

TABLE OF CONTENTS: **CONTENIDO**

Introduction . Introduccion

A) Overview of the Servite Order

VISTAZO GENERAL DE LA ORDEN SERVITA

History . **Historia**, UNIFAS, Calendar . **Fiestas**, Map . **Mappa**, Charism . **Carisma**

B) Secular Order in the United States – National Directory

La Orden Seglar en los Estados Unidos – el Directorio Nacional

C) Organization of National Office in the United States

Organización de la Oficina Nacional en los Estados Unidos

Office . **Oficina**, Council . **Consejo**, Statutes . **Estatutos**, Council . **Consejo**,
Nomination Process . **Proceso de nominación**

D) Organization of Local Communities

Organización de las Comunidades Locales

Leadership . **Liderazgo**, Prior/ess, Assistant Prior/ess . **Prior/ess asistente**,
Spiritual Assistant . **Asistente espiritual**, Council . **Consejo**, Secretary .
Secretaria, Treasurer . **Tesorero**, Formation Director . **Directora de formacion**,
Installation Rite, Possible Committees . **Posibles Comités**, Meeting Structure .
Reunión Mensual, Statutes Template, Service & Outreach . **Servicio y**
Apostolado, Visitation Preparation . **Preparación para la visita**, Canonical
Approval . **Aprobacion Canonica**

E) Inquiry and Initial Formation

Investigación y Formación Inicial

Inquiry and Formation . **Investigacion y Formacion Inicial**, OSSM Prayer book
lesson plan

F) Resources for Spiritual Growth and Formation

Recursos para el Crecimiento Espiritual y la Formación

Resources . **Recursos**, Advanced Directives . **Pre-Planificación Funeral**, Ongoing
Formation List, Opening Our Hearts and Homes, Sent to Serve . **Enviados Para**
SERVIR, Mary's Seven Steps on the Way to Solidarity with Creation, Catholic
Social Teaching, Certificate of Promise . **Certificado de la Promesa**

G) Servite Communications

La Comunicación Servita

Region, National, Servite Family, Publications . **Publicaciones**

**Handbook second revision - Draft
English and Spanish**

INTRODUCTION . INTRODUCCION

The OSSM Handbook has been designed to be a resource to the council members of each community. It has been designed for several reasons:

- To provide training for community leadership. As leadership for a community could change once each year, the cost is prohibitive for the National Council to provide training to local leadership.
- To provide a guide to Servite resources in one central place.

The handbook is provided in loose leaf form to make updating of its contents possible in a simple, cost effective and timely fashion.

INTRODUCCION

El Manual OSSM ha sido diseñado como un recurso para los miembros de los concejos de cada comunidad. Ha sido diseñado por varias razones:

- **Proveer adiestramiento para el liderato de la comunidad. Ya que el liderato de la comunidad cambia cada año, no será financieramente posible que el Consejo Nacional provee adiestramiento al liderato local.**
- **Proveer un guía de recursos Servitas en un local central.**

Se provee el Manual en hojas sueltas para que la actualización de su contenido sea posible en una forma sencilla, con costo efectivo, y oportuno.



OVERVIEW OF THE SERVITE ORDER

VISTAZO GENERAL DE LA ORDEN SERVITA

Philippians 2:2

then make my joy complete by being like-minded,
having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.

Filipenses 2:2

...les pido algo que me llenara de alegría. Tengan un mismo amor,
Un mismo espíritu, un único sentir...

Section Contents/ Contenido de Sección

1. Brief History of the Servants of Mary/Breve Historia de los Siervos de Maria
2. Brief History of the Secular Order of the Servants of Mary/Breve Historia de la Orden Secular de los Siervos de Maria
3. UNIFAS-USA/UNIFAS USA
4. UNIFAS Around the World
5. Servite Feasts/Fiestas OSM
6. Regional Conferences of the Order/Conferencias Regionales OSM
7. Charism of the Servants of Mary/Carsima de los Siervos de Maria

Brief History of the Servants of Mary

Before the Servites ever existed as an official religious Order, seven prosperous men came together in the city of Florence, Italy. As a reflection of the penitential spirit of the times, it had been the custom of these men to meet regularly as members of a religious society established in honor of Mary, the Mother of God. Eventually, the seven left their comfortable homes, put aside their finery and went to live together in a ramshackle building outside the city walls. The holiness and penitential lifestyle of the seven quickly attracted attention and people seeking prayers and spiritual direction became frequent visitors. To avoid these distractions that they considered a hindrance to the contemplative life they sought, the entire group moved to more peaceful surroundings, and established a hermitage on the summit of a nearby mountain, Monte Senario, sometimes known as the "sounding mountain."

Coming to be known as the "Friar Servants of Mary," others joined the first seven on Monte Senario, and as the group continued to grow, the seeds of the new religious Order took root. The Friar Servants of Mary were approved as a religious Order by the bishop of Florence sometime between the years 1240 and 1247. In the year 1304, the Order of Friar Servants of Mary received definitive approval as a religious Order in the Church by the Holy See.

Servite presence in the United States dates from 1852 when Fr. Antoninus Grundner of the Tyrolese Province began working among the German speaking Catholics first in New York City, then in eastern Pennsylvania, and finally as pastor of St. Alphonsus Church in Philadelphia. Fr. Grundner died in 1876 without having made a permanent foundation, though some Austrian Servites continued to work with Italian Servites in the Midwest. While attending the First Vatican Council in 1870, Joseph Melcher, first bishop of Green Bay, Wisconsin, invited Servites to work in his diocese. That same year four Servites, under the guidance of Fr. Austin M. Morini, took charge of St. Charles Church in Menasha, Wisconsin. In 1874, Bishop Foley invited the Order to Chicago, and eventually, Chicago became the center of Servite activity in the United States. The American Province was established in 1909.

Today, we serve in nearly all countries of North and South America. In addition, we are found in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. From a humble beginning we have been blessed with a long and rich history. We still, like our Seven Founders, go where the needs of God's people demand that we go. And we still seek the perfection of the Gospel way of life under the protection of Mary, the Mother and Servant of the Lord.

A more detailed history can be found at the International Servants of Mary website at: <http://www.servidimaria.net/en/index.htm> by clicking on the menu item "history."

Breve Historia de los Siervos de María

Antes de que existieran los Siervos de María como una Orden religiosa oficial, siete hombres prósperos se unieron en la ciudad de Florencia, Italia. Como reflejo del espíritu penitencial de los tiempos, había sido la costumbre de estos hombres reunirse regularmente como miembros de una sociedad religiosa establecida en honor a María, la Madre de Dios. Eventualmente, los siete dejaron sus casas cómodas, se apartaron de sus cosas finas y se fueron a vivir juntos en un edificio destatado fuera de los muros de la ciudad. Su estilo de vida sagrada y penitencial de los siete atrajo la atención de gente solicitando oraciones y dirección espiritual frecuentemente. Para evitar estas distracciones que ellos consideraban un estorbo a la vida contemplativa que ellos buscaban, el grupo entero se mudó a un lugar más sosegado y establecieron una ermita en la cima de un monte cercano, Monte Senario, que a veces se conoce como “el monte sonante”.

Comenzaron a conocerse como los “Frailes Siervos de María,” otros se unieron a los primeros siete en el Monte Senario, y como el grupo siguió creciendo, las semillas de una nueva Orden religiosa tomaron raíz. Los Frailes Siervos de María fueron aprobados como Orden religiosa por el obispo de Florencia dentro de los años 1240 y 1247. En el año 1304, la Orden de los Frailes Siervos de María recibió aprobación definitiva como Orden religiosa en la Iglesia por la Santa Sede.

La presencia Servita en los Estados Unidos va desde 1852 cuando el P. Antoninus Grundner de la Provincia Tirol empezó a trabajar entre los Católicos alemanes en la ciudad de Nueva York, y luego en el este del Estado de Pensylvania, y por último como pastor de la Iglesia San Alfonso en Filadelfia. El P. Grundner murió en el 1876 sin haber hecho una fundación permanente, aunque algunos Servitas austriacos continuaron el trabajo con los Servitas italianos en el medioeste. Mientras asistía al Primer Concilio del Vaticano en 1870, Joseph Melcher, primer obispo de Green Bay, Wisconsin, invitó a los Servitas a trabajar en su diócesis. Ese mismo año cuatro Servitas, bajo la guía del P. Austin M. Morini, tomaron el mando de la Iglesia San Carlos en Menasha, Wisconsin. En el 1874, el obispo Foley invitó a la Orden a Chicago, y eventualmente, Chicago se hizo el centro de actividad Servita en los Estados Unidos. La Provincia Americana se estableció en el 1909.

Hoy, servimos en casi todos los países de América del Norte y Sur. Adicionalmente, servimos además en Europa, África, y Australia. Desde un principio humilde hemos sido bendecidos con una larga y rica historia. Nosotros aún, como nuestros Siete Fundadores, vamos donde las necesidades del pueblo de Dios exigen que vayamos. Todavía buscamos la perfección de la vida del Evangelio bajo la protección de María, la Madre y Sierva del Señor.

Una historia más detallada se encuentra en el sitio web internacional de los Siervos de María <http://www.servidimaria.net>

UNIFAS

Unio Internationalis Familiae Servorum International Union of the Servite Family

What is UNIFAS?

UNIFAS is an umbrella international organization of Servites established May 4th, 1987 by Servite leaders from around the world.

UNIFAS Purpose is to foster communion and collaboration through:

- mutual help in the common sectors of our life and of our commitment to service
- the reading together of the signs of the times and the search for adequate answers
- consultation on themes and initiatives of joint interest

Members of UNIFAS Assembly and Executive Council are the following:

UNIFAS Assembly	Executive Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior General • Cloistered nuns • Italian congregations • Other Sister congregations • Secular Institutes • Secular Servites • Ex Officio Rep of the Friar's General Council Gen Sec for the Secular Order and Lay Groups • Officers Secretary Treasurer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior General • One Cloistered nun • One sister rep Italian congregations • One sister rep other congregations • One member of the Secular Institutes • One member of the Secular Servites • Ex Officio Rep of the Friar's General Council Gen Sec for the Secular Order and Lay Groups • Officers Secretary Treasurer

UNIFAS Functions through:

- Officers
- Council – executive body, elected from and by the Assembly *meets at least once a year*
- Assembly – board of directors *generally meets every four years*

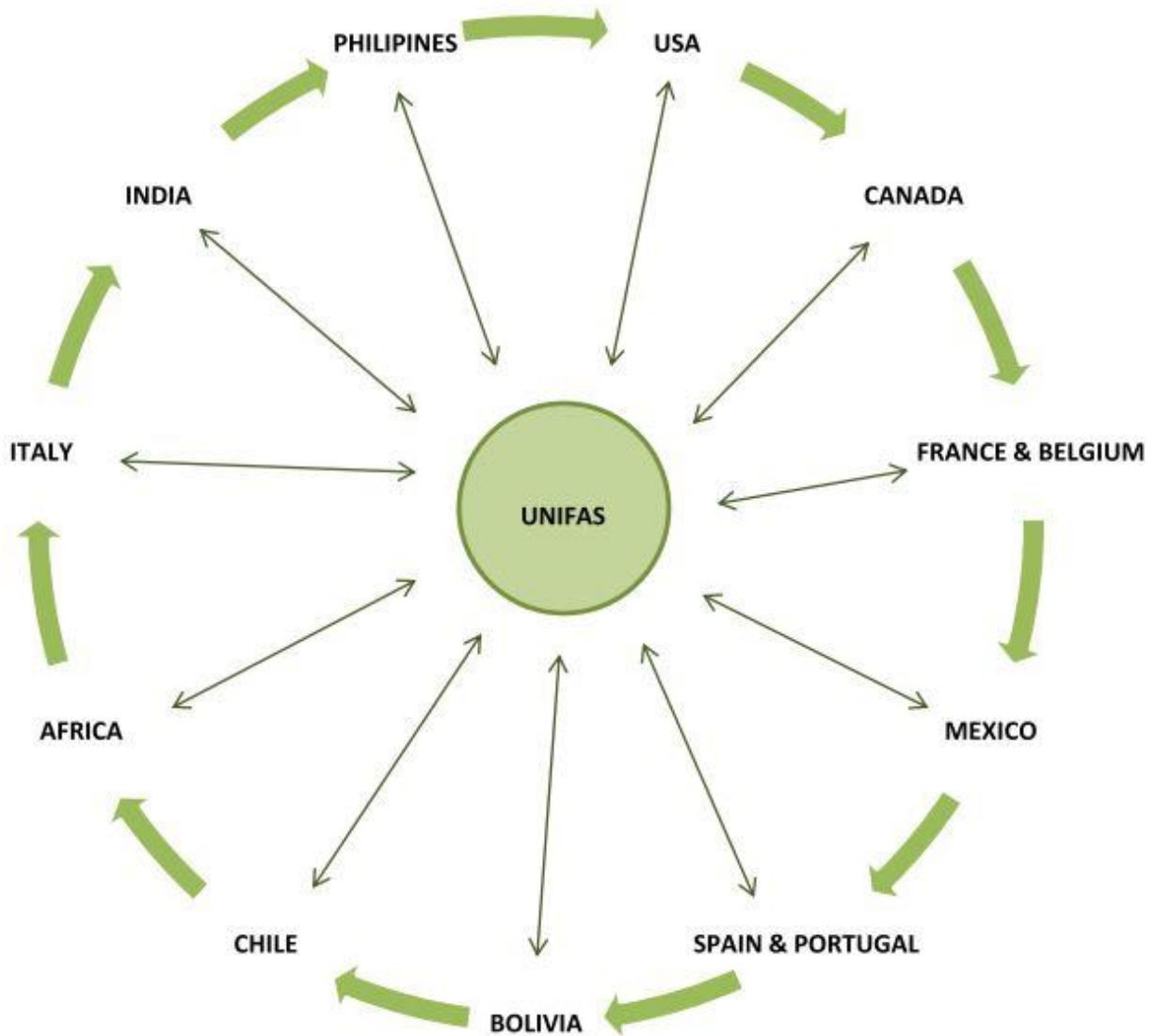
What is a National UNIFAS?

Each national UNIFAS group includes the various components of the Servite Family in a particular geographical region and gathers on a regular basis to *foster communion and collaboration* within the Servite Family. Each national group selects a president or a contact person to communicate with the international secretariat.

UNIFAS – USA was established in September 16th, 1995 *and meets annually.*

UNIFAS – USA Assembly	Executive Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Friars • Eight Sisters • Four Secular Servites • One OSSM National Assistant • One Omaha Servite Associate • One Ladysmith Servite CoJourneyer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President • Secretary • Treasurer • Member-at-Large

UNIFAS around the World



UNIFAS holds a conference every four years with a theme relative to current world issues. This theme is generally carried out in the **National UNIFAS** conferences held throughout the world and in the **UNIFAS – USA** conference which is held every four years.

UNIFAS
UNIO INTERNATIONALIS FAMILIAE SERVORUM
UNION INTERNACIONAL FAMILIA SIERVOS DE MARIA

UNIFAS NACIONAL: UNIFAS – USA

¿Qué es UNIFAS?

UNIFAS es una organización internacional de los Servitas que se estableció el 4 de mayo de 1987 por los líderes Servitas del mundo entero.

El propósito de UNIFAS es promover la comunión y la colaboración a través de:

- La ayuda mutual en los sectores comunes de nuestra vida y en nuestro compromiso a servir.
- Leer en conjunto los signos de los tiempos y buscar respuestas adecuadas.
- Consultar sobre temas e iniciativas de interés común.

Los miembros de la Asamblea de UNIFAS Y del Consejo Ejecutivo son los siguientes:

Asamblea Unifas

- El Prior General
- Las Monjas de clausura
- Las Congregaciones de religiosas italianas
- Las demás Congregaciones de religiosas
- Los Institutos Seculares Servitas
- Los Seglares Servitas
- Ex Oficio
Fraile Representante del Concilio General
Secretario General para OSSM y Grupos Laicos
- Oficiales: Secretario/a, Tesorero/a

CONSEJO EJECUTIVO

- El Prior General
- Una Monja de Clausura
- Una religiosa representante de las Congregaciones italianas
- Una religiosa representante de las demás Congregaciones
- Una representante de los Institutos Seglares
- Un representante de la Orden Seglar
- Ex Oficio
Fraile representante del Concilio General
Secretario General para OSSM y Grupos Laicos
- Oficiales: Secretario/a, Tesorero/a

Como funciona UNIFAS

- Oficiales
- El Consejo – el cuerpo ejecutivo, elegido de y por la Asamblea, se reúne una vez al año
- La Asamblea – el consejo de directores que se reúne generalmente cada cuatro años

¿Qué es UNIFAS Nacional?

Cada grupo de UNIFAS nacional incluye a los varios componentes de la Familia Servita en una región geográfica particular y se reúne regularmente para fomentar la comunión y la colaboración dentro de la Familia Servita. Cada grupo nacional selecciona un presidente o persona de contacto para poder comunicarse con el Secretariado internacional.

UNIFAS – USA se estableció el 16 de septiembre de 1995 y se reúne cada año.

UNIFAS-USA Asamblea

- Dos frailes
- Ocho religiosas
- Cuarto Seglares
- El Asistente Nacional OSSM
- Un Asociado de Omaha, NE
- Una Acompañante de Ladysmith, WI

Consejo Ejecutivo

- Presidente
- Secretario/a
- Tesorero/a
- Un vocal

Servite Feasts

January

- 1 -- Mary, Mother of God
- 12 -- St. Anthony Mary Pucci
- 15 -- Bl. James da Villa

February

- 3 -- Bl. Joachim of Siena
- 17 -- Seven Holy Founders of Our Order
- 19 -- Bl. Elizabeth Picenardi

March

- 16 -- Day of Prayer for OSSM
- 19 -- St. Joseph
Feast of Mary at the Cross
(Fifth Friday of Lent, which is the Friday before Good Friday)
- 25 -- Annunciation

May

- 4 -- St. Peregrine Laziosi
- 8 -- Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother and Mediatrix of Grace
- 11 -- Blessed Benincasa
- 12 -- Blessed Francis of Siena
- 30 -- Blessed James Philip Bertoni

June

- 19-- St. Juliana Falconieri
- 27 -- Blessed Thomas of Orvieto



July

- 1 -- Blessed Ferdinand Maria Baccilieri
- 4 -- Blessed Ubald of Borgo Sansepolcro
- 13 -- St. Clelia Barbieri

August

- 15 -- Assumption of the Blessed Virgin
- 23 -- St. Philip Benizi
- 28 -- St. Augustine
- 31 -- Blessed Andrew

September

- 1 -- Bl. Joan of Florence
- 5 -- Bl. Maria Maddalena Starace
- 6 -- Bl. Bonaventure of Forli
- 15 -- Our Lady of Sorrows
- 17 -- Bl. Cecilia Eusepi
- 22 -- Dedication of the Basilica of Monte Senario

October

- 3 -- Bl. Maria Guadalupe Ricart Olmos
- 25 -- Bl. John Angelo Porro

November

- 16— All Saints of the Order of the Servants of Mary;
- 17— Remembrance of All Deceased Friars, Sister and Relatives and Friends of the Servite Order

December

- 8 -- Immaculate Conception
- 10 -- Bl. Jerome of Sant' Angelo in Vado
- 12 -- Our Lady of Guadalupe
- 15 -- Bl. Bonaventure of Pistoia
- 25 -- Nativity of Our Lord



Fiestas OSM

ENERO

- 1 – María, Madre de Dios
- 12 – San Antonio María Pucci
- 15 -- Beato Santiago Defensor de los Pobres

FEBRERO

- 3 -- Beato Joaquín de Siena
- 17 -- Siete Santos Fundadores
- 19 -- Beata Isabel Piccenardi

MARZO

- 16-- Día de Oración por OSSM
- 19 -- San José
 - María al Pie de la Cruz
 - (4to Viernes de Cuaresma, viernes antes de Viernes Santo)**
- 25 -- La Anunciación

MAYO

- 4 -- San Peregrino
- 8 -- María, Madre y Mediadora de Gracia
- 11 -- Beato Benincasa
- 12 – Beato Francisco de Siena
- 30 – Beato Santiago Felipe Bertoni

JUNIO

- 19– Santa Juliana Falconieri
- 27 – Beato Tomás de Orvieto

JULIO

- 1 – Beato Ferdinand María Baccilieri
- 4 – Beato Ubaldo de Borgo Sansepolcro
- 13 – Santa Clelia Barbieri

AGOSTO

- 15 -- La Asunción de la Virgen María
- 23-- San Felipe Benizi
- 28 -- San Augustiín
- 31 -- Beato Andrés

SEPTIEMBRE

- 1 -- Beata Juana de Florencia
- 5 -- Beata Maria Maddalena Starace
- 6 – Beato Buenaventura de Forli
- 15 -- Nuestra Señora de los Dolores
- 17 -- Beata Cecilia Eusepi
- 22 – Dedicación de la Basilica de Monte Senario

OCTUBRE

- 3 – Beata María Guadalupe Ricart Olmos
- 25 -- Beato Juan Angel Porro

NOVIEMBRE

- 16— Todos los Santos y las Santas OSM
- 17— Todos los Difuntos OSM

DECIEMBRE

- 8 -- La Inmaculada Concepción
- 10 -- Beato Jerónimo de Sant'Angelo in Vado
- 12 – Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe
- 15 -- Beato Bonaventura de Pistoia
- 25 – Nacimiento de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo

Regional Conferences of the Order

Conferencias Regionales OSM



ASIA - CASA

Australia, India, Philippines, Indonesia, Myanmar

NORTH AMERICA - NAC

Canadá, México, USA, Colombia

SOUTH AMERICA - CONO SUR

Brasil, Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, Peru, Uruguay

AFRICA

Mozambique, Swaziland, Zululand, Uganda, Kenya

EUROPA

Italia, España, Austria, Germania, France, Ireland, UK

Charism of the Servants of Mary

Marian Inspiration

The total dedication to the Blessed Virgin Mary is another essential element of the life of the Order. It is rooted in the same experience of the seven holy Fathers at the beginning of their spiritual itinerary: "As they were aware of their imperfection, they humbled themselves, and with much devotion surrendered themselves at the feet of the glorious virgin Mary, the Queen of heaven, because she as a mediator and advocate, reconciled them to her Son and made them bear much fruits. That is why, from then on, they wanted to be called "Servants of Mary".

In fact the Order was very much convinced about the presence of Mary down through the centuries in its life.

Already in the time of the seven holy Fathers and St. Phillip Benizi, the Servite friars were aware of the reality that the Order was a sign of the maternal and merciful figure of Mother Mary, as Innocent IV himself called the Order (in the Bull 'Ut religionis vestrae' of 1st August 1254, as a vineyard planted by the Virgin Mary.

Down through the centuries the Order felt the presence of Mary very close to itself and venerated the Virgin Mary with devoted service to her. And it felt consoled and protected whenever it feared the risk of losing its spiritual patrimony. In those moments of trials and difficulties, the conviction that the Order was "religio Dominae nostrae" gave a new hope and strength to take up again its evangelical commitments.



In the Constitutions of 1987, the whole mystery of the Blessed Virgin Mary is proposed for the contemplation. According to the secular tradition of the order, some of the following aspects are very much highlighted:

- The incarnation of the Word, a great event in which the Servites contemplate the holy Virgin of annunciation who gives her "fiat" (cf. Lk 1, 38), as a humble and faithful servant of the Lord. And it is from her that the Servites learn "to welcome the Word of God and to be attentive to the call of the Spirit."

- The role of Mary taking part in her Son's salvific sufferings (cf. Lk 2, 34-35; Jn. 19, 25-27) inspires the servites to have a special veneration towards Our Lady of Sorrows:



- The maternal intercession of the Virgin Mary, queen and mother of Mercy, to whom her Servants appeal and whose merciful love they strive to live out in their life;
- Her glorification in heaven being close to her Son, by which she is resplendent as the most glorious Lady to whom the Servites offer their devoted service under her maternal protection.

Service

Service is an essential element of the Charism of the Order. This spirit of Service has its deep roots in the Sacred Scripture. In their ideal of service, the Servants of Mary are indeed inspired by the example of Christ who embodies the figure of the "the Servant of the Lord" (cf. Is 42, 1-7; 49, 1-9; 50, 4-11; 52, 13-53,12), who came "to serve and to give his own life in ransom for many" (Mk 10, 45) and is present in the midst of his disciples "as one who serves" (Cf. Lk. 22, 27; Jn.13, 3-17) and by the humble attitude of the blessed virgin Mary who presented herself as "the handmaid of the Lord" when she was called by God to collaborate in the salvific plan of the incarnation of the Word (Lk. 1, 38).

The Servites do a good variety of services: Service to God, Virgin Mary, Church, humanity, and to the friars of his own community. Service is 'sharing the aspirations and the restlessness of man and promoting the genuine forms of Christian life:

- service as offering hospitality and welcoming the brothers, especially the humble; assisting the elderly ones, the sick and the needy
- service also means manifold forms of apostolic responsibilities, particularly missionary activities;
- Also study, exercise of authority for the well-being of others, broad-mindedness toward all the creatures, relationships of peace and justice and love for all the creatures."

Fraternity

The constitutional text gives us a very clear idea about the importance of fraternal communion in our life. Jesus' prayer to the Father (cf. Jn.17, 11), the witnessing life of the first Christian community (Act 4, 32), the community life-style proposed by St. Augustine, and finally the exemplary life of the Seven Saints (cf. Legend de origin Ordinis) help us understand the importance of fraternal communion as an essential element of our life. Without this we would not be authentic Servants of Mary.

The fraternal communion characterizes our way of witnessing the Gospel;

- It defines our life-style, our work and prayer;
- It determines the form of government of the Order and it gives a peculiar imprint to our apostolic services; this is where we give witness to the evangelical poverty, obedience to the Word of God and to the community decisions;
- In our fraternal communion, we recognize a source of friendship and a safeguard of our consecration to the Lord in the chastity for the Kingdom;
- And finally the fraternal communion is a very essential atmosphere for the authentic formation of the Servants of Mary and for the integral development of our personality"

Mercy

Conversion

In the iconography of the Servants, we find the image of the Mother of mercy as one who welcomes her servants and protects them from every physical and spiritual evil, imploring graces and mercy from her Son; but in this piety of the Servants of Mary, we recognize a constant internal process which calls for **Conversion** which is understood as our constant effort to come back to God and our day-to-day progress in our spiritual journey based on the Gospel values. And conversion is a component characteristic of the spirituality of the Servants. It is rooted in the serious admonishment of Jesus towards whoever desires to be his disciple: "Repent and believe in the gospel" (Mk. 1:15) and it implicates a "radical and constant orientation of the community and of the individuals towards the newness of Christ."

For the Servites, the convincing example for the 'conversio morum' is that the Seven holy fathers renounced everything and made a radical choice to follow Christ.

The 'conversio morum' demands in fact an austere, sober and penitential way of life so that in each of us the words of St. Paul the apostle may come true: 'And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit' (Gal. 5:24-25) ".

Mary in the mystery of the Redemption:

The Sorrowful Virgin

For the Servants of Mary, their devotion to the Sorrowful Virgin is connected to the symbolism of the black habit, in which already the hagiographers of the 14th century recognized a sign of humility of the Virgin and the sufferings she underwent as she took part in the passion of her Son.



Philip Benizi, responding to the two Dominican friars who asked him about the Order of Servants of Mary, explained the significance of the black habit of the Servites. And also according to the author of 'Legenda de origine Ordinis' the Marian vision that Blessed Peter martyr had gives us a clear idea of the connection between the black habit of the Servites and the mystery of the sufferings that Virgin Mary underwent.



Here we deal with the early witnesses that go back to the first half of the 14th century. The historians of the Order are very much interested in making further research on these witnesses. We can recognize in them the careful attention paid towards the mystery of the sorrowful virgin. This special attention toward the sorrowful Mother grew got developed in the following centuries and it has become a very important element of the spirituality of the Order.

In fact, the particular cult toward our Lady of Sorrows was expressed with devotions like the rosary of Our Lady of Sorrows, Via Matris, and votive Mass of the seven sorrows of Mary, granted for the friars of the order on 9th 1668. From 17th to 19th century, we note a gradual development of this devotion among the friars of the Servite Order. On the 9th of August 1692, the Sorrowful Virgin was declared as patroness of the Order.

In the Constitutions of the Order, we find an epilogue that synthesizes the figure of the Mother of God in the mystery of the Redemption: "In our commitment of service, the figure of Mary at the feet of the Cross shall be our model. Since the Son of Man is still being crucified in his brothers and sisters, we, Servants of his mother, wish to be with her at the foot of those countless crosses in order to bring comfort and redemptive co-operation."

Carisma de los Siervos de María

Dimensión Mariana



La dedicación total a la bienaventurada Virgen, “especial refugio, madre singular y propia Señora” de los Siervos es otro de los elementos esenciales de la vida de la Orden de los Siervos de Santa María. Esta dedicación tiene sus raíces en el hecho mismo realizado por nuestros primeros Padres fundadores al inicio de su camino espiritual: ellos “temiendo su imperfección, pensaron rectamente ponerse humildemente ellos mismos y sus corazones, con toda devoción, a los pies de la Reina del cielo, la gloriosísima Virgen María, para que ella, como mediadora y abogada, los reconciliara y los recomendara a su Hijo, y supliendo con su

caridad plena a su imperfección, intercediera para ellos la fecundidad de méritos. Por eso poniéndose con honor de Dios al servicio de la Virgen Madre suya, quisieron desde entonces ser llamados “Siervos de santa María”.

La Orden en efecto, siempre ha estado convencida de una particular presencia de santa María en su vida: en la hora difícil de los orígenes, a lo largo de los siglos, en el tiempo actual.

Ya en la época de los siete santos Padres y de san Felipe Benizi, los Siervos tuvieron clara conciencia que en el origen de la Orden estaba la figura materna y misericordiosa de Santa María, la *Novella plantaio*, como el papa Inocencio IV, con una imagen de ascendencia bíblica (cf. Is 61, 3; Sal 143, 12), llama a la Orden en la bula *Ut religionis vestrae* del 1 de agosto de 1254. Sin duda se convirtió en la mente de los frailes *la plantatio Virginis*, como la viña plantada por la Virgen y por ella custodiada y defendida.

A lo largo de los siglos la Orden ha sentido siempre cerca la bienaventurada Virgen, que la veneraba con devoto servicio como Mujer del anuncio gozoso, de la misericordia real y de la compasión salvadora. La ha sentido cerca sobre todo en los momentos en el cual, los acontecimientos de varia naturaleza, habían amenazado la extinción y se corría el peligro de desaparecer parte de su patrimonio espiritual. En



esos momentos la conciencia de ser la “*religio Dominae nostrae*” constituyó para la Orden un motivo de esperanza y una fuerza especial para la renovación de su compromiso evangélico.

En las Constituciones (normas internas) de la Orden del 1987 y en algunos textos propios de la Familia de los Siervos todo el misterio de la Virgen es propuesta a los Siervos para la contemplación y al obsequio, pero según la secular tradición de la Orden, algunos aspectos son puestos en relieve:

- La Encarnación del Verbo, acontecimiento en el cual los Siervos contemplan llenos de veneración la **Santísima Virgen de la Anunciación**, la mujer del “*fiat*” (cf. Lc, 1, 38), humilde y llena de fe: y de ella aprenden “a acoger la Palabra de Dios y a estar atentos a las indicaciones del Espíritu;
- La asociación de la Madre a la pasión salvadora del Hijo (cf. Lc 2, 34-35; Jn 19, 25-27), que determina la particular piedad de los Siervos hacia la Virgen de los Dolores;
- La maternal intercesión de la Virgen, Reina y Madre de Misericordia, a la cual los Siervos confiados se abandonan y a la cual misericordia se proponen prolongar en su vida;
- Su glorificación al cielo junto al Hijo, por el cual ella resplandece como la Gloriosa Señora, a la cual los Siervos ofrecen su devoto servicio y bajo el cual patrocinio se refugian.

Servicio

El Servicio es un elemento esencial del carisma de la Orden. Este espíritu de Servicio tiene sus profundas raíces en las Sagradas Escrituras. En su ideal de servicio, los Siervos de María se inspiran antes que nada al ejemplo de Cristo, que se encarna en la figura del “Siervo del Señor” (cf. Is 42, 1-7; 49, 1-9; 50, 4-11; 52, 13-53, 12), que vino “para servir y dar la propia vida en rescate de todos” (Mc 10, 45) y esta en medio de sus discípulos “como aquel que sirve” (Lc 22, 27; cf. Jn 13, 3-17).

Después en la humilde actitud de la bienaventurada Virgen que, llamada por Dios a colaborar en el proyecto salvador de la encarnación del Verbo, se declaró: “Sierva del Señor” (Lc 1, 38).

Para los Siervos el “ámbito del servicio es muy amplio: Dios, la Virgen, la Iglesia, el hombre, los frailes de la propia comunidad.

El Servicio es la participación a las aspiraciones e inquietudes del hombre, la promoción de genuinas formas de vida cristiana;

- servicio como la hospitalidad y acoger a los hermanos, especialmente los más humildes, la asistencia a los ancianos, a los enfermos, y a las personas necesitadas;
- servicio son también las múltiples formas de compromiso apostólico, en particular el misionero;
- servicio finalmente es: el estudio, el ejercicio de la autoridad, el compromiso de tener con todas las criaturas “solo relaciones de paz, de misericordia, de justicia y amor constructivo.”

Fraternidad



En el texto de las Constituciones de los Siervos es clara la importancia de la comunión fraterna para la vida. La oración de Jesús al Padre para que sus discípulos fueran una sola cosa como Él y el Padre son una sola cosa (cf. Jn 17, 11), el testimonio de la primitiva comunidad cristiana en el cual “la multitud de los que habían venido a la fe, tenían un solo corazón y una alma sola” (Hch 4, 32), el precepto de san Agustín que los frailes vivan “unánimes en la casa” y tengan “todo en común” entre ellos y finalmente el ejemplo de

los Siete Santos Fundadores transmitido por el gran documento antiguo “*Legenda de origine Ordinis*” hacen que la comunión fraterna sea elemento esencial de la vida de los Siervos de María. Sin este elemento no serían siervos de Santa María.

La comunión fraterna caracteriza el modo de testimoniar el Evangelio;

- informa nuestro estilo de vida, nuestro trabajo y nuestra oración; determina la forma de gobierno de la Orden y da una peculiar huella a nuestro servicio apostólico;
- es el ámbito en el cual realizamos nuestro testimonio de pobreza evangélica y en el cual vivimos nuestro compromiso de obediencia a la Palabra de Dios y a las decisiones comunitarias;
- en ésta reconocemos una fuente de amistad y una salvaguardia de nuestra consagración al Señor en la castidad por el Reino;

- la comunión fraterna finalmente es el clima indispensable de la formación auténtica del Siervo de María y para su desarrollo integral de su personalidad.

Misericordia

La conversión.

En la Iconografía de los Siervos, a menudo se encuentra la imagen de la Madre de la Misericordia que acoge a sus siervos y los protege de todo mal físico y espiritual, implorando gracias y misericordia de su Hijo; pero también a menudo se reconoce en esta piedad de los Siervos el camino que Dios llama constantemente **la conversión**, entendida como el constante dirigirse a Dios y el cotidiano progreso en el camino trazado por el Evangelio, es una componente característica de la espiritualidad de los Siervos. Esa tiene su raíz en la gran amonestación de Jesús, dirigido a quienquiera ser su discípulo: “Conviértanse y crean en el Evangelio” (Mc 1, 15) e implica una “orientación radical y constante de la comunidad y de los individuos hacia la novedad de Cristo”.

Para los Siervos de cada tiempo el dejar todo y las opciones realizadas por los Siete Santos Fundadores cuando se reunieron para seguir a Cristo y su Evangelio, constituyen un ejemplo convincente de la “*Conversio Morum*”

La “*Conversio morum*” exige en efecto, un estilo de vida austero, sobrio, penitente, de modo que, para cada uno de nosotros, se haga realidad la palabra del apóstol: “Los que son de Cristo Jesús han crucificado su carne con sus pasiones y sus deseos. Si por lo tanto vivimos del Espíritu, caminemos también según el Espíritu” (Gal 5, 24-25).



María en el misterio de la Redención: la Virgen Dolorosa.

Para los Siervos de Santa María la devoción a la Virgen de los dolores se vincula al simbolismo del hábito negro, en el cual los hagiógrafos del siglo XIV reconocían un signo de la humildad de la Virgen y las penas sufridas en la pasión de su Hijo. La respuesta de san Felipe a dos frailes dominicos que le preguntaban sobre la Orden al cual pertenecía, y la visión mariana que según el autor de la *Legenda de origine Ordinis*, tuvo san Pedro Mártir ponen el hábito de los Siervos en relación con el misterio del dolor de nuestra Señora: “hábito de la viudez” de la Virgen, lo llama san Felipe; hábito que significa “el dolor que ella sufrió en la dolorosísima pasión del Hijo suyo”, precisa el autor de la *Legenda de origine Ordinis*.

Se trata de testimonios de la primera mitad del siglo XIV, que son objeto de creciente interés por parte de los historiadores de la Orden. En esos testimonios se puede reconocer el germen de aquella morosa atención hacia el misterio de la Virgen Dolorosa, que se desarrollará en los siglos sucesivos y constituirá uno de los elementos característicos de la espiritualidad de la Orden.

En efecto, el culto particular hacia la Virgen de los Dolores se expresa con devociones como la Corona de la Dolorosa, el Via Matris, y con una Misa votiva de los Siete Dolores que fue concedida para los frailes de la Orden el 9 de junio de 1668.

En los siglos XVII-XIX encontramos un hecho importante en el desarrollo de la devoción dentro de la Orden: el 9 de agosto de 1692 la Virgen de los Dolores fue declarada titular y patrona de la Orden; punto de un largo proceso en el cual varias expresiones de piedad por parte de la Orden Seglar se dirigía hacia la Virgen Dolorosa –sea litúrgicas como populares- habían surgido y se había solidificado; pero también fue estímulo y punto de partida para la creación de otros ejercicios piadosos en honor de la Reina de los Mártires.

En las Constituciones (normas) de la Orden se encuentra un grande Epílogo que sintetiza la figura de la Madre de Dios en el misterio de la Redención y sus Siervos: “ En este compromiso de servicio, la figura de María a los pies de la Cruz sea nuestra imagen conductora. Ya que el Hijo del hombre todavía está crucificado en sus hermanos, nosotros, Siervos de la Madre, queremos estar como Ella a los pies de las infinitas cruces, para llevar consuelo y cooperación redentora”.



ORGANIZATION OF THE NATIONAL OFFICE IN THE UNITED STATES

ORGANIZACION DE LA OFICINA NACIONAL DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS

Proverbs 11:2

**When pride comes, then comes disgrace,
but with humility comes wisdom.**

Proverbios 11:2

*Donde hay soberberia Habra verguenza;
Entre los humildes se halla la sabiduria.*

Section Contents/ Contenido de Sección

- 1. National Office/Oficina Nacional**
- 2. National Council/Consejo Nacional**
- 3. Particular Statutes for the National Council**
- 4. National Councilor Job Description**
- 5. National Councilor Nomination Process/ PROCESO PARA NOMINAR CONSEJEROS NACIONALES**

OSSM National Office

The USA OSM Provincial Center includes the OSSM National Office. The OSSM Provincial Office is the center of communication and coordination of the life and welfare of the Servite Secular Order. The National Assistant is a Servite Friar who is appointed by the Prior Provincial and his council for a term of four years. The National Office is also the resource center for all materials, books, and articles that are necessary to promote, encourage, sustain the various communities of the Secular Order throughout the USA. An OSSM National Registry of all Secular Order members is maintained and kept up to date by the National Assistant. The National Office provides assistance to the formation of new OSSM communities; provides guidance and support to the existing OSSM communities. The National Office also strives to promote communication among the various OSSM communities through the Secular Order newsletter that is published three times each year; sharing information through emails and website that will encourage OSSM communities to grow in their knowledge and understanding of this vocation in the Church, in the Order and in society.

Oficina Nacional OSSM

La Oficina Nacional OSSM forma parte del Centro Provincial OSM. La Oficina Nacional OSSM es el centro de comunicación y coordinación de la vida y el bienestar de la Orden Seglar Servita. El Asistente Nacional es un Fraile Servita nombrado por el Prior Provincial y su Consejo por un término de tres años. La Oficina Nacional es, además, una fuente de recursos: los materiales, libros y artículos necesarios para promover, animar y sostener la varias comunidades de la Orden Seglar a través de los Estados Unidos. En la Oficina Nacional se mantiene un Registro Nacional de todos los miembros de la Orden Seglar, el cual el Asistente Nacional mantiene actualizado. A través de la Oficina Nacional se ofrece ayuda en la formación de nuevas comunidades OSSM; y se provee orientación y apoyo a las comunidades OSSM existentes. Además, se hace el esfuerzo por promover comunicación entre las varias comunidades OSSM a través del boletín de la Orden Seglar que se publica tres veces al año; se comparte información a través de los correos electrónicos y el sitio web que motiva a las comunidades OSSM a crecer en su conocimiento y entendimiento de esta vocación en la Iglesia, en la Orden y en la sociedad.

OSSM National Council

The National Council of the Secular Order is composed of six Servites: two Friars and four Secular Servites. Who are they? The National Assistant, who is appointed by the Prior Provincial and Council for a term of four years, which is renewable indefinitely. The Friar Representative is appointed by the Prior Provincial for a term of three years. The four Secular Servites are selected for a term of four years by the previous National Council. Each community may nominate one Secular Servite. Commissioning will take place at the conclusion of the OSSM National Conference, which is celebrated every four years. Incoming National Counselors must be present to be commissioned.

The National Council meets three times each year to discuss issues and concerns of the life and welfare of the various Secular Order communities throughout the United States of America. Among the responsibilities of the National Council are the planning of the National Conference that is held every four years (2015 is the next one) as well as the planning dates to make official visitations to each of the communities of the Secular Order. It is the goal of the National Council to visit each community at least once during the four-year term.

What are the qualifications to be a National Councilor: to live by the Rule of Life; maintain an active personal prayer life; be an active member of a local OSSM community; at least two years of living the Promise.

The National Councilors are assigned a region of the United States for which they are primarily responsible. It is their duty to be in regular contact with the Prior/ess or Assistant for each community in their region.

What are the Regions for which the Councilors are responsible?

Region I (CT, NJ, PA, OH, MO)

Region II (FL, AL, LA)

Region III (IL, WI)

Region IV (NM, CO)

Region V (CA, OR, WA)

How can one contact the Regional Councilors? Each Prior/ess or Assistant has a copy of the OSSM National Directory, which contains the address, telephone number and email address for each member of the National Council. Contact can also be made through the OSSM National Office: osmsecular@aol.com, 773-354-9561.

Consejo Nacional OSSM

El Consejo Nacional de la Orden Seglar se compone de seis Siervos de María: dos Frailes y cuatro Seglares. ¿Quiénes son? El Asistente Nacional, quien es nombrado por el Prior Provincial y su Consejo por un término de tres años, que se puede renovar indefinitamente. El Fraile Representante es nombrado por el Prior Provincial por un término de tres años. Los cuatro Seglares Siervos de María son nombrados por los miembros del Consejo Nacional anterior por un término de cuatro años. Los nuevos miembros del Consejo Nacional son comisionados al final de la Conferencia Nacional OSSM, la cual se celebra cada cuatro años.

El Consejo Nacional se reúne tres veces al año para discutir problemas y preocupaciones sobre la vida y el bienestar de las diferentes comunidades de la Orden Seglar a través de los Estados Unidos de América. Entre las responsabilidades del Consejo Nacional están la planificación de la Conferencia Nacional que se celebra cada cuatro años como también planificar las fechas para la visita oficial de cada comunidad por lo menos una vez durante el término de cuatro años.

¿Cuáles son las cualificaciones para ser un Consejero Nacional? Seguir la Regla de Vida; mantener una práctica de oración personal; ser miembro activo de una comunidad local OSSM; por lo menos dos años de haber profesado la Promesa. A cada Consejero Nacional se le asigna una región de los Estados Unidos como su primordial responsabilidad. Es su responsabilidad mantenerse en contacto regular con el Prior/la Priora o el Asistente de cada comunidad en la región correspondiente.

¿Cuáles son las Regiones?

Region I (CT, NJ, PA, OH, MO)

Region II (FL, AL, LA)

Region III (IL, WI)

Region IV (CO, NM)

Region V (CA, OR, WA)

¿Cómo puede uno ponerse en contacto con los Consejeros Regionales? Cada Prior/a o Asistente tiene copia del Directorio Nacional OSSM, el cual contiene la dirección, número de teléfono y correo electrónico de cada miembro del Consejo Nacional. Además, puede comunicarse a través de la Oficina Nacional OSSM: osmsecular@aol.com, 773-354-9561.

Particular Statutes for the OSSM US National Council

Revised 8/9/2018

Mission Statement: The Secular Order of the Servants of Mary (OSSM), being founded and organized to help lay men and women, permanent deacons and diocesan priests to live out their Christian faith and proclaim the Gospel in the context of the world following the example of Mary the mother of Jesus, shall conduct its activities in strict accord with the teachings of the Holy Catholic Church and the Servite Rule of Life.

- I. General Description of the OSSM National Council
 - a. Composition
 - i. National Spiritual Assistant
 - ii. Five Secular Servites
 1. National Prioress
 2. National Assistant Prioress
 3. National Secretary
 4. National Treasurer
 5. National Liaison to the Latino Community
 - b. Function
 - i. Provide recommendations to and support the National Prior/ess.
 - ii. Provide recommendations, resources and information for local communities
 - iii. Plan the OSSM National Conference held every four years
 - iv. Take leadership in planning regional, state and area events involving multiple communities
 - v. Make at least one official visit to each local community during the four year term of the council, fraternal visits are encouraged if possible
 1. The National Prior(ess) will accompany a National Councilor to visit each community.
 2. The visitors will meet with the council and with the community to understand
 - a. The workings of the community
 - b. What things are working well that might be considered by other communities
 - c. Areas in which the community might need help or change
 3. The councilor will write a report covering the visit and send it to the National Prior/ess or the National Spiritual Assistant

for review and then send the final version to the local Prior/ess and the Spiritual Assistant.

- II. Formation of the National Council
 - a. National Spiritual Assistant is appointed by the Prior Provincial Council
 - b. Selection of Councilors
 - i. Each local community may nominate ONE candidate for the National Council when nominations are requested by the National Prior/ess prior to the National Conference.
 - ii. The local prior/prioress of the nominating community or their designate must complete the Nomination Form provided to them by the National Prior/ess
 - iii. The current National Council will review the nominations and select the incoming National Council by majority consensus.
 - iv. Incoming National Councilors must be present at the National Conference where they will be commissioned.
 - v. Vacancies will be filled by the National Prior/ess
 - c. Qualifications of Councilors
 - i. Live by the Rule of Life
 - ii. Maintain an Active Prayer Life
 - iii. Active members of their local community
 - iv. Has been promised for at least two years
 - v. Is not prior or prioress of their community during their National Council term
 - d. Term of Office is four years
- III. Meetings of the National Council
 - a. Are held at least three times each year via web based meetings or face-to-face at locations selected by the members
 - b. Transportation and meeting expenses are funded by the OSSM National Office
 - c. The agenda will be created by the National Prior/ess with input from the National Assistant and Councilors and will include the following:
 - i. Opening Prayer
 - ii. Review of previous minutes
 - iii. Review of major issues from reports submitted a week in advance of the National Council meeting written by each National Councilor
 - iv. Reports and discussion of specific projects undertaken by council
 - v. New projects to be undertaken by council
 - vi. Selection of date and location of next meeting
 - d. Meeting facilities and lodging will be the responsibility of the local host
- IV. The National Council shall have the power to appoint committees and delegate to such committees through a National Councilor Liaison.
- V. Particular Statutes will be reviewed every four years at beginning of each new term and updated as necessary.

