

# GENERAL STATUTES OF THE COMMUNITY OF THE BEATITUDES



August 2015

## CONTENTS

Preamble .....	3
Chapter 1. Nature and Purpose .....	4
1.1 Nature.....	4
1.2 Vocation and Spiritual Heritage .....	4
1.3 Purpose.....	5
Chapter 2. Consecrated Life in the Community .....	5
Chapter 3. Fraternal Life.....	7
Chapter 4. Life with God .....	8
Chapter 5. Apostolic Life.....	9
5.1 Spirit and General Points .....	9
5.2 Specific Terms .....	10
Chapter 6. Formation and Stages of Integration into the Community .....	11
6.1 General Points.....	11
6.2 Principles .....	11
6.3 Stages of Integration .....	12
6.4 Priestly Formation.....	15
6.5 Ongoing Formation.....	15
Chapter 7. Governance of the Community .....	16
7.1 General Points.....	16
7.2 Elections.....	16
7.3 The Juridical Structure of the Association.....	16
7.4 Juridical Structure of Each Branch of Consecrated Members.....	20
7.4.1 Governance of the Brothers' Branch of Consecrated Life.....	20
7.4.2 Governance of the Sisters' Branch of Consecrated Life .....	23
7.4.3 Community Houses .....	25
7.4.4 Grouping together of Community Houses.....	27
Chapter 8. Administration of Temporal Goods .....	27
Chapter 9. Separation from the Community .....	29
Chapter 10. Obligation to Observe the Statutes.....	30
Chapter 11. Realities Attached to the Community of the Beatitudes .....	3

## PREAMBLE

The Community of the Beatitudes was founded in France on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1973, by Ephraim and Josette Croissant, with another young couple, Jean-Marc and Mireille Hammel, under the name “Community of the Lion of Judah and of the Slain Lamb.”

Recognition by ecclesiastical authority was first granted by His Excellency Archbishop Coffy of Albi, who established it as a Pious Union in 1979.

In 1991 the Community decided to adopt the name “Community of the Beatitudes,” which was easier to use in the diversity of cultures where it had been established. The new name also expressed its desire for a greater openness to the poor.

Several months later, His Excellency Archbishop Meindre of Albi, approved *ad experimentum Statutes* defining the Community of the Beatitudes as a Private Association of the Faithful with juridical personality, of diocesan right. A new version of these *Statutes*, still *ad experimentum*, was approved in 1999.

The *Statutes* of the Community of the Beatitudes as a Private Association of the Faithful were approved by the Pontifical Council for the Laity on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2002, *ad experimentum* for five years, until December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007. This was extended for a further two years, then *de facto* up until the approval of the present *General Statutes*.

The present *General Statutes*, as well as the *Statutes of the Lay Branch*, approved by His Excellency Archbishop Robert Le Gall of Toulouse, mark a new stage in the history of the Community of the Beatitudes, which thus becomes a “*Public Association of the Faithful the intention of becoming an Ecclesial Family of Consecrated Life*” of diocesan right with.

Two other documents supplement these *Statutes*:

- the *Book of Life*, which describes the Community’s spirituality;
- the *Book of Norms*, made up of the *General Norms*, containing the provisions issued by the General Assemblies which apply to the whole Community, and the *Particular Norms*, that apply to each of the Branches, following approval by the President.

Moreover, according to the circumstances and where appropriate, *Directives* may be issued by either the President (*General Directives*) with the consent of the General Council, or by the Superiors of the Branches (*Particular Directives*) with the consent of the Branch Council and the Regional Superiors (*Regional Directives*), in keeping with the provisions of the *Book of Norms*.

## CHAPTER 1

### NATURE AND PURPOSE

#### • *1.1 Nature*

1. [*Public Association*] The Community of the Beatitudes (CB) is a Public Association of the Faithful with juridical personality, established by the Archbishop of Toulouse with the intention of becoming an Ecclesial Family of Consecrated Life, of diocesan right. This is in continuity with the Private Association of the Faithful, “Community of the Beatitudes,” founded on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1973, by Ephraim Croissant and his wife, and another married couple.

2. [*Composition*] The Community of the Beatitudes is composed of:

- a Brothers’ Branch of consecrated life, of which some members are clerics (priests and deacons), under the authority of a General Superior, always a priest;
- a Sisters’ Branch of consecrated life, under the authority of a General Superior;
- associate members, both lay (married or single) and clerics (permanent deacons), who together make up a Lay Branch under the direction of a General Moderator, with their own *Statutes*.

3. [*Lay Branch*] The members of the Lay Branch participate fully in the charism and in the mission of the Community. They are not members *pleno jure* of the Association, as are the members of the branches of consecrated life, but they participate in the governance of the Community in accordance with the specific terms defined in the present *General Statutes* and in the *Statutes of the Lay Branch*.

4. [*Governance*] The Community is governed by a President, a brother or sister, who is elected by the General Assembly from among the consecrated members. In a spirit of collegiality, he or she works closely with the General Council, seeking the will of God together with the heads of the Branches, exercising his or her authority with a respect for the proper autonomy of each Branch.

#### - *Vocation and Spiritual Heritage*

5. [*Founding Experience*] From its beginnings, an experience of Pentecost and an eschatological dynamism have been at the heart of the founding charism of the Community of the Beatitudes.

- Born in the current of the grace of the charismatic Renewal the Community desired to live each day in the Holy Spirit. It learns docility and abandonment to the Spirit of

- God that blows where and when it wills and advances toward the Kingdom to come.
- In these times which are the last, the Lord sends his consoling Spirit for renewing His Church, in order to adorn His spouse and to invite her to the wedding feast of the Lamb. Seized by this eschatological reality and fascinated by the perfection of the world to come, the Community “groans in travail” together with the whole creation in unceasing prayer. It wants to proclaim by its life, in an implicit and explicit proclamation, the reality of the Kingdom and the imminence of its coming. (*BL Num. 2*)

6. [*Founding Charism*] Under the impetus to always be renewed in this experience of Pentecost and the eschatological call, the founding charism is transmitted and manifested through the life in the Spirit, the communion of the states of life and the apostolic outreach that it derives from.

7. [*Life in the Spirit*] As our *Book of Life (BL)* states, each member of the Community is to live out this calling, in keeping with their state of life, through:

- an intense life of union with God, seeking to pray unceasingly, according to the Eastern Christian tradition, and faithfully practicing the Carmelite way of prayer;
- a regular sacramental life;
- celebration of the Liturgy, which unites us to the praise of Heaven;
- the practice of fervent praise and the exercise of charisms;
- consecration to the Virgin Mary;
- communion with the prayer of the People of Israel and intercession to hasten the fulfillment of the Lord’s designs with regard to Israel and the nations;
- ardent intercession, that all Christians may attain to full unity.

8. [*Communion of the States of Life*] The model of Trinitarian life inspires our call to communion of the states of life: just as the three Divine Persons live in perfect communion without, however, either confusing or losing the character proper to each one, in the same way our communion is oriented towards a dynamic unity, allowing each person to blossom in his or her own vocation. Moreover, the communion of the states of life reflects and reveals the underlying nature of the Church, People of God aspiring to a Trinitarian life in a mystery of communion. The “Community House” is to be a favorable place for seeking this communion (*cf. infra, art. 20 and 179*).

9. [*Apostolic Outreach*] Through the implicit witness of its life and the explicit witness of its apostolates (works of mercy and proclamation of the Word), the Community wishes to actively participate in the Church’s mission and in the New Evangelization.

### *Purpose*

10. [*The Beatitudes: a Way of Holiness*] The Beatitudes are the way in which we have been called to respond to the universal call to holiness in the following of Christ. Our whole life is to be permeated by the Beatitudes (*cf. Mt 5:1-12*). In order to testify to the hope and joy of the world to come, we choose to become men and women of the Beatitudes.

## CHAPTER 2: CONSECRATED LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY

11. [*The Call*] For all its members, belonging to the Community of the Beatitudes expresses the desire to give oneself radically to God. This gift of self, which takes on different forms according to one's condition in life and the commitment one has made, shall always aspire to walk a way of holiness in the following of Christ, who became poor and obedient, even unto offering his life for love of the Father.

12. [*Consecration*] After the required period of discernment and formation, members of the Community who feel so called may consecrate themselves for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven by private vows, assuming the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience (cf. can. 573). In this way they shall embrace more closely the form of life that Christ lived in this world. Through the renouncements inherent in the vows they are to take up their cross in the footsteps of Christ in order to strive all the more for the fullness of the love of God and charity towards their neighbor.

13. [*Chastity*] The object of the vow of chastity is perfect continence lived out in celibacy embraced for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven, assumed willingly, as a total gift to God of one's heart and one's body. This vow is a sign of the life to come and a source of greater fruitfulness in an undivided heart. The consecrated members of the Community commit themselves to a special intimacy with Christ in prayer, to custody of the heart from every affection contrary to the love of God, to a faithful vigilance over the senses and the eyes, so that nothing may interfere with this communion of love with the Bridegroom, and to a greater availability of the heart to others in order to love each person with Christ's own love (cf. can. 599).

14. [*Poverty*] The object of the vow of poverty, in imitation of Christ who, though he was rich, became poor for our sake, entails not only a life that is poor in reality and in spirit, industrious and sober, and removed from earthly riches, but also a dependence and limitation in the use and disposition of goods, in accordance with the present *General Statutes* and the *Book of Norms*. More particularly, it requires the consent of the Superiors of one's Branch for the use of any goods whatsoever, and the practice of a total renunciation of resources in accordance with the present *General Statutes* and *Book of Norms*. It also requires a detached and unselfish use of community goods (cf. can. 600).

15. [*Obedience*] The object of the vow of obedience is to offer to God the sacrifice of one's own will. Undertaken in the spirit of faith and love in the following of Christ who was obedient even unto death, it obliges the submission of one's will to one's lawful Superiors, who act in the place of God in all that refers to the life and mission of the Community, when they give orders following the present *General Statutes* and the *Book of Norms* (cf. can. 601).

16. [*Temporary Vows*] At the time of temporary vows, all the resources of a consecrated person are deposited into the common fund of their Branch House (cf. can. 668 § 3), which is to take

charge of their legitimate needs. The person may dispose of the gifts or presents they receive only with the permission of their Superiors. The administration of their goods is entrusted, in writing, to a person of their choice (cf. can. 668 § 1).

17. [*Perpetual Vows*] Before pronouncing perpetual vows the brother or sister is to draw up a will which is valid in civil law (cf. can. 668 § 4).

18. [*Divesting of Goods*] With the desire for a more radical poverty and a greater abandonment to Providence, after ten years of perpetual vows a consecrated brother or sister who so wishes may divest themselves of all the goods they own in favor of whomsoever they may wish, for example, their own family, the Community, or another Church institution, or a charitable work (cf. can. 668 § 4). For this, the permission of the General Superior of their Branch and the consent of the Branch Council are required. The brother or sister may also proceed with a renouncement in part, which may be renewed several times.

### CHAPTER 3: FRATERNAL LIFE

19. [*Fraternity*] The first exercise of charity in Christ to which all members of the Community of the Beatitudes are to be committed, consists of a mutual aid by our personal and common radicality in the following of Jesus, in fidelity to our charism. To this end, they are to feel responsible for fostering an authentic fraternal life together as one of the most precious gifts that the Lord has given them, wishing in this way to testify to the truth of the words of Psalm 133: “See how good it is, and how pleasant to live together as brothers!”

20. [*Fraternal Communion*] Each consecrated person would normally live common life in a House of their Branch, in order to foster a fraternal life that unites all the members in Christ as in a single family, that each member might become a mutual help for all so that each person may live out their own vocation. In this way, through fraternal communion, rooted and founded in love, the members are to be an example of the universal reconciliation in Christ (cf. can. 602).

21. [*Communion among the Members of the Community*] This fraternal life in a family atmosphere shall also be extended to the members of the other Branches of the Community, both consecrated and lay, especially within the Community Houses, which manifest the diversity and the communion of the different vocations in the Community, and where times of prayer, sharing, and apostolic collaboration bring together persons of all the states of life.

22. [*Work*] Happy to follow the designs of the Creator and to be associated with the work of Redemption, the brothers and sisters are to accomplish their work using all the resources of understanding and will that they possess, their natural gifts as well as those of grace. Lived out conscientiously, coupled with sobriety of life and an attention for the poor, work provides for our needs and is an effective witness given to the world. We consider it to be a gift of divine providence, a duty and an opportunity to grow in our humanity.

