, and whatever promotes vitality in our life together.

11. Each of us should take reasonable care of her health, using those means that are appropriate for persons of moderate social condition, according to place and circumstances. Our love and concern for one another should make, us especially attentive to our sick and aged members.
12. We will actively participate, according to each one's ability, in consultations, elections, community gatherings and other undertakings organized for sharing ideas and information and for continuing growth at local, province and congregation levels.

Chapter III

FOLLOWING CHRIST IN VOWED COMMITMENT

Religious Profession

13. As Adorers of the Blood of Christ we make permanent vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, to which we commit ourselves for the whole of our lifetime. Permanent profession preceded by at least three years of temporary vows.
14. We make profession according to the ceremonial approved for our congregation. The provincial superior or her delegate, as representative of the congregation, receives each sister's profession in the name of the Church.
15. In our congregation profession by temporary vows is vowing to God to live in chastity, poverty and obedience for a specified period of time (one, two or three years) according to the Constitution of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ. Such a commitment presupposes the intention of going on to permanent profession, unless further discernment leads to a different conclusion. The formula for temporary profession is that approved by the Congregation for Divine Worship.
16. The following is the core formula to be used at permanent profession:

In your presence, Sister Provincial (or delegate),
I, n.n. vow to God
forever
chastity, poverty and obedience.
according to the Constitution of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ.
Personal additions to the formula are approved by the Provincial Superior.

17. In our international congregation, the dress is that established by each provincial assembly and approved by the General Superior with the consent of her Council. Our dress as religious, worn as sign of our consecration, is to be simple, unadorned, adapted to time, place, and apostolic ministry. The small heart and cross is the official symbol of membership in our congregation.

Consecrated Virginity

18. Our behavior and bearing should show that we intend to live faithfully the celibate consecration by which we forego not only marriage but also all expressions contrary to consecrated chastity, and that we commit ourselves to growth in this virtue.

19. The simple lifestyle we profess will be conducive to the practice of the penance and self-discipline necessary to growth in virginal love. According to personal need, we will use suitable natural and spiritual helps in realistically meeting the tensions we experience in living celibate love. In times of trial and personal weakness we will support each other. With a deep sense of responsibility, a sister will seek help in these matters from her confessor, superior, or any other experienced person who is able to understand and assist her adequately.
20. We will strive to have a positive, healthy attitude toward ourselves as women, and will foster a genuine appreciation of the vocation of both Christian marriage and various forms of celibate life in the Church.

Gospel Poverty

21. The community is to provide for the actual needs of each sister in accord with the spirit of poverty and community resources. Simplicity of life in fact and in desire should be the guide for our standard of living in our residences, food, clothing, travel, social activities, health care, retirement and similar needs. We should try to be a countersign to the evils of materialism and consumerism, bearing witness to the possibility of sharing goods in common with others unselfishly and in a spirit of cooperation. We try to awaken consciences to an awareness that we are only stewards of the goods of the earth, with the duty of working to overcome the causes of poverty and marginalization of so many people throughout the world.
22. We will readily accept in our own lives the common law of labor. Since by our vow of poverty we have freely chosen not to earn anything for ourselves, whatever we earn in any way belongs to the community and should be given promptly to the proper authority. For the same reason, none of us may claim special privileges because we earn more than others.
23. As individuals we retain the right of owning personal property which we already have or may later receive as patrimony. We may not, however, administer it ourselves nor derive any personal benefit from it. If an individual sister desires to renounce her patrimony, partially or totally, she may do so as a personal practice of poverty in accord with what is stated in the bylaws.

Before making first temporary vows, each sister will make a legal will for any property she has or may subsequently acquire. If at the time of first profession a sister has any possessions, she will entrust their management to someone else and arrange for the use of the income from them. If a sister receives possessions after her religious commitment, she will at that time arrange for their administration and the disposition of income. For any other acts of ownership, such as changing her will, changing the administration and the disposition of income, modifying the use of income from patrimony, or other acts required by law, she needs the prior permission of the provincial superior.

24. All sisters should handle community resources, and what is provided for their personal or community use, with a readiness for accountability and a concern for poverty, as responsible stewards who recognize the importance for the human family of a wise use of our human and natural resources.
25. Though committed to gospel poverty, the congregation and the provinces have the capacity to acquire, possess, administer and alienate temporal goods. These must be administered prudently: in harmony with our corporate and personal commitment to simplicity of life, interdependence, concern for the poor and reliance on divine providence; and according to the principles of canon law and social justice. The General Superior with the consent of her Council may allow the goods of the Congregation, the provinces and their institutions to be alienated, offered as security, mortgaged, loaned or leased as long as their value is within the limits proposed by the respective national or regional conference of bishops and approved by the Apostolic See. For amounts beyond the limits the General Superior will request permission from the Apostolic See. The same norm applies in the contracting of debts, with the additional requirement that whoever requests permission for indebtedness should make known all existing debts and financial obligations to the authority from whom the permission is sought.

