**Commissio Constitutionum**

Proposed Revision of Chapter IX

# CHAPTER IX

# OUR APOSTOLIC LIFE

Rome — General Curia — 2010

# *General Curia of the Capuchin Friars Minor*

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Rome, 15th June 2010

Prot N 00592/10

*To all the friars of the Order*

Dear Brothers,

Some time ago while I was visiting some of our Circumscriptions in North America I noted with particular satisfaction how this section of our Order was experiencing a revival in vocations. This is a real motive for rejoicing! One of the characteristics that marked the young men who knocked on our door to embrace our way of life was a sincere and unconditional love for the Church both as the People of God and as an hierarchical organisation..

Chapter nine of our Constitutions specifically treats our involvement in the mission of the Church. I believe that we may simply say that there is no Church where there is no mission! The Church shares and continues the mission that the eternal Son of God received from the Father when He was sent into the world and, sustained by the work of the Holy Spirit, it takes it up.

We Capuchins are involved in this drive, which springs from the Father in heaven and which is

# Points for fraternal reflection

1) In contrast to the monastic way of life the Order of Friars Minor has been an apostolic Order from the beginning. In spite of their early preference for life in hermitages, the Capuchins also considered themselves to be brothers who were committed to the apostolate. Is this trend obvious in our local and provincial fraternities today? Where can the appropriate documentation be found?

2) The most important apostolate consists in living the Gospel with simplicity and joy. The community itself is already apostolic to the degree that it shows authentic concern for fraternal relationships within its precincts. How do I live the Gospel personally? For example, what reaction do I have towards someone who appears to say: "I take care of my own business?"

3) Our Constitutions say that all forms of the apostolate should be the concern of the whole fraternity. How are our gifts and personal initiatives taken into account in our local and provincial fraternities? Do they have the backing and support of the fraternity?

4) Without putting aside the traditional forms of our apostolate, such as giving missions and retreats, our Constitutions encourage us to undertake new forms of evangelisation. How are these regarded in our province? Are young brothers encouraged to undertake new and untested ventures?

5) During the celebration of the Eighth Centenary of the First Rule, Raniero Cantalamassa when speaking in Assisi on 15 April 2009 urged all the brothers of the First Order to become fishermen more than pastors once again, which meant that they should show greater concern for the strays and the non-baptised than for the "faithful sheep". Would this be more in line with the profile of the itinerant preacher of the early days than with the deskbound pastor who has the care of souls? How do these thoughts echo within me or within us? What are the opportunities for a missionary style care of souls in our territory or province?

6) There is presently a proposal to introduce an article regarding the pastoral care of families and of youth into our Constitutions as caring for the full life span from conception to death. What has been done and what is being done in your province in this regard?

7) There is also a new article concerning art and literature. Today where do find traces of beauty and Divine goodness? As the Lord's clowns, how do we express our praise of God?

8) New opportunities for evangelisation are emerging in television and the net. How are we involved in this new Areopagus? (Acts 17, 16-34). How is our province guaranteeing that publications and our presence in the media are in line with the teachings of the Church and character of the Order?

**OUR APOSTOLIC LIFE**
*PROPOSED REVISION OF CHAPTER IX*

# Introduction

A personal contribution prepared by one of the members of the Commission was used as the starting point for the work of the Sub-commission for the *Proposed Revision of Chapter IX*. The whole Commission carefully examined the initial Schema during its full meeting on 15-27 February 2010. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, our agreed text is late in being presented to the Order for evaluation. The Commission apologises for this.

As usual, the reasons behind the proposed changes and additions to the current text of the Constitutions are presented in the Explanatory Notes. We refer back to these for a more complete understanding of the Proposed Revision while we outline here the more significant elements that emerged during the work of the Commission:

- The ecclesiological foundation of apostolic life (cf. n. 144.2)
- The distinctive inspiration (*ispirazione originaria*) of Saint Francis and of our Fraternity (cf. n. 144.3)
- The relationship between fraternal life and apostolic life (cf. n. 145.3)
- Minority as fundamental criterion for our apostolic choices (cf. n. 145.7)
- Collaboration within the Order and outside the Order regarding apostolic initiatives and the need for planning (cf. n. 146.5)
- New mission contexts[1] (cf. n. 147.3-4);
- The importance of witness for effective apostolic action (cf. n. 147.7; and also 149.3)
- The Christological foundation of preaching (cf. n. 148.1)
- The Word of God as the soul of the apostolate (or the Biblical animation of each form of apostolate) (cf. n. 148.6)
- Our sacramental life and the apostolate (cf. n.149.3)
- Catechesis in the Faith (cf. n. 148.6)
- The *via pulchritudinis* of the apostolate (cf. n. 153.1)

From this list of elements it seems important to highlight the new mission contexts. The criterion of dynamic fidelity to our charism as Capuchin Friars Minor is fundamental in the work of the Commission and was underlined in the presentation of the Proposed Revision of Chapter One. In reference to Chapter Nine, the present Constitutions state: "This same Spirit raised up Saint Francis and his apostolic Fraternity so that, according to the more urgent needs of its time, it might offer all its energies to the Church in its mission to all peoples, especially to those who are most in need of hearing the gospel message" (n. 144.3).

For the reasons given later, the Commission proposes a change to this text, pointing out in particular that "the clause *according to the more pressing needs of its time* is exclusively limited to one historical moment, whereas our apostolic vocation is to face the more pressing needs of *every* age." Moreover the history of the Order shows how our Fraternity, down the centuries, in interpreting the signs of the times has tried to meet the needs of the Church and the various pressing needs of society by adopting or even modifying its own attitude regarding some forms of ministry and pastoral service. A good example of this is the ministry of hearing confessions. During the early centuries of our *Reform* this was exercised in a limited way within precise restrictions defined by the Constitutions. Gradually the confessional ministry became one of the most

[1] Translator: see footnote 4 below.

characteristic expressions of Capuchin apostolate.[2] It is even presented as a special charism of Capuchin apostolate.[3] In renewing its fundamental Legislation, and urged on by the need for dynamic fidelity, the Order is not limited to re-affirm the value of traditional forms of apostolate and social development.[4] The Order has also urged the friars to "read the signs of the times" (Const. 147.1) and "to undertake new forms of apostolate" (Const. 147.3). Among these new forms our Constitutions since 1968 have envisaged parish apostolate (Const. 151) and the Media apostolate (Const. 153). Number 93 of the Constitutions, about friars in particular circumstances who must live outside a religious house, should be considered from this perspective too. This passage was composed and introduced into the Constitutions following a specific request on the part of the central government of the Order because of new and pressing needs in the missions and of the apostolate.

The decision of the 2006 General Chapter to enhance the doctrinal and spiritual content of the Constitutions by drawing on recent Church and Order documents was also inspired by the criterion of dynamic fidelity. Therefore in fulfilment of the mandate received from the Chapter the Commission had carefully considered the teaching of *Vita Consecrata* which indicates some *mission contexts*[5] (cf. n.96-99).

The *areopagus* is a symbol of the meaning of mission, constantly reaching out to man and the human community in the more significant places where culture is created and people seek out truth - environments that can also be the most difficult and not without risk. If in the light of our tradition, which is re-affirmed in our current Constitutions, we take up ministries considered to be very difficult[6] or go where no one else wants to go - according to an expression attributed to Pope Pius XII[7] – it seems opportune that the Constitutions themselves give an indication to some areas of apostolate that constitute real and pressing needs: the promotion and defence of life against a culture of death, youth apostolate, ministry to couples and families, the evangelisation of culture and the world of education. Consequently on these aspects the Commission has prepared some texts to present for evaluation by the Order. At the same time it highlights these contexts already exist within the varied apostolic and social activity of our Fraternity.

