

# 07 Chapter 5: Concerning Formation

---

United States

CONCERNING FORMATION WHICH LEADS TO UNION WITH THE BROTHERS IN GOD 140. In order that religious life in our Order may be truly responsive to both the demands of the Gospel and the aspirations of human nature, as well as to the particular character of each individual vocation, candidates are to be initiated gradually but surely into our way of life. 141. The scope of formation is: To help the candidate to respond faithfully to his divine vocation, so that he may grow harmoniously into a mature human and Christian person. To be present to the candidate so that he may sincerely develop a sense of Christian responsibility and may learn to dedicate himself, his qualities, and his talents to his confreres and to the Church in apostolic activity. 142. The entire community has a real role in forming candidates so that the living faith and sincerity of life of each of the confreres, whether they live in the community or outside of it, are to contribute greatly to the process of formation. The awareness of such influence must also be a stimulus to the community, so that, taught by experience, they may renew local observances and customs. 143. The fundamental elements of formation should be the same for all confreres of the Order all over the world, allowing for a sound pluriformity. Among these fundamental elements there must be an initiation, given in the light of the particular charism of the Order and its history, into religious and community life as well as Sacred Scripture, liturgy, theology and the sense of apostolic mission.[5-1] 144. The time of initiation into community life should actually and concretely prepare the candidates for the life which they will be leading afterward. As the candidates grow toward human and christian maturity opportunity should be given them to develop and manifest a sense of personal responsibility and freedom. They should also be allowed a gradual participation in contributing to the progress of the community and afterwards helping to arrive at community decisions. 145. In so far as possible, training is to be given to the individual confreres so that each may learn how to develop his talents and potential and how to use them in the service of the community and church ministry. 146. Various stages of education and formation should be suitably accommodated to the particular conditions of the brethren, and when there is question of making decisions which affect them, they also should be heard. THE STAGES OF FULL INCORPORATION 147. In addition to common law, the following norms must be observed in regard to the stages leading to full incorporation in our communities. Admission 148. In Christ each person is called by the Holy Spirit to his proper ministry (cf. I Cor. 12:6 ff.). Those who believe they are called to serve God and the brothers according to our manner of living are to be admitted as candidates, unless there is a canonical impediment or a positive doubt concerning the genuineness of the vocation. On the other hand, only those should be accepted who possess the qualities, at least potentially, by which they may contribute effectively to the life and work of our communities. 149. Those who are considered suitable for religious life are admitted to the novitiate by the prelate with the consent of his council, manifested secretly, having first heard the opinion of the director of postulancy, if there is one. Postulancy 150. Where the postulancy is introduced, the postulants, for some period of time determined by the individual canonries, remain under the direction of a suitable religious, even though this probation period may, with the permission of the prelate, be carried out outside a house of the Order. Novitiate 151. In order that the novitiate be valid, it must be made in a house of the Order duly designated for this purpose by the prelate. It must also include at least twelve months spent in the community of the novitiate itself. 152. With due regard for the prescriptions