26. Provinces use their resources for individual and community needs, for apostolic ministries, and for the needs of the poor and of the kingdom. If a province or one of its institutions as a legal entity contracts debts or other financial obligations, only that province or institution will be responsible for their payment. There should be a generous sharing of resources within our congregation according to possibilities and needs.

Redemptive Obedience

27. As ecclesial women we recognize the authority of the Church, we obey the Pope as our highest superior, and we accept the authority of the bishops and other ecclesial bodies as expressed in Church law. Authority in our congregation is entrusted to those sisters who serve as superiors at general, provincial and local levels, and who are assisted by their respective councils; and to the general, provincial and local assemblies.
28. In our personal and communal search for indications of God's will, we look to our constitution, bylaws and norms, and to the decisions and calls made by those in authority in our congregation. With other Christians, we seek his will also in the scriptures and in worship; in directives, teachings and appeals of the Church; in our talents and inspirations and those of our sisters; in the needs of people, the events and movements of our world, and in the changing circumstances of daily life
29. Each of us will try to accept graciously her missioning to a specific local community and the ministry entrusted to her, and to accept the sisters missioned with her, perceiving in such obedience a carrying forward of God's plan in her life.
30. When a sister has reason to think that a superior is not aware of special difficulties she faces in obeying, she should make these known to her with frankness and a spirit of charity. The superior should re-examine the situation responsibly, ready to change the original decision if she finds this feasible under the given circumstances. However, if she concludes that the original decision is necessary, then the sister concerned will seek to obey with renewed confidence in the Lord.
31. If for serious reasons a provincial superior or general superior should think it necessary to give a command explicitly in virtue of the vow of obedience, she will do so only after having listened to the sister with understanding, having prayed about the need for taking this measure and having discussed it with her council, unless circumstances make this very difficult. Such a command should be expressed clearly and be given either in writing or in the presence of two witnesses

Chapter IV

OUR SHARING IN THE PASCHAL MYSTERY

32. Realizing our constant need for conversion, we will take personal responsibility for effective penance in our lives. While recognizing the value of the asceticism of daily personal, community and apostolic life, we should also develop communal and personal forms of penance that are meaningful today. We will respond faithfully to the Church's call for additional penance on Fridays, during the season of Lent and on other particular occasions, and try to make them times of true reconciliation and charity.
33. For us Adorers, to carry the cross may be to live by necessity under social systems that are unjust and discriminatory. This may mean that one is conscious of the evil and feels it impossible to effect immediate change in the system. The attempt to live prophetically in such a paradoxical situation, to criticize and to challenge constructively, to remain inside the situation while trying to better it and create something new is an ascetical task that we must accept in our suffering world as we move forward with the Church toward the fullness of resurrection.

Chapter V

OUR LIFE IN ADORATION

34. Prayer oriented to the mystery of redemption through the blood of Christ will be a priority for us individually and as a community. Though the style of our prayer will always be unique to each of us at every point of our ongoing relationship to God, the following norms are offered as a means of safeguarding our right to time for prayer and for carrying out our responsibility to deepen our life of prayer.

All of us share in the Eucharist daily if possible, partaking of the body and blood of Christ.

Ordinarily we pray morning and evening praise and Maria De Mattias' hymn to the blood of Christ daily in community. In addition, each of us is to be free for about an hour and a half each day for personal and/or community prayer.

Each local community will plan meaningful longer periods of communal prayer on a regular basis, preferably weekly.

All of us will periodically dedicate a day to spiritual renewal either communally or individually; this will ordinarily be done each month.

Each of us is to have opportunity for at least a week of retreat annually.

35. The manner, place and schedule of personal and community prayer should be in harmony with the demands and rhythms of our ministry, with our community needs, and with the Spirit's call to each of us for growth in our relationship with in prayer.
36. We draw inspiration for our prayer principally from sacred scripture. We will also use other authentic sources of Christian spirituality, especially the life and writings of our foundress and other sources of the history and spirituality of our congregation.
37. All of us are encouraged to participate in the Church's worship through the liturgical year and to rejoice with the people of God in the celebration of the sacraments. We endeavor in this way to deepen the grace of divine life into which we are baptized and confirmed. We will try to make Sunday truly a day of special celebration, and as far as possible contribute to the richness of the Eucharistic liturgy in our local situation. In addition to individual celebrations of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we should promote communal celebrations in order to express more clearly the social dimension of sin and salvation. In illness and in the weakness of aging we will worship our risen Lord in his healing power in the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, communally celebrated if possible.
38. Those sisters who are entrusted with authority at local and provincial levels have responsibility for trying to assure that opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and for competent spiritual direction are available for all sisters as desired.
39. We are to celebrate with special solemnity the principal feasts of our congregation, which are the following:
1. our titular feast, the Precious Blood of our Savior Jesus Christ, ordinarily celebrated on July 1
 2. our special feast of Mary, Woman of the New Covenant, celebrated with the Church on September 15 under the title of Our Lady of Sorrows;
 3. the feast of our foundress, Blessed Maria De Mattias, celebrated on February 4, anniversary of her birth and baptism;
 4. the feast of St. Gaspar Del Bufalo, founder of the Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood and cofounder of our congregation, celebrated on, October 21;