23. [*Rest*] Each person shall have the possibility of an annual period of rest and, if possible, a time in their family, in accordance with the provisions of the *Book of Norms*.

24. [*Absence*] A consecrated person may not absent themselves from their Branch House without the authorization of their local Superior. For a prolonged absence from one's House, one must obtain authorization from the General Superior of the Branch and the consent of the Branch Council, granted for a just reason. This authorization shall not exceed one year, unless it be for reasons of health, studies or an apostolate (cf. can. 665). The person is to maintain regular contact with their Branch House and their Superior.

25. [*Legitimate Needs*] Through the Branch Superiors at different levels, the Community of the Beatitudes is to be mindful of the legitimate needs of its members: it shall assist them in their human, spiritual, and even professional advancement in accordance with their condition of life and their role in the Community.

## CHAPTER 4: LIFE WITH GOD

26. [*Holy Mass*] The consecrated brothers and sisters of the Community are to participate, where possible, in the daily celebration of the Eucharist, source and summit of all authentic Christian life, nourishment and expression of the communion that we live out with God and with one another.

27. [*Prayer*] Each person is to consecrate one hour daily to silent prayer, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed where possible. In addition to fidelity to these times of prayer, every effort shall be made to foster unceasing prayer.

28. [*Liturgy of the Hours*] Each consecrated person shall endeavor to celebrate faithfully the Liturgy of the Hours (cf. can. 663). The offices of Lauds and Vespers are to be celebrated, where possible, in common. No one is to absent themselves from offices prayed in common without a serious reason.

29. [*Priests*] Priests and deacons are obliged to personally carry out every day the Liturgy of the Hours (cf. can. 276 § 2, 3°).

30. [*Permanent Deacons*] Celibate permanent deacons are obliged to carry out the offices of the Liturgy of the Hours in accordance with the prescriptions of the Conference of Bishops of the place of their residence.

31. [*Confession*] Each person is to approach the sacrament of Reconciliation regularly, at least once a month.

32. [*Spiritual Direction*] With the desire to open oneself fully to the will of God for one's life, each person is to avail themselves of a regular spiritual direction.

33. [*Little Triduum*] In keeping with the Community tradition, special importance shall be given to the "Little Triduum", this ascent towards Sunday which begins on Thursday evening. The special climate of recollection, the specific offices, and the Friday fast (except in the Easter season), are intended to associate us closely with the mystery of the Lord's death and Resurrection.

34. [*Lectio Divina*] In the daily schedule a sufficient amount of time is to be consecrated to *lectio divina*, in order to allow oneself to be enlightened, nourished and formed by the Word of God.

35. [*Silence*] Areas and times of silence, especially in the evening after Compline, are to be well defined.

36. [*Desert*] Each person is to take a desert day at least once a month, and each person is to make a week-long spiritual retreat once a year.

## CHAPTER 5: APOSTOLIC LIFE

### *5.1 Spirit and General Points*

37. [*Purpose*] The Community of the Beatitudes does not exist for itself alone and does not have in itself its own finality. The apostolic life of its members enables them to share the gifts and graces they have received in their life of prayer and in fraternal life, as well as to bring these to the world and to the Church (cf. *Redemptoris Missio*, n. 3). The apostolic life is to be a gift of self overflowing from the interior life of each person and, where the person experiences God's action and the power of the Spirit. Consecrated members are to take Christ the Lord as their model, so that their whole life may be animated by an apostolic spirit and all their apostolic action be permeated by a spirit of contemplation (cf. *Vita Consecrata*, n. 9).

38. [*Beauty*] The Community is also called to preserve and deepen its grace in the domain of art and beauty. Our world has an urgent need for true beauty that speaks of God, that gives meaning to man's life, and that testifies to the splendor of the world to come.

39. [*Importance*] Eager to participate in the Church's mission, the Community of the Beatitudes shall seek to foster and stimulate the apostolic life of its members, according to the particular grace and possibilities of each person, at the service of the poor, in view of the proclamation of the Gospel and the Kingdom of God.

40. [*Diversity*] The Community is not called to only one type of mission that would be specific to it, but to cooperate in a diversified way in the spreading of the Gospel, in whatever way it may feel called to do so, or according to requests made by the Church. Care is to be taken, however, that the apostolic activities undertaken by the members of the Community are in keeping with its charism and that they are not purely individual initiatives, but that they manifest a certain community dimension.

41. [*Respect*] Two exigencies are set before the Community in the different forms of its mission: firstly, the audacity to give witness to Jesus, sharing the knowledge of the one Savior and the light of the Gospel with all mankind; and secondly, a deep respect for persons, for their culture and for their respective journey.

42. [*Place of Communion*] Where possible, apostolic activities are to be undertaken in collaboration between the different states of life and the different Branches of the Community.

43. [*Lay Apostolate*] The Community shall foster the development of the lay apostolate in the Church, in keeping with the spirit of Vatican II. To this end, the consecrated members are to encourage and support the missions particularly of the Lay Branch.

44. [*Compassion*] With the desire to exercise compassion and to console the heart of Christ, we shall bear a preferential concern for the poor and for those who are suffering. Our houses shall be

open to the afflicted and to the poor as a prophetic sign of the world to come and as a presence of Christ in our midst.

45. [*Proclaiming the Gospel*] The Community shall be eager to contribute to the proclamation of the Word, to the New Evangelization, and to missions, including the *ad gentes* missions.

46. [*Apostolic Activities and Works*] In the Community, a distinction shall be made between:

- apostolic activities that involve little financial structure and do not require elaborate administrative structures (cf. art. 47-50);
- apostolic works that have their proper legal structure (cf. art. 52-53).

## 5.2 Specific Terms

47. [*Apostolates*] Apostolic activities may be personal or Community initiatives. They may also be conferred by the local Ordinary or by other local Church authorities.

48. [*Bond with the Church*] The Community's apostolic activities shall be exercised with the consent and under the vigilance of Church authorities, in accordance with Church law and in conformity with the provisions of the *Book of Norms*.

49. [*Local Responsibility*] When apostolic activities are conducted in Community settings or a Community House "in the name of the Community of the Beatitudes," they are under the responsibility of the local Head or Coordinator. He or she is to ensure that each apostolic activity runs well and is harmoniously inserted into the life of the local Church.

50. [*Relationship with the President*] All the apostolic activities and works of the Community and its members shall be under the vigilance of the President and the General Council.

51. [*Framework Document*] For each apostolic activity whose scope surpasses the local reality, a framework document is to be drawn up, which is to define its purpose, the means at its disposal, the persons in charge of it and their nomination, its economic administration, and the Community authority it is answerable to, in keeping with the provisions of the *Book of Norms*. This document is to be approved by the President with the consent of the General Council.

52. [*Apostolic Works*] Apostolic works are activities organized within the framework of juridical structures that may be distinct from the canonical structures of the Community of the Beatitudes. They are to be constituted either at the initiative of the higher authorities of the Community (the President and the General Council) or of one of the Branches, with the consent of the President and the General Council, or by Community members, with the consent of the General Head and the General Council of their Branch.

53. [*Civil Status*] Apostolates are to be constituted under the form of a juridical structure, in keeping with the law of the country in which they are to have their registered office. From among the different possible juridical structures, the one best suited to the type of activity exercised is to be chosen. Care shall be taken that these juridical structures function effectively,

in conformity with the norms that govern them.

54. [*Responsibility*] At its different levels, the governance of the Community is to determine which community authority each apostolate is to be answerable to, according to its nature and its geographical extension.

## CHAPTER 6: FORMATION AND STAGES OF INTEGRATION INTO THE COMMUNITY

### 6.1 General Points

55. [*Spirit and Purpose*] Formation must aim to gradually lead the members of the Community to achieve their unity of life in Christ, by the Spirit, and to the full assimilation of the Community's charism. It is to be a formation of the whole person and encompass all aspects of the Christian life.

56. [*Responsibility of the Members*] The first responsibility of formation lies with the Community members themselves, in an active cooperation with the grace of the vocation received from God and with the means offered by the Community. Since the Community is to be the natural environment for the development of each person, all shall be responsible for the quality of discernment of the formation.

57. [*Integral Formation*] Formation is to be systematic, adapted to the capacity of its members, spiritual and apostolic, doctrinal as well as practical, and shall include, if it is considered expedient, the obtaining of appropriate diplomas, both ecclesiastical and civil.

58. [*Content*] Formation programs shall foster the development of the whole person: human formation and emotional development, spiritual formation, biblical and doctrinal formation adapted to each person, formation in the Community's charism, and formation in preparation for missions or responsibilities that are conferred.

### 6.2 Principles

59. [*Relationship with the President*] The approval of formation programs in the Community belongs to the President with the consent of his or her Council, as does the decision to open or close Houses of Formation.

60. [*General Director of Formation*] The President, with the consent of the General Council, is to nominate a General Director of Formation, whose task is the coordination of the same: 1<sup>st</sup> to coordinate the phases of candidacy and common formation, 2<sup>nd</sup> to oversee the formation within the Branches. They are to be consulted for all decisions pertaining to this aspect.

61. [*Directors of Formation*] The local responsables of the year of common formation are

nominated by the President with the consent of the General Council (cf. art. 122). In a particular Branch, Directors of Formation are nominated by the General Head of each of the Branches, with the consent of the Branch Council and that of the President (cf. art. 135 and 161; art. 22 of the *Statutes of the Lay Branch*).

### 6.3 Stages of Integration

#### First Stage: Candidacy before Entering the Community

62. [*Candidature*] Before being received into the Community, a person is to be a “candidate,” visiting a Branch House of the Community or a Community House on a regular basis, according to the provisions in the *Ratio Formationis*, so as to share in the life of the Community and to allow his or her call to mature.

63. [*Terms*] The candidate is to spend time living in the Community, is to receive an initial formation in its charism, and is to be guided in his or her journey by a member of the Community, without excluding a spiritual direction by someone else.

64. [*Purpose*] This stage should allow the possibility of verifying the acquisition of sufficient human maturity, professional competency, and a suitable level of Christian living (personal prayer, sacramental life and apostolic disposition).

#### Second Stage: Aspirancy and Common Formation

65. [*Aspirancy - Admission*] If the person manifests an authentic vocation to the Community and sufficient human and Christian maturity, they may be admitted to the stage of common formation after submitting a hand-written request addressed to the Regional Head of the chosen Branch:

- the Regional Head may admit the candidate to aspirancy, at the recommendation of the person who guided his/her candidacy and after consulting the candidate's file;
- after admission, the Regional Head shall decide where the aspirant will receive common formation. During this year, the candidate will be under the responsibility of the Director of Formation.

66. [*Place*] The period of common formation is to take place in a Community House that is authorized to receive aspirants. This authorization is granted by the President with the consent of the General Council (cf. art. 57). Aspirants are to be accommodated in appropriate living quarters.

67. [*Distance Common formation*] Where a candidate desires to integrate into the lay branch finding that they are in a concrete situation that does not allow them to go to a Community House to accomplish the year of common formation, they shall undertake a formation program that is adapted and sufficient, not without being able to be attached to a Community house and to this effect spend enough time. This distance formation program is developed under the authority of the director of the formation for the lay branch according to the provisions in the *Ratio Formationis*.

68. [*Formation Team*] The aspirants shall be under the direct responsibility of the local director of the common formation, itself assisted by a team, in accordance with the provisions in the *Ratio Formationis*.

69. [*Purpose*] The stage of common formation is to allow the person to come to know and assimilate the charism proper to the Community. It shall not only be a period of intellectual formation, but a real school of life.

70. [*Content*] The stage of common formation is normally a period of one year (except in the cases provided according to *supra*, art. 67). It comprises the following elements:

- formation in the charism, life, mission, and spirit of the Community;
- formation in the spiritual life, prayer, and *lectio divina*;
- further basic human and doctrinal formation, if necessary.

#### Third Stage: Postulancy Year

71. [*Admission, Place and Duration*] After the stage of common formation, the person, at their written request and with the consent of the Regional Head concerned, may enter postulancy. Postulancy lasts one year, and may be extended for up to one year.

