This page was exported from - Canons Regular of Saint Augustine
Export date: Mon May 20 0:01:49 2013 / +0000 GMT

Constitution

Constitution of the Austrian Congregation

Contents Preface Chapter I - The Characteristics of the Austrian Canons Regular and their Importance for the Church - The Characteristics of the Canon Regular - Their Importance for the Church Chapter II - The Way into our Communities and the Formation - The Promotion of Vocations - Postulancy - Noviciate - Vows and Promises - Perpetual Solemn Vows - Academic Formation and Further Education Chapter 3 - The Life and Ministry of the Community - The Community in its Life before God - The Ministry of the Comunity - The Community in its Private Life Chapter 4 - The Capitular Constitution - Feast Chapter - Full chapter - house Chapter - The Chapter-Council Chapter 5 - Positions and Offices in the Community - The Provost - The Dean - The Officials Chapter 6 - The Congregation - The Nature and Aim of the Congregation - The General Chapter - The Officeholders of the Congregation - Visitation Final Clause

Preface

According to the requirements of the Second Vatican Council, the Austrian congregation of Augustinian Canons has worked out the following constitutions, which have been approved by the Holy See. They also carry out the requested up-to-date renewal of the Religious life. At the same time, they particularly take into account the original inspiration of the institute and its adaptation to the changing conditions of time. For this reason, an outline of the history is given before the text of the constitutions. The period of the foundation of the Augustinian Canons cannot be clearly defined. The idea of the canonical way of life is very old. It developed in bishops' houses and in early medieval collegiate chapters. It took a definite shape in the 11th and 12th centuries, the epoch after the Gregorian reform movement. The Lateran Synod of 1059 under Pope Nicholas II initiated the renewal of the canonical life. The reform wanted to achieve the common life of clerics without personal property. A number of already existing and newly-founded communities of canons undertook the apostolic or common life (cf. Lateran Synod can. 4). They found a model for it in the 'vita communis' of several bishops with their clergy, particularly in Saint Augustine's monastery of clerics. The Augustinian community life was based on the example of the early Church, in which the multitude of believers was one heart and one mind (cf. Acts 2:44;4:32-35; Augustine sermon 356). This thought shapes the Rule of St. Augustine which had gradually found its way into the reformed communities of canons. The Stifts of Augustinian canons of the Austrian congregation which still exist today (St. Florian, Reichersberg, Herzogenburg, Klosterneuburg, Neustift and Vorau) reach back to the time of the origins of the Order. All were set up in close contact with the bishop and were above all to serve the universal Church by the reform of the clergy and of the Christian people. From the start, the stifts fulfilled pastoral, cultural and social tasks. In the following period, the more the Augustinian canons defined their particular mission as opposed to that of the monks, the more they remembered the original priestly pastoral work of the canons, and in the course of history they took over a number of parishes. Throughout the centuries the houses were independent of one another and they also remained within the framework of the diocese. Eventually in the 17th and 18th centuries they were aggregated into the Lateran congregation. It was not until 1907 that the six stifts joined together to form the Austrian Congregation of Augustinian Canons. Thereby they were given exemption. Furthermore, the autonomy of the individual houses was safeguarded. Since the May 4th, 1959 our Congregation has been a member of the Confederation of Augustinian Canons.

Chapter 1

The Characteristics of the Austrian Canons Regular and their Importance for the Church]

I. The Characteristics of the Canon Regular

- The Augustinian Canons are an Order in the Church and thus are bound to the principles of religious life. God, who loved us first, must be sought and loved before anything else. Each canon lives and obtains from the spirit of prayer, particularly from the Liturgy of the Hours, and leads a hidden life in Christ. The characteristic peculiar to the Austrian Augustinian Canons can be seen quite clearly in the light of historical growth and from the requisites of the present time as: A priestly community for the ministry to the People of God. The canons form a priestly community in order to be able to fulfill their ministry better to the Church, and here specifically, to the diocese. Therefore this community is not an end in itself, on the contrary, one of its main aims is ministry. On the other hand however, this ministry, which is performed chiefly by parish work, even today makes demands for its greater effectiveness from the priestly community, from whose strength the individual can work more effectively. So community and ministry are not seen apart from each other as separate characteristics but both involve and complete each other, to the full assertion of the nature of the Canonical Order. Our priestly community can be supported in the fulfillment of its tasks and affairs by lay-brothers and choir-canons. They are true members of our Order, and in their own way, they have a part in our priestly mission.
- The Canons Regular vow to live by

the Rule of St. Augustine. Therefore the spirit of this Rule should be alive in our communities and should shape our priestly community. Even though individual instructions may be without significance for our time, the decisive request of the Rule is valid today. Holiness is concerned with the realization of a community on God. It is carried along by the deep awareness of the indwelling of God, which makes the community into a single temple. Such a community is particularly fit to fulfill its ministry to the People of God. - The Religious leads a life according to the evangelical counsels in one of the Church's acknowledged institutes. The theology of the vows must be continually deepened in accordance with new theological insights. The basic definition of canonical institutes is ministry in community. This also shapes the life lead in accordance with the evangelical counsels. Therefore in our Order chastity, poverty and obedience must be understood as, on one hand, for the community and, on the other, in the ministry to the Church. - The vow of chastity consecrated to God has its roots in the imitatable words of Christ. Through this vow the Religious binds himself to the observance of chastity in the manner befitting his vocation and he renounces marriage and family. It is celibacy for the Kingdom of Heaven which, at the same time, through the observance of the virtue of chastity is concerned for the affairs of the Lord, the building up of the community and an undivided ministry (Mt.19:12.1, Cor 7). This gift, which we look upon as constitutive for the Religious life, completely aligns us with the pure Christ. Right to the last Christ is pure because as God's Son he is directly of the Father. In the adoption of a pure way of life we orientate our whole lives and beings, like Christ, towards God. This vow makes our community life possible. The community in turn ought to support the individual in the following of this counsel. In this way the individual becomes free and unhindered for the ministry to the People of God. Perfect continence in no way hinders human development. The Religious is required to work continually on his personality. He is to take advantage therefore of all natural and supernatural aids. Not least here are the insights of the modern sciences, psychology and sociology being taken into account before others, which agree with the Christian philosophy of life. In our Order the community is a particular help for this. That is why each individual takes responsibility for the others. Brotherly understanding, which shows itself in contact and conversation and even in a reasonable reprimand and in the forgiving mentality, is required above all on this point. The superior carries a very special responsibility. In fraternal community life he is to be concerned above all to have a humane understanding of the difficulties of his Canons; however, he is also obliged to preclude any transgression by making appropriate and well-timed decisions. - Voluntary poverty for the sake of the imitation of Christ is a share in the poverty of Christ, who was rich and became poor for our sake (cf. 2 Cor 8,9). Through the vow of poverty we are bound to a simple, modest way of life and to do without personal property. Following this evangelical counsel is to be poor oneself in order to be rich for others. The form of poverty particular to us is shown by the possession of everything in common. It is a 'communitas sine proprietate' of individual members who live out of the common fund of the community. Behind this concept of poverty is Augustine's idea that the common monastic possession of everything is the visible and necessary expression of the communion of hearts. The example of the Fathers of our Order is the early Christian community, as we read in the Rule: "As you read in the Acts of the Apostles: They held everything in common. Each was given what he needed." The community frees the individual from the all too big worry of material possessions and so makes him freer for the ministry. The community carries the responsibility for its possessions. The Provost and the economic officials take care that the community property is faithfully managed in accordance with the findings of modern economic management. They are also obliged to give accounts of this to the full chapter. Our property must be characteristic of our social position. We cannot shirk our responsibility for the economically worse-off houses of our congregation. Just as we must be open with alert interest to the concerns of the world mission and the needy peoples. The poverty of our communities not only shows itself in the responsibly accepted property but also in the common work. The communities are bound to the universal law of work and so give evidence of their poverty. The work of the individual must be seen as an obligation from the vow of poverty. Through his work he supports the community. He is to receive from the canonry everything he needs in order to carry out his work. Yet there is not a complete bringing into line, but in accordance with our Rule, personal characteristics are taken into account. For his personal needs and for the requirements of his work he receives an allowance. He must present an account of this to the Provost. The lifestyle of the individual and that of the community should be characterized by simplicity, modesty, helpfulness and responsibility. - The Church has always seen the counsel of obedience as well founded in the life of Christ (John 6,38; Phil 2,6-8; Hebr 10,5-7). That is why listening to the Father and to His holy will is the first step. In religious obedience the Religious dedicates himself to a common way of life as well. The superior, in listening to God, has the task of interpreting this way of life, to which he himself is bound also, in accordance with the ever-changing conditions of the times in order to make it more fruitful in its ministry to the Church. Through this vow the individual is bound to lend obedience to his superiors in accordance with the Rule of St. Augustine and the constitutions. At