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[2] Cfr. G. SANTARELLI, *Il ministero delle confessioni nelle fonti e nella evoluzione nell'* [sic!] *Ordine Cappuccino* (I Frati Cappuccini. Sussidi per la lettura dei Documenti e Testimonianze del I secolo, 2). Roma 1989

[3] "Il ministero della riconciliazione è uno dei vostri grandi compiti, dei vostri gloriosi compiti! Si deve continuare nella stessa gloriosa tradizione. Penso che voi avete il carisma della Confessione, che dovete mantenere sempre vivo nel vostro cuore e nel vostro ministero. Questo grande, importante carisma! Specialmente ai nostri tempi, quando, nella vita umana e cristiana, questo carisma da una parte viene quasi un po' abbandonato e da un'altra parte viene invece ricercato! Durante il Sinodo, tanti vescovi hanno detto che, se c'è una crisi della Confessione sacramentale, è anche a causa dei confessori che non sanno confessare bene. Ora si deve capovolgere questo capitolo e ritrovare l'amore per le confessioni. E dove cercare grandi amatori della Confessione se non nell'Ordine dei Cappuccini, specialmente dopo la canonizzazione di san Leopoldo?" (GIOVANNI PAOLO II, *Discorso ai Ministri provinciali italiani dei Frati Minori Cappuccini*. Roma, 1 marzo 1984).
"The ministry of reconciliation is one of your great works, one of your glorious works! It must continue in the same glorious tradition. I think you have the charism of Confession, which you must always keep alive within your hearts and in your ministry – this great and important charism! In our times especially, in human and Christian life, while this charism is almost a little neglected on the one hand, on the other hand is is sought out! So many bishops said during the Synod that if there is a crisis in sacramental Confession this is also because of some confessors who do not know how to hear confessions well. This needs to be turned around now, to rediscover love for hearing confessions. And where can we look for those with a great love for Confession if not in the Capuchin Order, especially after the canonisation of Saint Leopold?" (JOHN PAUL II, Address (in Italian) to the Italian Capuchin Minsters Provincial in Rome, 1 March 1984).

[4] G. SCARVAGLIERI, *I Cappuccini e l'impegno sociale* (Studi e ricerche: nuova serie. *Laurentianum*; 3). Roma 2008; IDEM, *I Cappuccini e la sociologia* from *Laurentianum*, 48 (2007), fasc. 3.

[5] Translator: In Italian *Vita Consecrata* has *alcuni areopaghi della missione* while the official English text reads: *some new fields of mission*. The introduction now outlines the symbolism of the term "areopagus."

[6] Const. 145.5

[7] "Dove non sono penetrati o dove non sono comparsi i cappuccini? Specialmente nei momenti tristi, dove bisognava il soccorso, nei luoghi più abbandonati, dove nessuno voleva andare, era il cappuccino che andava" (cfr. G. SCARVAGLIERI, *I Cappuccini e la sociologia* Ex: Laurentianum, 48 (2007), fasc. 3, 469).
"Where haven't the Capuchins reached? Where haven't they been seen? Especially in difficult moments, when help was needed in the most abandoned of places and where no one else wanted to go – it was the Capuchin who went."

The main Magisterium Documents to which the Commission referred in the preparation of the *Proposed Revision of Chapter IX* are: the Encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (25 March 1995), and the Apostolic Exhortations *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (8 December 1975), *Catechesi Tradendae* (16 October 1979), *Familiaris Consortio* (22 November 1981) and *Vita Consecrata* (25 March 1996). The Documents of the Plenary Councils of the Order, the 2006 Project, and the Constitutions of 1968 were also taken into due consideration.

The numbering of Chapter IX remains the same as that of the current Constitutions; only n.149 has been divided into two. Some other numbers however have been put together along with the introduction of new paragraphs. We were of the opinion that there would be nothing in chapter IX to transfer to the complementary Code.

*For the Commission*

Br. Francesco Polliani, OFMCap
*Commission Secretary*

Br. Felice Cangelosi
*Vicar General OFMCap*
*Commission President*

Rome, 8 May 2010.

# Technical Notes

The Commission invites the brothers to keep in mind the suggestions already set out in the *Introductory Notes* to Chapter One. With regard to Chapter nine be especially aware that

**1)** To facilitate the understanding and study of the proposals, the new texts have been placed side by side in columns: the first column contains the text of the Constitutions in force at present *in one's own language*; the second column contains the text of the "revised version" *in one's own language*; when required, the third column contains the text of the norms that are envisaged as belonging to the supplementary Code, again *in one's own language.*

**2)** In the second and third columns the text of each paragraph is preceded by a rubric: *current text* (when the text currently in force has not be changed); *current text with additions* (when the text that is currently in force has been retained with new elements added); *current text with changes and additions* (when the text which is currently in force has been partly changed and new elements have been added); *new text* (when the text is completely new).

**3)** Each proposal is accompanied by explanatory notes, which appear after the summary of each individual number in the text. The explanatory notes contain only what in the opinion of the Commission is regarded as necessary for the understanding of changes or additions or the introduction of a new text. Reference to the documents of the Church or of the Order is restricted to what is necessary and the bibliographical references have been greatly reduced.

**4)** The following are presented in another table: the *Latin* text of the Constitutions appears in the first column; the *Latin* text of the "revised proposals" appears in the second column; when required the *Latin* text of the norms that are envisaged as belonging to the supplementary Code is presented.

**5)** The Order is invited to consider the proposed text, evaluating in particular the changes put forward, the new additions and in some cases the new arrangement of the content presented with some transfer of text.

**6)** Respecting the freedom of each brother to express individually his own opinion, the work would be greatly assisted if the observations were shared by groups of brothers or collected and sent in by the Ministers themselves, using the sheets provided following the attached models.

**7)** The evaluation of each number or paragraph is to be made using the sheets provided following the model prepared by the Commission Secretariat.
All the parts of each sheet must be filled in, keeping in mind that anonymous sheets are not acceptable, or those sent in by "a group of brothers…" without any signature.
Whether you agree with the proposed text or not it is sufficient to "briefly" express your own opinion.
If instead you propose an alternative text this should be presented clearly and concisely. You must provide the reason for the alternative text which is being proposed.

*The evaluation sheets for chapter 9 and the proposals for the same should reach the Commission by 31st October 2010.*

Rome, March 6 2010.