5. the feast of St. Francis Xavier, to whose patronage our congregation has been dedicated since its foundation, celebrated on December 3.
40. We remember frequently in prayer the deceased members of our congregation, especially on the anniversary of their death. When notified of the death of a sister, each local community will pray for her together, and each sister will remember her in the Eucharistic celebration. Furthermore, where possible, each local community of the deceased sister's province will together celebrate the Eucharist for her.
41. We will at times share our prayer and faith experiences with the clergy and laity, receiving inspiration from them and offering whatever help we can for their life of prayer
42. While we continue to intensify our communal and solitary prayer, we need to encourage one another to new dimensions of prayer. These will include awareness and for moving into situations in which we witness our concern for the poor, the marginalized and the powerless, and our willingness to become involved in courageous action on their behalf.

Chapter VI

OUR LIFE IN MISSION AND MINISTRY

43. In order of be faithful to our tradition in meeting the needs of God's people, especially the poor, during all the phases of their lives, we continue to engage in diverse ministries. Among these are works of education, retreats, pastoral services, lay associations, domestic service, health care, social services and care of the aged. We carry out our apostolate not only in the geographic area of the province, but also in distant areas where there is special need. All of us, in fidelity to our mission, are to develop attitudes of flexibility, mobility and openness either to continuing in our present ministry or to engaging in new service.
44. All provinces have a responsibility for regular re-evaluation of their apostolic works and ministries. The principal criteria for deciding to continue an apostolic endeavor or to undertake a new ministry are the following:
 1. urgency of the work or ministry in terms of evangelization or other human needs, especially those ministries which will more effectively promote the realization of a just society based on love;
 2. the giftedness and availability of sisters who are prepared or can be prepared for the work of ministry;
 3. assurance that existing works which are still genuinely needed and effectively being developed can continue, and that the needs for ministry internal to the province and congregation are met;
 4. availability of others who can and are willing to meet the needs;
 5. faithfulness to the spirit of our congregation as set forth in this constitution;
 6. approval by competent authority in our congregation and in the Church.
45. Whatever our ministry, each of us is called to find in it a means for evangelization, for working toward the unity of all in Christ, and for the promotion of justice, peace and love.
46. When our primary ministry is that of prayer and/or suffering, we are especially called to offer this prayer and suffering in support of our sisters in their ministries and for the coming of God's kingdom throughout the world.

Chapter VII

AUTHORITY AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES

General Norms

47. All who exercise authority in our congregation are to do so in accordance with Church law and our constitution, our bylaws, and other norms of the congregation or province. These are to be interpreted in harmony with the gospel, avoiding both excessive legalism and irresponsible non-acceptance of norms and directives.
48. All of us Adorers are members of a province or delegation from which we receive benefits, and toward which we are to contribute for its growth and vitality. Likewise, as members of an international congregation, we will be attentive to and flexible in responding to the needs of other provinces when such needs are expressed by the general superior and council or by a provincial and council.
49. Provinces and delegations are established according to geographic area. The decision to establish or divide a province, to merge previously erected provinces, or define them in another way is made by the general assembly at the proposal of the general superior and council. The decision to suppress a province is made by the general assembly upon request by the general superior and council. The decision to establish a delegation is made by the general superior with the consent of her council upon request from the provincial superior with the consent of her council and with the consensus of the provincial assembly. The decision to reinsert a delegation into its province of origin is made by the general superior with the consent of her council upon request by the provincial superior with the consent of her council, with the consensus of the provincial assembly, and with the previous discernment of the members that form the delegation.

General Government

Participation in Elections

50. All sisters of our congregation who have made permanent vows have a right to vote in elections and may be voted for. Sisters with temporary profession may vote in all elections; however, they may be voted for only as provincial assembly members or for offices at local level other than that of local superior.

General Assembly

51. The general assembly is a collegial gathering of Adorers representing our entire congregation, which serves as a primary means for communal obedience to the Holy Spirit. It has the highest authority in the congregation and is empowered to act in accordance with Church law and the constitution and bylaws. Its purpose is to promote the constant and ever-renewed fidelity of all Adorers in Living our vocation in the light of the gospel and our charism, and in view of the needs and changing conditions of Church and world.
52. The chief functions of the general assembly are these:
 1. to modify the constitution of our congregation: such modifications require a two-thirds majority and subsequent approval by the Apostolic See, to whom authentic interpretation is reserved;
 2. to establish, review and modify bylaws for the congregation, with due regard for diversity within unity;