the roots of this vow obedience is also lent to the Pope as the highest ecclesiastical superior. In the Canonical Order the combination between superiors and subordinates is supported by the collegial spirit. Obedience has a communal character. That means there is a commitment on both sides. The subordinates are called upon for their cooperation, for their own initiatives, but also for their own responsibility. It is the task of the superiors to enable and to foster these initiatives and to intervene helpfully in accordance with the rules of subsidiarity, to coordinate the work and thus to make the ministry of the community more effective. At the present time the office of the superior is to be seen more in the spirit of service to the brethren. In this way the love of God and the close solidarity with the subordinates become visible. Common planning and discussion are to precede the orders of the superior. However, the final decision is left up to him. The Provost should consider the strength and capabilities of his canons. He should respect the personal dignity of his subordinates and should win their voluntary loyalty in a positive and responsible obedience. Where it is necessary he should reprimand and punish with love so that the ministry of the community should in no way suffer damage. The obedience of the subordinates is a disciplined arrangement at the service of the community, Personal opinions and interests must always be put last whenever the ministry in community requires it. Also, out of this manner of obedience the special duty arises of giving an account of one's own work. - The Austrian Augustinian Canons are characterized by the stabilitas loci of the individual, and by the autonomy and the exemption of their houses. These marks are also to be understood as the basic requirements of our Order for community and ministry. 'Stabilitas loci' binds an individual to a community, not however for the sake of community but in order to help it in its ministry. Autonomy with regard to the congregation, and exemption with regard to the bishop, safeguards the justifiable independent existence and the internal ordering of the canonry. The justifiability of this independence is this, to make a better ministry possible. **II. Their Importance for the Church** - Canons are, of their origin, the bishop's clergy. Therefore the canonical ministry is seen as priestly ministry to the Church in the diocese. Our purpose as priests working in the service of the bishop must take on a definite form in the good liaison between stift and bishop, Canons and secular priests. Therefore our houses are to be centers of pastoral work and of the contact of priests with one another. The membership of the Augustinian Canons to the local Church also shows itself in their interest in the problems and concerns of the diocese. In order to be able to fulfill our ministry in community better, we are to strive for unified pastoral areas. Not least, our communities have the task of setting an example of community life to the secular priests. Then the importance of our college of priests inside the diocese will also obtain a visible expression. - The Augustinian canons also look upon the diocesan bishop as a member of the worldwide episcopate, and that is why they are involved beyond the local Church with the universal Church. Through the congregation and the confederation, which transcends the borders of countries and nations also, they know themselves to be in union with the universal Church. Therefore the canons are obliged to show interest in the life and plans of the whole Church and to energetically support its concerns above all in the missions. So, the Order of Augustinian canons is involved in the 'building up of the whole mystical body of Christ and in the welfare of the local Church.' Chapter 2 The Way into our Communities and the Formation] - In order to be able to fulfill our ministry in community we must try to have a thorough preparation and formation. The members of our communities ought to be responsible, mature men, well trained in everything that they need to fulfill their work. - The aim of all the formation is the attainment of a human and Christian maturity which exists in the harmonious development of the physical, affective, intellectual and spiritual predispositions. - Through the basic intention of our Order, ministry in the community, the formation yields itself to two main emphases: reception and integration into the community, and preparation for the common apostolic work. In our Order, up-to-date formation requires a thorough knowledge of our time and its diverse apirritual and intellectual trends. Only then can we be able to really fulfill our ministry in the Church and in the world. **I. The Promotion of Vocations** - "The duty of fostering vocations falls on the whol eChristian community" (OT 2). However, each canon especially must help through positive efforts, persistent prayer and the example of his way of life. - If the fostering and realizing of vocations is also the task of every member of our communities, then, in particular, the priests of our parishes are to be engaged in it. We can expect Religious vocations from our own pastoral areas before anywhere else. In addition to this, in each Stift a member of the community is to be entrusted with the care of vocations. In close cooperation with the priests on parishes he is to keep up contact with the students who are interested in our communities. - "An important contribution to the building up of priestly vocations is made by the family" (OT 2). Because this is an appropriate way to the vocation to the priesthood one should endeavor to keep contact with the students who live with their parents outside of the Stift. - This fostering of would-be vocations also takes place in the alumnate. It is our task to ensure a sound Christian training and to develop vocations. Under the guidance of the superiors and through the corresponding cooperation of the parents, the young people are to lead a life in accordance with their age and development. The principles of modern psychology and education must be taken into account.

If the Stift has no alumnate then it should try to have other accommodation for its students, (e.g. minor seminaries, a seminary for Religious, etc.). - "Religious institutes have the right to publicize themselves in order to foster vocations, and they also have the right to seek candidates (PC 24, in which the directives of the Holy See and the local Ordinary are taken into account). This will be achieved by invitations to the Stift, by weekend and holiday stays, days of recollection and other events. In the way, regular contact is to be established. Young people are not only to get to know the Stift but also the pastoral work and the other works of our community. Since our ministry is carried out first and foremost in parish work, this is done in a suitable way by active participation in the life of the parish (worship, youth work, etc.). - Care of Vocations also includes thematerial side of things. Where it is necessary the Stift and its parishes are to give appropriate financial support. - All our endeavors concerning vocations should foster human and spiritual development in such a way that the young men at the right age, can freely decide for themselves whether they join our communities or, as responsibly-minded Christians, choose other professions. **II. Postulancy**- In our Stifts postulancy can prevede admission to the clerical novitiate. The request fotr this preceding period of testing can be made either by the candidate or on the part of the Stift, i.e. novice master, postulancy director. The Provost decides on this request with the agreement of the chapter-council. - For lay-brothers and clerics a postulancy of at least six months is prescribed. - The purpose and aim of this period of testing lies in a good preparation for the novitiate. During the postulancy each person is to be guided towards that human and affective maturity which is necessary for Religious life. It is desirable, with the consent of the candidate, to consult a psychologist. During this time of testing the director of postulants is able to make sure that the candidate has the necessary aptitude for life in our communities. In the same way, the postulant is given the opportunity to satisfy himself as to the correctness of his choice of vocation. - The postulancy is directed by the novice master or a Religious who has been appointed by the Provost in agreement with the chapter-council. - The length of the postulancy must not exceed two years. The postulancy can be made inside or outside the Stift. - A postulant wears civilian clothes. - Work during the time of postulancy can be varied (e.g. ending of vocational training, study, social work). The length, place and form of the postulancy are to be suited to the individual candidates. This is to be decided on by the Provost with the agreement of the chapter-council. **III. Noviciate**- The novitiate provides for a deeper introduction into and practice of, the Religious life. During this time the novice gets to know the spirituality and work of our community. - Admission to the novitiate is decided, with adherence to the appropriate ecclesiastical norms and after consultation with the novice master, by the Provost with the agreement of the chapter-council. Before admission to the novitiate it is to be carefully considered as to whether the candidate possesses the necessary aptitude and sufficient maturity for our community. It is desirable during the novitiate - with the consent of the novice - to consult a psychologist. - A common novitiate can be arranged for clerics and lay-brothers. The clerical novitiate is also valid in the event of a move to the position of a lay-brother, and vice versa. A possible move is authorized by the Provost, after consultation with the novice master, with the agreement of the chapter-council. - The novitiate begins with a ceremony of reception in the enclosure. The Provost with the agreement of the chapter-council determines the time of the clothing in the habit after consultation with the novice master. A five-day retreat precedes the reception. The form of reception and the kind of habit is the same for clerics and lay-brothers. - The novice master is entrusted with the spiritual direction of the novices and their preparation for the apostolic life in our communities. This job requires that he is well-versed in the theory and practice of Religious life. He should know the spirituality of the Order and the problems of the times. He must be open for the questions and concerns of the novices and must be capable of fostering their vocations and helping them. The novice master must be a priest and over 30 years of age; he is appointed for three years. During his term of office he is not to be dismissed without serious reason. He can also be reappointed. Appointment, reappointment and dismissal are the tasks of the Provost, with the agreement of the chapter-council. Where it is necessary, an assistant can be given to the novice master to support him. He must be a priest and is nominated by the Provost and the chapter-council after consultation with the novice master. The novice master is obliged to produce a report on the novices for the Provost and the chapter-council at least once during their novitiate. - The novitiate is the community of the novices under the direction of the novice master. For it to be valid, the novitiate must take place in the properly designated house. The Abbot General can permit the novitiate community to move to another house of our community for a period of time. In this way a better formation is made possible. - In particular cases the Abbot General with the agreement of his council can allow the novitiate to be made in another house of the community. In this case a reliable Religious, who must be a priest, stands in for the novice master. - Community life is of great importance in the formation of the novices. Therefore every stift which has only one or two novices is recommended to amalgamate its novitiate with that of another house of our congregation for some period at least. - To be valid, the novitiate must last twelve months. An absence from the house and the novitiate community which lasts more than three months, either