OSSM National Council

The purpose of the National Council is to meet to discuss issues and concerns of the life and welfare of Secular Servite communities in the United States.

The qualifications of the National Councilors are as follows:

- Live by the Rule of Life
- Maintain an Active Prayer Life
- Is an active and contributing member of their local community
- Has been promised for at least two years
- Is NOT prior or prioress of their local community

Additional requirements of a National Councilor are as follows:

- Attend at least three council meetings each year
- Have access to the Internet and email
- Have good oral and written communication skills
- Have time to devote to National Council projects
- Being bilingual is a plus. One of the four councilors should be bilingual
- Follow the Particular Statutes for the National Council

National Councilors are assigned to one or more regions in the United States. It is their responsibility to be in regular communication with leadership of those communities. Each of the local communities is autonomous and the Councilor is not in a position of authority over the local community. The councilor will communicate concerns of the local community to the National Council and will ensure that local community leadership is informed of discussions and decisions that are appropriate to local communities, such as.

- Use of the OSSM Handbook
- Review and update of Particular Statutes
- Monitoring the Secular Servite website, especially for prayer requests
- Annual contribution to the National Office
- Monthly minutes

National Councilors are expected to submit a written report describing their individual activities and contact and relationship with their communities to the National Assistant and other members of the National Council one week prior to a National Council Meeting.

National Councilors are expected to be creative in the development of projects that would benefit the Secular Servites in the United States and to contribute to these projects. Examples of past and current projects are The OSSM Handbook, the OSSM Particular Statute Cookbook and the OSSM Profile.

National councilors are expected to review documents provided to them by the National Assistant or other councilors in a timely fashion. Councilors are expected to deliver assigned work or work they have volunteered on schedule and to actively support all projects taken on by the National Council.

In addition to making fraternal or informal visits as possible, National Councilors are expected to make at least one official visit, using the Official Pre-Visit Questionnaire and Official Visit Agenda during their four year term.

National Councilors are responsible for the planning of the National Conference that is held at the end of their terms. These responsibilities include choosing a site, working with site management to ensure conference needs are met, developing a budget, choosing a theme and procuring keynote speakers and workshop presenters and developing prayer experiences and worship aids.

Process for Nominating National Councilors

Each Secular Servite Community in the United States may nominate one, qualified Secular Servite for a four year term to the Secular Servite National Council in the United States. The nominations must be submitted on a nomination form six months prior to the National Conference. The new National Council will be chosen by the outgoing National Council. All members of the new National Council must be present at the National Conference to be commissioned.

The following are the qualifications required for nomination to the National Council. The nominee:

- Lives by the Rule of Life
- Maintains an Active Prayer Life
- Is an active and contributing member of his or her local
- Has been promised for at least two years
- Is NOT prior or prioress of his or her local

In addition the nominee must be ready to serve a four year term on the National Council and:

- Attend three council meetings each year
- Maintain phone, email and where possible in person contact with communities in their assigned region
- Have access to the Internet and email
- Have good oral and written communication skills
- Have time to devote to National Council projects
- Being bilingual is a plus, one of the four councilors should be bilingual

Nominees must be ready and able to perform the following as members of the National Council:

- Provide recommendations and support to the National Assistant
- Identify a site for and plan the National Conference every four years
- Maintain phone, internet and in person contact with communities in their region of responsibility providing them with help, support and issue resolution
- Report on community activity to the National Council and report on National Council activity to leadership of local communities.
- Make at least one official visit to each community in their region during their four year National Council term and provide a written report to the National Assistant and leadership of the community they have visited.
- Organize regional Secular Order activities that might include retreats, conferences, days of reflection, etc. and encourage communities to attend Promise ceremonies and other important events of nearby local communities.

It is important that when the local community council nominates a candidate they provide the information on the nomination form supporting the candidate in order to help the current National Council make informed selections. It is equally important that the

nominee be fully aware of what is expected of them should they be selected for the National Council. The nominee should be given a copy of the National Councilor Job Description.

With the nomination form, please have the candidate write and submit a short autobiography including family life, spiritual life, ministerial and work experience emphasizing their gifts.

National Council Nomination Form

Community Name/Location _____

Name of Nominee _____

Please answer the following questions using additional paper if necessary. Community opinion should be reflected in the responses.

Explanation how the nominee meets the requirements to be a National Councilor:

Explain what qualifications this candidate demonstrates to be nominated as a member of the National Council:

How has the nominee contributed to his or her local community:

I certify that the nominee is aware of and has accepted the nomination.

Prior/Prioress _____ Date _____

PROCESO PARA NOMINAR CONSEJEROS NACIONALES

Cada comunidad de la Orden Seglar en los Estados Unidos puede nominar a una persona que reúna las cualidades necesarias, por un término de cuatro años, para servir como miembro del Consejo Nacional. Las nominaciones deben ser sometidas utilizando el formulario indicado y seis meses antes de la Conferencia Nacional. El nuevo Consejo Nacional será escogido por los miembros del Consejo Nacional saliente. Todos los miembros del Consejo Nacional debe estar presente en la Conferencia Nacional para ser comisionados.

Las cualidades necesarias para ser nominado/a al Consejo Nacional son las siguientes. La persona nominada debe:

- **Seguir la Regla de Vida**
- **Mantener una vida de oración activa**
- **Ser miembro activo y contribuyente de su comunidad local**
- **Haber profesado la Promesa, por lo menos, por dos años**
- **No ser el prior/la priora de su comunidad local**

Además la persona nominada debe ser disponible para servir como miembro del Consejo Nacional por cuatro años:

- **Asistir a tres reuniones del consejo cada año**
- **Mantener contacto por teléfono, email o, cuando posible, en persona con las comunidades en su Región**
- **Tener acceso al internet y tener correo electrónico**
- **Tener buenas habilidades para la comunicación oral y escrita**
- **Tener tiempo para dedicar a los proyectos del Consejo Nacional**
- **Ser persona bilingüe es una ventaja, uno de los cuatro consejeros debe ser persona bilingüe**

Las personas nominadas debe estar listas y dispuestas a llevar acabo lo siguiente como miembro del Consejo Nacional

- **Proveer recomendaciones y apoyo al Asistente Nacional**
- **Identificar un local para y planificar la Conferencia Nacional cada cuatro años**
- **Mantener contacto por teléfono, email o en persona con las comunidades en su Región de responsabilidad proveyéndoles ayuda, apoyo y a resolver situaciones**
- **Presentar un reporte al Consejo Nacional sobre las actividades de las comunidad y a las comunidades sobre las actividades del Consejo Nacional**
- **Planificar por lo menos una visita oficial a cada comunidad en su Region de responsabilidad durante el término de cuatro años del Consejo Nacional y proveer un reporte por escrito al Asistente Nacional y a los oficiales de la comunidad visitada**

- **Organizar actividades de la Orden Seglar a nivel de la Región que pueden incluir retiros, conferencias, días de reflexión y demás y animar a la comunidades a participar en las ceremonias de la Promesa y otras actividades importantes de las comunidades locales cercanas.**

Es importante que cuando el consejo de la comunidad local nomine un candidato que provea la información indicada en el formulario para nominar en apoyo al candidato para así ayudar que el Consejo Nacional actual a hacer una selección informada. Es igualmente importante que la persona nominada esté totalmente al tanto de lo que espera de ella si es seleccionada por el Consejo Nacional. A la persona nominada se le debe entregar copia de la Descripción de la Responsabilidades del Consejero Nacional. Con el formulario de nominación, favor de pedirle al candidato que escriba y someta una breve autobiografía, incluyendo la vida de su familia, su vida espiritual, su experiencia de ministerio y de empleo, enfatizando sobre sus talentos y dones.

FORMULARIO PARA NOMINACION AL CONSEJO NACIONAL

NOMBRE Y LOCALIDAD DE LA COMUNIDAD:

NOMBRE LA PERSONA

NOMINADA: _____

Favor de contestar las siguientes preguntas utilizando otras hojas adicionales si fuese necesario. Las respuestas debe ser reflexión de la opinión de la comunidad. Explicar como esta persona nominada reúne las cualidades exigidas para ser Consejero Nacional:

Explicar por qué esta persona nominada es calificada para ser nombrada como miembro del Consejo Nacional:

¿Qué ha contribuido esta persona nominada en su comunidad local?

Certifico que la persona nominada sabe y acepta la nominación:

Prior/a _____ Fecha _____

OSSM National Secretary Description

Introduction

A secretary needs to understand their function and duties before accepting the responsibility. The secretary shall be responsible for the keeping of the minutes of the Council; be custodian of and maintain copies all documents of the Council. It is important that he or she have the ability to take notes and keep all documents organized and in order. General responsibilities are covered in four sections:

1. Qualifications
2. Duties and Responsibilities
3. Documentation
4. Filing

I Qualifications

The secretary needs the following skills and tools:

1. Proficient computer skills, generally Microsoft Word and Excel
2. Proficient at email communication
3. Good command of written English and/or Spanish

II Duties and Responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities of the National Secretary included but are not limited to:

1. Recording minutes of National Council meetings and send copies to Council within one month of meeting.
2. Updating and publishing OSSM National Directory
3. Updating OSSM Master Membership List
4. Updating the contact list on Constant Contact
5. Act as a resource to the local community secretaries.

III Documentation

Minutes of the Council meetings, are written by the secretary and is recommended the following format:

1. The OSSM logo is placed at the top the 1st page.
2. Specify the date, place and time of the meeting.
3. Specify if it is a regular or extraordinary meeting
4. The minutes should follow the order of the agenda,
 - List of those present and or absent
 - Initial Prayer
 - Reading and acceptance of minutes
 - Topics discussed
 - Actions to be taken and by whom
 - Items pending
 - New items
 - Treasurer's report
 - Communications Committee Report

- Comments, questions or concerns
- Announcements

IV Filing

1. Every set of minutes, reports, or any other documents need to be filed in the designated folder in the Dropbox file. There should be folders for each category of document and the documents are filed within the folder in chronological order.
2. The files should have folders for the following items, but not limited to:
 - a. National Council Minutes
 - b. Meeting Agendas
 - c. Treasurer's report
 - d. Committee reports
 - e. Statutes
 - f. Community rosters
 - g. Census Report
 - h. OSSM Master List
 - i. OSSM Directory
 - j. Promises pending/professed
 - k. Census Reports

OSSM National Assistant Prior/ess Description

Introduction

At the discretion of the National Prior/Prioress he/she may share some of his/her responsibilities. Additionally, the National Assistant Prior/Prioress will be expected to preside at national meetings in the event that the National Prior/Prioress is unavailable or unable to do so.

Qualifications

Needs the following skills and tools:

1. Proficient computer skills, generally Microsoft Word
2. Proficient at email communication
3. Good commands of written English and/or Spanish

Duties and Responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities of the National Assistant Prior/ess includes but are not limited to:

1. Send greetings to the communities on their feast days
2. Update the census report every two years.
3. Update the Community Rosters.
4. Update the Promises Professed/Pending
5. Act as a resource for local community Assistant Prior/ess

OSSM National Latino Liaison Description

Introduction

The Latino Liaison will be responsible for communications between the National Council and the Latino communities.

Qualifications

Needs the following skills and tools:

1. Proficient computer skills, generally Microsoft Word
2. Proficient at email communication
3. Good commands of written Spanish and English

Duties and Responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities of the National Assistant Prior/ess includes but are not limited to:

1. Receive and review the minutes from the Latino communities relating any pertinent information to the National Prior/ess as necessary
2. Translate communication from the National Council into Spanish
3. Act as an interpreter as needed
4. Act as a resource for the Latino communities

OSSM National Prior/ess Description

Introduction

The National Prior/ess presides at the meetings of the National Council and coordinates all activities of the Secular Order assuring that all is carried out in a spirit of charity and communion and that all national councillors fulfill their duties.

Qualifications

Needs the following skills and tools:

1. Proficient computer skills, generally Microsoft Word and Excel
2. Proficient at email communication
3. Good communication and interpersonal skills
4. Good command of written English and/or Spanish

Duties and Responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities of the National Assistant Prior/ess includes but are not limited to:

1. To foster and encourage the spiritual and apostolic endeavors of the Secular Order
2. (add the above line to support the Natl Prior/ess in #1 to all councilor positions)
3. Schedule and preside over National Council meetings.
4. To collaborate with the National Spiritual Assistant.
5. Receive and review the monthly minutes of the meetings of the local communities, addressing any pertinent issues as necessary.
6. Respond to OSSM inquiries that come in through the website.
7. Send out prayer requests.
8. Send out reminders for the Servite Saints and Blesseds.
9. Act as a resource for local community Prior/ess

OSSM National Treasurer Description

Introduction

A treasurer needs to understand their function and duties before accepting the responsibility. The treasurer shall be responsible for the keeping of the financial records of the Secular Order. The treasurer should have knowledge of basic accounting procedures.

works in collaboration with the Provincial Office finance personnel.

Qualifications

Needs the following skills and tools:

1. Proficient computer skills, generally Microsoft Excel
2. Proficient at email communication
3. Be capable of managing figures
4. Experience with financial control, budgeting and balancing accounts

Duties and Responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities of the National Treasurer includes but are not limited to:

1. Monitor the financial records of the Secular Order and provide a financial report at each National Council meeting.
2. To communicate with the local communities to make their annual contributions
3. to provide assistance as necessary in opening and maintaining their local bank accounts.
4. To maintain the records of the annual contributions from the local communities.
5. To create and maintain an annual and a budget for the National Conference.
6. Act as a resource to the local community treasurers.

1. Examples of Concern and Interest:

- (1) Prepare a regular and consistent Finance Report for review with local council, community meeting and National Office
- (2) Review and prepare report on expenses of local community as they relate to monthly supplies, support to National Office, missions and apostolates
- (3) Recommend Fiscal Policy for local community
- (4) Archive financial reports of local community and National Office
- (5) Maintain archives for long term future availability

- (6) Maintain an auditable system that tracks income and expenses.



ORGANIZATION OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

ORGANIZACION DE LAS COMUNIDADES LOCALES

Hebrews 2:11

**Both the one who makes people holy
and those who are made holy are of the same family.
So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.**

Hebreos 2:11

**Pues tanto el que santifica (Jesus)
Como los que son purificados tienen un mismo origen;
Por eso Jesus no se avergüenza de llamarlos
Sus hermanos y hermanas.**

Section Contents/ Contenido de Sección

1. Community Leadership/Liderazgo de la Comunidad
2. Role of the Local Prior/Prioress/El Papel del Prior/Priora Local
3. Spiritual Assistant/El Asistente
4. Local Community Councilor/El Concilio de la Comunidad Local
5. Possible Community Committees/Posibles Comités de Comunidad/
6. Secretary/Descripción del Secretario
7. Treasurer/Tesorero de Comunidad Local
8. Formation Director/Director de Formación
9. Community Meetings/Reunion Mensual
10. Particular Statute Guidelines
11. Pre-visitation Questionnaire/Questionario Pre-Visita
12. Official Visit Agenda/Agenda de la Visita Oficial
13. Community Christian Service/Servicio Comunitario
14. Request for Canonical Approval/Solicitar Aprobación Canónica
15. Role of the Local Assistant Prior/Prioress/Asistente al Prior/Priora
16. Installation Rites For OSSM Community Leadership

OSSM Community Leadership

The Council is the primary source of leadership of the OSSM Community. Although each community elects a prior or prioress, who has the ultimate responsibility for leadership, it is the collaborative effort of the Council to make decisions for the community. The council minimally consists of:

- Prior or Prioress
- Assistant Prior or Prioress
- Spiritual Assistant
- At least three councilors

Others may serve on the council as voting or non-voting members as specified by the Particular Statutes of a community or at the pleasure of the prior or prioress.

- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Formation Director
- Community Committee Chairpersons

The above leadership roles may or may not be held by councilors according to Particular Statutes and/or appointments by the council or the prior or prioress.

The responsibilities of the council are to:

- collaborate with the prior or prioress to lead and animate the community
- accept candidates for admission and for the promise
- dispense members from the promise at their request
- dismiss members from the community if necessary after a fair hearing with the member

Each community may form committees to perform specific functions. These committees may be specified in the Particular Statutes of each community or formed at the pleasure of community leadership. More detailed information about the function of each leadership role and committees follow.

Liderazgo de la Comunidad OSSM

El Concejo es la raíz primordial de liderazgo de la OSSM. Aunque cada comunidad elige a un prior o una priora, quien tiene la responsabilidad última para liderazgo, es el esfuerzo colaborativo del Concejo en hacer decisiones para la comunidad. El concejo consiste mínimamente de:

- Prior o Priora
- Asistente Prior o Priora
- Asistente Espiritual
- Por lo menos tres concejeros

Otros pueden servir en el concejo como miembros votantes o no-votantes según sea especificado por los Estatutos Particulares de la comunidad o por el gusto del prior/a. Estos pueden ser:

- Secretario
- Tesorero
- Director de Formación
- Responsables de los Comités de la Comunidad

Los papeles de liderazgo anteriores pueden o no pueden ser tomados por los concejeros de acuerdo a los Estatutos Particulares y/o nombramientos por el concejo o el prior/a.

Las responsabilidades del concejo son:

- Colaborar con el prior/a a dirigir y animar a la comunidad
- Aceptar candidatos para la admisión y para la promesa
- Dispensar a los miembros de su promesa cuando lo piden
- Despedir a los miembros de la comunidad si es necesario después de una entrevista justa con el miembro

Cada comunidad puede formar comités para realizar funciones específicas. Estos comités pueden ser especificados en los Estatutos Particulares de cada comunidad o formados al gusto del liderazgo de la comunidad. Más información detallada sobre LA función de cada papel de liderazgo y los comités se encontrará próximamente.

Role of the Local Prior (RL #70)

Represents and “presides over the fraternity in service of love”.

Not an authoritarian figure, but a brother, a sister, first to serve the fraternity and to live fraternal communion.

The Rule of Life states: “In the exercise of service the Prioress/Prior should be aware of bearing witness to Christ who came not to be served but to serve, to give more abundant life to His disciples”.

The Rule clearly indicates that the Prioress/Prior does not make decisions alone, but “together with the Council and each member of the Fraternity she/he has responsibility for the fraternity”. All proposals, all decisions are presented to the Council for their input and discussion, involving input from all members of the fraternity. The Council also, on their own, cannot make any decisions without first conducting a dialogue with the members of the fraternity.

According to the Servite mentality, it is not the individual who makes decisions; they are made in conjunction with others, in dialogue, conferring and researching. This implies that the strengths and gifts of all are valued and encouraged and put at the service of the life and welfare of the community.

Thus, one of the primary tasks of the Prioress/Prior is “the responsibility” to be guide, animator of the community on all levels: “to foster and encourage the spiritual and apostolic endeavors of the Fraternity”. This responsibility includes also a concern for that which may be a cause of difficulty or challenge to the life and welfare of the community by insisting on the spirit of dialogue and seeking healthy solutions.

The Prioress/Prior is “to be vigilant about observance of the Rule and Statutes”.

The Prioress/Prior “convokes and presides at the meetings of the Secular Fraternity and its Council” and coordinates all activities of the Fraternity assuring that all is carried out in a spirit of charity and communion and that all fulfill their duty.

El Papel del Prior Local (RV #70)

Éste representa y “preside sobre la fraternidad en el servicio del amor”. No es una figura autoritaria, sino un hermano, una hermana, primero para server la fraternidad y para vivir la comunión fraternal.

La Regla de la Vida dice: “En el ejercicio de servicio el Prior/a debe estar en alerta a dar testimonio a Cristo quien vino no para ser servido sino para servir, para dar mas vida abundante a Sus discípulos.”

La regla indica claramente que el Prior/a no debe tomar decisiones sólo, sino “juntos con el Concejo y cada miembro de la Fraternidad el/ella tiene la responsabilidad para la fraternidad”. Todas las propuestas, todas las decisiones son presentadas al Concejo para su aportación y discusión, involucrando aportación de todos los miembros de la fraternidad. El Concejo también, por su lado, no puede tomar decisiones sin primero dialogar con los miembros de la fraternidad.

De acuerdo con la mentalidad Servita, no es el individuo que hace decisiones; éstas son en conjunto con otros, dialogando, consultando, e investigando. Esto implica que las fuerzas y los dones de otros son apreciados y animados y puestos al servicio de la vida y el bienestar de la comunidad.

Por lo tanto, una de las primeras labores del Prior/a es “la responsabilidad” de ser guía, animador de la comunidad en todos los niveles: “a fomentar y animar los esfuerzos apostólicos y espirituales de la Fraternidad”. Esta responsabilidad incluye una inquietud por la que puede ser causa de dificultad o reto a la vida y el bienestar de la comunidad al insistir en el espíritu de diálogo y la búsqueda de soluciones sanas.

El Prior/a tiene que “ser vigilante sobre la observación de la Regla y los Estatutos.

El Prior/a “convoca y preside en las reuniones de la Fraternidad Secular y su Concejo; y coordina todas las actividades de la Fraternidad asegurando que todo se lleve a cabo en un espíritu de caridad y comunión y que todos satisfagan sus deberes.

Assistant Prior/Prioress Description

The role of the Assistant Prior/Prioress is to aid and assist the Prior/Prioress with his/her duties and obligations. Similarly, the Assistant Prior/Prioress is to be vigilant about observance of the Rule and Statutes.

The Assistant Prior/Prioress collaborates with the Prior/Prioress in leading and animating the community.

The Assistant Prior/ Prioress is someone with whom the Prior/Prioress can confer, share ideas and discuss concerns and interests pertaining to the life of the community.

At discretion of the Prior/Prioress they may share some of his/her responsibilities. Additionally, the Assistant Prior/Prioress will be expected to preside at meetings of the Secular community and its council in the event that the Prior/Prioress is unavailable or unable to do so.

The Assistant Prior/Prioress is an elected official of the local Council according to the norms of the Particular Statutes of the local community. Because they need to be available when the Prior/Prioress is away and unable to facilitate meetings, it is recommended that the Assistant Prior/Prioress not be the spouse of the Prior/Prioress.

The position of Assistant Prior/Prioress can prove a means of preparing individuals to be elected to the position of Prior/Prioress, however, it does not assure that the individual will become Prior/Prioress in the next term unless provided for in a community's Particular Statutes.

Descripción del Asistente al Prior/Priora

El rol del Asistente al Prior/Priora es de apoyar y asistir al Prior/Priora con sus responsabilidades y obligaciones. De igual manera, él Asistente debe de ser vigilante en que se observe la Regla de Vida y los Estatutos.

El Asistente al Prior/Priora colabora con él Prior/Priora en guiar y animar la comunidad.

El Asistente al Prior/Priora es la persona con quien él Prior/Priora puede dialogar y compartir ideas o preocupaciones acerca de los intereses pertinente a la Comunidad.

Al la discreción del Prior/Priora pueden compartir algunas de sus responsabilidades. Adicionalmente, será la responsabilidad del Asistente al Prior/Priora presidir las reuniones de la comunidad Seglar y el Consejo cuando el Prior/Priora esta indisponible o no puede.

El Asistente al Prior/Priora es elegido oficialmente por el consejo local, según las indicaciones o normas Particulares de sus Estatutos. Debido a que el Asistente debe de estar disponible cuando el Prior/Priora no esté presente para facilitar la reuniones, es recomendable que el Asistente no sea el conyugue del Prior/Priora.

La posición del Asistente al Prior/Priora sirve como preparación del individuo para ser elegido a la posición de Prior/Priora. Se debe tener en cuenta de que esto no asegura que el individuo será elegido Prior/Priora en el próximo trienio a menos que no sea indicado en los Estatutos Particulares de la comunidad.

The Spiritual Assistant

What the Spiritual Assistant IS:

- A full member of the council of the local community with voting rights, collaborating in all its activities, participating in its meetings and work, and providing the spiritual dimension to leadership and Servite dimension to service.
- Responsible for cooperating in the initial and continuing formation of the Secular Servites as counsel and resource person.
- A member of and a servant to the whole community, with the responsibility of active participation and the right of active voice, in order to foster the communion with the Church, give witness to Servite spirituality, the fraternal affection of the friars for the Secular Servites and the bond of communion among all Servites and provide the pastoral and spiritual care necessary.

What the Spiritual Assistant IS NOT:

- A factor of control in the community.
- Does not have a final say-so or veto in the organization of internal government or finances.
- Does not direct the ordinary administration or business of the community.
- Does not act as the spokesperson for the community.
- Does not run the community by imposing one's will, one's opinions, one's preferences, one's decisions upon others.
- Is not a passive element in the community.
- Does not merely exercise a sacramental role in the community (chaplain).
- Is not divorced from the life and activity of the community (e.g., absent from council meetings, from elections, from community discussions).

The Responsibilities of the Spiritual Assistant

Pastoral: *To facilitate the spiritual growth of the members of the community.*

- To develop a Christo-centric life according the Rule of Life of the Servite Secular Order:
 - through availability of Word and Sacrament
 - through conferences, exhortations, homilies, prayers
 - through presence and advices, especially at council meetings
 - through individual spiritual direction when necessary
 - through exercising a prophetic role in the community (i.e. challenging the members to develop creativity and ability to take risks)

- To assist in the formation of new members and to facilitate the ongoing or permanent formation of the promised as a resource person for content and methodology, as a catalyst in training the formation team, and as an evaluator of the formation program and team.
- To give official witness of the Church and Servite Family at receptions and celebrations of the Promise.

Fraternal: *to foster the common bond of unity in the Servite Family*

- Representing by presence and activity the common striving for holiness, the common participation in the same charism, and common efforts at evangelization among all who are called to the Servite Family.
- Promoting interactivity among the Servite Family
 - Between various levels of community (local, regional, national, international) as well as between Servite religious and Secular Servites.

Ecumenical: *to foster rapport and collaboration with groups akin to the Secular Servites*

- Other Secular Orders (e.g., Carmelite, Dominican, Franciscan, Augustinian, Benedictine, etc.)
- Laity encountered in other ministries, especially movements of spirituality and “public associations of the faithful”, like Marriage Encounter, Charismatic Movement, Cursillo Movement, Knights of Columbus, Legion of Mary, St. Vincent de Paul Society, youth groups, etc.
- Other denominations.

Qualities of a Spiritual Assistant:

Suitable:

- A Christo-centric person
- A person of prayer, mature in one’s own vocation
- A person of peace oneself and a peace-maker
- A credible witness to Christian faith and Servite vocation
- A person enthused about the Secular Order, about living and sharing one’s own vocation
- A brother/sister who accompanies Secular Servites on their pilgrimage
- A person with pastoral devotedness and a pastoral approach to ministry
- A person with basic communication skills for teaching and sharing

The Rule of Life, article 73: *THE ASSISTANT*

1. Each Secular Fraternity, or group of Fraternities, has an Assistant, named by the competent authority of the Servite Family. In cases where the Assistant is not a member of the Servite Family, the competent authority of the Order makes the nomination upon presentation by the local Fraternity and confirmation is then given by the local Ordinary.
2. The Assistant may be a sister or brother of the Servite family (friar, nun, sister, member of a Servite Secular Institute), a priest member of the Servite Secular Order, or another priest.
3. The Assistant should be competent and willing, committed to studying more deeply the specific vocation of the Secular Servite with the sisters and brothers with whom a common journey of faith is shared.
4. The Assistant is to foster the spirit of the Servite family among the members of the Fraternity and to offer a spiritual service of encouragement.

El Asistente

El papel del Asistente es el de actuar como guía, compañero espiritual, y maestro para el individuo/grupo en formación.

En el caso de grupos originados lejos de los conventos y deseando llegar a ser fraternidad seglar, el Asistente actúa en el lugar de un fraile ayudando con el programa de formación del grupo.

Con respecto a los grupos lejanos de los conventos, el asistente igualmente gozará de los siguientes derechos:

- convoca al grupo mensualmente para su encuentro programado
- modera la discusión y el estudio del grupo
- ofrece una asistencia litúrgica al grupo
- valora el progreso del grupo durante el período de Prueba

Esto supondría escribiendo al Asistente nacional al menos una vez cada dos meses. Este reporte debe contener los elementos siguientes:

- fecha (s) de reunión del grupo
- las observaciones del Asistente, recomendaciones y opiniones acerca del progreso del grupo durante la presente etapa del período de Prueba:
 - ¿manifiesta el grupo signos de asimilar el material de formación que está siendo estudiado?
 - En particular, ¿qué estudió el grupo este mes?
 - ¿cuáles fueron las penetraciones significativas obtenidas por el grupo durante su estudio este mes?

Algunas cuestiones el grupo o el Asistente ¿les gustaría que las considerara el Asistente nacional?

Una copia de la minuta tomada durante la reunión del grupo.

Este reporte debe ser enviado al Asistente nacional tan pronto como sea posible para inspección y e inclusión al archivo del grupo en la Secretaría nacional de la Orden seglar.

Local Community Council

- A. Consult with other council members, voting entities of the local government and the Servite Spiritual Assistant on matters of local community concern and interest
- B. Collaborate with the Prior/ess regarding the community concerns, interest and leadership
 - 1. Examples of Concern and Interest:
 - (1) Calendaring of your local community and regional OSSM and Servite community events and celebrations
 - (2) Planning the monthly meeting format and content
 - (3) On-going formation / spirituality and supplies
 - (4) Candidate formation / spirituality and supplies
 - (5) Communication and Supplies
 - (6) Finance Review
- C. Responsible for accepting Candidates Admission and Promise, and perpetual enrollment into the Secular Order
 - 1. Accept Candidate for (1) Admission and (2) Promise
 - (1) Admission - Consult with the Council after reading the candidate request for admission and collaborate with the Prior/ess on the admission of the candidate
 - (2) Promise – Consult with the Council after reading the candidates request and discern the preparation and maturity of the candidate and collaborate with the Prior/ess for the readiness of the candidate and her/his request to be Promised.
- D. The Councilor is responsible for the discerning and activating the dispensation of a Promise and the dismissal of a community member
 - 1. The Councilor will discern the proper documentation of cause for dispensation and dismissal, consult and collaborate with the Council and Prior/ess for timely dispensation and dismissal.
- E. In order to be a council member, there must be regular attendance in the local community meetings
- F. The Councilor will attend Council and Community meetings on a regular basis.

El Consejo de la Comunidad Local

- A. Consultar con otros miembros del consejo, entidades votantes del gobierno local y el Asistente Espiritual Servita sobre asuntos concernientes al interés de la comunidad local
- B. Colaborar con el Prior/a en cuanto a asuntos de la comunidad, interés y liderazgo
 - 1. Ejemplos de preocupación e interés
 - (1) Poner en calendario los eventos y celebraciones de la OSSM y Servitas comunales y regionales
 - (2) Planificación de el formato y contenido de reuniones mensuales
 - (3) Continuación de formación/espiritualidad y provisiones
 - (4) Formación de candidato/espiritualidad y provisiones
 - (5) Comunicación y Provisiones
 - (6) Análisis financiero
- C. Hacerse responsable por aceptar la Admisión y Promesa de Candidatos, e inscripción perpetua en la Orden Secular
 - 1. Aceptar el Candidato por (1) Admisión y (2) Promesa
 - (1) Admisión- Consultar con el Consejo después de leer la petición de admisión del candidato y colaborar con el Prior/a sobre la admisión del candidato
 - (2) Promesa- Consultar con el Consejo después de leer la petición del candidato y discernir la preparación y madurez del candidato y colaborar con el Prior/a sobre la buena disposición del candidato y su petición de ser Prometido.
- D. **El consejo** es responsable por el discernimiento y activación de la dispensa de la Promesa y el despido de un miembro de la comunidad
 - 1. El consejo discernirá la documentación apropiada para la causa de la dispensa y despido, consultará y colaborará con el Consejo y el Prior/a por la rápida resolución de la dispensa o el despido a tiempo.
- E. Para ser miembro del consejo, debe asistir regularmente a las reuniones de la comunidad locales
- F. El Consejo asistirá a las reuniones del Consejo y Comunidad regularmente.

OSSM Secretary Description

Introduction

A secretary needs to understand their function and duties before accepting the responsibility. The secretary is the keeper of all documents of the Community and Council. It is important that he or she have the ability to take notes and keep all documents organized and in order. General responsibilities are covered in four sections:

- 1- Qualifications
- 2- Documentation and Filing
- 3- Certification and Signing
- 4- Communication

I Qualifications

The secretary needs the following skills and tools:

- 1- Basic computer skills, generally Microsoft Word
- 2- Email access
- 3- Good command of written English or Spanish

II Documentation and filing

- a- Every application or letter submitted by new candidates to the secretary needs to be in a folder for that candidate.
- b- Needs to verify that every document is in order before being presented to the Council.
- c- Every document needs to be signed and dated.
- d- Minutes of the Council and community meetings, are written by the secretary and is recommended the following format:
 - 1- The OSSM logo is placed at the top the 1st page.
 - 2- Specify the date, place and time of the meeting.
 - 3- Specify if it is a regular or extraordinary meeting, also if it is a Council meeting.
 - 4- The minutes need to be in the same order as the agenda, It is suggested the following order be used:
 - List of those present and or absent
 - Initial Prayer
 - Specify formation, topic and by whom
 - Reading and acceptance of minutes
 - Topics to be discussed
 - Items pending
 - New items
 - Treasurer's report
 - Any other report of committees
 - Comments, questions or concerns
 - Announcement
 - Final prayer

- e- Every set of minutes needs to be signed by the person taking them. The secretary may appoint any OSSM member to take minutes in his or her absence.
- f- The secretary, in the absence of a Public Relations person, is responsible along with the Council of the production of any OSSM brochure or flyer.
- g- The secretary is responsible for keeping all files in order. The files may be inspected during the Canonical Visit that occurs once during each four-year term of the National Council. The secretary is responsible for receiving and filing any document for the Community.

III Filing

- a- Every set of minutes, report, or any other document needs to be filed in the designated folder. There should be folders for each category of document and the documents are filed within the folder in chronological order.
- b- Files need to be kept in a safe and dry place, where the heat or cold do not affect the documents.
- c- It is recommended that all files be in the parish office where the Community is located. If that is not possible, the secretary will keep them in his or her house.
- d- The files should have folders for the following items, but not limited to these:
 - 1- Minutes – Council & Community
 - 2- Letters in & out
 - 3- Treasurer’s report
 - 4- Committee reports
 - 5- Statutes
 - 6- Candidates and members files
 - 7- Agenda
 - 8- Directory of members
 - 9- Any other file necessary
 - 10- The directory of members containing a register of admission and promise dates.
 - 11- The secretary also maintains the community archive containing press releases, bulletin articles, programs for special events, photos, etc.

IV Certification

- 1- One of the main responsibilities of the secretary is the certification of every document.
 - A- Every document that is sent or received should be certified by the secretary
 - B- Received documents should be initialed and dated when they arrive.
 - C- Sent documents should be signed by the secretary and the Prior or Prioress.
- 2- It is suggested that official documents like the Promise Certificate be sealed with the Community official seal.
- 3- The official OSSM Community seal is kept in the custody of the secretary.

V Communication

- 1- The secretary is responsible to send reminders of the meeting of the Community by mail, email or phone call.
- 2- The secretary will take attendance at every meeting and will inform the council of any member who has enough unexcused absences to be considered inactive.
- 3- Any other official communication as needed.

Descripción del Secretario OSSM

Introducción

Un secretario tiene que entender sus funciones y deberes antes de aceptar la responsabilidad. El secretario mantiene todos los documentos de la Comunidad y el Concilio. Es importante que él o ella tengan la habilidad de tomar notas y mantener todos los documentos organizados y en orden. Responsabilidades generales se cubren en estas cuatro secciones:

1. Cualificaciones
2. Documentación y Archivo
3. Certificación y Firma
4. Comunicación

I. Cualificaciones

El secretario necesita las siguientes destrezas y herramientas:

1. Habilidades básicas de computadoras, generalmente Microsoft Word
2. Acceso a correspondencia electrónica
3. Buen dominio de la escritura en inglés y español

II. Documentación y Archivo

- a- Debe mantener una carpeta para cada candidato nuevo donde se guarda toda solicitud o carta sometida al secretario
- b.-Necesita verificar que cada documento esta en orden antes de ser presentado al Concilio
- c-Cada documento debe ser firmado y fechado
- d-Las minutas de las reuniones del concilio y la comunidad son escritas por el secretario y se recomienda que el siguiente formato:
 1. El logo OSSM se pone en la parte de arriba de la primera página.
 2. La fecha, el lugar, y la hora de la reunión son especificados.
 3. La reunión se especifica como regular o extraordinaria y también si es una reunión del Concilio

4. Las minutas deben estar en el mismo orden de la agenda. Se recomienda que sea el siguiente orden:

- Lista de aquellos presente y/o ausentes
- Oración inicial
- Especificación de formación, tópico y por quién
- Leer y aceptar las minutas
- Tópicos a discutirse
- Artículos pendientes
- Tópicos nuevos
- Informe del Tesorero
- Cualquier otro informe de comités
- Comentarios, preguntas o inquietudes
- Anuncios
- Oración final

e.- cada juego de minutas necesita ser firmado por la persona que toma las notas. El secretario puede nombrar a cualquier miembro OSSM para tomar notas en su ausencia.

f.-El secretario, en ausencia de una persona de Relaciones Pública, es responsable con el Concilio en la producción de cualquier folleto u hoja OSSM. Los archivos pueden ser inspeccionados durante la Visita Canónica que ocurre una vez durante cada término del Concilio Nacional. El secretario es responsable de recibir y archivar cualquier documento por la Comunidad.

III. Catalogación

- a- Cada juego de minutos, informes, u otro documento debe ser archivado en el cartapacio designado. Deben haber cartapacios para cada categoría del documento y los documentos son archivados dentro de un cartapacio en orden cronológico.
- b- Los archivos deben cuidarse en lugares seguros y secos, donde el calor o frío no les afecte.
- c- Es recomendado que todos los archivos se guarden en la oficina de la parroquia donde la Comunidad está localizada. Si esto no es posible, el secretario los mantendrá en su domicilio.
- d- Los archivos debe tener cartapacios para los siguientes artículos, pero no limitados a estos:
 - 1-Minutas—Concilio y Comunidad
 - 2-Correspondencia recibida y enviada
 - 3-Informes del Tesorero
 - 4-Informes de Comités
 - 5-Estatutos
 - 6-Cartapacios de miembros y candidatos

- 7-Agendas
- 8-Directorio de miembros
- 9-Cualquier otro cartapacio necesario
- 10-El directorio de miembros conteniendo el registro de admisión y fechas de promesa.
- 11-El secretario también mantiene el archivo de la comunidad conteniendo comunicados de prensa, artículos de boletín, programas para eventos especiales, fotos, etc.

IV- Certificación

1-Una de las responsabilidades principales del secretario es la certificación de cada documento.

A-Cada documento que se envía o recibe debe ser certificado por el secretario

B-Documentos recibidos deben ser fechados y tener las iniciales del secretario

C-Documentos enviados deben ser firmados por el secretario y el Prior/a

2-Se sugiere que documentos oficiales como el Certificado de Promesa sean sellados con el sello oficial de la Comunidad.

3-El sello oficial de la Comunidad OSSM está en la custodia del secretario.

V Comunicación

- 1- El secretario es responsable de mandar recordatorios de la reunión de la Comunidad por correo, correo electrónico, o llamadas
- 2- El secretario tomará asistencia en cada reunión y le informará al concilio si algún miembro tiene suficientes ausencias sin excusas para ser considerado inactive
- 3- Hará cualquier otra comunicación oficial cuando sea necesaria

Local Community Treasurer

- A. Consult with other council members, voting entities of the local government and the Servite Spiritual Assistant on fiscal year and budget
- B. Collaborate with the Prior/ess regarding fiscal year and budget
 - 1. Examples of Concern and Interest:
 - (1) Prepare a regular and consistent Finance Report for review with local council, community meeting and National Office
 - (2) Review and prepare report on expenses of local community as they relate to monthly supplies, support to National Office, missions and apostolates
 - (3) Recommend Fiscal Policy for local community
 - (4) Archive financial reports of local community and National Office
 - (5) Maintain archives for long term future availability
 - (6) Maintain an auditable system that tracks income and expenses.
- C. The treasurer is expected to attend community meetings regularly and council meetings as appropriate or necessary.
- D. The treasurer writes checks or makes payments as directed by the council or as result of community decisions.
- E. The treasurer can be a councilor.
- F. If the treasurer is a councilor, he or she will be a voting member of the council. If not, the treasurer may vote at the pleasure of the council or as determined by the particular statutes of the local community.
- G. SEE HANDBOOK SECTION I – “Community Finances” for more information on the duties of the Community Treasurer.**

Tesorero de la Comunidad Local

- A. Consultará con otros miembros del Concilio, entidades votantes del gobierno local y el Asistente Espiritual Servita sobre el año fiscal y el presupuesto
- B. Colaborará con el Prior/a relativo al año fiscal y el presupuesto
 - 1. Ejemplos de Preocupación e Interés:
 - (1) Un Informe Financiero consistente para ser revisado regularmente por el Concilio local, reunión de comunidad y la Oficina Nacional
 - (2) Un informe sobre los gastos mensuales de la comunidad local concerniente a provisiones, apoyos a la Oficina Nacional, misiones, y apostolados
 - (3) Recomendación de una Póliza Fiscal para la comunidad local
 - (4) Archivo de informes financieros de la comunidad local y la Oficina Nacional
 - (5) Mantenimiento de archivos para accesibilidad futura
 - (6) Mantenimiento de un sistema auditable de ingresos y gastos
- C. Asistirá el tesorero a las reuniones de la comunidad y el concilio regularmente y cuando sea apropiado o necesario.
- D. Escribirá los cheques o hará pagos bajo la dirección del concilio o como resultado de las decisiones de la comunidad.
- E. Podrá ser un concejal el tesorero.
- F. Será un miembro votante del concilio si el tesorero es un concejal. Si no el tesorero puede votar a la disposición del concilio o como sea determinado por los estatutos particulares de la comunidad local.

Formation Director

The Formation Director is the one simply stated in Article #53 of the *Rule of Life* as “the person responsible for formation.” This person may also be known as the Director of Formation.

The Formation Director is not elected, rather, in an established community, is appointed by the Community Council. The Formation Director of a new Community, called a Community-in-formation, is appointed by the OSSM National Assistant who oversees the formation of the new Community.

The Formation Director’s basic responsibility is to coordinate twelve monthly sessions of the candidate(s) learning about the Servite Secular Order. This is called *Initial Formation*. Coordinating includes the arranging for the twelve sessions to be conducted by, not only the Formation Director, but as available, various already Promised members of the Order known as OSSM’s. A record of attendance is kept to insure all candidates are present for all twelve session. It is required that any missed sessions be made up.

Other responsibilities of the Formation Director include acquiring the necessary paperwork for record purposes such as a candidate’s initial application and autobiography to be admitted to the Formation Program by way of the Rite of Admission, leading later to a letter of request to make the Promise by way of the Rite of the Promise, also known as the Promise Ceremony.

In addition to the above for a new Community-in-formation, the Formation Director will explain the following items which need to be accomplished to qualify and be accepted by being canonically approved by the Prior General:

1. Election of Community Council
2. Choose a Community name
3. Write to the Prior General for Canonical approval
4. Write Particular Statutes
5. Advanced Directives
6. Role of the Assistant
7. Guidelines for Visitation
8. Monthly meeting structure
9. OSM (Order of the Servants of Mary) publications list

Director de Formación

El Director de Formación es la persona que simplemente indica el Artículo #53 de la Regla de Vida como “el responsable de la formación.”

El Director de Formación, en una comunidad ya establecida, no es elegido sino que es nombrado por el consejo de la Comunidad. El Director de Formación en comunidades nuevas será nombrado por el Asistente Nacional, quien supervisara la formación dentro de esa comunidad.

La responsabilidad del Director de Formación es básicamente coordinar las doce sesiones que se llevaran a cabo mensualmente dentro del año de formación. Durante este tiempo el candidato(s) aprenderá todo acerca de la Orden Seglar Servitana. Esto se conoce como “*Formación Inicial*.” El coordinador asesorara que las doce sesiones se lleven a cabo, no solo por el Director de Formación, sino también por miembros que ya han hecho su Promesa a la Orden Seglar. Se debe mantener record de asistencia para asegurar que el candidato(s) ha estado presente en las doce sesiones. Se requiere que se reponga cualquier sesión perdida.

Otras responsabilidades del Director de Formación incluyen adquirir la documentación necesaria para el archivo de la comunidad como, la solicitud de entrada y la autobiografía del candidato para admisión en el Programa de Formación a través del Rito de Admisión. De igual manera al finalizar el año de Formación, el candidato luego solicitara por escrito su deseo de ser recibido en la Orden Seglar a través del Rito de la Promesa.

Según dicho previamente para una nueva Comunidad-en-Formación, el Director de Formación explicara los siguientes puntos que se deben de llevar a cabo para cualificar y, ser aceptada canónicamente y aprobada por el Prior General:

1. Elección del Consejo de la Comunidad
2. Escoger un nombre para la Comunidad
3. Escribir al Prior General pidiendo aprobación Canonica
4. Escribir sus Estatutos Particulares
5. Directivas Anticipadas
6. Rol del Asistente
7. Directrices para Visitación
8. Estructura mensual para reuniones
9. OSM (Orden Siervos de María) hoja de publicaciones



INSTALLATION OF COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

**The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve.
Matthew 20:28**

Each Community has a council. The members of the council are the prioress/prior/president, [the assistant prior/prioress] the [spiritual] assistant, and at least three councilors elected by the Community itself. (Art. 72.1)

The following installation rites can be used to formally install the elected members of the Community council and other appointed community leaders.

Prayers such as the Vigilia (OSSM Prayer Book) or morning/evening prayer may be prayed by the Community to begin the rite. The Prayer for Installation of Community Leadership is prayed at the end.

If more than one member of the community leadership is being installed, they can be called up individually to make their commitment. The Prayer for Installation of Community Leadership is then prayed after all have made their commitment.

The presider may be the Spiritual Assistant or the Prior/Prioress/President.

This section includes the Prayer for Installation of Community Leadership and installation rites for the following positions:

1. Prior/Prioress/President
2. Assistant Prior/Prioress
3. Councilors
4. Secretary
5. Treasurer
6. Formation Director



SERVITE SECULAR ORDER
PRAYER FOR INSTALLATION OF COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

All Secular Servites stand and pray:

Look kindly, Lord, upon this family
that trusts in You.
We thank You for Your guidance
in choosing leaders to help us
in our journey toward You.
We renew our commitment
to follow Jesus as Mary did.