***Br. Francesco***
***Polliani**, OFMCap*
*Secretary of the Commission*

**Model form to be sent to the Secretary of the Commission**
**(PLEASE SEND BY E-MAIL NO LATER THAN 31ST OCTOBER 2010)**

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## Commissio Constitutionum

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# EVALUATION

***of each no. or § of the* "Proposed revision of Chapter IX".**
***Indicate as clearly and concisely as possible whether you agree with the proposed text or not. You may propose an alternative text, giving your reasons.***

- **Name of the Circumscription:**

- **Brother/s:**

**Name:** **Surname:**
**Name:** **Surname:**
**Name:** **Surname:**
**Name:** **Surname:**
(…)

- **THE EVALUATION refers to n. ( ) of the "Proposed revision of Chapter IX".**

- **EVALUATION:**

- **Proposed alternative text (if you think it is necessary):**

- **Reasons for the alternative text:**

# Commissio Constitutionum

## CHAPTER IX

# OUR APOSTOLIC LIFE[8]

*The current title* (The Apostolic Life of the Brothers), *in line with proposals made in previous chapters, has been changed to a personal form. Wherever possible, the text itself is also in the first person plural.*
*The numbering will be adjusted after the revision of chapter 8. For the time being, the current numbering has been retained.*

**N. 144**

| CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (1990) | PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS |
|---|---|
| **144.** 1. The Son of God was sent into the world by the Father so that, assuming our human condition, he might bring the good news to the poor, heal the contrite of heart, proclaim liberty to prisoners, and restore sight to the blind. | **Current text (144,1) with additions**<br>1. The Son of God was sent into the world by the Father so that, assuming our human condition *and consecrated by the Holy Spirit* (1), he might bring the good news to the poor, heal the contrite of heart, proclaim liberty to captives, restore sight to the blind *and proclaim the Lord's day of favour* (2). |
| 2. Christ established the continuation of this mission within the Church by the power of the Holy Spirit. | **Current text (144,2) with additions**<br>2. Christ established that this mission, by the power of the Holy Spirit, should continue within the Church, *which welcomes it as a grace and as its own vocation, the profound expression of its identity* (3). |
| 3. This same Spirit raised up Saint Francis and his apostolic Fraternity so that, according to the more urgent needs of its time, it might offer all its energies to the Church in its mission to all peoples, especially to those who are most in need of hearing the gospel message. | **Current text (144,3) with additions and changes**<br>3. This same Spirit raised up Saint Francis and his apostolic Fraternity so that *following the example of Jesus and His first disciples they could go about the world preaching penance and peace, thus helping the Church in its mission to proclaim the gospel* (4). |
| 4. Our Fraternity, therefore, obeying the Spirit of the Lord and Its holy activity, fulfills a debt of service to all peoples by bringing them the gospel in deed and word in the Church. | **Current text (144,4)**<br>4. Our Fraternity, therefore, in obedience to the Spirit of the Lord and His holy activity, pays a debt of service to all peoples by bringing them the gospel in deeds and words in the Church (5). |

**Explanatory notes**

(1) The inserted phrase is inspired by a proposal in *Project 2006*. It seems more logical to restructure the sentence to bring out the consecutive relationship between the Incarnation and the anointing with the Holy Spirit at Jesus' baptism in the Jordan. In Luke's gospel the discourse in the synagogue at Nazareth, already recalled in the text of the Constitutions, comes after the episodes of the baptism and the temptations; the three episodes are linked by the theme of the Spirit and are arranged in sequence: election, temptation and mission.

[8] The English text of thei "Proposed Revision" of the Commission differs in several respects from available versions of the *Constitutions* published before 2002. The translation was revised, comparing and correcting existing English versions, to make it as faithful as possible to the original Latin.

(2) The addition of this last element, following a proposal in *Project 2006*, completes the reference to *Lk* 4,18-19. It did not seem appropriate to follow the suggestion of *Project 2006* and add to the text this quotation from PCO V: "His whole life, from the first moment of his existence to his death and resurrection, is an integral part of his evangelising activity" (n. 41). Although this text does contain a reference to *Evangelii nuntiandi* (n. 6), in fact the text of the Apostolic Exhortation is formulated differently and with greater precision.

(3) The addition of § 2 again refers to *Evangelii nuntiandi* (n. 14): "Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity".

(4) The current text has been modified by eliminating some less important parts: the clause *according to the more urgent needs of its time* is exclusively limited to one historical moment, whereas our apostolic vocation is to face the more urgent needs of *every* age. Even the last phrase *especially to those who were most in need of hearing the gospel message* seems unnecessary: a similar idea recurs frequently in the Constitutions. The new formulation we propose, composed from expressions found in the *Opuscula*, is closer to the experience of Saint Francis himself and to the origins of our Fraternity. For the sake of completeness, it might be good to include the aspect of pilgrimage explicitly in the text (pilgrims and strangers) and that of poverty (having nothing of our own). Cf. in this connection *Project 2006*, n. 106,4. The last part coincides with the current text in its insistence on assisting the Church to carry out its mission of evangelisation.

(5) *Project 2006* suggests adding *by our lives*; one can observe that the expression *in deeds and words* means precisely *by one's whole life.*

**N. 145**

| **CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (1990)** | **PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS** |
|---|---|
| **145.** 1. In our apostolic activity, let us preserve the proper characteristics of our charism, adapting them to different times and circumstances. | **Current text (145,1) with changes**<br>1. In our apostolic activity we should preserve the characteristics our charism, *expressing them in forms best suited to the conditions of time and place* (1). |
| 2. The principal apostolate of a lesser brother is: to live a gospel life in the world in truth, simplicity and joy. | **Current text (145,2)**<br>2. The principal apostolate of a lesser brother is to live the gospel life in the world in truth, simplicity and joy. |
| | **New text**<br>3. *And since the life of brotherhood is a particular sharing in Christ's mission, we should strive to improve its quality by making our fraternal relationships ever more authentic, generously involving ourselves in the mission of the Order and above all persevering in close and fervent dedication to the Lord Jesus. In this way our apostolate will be truly effective* (2). |
| 3. Let us show respect for all people and [manifest] a spirit ready for dialogue with them. | **Current text (145,3) with changes**<br>4. We should show *esteem and respect* (3)for all people and *always show our* readiness for dialogue with them(4). |
| 4. Although we prefer the evangelization of the poor according to the example of Christ and Saint Francis, we should not hesitate to proclaim the message of the conversion to justice and the responsibility of proclaiming peace to those in positions of power and those ruling others. | **Current text (145,4) with changes**<br>5. While we prefer to evangelize the poor according to the example of Christ and Saint Francis, we should not be afraid to proclaim to those in power *the duty to promote justice and peace* (5). |
| 5. We should willingly assume any ministry or apostolic activity as long as it is in harmony with our form of life and responds to the needs of the Church. | **Current text (145,5)**<br>6. We should willingly take on any ministry or apostolic activity as long as it is in keeping with our form of life and meets the needs of the Church. |

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|---|---|
| Aware of our minority, let us generously undertake those ministries that are regarded as especially difficult. | **Current text (145,5) with additions**<br>7. *Moved by love for the Father who sees in secret* (6)*, and consciously choosing a life of minority* (7)*,* we should generously undertake *humbler tasks* that are regarded as especially difficult, *while taking no pride in the fact* (8). |
| 6. Let the Fraternity, whether provincial or local, promote and coordinate various apostolic initiatives as expressions of the entire fraternity. | *Transferred and inserted into 146, 1*(9) |
| 7. As disciples of Christ and sons of Saint Francis, the brothers should keep in mind that a spirit ready to suffer the cross and persecution, even martyrdom, is required by the faith and the salvation of our neighbor. | **Current text (145,7) with changes**<br>8. *Indeed* (10), as disciples of Christ and sons of Saint Francis, *we* should keep in mind that the apostolic life calls for a spirit of readiness to suffer the cross and persecution, even to the point of martyrdom, for the faith and the salvation of our neighbour. |

**Explanatory notes**

(1) The content of the text has not been changed; the formulation is slightly different, bearing in mind that it is not the characteristics of our charism that need to be adapted, but the forms by which they are expressed. This § was added to the text of the Constitutions at the General Chapter of 1982.

(2) Following *Project 2006*, we propose to insert a new text to show the apostolic value of fraternal life. The proposed text, in its content and formulation, depends on *VC* 72.

(3) We propose to add the word *respect* to *esteem*; (note: the English version of the current text translates "esteem" as "respect"). Both qualities facilitate dialogue.

(4) The content of the text is unchanged, but we have tried to improve its formulation.