continuously or with the breaks added together, renders the novitiate invalid. For an absence of less than three months an extension is not necessary; however, it can be ordered by the Provost after consultation with the novice master depending on the reason for the absence. - Novitiate training requires an introduction into the mystery of Christ, an examination of the theology of Religious life and particularly the vows, an introduction into active participation in the liturgy; more enthusiastic study of and reflection on the Holy Scriptures, an introduction to the teaching and the practice of the spiritual life, above all, contemplation and prayer. Psychological and sociological knowledge makes growth into the community easier. A study of the Rule and way of life of St. Augustine, the traditions and the history of our Order and our stifts is necessary. In novitiate training all round human development must not be neglected. That is why some training in the arts is very worthwhile, (e.g. literature, music, etc.). - The pursuit of training activities can supplement the novitiate training. Therefore the novices can spend one or more periods of time, individually or in groups, outside of the novitiate house. During these periods the novices are still under the novice master. The time of this pursuit of training activities must be added on exactly to the twelve months. The novitiate extended in this way must not exceed two years. At the earliest, the pursuit of training activities is allowed three months after the start of the novitiate. In addition they must be so arranged that the novice spends an unbroken six months in the novitiate and that he comes back there at least one month before the end of the novitiate. The aim of these experiments is to give special preparation for the apostolic life of our communities and an appreciation of modern times. - The arrangement of the novitiate requires a stable, independent existence. That is why only the novice master is entitled to have charge over the novitiate. In order to facilitate the incorporation of the novices into our community, brotherly contact is to exist between them and the professed. - The novice can leave the novitiate at any time. At the request of the novice master the can be dismissed by the Provost after consultation with the chapter-council. Legitimate reasons are necessary for dismissal; these are to be made known to the person being dismissed. However, there is no right of appeal. **IV. Vows and Promises**- At the end of the novitiate the novice makes simple profession for three years in accordance with the appropriate ecclesiastical regulations. A promise can also be made in its place. The years of temporary commitment provide for further examination as regards to living according to the evangelical counsels and the work of our canonries. During this time independence and stability, aptitude for the common life and work, deep faith and willingness for the apostolic ministry should continue to increase. - Clerics are under the director of clerics until priestly ordination; brothers are under the master of brothers until perpetual profession. For the appointment of the director of clerics and the master of brothers the same regulations apply as for the novice master. - For admission to temporary vows the agreement of the full chapter is necessary. The novice master has to give a report on the candidates for profession. - Before taking temporary vows the novice must hand over the administration of his property to a person of his own choice and must make arrangements for its use for the period of profession. He keeps the right of ownership. In a will, valid according to civil law, the novice, who is able to dispose of it as he wishes, settles who is to be given his personal property in the event of his death. The open will is deposited with the superior and cannot be altered during the time of the temporary profession without his consent. - A five-day retreat must be made before making profession. The Provost can allow the taking of first vows to be brought forward for up to 15 days. He can also allow them to be taken outside of the novitiate house. The formula of profession approved by the Holy See is: "I, N., will live for three years in the community of the Stift N. for the service of the People of God. I vow to God, the Almighty, before our Fr. Provost N., (or before you Fr. N. the authorized representative of our Fr. Provost N.), my brothers (and the Christian people (used only at public professions)), a life of chastity consecrated to God, in poverty and in obedience according to the Rule and way of life of our Father, Augustine, and the constitutions of the Austrian Augustinian canons. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." - If the Religious has still not attained that degree of spiritual maturity which is necessary for the making of perpetual profession, the time of simple vows are extended to up to nine years at the most. The agreement of the full chapter is necessary for the renewal of simple vows. - A professed in simple vows can be dismissed for a serious reason by the decision of the full chapter. The reasons for the dismissal must not be proved in a formal manner but must certainly be well known. They must always be told to the Religious. He has complete freedom of defense and possesses the right of appeal to the Holy See, which has a delaying effect if his objection follows within ten days after the announcement of his dismissal. The dismissed professed is no longer bound by his vows. - At his own request the professed can be restored to the lay state by the Abbot General with the agreement of his council, which in this case can be obtained in writing, whereby a dispensation from temporary vows is legally granted. The professed is free to leave the Order when the time of the vows runs out. - After consultation with the chapter-council the Provost can, with legitimate reasons, stop a professed in temporary vows from admission to their renewal, or from taking perpetual vows. However, the agreement of the chapter-council is necessary for the dismissal of a member in temporary vows who, in the opinion of doctors and other experts, because of physical or mental