Newly elected only:

Grant, Mother of all goodness,
that we, your Servants,
be filled with hope!

Strengthen us,
and keep us faithful in your service
as leaders of this community.
With you as guide
may we serve our sisters and brothers
with love.

Secular Servites:

May you be supported by our prayers
and by the abiding presence of the Virgin Mary
so that what you do may benefit
the Church and our Order
and so witness your love for Christ
and all His sisters and brothers.

All: AMEN.



SERVITE SECULAR ORDER INSTALLATION OF PRIOR/PRIORESS/PRESIDENT

Presider: Today we install the newly elected Prior/Prioress/President of _____ Community, Secular Order of Servants of Mary who begin his/her term _____ (date).

(The newly elected Prior/Prioress/President comes forward)

Presider: The Prior/Prioress/President, first among the sisters and brothers, presides over the community in a service of love; together with the council and each member of the Community, she/he has responsibility for the Community.

In the exercise of service the Prior/Prioress/President should be aware of bearing witness to Christ who came not be served but to serve, and to give more abundant life to his disciples. *(Art. 70.1)*

Addressing newly elected Prior/Prioress/President:

_____, you have been elected to serve your sisters and brothers of this Secular Servite community in their pilgrimage toward a life of Christian perfection and loving service guided by Mary, Mother and Servant of the Lord. It shall be your duty:

- to convoke and preside at the meetings of the Secular Community and its council
- to foster and encourage the spiritual and apostolic endeavors of the Community
- to be vigilant about observance of the Rule and Statutes
- to collaborate with the Servite assistant and the officials of the Community *(Art. 70.2)*

Will you accept these responsibilities?

Newly elected Prior/Prioress/President:

Yes, with the help of God's grace and the guidance of Mary, Mother and Servant of the Lord, I will accept the duties of my office as Prior/Prioress/President of the Community.

All: PRAYER FOR INSTALLATION OF COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP



SERVITE SECULAR ORDER INSTALLATION OF ASSISTANT PRIOR/PRIORESS

President: Today we install the newly elected Assistant Prior/Prioress of _____ Community, Secular Order of Servants of Mary who begin his/her term _____ (date).

(The newly elected Assistant Prior/Prioress comes forward)

President: The Assistant Prior/Prioress is someone with whom the Prior/Prioress can confer, share ideas and discuss concerns and interests pertaining to the life of the community.

Addressing the newly elected Assistant Prior(ess):

_____, you have been elected as Assistant Prior(ess) to serve your sisters and brothers of this Secular Servite community by aiding and assisting the Prior(ess) with his/her duties and obligations. It shall be your duty:

- to collaborate with the Prior/Prioress in the leadership and animation of the Community
- to provide assistance to the Prior/Prioress by sharing some of his/her responsibilities
- to preside at the meetings of the Secular Community and its council in the event that the Prior/Prioress is unable to do so

Will you accept these responsibilities?

Newly elected Assistant Prior/Prioress:

Yes, with the help of God's grace and the guidance of Mary, Mother and Servant of the Lord, I will accept the duties of my office as Assistant Prior/Prioress of the Community.

All: PRAYER FOR INSTALLATION OF COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP



SERVITE SECULAR ORDER INSTALLATION OF COUNCILORS

Presider: Today we install the newly elected Councilors of _____
Community, Secular Order of Servants of Mary who begin his/her term
_____ (date).

(The newly elected Councilors come forward)

Presider: As stated in our Rule of Life, each Community has a council. The members of the council are the Prior/Prioress/President, the assistant and at least three councilors elected by the Community itself. (Art. 72.1)

The councilors work with the Prior/Prioress/President in planning, promoting and advancing the goals of the Community. A well-functioning Council is essential to the growth and success of a Community.

Addressing the newly elected Councilors:

_____, _____, and _____, you have been elected by your sisters and brothers of this community to serve as its councilors. They place their confidence in you and your ability to actively foster the aims of the Secular Order. It shall be your duty:

- to collaborate with the Prior/Prioress/President in the leadership and animation of the Community
- to attend and participate in Council meetings as well as Community meetings
- to accept candidates for admission and the Promise
- to dispense from the Promise or dismiss a member of the Community if it should become necessary to do so

(Art. 72)

Will you accept these responsibilities?

Newly elected Councilors reply, each in turn:

Yes, with the help of God's grace and the guidance of Mary, Mother and Servant of the Lord, I will accept the duties of my office as Councilor of the Community.

All: PRAYER FOR INSTALLATION OF COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP



SERVITE SECULAR ORDER INSTALLATION OF SECRETARY

Presider: Today we install the newly appointed Secretary of _____ Community, Secular Order of Servants of Mary who begin his/her term _____ (date).

(The newly appointed Secretary comes forward)

Presider: It is stated in our Rule of Life that each Secular Community will have a secretary. *(Art. 74.1)* The role of the secretary is to keep accurate records of community business and all its members.

Addressing the Secretary:

_____, you have been appointed Secretary of the community. Your responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- recording the minutes of the meetings of the Community and its council
- keeping the register of admissions and Promises up-to-date
- looking after and keeping up-to-date the records of the Community
- maintaining contact with those sisters and brothers who cannot attend the meetings *(Art 74.2)*

Will you accept these responsibilities?

Newly appointed Secretary replies:

Yes, with the help of God's grace and the guidance of Mary, Mother and Servant of the Lord, I will accept the duties of my office as Secretary of the Community.

All: PRAYER FOR INSTALLATION OF COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP



SERVITE SECULAR ORDER INSTALLATION OF TREASURER

Presider: Today we install the newly appointed Treasurer of _____ Community, Secular Order of Servants of Mary who begins his/her term _____ (date).

(The newly appointed Treasurer comes forward)

Presider: In the spirit of the beatitudes the Secular Community shares a communion of goods. The members contribute, according to their means, to the expenses of the local, national and international communities, and to the assistance of sisters and brothers in financial difficulties. *(Art. 21)*

Addressing the Treasurer:

_____, you have been appointed Treasurer of the community. It is your responsibility to:

- maintain the financial records of the community
- give financial reports to the council and community
- deposit funds to community account and withdraw by check as directed by the council
- collect and record dues
- ensure all expenditures have been approved by the council
- manage finances for special fundraising projects as needed

Will you accept these responsibilities?

Newly appointed Treasurer replies:

Yes, with the help of God's grace and the guidance of Mary, Mother and Servant of the Lord, I will accept the duties of my office as Treasurer of the Community.

All: PRAYER FOR INSTALLATION OF COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP



SERVITE SECULAR ORDER INSTALLATION OF FORMATION DIRECTOR

Presider: Today we install the newly appointed Formation Director of _____ Community, Secular Order of Servants of Mary who begins his/her term _____ (date).

(The newly appointed Formation Director comes forward)

Presider: The vocation of the Secular Servant of Mary is nourished within the Community and in communion with the whole Servite Family. In their continuing formation, the Secular Servants of Mary will seek through study to deepen their knowledge of the official documents of the Church and the Order. *(Art. 44)*

Addressing the Formation Director:

_____, you have been appointed the Formation Director of the community. It is your responsibility to:

- ensure that formation is according to the program prescribed by the National Council
- schedule lessons and speakers for ongoing formation
- oversee the initial formation of candidates during their period of initial formation as stated in Article 53 of our Rule of Life

Will you accept these responsibilities?

Newly appointed Formation Director replies:

Yes, with the help of God's grace and the guidance of Mary, Mother and Servant of the Lord, I will accept the duties of my office as Formation Director of the Community.

All: PRAYER FOR INSTALLATION OF COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Possible Community Committees

Introduction

A committee is a group of persons within the community to whom, as a group, some matter is committed. Committees help to support the overall activities and life of a community.

The committee may be formed for a limited duration or be a standing committee.

Committees provide a convenient means for a larger number of people to exchange ideas and information, make recommendations to the Council, and distribute the workload to more members of the community.

By careful selection of the membership of committees, it is possible to bring together a wide range of ideas, expertise and interests and, as such, ensure that all aspects of a decision or matter are considered when making a final recommendation to the council and/or community.

Committees provide community members an opportunity to share their various gifts, have hands-on experience with leadership matters helping to develop future officers and Council members for the community.

Possible Community Committees include the following:

Communication

Support the local OSSM community and council through utilizing suggested print, internet and social media venues. The communications venues will assist in the promotion and sharing of your local community events, celebration and evangelization efforts. The committee may also make aware regional, national and international Servite events, celebration and evangelization efforts to their local council for sharing with the local community.

See section 7 *Servite Communications*

The Secular Fraternity has living links with the local Church and the local Servite religious community, whose spirituality it shares and in whose apostolic work it takes part. (ROL 18)

Compassion

This committee will maintain the channel of prayer with the local OSSM community, regional, national and international Servite family of those that are in joy or sorrow, through preparation of prayers for local community meetings, cards in the mail, emails and phone calls.

Prayer is a meeting with God in faith; on this journey the Blessed Virgin, the highest example of a person of prayer, is the sure guide and support of Secular Servites. (ROL 24)

Social Justice

Support the local OSSM community and council of the present social justice efforts underway in our Servite family, local diocese and the Church of the world. This support would come in the form of prayers, introducing programs and literature for group discussion, participating in or developing community actions and events.

See section 6e Social Justice Information

As members of the Church and the world, they share the anxieties and the aspirations of both, and urged on by the love of God, they cooperate in the building of a new world in the light of Gospel Values. (ROL 39)

Hospitality and Events

In collaboration with the local OSSM council and community this committee will take point position in the communication of event logistical details, preparation of all aspects of meals and invitation to guests. This committee may be responsible for organizing the monthly local OSSM community social, as well as, making sure the pastor, sisters, friars or friend of Servites are invited to join the social time.

Whenever possible, sisters and brothers of the Secular Fraternity take part in the prayer life of the religious community, and, when invited, share its renewal sessions, chapters and meals. (ROL 19)

Library and Archives

Assist the local OSSM council secretary with the monthly meeting and community register by organizing a library system or archive location; support the local council by suggesting, providing and maintaining in the library or archive relevant resources for spiritual growth and formation.

See section 6 Resources for Spiritual Growth and Formation

Prayer is an essential duty for every Christian. But for Secular Servites who have chosen to follow Christ, his example, and his teaching, it constitutes a special commitment to growth in faith and hope and to bringing the commandment of love to perfection. (ROL 22)

Art and Liturgy

Support the local OSSM council and community in the preparation of prayer aides, music and organizing rituals and liturgical celebrations. This committee may also create the monthly meeting sacred space environment through the implementation of candles, flowers, statues, prints and music.

See section 6 *Resources for Spiritual Growth* and Formation and section 7c *Servites and Other Recommended Websites*

Faithful to their vocation, Secular Servites attach great importance to common prayer; together with their sisters and brothers they explore the depths of the Word of God and intercede for all people and the world itself. (ROL 25)

Evangelization

Support the local OSSM community and council of the present Evangelization, Catechetical and Mission efforts underway in our Servite family, local diocese and the Church of the world. This support would come in the form of prayers; introducing programs and literature on Vocation for group discussion; participating in or developing community apostolates and events; celebrating and recognizing Anniversaries rooted in sacrament and vocation.

The Secular Servite Fraternity supports and participates in the Order's work for vocations and in its apostolates, especially the missions. (ROL 43)

This is a list suggested for your use or to inspire an idea for a committee that would work best for your local community.

Posibles Comités de Comunidad

COMITES DE LA COMUNIDAD: INTRODUCCION

Un comité es un grupo de personas dentro de una comunidad a quien, como grupo, se le encomienda algún asunto a tratar. Los Comités ayudan a apoyar las actividades y la vida de una comunidad.

El comité puede formarse por un tiempo limitado o como comité permanente.

Los comités proveen un medio conveniente para que un número mayor de personas intercambien de ideas e información, ofrezcan recomendaciones al Consejo, e incluir a otras personas en realizar el plan.

Con una cuidadosa selección de los miembros del comité es posible reunir una amplia gama de ideas, conocimientos e intereses y, de tal forma, asegurar que todos los aspectos de una decisión o un asunto se tomen en cuenta al presentar la recomendación final al consejo o a la comunidad.

Posibles Comités de la Comunidad puede incluir los siguientes

Comunicaciones

Apoyar a la comunidad local y a su consejo a través de impresos, internet y otros medios sociales. Los medios de comunicación asistirán en la promoción y el compartir de eventos de la comunidad local, alguna celebración y los esfuerzos de evangelización. El comité puede también comunicar eventos Servitas regionales, nacionales e internacionales, celebraciones y esfuerzos de evangelización al consejo para compartir con la comunidad local.

Ver Sección 7 Comunicaciones Servitas

La Fraternidad está vitalmente unida a la iglesia local y a la comunidad religiosa de los Siervos del lugar, cuya espiritualidad comparte, y en cuyo compromiso apostólico colabora. (RL #18)

Compasión

Animar la oración con la comunidad local y con la familia Servita regional, nacional e internacional. Animar el orar con y por aquellos que experimentan gozo o sufrimiento, en la preparación de la oración para las reuniones de la comunidad local, enviar tarjetas postales, correo electrónico o hacer llamadas.

La oración es el encuentro con Dios en la fe. En este camino, la Virgen, altísimo ejemplo de criatura orante, es guía segura y ayuda para el Siervo de María seglar. (RL #24)

Justicia Social

Apoyar a la comunidad local y al consejo en los esfuerzos por la justicia social llevados a cabo en nuestra familia Servita, en la diócesis local o la Iglesia mundial. Este apoyo vendrá en forma de oraciones, de presentar programas y literatura para dialogar en grupo, participar en o desarrollar acciones y eventos en la comunidad. Ver sección 6e Información Justicia Social

Insertados en la iglesia y en el mundo, comparten sus anhelos y aspiraciones y, movidos por el amor a Dios, se comprometen a colaborar en la construcción de un mundo nuevo a la luz de los valores evangélicos. (RL #39)

Hospitalidad y Eventos

Colabora con el consejo y la comunidad local tomando el liderazgo en la comunicación de detalles preparativos del evento, entre los cuales son la preparación de alimentos y la invitación de los huéspedes. Este comité puede ser responsable de organizar una actividad social mensual para la comunidad local, como también, asegurarse de que el pastor local, las religiosas, los frailes o algunos amigos de los Servitas sean invitados a participar en la actividad..

Los Hermanos y las Hermanas de la Fraternidad Seglar, según su posibilidad, participen en los momentos de oración de la comunidad religiosa y, cuando sean invitados, a los encuentros de renovación espiritual, a la mesa, al capítulo. (RL #19)

Biblioteca y Archivos

Asistir al secretario del consejo local con la reunión mensual y el registro de la comunidad al organizar un sistema y/o lugar de archivo; apoyar al consejo local al sugerir, proveer y mantener recursos relevantes para el crecimiento espiritual y la formación permanente.

Ver Sección 6 Recursos para el Crecimiento Espiritual y Formación

La oración es un deber esencial para el cristianos; pero para el Siervo de María Seglar, que ha escogido seguir a Cristo, su ejemplo y su enseñanza, constituye un compromiso especial para crecer en la fe, en la esperanza y llevar a perfección el mandamiento del amor. (RL #22)

Arte y Liturgia

Apoyar al consejo y la comunidad local en la preparación de guías para la oración, música y organizar de ceremonias y celebraciones litúrgicas. Este comité puede

también crear un ambiente sagrado para las reuniones mensuales con el uso de velas, flores, estatuas, cuadros y música.

Ver sección 6 Recursos para Crecimiento Espiritual y Formación y sección 7c Servitas y Otros Sitios Web Recomendados

Fiel a su propia vocación, el Siervo de María Seglar amará la oración comunitaria y, junto con los hermanos y hermanas, profundizará la Palabra de Dios y rezará por todos los hombres y mujeres y por el mundo. (RL #25)

Evangelización

Animar en la comunidad y el consejo local los esfuerzos actuales de Evangelización, Catequéticos y de Misiones que se llevan a cabo en nuestra familia Servita, en diócesis local y en la Iglesia universal. El apoyo vendrá en forma de oraciones; presentar programas y literatura sobre Vocaciones para discusión en grupo; participación en o desarrollo de apostolados y eventos comunitarios.

La Fraternidad Seglar de los Siervos apoye y participe en el trabajo vocacional de la Orden y en el servicio apostólico y, de manera particular, en el ámbito de las misiones. (RL #43)

Esta es una lista sugerida para su uso o para inspirar la creación de los comités que pueden fu

The Monthly Community Meeting Norms for Secular Order Communities in the USA

Basic Structure:

- Servite Community Prayer (30 min.)
- Ongoing Formation (60 min.)
- Community Meeting (30 min.)
- Fellowship

Servite Community Prayer

The Rosary of the Seven Sorrows; the Via Matris; the Vigilia of Our Lady; the Servite Saints and Blessed: a reading about their life and a prayer (Prayer Book).

Ongoing Formation

The Council can consult with the community to identify topics to be considered in future sessions. For example, to learn more about the life of St. Peregrine, of the Seven Holy Founders; to study more about Mary and about the Seven Sorrows and how each of these are experienced today by ourselves, others, the Church, society at large; to learn more about life-threatening diseases: cancer, AIDS, and others, and how we can make others aware and prevent disease (Health Fair; talks by doctors and other medical professionals). A significant amount of formation time should be spent sharing on questions relevant to the presentation in order to facilitate relationship and trust among community members.

Community Meeting

The Prioress (Prior) convokes and presides at the meetings: to ask the opinion of the community members regarding activities to be carried out or issues of concern to be discussed; to inform the community about upcoming activities, meetings, Masses or prayer services; to receive suggestions from the community; the Treasurer gives a report (monthly, every two or three months). It is important to maintain an open communication among all in the community. The “candidates” (those “in formation”) also take part in the meeting. The Secretary should prepare a “calendar of events” for the month to be distributed to all at the meeting.

Reunion Mensual

Reunión Mensual

Estructura Básica: -Oración Comunitaria (30 minutos)
-Formación Inicial o Permanente (60 minutos)
-Reunión de la Comunidad (30 Minutos)
-Un compartir entre todos

La Oración Comunitaria– el Rosario de los Siete Dolores (la Corona); el Via Matris; la Vigilia de la Virgen María. Puede incluir la lectura sobre la vida de uno de los Santos o Beatos de la Orden y su oración particular. (Oracional)

La Formación Permanente – el Consejo puede consultar a la comunidad para identificar temas para las futuras sesiones. Por ejemplo, conocer mejor la vida de San Peregrino, de los Siete Santos Fundadores; estudio sobre la Virgen María, dialogar sobre los Siete Dolores y cómo se experimentan hoy personalmente, por otros, en la Iglesia o sociedad en general; conocer más sobre las enfermedades que amenazan la vida: el cáncer, el SIDA, y demás, qué se puede hacer para crear conciencia entre los demás para prevenir enfermedades (Feria de la Salud, charles sobre la salud por médicos y profesionales).

La Reunión de la Comunidad – planificada y dirigida por el Prior/la Priora y los miembros del Consejo: para pedir la opinión de la comunidad sobre cualquier asunto o actividad a llevarse a cabo; para informar a la comunidad sobre posibles futuras actividades, reuniones, Misas u oraciones; para pedir sugerencias de la comunidad; reporte de la tesorería (mensual, cada dos meses o cada tres meses). Es importante mantener una buena comunicación entre todos en la comunidad. Los “candidatos” participan también. Se toma cuenta de los ausente para informarles luego. La Secretaria debe preparar un “calendario” para repartir a todos cada mes.

Community Christian Service and Outreach Projects

Chapter 6 of the Rule of Life is dedicated completely to everything about the service of a Secular Servite Community, specifically, art. 37-43, explains to you Secular Fraternity how to assume the apostolic work to be done. We also recommend reading section 863 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church that gives more information about the apostolate.

Art. 41 of the Rule of Life; “as active members of the Secular Fraternity, Servites cooperate in the apostolic endeavors taken on by the group in response to the needs of the neighborhood and the local Church. According to their means and talents they also strive to take part in the particular works of pastoral service of the local religious community or parish.” Apostolic outreach, done as a Secular Order community, not only is effective but brings members of the Secular Order community closer together.

Examples regarding “apostolic endeavors” are:

- 1- Visiting the sick/homebound
- 2- Transporting someone to weekly Mass
- 3- Food/clothing drives to help poor of the parish
- 4- Holy Hour in honor of St. Peregrine
- 5- Community Service, example; Supporting a family where the parents are in jail, fundraising for The Holy Infant School in Haiti, etc...

The following points are to be considered too in their discernment:

- 1- Loving God: By loving Him, we serve Him and the church. When we love and serve Him, we serve mankind.
- 2- Assess the tools that the Secular Servite Community is going to be working with like:
 - a- Talent that God give us.
 - b- Holy Spirit
 - c- Prayer
 - d- Sacraments
 - e- Discipline
 - f- Bible
 - g- Recognized that Jesus is our Pastor together with the Virgin Mary
 - h- Unity, Fraternity and a lot of love, as we follow in the footsteps of the Seven Holy Founders. As a community, they founded and operated St. Mary’s Hospice. In their tradition, our communities are also called to serve together.

Servicio Comunitario, Apostolado y Proyectos de Ayuda a la Comunidad

El Capítulo 6 de la Regla de Vida es dedicado completamente a todo lo que es sobre el Servicio de la comunidad Seglar Servitana, específicamente, art. 37-43, explican sobre como la Fraternidad Seglar debe asumir y llevar a cabo su apostolado. Se recomienda que también lean sección 863 del Catequismo de la Iglesia Católica para más información sobre el apostolado.

Art. 41 de la Regla de Vida nos dice, “Como miembro activo de una Fraternidad Seglar, el Siervo de María colabore en los trabajos apostólicos asumidos por el grupo como respuesta a las necesidades del ambiente y de la Iglesia local; y, de acuerdo con sus posibilidades y capacidades, participe en los trabajos particulares del servicio pastoral de la comunidad religiosa local o de la Parroquia.” El servicio apostólico/comunitario, cuando hecho como una comunidad de la Orden Seglar, no solo es efectivo sino que nos une mas como miembros de la Orden Seglar.

Ejemplos de “trabajos apostólicos: son:

1. Visitar a los enfermos en casa o hospital
2. Proveer transportación a alguien a Misa semanalmente
3. Colección de comida o ropa para ayudar a los pobres de la parroquia
4. Hora Santa en honor a San Peregrino
5. Servicio comunitario, por ejemplo: apoyar a una familia cuando ambos padres se encuentran en prisión.
6. Recaudar fondos a través de actividades para el sustento de la escuela Santo Niño en Haití, etc...

Los siguientes puntos deben de ser considerados en su discernimiento:

1. Amar a Dios: Amando a Dios, le servimos a Él y a la Iglesia. Cuando le amamos y le servimos, también servimos a la humanidad.
2. Asesore las herramientas que la Comunidad Seglar Servitana utilizará:
 - a) Los Talentos que Dios nos da
 - b) Espíritu Santo
 - c) Oración
 - d) Sacramentos
 - e) Disciplina
 - f) Biblia
 - g) Reconocer que Jesús es nuestro Pastor conjuntamente con la Virgen María.
 - h) Unidad, Fraternidad y mucho amor mientras seguimos en los pasos de los Siete Santos Fundadores. Como Comunidad, ellos fundaron y trabajaron en el “Hospicio Santa María.” En la tradición de Ellos, nuestras comunidades son llamadas a servir juntos.

United States National OSSM Particular Statute Preparation Guidelines

This document has been developed to help secular order communities to develop their particular statutes. These statutes are meant to help communities adhere to the rule of life, to administrate themselves, and to create guidelines for their self governance and resolution of *most* possible conflicts.

The statutes are partially derived from the 1995 Rule of Life(ROL). Statutes are necessary because the ROL does not does not cover every detail of community governance and behavior. The statutes must be in concert with the word, spirit, and wisdom of the ROL and should never contradict any part of the ROL.

In developing particular statutes, attention should be paid to wording. Statutes are laws by definition. It is desirable that unambiguous words like must or will be used in forming statutes. When it is meant to leave application of the statute to community officers, may or should are appropriate to use.

These guidelines contain two types of statutes:

- **Statutes that come from the 1995 Rule of Life (ROL) or are general practice in the United States. These statutes are not usually flexible and are indicated in red, bold type.**
- *Statutes that are based on recommendations by the National Assistant and the National Council. These statutes are recommended and will be implemented unless there is good reason not to. These statutes are indicated in blue, italic type.*

Additional statutes may be added as needed at the discretion of each community.

This document may also be useful to you when you conduct your regular review of the particular statutes of your community.

There is no set length of a set of particular statutes that a community adopts. The sample statutes that appear in this document are lengthy in order to provide possible statutes that will help you in determining particular statutes for adoption by your community. These guidelines have been established by using statutes from roughly 25% of the Secular Order communities in the United States and documents from the National Assistant and National Council. This document is not an end all or be all and suggestions for its improvement are welcome.

1. Membership Requirements (ROL #48-59)

A. For Admission

1. **Baptized Catholics who have reached the age of 18 may become members of the Order Secular of the Servants of Mary (OSSM)**
2. *Inquirers must attend three consecutive community meetings prior to admission to the period of probation*
3. **Each inquirer seeking to enter the period of probation must submit a written request to the council of the local community requesting to enter the period of probation and why they want to enter OSSM.**
4. *The council may opt to interview those applying to enter the period of probation. If this is the case it will be done for all candidates.*
5. **With approval of the majority of the council, the candidate is accepted into the period of probation.**
6. *During the period of probation, the candidates must make up any formation sessions that they miss. They should also faithfully attend monthly community meetings*
7. *Candidates missing more the three meetings may be dismissed and must reapply for readmission to probation after a specified time stated in the community's particular statutes has passed.*
8. **Candidates make the promise after completing normally a year of formation and after requesting in writing to the council, their desire to make the promise.**

B. For Readmission to the Community

1. *Any candidate who has resigned from the formation process during the period of probation must apply in writing to the council for readmission*
2. *The candidate will be readmitted upon majority approval of the council.*
3. *The candidate will start the probationary period over or pick up where they left off depending on the statutes of the specific community.*

C. Obligations of Members

1. **Study and Live by the Rule of Life**
2. **Attend meetings and other Servite functions faithfully.**
3. *Notify a council member when you will not be able to attend.*
4. *Members who do not attend community meetings for 12 consecutive months will be placed on the inactive list*
5. **Attend Sunday Mass and other celebrations required by the church and develop a pattern of personal prayer that might include:**

- i. Daily Mass*
 - ii. Liturgy of the Hours*
 - iii. Prayers to Our Lady, especially The Seven Sorrows Rosary and the Vigil*
 - iv. Other personal formal or extemporaneous prayer*
6. **Nurture devotion and appreciation of Our Mother of Sorrows and live by her example.**
 7. **Share our time, through ministry of service, and worldly goods with others in need according to our ability and God-given gifts.**
 8. **Support our Servite brothers and sisters as needed.**
 9. **Share formation and fellowship with other Secular Order Communities and groups within the Servite family**

2. Leadership of the Community – The Council consisting of Prior or Prioress, an assistant, three or more councilors. *An Assistant Prior or Prioress is recommended.*

A. Duties of the council ROL #72

1. **Collaborate with the Prior or Prioress in the leadership and animation of the community**
2. **Accepts Candidates for admission and The Promise**
3. **Dispenses members from The Promise if requested**
4. **Dismiss a member from the community after a fair hearing with the member concerned if necessary**
5. *Appoint a secretary who will take minutes at community meetings and council meetings for the records of the community and provide the minutes to the National Assistant*
6. **Coordinate all activities of the community, especially ongoing formation**

B. Duties of the prior/prioress ROL #71

1. **Preside over and serve the Community**
2. **Convoke and preside at all meetings of the Secular Order and its council.**
3. **Foster and encourage the spiritual and apostolic endeavors of the community**
4. **Be vigilant about observing and living the Rule of Life and the particular statutes of the community**
5. **Collaborate with the Assistant, councilors and other officers and or chair persons**
6. **Select, *with the council's approval*, other officials and or chair persons to serve the community**

C. Duties and description of the Assistant ROL #73

1. **The assistant, when possible, should be a Servite friar or sister. If no Servite is available, the assistant could be a secular priest, a permanent deacon, or religious sister, preferably one who has made or will make The Promise.**
2. **Should be willing, competent and committed to studying more deeply the specific vocation of the Secular Servite with the sisters and brothers with whom a common journey of faith is shared**
3. **Fosters the spirit of the Servite family among the members of the Secular Order community and offers a spiritual service of encouragement**
4. *Serves in accordance with the document published by the United States National Council entitled "The Local Spiritual Assistant, Servite Secular Order (See attachment A)*

D. Duties and description of the Assistant Prior/Prioress

1. *The position of Assistant Prior/Prioress has been recommended by the US National Council. There is not yet a job description but this position has been designed to*
 - a. *Provide assistance to the Prior/Prioress by sharing some of their responsibilities*
 - b. *Provide a means of preparing individuals to be elected to the position of Prior/Prioress.*
 - c. *Facilitate community meetings in the absence of the Prior/Prioress*
2. *It is recommended that the Prior/Prioress and Assistant Prior/Prioress not be a spousal couple as the Assistant Prior/Prioress needs to be available when the Prior Prioress is away and unable to facilitate meetings.*
3. *The Assistant Prior/Prioress needs to be elected or appointed as specified in the Particular Statutes of the local community. Some options are:*
 - a. *The Assistant Prior/Prioress is the person in the Prior/Prioress election with the second highest number of votes*
 - b. *There is a separate election for the Assistant Prior/Prioress*
 - c. *There is some other method of selection defined in the Particular Statutes of the local community such as the outgoing Prior/Prioress serves in this capacity.*
4. *Election to the office of Assistant Prior/Prioress does not assure that the individual will become Prior/Prioress in the next term unless provided for in a community's Particular Statutes.*
5. *The Assistant Prior/Prioress should be a member of the Council*

E. Elections and Terms of Office

1. Eligibility and Terms

- a. *Only promised members may serve*
- b. *Terms should be two years*
- c. *Offices should/will not be held for more than two consecutive terms*
- d. *Council terms should be staggered to ensure continuity.*
- e. *When vacancies occur during a term, particular statutes should provide for a method of replacement by election, appointment by Prior/Prioress or appointment by council.*

2. Elections

- a. *Nominations should be held the month before elections. Particular statutes should specify the timing.*
- b. *Nominations can be made by a committee, from the floor or both as provided for by particular statutes.*
- c. *Elections should be by secret ballot. (Best friends may not make best leaders – members should be free to vote as they think best)*
- d. *Votes should be counted by the secretary and the Assistant. If the Assistant is not available, one other member appointed by the Prior/Prioress to help with the count*
- e. *Election should be by majority vote. A tie should be handled according to particular statutes.*
- f. *Newly elected individuals should begin their duties in the month following the election.*
- g. *The National Council has provided a rite that may be used for installation of new leadership.*

F. Other officials

1. Secretary (#74 ROL)

- a. **Take minutes at community meetings.** *(Minutes are also to be taken at council meetings by the secretary) Minutes are to be distributed and read according to particular statutes and provided to the National Assistant*
- b. **Keep register of admissions and promises up to date**
- c. **Keep a register of attendance at meetings**
- d. **Keep community archives complete and up to date**
- e. **Handle correspondence**
- f. **Ensure someone is appointed to take minutes in their absence**

2. Treasurer

- a. *Maintain financial records*
- b. *To give financial report to council and community at intervals determined by particular statute*
- c. *Deposit funds to community account and write checks as directed by the council*

- d. *Ensure that all expenditures have been approved by the council*
- e. *Manage finances for special fundraising projects if they exist*
- f. *Collect and record dues if relevant*

3. Formation Director

- a. *Schedule lessons and speakers for candidate formation*
- b. *Mentor candidates during formation*
- c. *Ensure that formation is according to the program prescribed by the National Council*
- d. *It should be noted that the formation director is not responsible to teach each formation session. It is a responsibility of the entire community.*

G. Committees and Chairperson

Each community should determine what committees (ministries, commissions) of one or more are necessary to their functioning and spell out responsibilities. Examples are:

1. *Spirituality Committee or Director – promote the study of lives of Servite Saints and Blesseds and Servite history*
2. *Publicity Committee or Director – Publicizing Servite events in the greater parish and local community through bulletin notices, posters, press releases, public service announcements, brochures and etc.*
3. *Hospitality Committee or Director – Coordinate members providing meals/refreshments after meetings and other Servite events.*
4. *Liturgy and Prayer Committee or Director – Organize prayer for community meetings and other special occasions such as healing Masses, celebration of Saints.*
5. *Social Action Ministry – Organize the social outreach of the Servite community to promote social justice. This might be done in conjunction with the parish or other organizations*
6. *Compassion Ministry – Send birthday cards, get well cards, minister to sick members, understand and help with special needs of members.*

3. Meetings

- A. *Meetings should be held at least once a month on a regular day (i.e 2nd Saturday*
- B. *Meetings should last two hours and include:*
 1. *30 Minutes of prayer from the Servite Prayerbook*
 2. *60 Minutes of Continuing spiritual formation that might include Servite history, Marian topics, Servite Saints and Blesseds, Social Justice issues*
 3. *30 Minutes community business*
- C. *A period of fellowship should follow the meeting*

- D. *Meetings should not be cancelled except for inclement weather, emergencies*

4. Finances

- A. *Each community will determine how they will raise funds as part of particular statutes*
 - 1. *If a community decides to collect dues, they should:*
 - a. *Specify amount and frequency of payment*
 - b. *Provide a process managed by the Assistant in cases where the specified dues are a hardship for the member (inability to pay dues should never keep a person from the community)*
 - c. *The treasurer should collect and record payment of dues*
 - 2. *Communities may take a secret collection*
 - 3. *Communities may raise funds through projects*

5. Review of Particular Statues

- A. *Particular Statues should be reviewed once a year in each community at a time specified by their statutes*
- B. *All Changes and additions must be approved by a majority of promised members.*
- C. *Revised particular statues must be submitted to the National Assistant for Review.*

Official Visit Agenda

Community Name

Date and Time of Meeting

Opening Prayer

Attendance

Introductions

Prior/Prioress Update on Status of Community

Spiritual Assistant Update on Status of Community

Visitation Evaluation

- A. Review of the organization of the council /community and formation and on-going formation process.
 - 1) Review the archives of the council and community minutes.
 - 2) Who submits your Council and Community minutes to the OSSM National Council?
 - 3) Review Council Election Process.
 - 4) Date of the last Annual review of your Community Particular Statutes.
 - 5) What is your process for Formation and On-going formation, what resources do you use?

- B. Discuss the style and quality of leadership in your community.
 - 1) What are the roles and/or obligations of the Community, Council, and Chairpersons? Assistant?

- C. What is the quality of socializing and community building inter / intra- community?
 - 1) Describe the Parish life of your community.
 - 2) How do you invite others to learn about our Servite Charism?
 - 3) What are your community social events outside of your monthly meetings?
 - 4) How to reach out to or interact with other Secular Servite Communities?
 - 5) Does your community have representation at OSSM National Conferences and UNIFAS Congresses?

- D. What are the communication resources used by your council and community?
 - 1) Do you have a newsletter, or Annual Calendar?
 - 2) Do you email or blog to share news or use the internet to find current faith or Servite information?

- E. What does your community look like, as servant to others?
 - 1) Describe your community prayer life.
 - 2) What are your community social justice efforts or apostolate?
 - 3) Explain how your community is living a Servite way of life?
 - 4) Other concerns, issues and activities

F. How can the OSSM National Office serve with you and your community?

G. Review of your financial record process.

H. Other questions and concerns?

Sending Forth Prayer

Agenda de la Visita Oficial

Nombre de la Comunidad

Fecha y Hora de la Reunión

Oración de Apertura

Asistencia

Introducciones

Actualización de la Condición de la Comunidad por el Prior/a

Actualización de la Condición de la Comunidad por el Asistente Espiritual

Evaluación de la Visita

- A. Revisión de la organización del concilio/comunidad, formación y proceso de formación continuo.
 - 1) Repaso de los archivos de las minutas del concilio y la comunidad
 - 2) Quién somete las minutas del concilio y la comunidad al Concilio Nacional OSSM?
 - 3) Repaso del Proceso de Elección del Concilio
 - 4) Fecha de la última revisión Anual de los Estatutos Particulares de la Comunidad
 - 5)Cuál es el proceso que usan para la Formación y Formación Continua?

- B. Discutir el estilo y calidad del liderazgo en la comunidad.
 - 1) Cuáles son los papeles y/u obligaciones de la Comunidad, Concilio y Presidentes de comités? El Asistente?

- C. Cuál es la calidad de socialización y desarrollo de comunidad inter/entre-comunidad?
 - 1) Describe la vida Parroquial de su comunidad.
 - 2) Cómo invitan a otros a aprender sobre el Carisma Servita?
 - 3) Cuáles son los eventos sociales fuera de las reuniones mensuales?
 - 4) Cómo se alcanza o interactúa con otras Comunidades Seglares Servitas?
 - 5) Tienen representación en las Conferencias Nacionales OSSM y Congresos UNIFAS?

- D. Cuáles son los recursos comunicativos usados por el Concilio y comunidad?
 - 1) Tiene un folleto o Calendario Anual?
 - 2) Tienen correo electrónico o blog para compartir noticias o usan el internet para encontrar información corriente sobre la fe o noticia Servita?

- E. Cómo se ve su comunidad? Se ven como sirvientes a otros?
 - 1) Describe su comunidad de oración.
 - 2) Cuáles son sus esfuerzos comunales de justicia social o apostolado?

- 3) Explique cómo está la comunidad viviendo un modo de vida Servita.
- 4) Otras preocupaciones, asuntos y actividades

F. Cómo puede la Oficina Nacional OSSM servirles a usted y su comunidad?

G. Repaso del proceso financiero.

H. Otras preguntas o preocupaciones?

Oración de Cierre

Pre-visitation Questionnaire and Information about the Official Visit – for the Local OSSM Community Council

Information About the Visit

- Each community has an official visit during a four year term of the National Council
- The visit consists of two parts; a meeting with the council and a meeting with the community
- The agenda for the meeting with the council is set by the visitors
- The meeting with the council should take about 90 minutes
- The purpose of the meeting with the council is, using the completed questionnaire below as a starting place, is to discuss the functioning, issues and needs of the community
- The visitors will offer suggestions and recommendations for consideration by the council. Every community has different needs and capabilities. It is up to the council to determine what they implement.
- At the beginning of the meeting, after the opening prayer, the prior/ess and spiritual assistant will allotted 15 minutes to present their view of how the community is doing and issues or questions that they may wish to raise to the visitor.
- The visitors will attend the community meeting as observers and will participate in the meeting as requested. The community meeting should have an agenda that reflects what normally occurs at regular meetings.
- Within several weeks of the visit, the visitors will provide a report to the prior/ess and spiritual assistant that summarizes impressions of the visit and recommendations. This report should be shared with council members.

Instructions for Use of the Questionnaire

- In preparation for the Official Visit, the Regional Councilor should provide this visitation form for use by the council two months prior to the visit.
- The completion of the questionnaire is meant to be a collaborative effort accomplished by the entire council. They may wish to meet together, discuss, and reflect upon the questions and their answers. The form is not intended for one person to fill out.
- You may use this form as a guideline and put your answers on another sheet OR using a word processor, you may simply insert your answers into this document. Please do whatever is easiest for you – it is not necessary that you write your answers on this form. You may refer to the number/letter of each question, if using a separate sheet.
- A copy of the completed questionnaire, along with the community's most recent Particular Statutes (including date of statute revision) is to be

returned at least three weeks before the date of the visitation to the Regional Councilor, who will in turn share its content with the National Assistant and/or Friar Representative on the National Council.

- A copy is also to be kept for the records of the community being visited.

TODAY'S DATE: _____

Date of planned visitation: _____

Name of Community:

Location of the Community:

Usual meeting date and time of the Council:

Members of the Council:

Please list names, address, phone number(s) & e-mail of each of the members of the Council. **You may wish to attach a separate list** Please include Prior/Prioress, Assistant Prior/Prioress Formation Director, Secretary, Treasurer, Spiritual Assistant and any other Councilors.

Community Membership

(Note: It is very helpful to attach a complete roster of members' names, addresses, email addresses, phone numbers and date of Promise. We need this information to update our National Database.

Please list the number of:

- a. Active Members _____ d. Candidates: _____
b. Inactive Members _____ e. Inquirers: _____
c. Dispensed Members _____ f. Isolated Members _____

(Active: attend regularly; Inactive: unable to attend; Isolated: moved away from OSM presence)

1. Formation and Spirituality

- a. Describe the prayer life of the Community. Does the fraternity use the Secular Order Prayerbook at its meetings? What kind of prayer or liturgy is used?
b. Please describe the personal spiritual commitment of the members and any retreats and/or days of recollection/reflection or special liturgies. Does the community celebrate any Servite feast days? If yes, which ones? and how?
c. Describe your INITIAL formation program. What structure, content and material do you use for initial formation? What form do the instructions take? When do those in initial formation meet?
d. Describe your ONGOING formation at community monthly meeting– structure, resources, content etc. Who provides ongoing formation to the community? How might the quality of your ongoing formation be improved?

2. Way of Life

- a. Briefly describe your community listing your strengths and gifts.
- b. Does your community have an apostolate that it sponsors?
- c. Describe the community's involvement in the life and activities of the local parish(es) to which its members belong.
- d. Is your community involved in areas of Family, Peace and Justice, Ecology, Work, and Youth? Is your involvement shared with the National Office through minutes or reports?
- e. Do community members contribute to the community's finances? Does your community do any kind of fund raising? Is there financial help available to those who would like to attend retreats, regional or national gatherings and meetings, etc.?
- f. Are members willing to take on leadership roles within the community?
- g. When were your last elections?

3. Communication

- a. Are members of your community in touch with each other outside of monthly meetings?
- b. Does the community publish a monthly newsletter? Do you mail a copy to the Region? To other communities?
- c. Please describe the nature of the contact your community has had with the Region. How might the Region be of more assistance to your community? How does your community keep in touch with other communities in the Region?
- d. Are the community reports, and other items requested by the Regional leadership submitted in a timely fashion? Are minutes of the Council and community meetings provided to the OSSM National Office? Has your Community submitted articles and pictures to Secular Servite News?
- e. Are in-home or hospital visits made to members who are ill (homebound, in a nursing home or rehab center)?
- f. Is there any outreach to Inactive Members?

4. What do you feel is the quality of spiritual assistance provided to the community?

5. Has the community made any efforts to recruit new members and promote the vocation to the Servite Secular Order? What has been successful?

6. What efforts or accomplishments is your community particularly proud of?

7. Does your community have any goals it has set for the coming year?

8. What are your major concerns or problems?

9. What questions or issues do you feel that the Official Visitors should address?

10. Any other comments?

CUESTIONARIO PRE-VISITA E INFORMACION SOBRE LA VISITA OFICIAL PARA CONSEJO LOCAL DE LA COMUNIDAD OSSM

Información sobre la Visita

- A cada comunidad se le hará una Visita Oficial durante el mandato de cuatro años del Consejo Nacional
- La visita consistirá en dos partes: una reunión con el consejo y participación en la reunión mensual de la comunidad
- La agenda para la reunión con el consejo la preparan los visitantes
- La reunión con el consejo durará unos 90 minutos
- El propósito de la reunión con el consejo es, utilizando el cuestionario completado como punto de partida, discutir el funcionamiento, los asuntos y las necesidades de la comunidad
- Los visitantes ofrecerán sugerencias y recomendaciones para que las considere el consejo. Cada comunidad tiene diferentes necesidades y capacidades, por lo que el consejo decidirá cuál de las sugerencias o recomendaciones implementará.
- Al comienzo de la reunión, después de la oración de apertura, al prior/a la priora y al/a la Asistente Espiritual se le concederán unos 15 minutos para presentar su parecer sobre cómo marcha todo en la comunidad y cualquier asunto o pregunta que quisieran presentar a los visitantes.
- Los visitantes participarán en la reunión de la comunidad como observadores y participarán según se les indique. La comunidad debe preparar una agenda que refleje lo que normalmente ocurre en las reuniones mensuales.
- Dentro de unas semanas después de la visita, los visitantes enviarán un reporte al prior/la priora y al/a la Asistente Espiritual que resumirá sus impresiones de la visita y sus recomendaciones. Este reporte debe compartirse con todos los miembros del consejo.

Instrucciones para el Utilizar el Cuestionario

- En preparación para la Visita Oficial, el Consejero Regional debe proveer copia del Cuestionario Pre-Visita, por lo menos dos meses antes, para que lo utilice el consejo.
- El completar el cuestionario debe realizarse como esfuerzo colaborativo entre todos los miembros del consejo.
- Pueden utilizar este formulario como guía y anotar sus respuestas en otra hoja o pueden simplemente anotar sus respuestas en el formulario directamente. Favor de hacer lo que más les convenga – no es necesario que anote sus respuestas en el formulario. Favor de referirse al número o la letra de cada pregunta si es que utiliza otra hoja.
- Una copia del cuestionario completado, con copia de los Estatutos Particulares más recientes (que incluya la fecha de la más reciente revisión), deben ser enviados al Consejero Regional por lo menos tres semanas antes de la fecha de la visita. El Consejero Regional se encargará de proveerle copia al Asistente Nacional o al Fraile Representante del Consejo Nacional.

- Deben conservar una copia del cuestionario completado en los archivos de la comunidad.

FECHA DE

HOY: _____

FECHA DE LA VISITA

OFICIAL: _____

NOMBRE DE LA

COMUNIDAD: _____

LUGAR DE LA

COMUNIDAD: _____

DIA Y HORA REGULAR DE LA REUNION DEL

CONSEJO: _____

MIEMBROS DEL CONSEJO:

Favor de anotar los nombres, direcciones, teléfonos y email de cada miembro del Consejo. (Quizás quiera incluirlo en una hoja aparte). Favor de incluir: Prior/a, Asistente Prior/a, Director/a de Formación, Secretario/a, Tesorero/a, Asistente Espiritual y otros consejeros.

MEMBRESIA DE LA COMUNIDAD

(Favor de tomar nota: Será una gran ayuda incluir una copia del registro completo de nombres, direcciones, email, teléfonos y fecha de la Promesa. Necesitamos esta información para poner al día nuestro Registro Nacional.)

Favor de anotar lo siguiente:

- a. Miembros Activos _____
- b. Miembros Inactivos _____
- c. Miembros Dispensados _____
- d. Candidatos _____
- e. Visitantes _____
- f. Miembros Aislado \rightarrow _____

(Activo: asiste regularmente; Inactivo: no puede asistir; Aislado: vive lejos de presencia OSM)

1. FORMACION Y ESPIRITUALIDAD

- a. Describa la vida de oración de la comunidad. ¿Utilizan el Oracional OSSM en las reuniones? ¿Qué forma de oración o liturgia se utiliza?
- b. Favor de describir el compromiso personal espiritual de los miembros y algunos días de retiro o de reflexión o algunas liturgias especiales. ¿Como comunidad, celebran algunas fiestas de los Siervos de María? ¿Cuáles? ¿Cómo?
- c. Describa el Programa de Formación Inicial. ¿Que formato, estructura o contenido se utiliza en el Programa de Formación Inicial? ¿Qué formato se usa para las instrucciones? ¿Cuándo se reúnen para las instrucciones de Formación Inicial?
- d. Describa el programa de Formación Permanente en la reunión mensual de la comunidad- estructura, recursos, contenido, etc. ¿Quién ofrece la Formación Permanente a la comunidad? ¿En qué se puede mejorar el programa de Formación Permanente?