(5) This § was added to the text of the Constitutions at the General Chapter of 1982, and derives from the Conclusions of PCO III (Mattli 1978), n. 13. While leaving the content unaltered, we propose a lighter formulation. It should also be noted that the sentence has only one punctuation mark, and one wonders which part corresponds to the example of Christ and Saint Francis: preference for evangelising the poor, or boldness in proclaiming the message of conversion to world leaders? If we consider the source (PCO III) from which the text is derived, the example of Christ and Saint Francis must refer to the second aspect. In fact the Mattli document says: "Notwithstanding our preference always to preach the gospel to "the poor", we should not forget the example of Saint Francis, who also proclaimed the gospel of conversion, truth, peace and good will to the powerful and to the leaders of nations " (n. 13). We find the same structure in the text approved by the General Chapter of 1982: "While preference must be given to evangelising the poor, *after the example Christ and Francis* we should not be afraid to proclaim also to those in positions power and to rulers the message of conversion to justice and the duty to project peace". In the light of the above, I propose a small change in the text, to make the text more supple and more faithful to Mattli and to the General Chapter. The current version is the work of the post-capitular commission

(6) The proposed formulation is closer to the text of the 1968 Constitutions: "*Moved by the love of the Father who sees in secret*, and conscious of our minority, let us generously embrace those ministries that are more difficult for others to adopt, but without seeking any glory from doing this". This text casts a particular light on all the Constitutions, highlighting once and for all that minority is to be lived evangelically (cf. *Mt* 6,4.6.18), without making a label or a distinctive coat of arms out of it or a flag to be waved. Perhaps for this reason, or to avoid this very risk, our legislative tradition has always been rather sparing in its use of the term minority, while affirming its substance. The reference to the *Father who sees in secret* reminds us that the disciple's justice must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, and calls us back to the practice of a genuine religious devotion. The Christian life – even in its more heroic aspects – must be lived with simplicity; Witness is not to be confused with ostentation or theatricality. Minority is the art of remaining unobserved. From this point of view, the formulation proposed for the Constitutions is extremely important.

(7) The expression *aware of our minority* seems rather vague; it is better to say *consciously choosing a life of minority* We should observe, however, that perhaps, rather than placing the two clauses side by side (*Moved by the*

*love of the Father, who sees in secret* **and** *consciously choosing a life of minority*), it would be more appropriate to make the second and third clauses subordinate to the first: *Moved by the love of the Father, who sees in secret, we consciously* **choose** *the life of minority* **and** *generously undertake ministries…*). In fact, it is precisely the love of the Father who sees in secret that motivates us to live in minority.

(8) Cf. above, note 6.

(9) § 6 of the current text was added to the Constitutions by the General Chapter of 1982. It seems to refer to structures and organisation; as such, it would be better placed in the following number.

(10) If we transfer the text of the current § 6 as we have just said, it becomes logical to place § 8 in the previous one, reinforced by the adverb *Indeed*. This happened in the Constitutions of 1968. Although the present text (n. 145,7) differs from that of 1968, its character, and to some extent its content, coincide. In fact:

| ***1968 text (n. 132)*** | ***Current text (n. 145,7)*** |
|---|---|
| Moved by the love of the Father who sees in secret, and conscious of our minority, we should generously undertake those ministries that are difficult for others to take on, but without seeking any glory from this; *indeed, in everything, as true witnesses of Christ, we should not fear to suffer persecutions, calumnies or penury, remembering that no disciple is greater than his Master.* | As disciples of Christ and sons of Saint Francis, the brothers should keep in mind that a spirit ready to suffer the cross and persecution, even martyrdom, is required by the faith and the salvation of our neighbor. |

**N. 146**

| **CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (1990)** | **PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS** |
|---|---|
| **146.** 1. The brothers should willingly engage in any kind of apostolate, even if it is of private inspiration, under obedience to the competent authority. | **Current text (146,1 + 145,6) with additions and changes**<br>1. *We* should willingly engage in any kind of apostolate, even if it is *a personal initiative, as the Lord inspires us* (1). *The various apostolic activities should be promoted and co-ordinated as an expression of the entire fraternity, and conducted* under obedience to the competent authority (2). |
| 2. Saving the right of the Supreme Pontiff to use the service of the Order for the good of the universal Church, the exercise of each apostolate is subject to the authority of the diocesan Bishop, from whom the brothers, after they have been approved by their ministers, receive the necessary faculties. When they are invited by a bishop to serve the people of God and their salvation, the ministers may freely accept [these invitations], in as much as they are able, according to our charism. | **Current text (146,2) with changes**<br>2. Saving the right of the Supreme Pontiff to use the services of the Order for the good of the universal Church, the exercise of any apostolate is subject to the authority of the diocesan Bishop, from whom the brothers receive the necessary faculties once they have been approved by their ministers. Let the ministers, as far as they are able and in accordance with our charism, gladly accept a bishop's invitation *when he calls us* (3) to serve the people of God and *to work together for* (4) *the salvation of all people.* |
| 3. While preserving our Capuchin-Franciscan characteristics, it is the responsibility of the provincial chapter to adapt our apostolic labors to the needs of the times. But it pertains to the provincial minister with the consent of the definitory to coordinate the apostolic resources of | **Current text (146,3)**<br>3. It is the responsibility of the provincial chapter to adapt our apostolic work to the needs of the times. while preserving our Capuchin Franciscan character. But it is for the provincial minister, with the consent of the definitory, to co-ordinate the apostolic |

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| the province. | resources of the province. |
| 4. After consulting the local chapter in matters of greater importance, the superior of a fraternity should allocate work, while keeping in mind the needs of the Church and the conditions of the individual brothers, [and] in close collaboration with any pastoral organization established by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. | **Current text (146,4)**<br>4. The guardiano, dopo aver consultato The Capitolo locale nei casi di maggiore importanza, distribuisca gli impegni, tenendo conto delle necessità della Chiesa e delle condizioni dei singoli frati, *nel pieno rispetto dei piani pastorali della Chiesa locale* (5). |
| 5. Let the brothers willingly collaborate in the works and initiatives of the other religious institutes of the Church. | **New text**<br>5. *For the good of the Church and according to need, the circumscriptions should willingly co-operate among themselves in apostolic works and initiatives, to be developed with sensible planning. Sustained by a sense of ecclesial communion,* we should fraternally co-operate also with other Institutes *of consecrated life, especially Franciscan ones* (6). |

**Explanatory notes**

(1) The intention behind the proposed text is to avoid speaking of *private* initiatives. It is better to speak of initiatives taken by a person who perceives the movements of the Spirit. This is why we have added the phrase *as the Lord inspires us,* with a clear reference to the divine inspiration mentioned many times by Saint Francis.

(2) The text of the § has been divided into two parts, in an attempt to distinguish in part one the promptness of the response, even in a personal initiative inspired by the Spirit, and in part two the necessary reference to the fraternity and to obedience, because even ventures undertaken by individual brothers, on their own initiative and by divine inspiration, must be exercised in obedience. The text of § 145,6 has also been incorporated here.

(3) The formulation of the text has been slightly modified, stressing the fact that the invitation made by bishops to the Ministers is not addressed to them personally, but to the entire circumscription or to a local fraternity. Hence it seems appropriate to say *when he calls us.*

(4) The expression *to work together for the salvation of all*, coined by the C.C.L. and consistently maintained in all editions of the Constitutions from 1968 until today, does not seem to be the most appropriate: we are not invited or called to save people, but to collaborate ("work together") for the salvation of people. We are not saviours! In this connection we should keep in mind the text of *Project 2006*: "In every apostolate we are always aware that we are only collaborators, even when we are called to take charge, since Jesus Christ is always Lord and the Holy Spirit is the true guide" (n. 107,4).