3. to develop timely enactments which promote the vitality of our life in mission;
 4. to decide particular administrative matters which, according to the constitution and bylaws, are within the competence of the general assembly;
 5. to elect the sisters who are to serve as general superior and councillors and to approve the selection of general secretary and treasurer.
53. The general assembly is convoked ordinarily every four years by the general superior in an official communication to all the sisters of the congregation. The general superior, together with the council, has the responsibility of directing preparations for the assembly.
54. Members of the general assembly are the delegates elected by the sisters in proportion to the number of members in the province; and, ex-officio, the members of the general administration and all provincial superiors. The elected members must be in greater number than the ex-officio members.
55. All of us share responsibility for the work of the general assembly, preparing for it by means of prayer, study, discussions and other community efforts and by offering suggestions and proposals, ordinarily through the provincial assembly. We also have a serious responsibility for electing as delegates sisters who will be able to contribute to the assembly because of their personal integrity, earnestness in living our vocation, understanding of the life and mission of the congregation, openness to others, awareness of the signs of the times, and willingness to engage seriously in the work of the assembly.
56. Each member has an obligation to prepare in advance for the work of an assembly. She has a serious responsibility to participate by openly and honestly expressing her views on matters discussed. She is to bring to the attention of the assembly the interests and concerns of the sisters of her province. At the same time she should maintain a global perspective, keeping in mind the needs and desires of all Adorers and the greater good of the entire congregation, of the universal Church and of the whole human family.
57. Each member must exercise discernment throughout the assembly. Especially she should seek with prudence and charity sufficient information about sisters who might serve the congregation as general superior and councillors, so she will be able to vote for those most qualified for these offices.
58. The general superior is the president of the assembly, though she may ask other members to preside at individual sessions. Other officers elected by the assembly are a secretary, a coordinator, a coordinating committee and two tellers.
59. The work of the general assembly is conducted according to the constitution and bylaws, supplemented by other rules of procedure adopted by the assembly.
60. For the election of the general superior, a two-thirds majority is required on the first and second balloting, a majority on the third and fourth balloting. For the election of general councillors, a two-thirds majority is required on the first balloting, a majority on the second and third, and a plurality on the fourth and fifth balloting. Specific norms regarding these elections are in the bylaws.
61. Decisions of the general assembly are normative for our entire congregation. Those involving a change in bylaws remain effective until modified by another general assembly. Ordinarily other decisions remain normative only until the conclusion of the succeeding assembly, unless they are reaffirmed. For special reasons, changes in previous assembly acts may be made effective immediately; at least those that do not change the constitution, for which it is necessary to have the approval of the Apostolic See.
62. The general superior is responsible for the promulgation of the decisions of the general assembly. She and the councillors are to exercise leadership in implementing these decisions, in collaboration with the provincial superiors, councils and assemblies.

General Administration

63. Overall leadership of our congregation is entrusted to the general superior assisted by four general councillors. They are elected by the general assembly for a term of four years. To be elected general superior a sister must have been perpetually professed at least ten years; she may not be reelected for a third consecutive term. The superior and council are assisted by a general secretary and treasurer, selected by the assembly from nominations made by the general superior with the consent of the council. These seven sisters form the general administration of our congregation. Besides possessing the qualities required for all offices of responsibility in our congregation, the sisters elected to the general administration ought to be women of love and humility, dedicated to the ideals of our apostolic spirituality. They should have initiative, experience, breadth of vision and concern for the needs of the whole Church and of all people. As a group, they are to witness to loving community, to collaboration in ministry and to unity within the diversity of our international congregation.
64. The general superior has the highest authority within our congregation in order to promote the vitality of apostolic life of all provinces, local communities and sisters. With prophetic vision she guides our congregation toward the future and serves as our center of unity. She is president of the general council, of the general assembly and of the inter-assembly congress. She serves as official liaison with the Apostolic See and represents our congregation to Church and civic communities, and in international organizations, especially those for religious women.
65. Sharing leadership with the general superior are four general councillors. They serve as consultants to the general superior and collaborate with her in serving our entire congregation. The general councillor designated by the general assembly substitutes for the general superior when the office is vacant.
66. Principal responsibilities of the general superior with her council are these:
1. to animate all Adorers to holiness in their apostolic life in creative fidelity to the spirit of our congregation, according to our constitution and norms;
 2. to promote unity among Adorers throughout the world while respecting our diversity, coordinating matters that pertain to more than one province and providing channels for communications within our congregation;
 3. to call all Adorers in a prophetic way to respond to the urgent and ever-changing needs of the Church and the world, especially the poor;
 4. to assure good leadership in all provinces through appointing members of provincial administrations after dialogue and discernment with the sisters of the provinces, maintaining close contact and collaboration with the administrations, stimulating them to creativity and efficiency in their ministry of administration, approving provincial formation and government plans and reviewing provincial assembly acts;
 5. to take special care in promoting the quality of initial and ongoing formation for all members of our congregation, and in fostering knowledge and appreciation of our charism and history;
 6. to stimulate and coordinate the insights and vision for the future of all Adorers through planning for the general assembly and leadership in carrying out its decisions;
 7. to provide that the general superior and/or one or more councillors visit all provinces of the congregation at least once every four years;
 8. to carry out all other ordinary functions of general administration and duties specified in the bylaws.
The general superior, to act validly, must have the consent of her council in those cases prescribed by canon law, by the constitution, and by the bylaws.