2. ESTILO DE VIDA

- a. Describa brevemente su comunidad, anotando las fortalezas y los dones.
- b. ¿Tiene su comunidad algún apostolado que promueve?
- c. Describa el involucramiento de la comunidad en la vida y las actividades de la parroquia local a la que pertenecen los miembros.
- d. ¿Su comunidad se involucra en asuntos de la Familia, la Paz y Justicia, la Ecología, el Trabajo, la Juventud? ¿Informa a la Oficina Nacional sobre su involucramiento a través de las minutas o los reportes?
- e. ¿Los miembros de la comunidad contribuyen a las finanzas de la comunidad? ¿Realiza su comunidad alguna actividad de recaudar fondos? ¿Tienen fondos para ayudar a los miembros que quieran participar en los retiros, los encuentros o las reuniones regionales o nacionales, etc.?

3. COMUNICACION

- a. ¿Los miembros de la comunidad están en contacto los unos con los otros fuera de las reuniones mensuales?
- b. ¿Publica la comunidad un boletín mensual? ¿Mandan copia a la Oficina Nacional? ¿A las demás comunidades?
- c. Favor de describir la naturaleza del contacto de su comunidad con la Región. ¿En qué puede la Región ayudar más a su comunidad? ¿Cómo se mantiene la comunidad en contacto con las demás comunidades en la Región?
- d. ¿Mandan a tiempo los reportes y demás asuntos que le piden de la Región? ¿Mandan copia de las minutas de las reuniones mensuales a la Oficina Nacional? ¿Ha enviado alguna vez sus comunidad fotos y artículos para publicarse en el boletín de la Orden Seglar?
- e. ¿Les hacen visita a casa o al hospital a los miembros enfermos (los inactivos, en un asilo o centro de rehabilitación)?
- f. ¿Se hace algún intento de contactar a los miembros inactivos?

4. ¿Qué dirían ustedes que es la calidad de la asistencia espiritual que reciben?
5. ¿Han hecho algún esfuerzo por reclutar nuevos miembros y promover la vocación de la Orden Seglar de los Siervos de María? ¿Qué éxitos han tenido?
6. ¿De cuáles esfuerzos o acontecimientos se siente más orgullosos como comunidad?
7. ¿Ha establecido su comunidad algunas metas para el año entrante?
8. ¿Cuáles son su preocupaciones o problemas mayores?
9. ¿Qué preguntas o asuntos piensan ustedes que los visitantes oficiales deben tratar?
10. ¿Algún otro comentario?

Requesting Canonical Approval of the Prior General for a Secular Order Community

Please refer to Chapter 12 of **The Rule of Life**, especially Articles 64.b,c, 65, 66.

As stated on page 7 of the Introduction to the Formation Program:

- ***“At a time determined by the National Assistant, the Prior or Prioress shall write, in the group’s name, a letter to the Prior General requesting canonical recognition of the group as a community of the Servite Secular Order. The letter should include a statement of the group’s intention for joining the Servite Secular Order. With the letter, a list of the names of the members of the group should be included.”***

Sample letter:

I write to you as Prior (Prioress) of *(name of the Community)* in *(City and State)*, USA. Our community is composed of *(number of members)*. We are members of *(name of the Parish around which the community is established or Servite Apostolate)* and are under the pastoral care of *(name of the Assistant of the community)*.

We began our formation on *(date)*. For the past *(how many)* months we have followed the Formation Program that has been established by the National Council of the Servite Secular Order. We hope to celebrate the Ceremony of the Promise on *(date of promise)*. Therefore, on behalf of my sisters and brothers in our Secular Order community, I make the petition to you, as Prior General, to officially recognize and canonically establish *(name of community)* of the Secular Order of Servants of Mary, *(City, State)*, USA.

In our formation sessions, we have studied **The Rule of Life of the Secular Order of Servants of Mary**. We have learned the history of the Order and of our Seven Holy Founders, as well as about other Saints and Blesseds of the Order. Through our study and formation, we have come to a fuller understanding of our relationship to Mary, Mother and Servant of the Lord, and our need to be of service to others. We have come to a greater appreciation of prayer as an essential element of our life. We also understand well the importance of reading Scripture and of offering prayers for the sick.

Our community is made up of individuals who are involved in a variety of Lay Ministries, such as *(name some of the ministries performed by the members)*. As a community, we have made a commitment to be of service to those who are ill, especially those who are terminally ill. Through the intercession of St. Peregrine,

we seek to accompany and support our sisters and brothers in their illness and pain. We draw inspiration from Mary, the Mother of God, at the Cross of Jesus, in reaching out in service to others.

During the past (*how many*) months, we have been in close contact with our sisters and brothers of (*name the Secular Order Community*). We have come together in prayer and fraternity to strengthen the bonds of friendship and mutual support as Secular Servites.

Therefore, we request that you accept us a community of the Servite Secular Order. We commit ourselves, as a community, to respect and live according to The Rule of Life of the Secular Order and to be of service to others. We look forward to living according to the spirituality and charism of the Servants of Mary, as we have come to know it through study and our lived experiences.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Prior (Prioress)

SAMPLE LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM THE LOCAL ASSISTANT

I wish to support the petition of the Prior and Council of our local Secular Order Community of *(name of community)*, in their request to be canonically established as an official community of the Order of Servants of Mary. I have personally been involved with them in their time of formation during the past *(whatever number)* months and I am confident that they are ready and willing to accept all the responsibilities that will come as a result of receiving canonical approval. The members of the community have demonstrated seriousness in their attitude and formation. They have labored diligently to establish a thriving and caring community, with a true sense of fraternity. The Marian charism has been an attracting feature for most of the members.

The letters are addressed to: Dear Fr. General,

The letters are to be mailed to:

PRIOR GENERAL
SERVITE GENERAL CURIA
PIAZZA SAN MARCELLO AL CORSO, 5
00187 ROME ITALY

PARA SOLICITAR APROBACION CANONICA PARA LA FRATERNIDAD DE LA ORDEN SEGLAR

Favor de revisar el Capítulo 12 de La Regla de Vida, especialmente los Artículos 64b,c; 65,66.

Según las indicaciones en la Introducción al Programa de Formación:

- **“En el momento indicado por el Asistente Nacional, el Prior/a debe escribir, en nombre de todos los miembros, una carta al Prior General solicitando el reconocimiento canónico para la fraternidad como comunidad de la Orden Seglar de los Siervos de María. La carta debe incluir una declaración de la intención de los miembros a formar parte de la Orden Seglar Servita. Con la carta, debe incluir una lista de los miembros de la fraternidad”.**

EJEMPLAR DE LA CARTA:

Le escribo como Prior/a de (nombre de la fraternidad) en (Ciudad y Estado), Estados Unidos. Nuestra fraternidad se compone de (número de miembros). Somos miembros de (nombre de la Parroquia a la que pertenecen y de la Diócesis).

Comenzamos nuestra formación (fecha). Durante los últimos (cuantos) meses, hemos seguido el Programa de Formación que ha sido establecido por el Consejo Nacional de la Orden Seglar. Esperamos celebrar (o Hemos celebrado) la Ceremonia de la Promesa (fecha). Por eso, a nombre de mis hermanos y hermanas de nuestra fraternidad seglar, le pido a usted, como Prior General, que reconozca oficialmente y establezca canónicamente nuestra fraternidad (nombre de la fraternidad) de la Orden Seglar de los Siervos de María, (ciudad y estad), Estados Unidos.

En nuestras sesiones de formación, hemos estudiado La Regla de Vida de la Orden Seglar de los Siervos de María; la historia de la Orden y de nuestros Siete Santos Fundadores, como también de los demás Santos y Beatos de la Orden. A través del estudio y la formación, hemos adquirido un mejor entendimiento de nuestra

relación con María, Madre y Sierva del Señor, y nuestro compromiso de servir a los demás. Hemos, además, adquirido una mayor apreciación a la oración como un elemento muy esencial en nuestras vidas. Entendemos también muy bien la importancia de leer la Sagrada Escritura y de orar por los enfermos.

Nuestra fraternidad se compone de individuos quienes ejercen una variedad de Ministerios Seglares, como (dar los nombres de los ministerios seculares que los miembros de la comunidad ejercen en su parroquia). Como comunidad, hemos hecho el compromiso común de servir a los enfermos, especialmente los enfermos gravemente. Por la intercession de San Peregrino, queremos acompañarlos y apoyarlos en su enfermedad y sufrimiento. María al pie de la Cruz es para nosotros una inspiración de servicio a los demás.

Le pedimos que nos acepten como fraternidad de la la Orden Seglar Servita. Nos comprometemos, como fraternidad, a respetar y a vivir según **La Regla de Vida** y de estar al servicio de los demás. Esperamos vivir según el charisma y la espiritualidad de los Siervos de María, según lo hemos aprendido y vivido hasta el presente.

Atentamente en Cristo,

Prior/a

EJEMPLAR DE LA CARTA DE APOYO DEL ASISTENTE LOCAL

Quiero dar mi apoyo a la petición del Prior/a y el Consejo de la fraternidad local de la Orden Seglar (nombre de la fraternidad), en su solicitud de ser erigida canónicamente como fraternidad de la Orden de los Siervos de María. Personalmente he compartido con los candidatos durante su período de formación estos últimos (cuantos) meses y estoy confiado que están dispuestos y preparados para aceptar las responsabilidades que resultarán al ser aprobados canónicamente. Los miembros de la fraternidad han demostrado seriedad en su actitud y formación. Han laborado arduamente para

establecer una fraternidad llena de vida y esperanza, con un buen sentido de union fraternal. La inspiración mariana has sido uno de los aspectos más atractivos.

Enviar las dos cartas a:

PRIOR GENERAL
CURIA GENERAL OSM
PIAZZA SAN MARCELLO AL CORZO, 5
00187 ROME ITALY



INQUIRY AND INTITIAL FORMATION

INVESTIGACION Y FORMACION INICIAL

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

**Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,
who comforts us in all our troubles,
so that we can comfort those in any trouble
with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.**

2 Corintios 1:3-4

**Bendito sea Dios, Padre de Cristo Jesus Nuestro Senor,
El Padre siempre misericordioso,
El Dios del que viene todo Consuelo,
El que nos conforta en todas las pruebas
Por las que ahora pasamos,
De mandera que nosotros tambien podamos confortar
A los que estan en cualquier prueba,
Comunicandoles el mismom Consuelo que nos comunica Dios a nosotros.**

Section Contents/ Contenido de Sección

- 1. Inquiry Formation Sessions**
- 2. Formation Program/Programa de Formacion**
- 3. Using the OSSM Prayerbook**

**SERVITE SECULAR ORDER
SUGGESTIONS FOR INQUIRY SESSIONS**

**ORDER OF FRIAR SERVANTS OF MARY
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA PROVINCE**

OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL ASSISTANT
SERVITE SECULAR ORDER

SERVITE PROVINCIAL CENTER
3121 W JACKSON BLVD
CHICAGO IL 60612-2729
Telephone: (773) 638-5800,Ext..48
Fax: (773) 533-8307

THE ORIGINS, SPIRITUALITY AND CHARISM OF THE SERVITE ORDER

Essential Items:

- The Servite Order was founded in the thirteenth century by the Seven Holy Founders in Florence, Italy.**
- The Servite Charism is expressed in three ways: fraternity, service, and Mary**
- The Servite Charism is our way of concretely witnessing the Gospel of Jesus in what we do and say**
- Servite spirituality is expressed in four ways:**
 - a) ever deepening relationship with God**
 - b) service to God's people, especially the poor and the sick**
 - c) prayer**
 - d) community & friendship**

THE ORIGINS OF THE SERVITE FRIARS: A LIVING HISTORY OF COMMUNITY

The Order of Friar Servants of Mary traces its earliest expression to the days of political, economic and religious ferment, which were the dominant atmospheres of central Italy at the beginning of the 13th century. Before the Servites ever existed as an official religious Order of the Church, seven men came together in the proud and prosperous city of Florence, Italy. It was by no means the first time that they had met. For some years a firm friendship based upon a mutual understanding of Christian ideals, had been growing among them. As a reflection of the penitential spirit of the times, it had been the custom of these seven men to meet regularly as members of a religious society established in honor of Mary, Mother of God. Gradually, the seven has been drawing further and further away from the predominant values and concerns of the many citizens, specifically the thirst for wealth, for status, for prestige. Instead of falling in with the bitter hatred and open violence of the period (the results of political strife), the seven original Servites had been busily shaping their lives on the pattern displayed in the Gospel.

One by one, Bonifilus, Alexis and their companions entered a group of penitents responsible for the running of a hospice dedicated to the care of the sick, the poor, and of pilgrims. The group was called "*Society of Our Lady,*" and its members "*Servants of Mary.*" Interestingly enough, in those early days of their association, the seven continued to live at home with their families, and yet with a special rule of life which outlined their spirituality, dedicated themselves to the Mother of God, and to the service of her Son through service to the poor and those persons on the fringe of society. Penance was a key aspect of the lives of the seven from the outset. Through penance they prayed that Mary, their Lady, would reconcile them to her Son, Jesus. Living with the poor, faced with the raging injustices of the time, and forced to reject the compromised values of the society at large, the seven effected a radical change in their lives. They became poor themselves but not by accident of birth (they were all merchants), but by choice!

The tradition and scientific history sometime differ in their presentation and interpretation of facts: historical documentation preserved in the Servite archives witnesses to a providential combination of persons and circumstances, movements and ideals, which culminated in the founding of the Order. But tradition has it that their Lady, the one to whom they had dedicated their services for the love of Christ and His poor, revealed herself to the seven merchants in the year 1233. As a result of that revelation the seven abandoned all their business interests, left their comfortable homes, put aside the finery which announced a person's

standing in society, and then went to live together in a ramshackle building. But as radical a move as that was, the seven felt that it was a reasonable enough price to pay for what they gained: a life shared as brothers in search of the Lord. The holiness and penitential lifestyle of the seven quickly attracted visitors, and then others who wished to join them in their newly found joy of fraternal living for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus. Finally, the entire group decided to move to more peaceful surroundings, and established a hermitage on the summit of a nearby mountain, "*Mount Senario*," sometimes known as the "*sounding mountain*." Our tradition tells us that the sound of the first Servants' holiness went out from their "*sounding mountain*" to the entire countryside.

Coming to be known finally as the "*Friar Servants of Mary*," the first Seven were joined by others on Mount Senario, and as the group continued to grow, the seeds of a new religious Order took root. The Friar Servants of Mary were originally approved as a religious Order by the bishop of Florence sometime between the years 1240 and 1247. The Servants decided to live by the Rule of St. Augustine, and added to the Rule their own expression of Marian devotion and dedication. We also know that by 1250 there were a number of Servants who were ordained to the priesthood, thus creating an Order with priests as well as brothers. By the year 1256 the Servants had received an official approbation from Pope Alexander IV which allowed for continued expansion of the community to other places where the needy awaited. In the year 1304, the Order of Friar Servants of Mary received definitive approval as a religious Order in the Church by the Holy See.

Since the early days of the Servite Order, friars, and later, Servite Sisters too, have spread throughout the world, living and sharing Christ's Gospel of peace under the special patronage of Mary, the "*Lady*" honored by the original seven Servants of Mary. In the year 1870, Father Austin Morini, OSM, came to the United States together with two other friars to make a permanent American foundation of the Order. Today, Servites serve in nearly all the countries of North and South America. In addition, Servites are to be found in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. From a humble beginning we have been blessed with a long and rich history. We still, like our Seven Founders, go where the needs of God's people demand that we go. And we still seek the perfection of the Gospel way of living under the protection of Mary, Mother and Servant of the Lord. Servite history, with its roots in the turmoil of 13th century Italy, and in the hearts, minds and souls of Seven Holy Founders, is still being lived and written in the lives of each Servite.

THE SERVITE CHARISM: OUR RESPONSE TO GOD

Every religious Order of the Church has a charism or spirit that is particular to that community. A charism is an Order's response to the action of God by the community. The charism of the Servants of Mary is lived through three elements: fraternity, Mary, and service.

Servites understand fraternity as an invitation to see the values of community living as being together as brothers. From within the confines of our fraternity we experience the presence of Jesus through the lives of those brothers whose lives we share. The individual experience of Jesus by each friar helps the entire community realize the presence of Jesus operative in the life of the community. From the communal experience of the presence of Jesus, the friars go forth into society and the world to share this same presence of Jesus with those to whom they minister. Servites attempt to build community where they live and work by witnessing attitudes of peace, justice and compassion within their ministry.

The person of the Mother of God has a very special place in the lives of Servites. Mary challenges us to develop attitudes of welcome to the Lord who calls us to respond to His invitation to holiness as Mary did "*I am the servant of the Lord.*" The Servite devotion to Mary further challenges us to stand near the crosses of those persons who are neglected or rejected by our society: the poor, the abandoned, and the sick. We stand at these crosses as Mary did, with a sense of hope believing in God's promise that He will take care of those who find life burdensome and are alone.

Service to others, especially to the poor and the sick whom the Lord calls most blessed in the Kingdom, is our response to the Lord's invitation as co-creators and citizens of the Kingdom of God. Servites serve so as to bring about the presence of God's kingdom here on earth. The Servite Charism is our particular way of living out the Gospel command to love on a daily basis.

SERVITE SPIRITUALITY: OUR WAY OF LIVING THE GOSPEL

The thirteenth century has often been referred to as the “*greatest of centuries*” because of its many lasting achievements. Although its heritage of art, architecture and theology is magnificent, it was also a time of great political, economic and social upheaval. One year in that century, 1233, also bears the nickname “*the year of the Great Alleluia.*” Almost all of Italy was involved in a great attempt at renewal that year. Many preachers tried to make people aware of how vital it was to bring back true Christian values and perspectives to everyday life and behavior. This is the same year that saw the beginnings of the Servite Order.

The Seven Holy Founders did not have the intention of beginning a new religious order within the Church. What they attempted to do was to find a way to deepen their commitment to Christ and the Gospel by their entire lifestyle, and they wanted to do so together. All the Seven wanted to do was to intensify their ability to be of service to God’s people. They did so by dedicating themselves to Mary and learning from her how to say “yes” to God as she did at the Annunciation. From the life of the Seven Holy Founders, Servites get their spirituality or way of following the Lord. The hallmarks of Servite spirituality are:

- ever deepening relationship with God
- service to God’s people, especially the poor and the sick
- prayer: of listening to God’s word spoken in the depths of our hearts, in Sacred Scripture, and in the lives of those we meet
- community and friendship: that we do not walk alone, but with and for others.

The example of the Seven Holy Founders shows us simply the basic messages of the Gospel: that all of life is holy, and all of life is to be treated with gratefulness, love, and respect.

PRAYER, STUDY, MEDITATION AND COMMUNITY: THE WORK OF SERVITES

There are many ministries that a Servite engages in. But, there are four that fuel the call of the life and ministry of the Servite. Prayer keeps us connected to God and focused on the reason for ministry, making the presence of God's kingdom known as the world. Prayer is both private and communal for us. Servite communities gather throughout the day for prayer. In our communal prayer we experience the Lord through the lives of our brothers. The *Liturgy of the Hours*, the *Eucharist*, and other prayer forms are the ways that we draw close to the Lord. Study of Scripture, theology and of current events is important so that Servites can form appropriate Christian responses to the events that shape the world and society. Study keeps before us the realization that sharing God's love is the primary action of our lives. Meditation is the ancient Christian practice of internal prayer. It is listening to the soft and loving voice of God in one's heart. Our meditation on the Scriptures reminds us of God's never ending presence in our lives. Community is living together as brothers, but also a call to extend our community to those we meet, offering to all the hospitality and friendship of God.

CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY AND THE SERVITE VISION

Our community is based upon a shared faith in the love of God. Nourished by God's Word and sacraments, as well as our personal religious experiences, our relationship with Christ is deepened. Following the teaching and example of the Lord, we recognize prayer to be a primary value in our life. All members of our community, therefore, strive to deepen and expand their experience of prayer.

As Servite friars, we are committed to an international brotherhood founded for the service of God and all his sons and daughters. Faithful to our traditions and history, we are inspired by Mary, Mother and Servant of the Lord. We Servites are witnesses to the values represented by the Blessed Virgin. Her compassion of the cross of her son challenges us to understand and alleviate the suffering borne by the Jesus' brothers and sisters today.

OUR MISSION IS SERVICE

Servite means Servant

Urged on by the grace of baptism, the stirring of the Holy Spirit and our religious consecration, we, Servants of Mary, set out to become living witnesses to Christian love. Desiring to express the charism of the Order, we give ourselves in service to others and so prolong the living presence of the Mother of Jesus in the history of salvation.

Just as God's Son lived among us to unite divided sisters and brothers, so our Order, a community of brothers in Christ, is sent to extend its fraternity to all people divided by reason of age, nationality, race, religion, wealth, and education. For this reason, Servites enter society, work among people, and participate in their hopes and sorrows. We want to assist people in discovering the value and full significance of life and human achievement.

TO RECEIVE A GIFT -- TO SHARE A GIFT

Some persons choose to spend their lives sharing a human project more enduring than themselves. The project shapes their attitudes and feelings and infuses those persons with a new purpose. With the project comes the taste of a new reality and the discovery that there are others who share the same vision.

For over 770 years, persons have experienced the joy of something greater by giving the gift of self to the service of God and neighbor as Servants of Mary.

The Order of Friar Servants of Mary, the Servite Friars, had its origin as an expression of apostolic gospel living, and is still a community gathered together in the name of Jesus.

The first Servite community came into being when seven merchants of Florence, Italy, banded together in the year 1233 to live together the fraternal life of the Gospel. These men are known as the Seven Holy Founders, and their feast day is celebrated in the Church on February 17.

As brothers united in love and supported by our regard for one another, we Servites put in common our goods, hopes, and works, and make our decisions collegially. By making ourselves available to go wherever our service is needed, we express the pilgrim nature of our life.

In order to serve the Lord and our sisters and brothers, we Servites, from our origin, have dedicated ourselves to Mary, the Mother and Servant of the Lord. We have turned to Mary on our pilgrimage to Christ and in our task of proclaiming Him to the world, and she teaches us to understand and alleviate human suffering. To an insecure world we propose as a model of the confidence befitting God's children, the humble woman of Nazareth who placed all her trust in the Lord.

"In our commitment of service, the figure of Mary at the foot of the cross shall be our model. Since the Son of Man is still being crucified in his brothers and sisters, we, Servants of His Mother, wish to be with her at the foot of those countless crosses in order to bring comfort and redemptive cooperation.

Although creation still groans in sorrow and anguish, we recognize that we are bearers of those forces which free creation from the slavery of corruption and bring it into the freedom of the children of God. This knowledge gives us the joy promised by Christ which no one can take from us."

-Servite Constitutions, article 319

MARY, THE MOTHER AND SERVANT OF THE LORD

Read: Mary, Woman Among Us by Leonard Foley, OFM in Catholic Update #CU0587.

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- Essential Items:**
- Mary is the Perfect Disciple whose life teaches Servites how to experience God everyday**
 - Mary teaches Servites how to respond to the call of God in their lives.**
 - Servite devotion to Mary brings us into the understanding of the power of God in our lives.**

THE MARIAN CHARACTER OF THE SERVITE ORDER

SERVANTS LIKE MARY

“In order to serve the Lord and their brothers and sisters, the Servants have dedicated themselves from their origins to the Mother of God, the Blessed One of the Most High.”

-Servite Constitutions, art. 6

Today, our witness to the Gospel, as that of our First Fathers, expresses itself in fraternal communion and service of God and all people, drawing abiding inspiration from Mary, Mother and Servant of the Lord. Mary has been honored as our Lady with particular acts of reverence: greeting her with the angelic salutation at the beginning of community gatherings, dedicating our churches to her, celebrating her feasts with solemnity and honoring her memory on Saturday and at the close of each day.

Thus, our prayer and Mary’s example motivates our apostolate. Being sensitive to the needs of the Church, we seek to know more about Mary and her mission in the mystery of salvation. In Mary, the most excellent fruit of redemption, we find a model for freedom which unites us with the oppressed; unity, which makes us work for the unity of the Church; and hope, which allows us to reach all women and men in the journey of their lives.

This vision is nourished by remaining attentive to the summons of the Word of God in quiet listening, in imitation of the Virgin.

Our spirit then, expresses itself in loving service of others, a service of compassion and support. Our prayer and study, combined with this service, continue to make Mary a living presence in the world.

Our model is Mary at the foot of the cross. Since Jesus continues to be crucified in His brothers and sisters, Servites wish to be at those countless crosses to bring comfort and witness to redemption.

**SERVITE SECULAR ORDER
FORMATION PROGRAM
PERIOD OF INITIAL FORMATION**

**ORDER OF FRIAR SERVANTS OF MARY
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA PROVINCE**

OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL ASSISTANT
SERVITE SECULAR ORDER

SERVITE PROVINCIAL CENTER
3121 W JACKSON BLVD
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INTRODUCTION

The material presented in the following pages is a model that can be used to form the candidates seeking membership in the Secular Order. It continues to be our experience that those persons seeking membership in the Servite Secular Order are looking for a way to live and witness the gospel in their lives. The Servite Secular Order invites lay people to do this using the spirituality and charism of the Servite Order as a guide in this endeavor. The basic goal of this particular formation program is to share with the candidate some of the essential ideas of Servite spirituality. During the Period of Initial Formation, the candidate will learn some of the history and spirituality of the Servite Order as well as the norms of the life of the Secular Servite as found in the *Rule of Life*. The Period of Initial Formation is intended to be a time of spiritual formation for the candidate. This formation program will aid in this process. Like any formation program, there is need to assist the candidate in this time of formation. This assistance is to be provided by the Assistant and the local community.

This formation program is a revision of the formation program that was published by the National Office of the Servite Secular Order in August, 1996. The major difference between this program and that published in 1996 is that this program incorporates *A Commentary of the Rule of Life of the Servite Secular Order* written by Fr. Conrad Borntrager, OSM.

What is offered in these pages is a model for formation. Our intention is to assist those, who have been given the responsibility of the formation of the candidates, with a program and a process for instructing those who are candidates. The program is structured for a twelve-month cycle. It is the responsibility of the local community through its Council, Assistant and Formation Director to adapt this formation program to their particular needs.

ENTRY INTO THE SERVITE COMMUNITY

The stages for entry into the Servite Secular Order are:

- The Inquiry Period
- The Period of Initial Formation
- The Promise

THE INQUIRY PERIOD

The Inquiry Period is the time when the prospective candidate shows interest in joining the Secular Order. During this period, the candidate is invited to attend the Secular Order community's monthly meeting. This is to familiarize the candidate with the local Secular Order community. Prospective members should normally be expected to consistently attend the regular monthly meetings for a period of three months prior to their formal Admission into the Period of Initial Formation. The Assistant and the Formation Director agree, with the candidate, upon a time, separate from the Secular Community's meeting, to discuss some basic information with the candidate. If, after these meetings, the individual expresses a desire to join the Secular Order, he/she is to present a written request for admission to the Period of Initial Formation. This written request is to be presented to the Council of the local Secular Order community. The Prior/ess is to request a motion to vote on the candidate's request following a written or verbal report on the candidate's intention of participating in the life of the Secular Order community. The council then will vote on the candidate's request. At the next community meeting, the new candidate is presented to the community. For communities being formed away from Servite priories, the same process is followed with the request being submitted to the National Assistant for approval. The letter of written request should include the following:

- Date
- Candidate's full name
- Candidate's home address
- Candidates reason for desiring membership in the Secular Order

The outcome of the council's vote is to appear in the minutes and the archives of the Secular Community.

THE PERIOD OF INITIAL FORMATION

The Period of Initial Formation is the official initial formation period of Secular Servites, which candidates complete before being granted full membership in the Secular Order. The period begins with the Rite of

Admission into the N (found in the Rites of Admission and Promise of the Secular Order). During this period the candidate studies the Secular Order's *Rule of Life*, lay spirituality, the early foundation of the Order, and the spirituality of the Order (see art. 53 of the *Rule of Life*). The purpose of the formation period is to assist the candidate in realizing his/her role within the larger Church and Servite Family. Later in this document there is an outline of a formation program, along with other formation materials that can be used during this period. *A Commentary on the Rule of Life of the Servite Secular Order* is the basic text for the period of formation. Any adaptations of the formation program are to be approved by the Secular Community's Council, after consulting with the community's Formation Director.

The Period of Initial Formation should normally last at least one year. The candidate is to be guided through this period by the Assistant (art. 73 of the *Rule of Life*) and/or a Formation Director chosen by the Secular Community's Council. The Formation Director can be a Secular Servite who exhibits a grasp of the *Rule of Life*, lay spirituality and participates regularly in the life of the local Servite Community. It is recommended that the Formation Director report on the progress of the candidate to the Secular Community's Council on a regular basis.

The Period of Initial Formation is to be governed in accord with articles 52-54 of the *Rule of Life*. Although it is the primary ministry of the Assistant and/or the Formation Director to guide the formation program, it is the responsibility of the local Secular Community through the direction of the Council.

The candidate in the Period of Initial Formation is expected to attend the regular monthly meetings of the local Secular Community. In addition, the candidate, under the direction of the Formation Director or the Assistant, is to meet separately, at a designated time to engage in the study pertinent to the formation period.

The Period of Initial Formation's completion is celebrated with the taking of the Promise by the candidate.

THE PROMISE

The Promise is the act by which the candidate freely renews his/her baptismal consecration, undertaking to live it according to the spirituality of the Order of Servants of Mary. The act of making the Promise is to be governed by articles 55-59 of the *Rule of Life*. Furthermore, the Rite of Promise, as found in the *Rule of Life*, is to be used exclusively.

Before the Promise is taken, the candidate is to submit a written request to the Secular Community's Council asking to be admitted to the Promise. It is suggested that the Council provide the candidate with the following instructions:

REQUEST FOR ADMISSION TO THE PROMISE

Please submit your written request to any member of the Council.

Briefly state, in your own words, why you desire to become a life time member of the Servite Secular Order.

Explain your understanding of the obligations you assume in make the Promise and the seriousness of these obligations.

Describe your degree of commitment to the Secular Community and the relative level of priority you are willing to place upon faithfully attending meetings on a regular and continuing basis.

Sign and date your request.

The Formation Director and/or the Assistant will provide a verbal or written report to accompany the candidate's written request for admission to the Promise. Upon reviewing the request and the report, the Council may proceed to vote on admitting the candidate to the Promise. The written request and report should be maintained in the community files together with the minutes of the meeting that document the decisions made.

The Secretary is responsible for keeping the Register of Admissions and Promises up to date. The Register should show the names of the members, when their Rite of Admission and Rite of Promise occurred; and, if deceased, the date of death. Addresses and telephone numbers may be included on the register or maintained on a separate list.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For further information regarding the Council of the local Secular Community see article 72 of the *Rule of Life*.

With regards to the Particular Statutes of the local Secular Community, see articles 75-76 of the *Rule of Life* for further details.

COMMUNITIES IN FORMATION

THE ASSISTANT

The role of the Assistant is to act as a guide, spiritual companion, and teacher for the individual/group in formation. In the case of groups originating away from Servite priories, the Assistant acts in the place of a Friar in guiding the formation program of the group.

The Assistant will assume the following duties:

- Convene the group on a monthly basis for its community meeting
- Facilitate the group's discussion and study
- Offer spiritual and liturgical assistance to the group
- Assess the progress of the group during the Period of Initial Formation

This would entail that the Assistant write to the National Assistant at least once every six months. This report is to contain the following elements:

- Dates of the group's meetings
- Observations, recommendations, opinions of the Assistant regarding the group's progress through the stage of the Period of Initial Formation.
- Significant insights that were gained by the group during its study.
- Any questions the group or the Assistant would like answered by the National Assistant.
- Copy of the minutes taken during the group's meeting.

This report is to be sent to the National Assistant as soon as possible for inspection and inclusion into the group's file in the Secular Order's National Office.

The group desiring admission into the Secular Order is to meet on a regular basis, no less than once a month. The structure of the meeting should be as follows:

- Prayer (Servite devotions; Mass; Liturgy of the Hours; and/or Scripture reflection. We recommend the use of the Prayer Book of the Servite Secular Order)
- Study (see outline under the Period of Initial Formation)
- Discussion of community business, i.e., date and time of next meeting, any reports or information, etc.
- Closing prayer
- Social time (refreshments, etc.)

The monthly meeting shall be at least one hour and a half in duration. After the initial group's making of the Promise, the above meeting outline is to be retained, given some adaptations for the community.

During the Period of Initial Formation, the Assistant is to facilitate the monthly meeting. The Assistant shall instruct the group in the study portion of the meeting and facilitate the discussion that is to take place. In the absence of the Assistant, the Prior/ess of the group or another competent individual is to be appointed by the Assistant to facilitate the group's meeting. Following the Promise of the initial group's members, the Prior/ess shall convene and facilitate the monthly meeting.

The group will elect from among itself persons to fill the offices, which comprise the membership of the local Secular Community's Council. The election will take place approximately eight months after the Assistant has received permission from the National Assistant to begin the Period of Initial Formation.

The election shall commence after a period of prayer by the entire group. Then, the Assistant will read the duties of each office (see art. 70-72 of the *Rule of Life*). The Assistant will oversee the elections. The elections begin with the Assistant asking for written nominations to the offices. After the written nominations have been compiled, the group with the Assistant is to vote for those individuals they feel are best qualified for the offices for which they are to be chosen. The vote shall be by written ballot. As stipulated in art. 75-76 of the *Rule of Life*, the following applies to the elections of community officials:

- the election is to be done by written ballot.
- an absolute majority of those casting votes is needed for election.
- the outcome of the elections shall be forwarded by written letter to the National Assistant by the Assistant of the local community.

The membership of the Secular Community's Council shall be comprised of the following officials:

- the Prior/ess, art. 70-71.
- three Councilors, art. 72
- Assistant, art. 73

The office of Secretary (art. 74) shall be filled by appointment by the Council.

After taking the initial group has taken the Promise, the new Secular Community will compose Particular Statutes governing the life of its community in accord with art. 75-76 of the *Rule of Life*.

In light of art. 21 of the *Rule of Life*, each member shares in contributing to the expenses of the community through prayer and monetary offerings according to the individual's ability to do so. An individual member's inability to contribute financially to the community's treasury shall not impede one's membership in the Servite Secular Order. With regards to the monetary contribution to the community, the community shall decide the means and frequency in which these contributions shall be taken. The community's treasury shall be noted in books separate from others and a treasurer may be appointed by the Council to oversee the monetary funds of the community.

ADMISSION AND PROBATION

Admission to the Servite Secular Order will be governed by articles 48-51 of the Rule of Life. In particular, for groups established away from Servite priories, the following statutes apply until the initial group desiring membership has completed its formation. Upon taking the Promise and election of its Council, the new Secular Community, in consultation with the National Assistant, shall adopt its own statutes regarding formation of new members. In the case of an initial group desiring admission to the Secular Order, each member shall submit a letter to the National Assistant including the following:

- Date
- Addressed to the Prior Provincial
- Names and addresses of the candidates
- Reason for joining the Servite Secular Order
- Signed in the candidate's own hand-writing

Upon receiving these letters and with the approval of the Provincial Council, the group shall be admitted to the Period of Initial Formation. The National Assistant shall then draw up the time line for the group's Period of Initial Formation in consultation with the Prior Provincial.

The Assistant will admit the group into the Period of Initial Formation using the applicable rites, unless the National Assistant is present to officiate. The proper permissions for acting in this capacity will be grant by the Prior Provincial. Those being received into the Period of Initial Formation shall receive a copy of the *Rule of Life of the Secular Order of the Servants of Mary* and a Servite rosary during the celebration of the Rite of Admission. These items can be obtained by contacting the National Office of the Servite Secular Order.

The length of time of the Period of Initial Formation shall be determined by the National Assistant in consultation with the Prior Provincial and the Assistant of the group. The Period of Initial Formation shall be no less than one year in duration, as stated in article 52 of the *Rule of Life*.

At the time determined by the National Assistant, the group shall complete the following documents:

- a letter from the Prior/ess written in the group's name requesting canonical recognition of the group as a community of the Servite Secular Order. The following are the particulars of said letter:

- Date

- Addressed to the Prior Provincial

- A statement of the group's intention for joining the Servite Secular Order

- The request for canonical recognition as a community of the Servite Secular Order.

- Signed in the writer's handwriting

- Including a list of the names of the members of the group

- a letter requesting canonical approval of the group as a community of the Servite Secular Order. The following are the particulars of said letter:

- Date

- Addressed to the Prior General of the Order

- A statement of the group's intention for joining the Servite Secular Order

- The request for canonical approval of the group as a community of the Servite Secular Order.

- Signed in the writer's handwriting

- Including a list of the names of the members of the group

The Period of Initial Formation for the group shall be governed by articles 52-54 of the *Rule of Life* and these statutes. Questions of interpretation of the statutes are to be directed to the National Assistant. After taking the Promise, the Secular Community's Council will interpret these articles according to their need and in accord with the community's particular statutes, and in consultation with the National Assistant.

THE PROMISE

With regard to the Promise, see articles 55-59 of the *Rule of Life*. Individual group members are to submit a letter of request to the Prior Provincial. The information contained in these letters will be the following:

REQUEST FOR ADMISSION TO THE PROMISE

Briefly state, in your own words, why you desire to become a life time member of the Servite Secular Order.

Explain your understanding of the obligations you assume in make the Promise and the seriousness of these obligations.

Describe your degree of commitment to the Secular Community and the relative level of priority you are willing to place upon faithfully attending meetings on a regular and continuing basis.

Sign and date your request.

The letter is to be submitted to the National Assistant along with the local Assistant's letter of recommendation. The Provincial Council grants the permission for taking of the Promise.

The National Assistant shall receive the group's Promise in the name of the Servite Family. In his absence, the local Assistant shall receive the Promise. The rites proper to the Admission and the Promise approved by the order shall be used exclusively.

FORMATION PROGRAM: OUTLINE, RESOURCES, SUGGESTIONS

PREFACE

The following formation program gives some practical ideas for the formation of the candidate. It is easy to follow and can be easily adapted to fit the needs of the candidates. Each candidate will need a copy of the *Rule of Life of the Servite Secular Order* during the formation period. Copies are available from:

**SERVITE PROVINCIAL CENTER
3121 W. JACKSON BLVD.
CHICAGO, IL 60612-2729**

Each candidate should also be provided with a copy of the book *Building A New World: A Commentary on the Rule of Life of the Servite Secular Order* by Fr. Conrad Borntreger, OSM. These books are also available at the address above.

Finally, each candidate should be provided with an outline of the formation program, which includes the articles of the Rule of Life and the pages of the Commentary on the Rule of Life to be studied in each session. In this way, each candidate will know, in advance, the material to be covered in the next session. This affords the candidate the opportunity to prepare for the next session by reading the material indicated. It is the duty of the Formation Director and/or the Assistant to assign the reading to the candidate and to ensure that the reading material is readily available for the use of the candidate.

FORMATION PROGRAM-OUTLINE AND SUGGESTIONS

The Period of Initial Formation

Session One: FORMATION-ADMISSION-PROBATION

Read: **Rule of Life, Articles 44-54; Commentary pages 119-135**
Formation Handout #1 (see handout section of this manual)

Essential Items:

- Formation is a time of learning about the Servite Secular Order through study of the Rule of Life.**
- Formation is a process-not a program. Its goal is to introduce the candidate to the function, life and vocation of the Secular Order of the Servants of Mary.**
- The formation process is at least one year in duration.**
- The formation process helps to deepen the candidate's knowledge of the Servite Order and its lay vocation through participation in the community, through study and prayer.**
- Essential to the formation process is the building of community among the members of the Secular Order. This takes place first by faithful participation and attendance at all meetings of the community. Those missing formation meetings must "make up" the work of those meetings missed.**

Session Two: THE ORDER OF THE SERVANTS OF MARY

Read: Rule of Life, Articles 1-4; Commentary pages 14-26
Formation Handout #2

Essential Items:

- The Servites arose as an expression of evangelical apostolic life.**
- Servites are committed to witness the Gospel in fraternal communion and to be of service of God and all people.**
- The inspiration for Servite life is Mary, Mother and Servant of the Lord.**
- Mary's fiat at the Annunciation teaches Servites:**
 - a) to receive the Word of God.**
 - b) to be attentive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.**

Session Three: THE SECULAR ORDER OF THE SERVANTS OF MARY

Read: Rule of Life, Articles 5-9; Commentary pages 32-41
Formation Handout #3

Essential Items:

- Secular Servites are lay men and women, as well as members of the diocesan clergy.**
- Secular Servites live out their baptismal consecration by using the spirituality of the Servite Order as a guide to bringing the Gospel of Jesus to every corner of their lives.**
- Secular Servites are members of the worldwide Servite Family.**
- The mission and vocation of Secular Servites is rooted in their baptismal consecration to fulfill in their lives and work the evangelical commandment of love.**
- Secular Servite communities make time within their monthly gatherings for study, prayer and social time. These three functions form the basis of the Secular community as well as support the vocation of the Secular Servite.**

Session Four: THE SECULAR ORDER OF THE SERVANTS OF MARY (Part 2)

Read: Rule of Life, Articles 10-14; Commentary pages 41-55
Formation Handout #4

Essential Items:

- Part of the vocation of the Secular Servite is to participate in the life of the local Secular Servite Community. This means to support each other in their family and social obligations.**
- Secular Servites use the religious experience of the Seven Holy Founders as the guide to their encounter with God.**
 - a) fraternal communion with other Secular Servites**
 - b) to render service to others**
 - b) drawing inspiration from Mary, Mother and Servant of the Lord**
- Through individual and communal listening, study and praying of the Sacred Scriptures, Secular Servites deepen their understanding of their vocation within the church and the world.**
- The Mother of God is our inspiration of responding to God's call in our lives.**

Formation Handout #4
Reflection/Discussion Questions

1) What gifts and talents am I willing to offer to my Secular Servite Community?

2) What are the ways in which I would like to serve my Secular Servite Community?

Session Five: ORGANIZATION OF THE SECULAR COMMUNITY

Read: Rule of Life, Chapters 11, 12, 13, Articles 60-76,
 Commentary pages 147-165
 Formation Handout #5

Essential Items:

- The Secular Order is made up of local communities, forming an international community.**
- The Secular Order communities may group together according to city, region or country.**
- Each Secular Order community governs its internal life under the leadership of a Prior/Prioress and Council.**
- Each Secular Order community is connected to the Order through a duly designated assistant.**
- Each community needs official ecclesial recognition or canonical approval by a decree of the Prior General. In certain circumstances, authorization from the Ordinary of the place is also required.**
- The roles and duties of the officials of the Secular:**
 - The Prior General**
 - The Secretary General**
 - The Prioress/Prior of the local community**
 - The Council**
 - The Assistant**
 - The Secretary**
- The Particular Statutes of the local community.**
 - The method of election and length of term of office of the community officials.**
 - The number of Councilors, if more than three are required.**
 - The number, responsibilities, the method of election and length of office of other community officials.**

Session Six: THE LIFE OF THE SECULAR COMMUNITY

Read: Rule of Life, articles 15-21; Commentary pages 58-67
Formation Handout #6

Essential Items:

- The life of the Secular Servite Community is based on the example of the first Christian communities who were “of one mind and one heart.” (See Acts 4:32)**
- Servite community is based on fraternal communion where Secular Servites know each other and support each other on their faith journey.**
- Secular Servites participate in the life of the Secular Community by sharing their personal experience and knowledge with each other.**
- The local Secular Servite community meets to:**
 - a) proclaim the Word of God in reflection and study**
 - b) pray**
 - c) study the documents of the Order and of the Church**
 - d) deepen their knowledge of each other**
- Secular Servites assist their community financially by making contributions to the community treasury.**

Session Seven: PRAYER

Read: Rule of Life, articles 22-24; Commentary pages 70-75
 Formation Handout #7

Essential Items:

- **Prayer is a commitment to growth in faith and hope and to bringing the commandment of love to perfection.**

- **Personal prayer is a daily encounter with the Lord. Secular Servites make time for prayer each day because prayerful encounter with God enhances and strengthens their vocation.**

- **Prayer is a meeting with God in faith. The Mother of God is the Secular Servites' example of prayer—silent, personal and hidden.**

Session Eight: PRAYER (Part 1)

Read: Rule of Life, articles 25-31; Commentary pages 76-89
Building A New World, pages 73-87
Formation Handout #8

Essential Items:

- Common prayer is essential for Secular Servites. Each gathering of the Secular Servite Community includes time for communal prayer that invites the Lord into the midst of the community.**
- Communal Prayer for the Secular Community includes a sharing of the Word of God in some form as well as prayer of intercession for the needs of the Servite Order, the church and the world.**
- According to the tradition of the Servite Order, liturgical prayer (Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Hours, the seven Sacraments) holds place of priority as the communal prayer of the Secular Order.**
- Secular Servites try to make participation in the Eucharist a frequent experience in addition to the Sunday Eucharist.**
- In accordance with the tradition of the Servite Order, Secular Servites, individually and communally, show special honor to the Mother of God by means of particular acts of devotion, especially the Hail Mary, the Vigil of Our Lady and the Rosary of The Seven Sorrows. Likewise, the Secular Community celebrates the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows as well as the feasts of Servite Saints and Blesseds.**
- The Secular Community remembers the deceased members of the community and the Servite Order frequently in its prayers.**
- To assist in building a strong community, the Secular Servite Community regularly schedules days or periods of recollection or retreat.**

Session Nine: PENANCE, CONVERSION AND THE WITNESS OF POVERTY

Read: Rule of Life, articles 32-36; Commentary pages 92-102
Formation Handout #9

Essential items:

- Penance is a means of conversion**
 - For Servites, friars and seculars, penance is understood as acceptance and service of one another.**
 - The practice of penance is a daily experience for Servites.**
 - Secular Servites make frequent use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a means of conversion to the Lord.**
 - Conscientious work, simplicity, austerity of lifestyle, sensitivity to the needs of others, and service to those in need is the manner in which the Secular Servites give testimony to their love and dependence on Christ.**

Session Ten: THE APOSTOLATE

Read: Rule of Life, articles 37-43; Commentary pages 105-118
 Formation Handout #10

Essential Items:

- Service radiates the Servite's love of Christ to others.**
- Duty to family is the primary avenue of service for Secular Servites.**
- Service to others as a community is directed in a special way to the poor, the sick, and the needy offering to them the hope of Christ's love.**
- The Secular Servite Community supports and participates in the Servite Order's work for vocations and the missions.**

Session Eleven: USING THE PRAYER BOOK

Read: **Rule of Life**, article 29, Commentary pages 82-86
Formation Handout #11

Essential Items:

- Enables the Secular Servite to fulfill the provisions in Rule of Life #29
- A brief guide to the content of the Prayer Book
- The Angelus
- The Vigilia de Dominia (Vigil of Our Lady)
- The Rosary of the Seven Sorrows (Servite Rosary)
- Servite Litanies of Our Lady and the Seven Holy Founders
- The Hymn: “Stabat Mater” (At the cross her staging keeping)
- The Via Matris (The “Way of the Mother”, The Sorrowful Mother Novena)
- Devotions in honor of Mary throughout the year.
- Devotions in honor of Servite Saints and Blesseds
- Servite Prayers for Particular Occasions

Session Twelve: THE PROMISE

Read: Rule of Life, articles 55-59; Commentary pages 137-142
 Formation Handout #12

Essential Items:

- The act of taking the Promise fully incorporates a person into the Servite Secular Order and the Servite Family.**

- The request to make the Promise must be made in writing.**

Forms: For the Formation Period

The pages that follow contain items that might be of help during the formation period and after. The first is a sample copy of the Register mentioned on page 4. It contains the necessary information of each member of the community. The page can be photocopied, completed and inserted into a three-ring binder.