72. [*Purpose*] In the course of this year, the postulant is to go deeper into their call, to continue to discern their state of life, and to be accompanied in this perspective, under the responsibility of the local Head of the chosen Branch.

- Fourth Stage: Novitiate

73. [*Novitiate*] If a call to consecrated life in the Community is confirmed, the person shall make their novitiate year in a Branch House established for this purpose.

74. [*Validity*] To be valid, without prejudice to the provisions of universal law (cf. can. 647 § 2, 648 and 649), the year of formation must take place in this Branch House.

75. [*Novitiate Formation House*] The establishment, transfer, and suppression of the Novitiate House are to be set out in writing by the Superior of the Branch and the approval of the Branch Council and that of the President (cf. can. 647 § 1).

76. [*Novice Master*] The formation shall be under the responsibility of a director of novices (cf. can. 650). He or she is nominated by the Superior of the Branch, with the consent of the Branch Council and the approval of the President, in accordance with the norms defined in universal law (cf. can. 651 and 652).

77. [*Admission and Taking of the Habit*] Admission to the novitiate shall be decided by the Regional Superior of the Branch, at the postulant's written request, after consultation with the persons having guided them, and taking into account the norms set out in universal law (cf. can.

641-645). The taking of the habit shall be done in accordance with the provisions in the *Book of Norms*.

78. [*Content*] During the novitiate, the person is to receive a formation in consecrated life, as well as on the meaning and the practice of the evangelical counsels, in accordance with the provisions in the *Ratio Formationis*. He or she is to experience consecrated life in the Community, and be imbued by its spirit.

79. [*Duration*] The novitiate lasts one year. It is possible to prolong it, with the permission of the director, but not to exceed six months. (cf. can. 653 § 2).

*Fifth Stage: Incorporation through Temporary Vows*

80. [*Admission to First Vows*] At the end of the year, if the person has sufficient maturity and if their call to consecration seems authentic, they are to be admitted to pronounce their first vows (cf. can. 653 § 2). This admission to first vows belongs to the Regional Superior of the Branch, with the consent of the Branch's Regional Council, at the person's written request, and upon consultation of the director of novices and the team of assistants.

81. [*Incorporation*] Through profession of temporary vows a person is incorporated into the Community of the Beatitudes with the rights and obligations defined by Canon Law (cf. can. 654).

82. [*Temporary Vows*] First vows are made for a period of one year, and they are renewed each year for a minimum duration of four years and a maximum duration of six years (cf. can. 655).

83. [*Prolongation*] If it seems advisable, the period of temporary profession may be extended by the General Superior of the Branch, in keeping with the provisions of the *Book of Norms*. The total time during which the member is bound by temporary vows may not, however, extend beyond nine years (cf. can. 657 § 2).

84. [*Formula of Temporary Vows*] The formula of the temporary vows is as follows:

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*

*Lord Jesus, I, ... renounce the world, its life and its ways, I renounce myself in order to be attached to You alone, the one Treasure of my life on earth, for as long as I shall live. For You are my Savior and my God and by my whole life I want to confess the grace of my Baptism. Today, in the presence of .... [the General Superior of the Branch, or their delegate], I make a vow for one year to follow you, in order to be but one with You, by consecrating myself in celibacy out of love for You and by practicing the evangelical counsels of Chastity, Poverty, and Obedience, in accordance with the rule of life of the Community of the Beatitudes, striving to live in unceasing prayer and the ever-renewed conversion of my heart, until You come.*

85. [*Renewal*] Each year, the temporarily professed is to make a written request of renewal to the Regional Superior of the Branch and, if judged suitable, is to be admitted to a renewal of profession; otherwise, they are to leave the community (cf. can. 657 § 1).

86. [*Development*] During the time of temporary vows, each year, under the responsibility of their Branch, each professed person is to make a retreat aimed at deepening and maturing in their call to consecrated life, in accordance with the charism of the Community.

87. [*Formation Content*] All consecrated persons must receive a solid foundation of doctrinal formation in philosophy and theology, developed according to their capacities and their particular gifts. They are also to receive adequate formation for the mission or tasks to which they may be bound in the Community. The provisions defined in the *Ratio Formationis* are to be upheld.

#### Sixth Stage: Incorporation through Perpetual Vows

88. [*Perpetual Vows*] Admission to perpetual vows is granted by the General Superior of the Branch, at the written request of the professed person, with the consent of the Branch Council and the confirmation of the President, and after consultation of those persons having undertaken the formation of the candidate during the period of temporary vows, in accordance with the provisions of the *Book of Norms*.

89. [*Formula for Perpetual Vows*] The wording of perpetual vows is as follows :

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
Lord Jesus, I, ... renounce the world, its life and its ways. I renounce myself in order to be attached to You alone, the one Treasure of my life on earth, for as long as I shall live. For You are my Savior and my God and by my whole life I want to confess the grace of my Baptism. Today, in the presence of ... [the General Superior of the Branch, or their delegate], I make a vow for all my life to follow you, in order to be but one with You, by consecrating myself in celibacy out of love for You and by practicing the evangelical counsels of Chastity, Poverty and Obedience, in accordance with the rule of life of the Community of the Beatitudes, striving to live in unceasing prayer and the ever-renewed conversion of my heart, until You come.*

#### *6.4 Priestly Formation*

90. [*Candidates for Priesthood*] If the candidate is a brother who aspires to the priesthood and is considered to have sufficient human and spiritual maturity, he may be admitted by the General Superior of the Brothers' Branch directly after the year of common formation, without completing the postulancy year, so that his journey towards priesthood shall not be lengthened excessively.

91. [*Formation*] After making first vows, he may begin formation for the priesthood, in accordance with the *Ratio Formationis* laid out in the *Book of Norms* and approved by the Archbishop of Toulouse.

92. [*Admission to Holy Orders*] Admission to Holy Orders belongs to the Archbishop of Toulouse, upon presentation of the candidate by the General Superior of the Brothers' Branch, with the consent of his Council and the confirmation of the President. Incardination takes place

in the Archdiocese of Toulouse.

### *6.5 Ongoing Formation*

93. [*Content*] Throughout their whole life, consecrated persons are to continue their spiritual, doctrinal, apostolic, and missionary formation with diligence.

94. [*Superiors*] Superiors are to make available the necessary means and times for this.

95. [*Terms*] This formation shall have varied forms and is to be adapted to each person, but is to consist in at least the equivalent of a yearly week-long session.

96. [*Doctorate*] For the member that is sent to do university studies toward a doctorate, the director of the branch, after consulting with the director of formation, needs the consent of the council and the confirmation of the President.

## CHAPTER 7: GOVERNANCE OF THE COMMUNITY

### *7.1 General Points*

97. [*Spirit*] In the Community of the Beatitudes, authority shall constitute a service exercised in keeping with the Community's charism, promoting the life and communion of its members, in a fraternal spirit. In this way those in charge at all levels are to exercise their authority in the fear of God, in conformity with the present *Statutes* and the *Book of Norms*. They are to be especially conscientious to free themselves of any spirit of domination or self-interest, seeking only the accomplishment of God's will, the Community's fidelity to its own vocation and the spiritual good of the brothers and sisters whom they are to love in an attentive and benevolent manner.

98. [*Confidentiality*] In the different governing bodies and, in particular, the various councils, extreme care is to be taken when examining personal situations to maintain great discretion, to not reveal confidential information, and to share only what is strictly necessary pertaining to decisions to be made, so that members of the Community are always guaranteed the climate of respect for persons and for confidentiality that would allow them to open their minds to their superiors without fear and with confidence (cf. can. 220 and 630 §5).

99. [*Duration*] In each Branch of the Community, the Heads are to exercise their office in accordance with the forms and times established in the present *Statutes*. During their mandate they may, however, be removed from office for serious reasons (cf. can. 193 and 194), or transferred to another one by the lawful authority (cf. can. 624 § 3). In the above cases and in the case of the cessation of office before the end of the mandate (resignation, prevention, death) the provisions in the *Book of Norms* are to be observed.

100. [*Decisions*] When a decision comes under the jurisdiction of a Regional Head of a Branch, in the case of impediment, it is to be referred to the General Head of the Branch.

### *7.2 Elections*

101. [*Norms*] With regard to elections, the norms laid out in the *Code of Canon Law* are to be observed (cf. can. 164), as well as the provisions of the present *Statutes* and the *Book of Norms*.

102. [*Validity*] An election is only valid if two thirds of those summoned to vote are present.

### *7.3 Juridical Structure of the Association*

#### *General Assembly of the Community*

103. [*Frequency*] The Community's ordinary General Assembly is to be held every four years. It is to take place in the same place and at the same time as the particular Assemblies of the Branches. There are to be common sessions for all the delegates and sessions particular to each

Branch.

104. [*Consultation prior to the General Assembly in Preparation for Elections*] Before the General Assembly there is to be a consultation of the committed members of the Community (Branches of consecrated life and Lay Branch) regarding those persons suitable for election as President. Within each Branch there is also to be a consultation regarding those persons suitable for election as Head of the Branch or as council members. These consultations are to take place in keeping with the provisions in the *Book of Norms*. The result of these consultations is to be given to the Archbishop of Toulouse, who is to communicate to the Assembly what he considers to be useful to assist it in its choices.

105. [*Composition*] The General Assembly is to be composed of:

- *ex officio* members: the outgoing President and the outgoing members of the Plenary General Council;
- the delegates elected by the Branches;
- experts or invited members, without voting rights.

106. [*Number of Elected Delegates*] The number of elected delegates and their allocation by Branch shall be fixed by the President with the consent of the Plenary General Council and that of the Archbishop of Toulouse, in accordance with the principles established by the previous General Assembly. The proportion of elected delegates must be at least equal to two-thirds of the total number of members.

107. [*Competence*] It belongs to the General Assembly to:

- elect the President;
- give its consent to the President's proposition for the institution of the General Assistant;
- deal with matters of greater importance that concern the whole Community;
- evaluate the life of the Community and define future orientations;
- approve the *General Norms* and issue rules binding upon the whole Community;
- establish the principles that are to determine the number and the allocation of elected delegates at the following General Assembly;
- introduce changes into the *Statutes*, an act which requires a two-third majority and the subsequent approval of the Archbishop of Toulouse.

108. [*Consultative Vote of the Lay Members*] The members of the Lay Branch have a consultative vote and the right to speak regarding all the decisions of the Assembly that concern the Community of the Beatitudes, except those concerning the internal matters of one or the other of the Branches of consecrated life. They have an active voice in the matters that specifically concern their Branch.

109. [*Agenda*] The General Assembly's agenda is to be fixed by the President, with the consent of the Plenary General Council. The agenda is to make provision, amongst other things, for plenary sessions and also particular sessions for the members of the different Branches.

110. [*Presidence*] Until the election of the President, the General Assembly is to be presided

over by the Archbishop of Toulouse or his delegate.

111. [*Mandate*] The President is elected for a mandate of four years, which may be renewed once. To be postulated, he or she must obtain a two-thirds majority in the first ballot (cf. can. 181 §1).

112. [*Qualities*] The President is to be a member of one of the Branches of consecrated life, perpetually professed for at least five years and at least thirty-five years old; the one chosen is to be one endowed with wisdom and the spirit of communion required to exercise this responsibility.

113. [*Extraordinary Assembly*] The President, with the consent of the Plenary General Council and the Archbishop of Toulouse, may call an Extraordinary General Assembly to deal with important matters that concern the Community as a whole. He or she is to set the agenda and the number of delegates by Branch, with the consent of the Plenary General Council.

- *The President and the General Council*

114. [*Function of the President*] The President, assisted by the General Council, governs the Community as a whole, in accordance with the present *General Statutes* and the *Statutes of the Lay Branch*. He or she is the guarantor of its unity, of the communion between the Branches, and of its fidelity to its charism and mission. He or she is to see to its integration into the Church, its spiritual and apostolic dynamism, and its healthy administrative and economic management. In a spirit of collegiality and the common seeking of the will of God, the President is to work in close cooperation with the General Superiors of the Branches, while respecting their rightful autonomy.

115. [*Designation of the President*] In the spirit of communion, the designation of President are as follows:

Convene the General Council, restricted, ordinary and at large, set the agenda and preside.