(5) The current text, while expressing an extremely important concept and a very valid and necessary insistence, seems very rigid in its formulation (*in close collaboration with any pastoral organization established by the ecclesiastical hierarchy*) and perhaps also restrictive. In the judgement of the Commission, it is not just a matter of taking account of the pastoral organisation set up by the hierarchy, but of respect for pastoral plans, which certainly involve the hierarchy and the organisational structures, but also the entire ecclesial community. It should be noted that some members of the Commission were rather perplexed by the proposed new formulation.

(6) The currant text speaks of our collaboration with other religious Institutes. It seems appropriate to insert into this chapter the need for collaboration between and among provinces. Hence the current text has been restructured with a view to apostolic collaboration between and among the various circumscriptions of the Order, also inserting the suggestion of *sensible planning.* The second part of the § inserts the need for collaboration with other Institutes of consecrated life, in a text formulated in the light of *VC* 52.

**N. 147**

| CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (1990) | PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS |
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| **147.** 1. In order that our apostolic initiatives may respond to the demands of evangelization and to peoples' needs, let the brothers accustom themselves to read the signs of the times through which the divine plan is perceived by the eyes of faith. | **Current text (147,1) with one change**<br>1. To ensure that our apostolic initiatives respond to the demands of evangelization and to peoples' needs, *we should* accustom themselves to reading the signs of the times, through which the divine plan is perceived by the eyes of faith. |
| 2. They should foster the customary works of the apostolate such as popular missions, retreats, the sacramental confession of the faithful, the spiritual care of religious women, especially Franciscans, care of the sick and of those in prison, works of education and of social development. | **Current text (147,2) with one change**<br>2. *We* should foster the customary works of the apostolate such as popular missions, retreats, the sacramental confession of the faithful, the spiritual care of religious women, especially Franciscans, care of the sick and of prisoners, works of education and of social development |
| 3. When taking on new forms of the apostolate, let the brothers show special care to those peoples who are deprived of ordinary pastoral care because of the conditions of their life: the young during decisive moments of their Christian life, emigrants, laborers, those burdened with financial pressures, or those harassed by hostility or racial prejudice. | **Current text, amended and expanded**<br>3. When taking on new forms of the apostolate *we* should show special concern for people who are *far from the faith and from religious practice, and for those who* (1) are deprived of ordinary pastoral care because of the conditions of their life: the young during moments of crisis in their Christian life, emigrants, labourers, those burdened with financial pressures, or those harassed by hostility or racial prejudice. |
| | **New text** (2)<br>*4. We should bear witness to the culture of life, and work hard to ensure that human life, from its conception until death, is always defended and promoted* (3). *We should work in favour of children and commit ourselves to the education and training of young people, even by our presence in schools and other centres of education* (4). *We should carefully support the family founded upon marriage, as the household Church and the living cell of society, showing our closeness and solidarity especially to the neediest families* (5). |
| 4. Let them undertake with special zeal an ecumenical dialogue of charity, truth and prayer with non-Catholic Christian brothers and sisters that they may share the Church's concern for restoring unity. | **Current text (147,4) with changes**<br>5. We should also share the Church's concern *to achieve the unity willed by Christ* (6), by actively joining in the ecumenical dialogue of charity, truth and prayer with *our* non-Catholic Christian brothers and sisters. |
| 5. Likewise let them attempt to establish a salutary discussion with those among whom they live or to whom they are sent who profess another religion and who do not believe. | **Current text (147,5) with one change**<br>6. Similarly, *we* should try to engage in profitable discussions with people of other faiths and with unbelievers, among whom we live or to whom we are sent. |
| 6. All ministries undertaken for the people must be founded upon a life shaped by the Gospel. The witness of brothers who live close to the people and [who] are simple of heart and minors by the condition of their life and speech is more easily understood and more willingly received. | **Current text (147,6) expanded, with changes**<br>7. All ministries undertaken for the people must be founded upon a life shaped by the Gospel. *We should remember that the world listens to witnesses more than to teachers, and listens to teachers only if they are witnesses. Therefore let us* live close to the people, simple and |

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| | lowly both in *our* way of life and in *our* speech (7). |

**Explanatory notes**

(1) We have accepted a proposal to insert here a reference to the care of those who are far from the faith or religious practice. (cf. *Project 2006* n. 114,3), which links up with the guidelines of PCO V nn. 85-87. R. Cantalamessa's suggestion is valid and noteworthy: we should be "fishers" more than "pastors", concerned above all to bring new people into the Church and to "fish back" those estranged from it. "The itinerant preaching which Francis chose for himself meets precisely this need. It would be a shame if the existence of our own churches and large structures made us Franciscans only shepherds and not fishers of men"[9]. In the context of the new evangelisation this should be a matter of urgency for us.

(2) As already indicated in the introduction, the new text proposed for § 4 flows from the teaching of *Vita consecrata* which gives examples of *new mission contexts* (cf. n. 96-99).

(3) Cf. *Evangelium Vitae* 77.

(4) Cf. *Vita consecrata* 96-97; PCO VII, n. 54. The text takes account of the experience of our Order which in many regions of the world has been, and still is, present in the field of education through schools, colleges and similar ventures.

(5) The underlying reason for proposing this new text is, once again, that of the **new mission contexts**, mentioned in *Vita consecrata*. In that context the Apostolic Exhortation does not mention the family, but, in the light of the teaching of the Magisterium, this should be considered one of the most urgent priorities of the present time. In particular, *Famliaris consortio* has a direct challenge for religious, for whom the apostolate of the family "finds its primary, fundamental and original expression precisely in their consecration to God. By reason of this consecration, "all Christ's faithful religious recall that wonderful marriage made by God, which will be fully manifested in the future age, and in which the Church has Christ for her only spouse, (*Perfectae Caritatis*, 12) and they are witnesses to that universal charity which, through chastity embraced for the Kingdom of heaven, makes them ever more available to dedicate themselves generously to the service of God and to the works of the apostolate.

Hence the possibility for men and women religious, and members of Secular Institutes and other institutes of perfection, either individually or in groups, to develop their service to families, with particular solicitude for children, especially if they are abandoned, unwanted, orphaned, poor or handicapped. They can also visit families and look after the sick; they can foster relationships of respect and charity towards one-parent families or families that are in difficulties or are separated; they can offer their own work of teaching and counselling in the preparation of young people for marriage, and in helping couples towards truly responsible parenthood; they can open their own houses for simple and cordial hospitality, so that families can find there the sense of God's presence and gain a taste for prayer and recollection, and see the practical examples of lives lived in charity and fraternal joy as members of the larger family of God.

I would like to add a most pressing exhortation to the heads of institutes of consecrated life to consider-always with substantial respect for the proper and original charism of each one-the apostolate of the family as one of the priority tasks, rendered even more urgent by the present state of the world." (*Famliaris consortio* 74).

(6) We propose a small variation at the end of the § to avoid wrong interpretations. In the Commission, however, it was observed that the *redintegratio (restoration)* of which the text speaks, inspired by the Decree of Vatican II *Unitatis redintegratio* and by CIC (can 755), is never understood, either in the conciliar texts or in the documents of the Magisterium, as a *return (to the Catholic Church),* but rather as a restoration of integral unity (*redire in integrum,* a "return to wholeness"*)*. This is why we speak of "restoring the unity" of the one, undivided Church, in conformity with the will of Christ the Lord. The intention underlying the change of text would perhaps have required us not to speak of *non-Catholic Christian brothers and sisters*, but of *all Christian brothers and sisters* or *all the disciples of Christ*. In fact the purpose of the ecumenical movement

[9] R. CANTALAMESSA, "*Let us observe the Rule we have promised*". Assisi, Chapter of Mats, 15-04-2009 on the VIII Centenary of the approval of the Rule of Saint Francis.