The second item is an application form that requests basic information about the individual. Along with it, the third item asks for a simple autobiography about the candidate. This can help the Assistant and/or the Formation director in learning more about the candidate.

The fourth item is a Promise sheet that can be signed by the candidate during the Rite of Promise. It can be placed in the archives of the Secular community.

Register # _____

Name _____

Address:

Telephone No.: _____ Date of Birth: _____

E-Mail Address _____

Member of _____ Parish
City _____ State: _____

Name of Servite Secular Community:

_____ City _____ State: _____

Date of Admission to the Period of Initial
Formation: _____

Official Witness: _____

Date of Promise: _____

Official Witness: _____

Release from Promise: _____

Official Witness: _____

Offices Held: _____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

Moved to Another City: _____

New Address: _____

New Telephone No. _____

Transferred to Another Secular Community: Date: _____

Location: _____

Date of Death: _____

Secular Order of the Servants of Mary

Application Form

Please complete this form and return it as soon as possible.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone No.: _____

Email: _____

Date of Birth: _____ **Age:** _____

Are you a baptized Catholic? Yes _____ **No** _____

Were you confirmed in the Catholic Church? Yes _____ **No** _____

Do you regularly practice your faith? Yes _____ **No** _____

What is your marital status? Single _____ **Married** _____ **Other** _____
(Please explain)

Why do you wish to join the Servite Secular Order?

What Parish do you live in? _____

Location:

Are you presently involved in any ministries within the Catholic Church?

Yes _____ **No** _____

What are they? _____

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Please tell us something about yourself. A short history of your life, your interests, etc., that we may get to know you better.

**THE PROMISE OF THE
SECULAR SERVANTS OF MARY**

**Trusting in the Lord's grace,
I promise to God
before you, father,
and you, my sisters and brothers,
to live the commitment
of my baptismal consecration
more intensely.**

**I will be faithful
to my family and social obligations,
and observe the Rule and Statutes
of the Secular Order of the Servants of Mary,
in order to share your vocation
of service and loving union,
drawing inspiration always from Mary,
Mother and Servant of the Lord.**

**May the intercession of Our Lady,
and your love
support me in this commitment.**

Candidate: _____

Assistant: _____

Prior/Prioress: _____

Date: _____

INTRODUCCION

Desde la publicación del primer programa de formación para el Periodo de Prueba de la Orden Seglar, dicho programa ha gozado de enorme éxito. El éxito del programa de formación es que ofrece a las comunidades seglares y a éstas asistiéndolas una manera práctica de estructurar y organizar todo el Periodo de Prueba. La creación del programa de formación surgió fuera de la necesidad práctica para estructurar el Período de Prueba para las comunidades de la Orden Seglar establecidas lejos de las asistencias de los frailes. El material presentado en las siguientes páginas es un modelo que puede ser usado para formar a los candidatos buscando miembros en la Orden Seglar. Sigue siendo mi experiencia que esas personas buscando membresía en la Orden Seglar están buscando un modo de vivir y testimoniar el evangelio en sus vidas. La Orden Seglar de los Siervos invita a la gente laica a hacer esto usando la espiritualidad y carisma de la Orden de los Siervos de María como una guía en este esfuerzo. La meta básica de este particular programa de formación es compartir con el candidato algo de las ideás esenciales de la espiritualidad servita dadas en la Regla de Vida de la Orden Seglar. Con la reciente publicación del libro Construyendo un Mundo Nuevo: Comentario sobre la Regla de Vida de la Orden Seglar de los Siervos de María, el Seglar Servita tiene ahora los significados para entender y prácticamente aplicar los principios de la Regla de Vida en su propia vida. El programa de formación presentado en las siguientes páginas usa ese libro como base. Dentro de los límites del Período de Prueba el candidato aprenderá algo de historia y espiritualidad de la Orden y las normas de vida del Seglar Servita descritas en la regla de vida de la Orden Seglar. El Período de Prueba es para ser un tiempo de formación espiritual para el candidato.

Creo que este programa de formación ayuda a este proceso. Pero, algún programa de formación depende de los que asistan al candidato, particularmente el asistente religioso. Si el asistente muestra entusiasmo por la Orden Seglar, también el candidato lo mostrará.

Este particular programa de formación es una segunda revisión del programa de publicado por esta oficina en Agosto de 1996. La mayor diferencia entre este programa y el de Agosto de 1996 es el uso de los comentarios sobre la Regla de Vida escrito por P. Conrad Bortrager, OSM.

Copias del comentario se obtendrán para cada candidato en el programa de formación. El mencionado libro se puede obtener en la oficina del Asistente Nacional. Lo que se ofrece aquí en estas páginas es un modelo para formación.

La intención al ofrecer este programa de formación es para auxiliar a los que asisten a los candidatos. El programa está estructurado para un ciclo de 12 meses. Es el deber de la comunidad local seglar mediante su Consejo, el Asistente local y el Maestro de Formación de la comunidad adaptar este programa de formación para las necesidades particulares de cada candidato.

ETAPAS DE FORMACION

Las etapas de formación para los interesados en obtener pertenencia a la Orden Seglar de los Siervos son:

- el periodo de petición
- el periodo de prueba
- la Promesa

PERIODO DE PETICION

El periodo de petición es el tiempo cuando el candidato prospecta muestra interés en unirse a la Orden Seglar. Durante este periodo, el candidato es invitado a asistir a la reunión mensual de la fraternidad. Esto es para familiarizar al candidato con la comunidad seglar local. Si después de observar que los encuentros de la comunidad el individuo expresa un deseo de unirse a la Orden Seglar, él o ella presenta una solicitud escrita para la admisión al Periodo de Prueba al Consejo de la fraternidad a través del Maestro (a) de Formación de la comunidad o al asistente. El maestro (a) y/o el asistente pueden compartirlo con la fraternidad en su siguiente encuentro también por el prior o priora o el asistente. Para las fraternidades establecidas lejos de los frailes, se sigue el mismo proceso con la solicitud siendo sometida al Asistente Nacional para la aprobación final. La Carta de solicitud incluirá lo siguiente:

- Fecha
- Nombre completo del candidato
- Domicilio del candidato
- Motivos por los que desea pertenecer a la Orden Seglar.

Para acompañar esta solicitud:

- reporte escrito y/o verbal sobre la preparación y buena voluntad del candidato para pertenecer a la OSSM. La solicitud escrita y el reporte del formador junto con el resultado de la votación del consejo deben aparecer en las actas del encuentro de la fraternidad y colocadas en los fólderes de su archivo. Con el voto positivo del consejo, el candidato es admitido al Periodo de Prueba haciendo el particular rito como se encuentra en la Regla de Vida de la Orden Seglar.

PERIODO DE PRUEBA

El Período de Prueba es el actual período de formación para el candidato a la Orden Seglar. El período empieza con Rito de Admisión al Período de Prueba (se encuentra en los Ritos de Admisión y Promesa de la Orden Seglar.) Durante este período el candidato estudia la Regla de Vida de la Orden Seglar, espiritualidad del laico, los inicios de la fundación de la Orden, y la espiritualidad de la Orden (ver Art. 3 de la Regla.) El propósito del período de formación es ayudar al candidato a realizar su rol importante dentro de la Iglesia y de la Familia de los Siervos. Más adelante, en este documento, hay un perfil del programa de formación que puede usarse durante este lapso. Pero las adaptaciones se harán según las necesidades del candidato. Algunas adaptaciones del programa de formación deben ser aprobadas por el asistente de la comunidad, después de consultar al Maestro de Formación de la comunidad. Con respecto a las comunidades seglares establecidas lejos de los priores servitas, el Asistente está para presentar las adaptaciones propuestas por escrito al Asistente Nacional después de que las apruebe el consejo seglar de la comunidad en consulta con el Maestro de Formación de la comunidad.

El Período de Prueba no debe durar menos de un año. El candidato es acompañado durante este período, por el asistente (Regla de vida, Art. 73) y/o el formador, escogido por el Consejo de la Comunidad seglar. El formador puede ser un Servita Seglar quien tenga una suficiente comprensión de la *Regla de Vida* de la Orden seglar, espiritualidad laical y regularmente participe en la vida de la comunidad seglar local. Es recomendable que el formador reporte el progreso del (los) candidato(s) al Consejo de la fraternidad sobre bases regulares.

El Período de Prueba es regulado según los artículos 52-54 de la *Regla de Vida*. Aunque es el primer servicio del Asistente y/o del Maestro de Formación paria guiar el programa de formación, el conjunto del programa de formación de la comunidad es la responsabilidad de la fraternidad seglar local mediante la dirección del consejo de la fraternidad seglar.

El candidato en el Período de Prueba se espera a atender la reunión mensual regular de la fraternidad seglar local. Además, el candidato bajo la dirección del Maestro de formación de la comunidad o del Asistente se encuentra separadamente, en un tiempo designado para tratar en estudio pertinente al período de la formación.

El término del Período de Prueba se celebra con la toma de la Promesa del candidato.

LA PROMESA

La Promesa es el acto por el cual el candidato libremente renueva su consagración bautismal, pretendiendo vivir de acuerdo a la espiritualidad de la Orden servita. El acto de la Promesa se regula por los artículos 55-59 de la *Regla de Vida*. Además, el *Rito de la Promesa* tal como se menciona arriba, exclusivamente.

Antes de que el candidato emita la Promesa, él/ella se somete a una solicitud escrita para el consejo de la fraternidad seglar pidiendo su admisión a la Promesa. La carta de solicitud debe contener los elementos siguientes:

- fecha
- nombre y dirección del candidato
- motivos

El Maestro de Formación de la comunidad y/o el Asistente dan un reporte verbal o escrito del progreso del candidato durante el Período de Prueba. Sobre la recomendación del Maestro de Formación de la comunidad y/o Asistente, el consejo de la fraternidad seglar hace la votación sobre la solicitud del candidato. La solicitud escrita por el candidato, el comentario del Maestro de Formación de la comunidad y/o el Asistente comenta, y el voto del consejo se ponen por escrito y se colocan en las minutas y archivos de la fraternidad seglar local.

Todo lo referente a la información del candidato (nombre, teléfono, fecha de nacimiento, fecha de admisión al período de prueba, fecha de emisión de la Promesa, y fecha de su defunción, etc.) se coloca en el *registro* de la fraternidad y asegurar que las anotaciones sean puestas al día.

Para las comunidades establecidas lejos de los conventos servitas, el proceso de arriba para las solicitudes de los candidatos se siguen igual. La solicitud escrita del candidato, el reporte del Maestro de Formación de la comunidad, el comentario del Asistente y recomendaciones, y el voto del Consejo de la fraternidad seglar se envían por escrito al Asistente Nacional para la aprobación final.

FORMACION ADICIONAL

Para mayor información respecto al Consejo de la fraternidad seglar local, véase el artículo 72 de la *Regla de Vida*. Aún más, la página 7 de este documento para abundar en información.

Con respecto a los *Estatutos particulares* de la fraternidad seglar local, véase los artículos 75-76 de la *Regla de Vida* para mayores detalles.

EL GRUPO (CANDIDATO DE LA FRATERNIDAD)

El grupo que desea admisión a la Orden Seglar por regla se debe encontrar no menos de una vez al mes. La estructura del encuentro será como sigue:

- 1- Oración (devoción Servita: Liturgia de la Horas; y/o reflexión de la Sagrada Escritura)
- 2- Estudio (ver el perfil bajo el Período de Prueba)
- 3- Discusión de asuntos comunitarios, por ejemplo, fecha de la próxima reunión.
- 4- Oración conclusiva y convivencia (tomar algún refresco o algo).

La reunión mensual tendrá la duración de una hora y media. Después de que el grupo inicial haya hecho la Promesa, el perfil de encuentro arriba mencionado puede tener algunas adaptaciones según la necesidades de la fraternidad.

Durante el Periodo de Prueba, el asistente debe facilitar la reunión mensual. Él instruirá al grupo en el tiempo de estudio de la reunión y facilitará el material pertinente. En ausencia del asistente, el prior o priora del grupo o algún otro individuos competente asignado por el asistente, facilitará la reunión. Después de la Promesa de los miembros del grupo inicial, el prior-a o algún otro miembro facilitará la reunión mensual.

El grupo elegirá dentro de los miembros personal para ocupar los oficios necesarios, que comprometen a los miembros al Consejo de la fraternidad local. La elección se llevará a cabo aproximadamente tres meses después de que el asistente haya recibido permiso del Consejo Provincial a través de la oficina del Asistente Nacional para empezar el Periodo de prueba.

La elección deberá comenzar después de un tiempo de oración del grupo entero. Después el Asistente leerá los deberes de cada puesto (Art. 70-72 de la R. de V.) El Asistente deberá de vigilar el proceso de elección que empieza nominando a los candidatos verbalmente para cada cargo. Cuando los cargos han sido nombrados, el grupo con el asistente votaran por aquellas personas que crean estar calificadas para los cargos. El voto será escrito en una papeleta. En virtud de los artículos 75-76 de la Regla de Vida, los siguientes estatutos se aplicarán para las elecciones de los miembros:

La elección se hará por escrito en papeletas por los miembros del grupo. El Asistente podrá igualmente participar en el proceso electoral. Una absoluta mayoría de los votos es necesaria para cada puesto.

Los puestos para el consejo serán elegidos después de un mes de haber tomado la Promesa y es cuando se iniciarán los puestos. El término del puesto para el primer Consejo puede ser cambiada por la Fraternidad consultando con los mismos. Este procedimiento deberá seguirse. El resultado de las elecciones deberá hacerse por escrito al Asistente Nacional por el Asistente local de la fraternidad.

Los miembros del Consejo de la Fraternidad comprenden lo siguiente:

- Prior o priora. Art. 70-71, R. de V.
- Tres Consejeros. Art. 72, R. de V.
- Asistente. Art. 73, R. de V.

El puesto de Secretaria (Art. 74, R de V.), se nombrará por el Consejo.

Después de la Promesa del Grupo inicial, la fraternidad propondrá sus estatutos particulares para regir la vida de la fraternidad de acuerdo con los artículos 75 y 76 de la Regla.

De acuerdo con el artículo 21 de la Regla, cada miembro contribuye a los gastos de la fraternidad a través de la oración y con aportaciones monetarias de acuerdo a las posibilidades de cada uno. Un miembro que no pudiera aportar económicamente con algo a la fraternidad no le impide servir en la fraternidad. Con relación a las aportaciones económicas a la fraternidad, la misma comunidad decidirá la frecuencia y fechas para su recolección.

La tesorería de la fraternidad deberá anotarse en libros separados y el tesorero será citado por el Consejo para que rinda cuentas de los fondos de la fraternidad.

PROGRAMA-PLAN GENERAL DE FORMACION, RECURSOS Y SUGESTIONES

PREFACIO

El siguiente programa de formación nos da ideas prácticas sobre la formación del nuevo candidato. Se sigue fácilmente y puede adaptarse a las necesidades del candidato. Cada candidato necesitará una copia personal de la Regla de Vida de la Orden Seglar y Construyendo un Mundo Nuevo que es un comentario a la Regla de Vida, durante el periodo de formación.

Estos libros se podrán obtener en:

La Oficina del Asistente Nacional de OSSM.
3121 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago IL 60612-2729

Además de los dos libros mencionados anteriormente, cada candidato deberá ser dotado con una copia de los Esquemas para cada lección. Sería ideal dárselos un mes antes de la lección para que puedan prepararla. Una lectura sugestiva y preguntas de reflexión ayudarán al candidato a ampliar sus objetivos para un entendimiento de los conceptos básicos de la vida y espiritualidad de la Orden Servita. Es un deber del Director de Formación o del Asistente asignar una lectura al candidato y asegurarse que este material este a su alcance.

PROGRAMA-PLAN GENERAL DE FORMACION Y SUGERENCIAS

EL PERIODO DE PRUEBA

Primera Sesión: Formación-Admisión-Prueba

Leer: **Regla de vida** Artículos 44-54

Construyendo un Mundo Nuevo, páginas 112-124

Temas esenciales:

- La Formación es un tiempo de aprendizaje acerca de la Orden Seglar a través del estudio de la Regla de Vida.
- La Formación es un proceso no un programa. Su meta es introducir al candidato a la vida y vocación de la Orden Seglar de los Siervos de María.
- El proceso de Formación dura por lo menos de un año.
- El proceso de Formación ayuda a profundizar al candidato en el conocimiento de la Orden Servita y en su llamado al laicado a través de la comunidad, con el estudio y la oración.
- Lo esencial para el proceso de formación es la construcción de la comunidad entre los miembros de la Orden Seglar. Esto es primero por la participación fiel y la asistencia a todas las reuniones de la fraternidad.

ESQUEMA DE FORMACION #1
Preguntas de Reflexión-Discusión

(1) ¿Cómo defines vocación?

(2) ¿Cómo entiendo mi vocación como laico en la Iglesia?

(3) ¿Qué espero aprender durante este periodo de formación?

Segunda Sesión: La Orden de los Siervos de María

Leer: **Regla la Vida**, Artículos 1-4

Construyendo un Mundo Nuevo, páginas 13-26

Elementos esenciales:

- **Los Servitas como una expresión de vida evangélico-apostólica.**
- **Los Servitas están llamados a testimoniar el Evangelio en comunión fraterna y a servir a Dios y al prójimo.**
- **La inspiración del Servita es María Madre y Sierva del Señor.**
- **El “fiat” de María, en la Anunciación enseña a los Servitas:**
 - a) **a recibir la Palabra de Dios**
 - b) **a estar atento a la inspiración del Espíritu Santo.**

ESQUEMA DE FORMACION #2
Preguntas de Reflexión-Discusión

(1) ¿Cómo doy hoy testimonio del Evangelio de Jesús?

(2) ¿Cómo María, la Madre y Sierva del Señor me inspira en mi fe en el Señor?

Tercera Sesión: La Orden Seglar de los Siervos de María

Leer: **Regla de vida**, Artículos 5-9

Construyendo un Mundo Nuevo, páginas 29-41

Temas esenciales:

- Los Seglares Servitas son hombres y mujeres laicos católicos así como miembros del clero diocesano.
- Los Seglares Servitas viven su consagración bautismal usando la espiritualidad de la orden Servita como guía para vivir el Evangelio de Jesús y llevarlo a todos los aspectos de su vida.
- Los Seglares Servitas son miembros de toda la Familia Servita en el mundo.
- La misión y vocación del Seglar Servita está en su consagración bautismal para llenar su vida y trabajar el mandato evangélico del amor.
- Las fraternidades Servitas tienen un tiempo para sus encuentros mensuales para estudio, oración y convivencia. Estas tres funciones forman la base de la Fraternidad y fortalecen la vocación del Seglar Servita.

ESQUEMA DE FORMACION #3

Preguntas de Reflexión-Discusión

(1) ¿Cuando escucho la palabra espiritualidad, qué significa para mí?

(2) ¿Por qué es tan importante para mí pertenecer a una fraternidad como la Order Seglar de los Siervos de María?

(3) ¿En qué forma expreso mi fe en el Señor?

Cuarta Sesión: La Orden Seglar de los Siervos de María (Parte 2)

Leer: **Regla de Vida**, artículos 10-14

Construyendo un Mundo Nuevo, páginas 42-56

Temas esenciales:

- Una parte de la vocación del Seglar Servita es participar en la vida local de la Fraternidad. Esto significa sobrellevamos unos a otros en familia y en las obligaciones sociales.
- Los Seglares Servitas usan la experiencia religiosa de los Siete Santos Fundadores como guía para su encuentro con Dios.
- A) comunión fraternal con los seglares Servitas y miembros de la Familia Servita
- B) servir a los demás
- a través de la escucha personal y comunitaria, estudio y oración de los escritos sagrados de la Orden Seglar, profundizando en el entendimiento de su vocación dentro de la Iglesia y el mundo.
- La Madre de Dios es nuestra inspiración para responder al llamado de Dios en nuestras vidas.

ESQUEMA DE FORMACION #4

Preguntas de Reflexión-Discusión

(1) ¿Cuáles son los dones y talentos que yo estoy dispuesto a ofrecer a mi Fraternidad?

(2) ¿Por qué son un medio para poder servir a esta Fraternidad?

(3) ¿Por qué es tan importante para mi pertenecer a una fraternidad tal como La Orden Seglar de los Siervos de María?

Quinta Sesión: La vida de la Fraternidad Seglar

Leer: **Regla de Vida**, artículos 15-21

Construyendo un Mundo Nuevo, páginas 57-66

Temas esenciales:

- **La vida de la Fraternidad Seglar está basada en el ejemplo de los primeros cristianos que eran “*un solo corazón y una sola alma*” (Lc. Capítulos 2 y 4)**
- **La fraternidad Servita esta basada en la comunión donde los Seglares Servitas se conocen y están dispuestos a compartir y sobrellevarse en su camino de fe.**
- **Los Seglares Servitas participan de la vida en común compartiendo su experiencia y conocimiento personal con la comunidad.**
- **La Fraternidad local se reúne para:**
 - A) proclamar la Palabra del Señor en reflexión y estudio**
 - B) orar**
 - C) estudiar los documentos de la Orden y de la Iglesia**
 - D) profundizar en su conocimiento**
- **Los Seglares Servitas contribuyen con sus aportaciones económicas a la Tesorería de la Fraternidad.**

Sexta Sesión: Oración

Leer: Regla de Vida, artículos 22-24

Construyendo un Mundo Nuevo, páginas 67-73

Temas esenciales:

- La oración es una prenda para crecer en la fe y esperanza y para vivir el mandamiento del amor para llegar a la perfección.
- La oración personal es el encuentro diario con el Señor. Los Seglares Servitas harán un tiempo personal de oración porque ese encuentro de oración con Dios engrandece y fortalece su vocación.
- La oración es encontrarse con Dios en la fe. La Madre de Dios es ejemplo para los Seglares Servitas, un ejemplo de Oración silenciosa, personal y escondida.

ESQUEMA DE FORMACION #6

Preguntas de Reflexión-Discusión

(1) ¿Cuál es mi definición de oración?

(2) ¿En qué forma hago oración?

(3) ¿Cuándo encuentro a Dios y cómo afecta mi vida?

Séptima Sesión: Oración (Parte 2)

Leer: Regla de Vida, artículos 25-31

Construyendo un Mundo Nuevo, páginas 73-87

Temas esenciales:

- La oración en comunidad es esencial para Los Seglares Servitas. Cada reunión de la Fraternidad incluye un tiempo de oración en la que se invita al Señor a estar en medio de la comunidad.
- La oración en Fraternidad incluye compartir la Palabra de Dios en alguna forma igual que la oración de intercesión por las necesidades de la Orden, de la Iglesia y del mundo.
- De acuerdo con la tradición de la Orden Servita, la oración litúrgica (Eucaristía, Liturgia de las Horas y los Sacramentos) tiene una prioridad como oración comunitaria de la Orden Seglar.
- Los Seglares tratarán de participar en la Eucaristía y hacer de ella una experiencia frecuente además de la Misa dominical.
- De acuerdo con la tradición en la Orden Servita, los Seglares, individual y comunitariamente, demuestran una especial veneración a la Madre de Dios por medio de devociones, especialmente el Ave María, La Vigilia de Nuestra Señora, y la Corona de los Siete Dolores. Igualmente la comunidad Seglar celebra la fiesta de Nuestra Señora de los Dolores como también las fiestas Servitas de los Santos y Beatos de la Orden con grandes celebraciones.
- La Fraternidad hace memoria de los muertos de la comunidad y los recuerda en sus oraciones.
- Para contribuir en la construcción de una Fraternidad fuerte, la Orden Seglar planea con regularidad días o periodos de retiro.

ESQUEMA DE FORMACION #7

Preguntas de Reflexión-Discusión

(1) ¿Qué beneficios recibo cuando participo en la Misa dominical?

(2) ¿Cuando encuentro a Dios en la Eucaristía cómo afecta mi vida?

Octavo Sesión: Origen, espiritualidad y carisma de la Orden Servita

Leer: **El Esquema de Formación #8**

Temas esenciales:

- **La Orden de los Siervos de María fue fundada en el siglo trece por las Siete Santos Fundadores de Florencia, Italia.**
- **El carisma Servita está expresado en tres (3) formas: fraternidad, servicio y María.**
- **El carisma Servita es nuestra forma concreta de dar testimonio del Evangelio de Jesús en lo que hacemos y decimos.**
- **La espiritualidad Servita está expresada en cuatro formas:**
 - (a) una profunda relación con Dios**
 - (b) servir a la gente de Dios, especialmente a los pobres y enfermos**
 - (c) oración**
 - (d) fraternidad, amistad y actitud de hospitalidad o servicio.**

ESQUEMA DE FORMACION #8

Los Origenes de los Frailes Siervos de María: Una historia viviente de Comunidad

La Orden de los Frailes Siervos de María marca su más temprana expresión en los días de fermento político, económico y religioso, que era la atmósfera dominante en el centro de Italia en el principio del siglo 13. Antes que los Servitas existieran como una Orden religiosa oficial de la Iglesia, siete hombres se reunieron en la orgullosa y próspera ciudad de Florencia, Italia. No era la primera vez que se reunían. Por algunos años una gran amistad basada en un entendimiento cristiano con los mismos ideales, había crecido entre ellos, como reflexión de los tiempos penitentes y era la costumbre de ellos reunirse regularmente como miembros de una sociedad religiosa establecida en honor de María, la Madre de Dios. Gradualmente, los siete fueron creciendo más y más lejos de los valores predominantes de los ciudadanos, especialmente por sed de salud, de estado económico y prestigio.

En lugar de caer en odio y amargura en la abierta violencia del período (los resultados de lucha política), los siete Servitas originales habían estado modelando sus vidas con el patrón explicado en el Evangelio.

Uno por uno, Bonfilio, Alejo y sus compañeros entraron al grupo de penitentes responsabilizándose de cuidar a los pobres y enfermos y a los peregrinos. El grupo fue llamado "*Sociedad de Nuestra Señora,*" y sus miembros "*Siervos de María.*" En esos días de su asociación, los siete siguieron viviendo con sus familias, pero con una regla de vida que delineó su espiritualidad; dedicándose a la Madre de Dios, y al servicio de su Hijo a través del servicio a los pobres y a aquellas personas marginadas de la sociedad. La penitencia era un aspecto de su vida, a través de ella oraban a María su Señora para reconciliarse con Jesús su Hijo. Viviendo con los pobres se encontraron con grandes injusticias de su tiempo, y forzados a rechazar los compromisos de la sociedad, los siete efectuaron un cambio radical en sus vidas. Se volvieron pobres, no de nacimiento (eran mercaderes), sino así lo escogieron.

La tradición y la historia difiere en su presentación y en la interpretación de los hechos: documentos históricos conservados en los archivos Servitas dan testimonio a unas personas y circunstancias, movimientos e ideales, que culminaron en la fundación de la Orden. Pero la tradición nos dice que su Señora, a la que ellos dedicaron sus servicios por amor a Cristo y a sus pobres, se apareció a los siete mercaderes en el año de 1233. Como resultado de esta revelación los siete abandonaron todos sus negocios, dejaron acomodadas a sus familias, se despojaron de sus ricos vestidos y se fueron a vivir juntos en un edificio casi en ruinas. Pero tan radical como

fue el cambio, los siete sintieron que era un precio suficiente y razonable para pagar por todo lo que habían ganado, una vida compartiendo como hermanos en busca del Señor. El estilo de vida de santidad y penitencia de los siete pronto atrajo visitantes y a otros que deseaban unirse a ellos en su gozo de vida fraternal en busca del Evangelio de Jesús. Finalmente el grupo entero decidió cambiarse a un lugar más tranquilo y establecieron una ermita en la cima de una montaña cercana, *“Monte Senario,”* también conocida como *‘montaña sonora.’* Nuestra tradición dice que el sonido de la santidad de los primeros Siervos se escuchó por su *‘montaña sonora’* a través de todo el campo.

Llegando a ser conocidos como *“Frailes Siervos de María,”* los Siete primeros fueron seguidos por otros en Monte Senario, y como el grupo continuó creciendo, la semilla de una nueva Orden religiosa se formó. Los Frailes Siervos de María fueron originalmente aprobados como una Orden religiosa por el Obispo de Florencia entre los años 1240 y 1247. Los Siervos decidieron vivir regidos por la regla de San Agustín, y le añadieron su propia expresión, dedicación y devoción Mariana. Nosotros sabemos que por 1250 había un número de Siervos que fueron ordenados para el sacerdocio, así se creó la Orden con sacerdotes y hermanos. Por el año 1256 los Siervos habían recibido la aprobación oficial del Papa Alejandro IV, quien permitió la extensión de la comunidad a otras partes donde fueran necesitados. En el año 1304, la Orden de Frailes Siervos de María recibieron la aprobación definitiva de la Santa Sede como Orden religiosa en la Iglesia.

Desde los primeros días de la Orden Servita, los frailes, y después las Hermanas Servitas, se han extendido por todo el mundo, viviendo y compartiendo el Evangelio de Cristo bajo el especial patrocinio de María, La *“Señora”* honrada originalmente por los siete Siervos de María. En el año 1870, el Padre Austin Morini, OSM, vino a los Estados Unidos junto con otros frailes para fundar una Orden permanente en América. Hoy, los Servitas sirven en casi todos los países de Norte y Sur América. Además Los Servitas se encuentran en Europa, África, Asia y Australia. Desde su humilde comienzo han sido benditos con una rica historia. Aún imitamos a nuestros Siete Fundadores, vamos a donde la demanda de gente necesitada nos llama. Seguimos buscando la perfección del Evangelio viviendo bajo la protección de María, Madre y Sierva del Señor.

La historia Servita con su raíz en el siglo 13 en Italia, y en el corazón, mente y alma de los Siete Santos Fundadores, está siendo vivida y escrita en la vida de cada Servita.

El Carisma Servita: **Nuestra respuesta a Dios**

Cada Orden religiosa de la Iglesia tiene un carisma o espíritu que los distingue. Un carisma es una respuesta a la Orden por la acción de Dios y para la comunidad. El carisma de los Siervos de María es vivir a través de tres elementos: fraternidad, María y servicio.

Los Servitas entienden la fraternidad como una invitación, como el valor de vivir juntos como hermanos. Desde nuestro confinamiento experimentamos la presencia de Jesús a través de la vida que compartimos con nuestros hermanos. La experiencia personal de Jesús ayuda a la comunidad entera para realizar esa presencia operativa en la vida comunitaria. Desde la experiencia comunitaria de la presencia de Jesús, los frailes llegan a la sociedad y al mundo para compartirla con aquellos a los que sirven. Los servitas pretenden construir una comunidad en la que vivan, trabajen y den testimonio con actitudes de paz, justicia y compasión dentro de su ministerio.

La persona de la Madre de Dios tiene un lugar especial en la vida de los Servitas. María nos reta a desarrollar actitudes de bienvenida al Señor que nos llama a dar respuesta a la invitación a la santidad como María: *“Soy la Sierva del Señor.”* La devoción Servita a María nos reta a estar cerca de las cruces de aquellos que son negados o repelidos por nuestra sociedad; los pobres, abandonados y enfermos. Estar junto a estas cruces como Ella hizo, con sentido de esperanza creyendo en la promesa de Dios que Él cuidará de aquellos atribulados y solos.

El servicio a otros, especialmente a los pobres y enfermos del Señor que son llamados benditos del Reino, es la respuesta a la invitación del Señor como preservadores y ciudadanos del Reino de Dios. Los Servitas sirven para traer la presencia del reino de Dios aquí en la tierra.

El carisma Servita es nuestra manera particular de vivir el mandato del Evangelio de amar todos los días.

Espiritualidad Servita

El Siglo XIII ha sido llamado el más grande de los siglos por sus hazañas. Aunque su herencia de arte, arquitectura y teología es magnífica, fue también un tiempo de gran inquietud política, económica y social. Un año en ese siglo (1233) mereció el apodo de “*el año del Gran Aleluya*”. Casi toda Italia se vio envuelta en un gran intento de renovación en ese año. Muchos predicadores trataron de alertar a la gente para traer de regreso los verdaderos valores cristianos y las perspectivas a la vida diaria y a su comportamiento. Este fue el año del principio de la Orden Servita.

Los Siete Santos Fundadores no tenían la intención de empezar una nueva orden religiosa dentro de la Iglesia. Lo que intentaban hacer era encontrar una forma para profundizar su compromiso con Cristo y con el Evangelio y lo deseaban hacer juntos. Los siete deseaban intensificar su habilidad para estar al servicio de la gente de Dios. Ellos lo hicieron consagrándose a María y aprendiendo de Ella como decir “*sí*” a Dios como lo hizo en la Anunciación. De ahí los Siete Santos Fundadores tomaron su espiritualidad y una forma de seguir al Señor. Las características de la espiritualidad Servita son:

- siempre profundizar la relación con Dios
- servir a la gente de Dios, especialmente a los pobres y enfermos
- escucha de la Palabra de Dios en lo profundo de nuestros corazones, en la Sagrada Escritura, y en la vida de aquellos que conocemos.
- comunidad y amistad: que no caminamos solos, sino con otros y para otros.

El ejemplo de los Siete Santos Fundadores nos muestra simplemente el mensaje básico del Evangelio: que toda la vida es santa, y que toda la vida debe ser tratada con gratitud, amor y respeto.

ESQUEMA DE FORMACION #8

Preguntas de Reflexión-Discusión

(1) ¿Cuáles son las formas en que yo expreso fraternidad en mi vida?

(2) ¿Cómo engrandecería mi vida el compartir fraternalmente con otros miembros de esta comunidad?

Novena Sesión: Penitencia, conversión y testimonio de pobreza

Leer: **Regla de vida**, artículos 32-36

Construyendo un Mundo Nuevo, páginas 88-96

Temas esenciales:

- **Penitencia significa conversión**
- **Para los Servitas, frailes y seglares, la penitencia es entendida como aceptación y servicio de uno a otro.**
- **La práctica de la penitencia es una experiencia diaria para los Servitas.**
- **Los Seglares Servitas hacen uso frecuentemente del Sacramento de la Reconciliación como manera de convertirse al Señor.**
- **El trabajo concienzudo, la simplicidad y la austeridad en el estilo de vida, la sensibilidad a las necesidades de los demás y el servicio a los más necesitados es una forma en que los Seglares Servitas dan testimonio de su amor y de su dependencia de Cristo.**

ESQUEMA DE FORMACION #9
Preguntas de Reflexión-Discusión

(1) ¿Cómo entiendo el término *conversión*?

(2) ¿Cómo puedo acrecentar mi conversión hacia el Señor?

Décima Sesión: El apostolado

Leer: Regla de Vida, artículos 37-43

Construyendo un Mundo Nuevo, páginas 97-111

Temas esenciales:

- **El servicio Servita irradia el amor de Cristo a los otros**
- **Los deberes familiares son la primera forma de servicio de los Seglares**
- **El servicio a los otros como comunidad especialmente a los pobres, enfermos y los más necesitados debe ser dirigido para ofrecer esperanza del amor de Cristo**
- **La fraternidad participa y proporciona trabajo para las vocaciones y las misiones**

Décima primera Sesión: María, Madre y Sierva del Señor

Leer: Esquema de Formación #11

Temas esenciales:

- **María es la Discipula Perfecta, su vida enseña a los Servitas como experimentar a Dios cada día.**
- **María enseña a los Servitas a responder al llamado de Dios en sus vidas**
- **La devoción Servita a María nos da el entendimiento del poder de Dios en nuestras vidas**

Esquema de Formación #11

Características Marianas de la Orden Servita

Siervos como María

“Para servir al Señor a sus hermanos y hermanas, Los Siervos se han dedicado desde sus orígenes a la Madre de Dios, La Bendita del Altísimo” (Constituciones servitas, Art. 6)

Hoy, nuestro testimonio del Evangelio, igual al de nuestros primeros Padre, se expresa en comunión fraterna y al servicio a Dios y a toda la gente, inspirándose en María, Madre y Sierva del Señor. María ha sido honrada como nuestra Señora con actos particulares de reverencia: saludándola con el saludo del ángel al principio de las reuniones comunitarias, dedicando nuestras iglesias a Ella, celebrando sus fiestas con solemnidad y honrando su memoria en Sábado y al final del día.

Además nuestra oración y el ejemplo de María motivan nuestro apostolado. Siendo sensibles a las necesidades de la Iglesia, buscamos conocer más a María en su misión y en el Misterio de Salvación. En María, el fruto más excelente de redención, nosotros encontramos un modelo de libertad que nos une con los oprimidos; unidad, que hace nuestro trabajo de unidad a la Iglesia; y esperanza, que nos permite alcanzar a todos los hombres y mujeres en nuestro caminar.

Esta visión esta alimentada permaneciendo atentos a los llamados de la Palabra de Dios en actitud silenciosa e imitación de la Virgen.

Nuestro espíritu entonces, se expresa en amoroso servicio a los demás, a un servicio de compasión y de sobrellevamos. Nuestra oración y estudio combinados con el servicio, hace a María presente en el mundo.

Nuestro modelo es María al pie de la cruz. Ya que Jesús continua siendo crucificado en sus hermanos y hermanas, los Servitas desean estar en las innumerables cruces para brindar apoyo y testimonio de redención.

ESQUEMA DE FORMACION #11

Preguntas de Reflexión-Discusión

(1) ¿Qué puede María, La Madre de Dios enseñarme acerca de la fe en Dios?

(2) ¿Cómo continuo respondiendo a la llamada de Dios en mi discipulado?

Décima segunda Sesión: La Promesa

Leer: Regla de Vida, artículos 55-59

Construyendo un Mundo Nuevo, páginas 125-129

Temas esenciales:

- El acto de hacer la Promesa incorpora a la persona dentro de la Orden Secular y a la Familia Servita.
- La solicitud para hacer la Promesa deberá ser escrita de puños y letra

FORMAS PARA EL PERIODO DE FORMACION

Las siguientes páginas contienen formas que pudieran ayudarnos durante y después del periodo de Formación. La primera es una copia del Registro mencionado en la página 6. Contiene la información necesaria para cada miembro de la comunidad. La página puede ser fotocopiada, llenada y guardada en una carpeta.

La segunda es una solicitud que pide la información básica individual. Junto con esta, la tercera pide una simple autobiografía del candidato. Esto ayudará al Asistente y al Maestro de novicios para saber más del candidato.

La cuarta es una hoja de la Promesa que puede ser firmada por el candidato durante el Rito de Promesa. Puede guardarse en los archivos de la Orden Seglar.

Lo que continúa es una copia de septiembre de 1980 del *Boletín de la Historia Servita* titulado Grupos laicos Servitas y La Tercera Orden. Contiene información que nos ayudará en la Orden Seglar (tercera).

Por –último una copia de *Los estatutos particulares* (ver los artículos 75-76 en la *Regla de Vida*) para las Fraternidades de Ordenes Seglares en los Estados Unidos. Puede ser usada como guía para elaborar los estatutos particulares de tu Fraternidad.

Registro

Nombre: _____

Dirección: _____

Teléfono: _____

Correo Electrónico: _____

Fecha de Nacimiento: _____

Miembro de la Parroquia de: _____

Ciudad _____ **Estado** _____

Nombre de la Fraternidad Seglar _____

Ciudad _____ **Estado** _____

Fecha de admisión al Periodo de Prueba _____

Testigo _____

Fecha de la Promesa _____

Testigo _____

Dispensa de la Promesa _____

Testigo _____

Archivo _____

Fecha _____

Cambio de Ciudad: _____

Nueva Dirección: _____

Nueva número Teléfono: _____

Transferido a otra Orden Seglar-

Fecha: _____

Lugar: _____

Fecha de defunción: _____

ORDEN SEGLAR DE LOS SIERVOS DE MARIA

Solicitud

Sírvase llenar esta forma y regresado a la brevedad posible.

Nombre: _____

Dirección: _____

Teléfono: _____ Fecha de Nacimiento: _____ Edad- _____

¿Estas bautizado en la Iglesia Católica? Si _____ No _____

¿Estas confirmado? Si _____ No _____

¿Practicas tu fe? Si _____ No _____

¿Cuál es tu estado civil? Soltero _____ Casado _____ Otro _____

(Explica) _____

¿Por qué deseas unirse a la Orden Seglar? _____

¿A qué Parroquia perteneces? _____

lugar: _____

¿Perteneces a algún Ministerio? Si _____ No _____ ¿A cuál? _____

Autobiografía

Favor de escribir acerca de ti mismo, un acorta historia de tu vida, tus intereses, etc., para conocerte mejor.

**LA PROMESA DE LA ORDEN SEGLAR
DE LOS SIERVOS DE MARIA**

**Confiando en la gracia de Señor, ante ti, Padre
y ante ustedes, hermanos y hermanas,
prometo a Dios vivir más intensamente
los compromisos de la consagración bautismal
y de observar, según mi condición familiar y social,**

Le Regla y Estatutos

de la Orden Seglar

de los Siervos de María

Para participar en su misma vocación

de servicio, y comunión fraterna,

inspirándome constantemente en María,

Madre y Sierva del Señor.

La intercesión de la Virgen, nuestra Señora,

y la caridad de ustedes,

Sostengan mi compromiso.

Candidato o candidata:

Asistente: _____

Prior o Priora: _____

Fecha: _____

Using the OSSM Prayer Book

Article 29 of the Rule of Life states: “In accordance with the traditions of the Order, the Secular Fraternity shows special honor to the Blessed Virgin by means of particular acts of devotion such as the Hail Mary, the Vigil of the Blessed Virgin, and the Rosary of the Seven Sorrows; it celebrates as family feasts the principal Marian feasts of the Order and the local Church, and keeps the memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows, as well as the solemnities and memorials of the saints and blessed of the Servite Order”.

Regular use of the Prayer Book alone enables a Secular Servite to fulfill every single provision of Article 29! This is not to say that the Prayer Book exhausts all the Servite resources available for fulfilling Article 29. In fact, it offers only a scant selection of the many prayer services available either from the Servite Development Office, Berwyn, IL or from the National Office of the Secular Order, Chicago, IL. But for a Servite isolated from community by illness or distance and for communities with limited financial resources, the Prayer Book offers a wealth of materials, which if used regularly, can effectively form us in Servite prayer and spirituality. Here is a brief guide to its content.

The Angelus (pages 7-18)

The Angelus is a traditional way to honor Mary in the mystery of the Incarnation. According to custom, it is prayed in the morning, at noon, and in the evening – so anytime a Secular Order community meets is an appropriate time to pray the Angelus. We often associate the Angelus with the ringing of church bells – morning, noon, and night – calling people to prayer. And in some towns in past ages, the Angelus bell served almost the same function as the contemporary factory whistle, signaling the beginning and the end of the work day and time for midday break.

Interestingly, though, the three times for praying the Angelus did not develop simultaneously. The custom of praying the Angelus first developed in the late middle ages as a prayer to be prayed in the evening for the success of the Crusades. The morning Angelus came along in the fourteenth century as a tie-in to the monastic custom of reciting three Hail Marys during Morning Prayer. The noon Angelus began as a Friday-only devotion of the beginning of Our Lord’s Passion and was gradually extended to the rest of the week.

The Angelus, which we may have memorized and prayed as a child, did not take its final form until the 16th Century. The tradition formula is contained within the Angelus service in the Prayer Book. The Servite Angelus service also contains a psalm and a Gospel, intercessions, and seasonal antiphons, which means that it

can be prayed at any time during the year. However, as an occasional prayer service to be used to open or close a community meeting, it is most appropriate during Advent and Christmas.

The Vigilia (Formula I, pages 19-28; Formula II, pages 29-39)

Unlike the Angelus and the Servite Rosary, which grew out of a desire of lay people to join with the religious in their time of prayer, the Vigilia began as a prayer service for the religious themselves. Based on the Biblical instruction of St. Paul to “pray constantly” and the Old testament injunction to pray seven times a day, monastic communities would pause in their work (or their sleep!) to gather for community prayer seven times each day. The prayer which came to be known variously as the Liturgy of the Hours, the Breviary, or Divine Office, consisted of one or more psalms, scripture, readings, intercessions, and closing prayer. Although in the early Church a form of the Divine Office was often prayed by clergy and laity together, by the Middle Ages it had become the domain of the religious orders. The sequence of psalms and prayers became standardized and the Divine Office became an official public prayer of the Church (and remains so today). In addition to the regular assigned prayers, there developed to her so-called “little offices” devoted to the praise of Mary or one of the saints, which would be recited after the regular office. These “little offices” followed the same format as the Liturgy of the Hours, with a hymn, psalms, and prayers.

The Vigilia as we know it began about the 11th Century as one of these “little offices”. It was prayed on Friday evening, the day before Saturday, on which the Church traditionally honors Mary. The Vigilia predates the beginnings of the Servites and was used by many religious communities in the middle ages which had a Marian orientation. The Servites recited it daily as part of Evening Prayer. The daily recitation of the Vigilia remained a requirement in the Rule of Life of the Friars until 1977, when it became a recommended practice for honoring Our Lady.

The Vigilia, which did not start out as a Servite prayer, has become so over the centuries, as the Servites are now the only religious community that still recommends the Vigilia to its vowed and lay members.

The Prayer Book contains two forms of the Vigilia: the first is a translation of the ancient formula and the second was composed after the publication of the new Rule of Life for the Friars. Since the Vigilia was for centuries prayed daily, it can still be used as a daily private devotion or to open or close a meeting at almost anytime during the year, though it might be most appropriate prayed on Friday evenings as well as on the eve of a Marian feast or at an event of significance to

the Secular Order community (for example, at a Day of Recollection, Retreat, or the Rite of the Promise).

The Rosary of Our Lady of Sorrows (First Method, pages 41-43; Second Method, pages 44-60)

The rosary is a kind of mantra, a prayer form that we find in many religions and dates back to the time before Christ. The idea is that as human beings we often need to do something to keep our physical bodies busy if we are to focus on what is spiritual. So we move our hands across the beads and repeat the same words with our mouths so that we can focus on the spiritual encounter with God.