- Convene the General Assembly, ordinary and extraordinary, set the agenda and its composition, in accordance to the disposition present in the *General Statues*.
- To accept all the decrees and decisions that come back, in accordance with the indications of the current General Statued, the Statues of the lay branch and the Book of Norms.
- To approve or confirm the decrees and decisions that the general superios of the branch, in accordance to the indications of the current General Statues, the Statues of the lay branch and the Book of Norms.
- Convene, when it is deemed appropriate, a director of the branch with the council.
- To name people to work at the service of the Presidency and the general house, with the consent of the director of the branches and those persons to whom it pertains.
- To accompany the different realities of the alliance of the Community.
- To represent the Community before the ecclesial and civil authorities.

116. [*In case of disagreement*] In case of disagreement with a drecree or a decision of the

director of one of the branches, for serious reasons believed to infringe the communion of the Community or the equilibrium of a house, whereas personal dialogue has not brought about results, the President will bring the difficulty to the restricted general Council, so that the director to whom it concerns can amend the decree or decision in an appropriate manner. If the judgement remains inadequate, the President can, after having consulted with the members of the ordinary Council general, decide to repeal.

117. [*The General Assistant*] The General Assistant is chosen from the consecrated branch, not being the President, is instituted with the consent of the General Assembly. He or she is to assist the President in the governance of the Community, stand in for them should they no longer be able to fulfill their office, and assure the interim in the case of resignation, which is to be presented to the Archbishop of Toulouse and accepted by him (cf. can. 189).

118. [*Ordinary General Council*] The ordinary General Council is composed of:

- the General Assistant;
- the General Superiors and the General Assistants of the Branches of consecrated life;
- the Moderator and the General Assistant of the Lay Branch;
- the General Finance Officer and the General Secretary, who have no voting rights within the Council.

119. [*Lay Vote*] The lay members are to have:

- a consultative voice and the right to speak in all matters concerning the Community of the Beatitudes as a whole;
- an active voice in matters specifically concerning the Lay Branch: organization of the Branch, opening and closing of lay Households and Fraternities, formation of lay members and works proper to the Branch.

120. [*Plenary General Council*] At least once a year the President is to convene the Plenary General Council which, apart from the ordinary General Council, includes all the General Council members of the Branches, in order to consider the Community in its entirety and to share about the life of the Branches.

121. [*Select General Council*] If the President judges it to be useful, he or she may also call together the select General Council with only the General Heads of each Branch of the Community.

122. [*Consent of the Ordinary Council for a decision*] The President requires the consent of the ordinary General Council for the following decisions:

- to open or close a Community House;
- to approve formation programs (cf. supra, art. 59)
- to facilitate a Community House to receive candidates for a year of common formation) (cf. supra, art. 66)
- to nominate a director of formation; (cf. supra, art. 60)
- to nominate a local responsible for common formation (cf. supra, art. 61)

- to nominate the Coordinator of a Community House; (cf. *infra*, art. 186)
- to entrust a mission to an autonomous house or to a fraternity of the lay branch (cf. LS, art. 65)
- to define the budget of the General Government and decisions concerning expenses extraneous to the budget;
- for extraordinary economic administrative acts specified in the *Book of Norms*, particularly the alienation of part of the Community's patrimony;
- to solicit a contribution from all the Houses;
- to decide which activities are to be common to the whole Community;
- to call an extraordinary General Assembly and fix its agenda; (cf. *supra*, art. 113);
- to fix the number of delegates for the following General Assembly and their allocation by Branch, in accordance with the principles established by the previous General Assembly (cf. *supra*, art. 115).

123. [*Consent of the Ordinary General Council for an Approval*] The President requires the consent of the ordinary General Council to approve the following decisions:

- to open or close a Branch House; (cf. *infra*, art. 134 and 160, LS, art. 49)
- to open or close a House of Formation of a Branch. (cf. *supra*, art. 134 and 160)

124. [*General Secretary*] The General Secretary is nominated by the President with the consent of the ordinary General Council. He aids the President and his Council members according to the specific instructions that will be received. The general secretary oversees the implementation of decisions that have been made; he keeps on file the documents that concern the government of the Community; he is an *ex officio* member of the General Council without the right to vote.

125. [*General Finance Officer*] The General Finance Officer is nominated by the President with the consent of the ordinary General Council. It belongs to him or her, in accordance with the provisions given in chapter eight and those contained in the *Book of Norms*:

- to administer the Community's goods and prepare the annual financial report;
- to request a report on the economic state of the Branches and to refer these to the presidency;
- to give a report to the presidency regularly, or at its request, on the economic state of the Community;
- to give a report on the economic state of the Community during the General Assembly;
- to draw up rules concerning the administrative situation of the members and to propose these to the President and the General Council.

126. [*Ecclesiastical Assistant*] It belongs to the Archbishop of Toulouse to appoint an Ecclesiastical Assistant, after hearing the President and the General Council of the Community (cf. can. 317 § 1).

## 7.4 Juridical Structure of Each Branch of Consecrated Members

### 7.4.1 Governance of the Brothers' Branch of Consecrated Life

The Particular Assembly of the Brothers' Branch and the General Governance of the Branch

127. [*Particular Assembly*] The ordinary Particular Assembly of the Brothers' Branch is to gather every four years at the same time as the General Assembly of the Community; it is attributed with the following:

- to elect the General Superior of the Branch and the Branch Council;
- to deal with matters of greater importance concerning the Branch;
- to evaluate the life of the Branch and its orientations for the future, as well as the application of these orientations and the general norms adopted by the General Assembly;
- to approve the *Book of Norms* of the Brothers' Branch;
- to give directives for the formation of priests;
- to fix the number of Branch Council members.

128. [*Composition*] The members of the particular Assembly of the Branch are those of the General Assembly of the Community belonging to the Branch (cf. *supra* art. 105), to which are added:

- the members of the Branch General Council;
- the Regional Superiors and the Finance Officer of the Branch who are *ex officio* members;
- those delegates elected to participate only in the Particular Assembly, the total number of elected members being at least equal to two-thirds of the members of the Particular Assembly;
- experts or invited members without voting rights.

129. [*Agenda and Number of Delegates*] The agenda and the number of delegates is fixed by the General Superior of the Branch with the consent of the Branch Council and the approval of the President.

General Government of the Branch

130. [*General Superior*] The General Superior of the Brothers' Branch must be a priest, perpetually professed for at least five years and at least thirty-five years old. The President presides over the election of the General Superior and his Council members. The procedure for this election is the same as that relating to the President (cf. norms contained in the *Book of Norms*). His mandate is for a period of four years and may be renewed once. To be postulated, he must obtain two-thirds of the vote in the first ballot (cf. can. 181 § 1).

131. [*General Assistant*] The General Superior of the Branch is to nominate one of his Council members as General Assistant. His role is to assist the Superior, to stand in for him when necessary, and to sit with him at the Community's General Council.

132. [*Links with the general government*] The General Superior of the branch forms part of the general government of the Community as a member of the general council. The General Superior works in close collaboration with the President and oversees the execution of the decisions of the general council in the branch. The General Superior is to consult the President, before all

decisions that could possibly have significant repercussions on the other branches or on the life of a community house.

133. [*Competences*] Besides those things mentioned elsewhere in the present *Statutes*, the attributions of the General Superior of the Brothers' Branch are as follows:

- to foster the unity and dynamism of the Brothers' Branch, the promotion of the brothers' consecrated life and the priestly ministry;
- to foster communion with the other Branches of the Community and with the General Presidential Governance of the Community;
- to communicate to the President all important decisions of the branch that the President has not approved or confirmed, in particular those concerning the placement of people;
- to foster the healthy administrative and economic management of the Brothers' Branch;
- to visit, where possible, the Houses and Regions of his Branch, especially the Houses of Formation;
- to maintain contact with the ecclesiastical authorities with regard to ordained ministers;

134. [*Consent of the Branch Council and approval of the president in the general council*] The Superior General needs the consent of its approval council and the of the president in the general council for decisions concerning:

- opening or closing of a house of brothers;
- opening or closing of a formation house of the branch.

135. [*Consent of the Branch Council and approval of the President*] the General Superior needs the consent of its council and the approval of the president in decisions concerning:

- creation of regions;
- nomination of responsables for formation (cf. supra, art. 61) and master of novices (cf. supra, art. 76)
- The erection, suppression and transfer of a novice house (cf. supra, art. 75)

136. [*Consent of the Branch's Council and confirmation of the President*] The General Superior needs the consent of the Council and the confirmation of the President for decisions concerning:

- Admission of a brother to perpetual profession
- Nomination of the regional director
- Presentation to the Bishop of Toulouse for a candidate for orders
- Authorization for a brother to enter a doctorate cycle
- Indult of excommunication for a brother

137. [*Consent of the Branch's Council*] The General Superior needs the consent of the council for decisions concerning:

- nomination of the local responsables for a house of brothers;
- the writing of commissioning letters for the brothers and deacons;
- permission for the deployment of goods of the members of the branch (cf. supra, art 18);
- permission for a prolonged absence (cf. supra, art. 24)

138. [*Council Members*] There are to be at least three Council members, who are elected by the Particular Assembly of the Branch for a period of four years, which may be renewed. If possible, one of the Council members is to be a brother who is not a priest. There is also to be a General Finance Officer of the Branch, without voting rights.

139. [*Extended Council*] At least once a year, the General Superior of the Branch is to convene the “Extended Council,” composed of the General Council of the Branch and the Regional Superiors, in order to gain an overall picture of the Brothers’ Branch and to reflect together upon the life of the Branch.

140. [*Secretary of the Brothers' Branch*] The Secretary of the Brothers’ Branch is nominated by the General Superior with the consent of the Branch Council. He acts as clerk, keeps the documents concerning the governance of the Branch, and follows up on the implementation of the decisions reached; he assists the General Superior of the Branch and his Council members in accordance with the particular instructions that will be received.

141. [*Finance Officer of the Brothers' Branch*] The Finance Officer of the Brothers’ Branch is nominated by the General Superior with the consent of the Branch Council. In keeping with the provisions in Chapter 8, and those of the *Book of Norms*, the following belongs to him:

- to oversee the economic management of the Branch;
- to give a report regularly, or at their request, to the presidency or the General Superior of the Branch, on the economic state of the Branch;
- to give a report on the economic state of the Branch during the Particular Assembly;
- to request reports on the economic state of the Branch Houses and to refer them to the General Superior and Council of the Branch;
- to oversee the administrative situation of the members of the Branch.

#### At the Regional Level

142. [*Regions*] The General Superior of the Brothers’ Branch, with the consent of the Branch Council and the approval of the President, may create “Regions” that group together a certain number of Houses of the Branch.

143. [*Nomination and mandate of the Regional Superior*] The General Superior, with the consent of the Branch Council and the confirmation of the President and after consultation of the brothers and priests of the Region, is to nominate a Regional Superior whose functions are defined in the Book of Norms. The mandate of a Regional Superior is for three years; it may be renewed.

144. [*Regional Council*] The Regional Superior may have the assistance of a Council whose composition and attributions are to be determined in the Book of Norms.

145. [*Communion and dialogue in other instances*] The Regional Superior will exercise its charge in close collaboration with the General Superior and the Council of the Branch, who with the President, the general council and, if the case deems it, the assistants of the President in charge of the accompaniment of the houses.

In the discernment prior to decisions, the General Superior of other branches of the same geographical area as the coordinators should enter in dialogue.

At the Local Level

146. [*House*] A House of the Brothers' Branch may be part of a Community House, or it may be autonomous.

147. [*Establishment*] The decision to establish a House of the Brothers' Branch belongs to the General Superior of the Branch, with the consent of the Branch Council and the approval of the President. It must also receive the written consent of the diocesan Bishop concerned. The Branch House's mission is to be specified in a document of foundation. At least three professed brothers or priests are required to establish a Branch House, of whom at least two are to be perpetually professed.

148. [*Local Superior*] The local Superior of a House of the Brothers' Branch is nominated by the General Superior of the Branch, with the consent of his Council, and after consultation of the Regional Superior and the members of the House. He is named for a three-year mandate, which may be renewed. This nomination is communicated in writing to the President.

149. [*Autonomous House*] in the case of an autonomous house, the local superior acts as the official representative of the community before the ecclesial and civil authorities, bearing all the rights and obligations as that of a coordinator of the community house. The nomination is confirmed by the President.

150. [*House Council*] In houses of seven or more professed members, a House Council of at least two professed members is to be elected by the professed members of the house. Otherwise, all the professed members are to be part of the House Council.