## 07 Chapter 5: Concerning Formation

---

in canons 647 and 648, absence from the novitiate house which lasts more than three months, either continuous or interrupted renders the novitiate itself invalid. An absence of more than 15 days must be made up. 153. When there are permitted periods of formative activity carried on outside the novitiate house to complete the formation of the novices, the entire time spent outside the novitiate is added to the twelve months required for the validity of the novitiate. Including this time, the total time of the novitiate should not exceed two years. 154. If when the novitiate is completed there is still doubt about the novice's suitability, the prelate can extend the novitiate, but not beyond six months. This applies even where there is a two-year novitiate. 155. Unity of mind and heart must prevail between the prelate, the novice master and the novices. This necessary union, which is the fruit of genuine charity, is necessary, for the formation of novices. 156. In our Order, all candidates, whether they have entered with a view toward the priesthood or not, can be formed in the same novitiate. If a lay brother is allowed to advance to the diaconate or to the priesthood, the novitiate does not have to be repeated. 157. A novice may freely leave the Order or be dismissed by the prelate for a just cause. The prelate, however, should proceed carefully and before dismissing a novice hear the master of novices unless a special reason intervenes. 158. If a man changes his mind and aspires to enter the Order again, and whether he is to be received either into the same canonry or into another, he is obliged to repeat the entire time of the prescribed novitiate, Where there has been introduced the custom of a two year novitiate, the novice who has duly fulfilled the requirement of a canonical novitiate of twelve months, and then legitimately left the novitiate during the second year, can be re-admitted by the prelate with the consent of his council, without being required to repeat the whole novitiate, but the second year can be extended for some time by the prelate, but not beyond six months. 159. The prelate, for a just cause, may permit that first profession be anticipated, but by not more than fifteen days. 160. To establish a novitiate does not require the permission of the Apostolic See. Each canonry by law is a house, in which the novitiate may be carried out. The prelate may also constitute a novitiate in a house that is dependent on a canonry. It is the Abbot General, however, who, with the consent of the Definitors of the Order, may permit the novitiate in a house dependent on the Order. To erect a second or third novitiate within the same canonry requires a written decree given by the Abbot General with the consent of the Definitors of the order. Temporary Profession 161. When the novitiate is completed, it is the right of the prelate with the consent of his council to admit a novice to profession. Beforehand, he is to consider the report of the master of novices. He should also hear anyone else whom the matter concerns. Moreover, as the profession approaches, he should inform the house chapter in sufficient time so that each one is given the opportunity of manifesting his considered judgment on the suitability of the candidate. 162. The novice, upon completing the novitiate, may profess temporary vows for a number of years which should be neither less than three nor longer than six. In a particular case for solid reasons the temporary profession may be extended by the prelate, such that however, the entire time in temporary vows does not exceed nine years. 163. When the time for which the vows were professed has elapsed, there is to be no delay in the renewal of vows. The renewal of temporary vows is dependent upon the prelate admitting those to be professed to such a renewal with the consent of the council. 164. Before first profession members should cede the administration of their temporal goods to whomever they choose and they freely dispose of the rights of use and usufruct in writing. A will which is valid in civil law should be made at least before perpetual profession. 165. Whoever legitimately leaves the Order after completing the novitiate or after profession, may be re-admitted by the Prelate with the consent of his council without the burden of repeating the novitiate; it is the right of the Prelate to determine a suitable period of probation prior to the profession of temporary vows and a time of temporary vows before solemn profession according to cc. 655 and 657. Solemn Profession