Within Western Christianity, the rosary began to take form about the 11th Century when the Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours prayed by communities of men and women had become standardized in Latin, using formulas that left little for the ordinary lay person to do. One of the practices that led to the formation of what we now know as the Secular Order was the custom of lay persons coming to Servite churches to join the friars for Morning and Evening Prayer. In an age before printing and limited literacy, handing out copies of the Divine Office (Breviary) would have been unthinkable. What did happen, though, is that the rosary developed as a sort of “poor man’s breviary”. There were 150 psalms in the breviary, and in a desire to “join in” this monastic practice, there developed a practice of saying 150 Our Fathers, with beads replacing the Breviary. Since this was also a time of growing devotion to Mary in the church, an alternate form of praying the beads developed that consisted of 150 Angelic Salutations (“Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee”). This came to be known as a “Rose Garden for Mary” or Rosarium for short. Note that the Hail Mary as we know it did not yet exist.

It was only in the late 12th Century that the response of Elizabeth, (Blessed art thou amongst women...) was added, and not until the 14th Century did the prayer include the name “Jesus”. In time, a phrase from the Psalms which could be applied to Mary was prayed after each Ave. At first these were all “joyful” phrases, but the practice later expanded to include the so-called sorrowful and glorious events of Mary’s life. By the end of the 14th Century, these phrases or “mysteries” had become standardized into 50 joyful mysteries, 50 sorrowful mysteries, and 50 glorious mysteries.

The problem was that the rosary had become as complex and unwieldy as praying the Breviary. Who could remember all 150 mysteries? It was here that the Dominicans played a powerful force in shaping the rosary in its present form. Thanks to their widespread preaching and writing on the rosary in the 15th Century, the rosary finally took its present form: the number of mysteries was reduced to 15, the 5 Our Fathers from the original “rosary” were inserted after the

mysteries, the Hail Mary as we know it was completed, and the term “rosary” came to be applied to the 50 Hail Mary’s.

It is interesting to note that the Rosary of the Seven Sorrows (the Servite Rosary) followed a similar path. During the earliest days of the Order, the emphasis was not on the sorrows of Mary but on her joys. The color of the Servite habit, however, was the color of mourning and so it was often called Mary’s mourning garment. Certain devotions became attached to certain religious communities and the connection between the Servites and the sorrows of Mary was formalized.

In the early 16th Century, Servites (including Secular Servites) were encouraged to recite the Sorrowful Mysteries of the rosary every day and to reflect on Mary at the foot of the Cross. The seven mysteries of the Servite Rosary began as individual reflections for the friars to use for each of the seven days of the week. The earliest references to what we now call the traditional “Servite Rosary” comes in 1617.

The Prayer Book contains both the traditional rosary of the Seven Sorrows and an alternate formula, which includes only the angelic salutation and response by Elizabeth followed by a short phrase recalling the sorrow being commemorated. Each Sorrow begins with the reading of a biblical passage. Although this second method of praying the rosary may seem “new” or “different”, we see from the history of the rosary, that this alternate way of praying the Servite Rosary actually brings us back to the earliest form of the Rosary (before the “Holy Mary, Mother of God...” became part of the Hail Mary). For group prayer, this alternate form will normally require that all members of the group have copies of the Prayer Book.

Litanies

(Our Lady of Sorrows, pages 61-64; Servants of Mary, pages 65-68; Our Lady of Hope, pages 69-73; In Honor of the Seven Holy Founders, pages 123-126)

A litany is a form of prayer in which a leader expresses a series of petitions or invocations, to which the congregation or choir replies each time with a set response. As with the Rosary, the litany is a prayer form that predates Christianity and has been part of Catholic Christian practice from the very early days. As form of public prayer, the litany has a number of advantages: members of the congregation do not necessarily need copies of a text in order to participate actively in praying a litany; and a litany may be (and often has been used) during processions that involve members of the congregation. Among the most familiar litanies are the Litany of the Saints and the Litany of Loreto. In fact,

the “Lord, have mercy” and the “Lamb of God” are litanies that have found their way into the Mass.

The Prayer Book contains three litanies in honor Mary: Litany of Our Lady of Sorrows; Litany of the Servants of Mary; Litany of Our Lady of Hope; and a Litany in Honor of the Seven Holy Founders.

Litanies normally do not exist on their own, but are prayed as part of some other prayer service. The litanies in the Prayer Book may be prayed at the conclusion of the Rosary, as part of Eucharistic Adoration, during a procession, or as a simple way to end a meeting of the Secular Order community.

The Stabat Mater (pages 74-76)

The familiar hymn, the Stabat Mater, most probably was composed as a poem in the late 13th Century. This hymn is often sung during the Stations of the Cross, but some Secular Order communities use it in its original format as a poem to conclude the recitation of the Rosary of Our Lady of Sorrows, as an alternative to reciting the Litany of Our Lady of Sorrows, during Lent. Needless to say, it can also be sung.

The Via Matris (pages 77-87)

This prayer service focusing on the Seven Sorrows of Mary is essentially an alternative to the Servite Rosary. It consists of opening and closing prayers along with meditations and prayers for each of the Seven Sorrows. Its development in many ways parallels the development of the Servite Rosary. Many versions of this service have been prayed through the years. The most famous of which is the Friday Novena in Honor of Our Lady of Sorrows which began with one service on a cold January night in 1937 at Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Chicago, IL. Within a few years, the Friday Novena of Our Lady of Sorrows was attracting some 70,000 people to 38 novena services at that one church every Friday! It later spread to some 2000 churches throughout the world, as literally millions of people faithfully prayed these prayers for nine consecutive Fridays (“a novena”). Copies of this original service, along with a revised version compiled in the early 1990s, are available from the Servite Development Office, Berwyn, IL. The Via Matris included in the Prayer Book dates from the late 1970’s. It has been used in a number of Servite churches in the United States as a weekly devotion.

Devotions of Servite Saints and Blessed (Commemorations of Mary, pages 91-106; Servite Saints and Blessed, pages 115-157; Servite spirituality, pages 109-113)

This next large portion of the Prayer Book consists of liturgical prayers for Marian feasts and a brief biography and prayer for each of the Servite saints and blessed. Here we have an invaluable calendar of feasts, which, if faithfully followed, will enable the Secular Servite to become very familiar with the Servite heavenly family.

In addition to the encouragement Article 29 of the Rule of Life gives to observe each of these family feast days, Article 28 of the Rule of Life stresses that Secular Servites are to take an active role in the Mass and, where possible, in Morning and Evening Prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours. An increasing number of our Secular Order communities do not have the luxury of attending Mass in a church staffed by Servites or celebrating these feasts with friar or sister communities. The Prayer Book offers the opportunity of, at least, a private celebration of every Servite feast. Within the section on Servite saints and blessed is a brief and helpful summary of Servite spirituality and also included are triduum of prayers for the Feast of the Seven Holy Founders and the Feast of St. Philip Benizi.

Prayers for Particular Occasions (pages 159-171)

The final pages of the Prayer Book contain prayers that may be used on different occasions: At Meetings and Fraternal Greetings; Dedication to a Life of Perfection and Service; The Promise; Days of Retreat; For Vocations; For the Missions; For the Sick; For the Dead; Reaffirmation of the Promise; At Elections.

Those familiar with the Rule of Life will immediately recognize that the Prayer Book is a carefully selected group of prayers that relate directly to the commitment to prayer that Servites have made. Article 43 of the Rule of Life states that “the Secular Servite fraternity supports and participates in the Order’s work for vocations and in its apostolate, especially the missions”. Thus, a healthy Secular Order community will find itself turning to these last pages of the Prayer Book quite often.



RESOURCES FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND FORMATION

RECURSOS PARA EL CRECIMIENTO Y LA FORMACION ESPIRITUALES

John 16:16

Jesus went on to say,

**“In a little while you will see me no more,
and then after a little while you will see me.”**

Juan 16:16

Dijo Jesus,

**“Dentro de poco tiempo ya no me veran.
Pero en un poco tiempo mas me volveran a ver”.**

Section Contents/ Contenido de Sección

- 1. Pre-planning for your Advanced Directives
/Instrucciones de Pre-planification de Funeral**
- 2. Servite Publications/Publicaciones de Siervos**
- 3. Open Our Hearts and Homes Community Self Evaluation/
Abir Corazones y Hogares – Auto-Evaluacion de la Comunidad**
- 4. Sent To Serve/Enviados Para Servir**
- 5. Ongoing Formation by Br. Arnaldo Sanchez, OSM**
- 6. Seven Principles of Catholic Social Teaching/
Los Siete Principios de la Enseñanza Católica Social**
- 7. References on Catholic Social Teaching**
- 8. Certificate of Promise/Certificado de la Promesa**
- 9. Mary’s Seven Steps on the Way to Creation**

SERVITE PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH

- \$.50 **Blessed Is She** (Reflections on the Magnificat by Fr. Joseph Chamblain)
- 3.00 **Do Whatever He Tells You** (reflections on “down-grading” of devotion to Mary after Vatican II – a statement approved by the General Chapter of the Servite Order in 1983)
- 5.00 **Servants of the Magnificat** (reflections on the Magnificat, especially for religious dedicated to Our Lady, but useful also for members of the Secular Order; this was issued by the General Chapter of 1995.)
- 2.00 **Novena in Honor of Our Sorrowful Mother** (prayerbook of the Sorrowful Mother Novena: two forms available – the traditional or the updated)
- 3.00 **Rosary of Our Lady of Sorrows** (publication of CLIOS, gives a history of the Servite Rosary and suggests a variety of different ways of praying the Rosary.)
- 3.00 **Vigilia de Domina** (a CLIOS publication – the Vigil of Our Lady, a Marian prayer which dates back to the foundation of the Order in the 13th Cn.)
- 3.00 **Saints and Blesseds of the Servite Order** (a book by Maire Ni Chearbhaill, on each of the Servite Saints and Blesseds approved by the Holy See).
- 3.00 **Servants of Mary: Reflections on the Servite Saints and Blesseds** (a book of reflections on each of the Servite Saints and Blesseds whose feast days are celebrated by the Church – by Fr. Joseph Chamblain,OSM)
- 4.00 **Servite Reform Movements** (a study of three major reform movements in the Servite Order, by Fr. Luke Foster,OSM: Congregation of the Observance (15th Cn.), Germanic Observance (17th Cn.), and the Hermits of Monte Senario (17th Cn.).

Available from: **SERVITE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**
 1429 S HARLEM AVE
 BERWYN IL 60402
 708-795-8885
 708-795-8892 (fax)

- 10.00 **Bound to Forgive** (autobiographical account by Fr. Martin Jenco,OSM of his time in captivity in Lebanon)
- 7.00 **Rule of Life of the Secular Order of the Servants of Mary**
 (In English, Spanish or French)
- 8.00 **Building a New World: A Commentary on the Rule of Life of the Secular Order of Servants of Mary**, by Fr. Conrad Bortrager,OSM (In English, Spanish or French)
- 8.00 **Prayer Book of the Servite Secular Order**

- 8.00 **Brothers and Servants: The Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order**, by Fra Franco A. Dal Pino,OSM; translated by Daniel Brown
- 12.00 **One in Love and Service: A Servant of Mary Reflects on His Roots**, by Fr. Peregrine Graffius,OSM
- 10.00 **Sources of History and Spirituality of the Servants of Mary** (an English translation of early documents referring to the Order – from 1245 to 1348 --: letters of Popes, Cardinals, Bishops, early Constitutions, some liturgical prayers, “*legendas*” of the saints from this period; reproductions of paintings commissioned for Servite Church)
- 3.00 **Early Beginnings of the Servants of Mary** (a book by Maire Ni Chearbhaill in Ireland on life of the Seven Holy Founders and the early years of the Order)
- 4.00 **Charism of the Servants of Mary** (a good presentation of Servite Spirituality by Fr. Christopher Ross,OSM)
- 5.00 **Shepherd of Souls** (the life of St. Anthony Pucci,OSM by Fr. Peter Rookey,OSM)
- 5.00 **In Praise of St. Juliana of Florence** (Four celebrations in her honor)
- 5.00 **In Praise of St. Peregrine Laziosi** (Three celebrations in his honor)
- 4.00 **Mary: Servant, Mother Woman** (Theological Reflections on the religious title Servant of Mary, by Fr. Walter Brennan,OSM)
- 6.00 **The Sacred Memory of Mary** (by Fr. Walter Brennan,OSM)
- 15.00 **The Seven Sorrows** (by Bob McCormack, music and meditation on the Seven Sorrows of our Blessed Mother) CD; cassette (\$10.00)
- 15.00 **In Honor of Mary** (by Bob McCormack, music and meditation: “a spiritual sojourn to significant places in Mary’s Life”). CD.
- 10.00 **SOSM SCAPULARS** (Made in Mexico)
- 8.00 Servite Rosary (black)
- 10.00 Servite Rosary (white crystal)
- 6.00 SOSM Pins
- 7.00 SOSM Pendants

**Available from: NATIONAL OFFICE
SERVITE SECULAR ORDER
3121 W JACKSON BLVD
CHICAGO IL 60612-2729
773-638-5800, ext. 48
773-533-8307 Fax**

Publicaciones en Español

1. Vigilia de Nuestra Señora (Oficio de los Siervos a Santa Maria).....	\$1.50
2. Siete Hombres Una Comunidad.....	\$2.50
(Origen de los Siervos de Santa María)	
3. San Peregrino Laziosi Siervo de María.....	\$2.50
(Oraciones, "leyenda", culto)	
4. Una Sola Alma Un Solo Corazón.....	\$2.50
(Origen de los Siervos de María)	
5. Breve Historia OSM.....	\$7.50
6. Enviados para servir: Siervos evangelizadores.....	\$4.50
7. Oracional de la Orden Seglar.....	\$8.00
8. Triduo a San Peregrino.....	\$4.50
9. Novena a San Peregrino.....	\$3.50
10. Liturgia de las Horas OSM.....	\$15.00
11. Via Matris (varios esquemas).....	\$9.50
12. Comentario a la Regla de Vida de la Orden Seglar.....	\$8.00
13. Regla de Vida de la Orden Seglar de los Siervos de Maria.....	\$7.00
14. Lectio Divina en el origen de los hermanos menores y de los Siervos de Santa María.....	\$4.00
15. Escapulario (Orden Seglar).....	\$15.00
16. OSSM pins.....	\$6.00
17. OSSM polo shirts (camisas).....	\$16.00

Para ordenar: osmsecular@aol.com, 773-354-9561.

Secular Servite

OSSM

Pre-planning your
Advanced Directives



Local Community cycle of life

- Pre-Planning Advanced Directives
- Items, Communication, Prayers, Ritual, Images

From our Rule of Life

Art. 9 This gift of a vocation finds its roots in baptismal consecration and with its acceptance the Servants of Mary commit themselves to follow Christ and to bring to fulfillment the evangelical commandment of love.



Holy Mary Mother of God Pray
 For Us Sinners Now and At the
 Hour of Our Death
 Amen

Pre-Planning Agreement Form

Directions

- Appoint one witness for the signing of the Advanced Directives.
- The Local OSSM Community will place original signed and dated Advanced Directives in their records.
- It is the responsibility of the OSSM brother or sister to provide copies of their Advanced Directives for placement in their *trust, will* and for their *family*.

The celebration of your life and memory are important to your loved ones.

	Vigil	Mass	Burial
Rosary			
Pin			
Scapular			
Prayer Book			
Rule			
Promise Certificate			
Other (ex. Servite			
Liturgy of the Hours			
Celebrant			
Con -Celebrant			
Cantor			
Musician			
Parish Name			

Mass of Christian Burial

Opening Prayer

Let Us Pray

Lord God,
who gives life and destroys death,
welcome our sister (Name) or brother (Name)
who has left our community of
Secular Servants of Mary
and now returns to you.
Amid the difficulties and labors of this world,
she/he dedicated herself/himself to follow Christ

and to bring to fulfillment
the evangelical commandment of love,
in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
Grant her/him your everlasting light and peace.

We ask this through the Lord Jesus Christ, your
Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
One God, forever and ever.
Amen.

Prayer Over the Gifts

Lord God, we offer these gifts for our sister (Name) or brother (Name)
By your power, may they become the sacrament of salvation which frees the world from sin and is the
pledge of future

Preface

The Lord be with you. /R

Lift up your hearts. /R

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. /R

All powerful and ever living God,
we do well always and everywhere to give you
thanks
through our Lord Jesus Christ.

He who died for his sisters and brothers
has prepared a place for us
in your eternal dwelling with Mary,
our Lady, and all her faithful servants.

He will come again in glory
to raise the us all and lead us into the
fullness of freedom and love
in your everlasting Kingdom.

He who conquered sin and death
promised eternal life to his disciples
who live in love.

And so, with all the choirs of angels and saints,
we praise you and join in their unending hymn
of praise.

Prayer After Communion

Let Us Pray

Lord,

we have been nourished by the sacrament of immortality.

We have celebrated these mysteries in memory of our sister (Name) or brother (Name).

As a Secular Servant of Mary, she/he was a witness to the Gospel, and urged on by the love of God,
she/he cooperated in the building of a new world in the light of
Gospel values.

Grant her/him now the gift of eternal life.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Introductory Rite

Leader: The Peace of the Risen Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

(song)

Leader: Brothers and Sisters we are gathered together in communion with our (name), who has left his/her earthly home for the eternal city. We know that those who die in the Lord continue to live with the risen Lord.

Encouraged by this faith, let us commend our (name) to the Father's love. He/She now stands before our merciful Father and is called in Christ to the fullness of his/her vocation and to share the glorious treasure which is his/her inheritance with Mary and all the Saints.

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, Source of all life, accept our prayer for your (name), a brother/sister of Christ, a servant of the Virgin Mary, and companion in life and service. (name) has left this world and now stands at the threshold of eternity. Let your face shine upon (name).

May (name) hear the voice of Your Son inviting him/her into the eternal city where you, heavenly Father, are the reward of the just, where Christ the Light shines forever, and where the Spirit pours out the abundance of your love. May (name) receive the promised inheritance, for you have been his/her treasure and the love of his/her heart.

May (name) receive from Our Lady the reward of a faithful servant. May the angels receive him/her into communion to share in the glory of the saints who proclaim your mercy forever. We ask this through Christ our Lord

All: Amen

Word of God Readings from Gospel, Divine Office or *Vigilia de Domina*

Prayers Intercessions

Leader: We have been comforted by God's Word; let us now raise our hearts in prayer to the Lord, the Father of mercy.

Reader: For our (name), who in baptism became a child of God and an heir of everlasting life; that the Lord bring him/her into the company of the saints, let us pray to the Lord. **All:** *Lord, have mercy on your servants.*

Reader: For (name), who was nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ; that he/she share in the heavenly banquet of eternal life, let us pray to the Lord. **All:** *Lord, have mercy on your servants.*

Reader: For (name), who dedicated his/her life to the service of God and the Virgin Mary; that Christ and His mother receive him/her into eternal happiness, let us pray to the Lord. **All:** *Lord, have mercy on your servants.*

Reader: For the relatives and friends of (name), and for all members for the Secular Servite Order: that they may find comfort and hope in the word and promises of the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.

All: *Lord, have mercy on your servants.*

Reader: For all those who have died in the hope of resurrection; that Christ may raise them to eternal glory on the last day, let us pray to the Lord.

All: *Lord, Have mercy on your servants.*

Reader: For all those who have died in the hope of resurrection: that Christ may raise them to eternal glory on the last day, let us pray to the Lord.

All: Hail, Holy Queen...

Concluding Rite

Leader: Let us now conclude our petitions with the prayer of Jesus

All: Our Lord's Prayer

Leader: God, almighty Father, in faith we proclaimed the death and resurrection of your Son. Grant that our (name), and all who sleep in Christ may participate in the fullness of life forever. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

Leader: eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord.

All: And let perpetual light shine upon him/her. May he/she rest in peace. Amen

Leader: May the soul of (name) and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the love of God and the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ bless and console us and gently wipe every tear from our eyes: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

Conclude with a song or a few moments of silent prayer or both...

From the Prayer Book

Ant. My soul counts on the word of the Lord because with the Lord is mercy and forgiveness.

Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,
Lord, hear my voice!
O let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleading.

If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,
Lord, who would survive?
But with you is found forgiveness;
for this we revere you.

My soul is waiting for the Lord,
I count on his word.
My soul is longing for the Lord
more than watchmen for daybreak.
Let the watchmen count on daybreak
and Israel on the Lord.

Because with the Lord there is mercy
And fullness of redemption,
Israel indeed he will redeem
from all its iniquity.

Ant. My Soul counts on the word of the Lord because with the Lord is mercy and forgiveness.

All pray in silence for awhile.

Prayer

Lord, you have revealed that you forgive us even when we cannot forgive ourselves. Do not consider the hidden faults of our departed brothers and sisters, but hear our voice that cries to you from the depths. Grant our brothers and sisters the light that they longed for more than watchmen count on daybreak. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

May the Lord receive our departed brothers and sisters into his light and peace.

All: Amen



Salve Regina



S Alve, Regina, * máter mi-se-ricórdi-ae : Ví-ta, dulcé-
do, et spes nóstra, sálve. Ad te clamámus, éxsu-les, fí-
li- i Hévae. Ad te suspi-rámus, geméntes et fléntes in hac
lacrimárum välle. E-ia ergo, Advocáta nóstra, illos tú-os
mi-se-ricórdes ócu-los ad nos convérte. Et Jésum, benedí-
ctum frúctum véntris tú-i, nóbis post hoc exsí-li-um ostén-
de. O clé-mens: O pí- a : O dúlcis Vírgo Ma-rí- a.

For music in any language contact the OSSM National Office

Email: osmsecular@aol.com

Servite Images for Your Prayer aid



Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4



Image 6



Image 5



Image 7



Image 8



Image 9

Images available at the OSSM
National Office

Email: osmsecular@aol.com
Phone: 773.638.5800 ext. 48

Orden Seglar de los Siervos María

Instrucciones De Pre-Planificación Funeral



Comunidad Local *ciclo de vida*

- Pre planificación por adelanto
- Asuntos, comunicación, oraciones, imágenes

Regla de Vida: Art. 9. Con la aceptación voluntaria del don de la vocación, arraigado en la consagración bautismal, el Siervo de María se compromete a seguir a Cristo y a llevar a su plenitud el mandamiento evangélico del amor.



Santa María Madre de Dios ruega por nosotros pecadores
ahora y el la hora de nuestra muerte, Amen.

Formulario de Instrucciones de Pre-Planificación Funeral

Información importante:

- Escoja un testigo para que firme lo pre-planificado
- La Comunidad OSSM local tomara nota en su record de la fecha cuando se firmo el formulario.
- Es responsabilidad del Servita firmando este acuerdo de proveer una copia de este acuerdo a sus familiares y en su testamento.

La celebración de su vida y memorias es importante para sus seres queridos.

- Favor de poner sus iniciales a lo que usted desea ese día:

Rosario

Botón OSSM

Escapulario

Libro Oracional

Regla de Vida

Certificado de la Promesa

Especifique:

Celebrante de la misa: _____

Cantante, coro o músico(s): _____

Sitio del funeral y nombre de la Parroquia: _____

Instrucciones adicionales, ejemplo: música, lectores, elogios en la eucaristía y notas adicionales:

Instrucciones de Pre-Planificación Funeral

Yo, _____ firmo aquí y estoy de acuerdo en estas Instrucciones Pre-Planificadas.

Firma _____ Día _____

Firma Testigo _____ Día _____

Nombre del testigo deletreado _____

MISA DE CRISTIANA SEPULTURA

ORACION COLECTA

Señor, que das vida y destruyes la muerte,
recibe a nuestro(a) hermano(a), (nombre),
quien se ha apartado de nuestra comunidad de
los Seglares Siervos de María
y ha retornado a Ti.

Entre las dificultades y los labors de este mundo,
se dedicó a seguir a Cristo y a llevar a su plenitude
el mandamiento evangélico del amor,
en servicio a la Santísima Virgen María, nuestra Señora.

Concédele Tu luz y Tu paz eternal.

Te lo pedimos por Jesucristo, nuestro Señor, Hijo Tuyo,
Que vive y reina contigo en la unidad del Espíritu Santo,
un solo Dios, por los siglos de los siglos. Amen.

ORACION SOBRE LAS OFRENDAS

Señor Dios, te ofrecemos estos dones por nuestro(a) hermano(a), (nombre).
Por Tu poder, que se transformen para nosotros en sacramento de salvación
que libera al mundo del pecado y es prenda del porvenir.

Por Jesucristo nuestro Señor. Amen.

Prefacio

El Señor este con ustedes. /Respuesta: **Y con tu Espíritu.**

Levantemos nuestros corazones. / **Respuesta: Lo tenemos levantado hacia el Señor.**

Demos gracias a nuestro Dios todo poderoso. /**Respuesta:** _____

Dios todopoderoso y por siempre Dios vivo, siempre te damos gracias y donde quiera por nuestro Señor Jesucristo. El quien venció el pecado y la muerte prometió vida eterna a sus discípulos quienes viven en su amor. El quien murió por sus hermanos y hermanas ha preparado un sitio para nosotros en su eterna morada con nuestra Santa Madre María, y todos sus fieles servidores. El vendrá en su gloria a resucitar a todos y a dirigirnos en su eterno reino de amor y libertad. Y con todos los coros de Ángeles y Santos, te alabamos y nos unimos por siempre con tu himno de alabanza.

Oración después de la Comunión

Oremos, Dios, nos hemos alimentado del sacramento de la inmortalidad. Hemos celebrado los misterios en memoria de nuestro(a) hermano(a) **N** _____. Como Siervo(a) Secular de María, el/ella fue testigo de tu Evangelio, e impulsado por el amor de Dios, el/ella coopero en la construcción de un nuevo mundo en la luz de los valores del evangelio.

Vigilia

Rosario (opcional)

Rito de introducción

Leader: La paz de Cristo resucitado este con ustedes.

Todos: y con ustedes.

(Himno)

Leader: Hermanos y hermanas estamos congregados hoy aquí en comunión con nuestro(a) **Nombre** _____ quien a dejado este mundo por la eterna ciudad. Sabemos que los que mueren en comunión con Dios continúan viviendo con el Dios resucitado. Animados por nuestra fe, vamos a encomendar a **N** _____, en el amor de nuestro Padre. El/ella esta ante nuestro Padre misericordioso y llamado en Cristo por su vocación y para compartir los tesoros gloriosos que el/ella heredo por María y todos los santos.

Oremos: Padre Celestial, fuente de la vida, acepta nuestras oraciones por **N** _____, hermano(a) de Cristo, un servidor de la Virgen María, su compañero por vida y de servicio.

N _____, ha dejado este mundo y esta ante el umbral de la eternidad. Deja que tu rostro brille ante **N** _____.

Que **N** _____, escuche la voz de tu Hijo invitando a el/ella a la ciudad eterna donde tu Padre Celestial, eres la recompensa total donde Cristo la luz que brilla por siempre y donde el Espíritu vierte en abundancia de tu amor. Que **N** _____, reciba la herencia prometida, porque tú eres su tesoro y amor de corazón. Que **N** _____, reciba de Nuestra Señora la recompensa como un fiel servidor. Que los Ángeles lo/la reciban en la comunión de compartir en la gloria de todos los Santos que proclaman la misericordia por siempre.

Por Jesucristo nuestro Señor Amen.

Intenciones

Leader: Hemos sido confortados por la palabra de Dios; ahora levantemos nuestros corazones en oración a Dios, nuestro Padre de misericordia.

Lector: Por nuestro Hermano(a) **N** _____, quien en el bautismo se convirtió en hijo de Dios y heredero de la vida eterna; que Dios lleve a **N** _____, en la compañía de los Santos, oremos a nuestro Dios. Todos: Dios tenga misericordia de tu servidor(a).

Lector: Por **N** _____, quien se alimento del Cuerpo y Sangre de Cristo; Que el/ella comparta el banquete celestial de la eterna vida, oremos a nuestro Dios. Todos: Dios tenga misericordia de tu servidor(a).

Lector: Por **N** _____, quien dedico su vida al servicio de Dios y la Virgen María; Que Cristo y su Madre reciba a el/ella en la eterna alegría, Oremos a nuestro Dios. Todos: Dios tenga misericordia de tu servidor(a).

Lector: Por los familiares y amigos de **N** _____, y todos los miembros de la Orden Secular de los Siervos de María: que encuentren consuelo y esperanza y las promesas de Dios, Oremos a nuestro Dios. Todos: Dios tenga misericordia de tu servidor(a).

Lector: Por todos quienes murieron con la esperanza de la resurrección; Que Cristo los resucite a la eterna gloria cuando el regrese, Oremos a nuestro Dios. Todos: Dios tenga misericordia de tu servidor(a).

Lector: Por todos quienes murieron con la esperanza de la resurrección; Que Cristo los resucite a la eterna gloria cuando el regrese, Oremos a nuestro Dios. Todos: Dios Te Salve María...

Rito de Conclusión

Leader: Ahora concluyamos nuestras peticiones con la oración que Jesús nos enseñó.

Todos: Padre nuestro que estas en cielo...

Leader: Dios y Padre todopoderoso, proclamamos con fe, la muerte y resurrección de tu hijo. Concede que nuestro hermano(a) **N** _____, y quien duerme en Cristo pueda participar por completo la vida por siempre. Te pedimos esto completamente en Cristo nuestro Dios. Todos: Amen.

Leader: Concédete el eterno descanso a el/ella, o Dios. Todos: Y permite que la luz perpetua brille en el/ella. Que descanse en paz. Amen.

Leader: Que el alma de **N** _____ y de todas las almas que partieron en tu fe, en completa misericordia de Dios, descanse en paz. Todos: Amen.

Leader: Que el amor de Dios y la paz de nuestro Señor Jesucristo bendiga y nos consuele y suavemente limpie cada lagrima en nuestros ojos: En el nombre del Padre y del Hijo y del Espíritu Santo.

Todos: Amen.

-Concluir con un himno o unos momentos de oración en silencio o ambas.

Concédete a el/ella ahora el regalo de la vida eterna. Te lo pedimos por Cristo nuestro Dios, Amen

Salve Regina

Dios te salve, Reina y Madre de Misericordia, vida, dulzura y esperanza nuestra.

Dios te salve. A ti llamamos, los desterrados hijos de Eva; a ti suspiramos, gimiendo y llorando en este valle de lágrimas.

Ea, pues, Señora, abogada nuestra, vuelve a nosotros esos tus ojos misericordiosos, y después de este destierro muéstranos a Jesús, fruto de tu bendito vientre.

Oh clemente, oh piadosa, oh dulce Virgen María.

Ruega por nosotros, Santa Madre de Dios.

Para que seamos dignos de alcanzar las promesas de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo.

Amén.

Imágenes Servitas para usar en el Programa de Oración de ese día.



Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4



Image 6



Image 5



Image 7



Image 8



Image 9

Más imágenes disponibles en la página web: www.servite.org, en la sección de OSSM.

References for Ongoing Formation

Br. Arnaldo Sanchez, OSM

1. Sources: Servite History First Century
2. Fra. Alexis, One of the Seven: Letter from the Prior General Fr. Angel Ruiz Garnica, OSM
3. Brothers and Servants: The Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order
4. Bear One Another's Burdens: Letter from the Prior General Fr. Angel Ruiz Garnica, OSM
5. St. Peregrine Laziosi, Servants of Mary: Translated by Peregrine Graffius, OSM
6. Lectio Divina by authors:
 - a. Mario Masini
 - b. Basil Pennington
7. Rosary of Our Lady of Sorrows
 - a. This book contains the History and both formats
 - b. Also found in OSSM Prayer Book – Page 41-44
8. Vigilia De Domina
 - a. Also found in the OSSM Prayer Book – Page 19-39
9. Angelus Domini
 - a. A version found in the OSSM Prayer Book - Page 7-18
10. The Foundation of the Order of Servants of Mary in the U.S.A. (1870 – 1883) by Fr. Austin Morini, OSM
 - a. Bro. Arnaldo Sánchez, OSM has a power point presentation
11. OSM Liturgical Publications In Praise of:
 - a. Our Seven First Fathers
 - b. St. Philip Benizi, OSM
 - c. St. Peregrine Laziosi, OSM
 - d. St. Anthony Mary Pucci, OSM
 - e. St. Juliana Falconieri, OSM
 - f. St. Joseph

See Sections of the Order Friar Servants of Mary General Curia Website, www.servidimaria.net to find the following resources

Under Spirituality at Marian Prayers:

- a. Vigil 1 & 2
- b. Angelus Domini
- c. Rosary of Our Lady of Sorrows 1 & 2
- d. Via Matris 1 & 2
- e. Akathistos Hymns

- f. The Hour of the Mother
- g. Ave Maria

Under Resources, at Documents, you will find the following OSM Documents:

- Rule of St. Augustine
- Constitutions OSM
- Capitular Documents 2007 (at capitular documents)

Under OSM Sources I (PDF)

- Archive Sources, Pg. 15
- Constitutiones Antiquae, Pg. 107
- Constitutiones Novae, Pg. 155
- Liturgical Sources, Pg. 167
- Hagiographical Sources, Pg. 185
 - **Legenda De Origine, Pg. 189**
 - Life of Saint Philip of Florence
 - I legenda “Vulgata”, Pg. 263
 - II Legenda “Perugina”, Pg. 287
 - Life of Blessed Joachim of Siena, Pg. 315
 - Life of Blessed Francis of Siena, Pg. 334
 - Life of Blessed Peregrine of Forli, Pg. 371
- Iconographic Sources, Pg. 384

Letters of the Priors General

- Bear One Another’s Burdens
- Alexis, One of the Seven
- Sent to Serve
- With Mary at the Foot of the Cross
- A family with a future after 700 years of life
- Do Whatever He tells you – Author, year
- Servants of the Magnificat – Author, year

Mary

1. There are various documents and books that can be used in our on-going formation.
2. Servite Religious and Sisters and Secular are available to give talks on Mary

UNIFAS Brazil 2010

Since we all are responsible for the care of our planet, make available for discussion the following available at the Secular Order Website,
<https://sites.google.com/site/secularservites/>:

- a. The Prior General's Opening Address
- b. Both talks given by Sr. Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ
- c. Talk given by Fr. Clodovis Boff, OSM

Liturgy of the Hours

Have a class/presentation on the History and proper way to pray the Liturgy of the Hours.

Review Fr. Vidal Martinez' email dated Monday, June 7, 2010

Recommendations for on-going formation

Opening Our Hearts and Homes Secular Order of the Servants of Mary

Familiarize yourself with the program.
Reproduce whatever parts of the material you plan to use.
Set up the gathering space needed for the meeting.

Each of the three sessions of this program includes a time for personal reflection and communal discussion. It is up to the leader or the group to determine how much time to allot to the process. A minimum of one (1) hour per session is recommended.

Reflection and Discussion Session: Session #1
Reflexión y Preguntas para Dialogar: Sesión #1

1. What initially drew you to the Secular Order of the Servants of Mary?
¿Qué te atrajo a la Orden Secular de los Siervos de María?

2. What are the signs of viability and vitality in the Secular Order today?
¿Qué señales de vida y vitalidad encuentras en la Orden Secular?

3. Through what means do others come to know about the Secular Order?
¿Por qué medios se enteran los demás de la Orden Secular?

4. What do you see as obstacles in the Secular Order for new membership?
¿Qué ves en la Orden Secular como obstáculo para los nuevos miembros?

5. Prospective candidates desire quality community life. What, in your local community, fulfills this desire? Los futuros candidatos buscan una vida comunitaria de calidad. ¿Cómo se realiza en tu Comunidad de la Orden Secular?

6. In your dialogue, what important insights did you learn?
En el diálogo, ¿qué ideas nuevas has escuchado?

Reflection and Discussion Session: Session #2 **Reflexión y Preguntas para Dialogar: Sesión #2**

REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: SESSION #2

REFLEXION Y PREGUNTAS PARA DIALOGAR: SESION #2

1. How were you invited into the Servite Secular Order?

¿Cómo fuiste invitado/a a la Orden Secular de los Siervos de María?

2. What do you think the person who invited you saw in you?

¿Qué, crees tú, que esa persona que te invitó vio en ti?

3. What are you looking for in potential candidates today?

¿Qué cualidades buscas en los posibles candidato/as?

4. Do your community's prayer, common life, and service meet the needs of today? How?

¿La vida de oración, de vivencia comunitaria, y de servicio en tu comunidad responde a las necesidades actuales? ¿Cómo?

Reflection and Discussion Session: Session #3

Reflexión y Preguntas para Dialogar: Sesión #3

1. As a Secular Order Community, what is your purpose for inviting new members?

¿Cómo Comunidad de la Orden Seglar, con qué propósito desean invitar a nuevos miembros?

2. How do you express your commitment to the Servite Secular Order without focusing exclusively on service to others?

¿Cómo expresas su compromiso a la Orden Seglar de los Siervos de María sin enfocarte exclusivamente en el apostolado?

3. How does your Secular Order Community encourage and share in vocation awareness efforts? What more can you do? ¿Cómo motiva y comparte tu comunidad en los esfuerzos por promover las vocaciones? ¿Qué más podrían hacer?

4. What ministries or activities of your Secular Order community have potential for generating new members? What efforts do you make to reach out to others?

¿Qué apostolado o actividades de tu Comunidad de la Orden Seglar tiene potencial para generar nuevos miembros? ¿Qué esfuerzos hacen para salir al encuentro de los demás?

5. What gift do you reflect as a promised member of the Servite Secular Order? How will you use this gift to invite new members?

¿Qué don reflejas como miembro de la Orden Seglar? ¿Cómo utilizarás ese don para invitar a nuevos miembros?

Sent to Serve “Evangelizing Servants”

Letter from the Prior General
Fr. Hubert M. Moons, OSM

Rome, 19 June 1992, Feast of St. Juliana Falconieri

TODAY'S CHALLENGES

Call to a new evangelization

Today's evangelization challenges

The situation of the Order today

Historical memory of the Order's evangelizing activity

EVANGELIZATION POTENTIAL OF OUR CHARISM

Compassionate presence

The Word of God

The witness of our life and especially of our fraternity

Spirit of service

Mary

ACTION SUGGESTIONS

Areas of evangelizing activities

Formation and evangelization

Some particular categories of evangelizing Servants

The government of the Order and the new evangelization

1 Today's Challenges

Call to a new evangelization

1. It is always the Spirit who calls to evangelization. So it was in the early church which, after being invested with Power from on high (Lk 24, 49), opened itself to the world to proclaim the gospel of Christ crucified and risen. Whoever is not sent by the Spirit runs in vain (see Gal 2, 2) and is besides a false prophet speaking in his or her own name and not in the name of the Lord (see Mt 23 & Ez 13).

2. John Paul II, attentive to the urgings of the Spirit, has called the whole church to a "new evangelization". He has done this first of all through the living example of his apostolic travels "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1, 8), then with his words, especially the

encyclical letter *Redemptoris Missio*.

3. The times in which we live are truly a *kairos* for the proclamation of the gospel. Christ himself calls to us: "Raise your eyes and see the fields which are ready for harvest" (Jn 4, 35). What are, then, the signs of this "favorable time" for sowing the seed of the liberating Word?

4. Let us recall first of all the five hundredth anniversary of the first evangelization of the Americas. It is one of the greatest missionary undertakings of the church, but it is also true that on that continent the missionary's cross came together with the conqueror's sword. This historical collusion has heavily stained the witness to the gospel of peace through the Christian community's share in responsibility for the massacre of indigenous races and cultures. But human sin did not overcome, the power of the Word that raised up on that continent the largest existing Christian community, half of the Catholic church today. The memory of the first evangelization of the Americas calls us to heed again the Lord's missionary injunction: "Go, make disciples of all the peoples" (Mt 28, 19).

5. The tremendous changes taking place in eastern Europe offer a second sign that now is a favorable *kairos* for evangelization. The communist system, which prohibited religion for political reasons, has caved in. Such a situation, with its violation of freedom of conscience, couldn't last. Religion, once repressed, is coming back in force and needs to be accompanied by a new evangelization.

6. A third sign appears in the efforts made toward European unification, and not simply in the economic realm, but before all else, in the rediscovery of Europe's Christian roots. The recent bishops' synod (28 November - 14 December 1991) proposed a "new evangelization" of the European continent, so that the people can "decide again on their future in contact with the person and message of Christ" (*Declaration of the special assembly on Europe*, 2).

7. We stand at the threshold of the second millennium. This fact pressures the church to an examination of conscience with regard to its missionary mandate. A third of humanity are declared Christians; and apart from the fact that their number is decreasing, they need a new evangelization, so that the faith becomes more than a cultural inheritance, so that it becomes a personal conviction and a courageous proclamation of Jesus Christ.

7a. Questions for community reflection

1. Which of the signs mentioned above, or what other signs, prod us the most to undertake a new evangelization effort?
2. What are the concrete implications of the presence of the Spirit who urges the entire ecclesial community to proclaim the gospel?

3. How was John Paul II's encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* received by your community? What new light did it shed on your apostolic service?

Today's evangelization challenges

8. Humanity today poses many and serious challenges to the work of evangelization. We can consider two of them: the problem of life's meaning and the problem of justice - in other words, the religious question and the ethical question.

9. Let's consider first the religious challenge regarding life's meaning. Modern societies are characterized by a growing domination of natural and social processes by human rationality. Religion has been moved outside the area of social concern and relegated to life's margins.

10. This phenomenon has taken on historically the form of secularism, the claim to prescind totally from every transcendental reference or, in other words, from the depth dimension of human existence. With their consumerism and hedonism modern societies have become largely materialistic and practically atheistic. They are organized and function "as if God didn't exist".

11. But such a situation does violence to the person as open to the radical and ultimate meaning of existence. In recent years there has been a strong reaction to this culture that is closed within the horizon of immanence. New forms of religious consciousness have emerged. If in some respects these represent a legitimate reaction to modern society's secularism, in other respects and from a Christian viewpoint they point to a new paganism with all sorts of ambiguities.

12. The modern world feels more and more like an orphan without God, the Creator and Father of all and everything; and it is to this world that the unity of believers is called to proclaim the news of the kingdom and of the Father who loves humanity in the alliance of grace and salvation established through his Son Jesus Christ. Who will be able to reveal to men and women of today the ultimate meaning of life? "Only you have words of eternal life" - this is the confession of faith made to Jesus Christ by Peter, the representative of all believers (Jn 6, 68). Yes, it's the task of the ecclesial community to be the very space where men and women of today can experience faith and rediscover both their own radical identity and their final destiny.

13. The modern world is, consequently, a genuine "mission territory". It's not enough to make Christian values (freedom, solidarity, peace ...) a part of modern culture that penetrates its structures. The culture must make these values its own through an option centered on their life-giving source: faith in Jesus the Lord!

14. The second great challenge for the Christian and human community concerns the ethical dimension of the social and economic misery in which a very large part of humanity lives and struggles. This is not, admittedly, a problem that touches the religious sphere directly; it is, nonetheless, closely connected with faith in Jesus the

Liberator. It's a connection that Jesus himself made between his own person and the poor: "I was hungry and you gave me to eat..." (Mt 25, 35). The content of evangelization cannot be restricted to the proclamation of the Lord of the kingdom; rather it implies the proclamation, too, of the kingdom of the Lord who is bread and peace for all. It is for this very reason that "evangelizing the poor" (Lk 4, 18; 7, 22) was for Jesus and continues to be for the church both sign and content of the mission.

15. The ecclesial community must, therefore, in the name of Jesus, care for the oppressed and abandoned of every kind. The social mission of the church arises out of its mission to evangelize. The option for the Christ of the poor leads to an option for the poor of Christ. The church today is confronted not only with the spiritual misery of the world but also with its socioeconomic misery. The church is called and in turn calls us to struggle tenaciously for a world that is both meaningful and just.

16. To these challenges others must be added: respect for nature (ecology), the dignity of women, peace among all peoples a culture that favors life in all its forms (in distinction to a culture of non-life), the physical and mental health of individuals (the drug problem), a new world order. Even without the dramatic and urgent character of the primary and fundamental problem of misery and hunger, all these challenges are serious and are waiting for the evangelizing message that comes from the church and, within the church, from the Servants of Mary.

16a Questions for community reflection

1. How does our community act with regard to the multitude of de-christianized or neo-pagan men and women who are outside the believers' circle? How can they be reached and how can the experience of faith in Jesus Christ be awakened in them, with all the social implications that involves?
2. How do we give concrete expression to the awareness that the "option for the poor" is part of the evangelization mission?
3. Which of all the problems of today's world deserves our special attention and commitment?

The situation of the Order today

17. The new foundations in Africa and Asia have to be counted among the most significant realities of the Order at the present time. Some new communities have come to life, not as the result of institutional planning, but rather as the surprising fruit of the action of the Spirit. They represent a "great hope for the Order with their opening to new cultures and churches and with their promising flourish of vocations" (1989 General Chapter, n. 70).

18. These communities are presently greenhouses of missionaries "ad gentes"; and at

the same time they are already active in the work of evangelization in the difficult areas in which they live.

19. With the political opening of Eastern Europe there appears for the Order the possibility of rebuilding its presence in that area, even if it's only a time for planting seeds for future growth. This renewal will make possible an apostolic service of re-evangelization in countries where for decades the public expression of the faith was repressed with violence.

20. In the so-called first world members of the Order are making every effort to overcome every inclination to conformity and resignation and to renew their evangelical presence. New types of communities and new forms of service are being established in answer to the new pastoral and social challenges of the area; but it is especially through the retrieval of prayerful and fraternal witness that the Servants of Mary are striving to build up an evangelizing presence in countries where the most advanced processes of modernization and secularization have generated new kinds of existential and social poverty.

21. In Latin America the Servants of Mary are trying to keep up with a Church set on making its own both the struggle of the oppressed and their culture. The new evangelization on this continent is striving to bring together faith and life, the gift of grace and the struggle for justice. As it tries to fit itself into the context of people's lives the Order is also working at a greater internal integration and a fuller participation in the indigenous local cultures.

21a Questions for community reflection

1. How is our community, or how is it able to be, in communion with the Order's new foundations and, more broadly, with the newest evangelization frontiers?
2. In what ways is our community close to those who live nearby, especially to the poorest?
3. To what degree is our community inculturated into the environment in which it lives? Do we, for example, speak the language of those to whom our message is directed? Is our proclamation of the gospel truly communicative?

Historical memory of the Order's evangelizing activity

22. From the very beginning of their evangelical-penitential life outside the walls of Florence the Seven Founders practiced evangelization through their life witness. It was the apostolate of attraction. Later, when they withdrew to Monte Senario out of a desire for greater solitude, they continued to exercise this attraction on the people. Speaking of Monte Senario and giving a mystical interpretation of its name as "Mount Sound", the *Legenda de origine* says: The Seven "were to make themselves heard by the world through their sound, i.e. through their word and example, so as to lead the world to follow Christ" (n. 43). **For this reason "many people, attracted by**

the sound from the mount and by the odor of their sanctity and virtue, followed with deep devotion and hurried to the place from which the sound and odor were coming ... They said to one another: Come, let us go up to this sweet sounding mount" (n. 45).