67. The general secretary has the following overall responsibilities: to assist the general superior and council in correspondence and communications concerning the government of the congregation, to serve as secretary for meetings of the general council, and to supervise the general archives of the congregation.
68. The general treasurer is responsible for the administration of the property and financial affairs of our congregation at the general level, under the direction of the general superior, in accord with Church and civil law and congregation norms. She assists at meetings of the general council when the administration of financial affairs is under discussion and at other times when invited.

Provincial Government

Overall Norms

69. Each province is to have a government plan which sets forth, in harmony with our constitution and bylaws, a detailed description of the organization of the provincial administration, a plan according to which the provincial assembly functions, and the province norms for local community organization. This government plan is approved by the provincial assembly and presented by the provincial superior for approval by the general superior with the consent of her council. Modifications in the plan require the same approval.
70. Each province will develop norms and policies useful for fostering among the sisters of the province fidelity and vitality in living their vocation personally, in community and in apostolic ministry. Local communities are also to develop policies when these will have the same purpose for the local group.

Provincial Assembly

71. The provincial assembly is a collegial gathering, representative of the members of the province. Its purpose is to foster the spiritual and apostolic vitality of the sisters in view of changing conditions and needs of the Church and world. A new provincial assembly is convoked at least every three years by the provincial superior. It is constituted and functions according to the approved plan.
72. The principal functions of the provincial assembly are these:
1. to make needed province norms in accordance with the constitution, bylaws and general assembly acts;
 2. to develop policies that will foster the consecrated life of adoring, redeeming love of the sisters of the province;
 3. to discuss and make recommendations on administrative matters normally within the competence of the provincial superior and her council which they refer to the assembly;
 4. to make decisions on matters specifically within the competence of the provincial assembly according to constitution and bylaws;
 5. to make proposals to a forthcoming general assembly.
73. Since the provincial assembly is directed to the welfare of each sister and the shared goals of the province, all Adorers of the province are in some way responsible for the work of the assembly and are to support it through prayer. All are to undertake with discernment the serious duty of electing delegates who are willing and able to fulfill the responsibilities of the assembly. Sisters of the province are also encouraged to follow the work of the assembly, to participate in preparatory studies, to attend sessions as observers, and to read carefully and discuss in community proceedings of the assembly. They are also encouraged to submit to the assembly proposals which they consider advantageous for the personal and apostolic growth of sisters of the province.

74. Members of the provincial assembly have a duty to participate actively and responsibly for the welfare of the Church and the world, our congregation, the province and each local community and sister.
75. The provincial superior forwards the substantive decisions of the provincial assembly to the general superior and council for review. The decisions become normative for the province unless vetoed, for serious reasons, by the general superior with the consent of her council. The reasons are to be communicated to the province.
76. All Adorers of the province are to accept the decisions of the provincial assembly in a spirit of faith and obedience, seeking to put them into effect in their own lives personally, as community, and in apostolic ministry.

Provincial Administration

77. Leadership in each of or provinces is entrusted to the provincial superior assisted by two or more councillors. They are appointed by the general superior with the consent of her council after dialogue and discernment with the sisters of the province. They are assisted by a provincial secretary and treasurer, also appointed by the general superior with the consent of her council, after having consulted with the newly appointed provincial superior and council. Together these sisters constitute the provincial administration. The term of office, which is to be not less than three years nor more than six, is indicated in the provincial government plan. To be appointed provincial superior a sister must have been perpetually professed for at least ten years. In addition to having the qualities demanded for all responsible positions within our congregation, these sisters should be women of vision, faith, apostolic zeal, humility, outstanding for their love of our congregation and open to the signs of the times. They are to bear witness to vital community living and to unity amidst diversity as they collaborate in their ministry to the sisters of the province.
78. Within the province the provincial superior has the highest authority and serves as a center of unity. With prophetic vision she guides and encourages the province as a whole, seeking to call forth from all sisters and local communities an ever growing response in adoring, redeeming love to the Lord's gift of vocation. She is president of the provincial council and of the provincial assembly. She is an ex-officio member of the general assembly and of the inter-assembly congress, and serves as principal liaison with the general administration and with bishops. She officially represents the province to Church and civic communities and to various organizations, especially those for major superiors. She admits candidates to formation as postulants, receives them as novices, and receives temporary and permanent profession of the sisters admitted to membership in our congregation.
79. The provincial councillors share province leadership with the provincial superior. They collaborate with her in promoting the apostolic life of all members of the province according to the constitution. They also serve as consultants to the provincial superior and assist her in representing the province to the Church and society.
80. Principal responsibilities of the provincial superior with her council are these:
 1. to encourage all sisters of the province to integral growth as apostolic Adorers, assuring them of needed opportunities such as retreats, ongoing formation programs, education, times of rest and recreation, and adequate health care;
 2. to promote vitality of local communities through care in appointing sisters to community, to stimulate and guide sisters in local community planning and living, and to maintain close contacts with them;
 3. to inspire all sisters of the province to enthusiasm for mission, calling forth their giftedness for service to God's people; to assign the sisters to ministry; and continually to reevaluate the apostolic works and ministries of the province;