illness even if this occurred just after profession is apparently not acceptable for Religious life. In making such a decision the superiors must act with love and fairness. - Temporary vows can be replaced by a promise. This promise embraces the spirit and the support of the evangelical counsels and it is binding to our community, its Rule and constitution. The novice is free to decide in favor of simple vows or one such promise. The promise is given in writing. The formula is: "I, N., bind myself with this promise for the length of ... to the community of the Stift N., I will live according to the spirit and support of the evangelical counsels. I promise to follow the Rule and the regulations of the constitutions faithfully. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." - The agreement of the full chapter is necessary for admission to promises and for their renewal. - Before making the promise the same instructions to do with the legality of wealth are to be met as before making temporary profession. (43). - The minimum length of the promise is one year; the full length of the period of probation between the end of the novitiate and the making of perpetual profession is three years. After that, a Religious in promises can request admission to perpetual vows. This period of probation can be lengthened for a legitimate reason with the agreement of the full chapter. However, it cannot last longer than nine consecutive years. - A Religious in promises can be dismissed for a serious reason by the decision of the full chapter. The reasons for dismissal must be made known to him. He has the right of free defense and a right of appeal to the Abbot General or to the Co-visitor. - At his own request, a Religious in promises can be released from his promise by the Provost with the agreement of the chapter council. He can freely leave our community after his promise expires. - The Provost, after consultation with the chapter-council, can stop a Religious in promises for legitimate reasons from renewing the promise or from making perpetual profession. - If a member has left a community after the expiry of simple vows or promises, or after being released from vows or promises, and again seeks admission, the full chapter can admit him again with a two-thirds majority. A repetition of the novitiate is not necessary. After the expiry of a period of testing the candidate can again be admitted to temporary vows or promises. The length of these however cannot be shorter than one year or than the temporary probation which the same candidate would still have had to go through before perpetual profession. **V. Perpetual Solemn Vows**- At the end of the period of probation the candidate takes perpetual vows in accordance with the appropriate ecclesiastical regulations. In our congregation perpetual vows are solemn for candidates to the priesthood, choir-canons and lay-brothers. At perpetual profession one solemnizes his final bond to the community and its ministry. Through it one becomes a full member of the community. - A special time of preparation precedes the taking of perpetual vows. It is to take the form of a 14 day course for all the candidates for profession of our congregation. In it they are once more to be introduced into the fundamentals of the Religious life and into the particular functions of our communities. The place, direction and time of this course are determined by the conditions laid down by the council of the Abbot General. - For admission to perpetual vows the agreement of the full chapter is necessary. The director of clerics has to give a report. To take perpetual vows the completion of the 21st year of age is required. Major Orders can only be received after taking perpetual vows. - Before taking perpetual vows personal property must finally be disposed of. The current will is also to be reviewed by the candidate and the superior. It is in keeping with the Augustinian ideal of common conventual property that his personal property be brought into the community. The formula of profession is: "I, N., will live for life in the community of the Stift N. for the service of the People of God. I vow to God, the Almighty, before our Fr. Provost N. (OR before you, Fr. N., the authorized representative of our Fr. Provost N.), my brothers (and the Christian people (used only at public professions)) a life of chastity consecrated to God, without personal property and in obedience, according to the Rule and the way of life of our Father, Augustine, and the constitutions of the Austrian Augustinian canons. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." - The profession form must be signed by the one professed and him, who received the profession. It is kept in the archives of the stift. The parish where the professed was baptized is to be notified of the taking of perpetual vows. - For the dismissal of a professed in perpetual solemn vows proceedings are to be taken by the appropriate superior according to the regulations of the current law of the Order. The Abbot General grants the dismissal with the agreement of his council. - A professed in perpetual vows can only be released from them at his own request by the Holy See. - The Provost, with the agreement of his council, can permit a stay outside of the monastery, which is to adhere to the current law of the Order as well. To transfer from one house to another one of our congregation, or from our congregation to another congregation of the confederation of Augustinian Canons, the requirements of the statutes of the confederation come into force. - Each case of exclaustration is to be submitted to the Holy See. A professed in perpetual solemn vows can only be granted an indult of secularization by the Holy See. **VI. Academic Formation and Further Education**- Academic and pastoral formation should be bound up with spiritual formation. The needs of our time require a sound formation. In our communities it is directed towards the apostolic ministry. That is why clerics are to be given the opportunity and instructions to practice the pastoral ministry, (e.g. parish work). The current regulations about ecclesiastical ministries and admission to ordination are to be

carefully observed. - The ecclesiastical regulations concerning the study of theology must be fulfilled. The Austrian congregation has the right to its own philosophical and theological college. Its course of studies must be drawn up in accordance with the ecclesiastical laws. The Provost is entitled to nominate and dismiss the professors. - The acquisition of state or ecclesiastical academic degrees is desirable. - To obtain a broad, human and academic outlook the so-called open semester at one of the native or foreign universities can prove very useful. That is why our clerics are to be offered the possibility. In such cases, the superiors are to take care of the accommodation. The lodgings are to be, where possible, in a Religious house. - Lectures, courses and conferences can supplement the normal studies. Superiors are to encourage participation in these events. - It is desirable that those who are particularly talented are sent to outstanding places of training so that they receive a thorough formation in theology and the other sciences. - It is a recognized requirement that priestly formation continues even after the course of studies. This further education is the concern of each canon. So he is to make use of the abundant possibilities which are offered at the diocesan and deanery levels, (theological lectures and days, further education courses, work-weeks). - Moreover, superiors are to take care that the canons have suitable periodicals and a good library at their disposal. - Lay-brothers and choir-canons have a right to a corresponding formation. This is to be adapted to their capabilities. A basic theological formation is imperative, (e.g. a theology correspondence course). Suitable brothers are to be given the possibility of a higher technical training or of academic study. After the appropriate formation our brothers can also be appointed as deacons for pastoral work. (Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, n. 7068/81 from 14/2/1981). Chapter 3 The Life and Ministry of the Community] **I. The Community and its Life before God**- The life and ministry of our community is rooted in faith. The sources of the religious life - of our life in faith - are the Scriptures and the liturgy. - The religious life of the individual is shaped by the community and its ministry. Consequently, it must always be oriented toward the community and its ministry. - In all areas of our religious life we try to have a deepened encounter with Christ in the Scriptures. - The liturgy, the mystery of the Eucharist in particular, is the center of our religious life. The Eucharist is the effective and visible sign of our communion with God, with each other and with the Christian community. At the same time it makes our ministry visible to the Christian community. So that the unity of the priesthood becomes clear, concelebration is recommended, though the decision to participate belongs to the individual priest. The importance of the Eucharistic celebration demands of us careful arrangements and preparations, as it is in accordance with our pastoral objectives. - Regulations concerning the intentions, foundation Masses, stipends and their administration, etc. are laid down in the house-rules in agreement with the current diocesan regulations. - We continue the praise and thanksgiving of the Eucharist in our community prayer and liturgical celebrations. For us, common prayer is essential; this holds not only for the stift, but also for the priests in the parishes. Prayer with the parish community helps its ecclesiastical character become particularly clear. - Prayer is the basic act of the worship of God. It is the verbal expression of faith, hope and love, which requires an external form. Structure, texts and postures are aids towards the fulfillment of prayer and they are not to be undervalued. The profession of faith that we make in prayer will become clearer the more the interior and exterior correspond. - Times of prayer, details of structure, e.g. of the choir office in particular, the use of the German language, occasional changes, participation in or exemption from prayer, etc. are decided by the individual stifts with the observance of appropriate ecclesiastical regulations. - Our life requires inner openness and preparedness for the call of God. In order to be able to understand this call and answer it, we must take time for personal prayer, supported by mediation. Further details are laid down in house-rules. Each person must seek a formula appropriate to himself in accordance with his conscience. Liturgical prayer offers valuable help for this. - Various aids are at our disposal for the renewal and deepening of the spiritual life. In personal and sacramental penance we show a sign of our intention for conversion, the renewal of our fundamental commitments and the attainment of reconciliation with God and the Christian community. The regular reception of the sacraments is imperative for the spiritual life and the ecclesiastical regulations for religious are to be observed at the same time. So that the communities attitude towards sin and forgiveness becomes clear, penitential services are very appropriate. The purpose of the academic analysis of theology and consideration of the questions of our time is to deepen our prayer life and religious life. Normal conversation can also be very important as well. Days of recollection and retreats are to be aids for our spiritual life. These can also be held in new was of religious reflection (e.g. courses on mediation, theological study days, etc.). In the arrangement of these, the concerns and wishes of the canons are to be taken into account. - The veneration of Mary, the Mother of God, is commanded to all canons; the prayer of the Rosary is an excellent method for this. - In our communities everyone must try to lead an up-to-date and natural religious life. Since our work changes and we need to be adaptable, our religious life must also be able to adapt itself. A living structure of liturgy and prayer is a sign of a dynamic community. **II. The Ministry of the Community**- Canons form a community in order to fulfill better their ministry to the