23. The Servite Order was born of this evangelizing witness: "Many, attracted by the sweet odor, decided to go and live with them... and not ever give up their company" (n. 47). This element, which belongs to the origins of the Order, became part of all its later evangelizing activity. **The Order has always preferred in its pastoral work the method of attraction over showy and institutionalized methods - in other words, it prefers the way of the lowly and free.** "Apostolic life", more than preaching, is the way of communion for the Order. Evangelical attraction comes to life through the witness of prayer, fraternity, self-denial and solitude.

24. The lives of the Order's saints give the same message. These holy men and, women evangelize with their lives: a simple and hidden fraternal life enriched with a special witness of joy, human delicacy and mercy, as is seen in **Blessed Francis of Siena**; or a life of prophetic courage and love for the oppressed, as exemplified in the life of **Blessed James of Citta' della Pieve**. In all of them shines forth a deep love for the Mother of Jesus. The service they render to Our Lady is filled with nobility and finds expression in multiple "acts of reverence".

25. The Servants of Mary carry on this humble kind of apostolic service in their sanctuaries, parishes and other social and cultural works. In this respect the figure of **St. Anthony Pucci**, the centenary of whose death (1892) we are celebrating this year, takes on special significance. As parish priest in Viareggio for forty-five years he dedicated himself totally to preaching, catechizing, caring for the poor and organizing the Christian community. And in his method of evangelization we see again the way of luminous attraction through the witness of an evangelical life that was poor, fraternal and nourished with devotion to the Mother of Jesus and to our Lord in the Eucharist. All this makes of St. Anthony the perfect pastoral model of the evangelizing Servant.

26. We can see how throughout history the life of the Order moves ahead in movements of concentration and dilation, of which Monte Senario and Florence are symbols. It is with this rhythm that the Servants of Mary live and grow, individually and in community, and with which they mature their discipleship and carry out their apostolate yesterday and today.

27. At the midpoint of the last century the Order, until that time limited to Europe, widened its evangelizing service to include North America for the sake of the immigrants there in need of pastoral care. Already at the time of the "discovery" of the Americas by Europeans the Order had thought seriously about sending missionaries to these areas, but nothing came of it. At the beginning of this century, in a context of missionary fervor and under urging of the 1901 general chapter, the Order committed itself decisively "to renew as soon as possible the mission among the infidels". It inaugurated a number of

foundations "ad gentes", first in Canada, then in South Africa and Latin America, and finally in the 1970s in Asia and other African countries. The general chapters followed the Order's missionary expansion with growing interest and suggested opportune directives.

28. We can ask why our Order, with respect to others, became aware of the urgency of missionary work remarkably late. Is it perhaps to be ascribed to the prevalently contemplative orientation of the Order and to the value attached to witnessing? Or is it the sign of a group that lived closed in upon itself throughout history? We can examine ourselves on this point in order to learn humbly the lessons that the Spirit teaches through history.

29. Let us recall with gratitude the great number of Servite women who not only shared in the Order's missionary work but also advanced on their own to new frontiers of evangelization in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.

29a Questions for community reflection

- 1. What is the most important lesson you have learned from the historical memory of the evangelizing activity of the Order?**
- 2. What can our community learn from the "way of attraction" characteristic of the Order's evangelization method? Which evangelical values do most to attract men and women today? How is the CC way of attraction' related to the mission "ad gentes"?**
- 3. Can you speak of a member of the Order that represents for you a living witness of dedication to the evangelization mission?**

2 Evangelization Potential of our Charism

30. At this point it will be worth our while to reflect for a moment on our charism' to consider how the task of evangelization in today's world challenges it. We will consider five key ways for understanding the connection between our charism and evangelization.

Compassionate presence

31. Compassion is one of the original and central values of the Order's charism. It's "a characteristic of the Servants" (*Const.*, 52) and is intimately related to the ideal of service. **Compassion is the root or soul of our service.**

32. Furthermore, **compassion is closely connected to devotion to Mary, the Mother of Mercy. It expresses a profoundly Marian attitude, such as we find in the invocation of the *Salve*: "turn thine eyes of mercy toward us".** Servants of Mary,

too, must look on every one of God's creatures with compassion. They will look at the world, not naively, but with critical realism, and without whine or wail. Getting beyond all pessimism and bitterness they will avoid taking into account only errors and vices so as not to despise people and curse the times.

33. This way of looking at the world is that of the heavenly Father. "God so loved the world that he sent his only Son ... God did not send his Son to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (Jn 3, 16-17). The compassion and mercy of the Father must also be ours (see Lk 6, 36).

34. This radical spirit of compassion should never leave us, not even when it is necessary to recognize and denounce the sins of the world. Hate for the sin does not eliminate but rather demands love for the sinner and concern for his or her conversion to Love.

35. Before becoming word and deed our basic evangelizing attitude will be that of compassionate presence. The meaning of the incarnation, without which there can be neither evangelization nor redemption, requires of us, not that we "stand for" , but rather that we "stand with", that we be close to our brothers and sisters to be evangelized. This is especially important with regard to those who are suffering, to all who are crucified on the infinite crosses in the world. **Standing alongside them we want to imitate the compassion of her who at the foot of the cross shared in her Son's suffering, offering the comfort of her silent but efficacious presence.**

36. The ideal of compassionate presence might arouse in some of us the desire to share more directly the suffering of the poor. The same ideal might also urge some to search for "expressions of our life that differ from those which already exist" (*Const.*, 78)- for example, communities established in areas where the poor live, so as "to share their plight and anxieties" (*Const.*, 58). Blessed Joachim of Siena is a beautiful example of this compassion for those suffering. Unable to console an epileptic he met, Joachim asked the Lord to have his brother's burden placed on himself, his prayer was granted and Joachim bore the illness patiently all the days of his life.

37. Compassion makes us discover not only new forms of life but also "new kinds of service" by which practical and efficacious assistance can be offered to the old and new kinds of misery present in our society (*Const.*, 76b).

38. Compassion, furthermore, requires of the Servants a serious *inculturation* into the society to which they bring their message. The Constitutions appropriately prescribe: "The friar should become one with the people he joins." The text makes this more specific when it speaks of "adopting their language, understanding their ways of thought and belief and sharing their problems." The result of this process will be an inculturated Christian community, that is, again in the words of the Constitutions, a people whose faith is rooted "in their own most genuine spiritual and cultural values" (*Const.*, 96). This applies not only to missionary work but to every kind of evangelization activity.

39. The evangelizing Servant will avoid at all cost even the appearance of any attitude of arrogance and presumption, as if the Servant were master of some truth being benevolently shared with the unknowing. The fact is that even the evangelizer must be evangelized. The Servant will approach others with a heart itself open to being evangelized. The Servant will be attentive to the "seeds, of the Word" which are sowed in every culture. Sharing in the kenosis of Christ the Servant will assume an attitude of humility and self-denial and learn to listen - serving is in fact essentially a matter of listening.

40. The Servant will listen also to the voice of the Lord who speaks in different accents. A special voice is that which is heard in the cry of the poor; it is a voice with the evangelizing potential to call us to conversion, solidarity, prophecy and even martyrdom. The person who sets out to evangelize the poor ends up being evangelized by them.

41. The Servant listens to the voice of the Lord heard in those who are existentially poor, those who have lost life's meaning, the faith dimension, the vision of eternal life, the grace of communion with the Creator and Father. The true Servant will be essentially fraternal, a companion along the way, searching with the others for the manifestation of the saving mystery. This will be the Servant's primary and basic attitude.

41a Questions for community reflection

1. **How is it possible to look compassionately on the world in which we live with all its incongruities?**
2. **What are the obstacles that keep us at a distance from the people? How can we overcome these obstacles?**
3. **What evangelical lessons do we learn from the people with whom we work?**

The Word of God

42. We must ourselves be evangelized before we set about evangelizing others; first we must listen to the Word, then proclaim it to others. This is what we see in Mary: before going into the hill country to bring the good news of the Messiah she listened with attention and accepted in faith the heavenly message.

43. The experience of God is at the very root of the mission; without it the mission is a merely human undertaking. Evangelization is real only if it is consequent to a faith that takes hold of one's whole being. The person who is open to being evangelized is aware of a spontaneous urge to evangelize others and to share the joy of what one has discovered (see Lk 15, 6.9). **For this reason evangelization is more the fruit of enthusiasm than organization, more the work of God's Spirit than of human enterprise.** Only in this way can positive effects be hoped for. "The world ... is crying for evangelizers who speak of the God they know and who is familiar to them, as if they

saw the invisible (EN 76f)." Communities of Servants must consequently begin by evangelizing themselves, constantly deepening their faith experience and rediscovering again and again the wonders the Lord works everywhere (see EN 15d).

44. We want therefore to pay more attention to the *Lectio divina* in our communities: a serious and shared reading of the Scriptures that takes into account the concrete reality of our life and of our people. It will be a time of mutual evangelization, a time when the members, as if involved in a kind of pious contest, compete in edifying one another, as we read in the comforting words of the Letter to the Hebrews: "We must consider how to rouse one another to love and good works. We should not stay away from our assembly, as is the custom of some, but encourage one another, and this all the more as you see the day drawing near" (10, 24-25)

45. As our Constitutions dictate, we will gather. "with the people, if possible" for the celebration of the liturgy (see art. 24a; also art. 80 & 81). The involvement of the ecclesial community will offer striking witness to the truth that we all, religious and laity, form one body, the Body of Christ in the midst of the world.

45a Questions for community reflection

- 1. How can God be experienced? Try to share fraternally a word about the way you have experienced and continue to experience God in your life.**
- 2. What room is there for the Word of God in our personal and community life? How can the Word of God be made more striking and enlightening for the people of God?**
- 3. To what extent is the ecclesial community involved in the liturgical celebrations of our community?**

The witness of our life and especially of our fraternity

46. "The good news has to be proclaimed especially through witness" (EN 21; and see 69 & 76). More than proclaimed, the gospel needs to be lived and witnessed. The Servant will witness above all to the absolute primacy of God, of love for the Mother of Jesus, of preference for the lowliest, and of generosity, joy and hope. But in a special way each Servant is called to offer the witness of fraternity.

47. Fraternity is one of the originating values of our spiritual tradition. Its gospel roots appear clearly in the priestly prayer of Jesus: "That they may be one so that the world will believe" (Jn 17, 21). The first Christians shocked the world with the unbelievable witness they gave to fraternal love. The world has always been sensitive to the witness of communion and scandalized by the bad example of disunion (see EN 77).

48. In their effort to live in fraternal communion the Servants look to the **luminous and incomparable example of the Seven Founders.** The *Legenda* says about their

friendship: "They could not bear being away from each other, separated for even an hour, without feeling quite uneasy" (ch. 6, n.29) We are always mindful of this uncommon grace: our Order was founded by a community and must therefore live and evangelize as a community.

49. Our witness of fraternity also draws a strong impulse from the Rule of St. Augustine. According to the Rule communion is the central goal of religious life: <<Before all else, - live together in harmony>>, <<being of one mind and one heart>> on the way to God. For is it not precisely for this reason that you have come to live together?" (art. 3).

50. It follows from all this that at the beginning of our evangelization efforts stands the living witness of our life, especially of our fraternity. **In this sense our community life is an evangelizing act.** Even those in the Order who have a vocation more ad intra will carry out their evangelization work by offering to the world the very real witness of fraternal love.

51. Many of the communities of the Order are living today in multicultural situations. In them we meet other Servants from different cultural backgrounds. This is a splendid opportunity for mutual enrichment through an exchange of cultural differences. In such a situation the special values of each culture are given recognition and appreciation: the perception of the vital cosmic unity that is characteristic of African cultures, the openness to the divine mystery so characteristic of Asian cultures, the social sensitivity common to Latin America cultures, the feeling for freedom and initiative which is found in North America, the concern for the meaning of human existence and history which we find in Europe. In this way our communities become laboratories of international and multicultural living. At the same time they are a prophecy of the world of tomorrow where multiple cultures are called to live in peace. Lastly, they give witness to catholicity by showing how it is possible to live today a specific cultural fraternity.

52. It's important to realize that fraternity is an indispensable condition for the pastoral fruitfulness of all evangelization work. Our apostolic service, over and above the concrete forms in which it is carried out, has always to maintain a community character. In this regard our Constitutions manifest an original vision of evangelization when they declare how important it is for the Order "to extend its fraternity to the people of today" (art. 74) and to work for the creation of "an ever-growing faith community (art. 82). This applies too to the missions where our "so eminently community-centered" life will be the first sign of the church's presence (art. 95).

53. In the light of this evangelization through fraternity the Constitutions state that "commitments which affect the whole community are to be taken on by the community" (art. 20). And this is in line with the Lord's own apostolic recommendations. He chose twelve" (Mk 3, 14) for the mission and sent them to preach "two by two" (Mk 6, 7). The Second Vatican Council (PO 8), moreover, appropriately recalls this rule of the apostolic fraternity with regard to all pastors. And it applies still more to all religious, and especially to us Servants of Mary.

53a Questions for community reflection

1. Recall members of the Order you remember for having evangelized through their life witness.
2. How can our community better its witness of fraternity, especially those elements to which the people are most sensitive.
3. How do we live cultural differences within the community? What pastoral repercussions do these differences have?

Spirit of service

54. How does the new evangelization make a claim on our charismatic vocation to service? Our spirituality calls us not so much to specific kinds of service, but rather to do everything in a spirit of service. To evangelize as Servants, then, includes the following:

- to evangelize *humbly*, not as master but as messenger and servant of the Word (EN 78);
- to evangelize *faithfully*, for what is asked of the servant is fidelity (see 1 Cor 4, 2);
- to evangelize *obediently*, accepting promptly to go where the Word sends us;
- to evangelize *joyfully*, for the Lord is to be served with joy (see Ps. 99, 2) and without murmuring (see Heb 13, 17 and 1 Cor 10, 10);
- to evangelize *without demanding anything*, according to the Lord's command: <<When you have done all you were supposed to do, say, "We are useless servants" (Lk 17, 10)>>.

55. But of whom are we the servants?

- We are servants of the *Good News* proclaiming in Christ Jesus the gospel of grace and liberation (Lk 4, 18-19).
- We are servants of *prophecy* courageously decrying every kind of oppression and preaching the advent of a world where all are brothers and sisters whose love brings joy to the Father's house.
- We are servants of *life* standing alongside all whose existence is threatened, from the unborn to the aged.
- -We are servants of the *poor* helping them to free themselves from the burdens of hunger, ignorance, sickness and untimely death.
- -We are servants of *peace* trusting in the power of gospel meekness and loving self-sacrifice and overcoming every feeling of hate and revenge.
- We are servants of the *glorious Virgin* offering her daily praise and drawing inspiration from her example in all our service.

56. On the other hand we refuse categorically:

- to be servants of the *mighty* by taking their gifts and supporting their indecent interests;
- to be servants of modern society's *idols*: pleasure, success and fame;
- to be servants of *ideologies* aiming to blur our vision and keep us quiet, taking away our freedom to think and to say the truth;
- to be servants of any and every human *institution* that tries to dominate and manipulate us;
- to be servants of *injustice* and *sin* that deprive of the "glorious freedom of the children of God (Rm 8, 21).

We want in the end to be "free from everything in order to be "the servants of all" in love (see Gal 3, 5), in imitation of Jesus Christ, Servant of Yahweh, and of Mary, Servant of the Lord.

56a Questions for community reflection

1. Which aspect of our charism of service would you highlight in the work of evangelization?
2. Which gospel cause are we especially called to serve today?
3. What most enslaves a Servant and suppresses all freedom to proclaim the Gospel?

Mary

57. It's important to see clearly from the beginning that Mary belongs to the content of the mystery of salvation and consequently to the proclamation of the gospel. She is truly the <<Virgo praedicanda)>. To proclaim Christ in his relationship to his Mother has been and continues to be a very valid missionary method based on the fact attested in the gospels (see Mt 2, 11; Jn 2, 5) that Mary always leads us to Jesus. As we plead in the *Salve*, she shows Jesus" to us.

58. This was, moreover, the missionary method used in the first evangelization in America. It is Mary who introduced the Messiah to the continent. It is not without significance that the ship with which Columbus traveled to America was called the Santa Maria. It is just as significant that the first Mass celebrated in America, at Santo Domingo, was on the feast of the Visitation. John Paul II was able to say, therefore, that "Latin America was transformed into the land of the new visitation because the inhabitants accepted Christ who had been carried there, in a sense, in the womb of Mary" (Talk at Santo Domingo, 11 November 1984). Furthermore, the Virgin of Guadalupe is represented as the Mother of life: carrying the Messiah she gives birth to him on behalf of the new people being born on that continent. And this new people perceived in her face the signs of the tenderness and grace of the maternal face of God.

59. Besides belonging to the content of evangelization Mary is a spiritual model for the evangelizer. According to the document "Do Whatever He Tells You" of the 1983 general chapter (nn. 44-49) **there are four biblical scenes where Mary appears proclaiming the Gospel word:**

- **At the Visitation (Lk 1, 39-56) Mary carries the incarnate Word in her womb to John and his parents and proclaims the wonderful things God has accomplished in her.**
- **At the visit of the Magi she is the one who shows the King to the representatives of the nations to be evangelized; coming into the house "they saw the child with Mary, his Mother, and bowed and adored" (Mt 2, 11).**
- **At the wedding in Cana it is Mary whose action provokes the beginning of Jesus' messianic signs and the birth of faith in the disciples. She also orders obedience to the Lord with the words "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2, 5) - the same command that Christ himself will give to the apostles when he sends them out as missionaries.**
- **Lastly, before Pentecost, Mary, together with the apostles, the other women and the brothers of Jesus, prepares herself to receive the Spirit who will give the church the power to spread to the ends of the earth (Acts 1, 14).**

60. The II Vatican Council sees in the Mother of Christ a great example of that "maternal affection" with which every evangelizer has to be nourished (LG 65). Like Mary, the preacher must bring Christ to birth in the hearts of his hearers - just as the Apostle says (Gal 4,119 and 1 Cor 4, 15).

61. **Especially for us Servants of Mary she represents a style of evangelization. Let us recall several characteristics of this style.**

- ***Lowliness.* Mary is the lowly woman Yahweh looked on with compassion. In the same way every Servant of the Virgin has the same regard for all, is not haughty and is attentive to the lowly (see Rm 12, 16). In the Order humility has always been considered a fundamental virtue. Could it be otherwise for the Servants?**
- ***Incarnation.* Mary is the woman in whom the Word became flesh, first in her life, then in her womb. The Servant; too, must have the same realism, a faith embodied in the most varied forms of service that avoids every kind of empty and abstract spiritualism.**
- ***Nearness.* Mary was always present, in an affectionate and active way, in the life of Jesus: at Cana, at foot of the cross and in the first community.**

The Servant, too, must be present -and sometimes simply a presence- wherever Christ suffers from hunger, abandonment, hopelessness, helping to redeem those suffering by sharing their hardship.

61a Questions for community reflection

- 1. How is Mary present in our preaching? Is our Mariology related to the work of evangelizing, is it Christocentric?**
- 2. Have a fraternal exchange of experiences on how the proclamation of Mary opens the way to the proclamation of Christ.**
- 3. How is Mary an example of "maternal affection" for our relationships with people?**

3 Action Suggestions

62. Having taken a look at today's world in terms of the values contained in our charism, let's now consider some possible lines of evangelizing action.

Areas of evangelizing activities

63. First of all there are our parishes; they are the ordinary context for "new evangelization". As we know, the percentage of regularly practicing Catholics is small (about a third); the majority practices only occasionally. It is at this majority and its need to be renewed in faith that the new evangelization is aimed (see EN 52 &56; RMI 33d). And those who practice regularly have a special and important mission of sensitizing and trying to get those who are distant more involved in church life. For this task they need a strong missionary spirit which the pastoral leaders must inspire and sustain.

64. There are many possible ways of reaching those who have been evangelized very little or not at all: preparation for the sacraments of initiation, home visits, parish missions, saints' feast days, the mass media, and any other means which pastoral creativity can come up with.

65. The liturgy plays a very important role in evangelization project. As the II Vatican Council (SC 10) stated, the liturgy is the source and high point of the Church's life. Besides the value of collective prayer the liturgy is a privileged time for evangelization. This is so not only because a lively can be a strong call to faith, but also because it includes the proclamation of the Word. This is especially important and valuable for those-and they are the majority-who relate to the faith community almost exclusively through the sacraments. The sacraments offer an excellent opportunity for calling those at a distance to draw near to the Lord. The sacrament of reconciliation deserves special attention; through it conscience experiences the call of renewing grace.

66. The homily has a privileged place in liturgical celebrations. Evangelizing Servants work at enriching this moment of grace through an intense and prolonged preparation.

67. Besides the homily there is also catechesis which contributes to the growth of the Word in the hearts of all-children, young people and adults. Blessed John Angelo Porro is an inspiration and example for the Servants in catechetical work.

68. In parish work the ordained Servants will never forget that they are religious who are priests and not the opposite. The exercise of the priestly ministry should be dearly marked by the style proper to religious. Part of the local church, the Servant's horizon is universal and the Servant is always ready to go where the major superiors see a need. In parish leadership work every Servant is guided by the prophetic charism that belongs to religious life and that constantly draws attention to new approaches to the challenges facing evangelization today.

69. And there is more. All evangelizing work must be carried out in the style of our charism, i.e., in community, in a spirit of humble service and always inspired by Mary (see *Const.*, 1). The Mother of Jesus should always be present in our preaching and in all our apostolic work. She is the one who brings the Lord to others, especially those furthest away. In our world divided between the opulence of a few and the misery of many we can't forget that the Messiah brought by the Virgin is the Liberator of the Magnificat. For this reason the Servants will imitate Mary of Nazareth "who didn't hesitate to proclaim that God vindicates the lowly and oppressed and overthrows the powerful of the world from their thrones" (MC 37b).

70. Marian sanctuaries are also privileged places for evangelization. This is so, first, of all, because people, often people who do not practice regularly but who are moved by need or a sense of gratitude, come there with an open heart to receive the Word and the Grace of the Lord. Secondly, they come be

cause they sense there the power of Mary's intercession. She calls them to conversion and to obedience to the Word and bestows on them healing and salvation. The ministry carried out in the sanctuaries is of increasing importance in our mobile society, especially on weekends. For many people the sanctuaries are the places where they encounter God, especially through the sacrament of reconciliation and the Eucharist. The preaching of the gospel will strive to arouse in the faithful a commitment to Jesus Christ and to the demands of his kingdom of love, justice and peace.

71. The mission "ad gentes" has always been a specific form of evangelization in the Church and the Order. From centuries-long missionary experience, and especially from the five hundred years of evangelization in the Americas, we can draw some important guidelines:

72. First of all, dialogue. Faith witness must happen in a context of dialogue. The evangelizer must also be evangelized. Dialogue presupposes a listening and receptive

attitude, so as to discern "the seeds of the Word", "the riches that God in his bounty has given to all peoples" (AG 11).

73. Then, there is the matter of *inculturation*. The evangelizing Servant "becomes incarnate like Christ in his people" (1989 General Chapter, n. 94). Inculturation of the faith and the church is impossible unless the evangelizer is steeped in the people's culture.

74. Lastly, justice. The proclamation of the Messiah cannot be cut off from the proclamation of the liberation of the oppressed. Jesus himself, "the first and greatest evangelizer" (EN 7) conducted himself in this way: "The Lord has sent me to evangelize the poor" (Lk 4, 18). A privileged sign of the coming of the kingdom is that "the good news is proclaimed to the poor" (Lk 7, 22). In this way evangelization creates a new society according to the kingdom of God at the same time that the church is implanted.

75. All of this must happen with a style of missionary existence characteristic of our Order. This includes: compassion, fraternity, central reference to the Mother of God, and humility in service.

76. The importance of the missions demand that superiors encourage those members who want to go "ad gentes", even for a limited period of time. The superiors must also sensitize the members "to the missionary commitment of the Order" (1989 General Chapter, n. 97).

77. Besides these areas of evangelizing activity "new forms of service" (Const., 76b) are suggested to the Servants by the Spirit. What are these new forms that our charism calls us to take on today? Here are a few categories of persons who are especially in need of our apostolic service:

- *young people*, especially the victims of drugs and AIDS;
- *children* who have been abandoned and who are counted in the thousands in the Third World;
- *immigrants* in the industrialized world;
- *women*, particularly those in demeaning or unrewarding situations; our Marian spirit calls us to solidarity,
- *minorities* of every kind: racial, ethnic, sexual, religious;
- the world of *culture*: the mass media and the universities-these are the "modern areopagus" (RMI 37).

78. Evangelizing Servants, last of all, cannot hold themselves back from the major problems stirring the contemporary world-peace, ecology, racism, the search for an authentic new world order, and, especially, the overcoming of famine and misery. The world's joys and hopes, especially those of the poor and suffering, are also the joys and hopes of the Servants of Mary (see GS 1).

78a Questions for community reflection

1. What can be done to revitalize the evangelizing capacity of our community in the context of its specific pastoral activity?
2. If the charism affects all our activity, what aspect of our charism needs development for the sake of the evangelizing work to be done?
3. What are some of the new frontiers of apostolic service which Servants of Mary have yet to get involved in?

Formation and evangelization

79. During initial formation every Servant of Mary will acquire a personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus (see Phil. 3, 8). Like Mary of Bethany, every Servant will sit at Jesus' feet and listen to his Word (see Lk 10, 39). It is necessary to be a disciple in order to be an apostle. Evangelization is a matter of proclaiming the Word you've heard and of witnessing an experience you've had. "If we live in Christ and experience him as the Absolute of our life we feel the compelling need to give him to others" (1989 General Chapter, n. 301). To fracture this fruitful dialectic of receiving and giving would mean failing into a sterile personalism and a useless activism.

80. For this reason formation must take into account the two dimensions of the life of faith: concentration and expansion. This includes, on the one hand, the grounding of mission in faith experience; and, on the other hand, the opening of faith to the missionary call. And this holds for both the Order's clerics and all other members. Initial formation places the accent on "being with" Jesus in community (see Mk 3, 14b), but this has to be developed in stages of apostolic service toward the "sent-forth-to-proclaim" (see Mk 3, 14c), as Jesus did with his disciples in the first mission (see Mk 6, 7-12).

81. The pastoral experiences of the formation years aim at producing in the candidates more of an immanent, i.e. a specifically formative, effect than a transitive or pastoral one. For this reason, the apostolic activities of those in formation have to be carefully reflected upon in times of prayer, celebration and study so they can be purified and perfected according to the reflective and sapiential model of Mary of Nazareth, who "kept and reflected on all these things in her heart" (Lk 2, 19.5 1).

82. It's important that candidates be initiated a spirituality in which faith and life, prayer and ion, discipleship and apostolate, are intimately related. This dialectic must be pursued of course in the period of ongoing formation. Each stage unfolds with its own accents and rhythm.

83. From the very beginning of formation there two aspects of evangelization that must be clearly marked out in all pastoral activity, two aspects to which the contemporary

world is very sensitive: incarnation in the life and culture of a people and attention to the liberating dimension of the gospel. The latter is crucial today for the credibility of Christian proclamation (see OA 5 1) and the first is basic for "the foundation and growth of the local church " which is the objective of missionary activity (see 1989 General Chapter, n. 93).

84. The vocation to the mission "ad gentes" will be fostered in candidates through various means:

- intercessory prayer;
- visits from missionaries, hearing of their experience;
- exchange of news with missionaries through letters and bulletins;
- missionary experiences;
- taking part in promotional missionary drives.

84a Questions for community reflection

1. How can we help those in formation to develop both a prayer life open to missionary involvement and an involvement rooted in prayer?
2. How do the two aspects of authentic evangelization, inculturation and liberation, get developed in the years of first formation?
3. What can be done in our communities and especially in our formation communities to arouse and increase interest in the mission "ad gentes"?

Some particular categories of evangelizing Servants

85. Now we want to turn our attention to the special task of a few groups of Servants in the new evangelization: lay members, the elderly members of the Order, and the members of contemplative communities.

86. With regard to lay Servants -and we use the term "lay" in all its theological richness-, it's necessary to keep in mind that our communities intend a life of radical fraternity. Our lay members are essentially involved in the project of radical fraternity, being at the same time a need, a test and a memory for all. With good reason our Constitutions state: "We are all servants and that is what we call ourselves. We all have the same dignity ... and we are all equal" (art. 9). In line with this text the 1989 General Chapter declared that the Order, "in its option for a world without divisions and inequalities.... encourages all to a profound conversion, so that all divides and all that obscures the transparent quality of our fraternal life be removed from our communities" (n. 86).

87. The transparent quality of our fraternal witness has a by no means marginal meaning for the work of evangelization. In fact, a first contribution to the proclamation of the gospel comes from our living together in charity. If there are divisions in the community how can we proclaim the credibility of the kingdom of the Father, for this

kingdom is also a kingdom of brothers and sisters?

88. Lay Servants are for the whole Order a theological memory of its originating identity: the Order is a particular state of life and not a hierarchical ministry. Our vocation is in fact rooted in baptism and not in the sacrament of orders. Lay Servants are also a historical memory of the Seven Founders, most of whom were living in the lay state; priestly ministry came later as an expression and extension of their religious consecration. The priests of the Order will always be Servants who are priests and not priests who are also Servants; it is the religious charism that grounds and gives meaning to full equality among all Servants.

89. On the other hand, evangelization is the mission of every baptized person. By their state of life, as well as through their example of faith and of humble and efficacious service, lay Servants have a unique place of their own in the work of evangelization. Their evangelical witness is of evangelizing value and benefit, first of all, to the other members of the community, who are privileged to have these fully lay members. The piety and tireless work of these lay members throughout history is so well known and appreciated that we need not praise them again here.

90. Lay members have, besides, a unique role in the general ministry of the church and can by their baptism take on many pastoral tasks, such as catechesis, *lectio divina*, animation of the liturgy, the visiting of the sick, as well as many other activities that fit in with the charismatic and prophetic role of religious.

91. In vocation work our communities should be careful to present clearly the possibility of living our charism outside the clerical state as lay Servants. We are aware that much remains yet to be done to retrieve a rich presence of the authentically lay members of our communities.

92. Servants who are senior in age also have a place of their own in evangelization work. In their prayer, more intense in later years, and by their courageous acceptance of their condition, these Servants carry out a most useful service for the apostolic activity of their communities.

93. Their presence is especially fruitful through the evangelical and evangelizing example they offer to the other members of the community: the example of their faith, patience, perseverance, kindness and attentiveness to others, poverty, wisdom, counsel, and other Christian virtues.

94. The elderly will also be able to find some pastoral involvement where their life experience spiritual wisdom will be fruitful: for example, sacrament of reconciliation, spiritual direction, pastoral encounters.

95. With regard to those Servants who, following upon a constant tradition of the Order, choose different forms of hermetical life, they too should have a sense of being called to

evangelization work, they should take part in it wholeheartedly according to their special style of life. Their unceasing prayer to the Lord will be an echo of the cries and hopes of their brothers and sisters involved directly in evangelization efforts. They will take upon themselves the burdens of other evangelizing Servants and will keep them "profoundly present in the heart of Christ" (LG 46b). The source of apostolic vitality is the contemplation of the love of God. For this reason the witness offered to the primacy of God and of God's love is an inexhaustible source of evangelizing energy for all the others.

96. Contemplative communities can contribute more directly to evangelizing activities in several specific ways:

- by offering hospitality to those directly involved in evangelization for the sake of physical and spiritual renewal;
- by welcoming into their communities those people, especially young people, who are searching for the sources of the fullness of life;
- by celebrating the sacred mysteries in a dignified and dynamic way so that, as St. Paul says, "if some nonbeliever or someone not initiated came along, he or she would fall down in adoration of God and proclaim the presence of God among you:" (1 Cor 14, 24-25).

96a Questions for community reflection

1. Exchange ideas on the theme of retrieving the presence of lay Servants in the Order. What would the advantages be and what can the community do to favor this?
2. What do we do to promote the evangelizing capacities of the elderly in our communities?
3. What value do we attribute to contemplation and to contemplative Servants in terms of evangelization?

The government of the Order and the new evangelization

97. The role of superiors at different levels (general, provincial, local) and of chapters and councils is vital for the work of evangelization. Their first task is surely that of promoting evangelization. Superiors and chapters will make every effort to encourage total dedication to the work of proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom. All Servants desire to receive from their superiors, besides their administrative service, words of encouragement.

98. Those in charge in the Order will also be an to the members of gospel proclamation to the people. This is what we see in the lives of the saints such as St. Philip and St. Anthony Pucci: they carried both leadership and evangelization activities.- The superiors are of course called to re-evangelize again and again the members of the Order by calling them to conversion and faith in the gospel (see Mk 1, 15).

99. The government of the Order has the duty guaranteeing the necessary means, there where evangelization requires special resources, such as in the missions and new foundations. Special attention will be given to the struggles and difficulties of all who work in these areas. Special attention will also be given to lay members and to the elderly; they will be encouraged to make their own contribution to the new evangelization.

100. Lastly, the superiors will promote communication among those involved in the various evangelization projects. They will foster an exchange of information, goods and services among the communities. The sharing of goods deserves special attention as a sign and means of spiritual, fraternal and apostolic communion (see the Rule of St. Augustine, ch. 1 and the recommendations of the 1989 general chapter, n. 202-203).

100a Questions for community reflection

1. What does each one expect from the leadership of the Order at all levels with regard to the new evangelization?
2. What kinds of cooperation already exist or should exist among the communities and provinces with regard to evangelization?
3. What can the superiors do to promote within the Order a sense of apostolic cooperation?

101. These reflections and suggestions are offered with simplicity to the communities of the Order by the general government. They are the result of meditation on the Word and of dialogue with many members of the Order. May God help us to hear what "the Spirit says to the communities" (Rev 2, 7) today. And may the Virgin Mother of the Incarnate Word continue to be with us in this new stage of our evangelization mission.

Rome, 19 June 1992, Feast of St. Juliana Falconieri

Fr. Hubert Maria Moons
Prior General of the Friar Servants of Mary

Enviados Para SERVIR

Siervos Evangelizadores

1

Provocaciones del Momento Actual

Llamada a la nueva evangelización

1. Siempre es el Espíritu el que convoca a la evangelización. Así fue en la primera iglesia, la cual, habiendo recibido Fuerza de lo Alto (Lc. 24, 49), se abrió al mundo para anunciar el Evangelio del Crucificado y Resucitado. Ya que el que no es mandado por el Espíritu, corre en vano (cfr. Gal. 2, 2). Y además, se muestra como falso profeta, que habla en nombre propio y no en nombre del Señor (cfr. Jer. 23; Ez. 13).

2. Juan Pablo II se hizo intérprete de la voz de Espíritu y lanzó a toda la iglesia la convocatoria de la "nueva evangelización". Lo hizo, en primer lugar, a través de su ejemplo vivo, realizando sus viajes apostólicos "hasta los confines de la tierra" (Hch. 1, 8); luego, mediante sus propias palabras, especialmente por la encíclica *Redemptoris Missio*.

3. De hecho, el tiempo en que vivimos representa un verdadero *kairós* para el anuncio del Evangelio. Es Cristo mismo el que nos invita: "levantad vuestros ojos y ved los campos que blanquean ya para la siega" (Jn. 4, 35). Y ¿cuáles son, pues, las señales de ese «momento oportuno» para lanzar la semilla de la palabra libertadora?.

4. Tenemos, en primer lugar, la memoria de los 500 años de evangelización de las Américas. Fue una de las mayores gestas misionarias de la Iglesia. Es verdad: la cruz del misionero llegó a aquel continente junto con la espada del conquistador. Esa colusión histórica manchó gravemente el testimonio del Evangelio de la paz y comprometió seriamente la comunidad cristiana en la responsabilidad histórica frente a la masacre de las razas y culturas indígenas. Con todo, el pecado del hombre no anuló la fuerza de la Palabra. Ésta no dejó de producir en aquel continente la mayor cristianidad viva existente, la mitad de la iglesia católica actual. Por tanto, la memoria de la primera evangelización de las Américas nos llama a acoger de nuevo el mandato misionero del Señor: «Id, haced discípulos míos de todos los pueblos» (Mat. 28, 19).

5. Una segunda señal del actual *kairós* evangelizador nos viene de las gigantescas transformaciones que están en curso en Europa del Este. Aquí se ha hundido el sistema comunista, que había puesto la religión bajo entredicho político. Pero esa situación violentaba la libertad de conciencia y por ello no pudo resistir y tuvo que ceder. Ahora emerge ahí con fuerza la religión antes reprimida, y exige que emprendamos de nuevo con rigor una nueva evangelización.

6. La tercera señal nos la ofrece el esfuerzo de reunificación de Europa no sólo en el aspecto económico sino más bien bajo la insignia de la cruz, es decir, de sus raíces auténticamente cristianas. El reciente Sínodo de los Obispos en torno a esta cuestión (28 nov. - 14 dic. 1991) ha vuelto a lanzar el proyecto de una «nueva

evangelización» del continente europeo, para que estos pueblos puedan "decidir nuevamente sobre su futuro en el encuentro con la persona y el mensaje de Jesucristo" (Declaración de la asamblea especial para Europa, 2).

7. Finalmente, estamos llegando al término del segundo milenio. Esta fecha constituye para la Iglesia un poderoso estímulo para que haga un examen de conciencia frente al mandamiento misionero. Lo cierto es que los que se confiesan cristianos, a pesar de que representan hoy una tercera parte de la humanidad, no cesan de disminuir en número, y, hasta entre los que se profesan cristianos, son muchos los que necesitan una reevangelización para que la fe pase a ser, de mera herencia cultural, una convicción personal, y de convicción personal a anuncio valiente de Jesucristo.

7a Preguntas para confrontar en la comunidad:

1. ¿Qué señal, de las propuestas u otras, nos estimula mayormente para un nuevo esfuerzo de evangelización?
2. ¿Qué significa esto: es el Espíritu que impulsa la Comunidad eclesial entera al anuncio del Evangelio?
3. ¿Cómo fue *recibida* en tu comunidad la encíclica de Juan Pablo II *Redemptoris Missio* (dic. 1990) ¿qué nuevas luces aportó para el servicio apostólico que tú realizas?

Desafíos del tiempo actual a la evangelización

8. Muchos y grandes son los desafíos de la humanidad actual respecto a la evangelización. Destacamos dos: el problema del sentido de la vida y el problema de la justicia. Se trata respectivamente de la cuestión religiosa y de la cuestión ética.

9. Tomemos el desafío religioso del sentido de la vida. Las sociedades modernas se caracterizan por un dominio creciente de la racionalidad humana sobre los procesos naturales y sociales. Esto llevó a dejar fuera del área social a la religión, relegándola al margen de la existencia.

10. Este proceso, en sí legítimo, se desarrolló históricamente en forma de secularismo, es decir, la pretensión de prescindir totalmente de una referencia trascendente, o sea, de la dimensión profunda de la existencia. Las sociedades modernas, en su consumismo y hedonismo, se han vuelto en gran parte materialistas y prácticamente ateas: viven y se organizan "como si Dios no existiera".

11. Sin embargo, una situación así violenta la naturaleza del hombre, en cuanto ser abierto al sentido radical y último de su existencia. En estos últimos años se ha verificado una fuerte reacción a esa cultura cerrada al horizonte de la inmanencia y han emergido tumultuosamente nuevas formas de conciencia religiosa. Estas, si por un lado representan reacciones legítimas al secularismo de la sociedad moderna, por otro significan, a los ojos de la fe cristiana, el advenimiento de un neopaganismo con todas sus ambigüedades.

12. Como sea, el mundo moderno se siente cada vez más huérfano de Dios Creador y Padre de todo y de todos. A ese mundo es al que la comunidad de los fieles está llamada a anunciar la buena nueva del Reino, del Padre que ama a la

humanidad en la alianza de gracia y salvación establecida a través de su Hijo Jesucristo. Pues ¿quién podrá descubrir al hombre moderno el sentido último de su vida? "sólo tú tienes palabras de vida eterna" - confiesa Pedro, representante de los creyentes, a Jesucristo (Jn. 6, 68). Sí compete a la comunidad eclesial ser el espacio donde el hombre y la mujer de nuestro tiempo puedan realizar la experiencia de la fe, redescubrir su propia identidad radical y su destino último.

13. En este sentido, la esfera de la modernidad es «tierra de misión». No es suficiente que los valores cristianos (libertad, solidaridad, paz), formen parte de la cultura moderna e impregnen incluso sus estructuras. Es necesario que se los apropien de nuevo mediante una opción de aquello mismo que está en su propia fuente y que constituye su savia vital - la fe en Jesús, el Señor.

14. El segundo gran desafío lanzado a la comunidad cristiana y humana en general se refiere a la cuestión ética de la miseria socioeconómica en que actualmente se debate gran parte de la humanidad. Sin duda que este no es un problema directo y primeramente religioso, pero tiene una conexión estrechísima con la fe en Jesús, el Libertador. Es una conexión que Él mismo estableció entre su persona y el pobre: "tuve hambre y me disteis de comer..." (Mat. 25, 35). De consecuencia, el contenido de la evangelización no puede quedar limitado al anuncio del Señor del Reino, sino que también implica anunciar el Reino del Señor, que es pan y paz para todos. Por esto mismo, "evangelizar a los pobres" (Luc. 4, 18, y 7, 22) fue para Jesús, y sigue siendo para la Iglesia, signo y juntamente contenido de su misión.

15. Por ello la comunidad eclesial, en nombre de Jesús, tiene que preocuparse de los oprimidos y abandonados de todo género. La misión social de la Iglesia deriva de su misión evangelizadora. Su opción por el Cristo de los pobres la lleva a la opción por los pobres de Cristo. Así, pues, además de la miseria espiritual del mundo moderno, la Iglesia tiene hoy ante sí la miseria socioeconómica. Está convocada, y convoca por su parte, a luchar de manera indisociable por un mundo que tenga sentido y, al mismo tiempo, un mundo de justicia.

16. Además de los grandes desafíos indicados, existen hoy otros, como: el respeto a la naturaleza (ecología), la dignidad de la mujer, la paz entre los pueblos, la cultura de la vida en todas sus formas (contra una mentalidad anti-vida), la salud física y mental de los individuos (el problema del narcotráfico), un orden mundial nuevo. Aunque ninguno de ellos pueda compararse, en dramaticidad y urgencia, a la cuestión de la miseria y del hambre, a causa del carácter primario y elemental de esta última, todos son desafíos reconocidamente graves, sobre los cuales la Comunidad cristiana, y los Siervos en ella, no pueden dejar de decir su palabra evangelizadora.

16a. Preguntas para confrontar en la comunidad:

1. ¿Qué hace nuestra comunidad con esa masa de hombres y mujeres descristianizados o neopaganizados que se encuentran fuera del círculo de los fieles? ¿cómo llegar hasta ellos y despertar en ellos la experiencia de la fe en Jesucristo con todas sus implicaciones sociales?
2. ¿Cómo expresamos en concreto nuestra consciencia de que la "opción por los pobres" forma parte de nuestra misión evangelizadora?

3. Entre todos los problemas del mundo de hoy, destaque uno que merezca de nosotros una atención y empeño particulares.

Situación actual de la Orden

17. Entre las cosas actualmente más significativas de la Orden podemos contar sin duda las nuevas fundaciones en África y en Asia. Se trata de comunidades nacidas fuera de toda programación institucional, como frutos sorprendentes del Espíritu. Representan una "gran esperanza para la Orden, por la apertura a nuevas culturas y a nuevas Iglesias, y por el prometedor florecimiento de vocaciones que ofrecen" (Capítulo General 1989, nº 70).

18. Desde el punto de vista de la evangelización, son de momento sementeras de misioneros «ad gentes», pero no dejan de ser al mismo tiempo focos de evangelización en los difíciles medios en que se encuentran.

19. Con la apertura política del este europeo, se abre también para la Orden la posibilidad de reactivar su presencia, aunque sólo sea en germen, en esa área. Tal reactivación es condición para un servicio apostólico de reevangelización en aquellos países, donde por decenas de años la expresión pública de la fe fue reprimida, incluso con violencia.

20. En el primer mundo se esfuerzan los Siervos por ser una presencia evangelizadora renovada, superando la tendencia al conformismo y a la resignación. Se crean nuevas formas de comunidad y de servicio, como respuesta a los recientes desafíos pastorales y sociales del ambiente. Pero es sobre todo mediante un restablecimiento del testimonio orante que los Siervos procuran ser una presencia evangelizadora en países en que el más avanzado proceso de modernización, más secularizador pues, se ha convertido al mismo tiempo en generador de nuevas pobrezas, tanto existenciales como sociales.

21. En América Latina, los Siervos trabajan por sintonizar sus pasos con el camino de una Iglesia que se dispone a asumir la lucha del pueblo oprimido, y también su cultura. La nueva evangelización en ese continente se esfuerza por unir íntimamente fe y vida, apertura a la gracia y lucha por la justicia. Al mismo tiempo que busca insertarse en los medios populares, en ese continente la Orden se esfuerza por una mayor integración interna y por una indigenización más profunda en las culturas locales.

21a. Preguntas para confrontar en la comunidad:

1. ¿Qué tipo de comunión está ofreciendo nuestra comunidad, o puede ofrecer, a las nuevas fundaciones de la Orden y a los frentes más avanzados de la evangelización en general?
2. ¿Cuál es el grado de proximidad de nuestra comunidad respecto al pueblo al que se acerca, especialmente con los sectores más pobres?
3. ¿En qué medida está nuestra comunidad adecuadamente inculturada en el medio en que vive? - Por ejemplo: ¿usamos el lenguaje de los destinatarios de nuestro mensaje? - ¿es comunicativa nuestra predicación evangélica?

Memoria histórica de la acción evangelizadora de la Orden

22. Al inicio de su vida evangélico penitencial, a extramuros de Florencia, los Siete ya practicaban la evangelización del pueblo mediante su testimonio. Era el apostolado de la atracción. Retirándose luego a Monte Senario, para gozar de mayor soledad, continuaron atrayendo el pueblo a sí. Hablando de aquel monte, e interpretando místicamente su nombre como "Monte Sonario", la *Legenda de Origine* dice: los Siete "iban a hacerse oír por el mundo con su sonido, es decir, con su palabra y ejemplo, para llevar el mundo a seguir a Cristo" (nº 43). Por eso - explica la *Legenda* - "muchos del pueblo, atraídos por su santidad y virtud, y siguiendo con profunda devoción ese sonido e perfume, se apresuraban en dirección al lugar de donde ese sonido y ese perfume venían... Y hablando el uno al otro decían:... Venid subamos a este monte sonoro y oloroso..." (nº 45).

23. De hecho, la Orden de los Siervos nació de ese testimonio evangelizador: "...Muchos, atraídos por el perfume... se decidirán a vivir con ellos, sin abandonar ya su compañía" (nº 47). Este dato originario acompañó toda la acción evangelizadora posterior de la Orden, que siempre ha preferido una pastoral o método de atracción, o sea, los caminos humildes y libres, a los caminos más vistosos y institucionalizados. La «vida apostólica» es para la Orden un camino de comunión más bien que un camino de predicación. Así pues, la atracción evangelica pasa, antes que nada, por el testimonio de oración, de fraternidad, de desprendimiento y también de recogimiento).