151. [*Fellowship*] The local Superior is to encourage all professed members to take part in a responsible and active way in the life of the local Branch. To this end he is to foster times of fellowship and sharing.

152. [*Attachment to a Branch House*] The assignment of a brother to a Branch House, as well as transfers to another Branch House, belongs to the authority of the General Superior of the Brothers' Branch.

*7.4.2 Governance of the Sisters' Branch of Consecrated Life*

*The Particular Assembly of the Sisters and the General Governance of the Branch*

153. [*Particular Assembly*] The ordinary Particular Assembly of the Sisters' Branch is to gather every four years at the same time as the General Assembly of the Community; it is attributed with the following:

- to elect the General Superior of the Branch and the Branch Council members;
- to deal with matters of greater importance concerning the Branch;

- to evaluate the life of the Branch and its orientations for the future, as well as the application of the orientations and the general norms adopted by the General Assembly;
- to approve the *Book of Norms* of the Sisters' Branch;
- to fix the number of Branch Council members.

154. [*Composition*] The members of the Particular Assembly of the Branch are those of the General Assembly of the Community belonging to the Branch (cf. supra art. 105), to which are added:

- the Regional Superiors and the Finance Officer of the Branch who are *ex officio* members;
- those delegates elected to participate only in the Particular Assembly, the total number of elected members being at least equal to two-thirds of the members of the Particular Assembly;
- experts or invited members without voting rights.

155. [*Agenda and Number of Delegates*] The agenda and the number of delegates is fixed by the General Superior of the Branch with the consent of the Branch Council and the approval of the President.

General government of the branch

156. [*General Superior*] The General Superior of the Sisters' Branch must be a sister, perpetually professed for at least five years and at least thirty-five years old. The President presides over the election of the General Superior and her Council members. The procedure for this election is the same as those relating to the President (cf. terms contained in the *Book of Norms*). Her mandate is for a period of four years and may be renewed once. To be postulated, she must obtain two-thirds of the vote in the first ballot (cf. can. 181 § 1).

157. [*General Assistant*] The General Superior of the Branch is to nominate one of her Council members as General Assistant. Her role is to assist the Superior, to stand in for her when necessary, and to sit with her at the Community's General Council.

158. [*Links with the general government*] The General Superior of the branch forms part of the general government of the Community as a member of the general council. The General Superior works in close collaboration with the President and oversees the execution of the decisions of the general council in the branch. The General Superior is to consult the President, before all decisions that could possibly have significant repercussions on the other branches or on the life of a community house.

159. [*Competences*] Besides those things mentioned elsewhere in the present *Statutes*, the attributions of the General Superior of the Sisters' Branch are as follows:

- to foster the unity and dynamism of the Branch, and the promotion of sisters' consecrated life;
- to foster communion with the other Branches of the Community and with the General Presidential Governance of the Community;
- to communicate to the President all important decisions of the branch that the President

- has not approved or confirmed, in particular those concerning the placement of people;
- to create Regions, with the consent of her Council and the approval of the President;
- to foster the healthy administrative and economic management of the Sisters' Branch;
- to visit, where possible, the Houses and Regions of her Branch, especially the Houses of Formation.

160. [*Consent of the council of the branch and approval of the president in the general council*] There are to be at least three Council members, who shall be elected by the Particular Assembly of the Branch for a period of four years, which may be renewed. There is also to be a General Finance Officer of the Branch, without voting rights.

- Open or close houses of sisters
- Open or close a formation house of the branch

161. [*Consent of the Branch Council and approval of the President*] the General Superior needs the consent of its council and the approval of the president in decisions concerning:

- creation of regions;
- nomination of responsables for formation (cf. supra, art. 61) and master of novices (cf. supra, art. 76)
- The erection, suppression and transfer of a novice house (cf. supra, art. 75)

162. [*Consent of the Branch's Council and confirmation of the President*] The General Superior needs the consent of the Council and the confirmation of the President for decisions concerning:

- Admission of a sister to perpetual profession
- Nomination of the regional director
- Authorization for a sister to enter a doctorate cycle;
- Indult of excommunication for a sister

163. [*Consent of the Branch's Council*] The General Superior needs the consent of the council for decisions concerning:

- nomination of the local responsables for a house of sisters;
- permission for the deployment of goods of the members of the branch (cf. supra, art 18);
- permission for a prolonged absence (cf. supra, art. 24)

164. [*Council Members*] There are to be at least three Council members, who are elected by the Particular Assembly of the Branch for a period of four years, which may be renewed. If possible, one without voting rights, and a General Finance Officer of the Branch.

165. [*Extended Council*] At least once a year, the General Superior of the Branch is to convene the "Extended Council," composed of the General Council of the Branch and the Regional Superiors, in order to gain an overall picture of the Sister's Branch and to reflect together upon the life of the Branch.

166. [*Secretary of the Sisters' Branch*] The Secretary of the Sisters' Branch is nominated by the General Superior with the consent of the Branch Council. She acts as clerk, keeps the documents concerning the governance of the Branch, and follows up on the implementation of the decisions

reached; she assists the General Superior of the Branch and her Council members in accordance with the particular instructions that will be received.

167. [*Finance Officer of the Sisters' Branch*] The Finance Officer of the Sisters' Branch is nominated by the General Superior with the consent of the Branch Council. In keeping with the norms in Chapter 8 and those of the *Book of Norms*, the following belongs to her:

- to oversee the economic management of the Branch;
- to give a report regularly, or at their request, to the presidency or the General Superior of the Branch, on the economic state of the Branch;
- to give a report on the economic state of the Branch during the Particular Assembly;
- to request reports on the economic state of the Branch Houses and to refer them to the General Superior and Council of the Branch;
- to oversee the administrative situation of the members of the Branch.

#### At the Regional Level

168. [*Regions*] The General Superior of the Sisters' Branch, with the consent of the Branch Council and the approval of the President, may create 'Regions' that group together a certain number of Houses of the Branch.

169. [*Nomination of the Regional Superior*] The General Superior, with the consent of the Branch Council and the confirmation of the President and after consultation of the brothers and priests of the Region, is to nominate a Regional Superior whose functions are defined in the Book of Norms. The mandate of a Regional Superior is for three years; it may be renewed.

170. [*Regional Council*] The Regional Superior may be assisted by a Council whose composition and attributions are to be determined in the *Book of Norms*.

171. [*Communion and dialogue in other instances*] The Regional Superior will exercise its charge in close collaboration with the General Superior and the Council of the Branch, who with the President, the general council and, if the case deems it, the assistants of the President in charge of the accompaniment of the houses.

In the discernment prior to decisions, the General Superior of other branches of the same geographical area as the coordinators of the community houses, should enter in dialogue.

#### At the Local Level

172. [*House*] A House of sisters may be part of a Community House, or it may be autonomous.

173. [*Establishment*] The decision to establish a House of the Sisters' Branch belongs to the General Superior of the Branch, with the consent of the Branch Council and the approval of the President. It must also receive the written consent of the diocesan Bishop concerned. The Branch House's mission is to be specified in a document of foundation. At least three professed sisters are required to establish a Branch House, of whom at least two are to be perpetually professed.

174. [*Local Superior*] The local Superior of a House of the Brothers' Branch is nominated by the General Superior of the Branch, with the consent of his Council, and after consultation of the Regional Superior and the members of the House. He is named for a three-year mandate, which may be renewed. This nomination is communicated in writing to the President.

175. [*Autonomous House*] in the case of an autonomous house, the local superior acts as the official representative of the community before the ecclesial and civil authorities, bearing all the rights and obligations as that of a coordinator of the community house. The nomination is confirmed by the President.

176. [*House Council*] In smaller Branch Houses all the professed sisters are to be part of the House Council. In houses of seven or more professed members, a House Council of at least two persons is to be elected by the professed sisters of the Branch House.

177. [*Fellowship*] The local Superior is to encourage all professed members to take part in a responsible and active way in the life of the local Branch. To this end she is to foster times of fellowship and sharing.

178. [*Attachment to a Branch House*] The assignment of a sister to a Branch House, and transfers to another Branch House, belong to the General Superior of the Sisters' Branch.

#### 7.4.3 Community Houses

179. [*Definition*] A Community House is made up of:

- a Branch House of brothers and a Branch House of sisters, and, whenever possible, the presence of lay associates;
- or a Branch House of consecrated members and a Household of the Lay Branch (cf. *Statutes of the Lay Branch*, art. 57);
- or a Branch House of both Branches of consecrated members and a Household of the Lay Branch.

Ideally, the three Branches should be represented whenever possible. The Community House enables the Community to manifest its special character of the diversity of the states of life (consecrated brothers and sisters, families, single laypersons...), and to develop apostolates with the collaboration of the different Branches.

180. [*Purpose*] Each Community House assumes one or several particular missions, either apostolic or charitable, which are to be approved by the President with the consent of the General Council. The Responsible Head and regional superior will guard that these changes affect the members of their branches and insure not to upset the balance between them and the apostolic activities of a house; they will be attentive and always consult the coordinator.

181. [*Charter*] Each Community House is to have its own Charter, approved by the President, in which the House's mission, organization, use of buildings, rhythm of prayer and activity, and its economic management are to be specified.

- This charter is to be approved by the President with the consent of the General Council, and is to be reviewed at least every three years, at the beginning or renewal of

the Coordinator's mandate, or whenever the President may consider it to be necessary, with the consent of the General Council.

- It must respect the legitimate autonomy of each Branch and the attributions of their Superiors.

182. [*Attachment to the Church*] A Community House may be founded only with the diocesan Bishop's written permission.

The apostolic and charitable activities of a house are accomplished in communion with the local church, under the vigilance of the diocesan bishop according to the rights of the church.

183. [*Prayer*] In each Community House, where possible, there is to be the daily celebration of the Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Hours, and the times of prayer proper to the Community, at which each person is to participate in keeping with the requirements of his or her state of life.

184. [*Areas*] In a Community House there are to be areas that are accessible to all the members of the House (chapel, meeting or work areas, library, etc.), as well as private areas for the Branches and the families, which allow each person (consecrated, families, etc.), to live out their own vocation and to have a private space at their disposal.

185. [*Authority*] The members of a Community House are answerable to the Heads of their respective Branches for that which concerns their personal life and their vocation, in accordance with the present *Statutes*. For that which concerns the life of the House and its activities, they are answerable to the Coordinator of the Community House.

186. [*Nomination and mandate of the Coordinator*] The Coordinator of a Community House is nominated by the President of the Community, with the consent of the General Council, after consultation of the professed members and the life-committed lay members of the House, for a mandate of three years, which may be renewed twice. He or she is normally to be chosen from among the perpetually professed members of one of the Branches of consecrated life.

187. [*Functions of the Coordinator*] In a spirit of communion, the attributes of the coordinator of a community house are as follows:

- to insure the unity and fidelity to the community's charism, in particular the communion between branches,
- to guard and assure the accomplishment of the mission entrusted;
- to supervise the life and activities, in particular community prayer, fraternal times, services and apostolates;
- to insure integration in the local church ;
- to maintain healthy administrative and economic management.

188. [*Authority of the coordinator*] A coordinator recognizes its true authority in the life and activity of the house, making decisions that are in accord with the council of the house, restraining, according to the texts in vigor. In the case of a disagreement with a local, regional or superior of a branch, he will appeal to the President who will address it according to the rights.

189. [*Community House Council*] The Coordinator of a Community House is assisted in his or her task by a Council composed of at least three members. The Head of each Branch House or Household within the Community House is an *ex officio* member of the Council. The others are elected by the members of the House for a mandate of one year, which may be renewed, in accordance with the terms laid out in the *Book of Norms*.

For particular issues dealing with the life of a branch to a house, the coordinator can meet in a “limited council” with the local responsables, at their initiative or when asked by a local responsible.

190. [*Meetings*] The Community House Coordinator is to periodically gather together all the perpetually professed members and the life-committed or permanent lay members of the House to involve them in the reflections and decisions concerning the life and mission of the House.

191. [*Finance Officer*] Each Community House is to have a Finance Officer, distinct from the Coordinator, who is to give a regular account of the situation of the House to the Coordinator and the Council. The Finance Officer is nominated by the Coordinator, with the consent of the Community House Council.