Church and to the world. - Communal responsibility is in accordance with communal work. Each canon must not only look after his own area of work, but - with respect to the areas of work of others - must be constantly interested in and responsible for the whole of the community. Mutual openness of information is a prerequisite for this. - The up-to-date fulfillment of our ministry demands careful planning and coordination. - Our community promotes the complete commitment of each individual to his work. This commitment is focused not only according to his capabilities but also is subordinated to the good of the whole community. - Today the variety of ecclesiastical ministries requires cooperation in all areas for better effectiveness. Therefore we should seek after an effective cooperation among religious, priests and laity (e.g. professional people, secular groups and institutions, the deanery and diocesan clergy, stifts, the congregation). - We are to remain adaptable in our ministries. Our communities must continually review their areas of work, not close down any ministries which are in keeping with the times, have the courage to experiment and make a fresh start within the framework of the general laws of the Church and the Order. In our own work we must take into consideration each new realization of ecclesiastical and secular work. - All works - be they pastoral, cultural, academic, economic or social - are to be regarded as ministry. - We fulfill our ministry above all in parish work. Through it we contribute to the building up of the diocese. - The requirements of universal, diocesan and our own laws apply for the nomination and dismissal of parish priests, (see the Capitular Constitution no. 180). If possible when filling parish assignments, the aptitudes of the individual canons and the wishes of the parish are to be taken into consideration. According to their abilities and training individual canons may also undertake special work, e.g. youth ministry, adult education, etc., for several parishes. - Our priestly ministry in the diocese demands good cooperation with the rest of the parish clergy. Therefore, participation in common events of the deanery is necessary. - The canons in parishes are to maintain community and are to help one another in their work. They carry responsibility for each other. Closely-knit parish areas make cooperation easier. - Strong contacts are to prevail between the stift and the parishes. Mutual assistance and the visits of fellow canons make this manifest. Before all else the superiors are to endeavor to have close personal contacts. - Several canons are to be in one parish so that they can live the "vita communis". As a living cell in the parish community, they are to be the example of Christian charity. - Today the parish staff is listed under new methods of parish work. It seems to be appropriate to the nature of our Order. As a result each stift is to check its possibilities. - The diocesan regulations apply for pastoral work in parishes. The administration of finances is subject to the requirements of ecclesiastical and diocesan laws, as well as to the supervision of the Provost. Individual regulations are laid down in the house-rules. - The dynamism of our communities is further manifested in our continued willingness to embrace special tasks. In this way we provide a further ministry for the building up of the Church. Thus our houses become spiritual and intellectual centers. As a result, each individual stift is to keep on considering these opportunities. - In our stifts we have a rich cultural tradition, which is seen above in our great works of art. We want to preserve this heritage and make it accessible to the people of our time. The cultural and artistic works of the present must also be a matter of interest for us. - The importance of our stifts also lies in their academic achievements. The tradition of our houses commits us to this area. If possible, talented and able canons are to be instructed and made available for such work. - Poverty makes our community and ministry possible. Individual regulations concerning the economic management are governed by house-rules. The General Chapter decides on the proposals of the individual full chapters on the limits of expenditure for the provost, the chapter-council and chapter itself. The ministerial function of our property becomes visible in a special way by its social position and its charitable works. - According to their abilities and opportunities, the canons are to be prepared for all the ministries mentioned. Through our work people come into living contact with us, the stift and the community. In this way the stift really becomes a living house that provides human encounter, religious deepening, education and relaxation in brotherly-togetherness. **III. The Community in its Private Life**- Our communities have the right to their own lives. However, they always remain bound up in the life of the Christian community. They are to be dynamic cells which contribute to the building up of the Christian community through their ministry. In our community life we put the Augustinian spirituality, which is founded on the example of the early Christian community, into practice. - Our community is lived brotherliness. It creates room in our houses for human encounter, mutual understanding, security and relaxation. We are to encourage and help one another to share their joy, sorrow and worries with each other. Everyone must avoid everything that divides and burdens the community, and nurture that which unites and strengthens it. Weaknesses and tensions which arise out of the differences of character and age, we should bear with love. Mutual respect, tact and decency must shape our lives. In genuine endeavors for love the personality of the individual develops inside the framework of the community. And so, we live the evangelical ideal of brotherly community, which we ourselves proclaim to mankind. - The life-style of our community takes into account prinicipa1ly that of the environment. Modern times offers us many spiritual and material

values. We approve of this offer but, at the same time, we are critical of it and we search for a Christian solution in all of it. - The individual houses of our congregation have a set of house-rules. This controls the individual regulations concerning the local conditions and requirements of our work. The house-rules are decided by the full chapter. A copy of these house-rules must be deposited with the Abbot General. He is also to be notified of all amendments. Since the house-rules regulate the concrete life of our communities, they must be continually revised and adapted. This must be done before each ordinary visitation at least. - The house-rules fix the enclosure area and the enclosure rules. - We need silence for Religious life, peace for work and relaxation. A social silence is to be observed in our communities. - The form of our habit has evolved from history. Therefore there are differences among the individual stifts. Further details are laid down in the house-rules. In principle the habit is to be worn. For a legitimate reason a discreet kind of dress similar to that of the secular clergy is permitted. For isolated cases and for important reasons, and for as long as these reasons last, the Provost can on these occasions permit civilian clothes. - There is seniority in our communities. This begins from the start of the novitiate. The Provost and the dean take precedence. We understand that seniority has no privileges but that it is for the ordering of the community. It is in accord with the spirit of brotherliness that we address each other by our religious names. We only use the title of office for superiors. - Out of love we know that we are all under an obligation to guests and visitors and we are to show hospitality to them. The reception of and the catering for guests depend on the facilities of the house. - Common meals ought to promote the community spirit and are a sign of friendship and love. The common table is to be a concern of every canon. Regulations about prayers and reading at mealtimes are left up to the individual houses. They are to provide for the reading of the Rule and the constitutions. - Everyone is called upon to strive for a genuine attitude of repentance, which today must manifest itself particularly in noticeable asceticism of consumption. The diocesan rules are followed with regards to fasting. - Recreation, personal encounter and conversation provide further opportunities to cultivate brotherly-togetherness. Therefore the canons ought to give themselves time for these. Communal celebrations (saint s days, birthdays, house feasts) intersperse our everyday life. They give joy and the awareness of belonging to a community. - Our community ought to provide the opportunity of natural, lively cooperation. Small groups and friendships will deepen the personal relationships of the canons with each other. In this the whole of the community must be respected. - In everything we should respect our community, consider its honor and protect it from outsiders. - The community has also to care for the needs of the individual. Here there are justifiable differences which come from the characteristics of the personalities and their development. The life-style of the individual must, however, be shaped by responsibility for the community and by modesty. - Everything we earn through our work (fees, compensation, and pensions) is fundamentally the property of the community. Each canon receives an allowance for his personal needs and for the requirements of his work, an account of which he must give to the Provost. These funds are trust money which gives no reason for a surrender to the right of private ownership. On principle, savings are only allowed to be placed in the common conventual account. Withdrawals are made only with the knowledge of the superiors. In the case of savings, a last will and testament must state that the amount belongs to the stift. Individual regulations are given in the house-rules. - Significant inheritances and large gifts can only be accepted with the approval of the Provost. In this case the canon, in agreement with the Provost, must have charge over the newly-acquired article and he must amend his will if necessary. The possibility of bringing everything into community is in accordance with the Augustinian ideal of common monastic possession. - Every canon has the right to appropriate living quarters. Orderliness and cleanliness are prerequisites for a homely atmosphere. It contributes to the canon feeling secure and at home. - An accurate inventory of the parishes must be drawn up. It follows from this what property belongs to the stift, the parish, the priest, the curate or the housekeeper. - Similarly, well-ordered housekeeping is necessary. In the stift responsible officials are to look after it. In parishes the priest is responsible for the common housekeeping. State and ecclesiastical regulations are to be observed in the employment of housekeeping personnel. The contract of employment is to be submitted to the Provost. He has the right of perusal in the confirmation of wages. Further regulations are given in the house-rules. - To make our ministry easier the purchase of a vehicle is justified. The permission of the Provost is necessary for this. - The canons are to be given sufficient time for recuperation. Free time ought to provide a balance. It preserves and fosters mental and physical health, makes relaxation and reflection possible, and gives us the opportunity for personal further education and development. Each canon should have one free day a week. The house-rules lay down the length of the annual holiday. It is, however, to be fixed at three weeks at least. It must be the concern of the whole community to secure for the canons the necessary time for recuperation and holidays by helping and supplying. - In every human community there is wrong, sickness, need and death. In order to safeguard the unity of the Spirit we must avoid dislike and envy, discord and unfounded criticism, and refrain from everything that harms the good name of the canons. Whenever we are in disagreement we are to be quickly reconciled