4. to lead the sisters toward unity of heart and a sense of responsibility for the mission life of the province by fostering communication among them, involvement of sisters as far as possible in province planning and service, and promoting appreciation of province history;
 5. to promote interest in our congregation in the local area, especially among women who may be called to share our vocation;
 6. to provide adequate formation for new members and, with due discernment to admit them progressively to novitiate, temporary vows and permanent profession;
 7. to promote the province as a vital unit of our total congregation through leadership in province participation in the general assembly and in the implementation of its decisions, through maintenance of strong bonds and frequent communication with the general administration, through fostering interest in other provinces and sharing resources in times of need, and through encouraging the study of our congregation's charism and history;
 8. to collaborate as ecclesial women with the local Church, and to foster in the sisters a desire to contribute toward the building up of the Body of Christ in the local area while maintaining interest and concern for the whole Church and the world;
 9. to provide that the provincial superior or her delegate visit local communities at least annually;
 10. to attend to the temporal affairs and other ordinary functions of the provincial administration and to those matters specified in the bylaws.
 11. The provincial superior, to act validly, must have the consent of her council, in those cases prescribed by canon law, by the constitution, and by the bylaws.
81. The general responsibilities of the provincial secretary are these: to assist the provincial superior and council in communications and correspondence, to serve as secretary for council meetings, and to be responsible for province archives.
82. The provincial treasurer, with a sense of responsible stewardship and under the direction of the provincial superior and council, handles the administration of property and financial affairs of the province. She assists at council meetings when these affairs are on the agenda and at other times when she is asked to attend.

Local Government

83. Each province is to develop a plan and guidelines for organization and governance of local communities that will best promote the vitality of our life in apostolic community.
84. Though there is a great diversity of circumstances in which we Adorers live in local community, the province plan should include the following for each local community:
1. provision for a superior or contact person with an indication of her responsibilities, the number of years she must be perpetually professed, and the term of office; provision that each sister have someone other than the provincial superior with personal authority in her regard, with the exception of those sisters to whom such authority is entrusted;
 2. requirements for a local assembly of all sisters which meets regularly to plan and evaluate community living in order to promote an integrated life of service and a mutual concern for one another;

3. indication of circumstances in which the local community is to have local councillors and/or a treasurer.
85. The provincial plan is also to assure that leadership is provided in each local community for the following:
1. spiritual animation in all dimensions of our consecrated life;
 2. planning for community sharing and meetings in ways called for in this constitution and in the bylaws;
 3. opportunities for spiritual and human growth;
 4. promotion of unity, mutual love and trust in the community;
 5. regular evaluation of community plans and living;
 6. mutual encouragement in apostolic mission;
 7. adequate communication with total province and congregation, especially with provincial leadership;
 8. adequate communication with local Church and civic community;
 9. material aspects of the life of the community and each of its members, such as health, housing and financial matters;
 10. all other matters which are to be taken care of at local community level according to our constitution and bylaws.

Chapter VIII

VITALITY OF OUR CONGREGATION

Vocation and Formation

86. With the whole Church we share the duty of fostering in others the call that God may offer them to a life of service in the priesthood, religious life or other ecclesial ministry. We fulfill this duty primarily by the joyful witness of our life in community and enthusiasm in our ministry. We do so also through prayer and by promoting vital Christian family life, by making known the need and value of Church vocations and by encouraging those who seem gifted by God with such a call.
87. Within our congregation the provincial superior is responsible for admitting candidates who seem sufficiently mature and genuinely called to our way of life, and free from the impediments stated in canon law. She is authorized, with the approval of the council, to admit candidates to the novitiate, to temporary vows and to permanent vows. This is done after careful discernment, and after consultation with the candidates, the director(s) of formation and others.
88. After a candidate has been accepted, the province assumes together with her the responsibility for her initiation into a life of consecration according to our unique charism in the Church. The formation of new members is under the general direction of the provincial superior and council. They present to the general superior for approval, with the consent of her council, a detailed formation plan, according to the norms of Church law and of our congregation, and this plan is to be evaluated

periodically and modified as appropriate. The sisters appointed as formation directors are immediately responsible for implementing this plan and for formation of new members.

89. Provincial and interprovincial formation plans may vary in organization and details. However, all plans should meet the requirements stated below:

1. The following phases of formation should be provided for each candidate prior to her permanent vows:
 - a. a time of initial contact and sharing of our life in community (postulancy), for not less than three months and ordinarily not more than two years;
 - b. in accord with Church directives, a period of not less than one year and not more than two years (novitiate), which includes twelve months in the novitiate community, and which includes the following: intensive study, prayer and reflection on the Word of God, the constitution, and the meaning of response to God's call as a religious woman in the Church; and a time of apostolic experience; these two phases of formation should be conducted, preferably, in the culture and language of the candidate; absences from the novitiate are regulated by the norms of canon law;
 - c. a time of temporary vows to live the gospel counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience as a member of our congregation, according to our constitution; this time is to be not less than a total of three years, nor more than six; temporary vows may be made for one, two, or three years' duration, as specified by each province plan;
 - d. at least a year of apostolic ministry as a temporarily professed member of our congregation;
 - e. an extended time of intense preparation prior to permanent vows.