"is the restoration of unity among all Christians, which the Church is bound by the will of Christ to promote" (can 755, § 1).

(7) The first statement of the current text remains unaltered. The second has been partly replaced and partly modified. *The witness of brothers… is more easily understood and more willingly received* has been replaced by an expression derived from a famous phrase of Paul VI, also introduced into *Evangelii nuntiandi* ("As we said recently to a group of lay people, "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses" [n. 41]), because it is very relevant and effective. Moreover, the theme of fitness is well developed in the same Apostolic Exhortation. The last line of the text has been slightly reformulated, in the light of the French translation: "Le témoignage des frères sera plus facilement compris et mieux accueilli s'ils vivent proches des gens au cœur simple et se comportent en vrais mineurs dans leur style de vie comme dans leur langage" ("The witness given by the brothers will be more easily understood and accepted if they live close to simple-hearted people and behave as true lesser brothers, both in their lifestyle and in their speech").

## N. 148

**Premise**

*The Constitutions of 1968 devoted three whole numbers to the apostolate of the Word. The General Chapter of 1982 wished to simplify the text, but in the reduction process a few very important aspects were lost, which had been particularly underlined by the Magisterium after the Council. We therefore propose a number of additions to the current text, with the aim of restoring some of the concerns of the 1968 text and enriching it in the light of the teachings of the Church.*

| CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (1990) | PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS |
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| | **New text**<br>1. *Jesus devoted His life to proclaiming the Kingdom of God and sent His apostles to preach the gospel to all nations* (1). |
| **148.** 1. As he went throughout cities announcing the mystery of Christ in few and simple words, Saint Francis, the herald of Christ, confirmed by the authority of the Church, scattered the seeds of the Gospel everywhere. | **Current text (148,1)**<br>2. Saint Francis, Christ's herald, confirmed by the authority of the Church, scattered (2) the seeds of the Gospel everywhere as he went from place to place announcing the mystery of Christ in few and simple words. |
| 2. Following his example and the tradition of our Order, the brothers should preach the word of God clearly, and adhere to the Sacred Scriptures faithfully. | **Current text (148,2) expanded, with changes**<br>3. *Therefore, docile to the command of the Divine Master* (3) *and* following St Francis' example and the tradition of our Order, let us preach the word of God in clear language, adhering faithfully to the Sacred Scriptures. |
| 3. Let the brothers make every effort to imprint the word of God, Christ, upon their own hearts and give themselves totally to Him, so that He may impel them to speak out of an abundance of love. In this way they shall preach Christ Himself by their life, work and speech. | **Current text (148,3) with changes**<br>4. Let *us* make every effort to imprint on *our* hearts the word of God, who is Christ, and give ourselves totally to Him, so that He may move us to speak out of an abundance of love. In this way we will preach Christ Himself by our life, our actions and our speech. |
| 4. That this may occur, let them strive to make continual progress in the wisdom of Christ that is acquired above all in the course of life, and especially through persistent reading, meditation and careful study of the Sacred Scriptures. | **Current text (148,4) with one change**<br>5. In order that this may happen, let *us* strive to grow in the wisdom of Christ, which is chiefly acquired by living it, notably through persistent reading, meditation and careful study of the Sacred Scriptures. |
| | **New text**<br>6. *Let us ensure that all our pastoral service is imbued with a* |

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| | *biblical spirit* (4). *We should provide instruction in the faith* (5) *using methods appropriate to the needs of different groups of people and different professional circles. We should work so that the light of Christ penetrates every sector of human life, and the leaven of salvation transforms society from within, so that a culture permeated by gospel values may be promoted and strengthened* (6). |

**Explanatory notes**

(1) The text of 1968 introduced its treatment of the ministry of preaching with an inspiring doctrinal premise and, following the tradition of our Constitutions, referring above all to the example of Christ (cf. *Const* 1925, n. 181). It seems opportune to restore this Christological foundation.

(2) Tense changed in both verbs (from imperfect to perfect) for stylistic reasons, since the previous paragraph has the verb in the perfect tense.

(3) Our commitment to preaching the word derives not only from the example of Francis, but primarily from the example of Christ and from the mission He entrusted to the apostles. We devote ourselves to preaching in obedience to Christ.

(4) The addition is inspired by *Project 2006*: *let us give due importance to the biblical apostolate*. However the sole objective of this apostolate appears to be the distribution of the Bible. The proposed text is formulated in the light of *Dei Verbum* (cf. n. 24) and on the basis of Proposition 30 of the 2008 Synod of Bishops: "The Synod recommends that the "biblical apostolate" be strengthened, not side by side with other forms of pastoral activity, but as the biblical heart and soul of all pastoral care".

(5) In the present Constitutions the term *catechesis* is used only once (cf. 28,2: "The formation of postulants is aimed chiefly at completing their *catechesis* in the faith"). The text of 1968, speaking about the apostolate of the Word, mentioned it twice (cf. nn. 135 and 137). This proposal for § 5, as well as referring to the text of 1968, intends to take up the appeal made in *Catechesi tradendae*: "Many religious institutes for men and women came into being for the purpose of giving Christian education to children and young people, especially the most abandoned. Throughout history, men and women religious have been deeply committed to the Church's catechetical activity, doing particularly apposite and effective work. At a time when it is desired that the links between religious and pastors should be accentuated and consequently the active presence of religious communities and their members in the pastoral projects of the local Churches, I wholeheartedly exhort you, whose religious consecration should make you even more readily available for the Church's service, to prepare as well as possible for the task of catechesis according to the differing vocations of your institutes and the missions entrusted to you, and to carry this concern everywhere. Let the communities dedicate as much as possible of what ability and means they have to the specific work of catechesis" (n. 65).

(6) The text is derived almost literally from *VC* 98: *the evangelisation of cultures* is still one of the *mission contexts* for religious. In this respect we should remember that the Constitutions of 1968, in n. 135, spoke about "conversations and dialogue... conferences and congresses of every kind, the press and other instruments of social communication". N. 136 said: "The friars shall preach the word of God clearly and simply, so as to adapt the gospel suitably to the understanding of ordinary people and to modern requirements… They shall deal with the problems of the contemporary world in the light of Christ ". In no. 137 they said: "In addition, the friars should be carefully trained in the techniques of preaching and catechesis, so that they are effective instruments to ensure that the word of God is spread and held in honour. In their work to build up the Church, let them maintain sincere relationships of warm friendship with all people".

**N. 149**

| CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (1990) | PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS |
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| **149.** 1. Through the celebration of the sacraments | **Current text (149,1) with additions** |

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| Christ is present to the faithfu1 with His power, sanctifies them, and builds up His body. | 1. Through the celebration of the sacraments Christ is present to the faithfu1 with His power, sanctifies them and builds up His body, *while the people of God renders worthy worship to the Lord their God* (1). |
| Therefore, let the brothers be ready to assist the faithfu1 when administering the sacraments either by virtue of their office or when invited to do so by the clergy. Thus, on these occasions, the faith may be nourished, strengthened and expressed. | **Current text (149,1) with changes**<br>2. Therefore let the brothers be ready to assist the faithfu1 by administering the sacraments either in virtue of their office or when invited to do so by the clergy, so that, *through the celebration of the mysteries* (2), *the faithful may be helped to nourish, strengthen and express their faith..* |
| | **New text**<br>3. *Let us prepare ourselves diligently to dispense the mysteries of God, desiring to imitate what we celebrate and to conform our lives to the mystery of the Lord's cross* (3). *We should nourish among the faithful a Christian life cantered on the Eucharist, drawing from this same source of pastoral charity the energy to give ourselves for the good of our neighbour* (4). |

**Explanatory notes**

(1) The current text is incomplete in its treatment of the significance and purpose of the sacraments. We therefore propose to return, in part, to the 1968 text (n. 138), derived from *SC* 7 and 59. Cf. also *SC* 33.