and are to again look for common ground. - Our personal responsibility for one another demands the spirit of brotherly correction. We must also take such a word of admonition to ourselves with willing hearts and we must examine our attitude with regard to this. - If a canon has seriously erred or has caused a public scandal he should be prepared to carry the consequences. The Provost is to reprimand him and to punish him in a suitable manner. The community must reflect on to what extent it itself was responsible for the transgression. In no circumstances can we deny our help to this canon. We must continue to stand by him in word and deed. The example of Jesus and the knowledge of our own weakness demands of us understanding and forgiving love. And so, we are to help the canon to begin anew. - For us devotion to the community is an important value. Nevertheless we are to have understanding for those who perhaps after many years leave our community and continue their way of life elsewhere. So we also want to offer to them the necessary help. We should guard against passing a final judgment on them. - The sick canons can expect the security of our community in a special way. They themselves are to bear their illness with patience. The superiors or their representatives are to see to the necessary treatment and nursing. The canons are to show their closeness by frequent visits. In serious illness the dean is to see to the administration of the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Regulations concerning National/Private Insurance, regular medical examinations, convalescence etc. are to be given in the house-rules. - The old canons have given great service to the community. We owe them thanks for it. We are to devote our care and attention to them and try to provide a pleasant old age for them. - We realize that the bond of community is in no way severed by death. If possible, at least one canon should be present at the death of another. The superiors are to look after the obituaries, a worthy funeral, the grave and its maintenance. As a rule, the funeral takes place in the house s own burial place. We are to remember our departed canons at the Eucharistic celebration and in our prayers. The house-rules lay down individual regulations. Chapter 4 The Chapter Constitution] - The chapter is the community of canons in perpetual vows. They all have joint responsibility for the community and are called to active participation. - Chapter meetings are used for joint discussion and for passing resolutions. They provide an opportunity for obtaining information and for the exchange of different opinions. They are the expression of the common interest. **I. Feast Chapter**- On festal community occasions a feast chapter can be held. These meetings are to take place in a festive atmosphere. - All members of the stift can take part in a feast chapter. The Provost can also invite guests to it. **II. Full Chapter**- All canons in perpetual vows are summoned to the full chapter. Participation in the chapter is compulsory. If prevented from attending the reason for the absence is to be communicated to the president beforehand. - At an ordinary meeting the full chapter deals with the important affairs of the stift; at an extraordinary meeting it elects the Provost. - The ordinary chapter is called and conducted by the Provost or, if he is prevented, by the dean. The extraordinary chapter is called by the dean and is conducted by the President of the congregation. Should the dean also be prevented, the senior member of the chapter council takes his place. - The full chapter must take place at least once a year. It must also be summoned whenever two members of the chapter-council, or a third of the voting chapter members, ask for it in writing. - The written invitation to the full chapter must be given out at least 14 days before the date of the meeting. This invitation is also to contain the agenda. Before the meeting the members of the chapter can put forward written proposals to be added to the agenda, which must be in the hands of the president three days before the chapter meeting at the latest. These proposals are to be submitted to the full chapter. The president can also make an addition to these proposals up until this time. During the chapter meeting the forwarded proposals need only be dealt with verbally if the president and the majority of the chapter members agree. In cases of real urgency which need swift decisions, the summoning of the full chapter can follow without delay. - The president has the duty to prepare the meeting well. The chapter council or competent well-informed canons can support him in this. For a proper handling of more difficult material it can be convenient to send written documents to the members of the chapter. - It is the task of the full chapter to elect the Provost, the dean of the stift, the members of the chapter-council, the representative for the General Chapter and the dean s co-administrators, after the death or resignation of the Provost Etc... - The agreement of the full chapter is necessary: for admission to simple profession, temporary promises or their renewal, and to perpetual vows. The chapter decides on the dismissal of a professed in temporary vows or promises. It decides on the re-admission of a former member in temporary vows or promises who has left the stift of his own free will or who was dismissed with a two-thirds majority. Before this voting in the chapter, which is done by secret ballot, the appropriate canon (novice master, director of clerics) must draw up a report. A report is to be given to the chapter annually concerning the fostering of would-be vocations, the novices and the juniors in temporary commitment. - Important community matters are to be dealt with in the chapter. It is appropriate to the pastoral work of our Order that pastoral problems which concern all our canons are dealt with in the chapter. - The chapter must agree on the buying and selling of that which exceeds the sum lay down by the General Chapter; as well as on the taking of any loans. Disposals of property and loans over and above that of the sum laid down by the

ecclesiastical authorities are to be presented to the Holy See for confirmation. At least once a year the chapter is to be given an account of the household management and planning. The balance sheet is also to be presented with it. - The decisions of the General Chapter must be reported to the chapter. The chapter deals with the visitation report. At each chapter meeting the dean, or one of the members of the chapter council, reports on the activity of the chapter-council. - The chapter can pass obligatory regulations for all members. It decides on the house-rules. - The Provost can allow professional people (periti) into the chapter meetings with the agreement of the chapter-council; they do not have voting rights. - The chapter can set up committees for a given period or permanently. The leader and members of the committee can be elected by the chapter per acclamationem. Definite areas of work are assigned to these teams. The result of their work is to be submitted to the chapter. - In the chapter the ballots are decided by absolute majorities of valid votes. The Provost does not vote. In the event of a tied-vote he has the right of diriment. When voting an absolute majority is required in the first and second ballots, in the third ballot a simple majority suffices. The president has voting rights. In the event of a tied-vote seniority decides. There are separate regulations for the election of the Provost. Ballots and votes about important matters are secret. Each chapter member has the right to call for a secret ballot. Only the members present at the chapter have the right to vote. - When voting the president is to remind the voters of their responsibility. Oaths are not necessary. - All canons in perpetual vows have the right to vote and are eligible for office. There are separate regulations as regards eligibility for election as Provost and dean. In serious cases the Provost, with the agreement of the chapter-council can withdraw eligibility for office for a given time. - At ballots and secret voting in an ordinary meeting of the chapter the two eldest members of the chapter-council according to seniority are the scrutineers. - The secretary of the chapter, who is appointed by the Provost, draws up the minutes of all the chapter meetings. These must be approved at the next meeting of the chapter and must be signed by the president and the secretary. - For a legitimate reason each member of the chapter can take a look at the minutes of the chapter meetings. - Over the course of events in the chapter discretion is called for with regards to outsiders. The Provost can subject individual points of the agenda of a chapter to the pledge of secrecy. - In the event of an ecclesiastical censorship the right of chapter is lost. In serious cases it can also be withdrawn for a given period by the Provost with the agreement of the chapter council. **III. House Chapter**- All canons in perpetual vows who live in the house are called to the house chapter. All members of the chapter can take part. - It is for the Provost to call and conduct a house chapter. If the Provost is prevented, or with his permission, the dean can also call and conduct a house chapter. The invitation with the agenda must be issued at least 24 hours before the meeting. - The house chapter deals with the affairs of the house and those matters which are allocated to it by the full chapter or by the house-rules. - When discussing questions about the house-rules which affect the juniors (e.g. liturgy, choral office), members in temporary vows or promises who are present in the house are also to be invited with the permission of the director of clerics. When voting they enjoy voting rights. - The secretary of the chapter takes down the minutes of the meeting of the house chapter. These must be approved at the next meeting. **IV. The Chapter-Council**- The Provost is supported in the management of the canonry by the chapter-council. The chapter-council is to be understood as the permanent committee of the chapter. It represents the chapter in routine affairs. - Under the presidency of the Provost the chapter-council consists of the dean and the councilors. Their number is determined by the house-rules. Half of the councilors are nominated by the Provost, the other half are elected by the full chapter. - The term of office of a councilor is six years. - The novice master is to be consulted concerning spiritual or disciplinary questions, and the appropriate official concerning economic affairs. If the affairs of a parish are discussed the relevant priest must be invited. The Provost can summon professional people (periti) to the meetings. All of these have no voting rights. - The chapter-council is convened by the Provost. If the dean is running affairs potestate vicaria , then he can convene the chapter council. - The meetings of the chapter-council are to take place regularly, at least four times a year. A meeting must also be convened when it is asked for in writing by two councilors. - Each member of the chapter has the right to put in written proposals to the president which must be dealt with at the next meeting of the chapter-council. - If possible, the date of the meeting and the agenda are to be made known to the councilors a week beforehand. - The agreement of the chapter-council is necessary: for admission to postulancy and to the novitiate, for determining the time of clothing in the habit, and for crossing from one class of the novitiate to another. These rights can be transferred to the house chapter by the house-rules. The chapter-council decides on: the appointment, re appointment and dismissal of the director of postulants, the novice master, and the director of clerics and his socius, and the withdrawal of chapter rights or of eligibility for office for a given time. - The novice master is to report to the chapter-council concerning the novitiate at least once a year. - The Provost must obtain the opinion of the chapter-council in the following matters: on the dismissal of a postulant or novice, on questions of religious discipline, on community life and the pastoral ministry, on the appointment of officials and on the filling of parochial positions, and on all other important affairs of the stift according to the

regulations of general ecclesiastical law and the constitutions. - The visitation report is to be submitted to the chapter-council verbatim. - The chapter-council has the right to supervise economic management and planning. That is why the officials have to render it an account once a year. It has the right to check the conducting of business and the book-keeping. It reviews and corrects the balance sheets. - The chapter-council can authorize the buying and selling of things inside the limits laid down by the General Chapter. - The Provost can consult the chapter-council concerning the preparations for the full chapter. - The full chapter can transfer further authority to the chapter-council from its own powers, be it for a single case or permanently. This holds above all for urgent matters which cannot be delayed. - If the voting of the chapter-council is in agreement, then the Provost does not vote. In the event of a tied-vote he has the right of diriment. - The secretary of the chapter is to take the minutes of the chapter council. They must be approved at the next meeting and be signed by the president and the secretary.