2. The initiation and formation program should give evidence of the following:
 - a. a respect for each candidate and her personal gifts, needs, and past experiences, and an appreciation for a diversity of cultures and ethnic values;
 - b. approaches that will create an atmosphere of confidence, joy, mutual acceptance and love, and that will favor development of a spirit of initiative and responsibility;
 - c. flexibility in the length of time spent in any one phase of initiation in order to provide for the individual rate of growth of each new member and to insure a more personal and mature decision concerning her vocation;
 - d. responsibility of the community to share in some way in the new member's total growth, and of the candidate to contribute her personal gifts and talents to the community.

3. The program should include the following elements of education and formation:
 - a. a sound theological training that includes study of scripture and liturgy;
 - b. a thorough study of religious life with an emphasis on the centrality of charity, the gospel counsels, the ecclesial and apostolic nature of our charism as Adorers of the Blood of Christ, the history of the congregation and the life and spirit of our foundress;
 - c. helps for spiritual growth, particularly growth in prayer personally, in community, and in liturgical celebration; individual guidance by formation personnel and competent spiritual directors;
 - d. a liberal education, opportunities for cultural development, and the necessary professional or technical preparation for apostolic ministry;

- e. a critical study of one's own culture and values in light of the gospel.
90. Sisters appointed to the ministry of formation are to have perpetual vows, to possess the needed spiritual and psychological maturity, understanding of human nature and ability to relate well with others, and to have an adequate education, experience in community living and ministry, and an openness to the needs of the Church and the world. They must also have a strong appreciation of our life and mission as expressed in the constitution and as lived in an international congregation.

Withdrawals

91. Women who have been admitted to the initial phases of formation, but have not yet made temporary vows in our congregation, after prayerful discernment may freely leave or, for adequate reasons, may be asked to leave by the provincial superior with the advice of her council.
92. At the expiration of the period of her temporary vows, a sister, after prayerful discernment may leave voluntarily or, for adequate reasons, may be excluded from subsequent profession by the provincial superior with the consent of her council. Upon the request of a sister with temporary vows the general superior, with the consent of her council, for serious reasons may grant her an indult to leave the congregation before the time of vows has expired.
93. If a sister with permanent vows ever thinks it necessary to consider withdrawing from the congregation, she should reflect about it carefully, realizing that she has freely made a lifetime commitment. Through prayer and through adequate and prudent counsel, she should seek to discern God's will for her. Before finalizing her decision to leave the congregation, she should make the matter known sufficiently far in advance to the provincial superior, who should receive her with charity, arranging for whatever help she seems to need in coming to a prudent decision. If she decides to leave, she asks the general superior through the provincial superior, for a dispensation from her permanent vows. The general superior forwards the request to the Apostolic See with her opinion and that of her council.
94. For very serious reasons that point to an unwillingness to live according to our constitution and other norms, a professed member may be dismissed from the congregation when repeated efforts to help her in conversion and renewal seem to effect no real change for the better. Having obtained the consent of her council, the provincial superior or her substitute will communicate to the sister the fact that steps are being taken toward her dismissal. She will transmit all of the acts and documents to the general superior and council who, in a collegial meeting and by secret vote, have the authority to issue the decree of dismissal if they judge this best for the sister and for the congregation. The decree is presented to the Apostolic See for confirmation, by which it becomes effective. All steps are to be documented and attested to by witnesses, and the sister is to be informed of the process of her right to defend herself, all in accord with the norms of Canon law.
95. When a member withdraws from the congregation, the community returns her dowry if she had one, and her patrimony unless she has renounced it. She may not demand remuneration for her service as a member of the congregation since, like all other members, she freely chose to serve the Lord and his people in a life of poverty, without personal gain. The province, through the provincial superior, will provide for her immediate needs when she leaves, doing so with charity and equity.

Continuing Growth

96. All of us are encouraged to use profitably the opportunities which are to be provided by the province for our enrichment. Among these will be an extended period for personal and spiritual growth at a time well beyond permanent profession when the province can arrange it.
97. Fidelity to our apostolic mission should stimulate us to constant professional and cultural development according to our possibilities. We are to keep ourselves interested in and informed about developments in contemporary society and in the Church, especially in the areas of theology, liturgy, scripture, ecumenism and pastoral ministry. For this purpose all of us should have ready access to needed books and periodicals, especially to pertinent Church documents. We will also make use of the ordinary means of communication and of discussions, workshops, courses and meetings.

98. We renew our religious vows frequently. We do this together on the feasts of the Precious Blood and of our foundress, Maria De Mattias, and either together or privately as is feasible at the close of our annual retreat.

99. The formula for devotional renewal of vows for our congregation is as follows:

Trusting in God, who is ever faithful,
I from this day onward
set my face ever more steadily toward the Lord.
I vow to God
chastity, poverty and obedience
according to the Constitution of the Adorers
of the Blood of Christ.
I promise to my sisters to share the life
and mission
of this community in the Church
as I strive to respond to Christ's call to discipleship.
May God keep this will in me. Amen.