192. [*Economic Matters*] A yearly report of activity and an economic and financial report shall be communicated to the President as well as the General Finance Officer.

193. [*Accompaniment of the community houses*] The president, with the consent of the general council, can nominate one or several assistants in charge of insuring the ordinary accompaniment of the community houses. The documentation of this role is written in the general norms and its modalities are defined accordingly in a letter of mission.

## CHAPTER 8

### ADMINISTRATION OF TEMPORAL GOODS

194. [*Rigor*] The witness of evangelical poverty, as it has been given to us by the apostles and the first Christian community in Jerusalem, is part of our life and its apostolic fruitfulness. That is why rigor in the administration and use of temporal goods constitutes a grave duty for us and, in particular, for Heads of the Branches and for Finance Officers.

195. [*Spirit*] The administration of goods in the Community must be motivated by a spirit of responsibility and prudence, but also by trusting abandonment to Providence and a concern for the sharing of our goods with the poor, by simplicity and by evangelical poverty. Superiors and Finance Officers, as well as all the brothers and sisters, are to constantly remind themselves that they are only stewards and not the owners of the goods at their disposal, and that the sole purpose of these goods is that they be placed at the service of the Kingdom and of the poor.

196. [*Ownership of Goods*] The Community's goods do not belong to a particular Branch, but to the Community of the Beatitudes as a whole. The ordinary administration of the Community's patrimony is assured by the General Finance Officer, under the responsibility of the President and General Council and in association with the Branch Finance Officers.

197. [*Norms*] Goods belonging to the Community are ecclesiastical goods, and their administration is therefore submitted to canons 1254 to 1310. Consequently, the Community is to give a yearly account of its economic administration to the Archbishop of Toulouse (cf. can. 1287).

198. [*Juridical Capacity*] The Community has the right to acquire, administer and alienate goods in accordance with the provisions in the *Book of Norms*. This must be done with respect for its spiritual and apostolic purposes and in conformity with the civil laws of the countries where its activities are exercised. It is to be animated by a spirit of wise and healthy stewardship (cf. can. 1284), but at the same time, by trust in Providence.

199. [*Ordinary Administration*] The administration of temporal goods belongs to the authority of the Community's legitimate Branch Heads, in accordance with the present *Statutes*, but the ordinary administration is entrusted to the Finance Officers, who are to give a regular account of their administration to the Coordinator and/or respective Heads of the Branches that they are answerable to.

200. [*Extraordinary Administration*] The *Book of Norms* will define extraordinary administrative and financial actions (e.g., investments, remodeling, alienations, significant acquisitions, and the solicitations) as well as the procedures to follow. For extraordinary administrative and financial actions:

- the Coordinator needs the consent of his council, of the President, and of the General Council;
- Local and Regional Heads need the consent of their council, of their General Branch Head, and of the President and the consent of the General Council;
- the General Finance Officer needs the accord of the President and the consent of the General Council.

201. [*Finance Council*] In financial matters, the General Governance of the Community is to be assisted by a Council made up of at least two persons, as well as the General Finance Officer (cf. can. 1280). These persons are to be nominated by the President with the consent of the General Council.

202. [*Mutual Assistance*] The administration of goods and the management of financial movements in the Community must ensure that none of the three Branches of the Community be disadvantaged with regard to the others, and that each of them may have at its disposal the resources necessary to run properly. The *Book of Norms* is to set out rules in this regard and, in particular, the manner in which each Branch House and each person within a Community House is to participate in the overall budget.

203. [*Transparency*] A climate of transparency is to be maintained with regard to money and its

use. Each person, each Branch House and each apostolic activity is to give a regular account of their budget to the Coordinator and/or Branch Head they are answerable to, in accordance with the provisions of the *General Norms*.

204. [*Social Security and Health Insurance*] Each member of the Community is to have the benefit of a health insurance and a pension, in conformity with the civil and ecclesiastical legislation of their country.

205. [*Work*] By diligence in their work, all members are to contribute so that the Community has at its disposition the resources necessary for the good of all.

206. [*Tithe*] Since the beginning of the Community, we have expressed our trust in Providence and our desire to share our goods through the principle of the tithe. That is why each Community House, each Branch House, and each person belonging to the Community is to pay a tithe of their resources, in accordance with the provisions of the *Book of Norms*. This tithe is to be used for the running costs of the governing authorities, for solidarity within the Community, as well as for assistance of those less fortunate.

207. [*Regional Funds*] The Regional Fund is under the responsibility of the Regional Head and the Regional Council and is to be administered in accordance with the provisions of the *Book of Norms*. The Regional Finance Officer is to be nominated by the Regional Superior with the consent of the Regional Council.

208. [*Local Funds*] The funds of each House are under the responsibility of the local Head and the local Council: the fixing of the budget, extraordinary acts, and transparency before the professed members. The Finance Officer is responsible for the implementation of the budget; he or she is nominated by the local Head, with the consent of the local Council.

## CHAPTER 9. SEPARATION FROM THE COMMUNITY

209. [*Separation*] If after due reflection and dialogue, a member of the Community decides to withdraw from it, they are to make their request to the General Head of one's Branch, in accordance with the provisions of *Canon Law* (cf. Can. 691) and of the particular *Book of Norms*. If the person is a cleric, the norms of universal law are to be observed with regard to excommunication and incardination.

210. [*Effects*] When the General Head of a Branch, with the consent of the Branch Council and the President's confirmation, grants permission to a member to leave the Community, all the bonds, rights, and obligations deriving from incorporation cease (cf. can. 692).

211. [*Dismissal*] A member of the Association is liable to dismissal in the case of a total or

partial infringement of the Church's universal law and the fundamental norms of the Community, as well as the norms proper to the Branch to which they belong, if it concerns a matter that is grave and externally imputable. In deciding upon the dismissal, the procedure indicated in canons 694-704 are to be observed by analogy, adapting them to each case.

212. [*General Principle*] The person who leaves must keep in mind that their adherence to the Community was made freely and in a conscious manner. Therefore, anyone who leaves or who is legitimately dismissed from the Community of the Beatitudes does not have the right to demand compensation for services given, or to claim back gifts made to the Community of whatever nature. Moreover, these persons are bound to return all the distinctive signs and documents of the Community that may have been entrusted to them.

213. [*Equity and Charity*] Persons who leave the Community of the Beatitudes, for whatever reason, are always to be treated with equity and evangelical charity, in accordance with the provisions of the *General Norms*, and may count on the Community's prayer.

## CHAPTER 10. OBLIGATION TO OBSERVE THE STATUTES

214. [*Rights and Obligations*] The Community of the Beatitudes is to be attentive to fully respect the rights of its members, especially all those recognized for the faithful, both consecrated and lay, in the *Code of Canon Law*. In turn, all members of the Community are to commit themselves to observing the present *Statutes* as faithfully as possible, seeking in all things the increase of an authentic communion between Branches and putting all their capacities at the service of the charism common to all, for the good of the Church and the mission that it entrusts to us.

215. [*Modifications and Interpretation*] Modifications made to the present *Statutes* by a General Assembly must be approved by the Archbishop of Toulouse. As Bishop of the principal seat of governance, the authentic interpretation of the statutory norms also belongs to him. Their practical or declaratory interpretation belongs to the President.

## CHAPTER 11. ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

216. [*Associated Members*] Certain persons may desire to have a spiritual or apostolic connection to the Community of the Beatitudes.

Several forms of commitment are possible for both laypersons and clerics. The integration of these persons is regulated by the *Book of Norms*. Through these bonds, the Community of the Beatitudes embraces everyone who wishes to share in certain aspects of its spiritual heritage.

217. [*Responsibility of the Community*] The President and General Council shall have a pastoral concern for the members of these realities. They shall exercise this care according to the modalities defined in the *Book of Norms*.

218. [*Friends of the Lamb*] The Friends of the Lamb commit themselves to living out the spirituality of the Community of the Beatitudes and to taking part in its mission, according to the indications of the *Book of Norms*.

219. [*Young People*] In the desire to share in the spirituality of the Community of the Beatitudes, certain young people, who walking together in various groups, associations, and activities that the Community offers, bind themselves to it more directly through a commitment contained in a specific charter that is written in the *Book of Norms*.

## Table of contents

Preamble.....	1
Chapter 1. Nature and Purpose.....	2
1.1. Nature.....	2
1.2. Vocation and Spiritual Heritage.....	3
1.3. Purpose.....	4
Chapter 2. Consecrated Life in the Community.....	5
Chapter 3. Fraternal Life.....	7
Chapter 4. Life with God.....	9
Chapter 5. Apostolic Life.....	10
5.1. Spirit and General Points.....	10
5.2 Specific Terms.....	11
Chapter 6. Formation and Stages of Integration into the Community.....	13
6.1. General Points.....	13
6.2. Principles.....	13
6.3. Stages of integration.....	14
First Stage: Candidacy before Entering the Community.....	14
Second Stage: Aspirancy and Common Formation.....	14
Third Stage: Postulancy Year.....	15
Fourth Stage: Novitiage.....	15
Fifth Stage: Incorporation through Temporary Vows.....	16
Sixth Stage: Incorporation through Perpetual Vows.....	17
6.4. Priestly Formation.....	17
6.5. Ongoing Formation.....	18
Chapter 7. Governance of the Community.....	19
7.1. General Points.....	19
7.2. Elections.....	19
7.3. Juridical Structure of the Association.....	20
General Assembly of the Community.....	20
The President and the General Council.....	21
7.4. Juridical Structure of Each Branch of Consecrated Members.....	25
7.4.1. Governance of the Brothers' Branch of Consecrated Life.....	25
The Particular Assembly of the Brothers' Branch and the General Governance of the Branch.....	25

<u>General Government of the Branch</u> .....	<u>25</u>
<u>At the Regional Level</u> .....	<u>27</u>
<u>At the Local Level</u> .....	<u>28</u>
<u>7.4.2. Governance of the Sisters' Branch of Consecrated Life</u> .....	<u>29</u>
<u>The Particular Assembly of the Sisters and the General Governance of the</u> <u>Branch</u> .....	<u>29</u>
<u>General Government of the Branch</u> .....	<u>29</u>
<u>At the Regional Level</u> .....	<u>31</u>
<u>At the Local Level</u> .....	<u>32</u>
<u>7.4.3. Community Houses</u> .....	<u>33</u>
<u>Chapter 8. Administration of Temporal Goods</u> .....	<u>36</u>
<u>Chapter 9. Separation from the Community</u> .....	<u>38</u>
<u>Chapter 10. Obligation to Observe the Statutes</u> .....	<u>39</u>
<u>Chapter 11. Associate Members</u> .....	<u>39</u>
<u>Table of Contents</u> .....	<u>40</u>

**STATUTES  
OF THE LAY BRANCH OF THE  
COMMUNITY OF THE BEATITUDES**



**August 28, 2015**

## 1. GENERAL POINTS

1. [*Object*] The object of these Statutes is to outline the vocation and commitments of the members of the “Lay Branch” of the Community of the Beatitudes, which is a Public Association of the Faithful, with the intention of becoming an Ecclesial Family of Consecrated Life, established by the Archbishop of Toulouse. The rules in these *Statutes* are supplemented by those of the *Book of Particular Norms of the Lay Branch*.

2. [*Members*] The Lay Branch is composed of members of the faithful, men and women, lay (married or single) and clerics (permanent deacons) who, responding to a call from God, wish to follow Him by living in accordance with the charism of the Community of the Beatitudes, as is defined in the *General Statutes* of the Community and in its *Book of Life*.

3. [*General Statutes*] The present text refers, therefore, to the *General Statutes of the Community of the Community of the Beatitudes* and, in particular, to those parts concerning the charism, spirituality, formation and integration, apostolates, governing bodies in which members of the Lay Branch may have a certain participation, life of the “Community Houses,” and other elements common to all the Branches mentioned in the *General Statutes*.

4. [*Specific Vocation*] The members of the Lay Branch recognize in the vocation of the Community a form of life that gives them the possibility of seeking evangelical perfection. Through their membership in the Community, they wish to express the consecration of their life to the Lord, living in accordance with the spirit of the evangelical counsels and that of the Beatitudes (cf. Mt 5: 1-12; cf. *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, n. 4) in order to be a prophetic sign in this world of the Kingdom to come. They choose to assume a certain form of community life that is compatible with their own vocation, to strive towards a life of deep and incessant prayer, a trusting abandonment to Providence, and a share in the mission and apostolates of the Community.