Chapter 5 Positions and Offices in the Community] **The Provost**- The office of Provost is the highest position in our community. For this reason he deserves respect and precedence. - The Provost has to ensure unity in the ministry and life of the community. He has the highest supervision and control of all affairs of the stift. He coordinates the initiatives of individuals within the frame work of the general work of the community. In this the final decision rests with him. In accordance with the chapter principles, common planning and discussion precede the orders of the Provost. - The Provost is to endeavor to have a personal relationship with his canons. He is to appreciate their work and encourage them in difficult situations. The Provost is to enable each canon to work freely with full responsibility. He is to take into account the skills and interests of his colleagues and is to promote their own initiatives. When it is necessary he is to reprimand them. It is also up to him to deal out punishment. - In order to be able to organize the guidance of the community to the requirements of the time and the concrete situation, the Provost as the major superior according to Church law is vested with great authority. All this authority, which the Provost should use generously, will make the ministry of the community alive and effective. Also, in this way the autonomy of the stift is emphasized. - The Provost represents the Stift in external affairs. - The Provost is elected at an extraordinary meeting of the full chapter under the direction of the President of the congregation. When voting for the Provost an absolute majority is needed in the first, second, and third ballots. In the fourth ballot the two candidates only who had the most votes in the third ballot can stand. In the event of a tied-vote seniority decides. Only the members of the chapter who are present in the house where the election is taking place have voting rights. All persons entitled to vote must however be summoned in accordance with the law. The two eldest members of the chapter-council according to seniority are the scrutineers. - Every professed canon in perpetual vows who is ordained to the priest hood and who has completed his thirtieth year of age is eligible to be Provost. - If the person elected accepts the post, then the President is to con firm his appointment straight away. If the President of the election is convinced that the person elected to the office of Provost is unsuitable, then the case must be put before the Abbot General s council to decide. - The secretary of the President is to make a record of the voting. This is to be signed by the President of the election, the scrutineers and the secretary, and is carefully stored in the archives of the stift. - The newly-elected Provost is to ask for abbatial consecration from the diocesan bishop as soon as possible. When the Provost has received the abbatial consecration he is allowed to carry out all the ordinations and consecrations which he is entitled to do by virtue of his rights and privileges. He always has the right to pontificate in all the churches of the entire Order and in others with the knowledge of the local ordinary. - The postulation is carried out according to our special privilege if it is asked for in writing by at least a third of the voting chapter members. It can only be carried out in no more than two ballots, and the candidate in question has no vote. For the positive result of the postulation at least two-thirds of the valid votes are necessary. The postulation must be submitted to the Holy See within eight days for confirmation. If the necessary majority of votes is not reached in either of the ballots, the postulation is dropped. The election of another candidate begins with the first ballot. - The Provost is always elected for an indefinite period. At the completion of his seventieth year of age the Provost may like to resign his office. - An election for a defined period of office of ten years is possible if the chapter itself decides on it by a secret ballot with a two thirds majority before the election. This ballot must be held if a member of the chapter asks for it. When the period of office expires, re-election is possible. - An election of an administrator for five years is possible if the chapter itself decides on it by a secret ballot with a two-thirds majority before the election. This ballot must be held if a member of the chapter asks for it. An administrator has all the rights and duties of a Provost, except those which follow from abbatial consecration. Two periods of administration one immediately after the other are not allowed. - The office of Provost becomes vacant through the death, the expiry of the period of office, the resignation or the removal from office of the Provost. - At the death of the Provost the dean is to notify the diocesan bishop and the President of the congregation. Until the election of a new Provost the dean may manage the canonry together with two co-administrators elected by the full chapter. For the election of a new Provost the dean summons the extraordinary full

chapter in agreement with the President of the congregation. - Before the period of office of a Provost expires by the completion of a ten-year term of office, the dean, in agreement with the President of the congregation, summons the extraordinary full chapter for the election of a new Provost. The term of office of the retiring Provost ends with the new election. The Provost whose term is coming to an end retains all chapter rights. - If a Provost wants to resign because of illness, age or other serious reasons, he is to inform the President of the congregation about this intention. The latter accepts the resignation after consultation with the stift in question and the Abbot General s council. - If very serious reasons suggest a change in the leadership of a canonry, the appropriate visitor is to carry out an extraordinary visitation. If both visitors come to the conclusion that the dismissal of the Provost is necessary for the well-being of the house then they are to call a full chapter of the stift concerned. After consultation with the full chapter the case is to be put before the Abbot General s council. If the council comes out in favor of the termination of the appointment, then the appropriate visitor is to invite the Provost in question to give up his office of his own free will. If the Provost is not if the opinion that he should comply with the invitation to resign then the facts of the case, together with the statements of both parties, are to be presented for the judgment of the Roman authorities. - A Provost who has resigned retains all chapter rights. A Provost who has been dismissed from office loses his eligibility for office at the election of the Provost. - The President of the congregation with the chapter-council of the house in question sees to the care of a Provost who has been deposed from office. - A Provost who has been dismissed from office is entitled to the position in seniority before that of the dean of the stift. **II. The Dean**- The dean is the first adviser and deputy of the Provost. He supports the Provost in the direction of the stift. If the Provost is prevented, the dean exercises the rights of a major superior. - The dean is also the representative of the chapter. He must countersign all documents and contracts in its name whenever the law of the country does not stipulate anything else. - The Provost can transfer the tasks of leadership with full responsibility to the dean. - In general, the dean has more responsibility for the inner running of the house. The tasks of the dean are different according to the situation of the individual stift. Further details are given in the house-rules. - The dean is elected by free elections for six years by the full chapter. Every professed canon in perpetual vows who is ordained to the priesthood is eligible for office. Following canonical tradition re-election is possible at anytime. **III. The Officials**- The offices in our houses are a service to the community. By their work the officials provide for the canons many requirements for their priestly work. They take worries off their shoulders and therefore support the ministry of the community and of the individual. On the other hand, the canons are to value the help of the officials, to appreciate their directions and to have understanding for their problems. - The appointment and also the dismissal of an official are carried out by the Provost after consultation with the chapter-council. A sound training of an official is desirable. - The determining of the types, names and scopes of the officials is left up to each stift. - Where an official and the situation of the house permit it, the help of well-informed laity is desirable. In this way more canons become available for actual pastoral work. Care must be taken, however, that there is not a lack of the necessary supervision by a suitable canon, particularly in the area of economic management. - The officials are to develop their own initiatives in their offices and to carry out their service responsibly with respect to the superiors and the community. Inside his area of authority which has been determined by the house-rules, the chapter-council and the Provost, each official carries full responsibility and has freedom of action. He is to give an account of his work to the Provost, the chapter council, and the full chapter. Every member of the chapter has the right in a full chapter to ask for information from the officials. Chapter 6 The Congregation] **I. The Nature and Aim of the Congregation**- The Austrian congregation of canons is the union of the stifts of St. Florian, Reichersberg, Herzogenburg, Klosterneuburg, Neustift and Vorau. The congregation is incorporated into the Confederation of Canons Regular of St. Augustine, at whose head is the Abbot Primate. At the same time, autonomy is preserved, and it guarantees our rightful independent existence, our internal ordering and the works of each canonry (canonia sui iuris). - Our congregation is built on the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity. The solidarity rises from the common priestly ministry of the canons in the Church and from the common concerns of our houses. It finds its living expression in our growing interest for one another, in the will for mutual assistance and in the brotherly spirit. The subsidiarity function is put into effect first of all in safe guarding our concerns with regard to the outside. It shows itself also in the working out of the common legal constitution and in a controlling function. The subsidiary combination is to be effected spiritually, personally, financially, and organizationally. - The individual stifts are exempt. **II. The General Chapter**- The General Chapter is the highest body of the congregation. It is particularly expressive of our unity. The General Chapter supports the work of our houses in an assisting role, and promotes the working together of the individual stifts as partners. In the fulfillment of its purpose it issues binding rules. - The Provost, the dean, and one delegate elected by the full chapter from each stift are part of the General Chapter. If one of the members is legitimately prevented, then the following applies: the Provost appoints a representative to take his place, the