## 07 Chapter 5: Concerning Formation

---

in our Order 166. It is the right of the Prelate with the consent of his council to admit to public perpetual vows, called in our Order solemn vows. As the profession approaches he is first to inform the members of the canonry in sufficient time so that each one is given the opportunity of manifesting his considered judgment on the suitability of the candidate. The solemn profession may be anticipated for a just cause but not beyond three months. In order that the perpetual profession be fully effective, it is most desirable that preceding it a sufficiently lengthy period of time for immediate preparation be designated. It is left to each canonry to determine or modify the time and form of this period of preparation. Profession of solemn vows in the Order is carried out according to our own rite approved by the Holy See. 167. Those who are admitted to solemn profession in our Order must renounce beforehand their goods and make that renunciation in a manner which, in as much as possible, is also valid according to civil law and takes effect from the day of the profession. By such renunciation they lose the very capacity for acquiring or possessing and therefore acts contrary to the vows of poverty are invalid. They must surrender any goods which come to them after the renunciation to the canonry to which they belong according to the locally accepted practice. Those bound by the perpetual vow of chastity in the Order invalidly attempt marriage. ECCLESIASTICAL STUDIES 168. Juniors, before entering into the ecclesiastical disciplines, should be properly educated in undergraduate studies, especially in the humanities and sciences in the manner in which youth in their regions prepare for higher studies. If it is not possible to provide facilities for such studies, prelates should send their students to some well equipped institution. 170. In the house of studies there must flourish a common life which is accommodated to the situation of the students but nevertheless in accord with the spirit of the house of profession. 171. The master of professed should diligently inquire about the application and progress of the students and fraternally work with the prefect of studies to whom, along with the instructors, falls the responsibility to direct the studies of the students. 172. Where there is a commission on studies, it should include representatives of the professors and students as well as of the community. This is true because the studies of our Juniors have great bearing on community life. 173. Ecclesiastical studies are to be carried out according to the discipline of the Church in such manner that they begin with attention to the mystery of salvation, so ordered that the students may grasp the meaning, order, and pastoral purpose of ecclesiastical studies, and at the same time may be aided in deepening and penetrating their own life with faith. PROMOTION TO ORDERS Installation in the Ministries 174. The ministries of lector and acolyte, the common law being observed, may be conferred on any suitable religious. They are conferred by one's proper prelate, whether an abbot or prior de regimine, after the confrere aspiring to them has presented a freely written and signed petition to his own prelate. Promotion to Orders 175. Only those solemnly professed, about whom it can be conjectured that they will be suitable and worthy priests or deacons, may be advanced to the orders of diaconate and priesthood. 176. Candidates to the diaconate, either permanent or transitional, and to the priesthood, must receive and exercise the ministries of lector and acolyte for a suitable period of time. The right of dispensing them from receiving these ministries is reserved to the Holy See. Candidates for the diaconate, before they are promoted to this order, must present to their prelate a handwritten and signed declaration, by which they testify that they knowingly and willingly are ready to receive the sacred order and devote themselves perpetually to the ecclesiastical ministry at the same time seeking to be admitted to the order which they will receive. 177. Observing other elements in common law, according to the privilege of the Order, solemnly professed religious, in possession of dimissorial letters from their prelates, may receive holy orders on Sundays or other feast days, even consecutively, from any Catholic bishop whom they prefer, even a guest, validly and licitly.[5-2] 178. Before anyone may be promoted to sacred orders, the prelate shall see to it that cc. 1050, 1051 and

## 07 Chapter 5: Concerning Formation

---

1052.2 be observed. THE MASTER OF NOVICES AND THE MASTER OF JUNIORS 179. Those who accept from the community the immediate responsibility for formation should have skill in the necessary fields, as well as experience so that the responsibility given to them may be faithfully carried out. They should know well the mentality and the values of the social milieu from which the candidates come. The responsibility of forming members is an apostolic responsibility which may be carried out by a group of persons whose qualities, working together, can increase the effectiveness of formation. 180. There must always be a novice master with his own proper responsibility; he must be at least 30 years of age. The master of novices shall draw up concrete norms for the formation of the novices. These norms must be approved by the prelate and his council. The master should frequently call the novices in, listen to them, inspire them, correct their negligences and lead them to more perfect things by his counsel. 181. The directors of formation shall employ great effort in training novices and juniors according to the mind of these Constitutions. CONTINUING FORMATION 182. Once the regular course of studies is completed, every confrere should earnestly continue spiritual and doctrinal development, being conscious of the advances in the sciences, and especially the ecclesiastical sciences, as well as taking into account the development both of the human community and of the needs of the various apostolates. 183. Continuing formation is concerned not only with intellectual knowledge, but more especially with the human development of the whole person so that the confreres may better serve their community for the good of the people of God. 184. The community should provide not only the necessary funding, but also the time, so that confreres, in accordance with their own talents, may be able to perfect their own gifts and knowledge by study. 185. University studies are commended even when these do not immediately follow the normal course of studies. In certain cases the opportunity should be provided confreres of giving themselves over to continuing formation, even suspending apostolic work for a time. [Click here to go to Constitution Chapters](#)