5. [*Apostolic Life*] The decision of lay faithful to commit themselves to the Community is thus a response to the Church’s urgent call addressed to the lay faithful since the Second Vatican Council to follow the way to holiness that flows from the grace of Baptism and to participate fully in the mission of the Church, especially the proclamation of the Gospel.

### Married Persons

6. [*Vocation of the Family*] Married persons of the Community, leaning on the grace of the Sacrament of Marriage, fulfill their vocation as a couple and as a family according to a particular path, as described in the preceding paragraphs. The response to this call must foster the fulfillment of the vocation proper to the Christian family, in accordance with the

doctrine of the Church, and it must intensify the communion of the couple, their educational responsibility towards their children, and also the family's involvement in the life and mission of the Community, as well as that of the Church and its evangelical witness in society.

7. [*Unanimity of the Couple*] A married couple may not commit themselves to the Community unless the decision is made in full communion by both parties and accepted peacefully by children who are of the age of reason.

8. [*Commitments Proper to Couples*] While manifesting a certain exigency in obedience as defined by the present *Statutes*, the commitment of a couple in the Community is to be respectful of the legitimate autonomy of the family. Married persons assume the demands of poverty and the sharing of goods, as described in the *Statutes*. At least one member of the couple is to undertake paid work, either in a Community service or apostolate, or outside of the Community, and is to have the benefit of the social security systems put in place by the civil legislation of their country.

9. [*Private Lodgings*] A family is to have its own independent lodgings that guarantee the necessary family privacy, for the good of the couple and for the harmonious education of the children.

## Single Persons

10. [*The Way of Holiness for Single People*] Single people who commit themselves in the Community choose to live a life of prayer, Gospel radicality, and service to the Church, in accordance with the present *Statutes*. They are to be careful to live out their condition in life responsibly, with a desire for holiness, by giving of themselves in prayer, work, service, and participation in the mission of the Community and of the Church.

11. [*Various Conditions among Single Persons*]

a) [*Celibates*] Among the single persons in the Community, some may remain open to a vocation to marriage. Others may choose to remain in their single state, manifesting thereby that the grace of their Baptism and that of the call to the Community give meaning and fruitfulness to their life.

b) [*Celibates for the Kingdom*] Certain celibates, responding to a personal call of the Lord, may make a private vow of celibacy for the Kingdom.

## Permanent Deacons

12. [*Discernment and formation*] Married or single men within the Lay Branch may be called to the permanent diaconate. Although they then become clerics, they remain members of

the Lay Branch. The discernment and preparation are to be done in accordance with the provisions of the *Book of Norms*.

**13. [Admission to candidacy] The admission among candidates for orders is made by the Bishop of Toulouse (or by the bishop of the diocese where the candidate will be ordained), on presentation to candidacy to the general moderator with consent of the council and the confirmation of the President.**

## 2. EVANGELICAL LIFE AND COMMITMENTS

14. [*Various Forms*] The commitment to community life may be lived out according to various forms:

- on a daily basis within a Household of the Branch (cf. art. 58);
- within a Fraternity of the Branch (cf. art. 59);
- or by attachment to a Household of the Branch, with at least a weekly participation in its life.

In each case, a charter is to be drawn up that is to describe the concrete conditions of participation in community life (cf. art. 62).

15. [*Other Cases*] In certain cases, community life may be lived out in association with a Community House that lacks a Lay Branch or with a House of one of the Branches of Consecrated Life, under the direct authority of the Regional Moderator of the Branch.

16. [*Transition from One Form to Another*] There is the possibility of changing from one form to another after dialogue with the Regional Moderator of the Branch (or, in the absence thereof, the General Moderator), in accordance with the provisions of the *Book of Norms*.

17. [*Content of the Commitment*] The content of the Commitment within the Branch is:

- to participate in community life according to one of the forms set out above (cf. art. 13);
- to aim at assuming the following rhythm of prayer: daily Eucharist, a silent prayer time, the two offices of morning and evening prayer, and the weekly “Little Triduum” of Thursday evening to Sunday midday;
- in a spirit of poverty, to adopt simplicity of life and sobriety in the use of goods; besides paying a tithe, to practice the sharing of resources according to the one's own possibilities; to practice transparency and discern the most important choices in dialogue with the Moderators; to maintain a savings account in the context of legitimate needs; to avoid accumulating goods without real necessity (cf. *Book of Norms*);

- to practice obedience towards those rightfully in charge in what pertains to community life and apostolic activities; the members are to enter into dialogue with the Moderators of the Branch before any important choice of life, in order that their decisions may be made in light of their community commitments (cf. charter) and their call;
- to remain open to being sent on mission and participating in the Community's activities and apostolic works.

18. [*Particular Cases*] § 1. For a specific mission, a single person or a married couple may be required to live for a time outside those forms previously set out (cf. art. 13). The General Moderator and the President, with the consent of the General Council, will establish their letter of mission.

§ 2. In other cases mentioned in the *Book of Norms*, **and due to personal reasons**, a single person or a couple may be required to live for a time outside those forms previously set out. The Regional Moderator (or, if there is none, the General Moderator) will dialogue with the interested party to determine the framework and terms of this time that will enable them to persevere in fidelity to their Community commitment.

**19. [*Attachment*] Normally the members of the branch are attached to a house or a fraternity and dependent upon de local moderator (cf. *infra*, art.66). By default in the case of *supra*, art. 15, where if the situation mentioned in *supra*, art. 18 § 2, it becomes necessary, they are directly dependent on the regional moderator.**

### 3. FORMATION AND INTEGRATION

20. [*General Principles*] Besides the norms set out in the following paragraphs, the provisions of the *Book of Norms* concerning formation are to be observed.

21. [*Purpose of Formation*] All members of the Branch are to acquire an in-depth knowledge of the vocation proper to the Community, and to enter progressively into a practical application of this vocation. They are to acquire a good spiritual, biblical, and doctrinal formation (in the spirit of *Christifideles Laici* nn. 58-60), more or less developed according to their capacities, and in accordance with the mission or the tasks to which they may be called in the Community, in the Church, or in society. They may undertake a specific formation required for this mission or these tasks.

22. [**General Director of Formation**] The General Formation Director of the Lay Branch is nominated by the General Moderator, with the consent of the General Council of the Branch and the approval of the President. His or her role consists in coordinating formation within

the Branch. He or she is to maintain contact with the General Formation Director of the Community (cf. *General Statutes* art. 60).

23. [**Regional Director of Formation**] Where it seems expedient, Regional Formation Directors may also be nominated by the General Moderator, with the consent of the General Council of the Branch and after consultation of the General Formation Director of the Branch. In concert with the same, he or she is to coordinate formation within the Region.

24. [*General Director of Formation and Discernment for Celibates for the Kingdom*] The General Director of Formation and Discernment for Celibates for the Kingdom is named by the General Moderator, with the consent of his or her Branch Council and with the approval of the President. This role consists of discerning and forming celibates for the Kingdom in their year of discernment and during their temporary vows. He or she shall be in contact with the General Director of Formation of the Lay Branch.

### **Preliminary Stage: Candidacy before Entering the Community**

25. [*Candidacy*] Before being received into the Community, a single person or married couple is to become a candidate. That which is set out in articles 61-63 of the *General Statutes* is to be observed.

### **Second Stage: Aspirancy - Year of Common Formation**

26. [*Admission*] If the person manifests an authentic vocation to the Community and sufficient human and Christian maturity, they may be admitted at their own request to the second stage of formation.

27. [*Place*] Wherever possible, the single person or married couple is to undertake the year of Common Formation in a Community House in accordance with the provisions given in the *General Statutes* (cf. art. 64-69).

28. [**Distance Common Formation**] When a single person or married couple **find themselves in** a concrete situation that does not allow them to go to a Community House **to accomplish** the year of common formation, the Regional Formation Director of the Branch (or, in the absence thereof, the General Formation Director) is to propose the Distance Common Formation program, following the indications in the *Ratio Formationis*.

### **Third Stage: Probation**

29. [*Admission*] After the year of common formation, if the single person or married couple so request and with the consent of the Regional Moderator concerned, they are to be admitted to the time of Probation, in accordance with one or the other possible forms of commitment.

30. [*Variations*] The **determination of concrete** conditions concerning their integration into the Community are **to be entrusted to the authority** of the Regional Moderator (if necessary, in the form of a personal charter, cf. art. 62). During the time of Probation, the single person or couple are to deepen their call and are to be guided in this perspective. They are to continue their formation in accordance with the provisions in the *Ratio Formationis*.

#### **Fourth Stage: Incorporation through Temporary Commitments**

31. [*Incorporation*] Through temporary commitments, a single person or married couple is incorporated into the Community of the Beatitudes with the rights and obligations defined by the present *Statutes*.

32. [*Admission*] Admission for a temporary **commitment is pronounced after the person's request by** the Regional Moderator, at the person's request, with the consent of the Local Moderator and the Local Council, and with the recommendation of the local committed members and the Regional Formation Director. It is to take place within no more than four years after the beginning of the common formation.

33. [*Duration of the Temporary Commitment*] A temporary commitment is made for a period of three years. It may be renewed for a further year for a maximum of three times.

34. [*Renewal*] When the period of time for which the commitment was made has been completed, the candidate is to make a written request to the General Moderator either to prolong for one year or to be admitted to a definitive commitment. If they are judged suitable, they are to be admitted to the renewal of their commitment or to a definitive commitment. If the single person or married couple are not admitted, they are to leave the Community or else discern a commitment in one of the other realities associated with the Community of the Beatitudes.

35. [*Formation before the Definitive Commitment*] During the period of temporary commitment, the person is to receive formation under the responsibility of the Regional Formation Director, in accordance with the provisions set out in the *Ratio Formationis*.

#### **Fifth Stage: Definitive Commitment**

36. [*Admission for the Definitive Commitment*] Admission to a definitive commitment is **pronounced** by the General Moderator of the Branch, with the consent of the General Council of the Branch **and the confirmation of the President, after consulting with the** Local Moderator, that of the local permanently or definitively committed members, as well as that of the Regional Formation Director.

37. [*Permanent Commitment*] A single person who wishes to be a member of the Community and who has not made a definitive private vow of celibacy (cf. art. 11), instead of making a definitive commitment at the end of their temporary commitment, will make a “permanent commitment”.

38. [*From Permanent to Definitive*] If a permanently committed member pronounces a definitive private vow of celibacy, their commitment thereby becomes automatically definitive.

39. [*Formula*] Temporary and definitive commitments are to be pronounced according to the formulas approved by the General Moderator, with the accord of the President and the consent of the General Council.

40. [*Marriage*] When temporarily or permanently committed lay persons marry, they are dispensed from their Community commitments in order to give priority to building their life as couple. They may, if they wish, and after due discernment, make a temporary commitment. It belongs to the Regional Moderator or, in the absence thereof, the General Moderator, following the recommendation of the Local Moderator, to determine the stages of this progression towards a temporary commitment.

### **Ongoing Formation**

41. [*Ongoing Formation*] Ongoing theological, biblical, spiritual, intellectual, and human formation is to be fostered throughout the whole of one’s life. It shall take various forms and is to be adapted to each person, but is to consist in at least the equivalent of a yearly week-long session.

### **Discernment and Formation for Celibates for the Kingdom**

42. The discernment and formation for celibates for the Kingdom is handled by the Director of Discernment and Formation for Celibates for the Kingdom. The steps and content of the formation are contained in the *Ratio Formationis*.

## **4. GOVERNANCE OF THE LAY BRANCH**

### **The Particular Assembly and Governance of the Branch**

43. [*Jurisdiction*] The Ordinary Particular Assembly of the Lay Branch is to gather every four years, at the same time as the General Assembly of the Community; it is responsible for the following:

- to elect the General Moderator;
- to fix the number of Branch Council members and to elect them;
- to deal with matters of greater importance concerning the Branch;

- to evaluate the life of the Branch and its orientations for the future, as well as the application of these orientations and the general norms adopted by the General Assembly;
- **to make modifications to the present Statutes of the Lay Branch, a two third majority is needed, along with the approval of the President and that of the Archbishop of Toulouse**
- to modify **and approve** the *Book of Norms* of the Branch.