full chapter votes for the dean and the delegate through a substitute. - With the agreement of his council the Abbot General can invite professional people (periti) to the meetings of the General Chapter. These people have no voting rights. - The ordinary General Chapter is called by the Abbot General every five years. During this time the Abbot General, with the agreement of his council, can call an extraordinary General Chapter to deal with important affairs. - The Abbot General with his council prepares the agenda of the ordinary General Chapter. He is to send this agenda to every chapter member of the congregation at least two months before the General Chapter. A discussion of the points in the agenda is desirable at the full chapter. Inside of a month each chapter member has the right to put in written proposals to the Abbot General to be added to the agenda. These proposals are to be put before the General Chapter. The Abbot General sends the final agenda to the participants in the General Chapter at least 14 days before the meeting. - The General Chapter has the task of electing the Abbot General and the Co-visitor, as well as the representatives of the congregation for the council of the Abbot Primate; it also draws up three proposals for the election of the Abbot Primate. The General Chapter accepts the resignation of the Abbot General. It deals with all important affairs of the congregation and with the proposals of individual chapter members. At every ordinary General Chapter the Abbot General reports on the state of the congregation. - At the General Chapter the ballots are decided by an absolute majority of the valid votes. The President votes as well. In the event of a tied-vote the proposal is rejected. In order to change the regulations of the constitutions a two-thirds majority is necessary. These changes are to be presented to the Holy See for approval. At the request of at least three members of the chapter the General Chapter decides on particularly important affairs by a two-thirds majority. When voting the President has the right to vote. Votes and ballots on important affairs are secret. - The decisions of the General Chapter come into force immediately and are valid until explicitly revoked. The decisions must be passed on to the members of the chapters of individual houses at a meeting of the full chapter. - The Secretary General takes the minutes of the General Chapter. They are to be approved at the end of the meeting of the General Chapter and are signed by the Abbot General, the Co-visitor, and the secretary. The minutes are to be published. **III. The Officeholders of the Congregation**- The Abbot General presides over the congregation. - The Abbot General is elected by the General Chapter from the ruling Provosts of the individual canonries. His term of office lasts for five years. At the election of an Abbot General an absolute majority is necessary in the first, second and third ballots. In the fourth ballot the two candidates only who had the most votes in the third ballot are eligible for office. In the event of a tied vote, he is considered elected who has precedence first of all according to seniority and then according to years of age. The Abbot General can be re-elected. The Roman authorities are to be notified of the election of the Abbot General. - In addition to the tasks designated by general ecclesiastical law, the Abbot General calls and conducts the General Chapter. - The Abbot General conducts and confirms the election of a new Provost in the individual canonries. He accepts the resignation of a Provost after consultation with the monastery in question and the Abbot General s council; and the resignation of the Co-visitor after consultation with the Abbot General s council. - The Abbot General inspects the stifts of our congregation. - Affairs of individual stifts and of the congregation which need to be dealt with by the Roman authorities are taken care of by the Abbot General through the Procurator General in Rome. - If the Abbot General wants to resign, he calls a General Chapter which accepts his resignation. If the Abbot General also resigns as Provost of his house, then the General Chapter must be adjourned until the resulting election for a Provost by the stift in question. Under the presidency of the Co-visitor the General Chapter elects the new Abbot General and, if necessary, the Co-visitor. The term of office of the new Abbot General as well as that of the Co-visitor only lasts until the end of the current five-year period. - On the death of the Abbot General the Co-visitor calls the General Chapter to elect a new Abbot General. The term of office of the new Abbot General lasts only until the end of the current five-year period. - The Co-visitor is the deputy of the Abbot General. After the death or resignation of the Abbot General, or when he is impeded, the Co-visitor exercises his office as Vicar General. For his election the same rules apply as for the election of the Abbot General. - The Co-visitor visits the canonry of the Abbot General. - If the Abbot General has resigned, the Co-visitor conducts the election of the new Abbot General. After the death of the Abbot General, the Co-visitor calls and conducts the General Chapter. - In the event of the death, resignation, or long-term impediment of the Co-visitor the longest ruling Provost takes over the office of Co-visitor. The term of office of this new Co-visitor lasts until the end of the current five-year period of the General Chapter. - The Abbot General s council has the task of advising the Abbot General on affairs of the congregation. In the cases designated by general and particular law, the Abbot General is bound to the decisions of his council. - The council is made up of the Provosts of the stifts and the dean of the Abbot General s canonry. If a member of the council is impeded, he can delegate a substitute. - The council is called by the Abbot General. The decisions are made by absolute majority. The Abbot General does not vote, but, however, he has the right of diriment. - In particular cases (e.g. the impeding of the office of Abbot General) the Co-visitor can call and conduct

the council. - The General Chapter can transfer particular tasks to the Abbot General council. - The Abbot General can invite professional people (periti) to the meetings of the council; these people do not have voting rights. - The Abbot General can appoint a secretary at his own discretion to execute the affairs of the congregation. The latter is to write the minutes of the General Chapter and of the Abbot General s council. - The Procurator General represents the affairs of the individual stifts and of the congregation to the Roman authorities. The General Chapter appoints the Procurator General on the recommendation of the Abbot General for five years. If the Procurator General retires in the meantime, the Abbot General with the agreement of his council is to appoint a provisional Pro curator. His term of office lasts until the end of the current five year period of the General Chapter. **IV. Visitation**- The visitation has the task of examining the life and activities of the individual stifts. If gives the communities and the canons the opportunity to reconsider their ministry in community again and again. Through the visitation new stimuli are to be given to their work. - The individual houses must be visited by the Abbot General, and the Abbot General s canonry by the Co-visitor, within five years. The visitors are accompanied by a secretary. - The visitor has the right and the duty to question all the members of the houses individually. They are to freely express their opinions and concerns. The visitor may conscientiously examine the spiritual, intellectual, personal and economic state of the community. He can also inspect the buildings, the work, the living quarters of the canon, and the presbyteries. - A month before the visitation an economic report with the balances is to be presented to the visitor. For a legitimate reason the visitor can ask for the accounts to be examined by a qualified institute. The cost of this is to be met by the stift which is being visited. - After the visitation has been completed, the visitor produces a written report of the visitation. He is to present and order in it particularly that which is to be changed or improved. These orders must be carried out as soon as possible. A report concerning them is to be made to the visitor within six months. - The visitors report to the General Chapter on the completed visitations. - If a stift is in a difficult situation, the appropriate visitor can carry out an extraordinary visitation. For it to be carried out, he must be supported by a second Provost whom he can freely choose. - If serious problems cannot be resolved in the context of a visitation be it an ordinary or an extraordinary one by the visitors alone, then the Abbot General s council must deal with it. Final Clause - The constitutions are given to us as helps on the way to the attainment of perfection. Whenever they describe divine commandments, ecclesiastical laws or regulations concerning the vows, they are bind under pain of sin. By the conscientious observance of these rules we fulfill as best we can our basic purpose: ministry in community.