PREFACE OF THE 1857 CONSTITUTION

To reveal his infinite love for us and in consequence of his great mercy, Jesus Christ our divine Redeemer consented to shed his precious blood for us, in the midst of suffering and humiliation, as the price of our salvation and glory.

Yes, he gave it all, he gave it for all, and he does not cease to give it. Like a fountain, or rather like a life-giving river accessible to all, it flows on and out to all the children of Adam, going with them abundantly at every moment of their mortal life in order to sanctify them and bring them to eternal happiness.

Now this our lowly Congregation that lives and labors under the glorious title of the most precious blood of Jesus Christ, must be patterned and shaped into a living image of that divine charity with which this divine blood was shed and of which it was and is sign, expression, measure and pledge.

This is why our principal goal must be to invite women and girls to share in the fruits of redemption, using all our energy and all the means that are appropriate to our vocation for this purpose. Through a solid Christian formation (education) we are to help them become worthy daughters of that spouse which Jesus acquired with his blood, and we are to assist and guide them along the path of virtue, according to God's holy law, during all the phases of their lives, so far as we can do this, with God's help.

Hence our work, our zeal and our labors must not be limited to instructing small girls. Rather, we must dedicate ourselves to preparing them to receive the Bread of Angels. Then later we must assist them when they are older and face new dangers and have greater need. We must also help them to learn how to carry out their duties and tasks in the home, guiding them in living devoutly, modestly, prudently, in self-possession, and especially in obedience. When they reach that crucial time of making their choice of a state of life we must not forget about these precious ones who, like flowers, have been entrusted by the Lord to our care. Nor must we abandon them when they have chosen to remain in the world; nor later, when they are in need of a time of quiet and come to us seeking space and shelter and help for some days in our houses in order to grow in a virtuous life.

From all this we see clearly how varied and extensive are those services and works of charity to which God calls us, and which on our part we must gladly accept and carry out faithfully, guided by all that is set forth in the third part of this Rule, for the glory of the Lord who loved us and has redeemed us with his own blood.

Very rich, surely, will be the harvest which by God's favor we shall be able to gather, using the means that are available. Very diverse as these are, they are all directed to promoting, safeguarding and bringing to perfection the holiness of those souls whom Jesus will entrust to us. Ours is truly a great undertaking, but greater still will be the help that comes abundantly to us from our Savior.

That we may not be unworthy of such divine aid, however, we must not fail on our part to live up to what is required of us in order to reach our goal as it is set forth here. Who is there, indeed, who will not recognize how solid our own virtue must be, how constant and sincere our zeal, how unalterable our patience, and how upright and inspiring our own lives must be. How can we promote the spiritual good of others if we ourselves do not possess these precious qualities? This then is what God calls us to, and what the Institute is committed to.

But how will all this be brought about if not by our own having a very high respect, reverence and love for the Rule, and in living faithfully according to what it asks of us. Yes, this is the most effective way to become authentic Adorers of the divine Blood and true daughters of this Institute, so as to draw down divine blessings on ourselves and on our work, and so as to be able to cooperate effectively in the salvation of others. This is why all those who, by God's goodness, have been called to go forth with us under the banner of the divine blood, are reminded to carry the Rule deep within their hearts. Though it does not oblige us under pain of even venial sin, it is nevertheless the expression of God's will for us, and the way along which the Lord wants to draw us to himself and make us his instruments for others' salvation.

(Translation made, Rome, 1979)

DECREE OF PRAISE

The Superior of the Institute Of the Sisters Adorers of the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ has most humbly addressed His Holiness, the Supreme Pontiff, Pope Pius IX, that he might deign to approve and confirm with Apostolic Authority the aforementioned Institute, already for several years into various cities, and its Constitutions.

Considering this request and having taken cognizance of the state of the aforesaid Institute from the testimonial letters of the Bishops in whose dioceses are located houses founded by it, and having learned from these letters with how much industry and zeal the Sisters attend to the Christian and secular education of poor girls, His Holiness has ordered that the same Institute, with its scope, be made the object of fullest praise and recommendation, so that the religious belonging to it, spurred on by this public testimony of the Apostolic See, perfect eagerly from day to day in direct dependence of their respective Ordinaries, this truly Christian work.

As to the other part of the request, His Holiness has decided that it shall be provided for at some time more opportune.

Rome, from the Secretariate of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, May 30, 1855.

L.S.

G. Card. De Genga, Prefect

A. Gaggiotti, Substitute

Index

- **Chapter I, OUR VOCATION IN THE CHURCH**
- **Chapter II, OUR LIFE IN APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY**
- **Chapter III, FOLLOWING CHRIST IN VOWED COMMITMENT**
- **Chapter IV, OUR SHARING IN THE PASCHAL MYSTERY**
- **Chapter V, OUR LIFE IN ADORATION**
- **Chapter VI, OUR LIFE IN MISSION AND MINISTRY**
- **Chapter VII, AUTHORITY AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES**
- **Chapter VIII, VITALITY OF OUR CONGREGATION**
- **PREFACE OF THE 1857 CONSTITUTION**
- **DECREE OF PRAISE**