44. [*Composition*] The members of the Particular Assembly are those of the General Assembly of the Community belonging to the Branch (cf. *General Statutes* 102), to which are added:

- General officers;
- the Financial Officer, who is a member by right;
- those members elected in accordance with the *Book of Particular Norms of the Lay Branch* if this takes place, to participate only in the Particular Assembly in order to ensure a better representation;
- experts or invited members without voting rights.

The total number of elected members is to be at least equal to two-thirds of the members of the Particular Assembly.

45. [*Agenda and Number of Delegates*] The agenda and the number of delegates are fixed by the General Moderator, with the consent of the Branch Council and the approval of the President.

### **General Moderator and General Council**

46. [**General Moderator**] The General Moderator of the Lay Branch, man or woman, is to have been definitively committed in the Community for at least five years. They are to be at least thirty-five years old. If the person is married, their spouse is to accompany them in their charge and may participate in meetings, but without voting rights. His or her mandate is for a period of four years, and may be renewed once. To be postulated, they must obtain a two-thirds majority in the first ballot (cf. can. 181, §1).

**47. [*Links with the general governance*] The General Moderator of the branch forms part of the general governance of the Community as members of the general council according the statutory variances (cf. SG, art. 118-121). He works in collaboration with the President and oversees the execution of the general Council's decisions in the branch. Before all decisions that could potentially have significant repercussions on other branches or on the life of a community house, he will consult the President.**

48. [*Jurisdiction*] It belongs to the General Moderator to

- to foster the unity and dynamism of the Lay Branch and the blossoming of the baptismal consecration in its members according to the charism of the Community;

- to foster communion with the other Branches of the Community and with the President;
- **to communicate to the President all the important decisions of the branch that the latter does not have to approve or confirm, particularly those decisions concerning the allocation of persons;**
- to foster the healthy administrative and economic management of the Branch;
- to maintain real contact with the members of the Branch;

**49. [Consent of the Council of the Branch and approval of the President in the General Council]** In a general Council, the General Moderator will need the consent of its Council and the approval of the President in order to make the following decisions:

a) to open or close a house or fraternity of the lay branch, after seeking the advice of the

**Regional Moderator (cf. SG, art.123);**

b) to confer upon a member of the branch a mission that involves the Community (cf. supra, art. 18 § 1)

**50. [Consent of the Council of the Branch and approval of the President]** The General Moderator will need the consent of its Council and the approval of the President in order to make the following decisions:

- to create, modify, or suppress a region of the branch;
- to name a General Moderator for the formation of the branch (cf. art. 22)

**51. [Consent of the Council of the Branch and confirmation of the President]** The General Moderator will need the consent of its Council after the confirmation of the President in order to make the following decisions:

- to name a Regional Moderator;
- to name a General Director of formation and discernment for the celibates for the Kingdom (cf. supra, art. 24);
- to admit a candidate for definite or permanent commitment (cf. supra, art. 36);
- to present to the Archbishop of Toulouse or a bishop concerns regarding a candidate for the permanent diaconate. (cf. supra, art. 13).

52. [Consent of the Council] The General Moderator will need the consent of its Council in order to make the following decisions:

- name the Finance Officer and the Secretary;
- **name those responsible for the formation of the branch (region, diaconate);**
- name the local responsible for the houses and fraternities.

**53. [Assistant General]** The General Moderator will appoint two counselors as assistant general, if possible from another state of life. These will be in charge of assisting, replacing in case it is needed, and to sit with the General Council of the Community.

54. [General Council] The General Council of the Branch is made up of at least four members. Where possible, there is to be a married couple among them and two singles. They are to be elected by the delegates of the Particular Assembly. The General Finance Officer of the Branch is also a member of the Council, but without voting rights.

55. [*Extended Council*] At least once a year, the General Moderator is to convene the Extended Council, composed of the General Council of the Branch and the Regional Moderators. The Extended Council is an organ of consultation and exchange that serves to assist the General Governance in its task by providing a wider and more complete vision of the life of the Branch.

56. [*Secretary of the Branch*] The Secretary of the Branch is nominated by the General Moderator, with the consent of the General Council of the Branch. He or she acts as clerk, has the task of safe-guarding the documents concerning the governance of the Branch, and is to assist the Moderator of the Branch and his or her Council Members, in accordance with the particular instructions they may have given him or her.

57. [*Finance Officer of the Branch*] The Finance Officer of the Branch is nominated by the General Moderator, with the consent of the Branch Council. It belongs to him or her, in accordance with the norms given in chapter 5 of the present *Statutes* and those contained in the *Book of Particular Norms of the Lay Branch*:

- to administer the goods entrusted to the management of the Branch and to prepare the annual financial report;
- to request a report on the economic state of the Households and the Fraternities and to refer these to the General Moderator of the Branch;
- to give a report to the Presidency, to the General Moderator, and to the General Council of the Branch regularly, or at their request, on the economic state of the Branch;
- to give a report on the economic state of the Branch during the General Assembly of the Branch;
- to oversee the administrative situation of the members of the Branch.

## The Regional Level

58. [*Regions*] The General Moderator, with the consent of the General Council of the Branch and the approval of the President, may create Regions in the Branch that group together a certain number of Households or Fraternities of the Branch.

59. [***Appointment and mandate of the Regional Moderator***] The General Moderator **will nominate, with the consent of its Council and the confirmation of the President**, and after consultation of the lay members of the Region, a Regional Moderator. The mandate of **the** Regional Moderator is for three years; it may be renewed.

60. [***Proficiencies of the Regional Moderator***] **The Regional Moderator exercises its responsibility in close collaboration with the General Moderator and the Council of the Branch, which the President, the general council, and when appropriate, the assistants to the President in charge of the accompaniment of the houses. In the discernment period prior to making decisions, the Regional Moderator will engage in dialogue with the Regional Moderators of other branches within the same geographical area such as with**

**the Coordinators of the houses involved. Its powers other than those indicated in the present Statutes and in the Book of Norms, will be listed in the letter of mission**

61. [*Decisions*] When a decision belongs to the Regional Moderator, in the absence thereof, it is to be referred to the General Moderator

62. [*Regional Council*] The Regional Moderator shall be assisted by a Council made up of three persons nominated in accordance with the provisions of the *Book of Norms*.

### **The Local Level**

63. [*Households*] A Household of the Lay Branch is to be made up of at least three definitively or permanently committed members in a setting that enables a daily community life. It may be part of a Community House (cf. *General Statutes* 161) or it may be autonomous.

64. [*Fraternities*] A Fraternity of the Lay Branch is made up of definitively or permanently committed members who do not live in the same location. Its everyday functioning and the nomination of the Local Moderator are identical to that of a Household, but the community rhythm of life may be limited to a weekly basis.

65. [*Mission of the Foundation*] An autonomous Household or Fraternity is to have a mission that is in keeping with the charism and the unity of the Community and in communion with the local Church. This mission is to be entrusted to it by the President with the consent of the General Council, after the plan has been presented by the General Moderator. (Cf. SG, art. 122g)

**66. [*Local Moderator*] A Household or Fraternity is to be entrusted to a Local Moderator for a renewable three-year term. He or she is nominated by the Regional Moderator, after consultation of the local committed members, with the consent of the Regional Council and the approval of the General Moderator. **This nomination is communicated in writing to the President.****

67. [*Jurisdiction*] It belongs to the Local Moderator:

- to ensure the Household or Fraternity's fidelity to the Community's vocation and to the mission entrusted to it;
- to propose candidates for temporary commitment to the Regional Moderator;
- to establish personal charters and letters of mission of the members of his or her Household or Fraternity, in consultation with the Regional Moderator, and to ensure that these are respected;
- in the case of an autonomous Household or a Fraternity, to foster a healthy integration with the local Church.

68. [*Local Council*] The Local Moderator is to be assisted by a Council. In smaller realities, **all the life-committed members definite or permanent**, are to be part of the local Council. Where there are seven or more life-committed members **definite or permanent**, a local

Council of at least three persons is to be elected by the members of the Household or Fraternity.

69. [*Synod*] The Synod is the gathering of all the committed members of a Household or Fraternity, gathered periodically to reflect on its life and its organization. The Synod of the committed members is to determine the organization and manner of life proper to the Household or Fraternity.

## **5. ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAY BRANCH**

70. [*Spirit*] The administration of goods in the Branch is to take into account what is written in Chapter 8 of the *General Statutes*.

71. [*Tithe*] The tithe is to be paid on individual and Community resources; it is to be allocated in accordance with the provisions of the *Book of Norms*.

72. [*Social Security and Health Insurance*] Each member of the Branch shall see to his or her own Social Security and health insurance, according to the civil and ecclesiastical laws of his or her country.

73. [*Local Fund*] The funds of the Household or Fraternity are under the responsibility of the Local Moderator and the Local Council: the fixing of the budget, extraordinary acts, and transparency before the committed members. The Finance Officer is responsible for the application of the budget; he or she is nominated by the Local Moderator with the consent of the Local Council.

74. [*Household and Community House*] The economic relationship between the Household and the Community House is set out in the *Book of Norms*.

75. [*Regional Fund*] The regional fund is under the responsibility of the Regional Moderator and the Regional Council and is to be administered in accordance with the provisions of the *Book of Norms*. The Regional Finance Officer is nominated by the Regional Moderator, with the consent of the Regional Council.

76. [*General Fund*] The general fund of the Branch is under the responsibility of the General Moderator and the General Council of the Branch: the fixing of the budget, extraordinary acts, and reports to the Presidency. The role of the Finance Officer of the Branch is set out in art. 49 of the present *Statutes*.

## **6. LEAVE OF ABSENCE, NON-RENEWAL OF COMMITMENTS, SEPARATION, DISMISSAL**

77. [*The Non-renewal of Temporary Commitment*] The non-renewal of the temporary commitment results in departure from the Community.

78. [*Leave of Absence*] Certain circumstances may cause a committed member to request leave from the Community for a certain amount of time. The framework and duration of the

absence shall be drawn up by the Regional Moderator and the person in question according to the modalities indicated in the *Book of Particular Norms of the Lay Branch*.

79. [*Separation*] If, after adequate time for reflection and dialogue, a member of the Lay Branch decides to sever bonds with the Community, he or she shall make this request to the General Moderator according to the indications in the *Book of Particular Norms of the Lay Branch*.

80. [*Dismissal from the Branch*] In the case of a grave and repeated failure to keep Community commitments, or for canonical reasons (cf. can. 316, CIC), after the person has had the possibility to offer an explanation, the Moderator, with the consent of the Council, may ask a member of the Lay Branch to take a leave of absence or to depart from the Community. The procedure shall take place according to the *Book of Particular Norms of the Lay Branch*.

## 7. OBLIGATION TO OBSERVE THE STATUTES

81. [*Rights and Duties*] The Community of the Beatitudes shall be careful to fully respect the rights of its members. In turn, all the members of the Lay Branch of the Community shall commit to live out as faithfully as possible the present *Statutes*, seeking in all things an ever-increasing, authentic communion, putting all their capacities at the service of the common charism for the sake of the Church and the mission with which the Church entrusts us.

82. [*Modification and Interpretation*] The modifications integrated into the present *Statutes* by a Particular Assembly **must be approved by the President and the Archbishop of Toulouse**. As bishop at the head of the Community, his is also the prerogative for the authentic interpretation of the statutory norms. Their practical or declarative interpretation belongs to the President.

## CONTENTS

1. General Points .....	3
Married Persons .....	3
Single Persons .....	4
Permanent Deacons .....	4
2. Evangelical Life and Commitments .....	5
3. Formation and Integration .....	6
Preliminary Stage: Candidacy before Entering the Community .....	7
Second Stage: Aspirancy - Year of Common Formation .....	7
Third Stage: Probation.....	7
Fourth Stage: Incorporation through Temporary Commitments .....	7
Fifth Stage: Definitive Commitment .....	8
Ongoing Formation .....	8
Discernment and Formation for Celibates for the Kingdom .....	8
4. Governance of the Lay Branch .....	9
The Particular Assembly and Governance of the Branch .....	9
General Moderator and General Council .....	9
The Regional Level.....	11

The Local Level .....	11
5. Administration of the Lay Branch .....	12
6. Leave of Absence, Non-Renewal of Commitments, Separation, Dismissal .....	13
7. Obligation to Observe the Statutes .....	13