(2) § 2 is identical to the current text, but we have tried to improve its formulation. In particular, we believe it is better to say *through the celebration of the mysteries* instead of using the generic phrase *hac occasione (on that occasion)* of the Latin text.

(3) The text of 1968 (n. 138) exhorted the brothers to *prepare themselves diligently*, but with reference to preparation for the "instruction [of the faithful]during the liturgical actions, especially in the homily during the Eucharistic sacrifice". The concept of 1968 is therefore restored, but with a broader perspective, bringing out also the need for examplarity: we are not only called to celebrate the sacraments for others, but to live out, to give witness to, what we celebrate. The wording of the proposed text is inspired by a formula found in the Roman Pontifical.

(4)The second part of the § draws its inspiration from a concern of *Project 2006*: "In the ecclesial communities and in our fraternities let us increasingly cultivate the Eucharist, the source of communion, and the soul and nourishment of apostolic energy. We must be conscious that, as well as being committed to celebrate the Eucharist, we are called to live eucharistically" (n. 112,2). The formulation is different, but the content expressed by *Project 2006* has been safeguarded.

**N. 149 bis (= 149,2-4)**

| CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (1990) | PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS |
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| **149.** 2. The brothers who are priests, in the spirit of Christ the Shepherd, should proclaim the remission of sins in the sacrament of reconciliation and willingly offer themselves for hearing the confessions of the faithful, especially since it is a ministry highly appropriate to lesser ones and is often exercised on behalf of people who are spiritually very poor. | **Current text (149,2) with deletions and one change**<br>1. The brothers who are priests should proclaim the remission of sins in the sacrament of reconciliation in the spirit of Christ the Shepherd and willingly make themselves available to hear the confessions of the faithful, particularly since this ministry is highly appropriate to *us as lesser brothers* (1). |
| 3. Let zeal for the holiness of God and His mercy, as well as respect for the dignity of the human | **Current text (149,3)**<br>2. They should be outstanding in their zeal for God's |

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| person, charity, patience and prudence be resplendent in them. | holiness and mercy, in their respect for the dignity of the human person, their charity, patience and prudence. |
| 4. Confessors should strive to make continual progress in pastoral knowledge and in the proper exercise of their ministry | **Current text (149,4)**<br>3. Confessors should endeavour to make continual progress in pastoral knowledge and in the proper exercise of their ministry. |

**Explanatory notes**

(1) We propose this expression to avoid difficulties in translating and interpreting the single word *minors*. The last phrase of the current text, *people who are spiritually very poor*, is open to misunderstanding. The Commission, unable to replace it with a better, more striking phrase, therefore opted to delete it.

**N. 150**

| CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (1990) | PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS |
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| **150.** 1. After the example of Saint Francis and the enduring tradition of the Order, the brothers should willingly undertake the spiritual, and even the bodily, care of the sick and infirm. | **Current text**<br>1. After the example of Saint Francis and the enduring tradition of the Order, the brothers should willingly undertake the spiritual, and even bodily, care of the sick and infirm. |
| 2. Thus by following Christ Who went about the cities and villages healing every sickness and infirmity as a sign of the coming of the Kingdom of God, they will fulfill the mission of the Church which, through its children, unites itself with people of every condition, especially the poor and afflicted, and willingly spends itself for them. | **Current text**<br>2. Thus, by following Christ Who went through towns and villages healing every kind of sickness and infirmity as a sign that the Kingdom of God had come, they will fulfil the mission of the Church which, through its children, unites itself with people of every condition, especially the poor and afflicted, and willingly spends itself for them. |
| 3. Let the ministers encourage this ministry since it is an excellent and efficacious work of charity and of the apostolate. | **Current text (150,3) with one change**<br>3. *The ministers and guardians* should encourage this ministry since it is an excellent and effective work of charity and of the apostolate. |

**N. 151**

| CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (1990) | PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS |
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| **151.** 1. In keeping with the character and tradition of our Order, let the brothers be ready to offer pastoral assistance to the clergy in the parishes of a particular**.** | **Current text**<br>1. In keeping with the character and tradition of our Order, let the brothers be ready to offer pastoral assistance to the diocesan clergy in parishes. |
| 2. WhThee being attentive to the urgent needs of the faithful, major superiors, with the consent of the councThe, may accept with prudence the care of a parish in the spirit of service to a particular Church. | **Current text modified**<br>2.. While being attentive to the urgent needs of the faithful, *the ministers*, with the consent of the council, may prudently accept the care of a parish in a spirit of service to the particular Church. |

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| 3. That we might be faithful to our vocation in assuming this ministry, those parishes should ordinarily be preferred in which we can more easily give a witness of minority and lead a form of life and work in fraternity. In this way the people of God can appropriately share in our charism. | **Current text**<br>3. In order to stay faithful to our vocation when assuming this ministry, we should ordinarily prefer parishes where we can more easily give a witness of minority and live and work in fraternity. In this way the people of God can appropriately share in our charism. |
| 4. Shrines entrusted to our Order should be centers of evangelization and sound devotion. | **Current text (151,4) expanded**<br>4. Shrines entrusted to our Order should be centres of evangelization and sound devotion. *Our work in them should accord with the Church's guidelines* (1) *and give witness to the fundamental values of our life* (2). |

**Explanatory notes**

(1) The addition *should accord with the Church's guidelines* is obligatory in a constitutional text. Indeed, in every shrine the authority of the Church (the local Ordinary or the Episcopal Conference or the Holy See) exercises its own competence and has the responsibility of overseeing the apostolate conducted in them. (cf. CIC, can. 1230-1234). Therefore PCO I, with reference to shrines, stated: "Our apostolate should be integrated into the pastoral programme of the local Church" (III,13). At the universal level the Church itself has published special norms governing pastoral work in shrines[10].

(2) The final request expressed in the text is particularly pertinent, because the fundamental purpose of our presence in shrines is to give witness. The same concern was already evident at PCO I, which was very cautious when speaking about shrines. The subject was developed by Br. John Corriveau in Circular Letter n. 7 (October 30, 1995; Prot. N. 01056/95), which provides further material on which to draw to improve the constitutional text.

**N. 152**

| CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (1990) | PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS |
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| **152.** 1. As they recognize the role of the laity in the life and activity of the Church, let the brothers encourage the lay people to assume the different ministries proper to them, especially in the work of evangelization. Likewise [the brothers] should promote associations of the faithful whose members strive to live and proclaim the word of God and to change the world from within. | **Current text (152,1) expanded, with changes**<br>1. *Let us recognise and promote* the mission that rightly belongs to the laity, *which originates in baptism*, especially in the work of evangelisation, *and we should learn to work together with them* (1). *We* should likewise *support* associations of the faithful whose members strive to live and proclaim the word of God and to change the world from within. |
| 2. Among these associations, the Secular Franciscan Order should be close to our heart. Let us cooperate with Secular Franciscan that their fraternities may progress as communities of faith endowed with a special effectiveness for evangelization, as well as in the formation of individual members. Thus they may spread the Kingdom of God not only by the example of their life but also by various kinds of apostolic activity. | **Current text (152,2), slightly reformulated**<br>2. Among these associations, the Secular Franciscan Order should be especially dear to us. We should work with Secular Franciscans to promote the growth of their fraternities as communities of faith endowed with a special effectiveness for evangelization. *We should also co-operate* in the formation of individual members, so that they may spread the Kingdom of God not only by the example of their lives but also by various kinds of apostolic activity. |

[10] Cf. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF IL SACRAMENTS, *Directory on popular piety and liturgy. Principles and guidelines* (Vatican City 2002), chap. VIII. *Shrines and Pilgrimages* (nn. 261-287). Cf. also *I Santuari. Configurazione giuridica e dimensione pastorale*. Intervention by the Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy (19 November 1998).

**Explanatory notes**

(1) We propose to reformulate the first part of the §, not using the word *ministry*, in order to avoid misunderstandings. It is preferable to speak of the *mission that rightly belongs to the laity, which originates in baptism* and must be recognised and promoted. It seemed very appropriate also to bring out the fact that it is not sufficient to *recognise* and *promote* their mission, but that we should also *learn to work together* with the laity.

**N. 153**

| CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (1990) | PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS |
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| **153.** 1. Saint Francis used to encourage his brothers to proclaim the Kingdom of God even with songs and praises in the language of the people; he himself strove to serve the salvation of all peoples through many writings. | **New text** (1)<br>1. *Saint Francis, who saw "in things of beauty Him who is most beautiful"*(2), *invited all creatures to praise and glorify the Lord. Let us, too, learn to recognise all the good and beautiful things the Lord has sown in the human heart and in the harmony of creation. With moderation and simplicity, let us make full use of them in our apostolates so that God's glory, resplendent in creation and most of all in the paschal mystery, may draw the hearts of men and women to itself. Let us commit ourselves to make God's beauty known, through the spoken and written word and also through Christian art.* |
| 2. Therefore, let us also greatly esteem the modern means of social communication for their power to influence and move the masses and the entire human society and as instruments suitable for evangelizing peoples of our time. | **Current text (153,2-3-4) expanded, with changes**<br>2. We should proclaim Christ far and wide, without excluding the use of the communications media, which offer great opportunities for evangelisation. Therefore superiors should see to it that suitable brothers can be properly trained in the efficient and correct use of these media. All the brothers should be suitably instructed in how to use them carefully and responsibly (2). |
| 3. That the various forms of the apostolate may be strengthened in our fraternities by these means of social communication, superiors should take care that brothers who are found qualified for this receive appropriate training. | *Merged with the previous number.* |
| 4. All the brothers should be suitably instructed in a responsible use of these means of social communication that, through them, they may acquire an accurate and realistic understanding of the condition of human society and the needs of the Church. | *Merged with n. 2.* |
| 5. With combined efforts, let them also exercise the apostolate of the printed page, especially in publishing matters of Franciscan interest. It is strongly recommended that offices for this purpose be established in provinces or nations, and even in the Order as a whole. | **Current text (153,5) with one change**<br>3 We should gladly join in the apostolate of the press, especially in publishing Franciscan works. |
| | **New text**<br>4. *In our publications, when using the means of social communication and when we appear in the media, we should* |

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| | *express full adherence to gospel values and to the teaching of the Church* (4). |
| | **New text**<br>5.*Publications and communications that represent the Order officially, both locally and at universal level, must be duly assessed and authorised by the competent superior. Particular care should be taken to ensure that they are up to date and express the genuine thinking of the Order.* |
| 6. The prescriptions of universal law are to be observed in matters pertaining to the instruments of social communication. When it is a matter of writing about religion or morals, it should be remembered that permission is also required from the major superior. | **Current text (153,6)**<br>6. Regarding the instruments of social communication, the prescriptions of universal law are to be observed. When writings about religion or morals are concerned, it should be remembered that permission is also required from the major superior. |
| | **New text (cf. 153,5 part two)**<br>7. It is appropriate to establish suitable offices at the various levels in the Order so that the apostolate of the communications media may be co-ordinated, supported and properly evaluated. |
| 7. Let the brothers have the equipment necessary for carrying out their duties without this being a detriment to fraternal life and with due consideration to our Capuchin-Franciscan vocation. | *deleted* (5) |

**Explanatory notes**

(1) We propose a text that enriches and develops the content of the present Constitutions, starting from the example of Saint Francis, who was a master of the *way of beauty,* educating ourselves to recognise and value in our apostolates the aesthetic dimension, and committing ourselves to this both in simple or "ordinary" speech and in writings, using typically Franciscan artistic expressions[11].

(2) Cf. *Legenda Maior*, IX.

(3) The current text and the two following §§ seem to express a rather dated approach to the mass media – too emphatic, insufficiently critical and perhaps rather ingenuous. Today, given the enormous developments that have taken place in the world of the media, we are better placed to have a mature awareness of the possibilities they offer, but also of the risks involved. Some of the positive and negative aspects of the media have already been highlighted in chapter 6. Here, it is appropriate to confine the references to recognising the great possibilities they offer for evangelisation, together with the need to be adequately trained in their use and the responsibility that this involves.

(4) Given the importance that the communications media have assumed, and knowing from experience that their use can be a sensitive area, especially in the case of official statements, the following §§ have been added to make clear our firm determination (and vocation !) always to walk *with the Church*. The superiors of the Order have their own special responsibility in this area, since they are called upon to watch over and to regulate the use of the media, especially when matters of faith and morals are involved.

(5) The paragraph can be omitted, being more appropriately placed in the chapter on work.

**N. 154**

| CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (1990) | PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS |
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| **154.** 1. In whatever capacity they are dedicated to | **Current text (154,1) with changes** |

[11] Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Message to OFMConv General Chapter and to the Community of the Sacro Convento* (Assisi 17 June 2007).

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| the apostolate, let the brothers integrate their life and activity in the exercise of love to God and people that is the soul of every apostolate. | 1. *Whatever work we are engaged in* (1), *we* should integrate *our* life and activity with the exercise of love for God and people, which is the soul of every apostolate. |
| 2. They should also remember that they cannot pursue their mission unless they are continually renewed in faithfulness to their own vocation. | **Current text (154,2) with changes**<br>2. *Let us* also remember that *we* cannot pursue *our* mission unless *we* are continually renewed in fidelity to *our* own vocation. |
| 3. Let them, therefore, perform works of the apostolate in poverty and humility, not making a ministry their own, that it may be clear that it is Jesus Christ alone whom they seek. Let them preserve that unity of the fraternity which Christ wished to be so perfect that the world would know the Son was sent by the Father. | **Current text (154,3) with changes**<br>3. Let *us* therefore be poor and humble in performing works of the apostolate, without making any ministry *our* own, so that all may clearly see that *we* seek Jesus Christ alone. Let *us* preserve that unity in brotherhood which Christ wished to be so perfect that the world would know the Son had been sent by the Father. |
| 4. Let them cultivate a life of prayer and study in a fraternal exchange, so that they may be intimately united with the Savior and, moved by the power of the Holy Spirit, offer themselves with a magnanimous and ready spirit to witnessing to the joyful good news in the world. | **Current text (154,4) with changes**<br>4. In *our* life together as brothers, let *us* cultivate a life of prayer and study, so that *we* may be closely united with the Saviour and, moved by the power of the Holy Spirit, may offer ourselves with a ready and generous heart to witness to the good news in the world. |

**Explanatory notes**

(1) This formulation makes the text easier to understand.