24. La vida de los santos y santas de la familia servita no nos muestra otra cosa. Evangelizan a través de su vida - vida fraterna, sencilla e incluso escondida. No falta en ellos un particular testimonio de alegría, delicadeza humana y misericordia, como se puede ver en el beato Francisco de Siena, ni tampoco el arrojo profético y amor a los oprimidos, como se ve en el beato Santiago de Città della Pieve. En todos brilla, sin embargo, un amor entrañable a la Madre de Jesús. Su *servitus* está llena de nobleza y pasa sobre todo a través de las muchas «reverencias» a la gloriosa Señora.

25. Los Siervos tampoco descuidan el servicio apostólico humilde en los santuarios, parroquias y diversas obras sociales y culturales. Conviene destacar aquí a San Antonio M. Pucci, precisamente en este año en que celebramos el centenario de su muerte (1892). Pastor durante 45 años en Viareggio, se dedicó totalmente a la predicación, catequesis, cuidado de los pobres y organización de la comunidad cristiana. Pero su manera de evangelizar fue igualmente el camino de atracción o de irradiación. El fue testimonio de vida realmente evangélica: pobre, fraterna, llena de piedad hacia la Madre de Jesús y el Señor eucarístico. En este sentido, San Antonio es el tipo pastoral más acabado del Siervo evangelizador.

26. Como quiera que sea, observamos por la historia que la vida de los Siervos transcurre en la alternancia de concentración y de dilatación, simbolizados respectivamente por Monte Senario y Florencia. En este ritmo, los Siervos, individual o comunitariamente, viven y crecen, practican el discipulado y ejercen el apostolado. Y ésto tanto antaño como hoy mismo.

27. A mediados del siglo pasado, la Orden, limitada hasta entonces a Europa, extiende su servicio evangelizador a América del norte, objetivizando concretamente la pastoral de los emigrantes. Ya al inicio del «descubrimiento» de las Américas por los europeos, la Orden pensó seriamente mandar misioneros a

aquella región, pero la idea no llegó a concretizarse. A principios de este siglo dentro de la atmósfera misionera de la época, y bajo el impulso del Capítulo General de 1901, la Orden tomó a pecho «recuperar lo antes posible la misión entre los infieles». Inició entonces varias fundaciones «ad gentes», primeramente en Canadá, luego en África del Sur y en América Latina y, por último a partir de los años 70, en Asia y en otros países de África. Desde aquella década los Capítulos Generales acompañan con interés creciente este despliegue misionero de la Orden, dando oportunas orientaciones.

28. Podríamos preguntarnos por qué nuestra Orden, a diferencia de otras, haya despertado tan tarde respecto a la actividad misionera. ¿Tendría esto algo que ver con la naturaleza más contemplativa y testimonial de la Orden? ¿O quizás porque vivió, a lo largo de la historia, demasiado replegada en sí misma? Los Siervos pueden interrogarse para sacar humildemente las lecciones que el Espíritu quiere darnos a través de la historia.

29. Hay que hacer también una mención honrosa de las tantas hermanas Siervas que, no sólo participaron como los Siervos de la misma labor misionera, sino que también han abierto por su cuenta nuevas fronteras de evangelización en África, Asia, las Antillas.

29a. Preguntas para confrontar en comunidad:

1. ¿Cuál es la lección más rica que tú personalmente sacas de la memoria histórica respecto a la actividad evangelizadora de la Orden?
2. ¿Qué puede aprender nuestra comunidad de la «vía de la atracción» - nota característica del método evangelizador de los Siervos? ¿El testimonio de qué valores evangélicos atrae más al hombre y a la mujer de hoy? Y ¿Cómo «la vía de la atracción» se conjuga con la misión «ad gentes»?
3. Habla de alguna persona de la Orden, conocida o menos, que para ti representa un testimonio vivo de alguien que se entrega a la causa de la misión evangelizadora.

2 Potencial Evangelizador del Carisma

30. Conviene ahora que nos detengamos un poco sobre nuestro carisma para examinar en qué modo lo interpelan las exigencias de evangelización en el mundo en que vivimos. Percibimos en él cinco líneas de fuerza que vamos enseguida a explicitar.

Presencia misericordiosa

31. La misericordia es uno de los valores originales y centrales del carisma de nuestra Orden. Es "una de las características de los Siervos de María" (*Const.* 52). Ella está íntimamente ligada al ideal mismo del servicio. La misericordia es la raíz y el alma de todo nuestro servicio a los hermanos.

32. La misericordia, por otro lado, está vinculada a la devoción a María, la Madre de la misericordia. En efecto, se trata de una actitud profundamente mariana, como pedimos en la *Salve*: "vuelve a nosotros esos tus ojos misericordiosos". Así también los Siervos deben dirigir su mirada llena de compasión sobre toda criatura

de Dios. Sin ingenuidad, sino con realismo crítico, mirarán al mundo sin ninguna clase de lamentación ni queja. Superando el pesimismo y la amargura, evitarán fijarse en los errores y en los vicios de los seres humanos, para no caer en el desprecio de la humanidad y en la maldición de los tiempos.

33. Esa es también la mirada del Padre sobre el mundo. "Tanto amó Dios al mundo que le dio a su Hijo único... Dios no envió a su Hijo al mundo para juzgar al mundo, sino para que el mundo se salve por él" (Jn. 3, 16-17). La misericordia del Padre, pues, es también la nuestra (cf. Lc. 6, 36).

34. E incluso cuando tenemos que reconocer y denunciar proféticamente los pecados el mundo, que nos nos abandone ese espíritu de misericordia radical. El odio al pecado no elimina, antes bien exige, el amor al pecador y el celo por su conversión al Amor.

35. Aún antes de la palabra y de la misma acción, nuestra primera actitud evangelizadora será la presencia misericordiosa. Más que estar-por, queremos estar-con. Es el sentido de la encarnación, sin el cual no hay evangelización ni redención. De ahí la importancia de la proximidad junto a los hermanos y hermanas que han de ser evangelizados. Y esto vale sobre todo en relación a los que sufren, a la masa de los crucificados, clavados en las infinitas cruces del mundo. Junto a ellos queremos imitar a la Misericordiosa, que permaneció de pie, en comunión con el sufrimiento del Hijo, y llevándole consuelo con su presencia silenciosa mas eficaz.

36. Esta presencia misericordiosa puede impulsar a algunos de nosotros a vivir más de cerca la pasión de los pobres. Es la llamada a las "formas de vida diversas de las ya existentes" (*Const.* 78), como las comunidades insertas en medios populares, cuyo propósito es "vivir como los más pobres, participar de su situación y compartir sus angustias" (*Const.* 58). De esta com-pasión con el que sufre nos da un magnífico ejemplo el beato Joaquín de Siena quien, no consiguiendo consolar a un epiléptico, suplicó al Señor - y obtuvo - tomar sobre sí la dolencia del hermano, llevándola pacientemente hasta el fin de sus días.

37. La misericordia nos hace descubrir no sólo nuevas formas de vida, sino también "nuevos tipos de servicio" concreto y eficaz junto a las nuevas y antiguas miserias de la sociedad actual (*Const.* 76b).

38. Y aún más, la misericordia pide también al Siervo una decidida *inculturación* en el medio en que va a evangelizar. Muy a propósito dicen las Constituciones: "el fraile hágase uno más del pueblo al que llega". Y explica cómo: "adoptando el idioma, comprendiendo su modo de pensar y de creer, y compartiendo sus problemas". El fruto de ese proceso será una comunidad cristiana inculturada, es decir, con palabras de las Constituciones, "un pueblo que progresa a partir de sus valores espirituales y culturales más auténticos" (nº 96). Y esto que vale particularmente para el trabajo misionero, vale también para la obra evangelizadora en general.

39. El Siervo evangelizador evitará por todos los medios asumir, incluso en apariencia, cualquier actitud de arrogancia y presunción, como si fuera el señor de la verdad, que va benigneamente a comunicarla a los ignorantes. No. El evangelizador tiene que ser él también evangelizado. El Siervo se acercará al otro con un corazón abierto para dejarse evangelizar. Estará atento a las «semillas del

Verbo» generosamente esparcidas en todas las culturas. Por ello, adoptará una actitud de humilde desprendimiento, en comunión con la *kénosis* de Jesús. Esto se demostrará particularmente en la capacidad de escucha del otro. Porque el Siervo es esencialmente un ser de escucha.

40. El Siervo escucha la voz del Señor, que nos habla a través de muchas voces. Una especial es la que resuena en el grito del pobre. Éste posee un potencial particular de evangelización, en cuanto nos llama a la conversión, a la solidaridad, a la profecía, e incluso al martirio. Quien va a evangelizar a los pobres termina siendo evangelizado por ellos.

41. Mas el Siervo oye también la voz de su Señor en el clamor del pobre existencial, del que ha perdido el sentido de la vida, la dimensión de la fe, la perspectiva de la vida eterna, la gracia de la comunión con el Creador y Padre. El Siervo se sentirá antes que nada un hermano entre hermanos, un compañero de camino que busca, también él, el rostro del misterio que salva. Esta es su postura más primaria y elemental.

41a. *Preguntas para confrontar en comunidad:*

1. ¿Cómo tener para con el mundo en que vivimos, con todas sus irracionalidades, una mirada de misericordia?
2. ¿Cuáles son los obstáculos que nos distancian evangélicamente del pueblo? ¿Cómo superarlos?
3. ¿Qué lecciones evangélicas aprendemos del pueblo con el que trabajamos?

La Palabra de Dios

42. Antes de evangelizar a los demás es necesario que nos evangelicemos a nosotros mismos. Es decir, debemos ponernos a la escucha de la Palabra antes de que podamos anunciarla a los demás. Esta es también la actitud de María que, antes de ponerse en camino a la montaña de Judea para llevar la buena nueva de la llegada del Mesías, escuchó con atención y acogió con fe el mensaje celeste.

43. A la raíz de la misión se encuentra la experiencia misma de Dios. Sin ella, la misión no pasa de ser una empresa puramente humana. La evangelización sólo puede ser la irradiación de una fe que penetra todo el ser. El auténtico evangelizado es llevado a evangelizar, a comunicar la alegría de su descubrimiento (cfr. Lc. 15, 6.9). Por esto mismo, la evangelización es mucho más fruto del entusiasmo que de la organización, más obra del Espíritu de Dios que de los medios humanos. Y así también los efectos de la misma serán seguros. Porque "...el mundo reclama evangelizadores que le hablen de un Dios que ellos conozcan y les sea familiar como si viesen lo invisible" (EN 76f). De aquí que la Comunidad de los Siervos debe empezar por evangelizarse a sí misma, profundizando constantemente su experiencia de fe, redescubriendo continuamente las maravillas que el Señor obra por todas partes. (cfr. EN 15d).

44. De consecuencia, queremos prestar una atención mayor a la *Lectio Divina* en comunidad. Tendrá que ser ésta una lectura viva confrontada con la realidad concreta de nuestra vida y del pueblo. Ha de ser también una lectura compartida.

Será un momento de evangelización mutua, en la que un hermano animará a otro, en santa emulación, según las confortadoras palabras de la Carta a los Hebreos: "fijémonos los unos en los otros para estímulo de la caridad y las buenas obras, sin abandonar vuestra propia asamblea, como algunos acostumbran hacerlo, antes bien animándoos: tanto más cuanto que veis que se acerca ya el Día". (10, 24-25). 45. Como piden nuestras Constituciones, "a ser posible, con el pueblo", nos reuniremos para la celebración de la liturgia (24a; cfr. también en 80 y 81). Este implicar a la comunidad eclesial que nos rodea será un hermoso testimonio de que, religiosos y laicos, formamos todos un solo cuerpo - el Cuerpo del Cristo en el mundo.

45a. Preguntas para confrontar en comunidad:

1. ¿Cómo hacer la experiencia de Dios? - Intercambiar fraternalmente cómo experimentó o experimenta cada uno a Dios en su vida.
2. ¿Cuál es el lugar que tiene la Palabra en nuestra vida personal y comunitaria? ¿Qué hacer para que sea máa iluminadora, también en favor del pueblo de Dios?
3. ¿Cuál es el grado de implicación de la comunidad de nuestro entorno en las celebraciones de nuestra comunidad?

Testimonio de vida, especialmente de fraternidad

46. "La buena nueva se ha de proclamar, entes de nada, por el testimonio" (EN 21; cfr. también 69 y 76). Más que anunciarse, el Evangelio se vive y se atestigua. El Siervo será, pues, antes que nada, testimonio de la primacía absoluta de Dios, de amor a la Madre de Jesús, de preferencia por los pequeños, de disponibilidad, alegría y esperanza. Pero, en particular está llamado a dar testimonio de fraternidad.

47. La fraternidad es uno de los valores más preciosos de nuestra tradición espiritual. Su valor está patente en la llamada oración sacerdotal de Jesús: "que ellos sean uno para que el mundo crea" (Jn. 17, 21). Los primeros cristianos maravillaron al mundo con su increíble testimonio de amor recíproco. Y desde siempre, el mundo se muestra sensible al testimonio de comunión y escandalizado frente al mal ejemplo de la desunión (cfr. EN 77).

48. En nuestro camino de comunión fraterna, los Siervos cuentan con el ejemplo luminoso y sin par de los Siete Fundadores. Respesto a su unión afirma la *Legenda*: "...La amistad de caridad les obliga... a no poder soportar la ausencia temporal entre sí y a no poder tolerar sin grave incomodidad estar separados el uno del otro ni siquiera una hora" (cap. VI nº 29). Tendremos siempre que acordarnos de esta gracia nada común: que nuestra Orden fue fundada por una comunidad y que, por tanto, como comunidad debe vivir y evangelizar.

49. Nuestro testimonio de fraternidad, además, saca un fortísimo impulso de la Regla de San Agustín, que pone la comunión como objetivo central de la vida religiosa: "El motivo principal por el que os habeís reunido en comunidad es que viváis unánimes en casa y tengáis un alma sola y un solo corazón vuelto hacia Dios" (nº 3).

50. De todo esto se deriva que nuestro primer servicio evangelizador al pueblo es nuestro testimonio vivo, especialmente de fraternidad. En este sentido nuestra vida comunitaria es de por sí evangelizadora. También los que en la Orden viven una vocación orientada más bien *ad intra*, desarrollan su tarea de evangelización si ofrecen al mundo el testimonio concreto de amor fraterno.

51. Muchas comunidades de la Orden viven hoy en situaciones pluriculturales. En ellas se encuentran hermanos de culturas diversas. Es ésta una oportunidad óptima para enriquecerse mutuamente mediante el intercambio de las diferencias culturales. En este encuentro se reconoce y se aprecia el valor principal de cada gran cultura: la percepción de la unidad vital cósmica propia de África, la apertura al misterio divino que anima la cultura asiática, la sensibilidad social típica de América Latina, el gusto de la libertad y de la iniciativa de América del Norte, el sentido del hombre y de la historia como herencia específica de Europa. De esta manera nuestras comunidades se convierten en laboratorios de internacionalidad y de pluriculturalidad. Y al mismo tiempo, profecía del mundo de mañana, donde las múltiples culturas existentes están llamadas a vivir en la paz. En fin, ofrecen un testimonio de catolicidad, demostrando cómo es posible vivir hoy una específica fraternidad cultural.

52. Hay que darse cuenta de que la fraternidad es también condición indispensable para la fecundidad pastoral de toda la obra de evangelización y de cualquiera de sus partes. Nuestro servicio apostólico, sea cual fuere su forma concreta, debe mantener siempre un carácter comunitario. En este sentido nuestras Constituciones manifiestan una visión original de la evangelización considerándola, ante todo, como "extensión de nuestra fraternidad a los hombres de hoy" (art. 74) y, luego, como creación a nuestro alrededor de "una comunidad de fe cada vez más vasta" (art. 82). Esto vale igualmente para la misión, donde nuestra "vida eminentemente comunitaria" ha de constituir la primera presencia de Iglesia (art. 95).

53. A la luz de esta evangelización en fraternidad, las Constituciones establecen que "los compromisos que se refieren a toda la comunidad se asuman comunitariamente" (art. 20). Y aún: "la comunidad preferirá el trabajo en grupo" (art. 75b). Y esto en la línea de las recomendaciones apostólicas del Señor que, cuando pensó en la misión, "eligió a doce de ellos" (Mc. 3, 14), y los envió a predicar "de dos en dos" (Mc. 6, 7). Es más, la fraternidad apostólica es una regla recomendada oportunamente por el Concilio Vaticano II (PO 8) en relación a todos los pastores. Y vale con mayor fuerza para los religiosos y más aún para los Siervos.

53a. *Preguntas para confrontar en comunidad:*

1. Recordar figuras de Siervos que han evangelizado sobre todo con un testimonio de vida particular.
2. ¿Cómo puede nuestra comunidad mejorar su testimonio de fraternidad ante el pueblo, sobre todo en relación a los aspectos hacia los que el pueblo se muestra más sensible?
3. ¿Cómo vivimos las diferencias culturales dentro de la comunidad? ¿Cuáles son sus repercusiones pastorales?

Espíritu de servicio

54. ¿Cómo cuestiona la nueva evangelización nuestra vocación carismática de servicio? Más que a realizar servicios específicos, nuestra espiritualidad nos llama a hacer todo con espíritu de servicio.

Evangelizar como Siervos, pues, quiere decir:

- evangelizar en la *humildad* de quien no es amo de la Palabra, sino mensajero y servidor (cfr. EN 78);
- evangelizar en la *fidelidad*, porque lo que se exige del siervo es la fidelidad (cfr. 1Cor. 4, 2);
- evangelizar en la *obediencia*, dirigiéndose con presteza allá donde la Palabra envía;
- evangelizar en *alegría*, porque al Señor se le sirve en alegría (cfr. Sal. 99, 2), sin murmuraciones (cfr. Hbr. 13, 17 y 1Cor 10, 10);
- evangelizar en la *gratuidad*, según el mandamiento del Señor: "cuando hayáis hecho todo lo que os fue mandado, decid: Somos siervos inútiles. Hemos hecho lo que debíamos hacer" (Lc. 17, 10).

55. Pero ¿de quién somos siervos?

- Somos siervos de la *Buena Nueva*, anunciando en Jesucristo el Evangelio de la gracia y de toda liberación (cfr. Luc. 4, 18-19).
- Somos siervos del espíritu de *profecía*, denunciando valientemente todo tipo de opresión y predicando el advenimiento de un mundo de hermanos, cuyo amor alegra la casa del Padre.
- Somos siervos de la *vida*, poniéndonos al lado de aquellos cuya existencia está amenazada, desde el niño apenas concebido hasta el anciano jubilado.
- Somos siervos de los *pobres*, ayudándoles a liberarse del yugo del hambre y de la ignorancia, de la enfermedad y de la muerte prematura.
- Somos siervos de la *paz*, confiando en la fuerza de la mansedumbre evangélica y del sacrificio de sí mismo realizado por amor, superando todo sentimiento de odio y de venganza.
- Somos finalmente siervos de la *Virgen gloriosa*, ofreciendo a ella cada día nuestra alabanza e inspirándonos en su ejemplo en cada servicio que realizamos.

56. Al contrario, rehusamos rotundamente:

- ser siervos de los *grandes* de este mundo, recibiendo sus favores y sosteniendo sus turbios intereses;
- ser siervos de los *ídolos* de la sociedad moderna: el dinero, el placer, el éxito, la fama;
- ser siervos de *ideologías* dirigidas a cegar y a amordazar, quitándonos la libertad de pensar y de decir la verdad;
- ser siervos de cualquier *institución* humana que quiera subyugarnos y manipularnos;
- por último ser siervos de la *injusticia* y del *pecado*, que nos privan de la "gloriosa libertad de los hijos de Dios" (Rom. 8, 21).

- En suma, queremos ser «libres de todo» para hacernos «siervos de todos» por amor (cfr. Gal. 5, 13), a imitación de Jesús, el siervo de YHWH, y de María, la Sierva del Señor.

56a. Preguntas para confrontar en comunidad:

1. ¿Cuál es la característica de nuestro carisma de servicio que pondrías de relieve en el trabajo de evangelización?
2. ¿Qué causa evangélica estamos hoy llamados a servir en manera particular?
3. ¿Qué es lo que más esclaviza hoy a un Siervo y le quita la libertad de anunciar el evangelio?

La figura de María

57. Ante todo, es importante tener siempre claro que María pertenece al contenido del misterio de la salvación y, por tanto, al anuncio del Evangelio. María es realmente la «Virgo prædicanda». Anunciar la persona de Jesucristo, asociándola desde el inicio a su Madre, ha sido y sigue siendo un método misionero validísimo, que se basa en el hecho, según los evangelios (cfr. Mt. 2, 11; Jn. 2, 5), de que María nos lleva siempre a Jesús. Ella siempre nos «muestra a Jesús», como pedimos en la *Salve*.

58. Por lo demás, éste fue el método misionero de la primera evangelización en América. Es María la que ha introducido al Mesías en aquel continente. No carece de sentido que la carabela en la que viajó Colón se llamara Santa María. Y también es significativo que la primera misa celebrada en América - y precisamente en Santo Domingo - fuese la de la Visitación. Por esto Juan Pablo II ha podido afirmar: "América Latina se transformó en la tierra de la nueva Visitación, porque sus habitantes acogieron al Cristo llevado, en cierto modo, en el seno de María" (Discurso en Santo Domingo, 11 noviembre 1984). A la Virgen de Guadalupe, además, se la representa como la Madre de la vida: grávida del Mesías, ella lo da a luz en favor del nuevo pueblo que está naciendo en aquel continente. En su semblante este nuevo pueblo descubrió los rasgos de la ternura y de la gracia del rostro materno de Dios.

59. Además de constituir el contenido de la evangelización, María se presenta al evangelizador como su modelo espiritual. Según el documento «Haced lo que El os diga» del Capítulo General de 1983 (nn. 44-45), cuatro son las principales escenas bíblicas donde María es presentada como la que anuncia la palabra evangélica:

- En la Visitación (Luc. 1, 39-56), María lleva al Verbo, que se ha encarnado en su seno, a Juan y a sus padres, proclamando las maravillas que el Señor ha realizado en ella.
 - En la visita de los Magos, ella es la que muestra al Rey a los representantes de las naciones que iban a ser evangelizadas; entrando en la casa, "vieron al niño con María, su madre, y postrándose lo adoraron" (Mt. 2, 11).
 - En las bodas de Caná ella es la que suscita la inauguración de los signos mesiánicos de Jesús y, al mismo tiempo, el surgimiento de la fe en los discípulos, y es ella aún la que manda que se obedezca al Señor, diciendo:

"Haced todo lo que El os diga" (Jn. 2, 5b) mandamiento que precisamente Cristo dará a los apóstoles mientras los envía a misionar.

- Por último, antes de Pentecostés, María con los apóstoles, las otras mujeres y los hermanos de Jesús, se prepara a recibir el Espíritu que dará a la Iglesia la fuerza para dilatarse hasta los confines de la tierra (Hch. 1, 14).

60. El Concilio Vaticano II ve en la Madre de Cristo el gran ejemplo de aquel «materno afecto» que todo evangelizador debe nutrir en sí (LG. 65). El predicador, como María, tiene que engendrar a Jesús en el corazón de las personas, según lo que dice también el Apóstol (Gál. 4, 19 y 1Cor. 4, 15).

61. María representa sobre todo un estilo de evangelización para todo Siervo. Este estilo tiene algunas características:

- *Sentido de la pequeñez.* María es la humilde, a la que YHWH miró con complacencia. Del mismo modo el Siervo de la Virgen «no anda tras sueños de grandeza, sino que va más bien a lo sencillo» (cfr. Rom. 12, 16). La humildad ha sido considerada siempre en la Orden como una de las virtudes básicas. ¿De qué otro modo podría ser para los Siervos?
- *Sentido de encarnación.* María es la mujer en la cual la Palabra se ha hecho carne, primero en su vida y luego en su seno. También el Siervo ha de tener el sentido de lo concreto, de la fe que toma cuerpo en los servicios más diversos, evitando todo espiritualismo vacío y abstracto.
- *Sentido de la cercanía.* María ha estado siempre presente en la vida de Jesús de manera afectuosa y activa: en Caná, junto a la cruz y en la primera comunidad. También el Siervo tiene que estar presente - tal vez simplemente presente - allá donde el Cristo sufre hambre, abandono, desesperación, para compartir su pena y ayudar a la redención de quien sufre.

61a. Preguntas para confrontar en comunidad:

1. ¿De qué manera está presente María en los contenidos de nuestra predicación?. Nuestra mariología ¿es evangelizadora, es decir, cristocéntrica?
2. Intercambiar fraternalmente experiencias sobre el modo cómo el anuncio de María abre el camino al anuncio de Cristo.
3. ¿De qué manera María es ejemplo de «afecto materno» en nuestras relaciones con la gente?

3 Pistas de Acción

62. Tras haber considerado la situación y confrontado con ella los valores de nuestro carisma, veamos ahora algunas líneas de acción respecto a la evangelización.

Áreas de evangelización

63. El lugar ordinario de la «nueva evangelización» lo constituyen sobre todo nuestras parroquias. Como se sabe, el número de los practicantes habituales es escaso (una tercera parte, como media), mientras que la mayoría son practicantes

ocasionales. La «nueva evangelización» se dirige particularmente a estos últimos, que tienen necesidad de ser reanimados en la fe (cfr. EN. 52 y 56; RMI. 33d). A este respecto, los fieles que practican con regularidad la vida parroquial tienen una misión muy importante: sensibilizar e implicar a los más alejados. Pero para ello necesitan impregnarse de un fuerte espíritu misionero. Es tarea específica de los pastores suscitar este espíritu y reavivarlo para la misión.

64. Muchas son las iniciativas pastorales para la movilización religiosa de las masas, poco o nada evangelizadas: la preparación a los sacramentos de iniciación, las visitas a las familias, las misiones populares, las fiestas de los santos, el uso de los medios de comunicación social, y cualquier otro medio que la creatividad pastoral sugiera.

65. La celebración litúrgica tiene un papel preeminente en cuanto a la evangelización se refiere. Como afirma el Concilio Vaticano II (SC. 10), es la fuente y la cumbre de la vida de la Iglesia. Además del valor específico de oración colectiva, la liturgia es un momento privilegiado de evangelización, no sólo porque una celebración viva puede constituir una fuerte llamada a la fe, sino también por el lugar que tiene en ella el anuncio de la Palabra. Esto es cierto en particular para quienes se acercan a la Comunidad de fe casi exclusivamente a través de los sacramentos, y son la mayoría. Los sacramentos constituyen entonces una oportunidad inmejorable para invitar a los hermanos lejanos a que se acerquen al Señor. Especial atención merece el sacramento de la reconciliación: por él las conciencias se abren a la llamada de la gracia renovadora.

66. La homilía ocupa un lugar privilegiado en las celebraciones. Los Siervos evangelizadores siéntanse comprometidos a perfeccionar este momento de gracia mediante una preparación particularmente intensa y prolongada.

67. Además de la homilía, la catequesis contribuye al crecimiento de la Palabra en el corazón de los niños, de los jóvenes y también de los adultos. En este campo los Siervos tienen en la figura del beato Juan Ángel de Milán un buen ejemplo en que inspirarse.

68. En el desarrollo de su trabajo parroquial, nunca se olviden los Siervos de que son Religiosos sacerdotes, y no lo contrario. El ejercicio del ministerio sacerdotal debe estar claramente marcado por el estilo propio del religioso. Aunque insertado en la Iglesia local, el Siervo dirige su mirada sobre el horizonte de la universalidad, dispuesto a acudir allí donde los responsables mayores lo enviaren. Al mismo tiempo, como animador de una parroquia, tiene que dejarse guiar por el carisma profético que marca su ser religioso y que lo lleva a abrir nuevos caminos frente a los desafíos más graves de la hodierna evangelización.

69. Hay más. Todo el trabajo evangelizador se ha de desarrollar según el estilo específico de nuestro carisma, es decir: comunitariamente, en espíritu de humilde servicio e inspirándonos constantemente en María (cfr. *Const.* 1). En nuestra predicación y en toda nuestra acción apostólica, hay que tener siempre presente la figura de la Madre de Jesús ya que es Ella la que trae al Salvador, especialmente a los más alejados. Y, en nuestro mundo dividido entre la opulencia de pocos y la miseria de muchos, no podemos olvidar nunca que el Mesías traído por la Virgen es el Libertador del Magníficat. Por esto, el Siervo imitará a María de Nazaret "que

no dudó en proclamar que Dios es vindicador de los humildes y de los oprimidos y echa de sus tronos a los potentes del mundo" (MC. 37b).

70. Los santuarios marianos son también lugares privilegiados para la evangelización. Ante todo porque personas, con frecuencia alejadas de la práctica regular de fe, pero empujadas por una necesidad o por un sentido de gratitud, vienen a ellos con el corazón abierto para recibir la gracia del Señor. Y además porque en los santuarios se percibe con mayor viveza la fuerza de la intercesión de María que invita a la conversión y a la obediencia a la Palabra, y dispensa curaciones y salvación. Hoy la pastoral de los santuarios es tanto más oportuna cuanto más aumenta en la sociedad la movilidad geográfica, sobre todo en los fines de semana. Para muchos los santuarios se convierten en lugares de encuentro masivo con Dios, especialmente a través de los sacramentos de la reconciliación y de la eucaristía. La predicación evangélica cuidará de suscitar en los fieles la adhesión a Jesucristo y a las exigencias de su Reino de amor, de justicia y de paz.

71. La misión «ad gentes» ha sido siempre una forma específica de la evangelización de la Iglesia y también de la Orden. De la milenaria experiencia misionera, en particular de los 500 años de evangelización de las Américas, nos vienen algunas importantes indicaciones:

72. Ante todo el diálogo. El testimonio de fe debe darse en un contexto de diálogo, a través del cual el evangelizador también se deja evangelizar. El diálogo presupone una actitud de escucha y de recepción respecto al otro, en el intento de discernir los «gérmenes del Verbo», es decir, "las riquezas que Dios, en su magnificencia, ha dado a los pueblos" (AG. 11).

73. Luego, la inculturación. El Siervo evangelizador "se encarna como Cristo en el pueblo" (Capítulo General 1989, nº 94). No puede haber inculturación de la fe y de la Iglesia si el evangelizador no se sumerge en la cultura de un pueblo.

74. Por último, la justicia. Anuncio del Mesías y anuncio de la liberación del oprimido son inseparables. Jesús mismo, "el evangelizador primero y el más grande" (EN. 7), se comportó así: "el Señor me ha enviado a evangelizar a los pobres" (Lc. 4, 18). Signo privilegiado del advenimiento del Reino es que "se anuncia la buena nueva a los pobres" (Lc. 7, 22). De esta manera, en el mismo momento en que se implanta la Iglesia, la evangelización crea una sociedad nueva según el Reino de Dios.

75. Todo esto tiene que acaecer en el estilo servita de ser misionero, lo que comporta, pues: la cercanía misericordiosa, la fraternidad, la referencia central a la Madre de Dios, la humildad del servicio.

76. La importancia de las misiones exige que los priores favorezcan de todas las maneras a los hermanos que desean partir «ad gentes», aunque sea por tiempo limitado. Los priores deben también sensibilizar y animar "a los frailes respecto al compromiso misionero de la Orden" (Capítulo General 1989, nº 97).

77. Además de estas áreas de evangelización, se abren a los Siervos "nuevos tipos de servicio" (Const. 76b), según lo que el Espíritu sugiere. ¿Cuáles son los nuevos servicios que nuestro carisma pide que asumamos hoy?. He aquí algunas categorías de personas hoy particularmente necesitadas de nuestro servicio apostólico:

- Los jóvenes, sobre todo las víctimas de la droga y del SIDA;
- los niños abandonados, que se encuentran a millares en el Tercer Mundo;
- los emigrantes en el mundo industrializado;
- las mujeres de las clases populares, a las cuales tanto nos acerca la figura de María, de manera especial;
- las minorías de cualquier clase: raciales, étnicas, sexuales, religiosas;
- en el mundo de la cultura: los medios de comunicación y las universidades - "aerópagos modernos" (RMi. 37).

78. Finalmente los Siervos evangelizadores no pueden quedar al margen de los grandes problemas que agitan la humanidad contemporánea, como la paz, la ecología, la lucha contra el racismo, la búsqueda de un auténtico nuevo orden mundial y, antes que nada, la superación del hambre y de la miseria. Las alegrías y las esperanzas del mundo, sobre todo de los pobres y de los que sufren, son también las alegrías y las esperanzas de los Siervos de María (cfr. GS. 1).

78a. Preguntas para confrontar en comunidad:

1. ¿Qué hacer para reactivar la capacidad evangelizadora de nuestra comunidad en la pastoral específica en la que está inserida?
2. Si es el carisma lo que cualifica toda nuestra acción ¿Cuál es el aspecto de nuestro carisma que necesita ser profundizado en el trabajo de evangelización?
3. ¿Cuáles son los nuevos frentes de servicio apostólico en el mundo que esperan la presencia de los Siervos?

Formar para la evangelización

79. Durante el período de formación inicial, el joven Siervo ha de profundizar el conocimiento vivo del Señor Jesús (cfr. Fil. 3, 8). Como María de Betania, se adentrará en la escuela de Jesús, permaneciendo a sus pies y escuchando su Palabra (cfr. Lc. 10, 39). En verdad, ser discípulo es condición del ser apóstol. Evangelizar es anunciar una palabra que se ha escuchado, dar testimonio de una experiencia que se ha vivido. "Si vivimos en Cristo y lo experimentamos como el absoluto de nuestra vida, sentimos la imperiosa necesidad de darlo a los demás" (Capítulo General 1989, nº 311). Interrumpir esta dialéctica profunda del recibir y del dar, significa caer en un intimismo estéril y en un activismo inútil.

80. Por esto precisamente, la formación tendrá que considerar con mucha atención la doble dimensión de la vida de fe: concentración y dilatación. Esto comporta, por un lado, que la misión tenga que echar raíces constantemente en la experiencia de la fe, y por otro, la apertura de la fe a la llamada misionaria. Y esto vale tanto para los Siervos clérigos como para los Siervos laicos. En el período de la formación inicial el acento se pone, por supuesto, en el «estar-con» Jesús en comunidad (cfr. Mc. 3, 14b); pero este momento tendrá que desarrollarse, a través de etapas de apostolado explícito, hasta al «envío a predicar» (cfr. Mc. 3, 14c), como hizo Jesús con sus discípulos en la primera misión (cfr. Mc. 6, 7-12).

81. Las experiencias pastorales del período de formación han de orientarse a producir en los candidatos más bien un efecto inmanente, o sea, específicamente

formativo, que no un efecto transitivo, de tipo pastoral propiamente dicho. Por ello, la actividad apostólica de los jóvenes tiene que ser objeto de atenta reflexión en los momentos de oración, de celebración y de estudio, para purificarla y perfeccionarla, según esa actitud meditativa y sapiencial típica de María de Nazaret, quien "conservaba todas estas cosas meditándolas en su corazón" (Lc. 2, 19.51).

82. Es necesario que, desde el principio, el candidato vaya adquiriendo una espiritualidad en que queden íntimamente relacionadas fe y vida, oración y acción, discipulado y apostolado. Esta dialéctica proseguirá naturalmente durante la etapa de la formación permanente. Cada etapa se desarrollará según tonos y ritmos propios.

83. Del mismo modo, ya desde la misma formación inicial, deben quedar claras en la pastoral, estas dos exigencias de la evangelización, hacia las que es sensible el mundo contemporáneo: encarnación en la vida y en la cultura del pueblo, y atención a la dimensión liberadora del Evangelio. De ésta última depende hoy en gran parte la credibilidad de la predicación cristiana (cfr. OA. 51), y de aquélla, la "fundación y el crecimiento de la Iglesia local", objetivo de la actividad misionera (cfr. Capítulo General 1989, nº 93).

84. Se estimulará convenientemente al candidato respecto a la misión «ad gentes», con los medios más variados, como:

- oración de intercesión;
- las visitas de misioneros y la escucha de sus experiencias;
- el intercambio de noticias con misioneros valiéndose de cartas y boletines;
- períodos de actividad en territorios de misión;
- campañas misionales con exposiciones y recolección de dones.

84a. Preguntas para confrontar en comunidad:

1. ¿Cómo ayudar a los candidatos, por un lado a una vida de oración abierta al compromiso, y por otro, a un compromiso animado por la oración?
2. ¿Cómo se desarrollan, durante el período de formación inicial, las dimensiones de inculturación y liberación propias de una auténtica acción evangelizadora?
3. ¿Qué se puede hacer en nuestras comunidades, y especialmente en las casas de formación, para despertar y nutrir el interés por la misión «ad gentes»?

Algunas categorías particulares de Siervos evangelizadores

85. Es importante que ahora nos fijemos en algunos tipos singulares de hermanos y en su tarea específica en la nueva evangelización. Queremos ocuparnos en particular de los Siervos laicos, de los hermanos de la tercera edad y, en fin, de los miembros de las comunidades eremítico-contemplativas.

86. En cuanto a los Siervos laicos <196> y usamos el término «laico» en toda su riqueza teológica <196> hay que recordar siempre que nuestras comunidades quieren vivir un camino de fraternidad radical. De esta fraternidad radical, nuestros hermanos laicos son para todos, al mismo tiempo, exigencia, prueba y memoria viva. Justamente las Constituciones proclaman: "Todos somos y nos llamamos

Siervos; todos, en cuanto hermanos, tenemos la misma dignidad y somos iguales entre nosotros" (art. 9). En coherencia con este artículo, el Capítulo General de 1989 declara: La Orden "en su opción por un mundo sin divisiones ni desigualdades ..., invita a todos los hermanos a una profunda conversión, para que se elimine en nuestras fraternidades todo lo que divide y ofusca la transparencia de nuestra vida fraterna".

87. Respecto a la evangelización, la transparencia de nuestro testimonio de fraternidad tiene un significado no marginal. En efecto, vivir en el amor mutuo constituye ya un contributo inicial para el anuncio del Evangelio. Si existen divisiones en la comunidad ¿cómo podemos anunciar con credibilidad el Reino del Padre, que es también el reino de los hermanos?

88. Los Siervos laicos son para toda la Orden memoria teológica de su identidad original: un estado peculiar de vida y no un ministerio jerárquico, pues nuestra vocación se basa en el bautismo, y no en el sacramento del orden. Los Siervos laicos son, además, la memoria de los primeros Siervos, la mayoría de los cuales vivía en condición laical, habiendo sobrevenido posteriormente el ministerio prebiteral, como expresión y extensión de la consagración religiosa. Los sacerdotes de la Orden serán siempre Siervos sacerdotes, y no sacerdotes Siervos, ya que es el carisma religioso el que da fundamento y sentido a la profunda igualdad existente entre todos los Siervos sacerdotes y laicos.

89. Por otra parte la obra de evangelización es misión de todo bautizado. Por ello, los Siervos laicos ocupan aquí un lugar propio y único, ante todo con su misma vida laical, a través del ejemplo de fe pura y de servicio humilde y eficaz.. Este ejemplo evangélico resulta al mismo tiempo evangelizador y se convierte en beneficio, en primer lugar, de los miembros de las comunidades que gozan del privilegio de tener hermanos plenamente laicos. La piedad y la laboriosidad pertenecen a la larga tradición de estos hermanos, y son tan conocidas por todos que nos dispensan de la necesidad de tejer su elogio.

90. Los frailes laicos tienen además un papel singular en el ministerio general de la Iglesia y, en virtud del bautismo, pueden perfectamente asumir muchas competencias pastorales, como la catequesis, la lectio divina, la animación litúrgica, las visitas a los enfermos y muchas otras actividades, siempre en la línea carismático-profética de los Religiosos.

91. En la promoción vocacional, nuestras comunidades se preocuparán de presentar con claridad la posibilidad de vivir el carisma servita fuera de la condición clerical, como Siervos laicos a pleno título. Nos damos bien cuenta de que aún queda mucho que hacer para recuperar una presencia expresiva de hermanos auténticamente laicos en nuestras comunidades.

92. También los Siervos de la así llamada tercera edad tiene su lugar específico en la misión evangelizadora: ejercen un servicio de gran utilidad para la acción apostólica de la Comunidad eclesial mediante la oración, que a esta edad se hace más intensa, y también con la aceptación animosa de su misma condición.

93. Su presencia es igualmente fecunda por el ejemplo evangélico y evangelizador que ofrecen a los hermanos <196>ejemplo de fe, paciencia, perseverancia, acogida, pobreza, don de consejo, y de otras virtudes cristianas.

94. Los hermanos ancianos, por último, pueden encontrar en el ámbito de la pastoral directa espacios propios, donde su experiencia de vida y su sabiduría espiritual resultan muy fructuosas, como en el ministerio de la reconciliación, en la dirección espiritual y en la orientación pastoral.

95. Por lo que se refiere a los hermanos que, según una tradición constante en la Orden, asumen diversas formas anacóricas, siéntanse también ellos interpelados por la nueva evangelización, participando en ella con decisión, aunque con su estilo propio. Su incesante intercesión ante el Señor será el eco de los clamores y de las esperanzas de los hermanos que se encuentran comprometidos directamente en la evangelización. Se harán cargo, por lo tanto, de los otros Siervos evangelizadores, teniéndolos "presentes de manera más profunda en el corazón de Cristo" (LG 46b). En la contemplación del amor de Dios está la fuente última de la vitalidad apostólica. Por ello, el testimonio que estos hermanos ofrecen del primado de Dios y de su amor, constituye una fuente inagotable de energía evangelizadora para todos los demás.

96. Las comunidades contemplativas pueden contribuir de manera más directa a la evangelización pública mediante algunas actividades específicas:

- ofreciendo lugares y medios para que los agentes directos de la evangelización puedan recobrar física y espiritualmente;
- acogiendo y acompañando a las personas, sobre todo a los jóvenes de hoy, que se abren a la búsqueda de las fuentes de la plenitud de vida;
- celebrando con dignidad y participación viva los sagrados misterios, de manera que <196>como dice San Pablo<196> "si llega algún no creyente o no iniciado ... postrado rostro en tierra, adorará a Dios confesando que Dios está verdaderamente entre vosotros" (1Cor. 14, 24-25).

96a. Preguntas para confrontar en comunidad:

1. Comunicarse ideas sobre la necesidad de recuperar la presencia de los Siervos laicos en nuestra Orden: qué ventajas tienen y qué puede hacer la comunidad en este sentido.
2. ¿Qué hacemos para valorar la persona y la capacidad evangelizadora propia de nuestros hermanos ancianos?
3. Qué valor evangelizador damos a la contemplación y a los Siervos contemplativos?

El gobierno de la Orden y la nueva evangelización

97. El papel de los responsables de la Orden en los diferentes grados (general, provincial, y local) y entidades (capítulos, consejos) es vital para la evangelización. Por supuesto, su primera incumbencia es la de la animación evangelizadora. Los hermanos priores y los capítulos no ahorren ningún esfuerzo para incentivar a los frailes a dedicarse totalmente al anuncio del Evangelio del Reino. Los Siervos esperan de los hermanos mayores, además del servicio administrativo, palabras de aliento.

98. Quienes presiden la Orden tienen que ser además ejemplo de anuncio evangélico al pueblo, como hicieron de manera admirable los santos que tuvieron cargos de dirección en la Orden como san Felipe y san Antonio María.

Naturalmente son llamados a reevangelizar siempre de nuevo a sus mismos hermanos, llamándolos sin descanso a la conversión y a la fe en el Evangelio. (cfr. Mc. 1, 15).

99. El gobierno de la Orden tiene que garantizar una presencia privilegiada allá donde la evangelización exige un mayor empeño, como en las nuevas fundaciones y en las misiones. Así podrá seguir más de cerca a los hermanos en sus luchas y dificultades. Mostrarán especial cariño para con los Siervos laicos y con los ancianos, animándoles a contribuir ellos también a la obra de la nueva evangelización.

100. Por último, los hermanos mayores cuidarán de que se establezca fecundo intercambio entre las diversas iniciativas evangelizadoras y para ello fomentarán entre las comunidades una intensa comunicación de informaciones, bienes y servicios. La comunión de bienes materiales merece una especial atención, ya que es signo y medio de comunión espiritual, fraterna y apostólica, según la inspiración de la Regla de San Agustín (cap. I) y la recomendación del último Capítulo General de la Orden (nn. 202-203).

100a. Preguntas para confrontar en comunidad:

1. ¿Qué se espera cada uno de nosotros de las autoridades de la Orden, en sus varios niveles, respecto a la nueva evangelización?
2. ¿Cómo se actúa o puede actuarse la colaboración entre las diversas comunidades y provincias en vista de la evangelización?
3. En particular ¿qué pueden hacer los responsables de la Orden para que crezca en ella el sentido de la colaboración apostólica?.

101. Estas líneas de reflexión y de acción que el Gobierno General propone con sencillez a las comunidades, son fruto de meditación ante la Palabra y de diálogo con muchos hermanos de la Orden. Quiera Dios ayudarnos para que toda la Orden se ponga a la escucha de lo "que el Espíritu dice a las comunidades" (Apoc. 2, 7) en este momento. La Virgen de la Palabra hecha carne siga acompañándonos en la nueva etapa de nuestra misión evangelizadora.

Desde nuestro convento de San Marcelo, Roma, 19 de junio de 1992, fiesta de Santa Juliana Falconieri, virgen.

fray Hubert María Moons,
Prior General de los Frailes Siervos de María

Abreviaturas de los documentos:

EN	Evangelii Nuntiandi
GS	Gaudium et Spes
LG	Lumen Gentium
MC	Marialis Cultus
OA	Octogesima Adveniens
PO	Presbyterorum Ordinis
RMI	Redemptoris Missio
SC	Sacrosanctum Concilium

ÍNDICE

Primera parte

PROVOCACIONES DEL MOMENTO ACTUAL

Llamada a la nueva evangelización

Desafíos del tiempo actual a la evangelización

Situación actual de la Orden

Memoria histórica de la acción evangelizadora de la Orden

Segunda parte

POTENCIAL EVANGELIZADOR DEL CARISMA

Presencia misericordiosa

La Palabra de Dios

Testimonio de vida, especialmente de fraternidad

Espíritu de servicio

La figura de María

Tercera parte

PISTAS DE ACCIÓN

Áreas de evangelización

Formar para la evangelización

Algunas categorías particulares de Siervos evangelizadores

El gobierno de la Orden y la nueva evangelización

Mary's Seven Steps on the Way to Solidarity with Creation

F. Javier Orozco, SFO, PhD

IV OSSM National Conference, Winter Park, FL, October 29, 2011

Introduction

It seems to me that for us, Catholics, Mary has always been at the center of our lives. Each one of us has our own particular stories of how Mary accompanies us, challenges us and even transforms our own ways of thinking and being in the world. Culturally, the same can be said of Mary. Each culture, old and new, has a portrait of Mary to share with the world and, in each picture of Mary given to us by the diversity of cultures, we, somehow, see our very selves revealed in it. Mary is *us* as Russian, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Latin American, Irish, German, African...and the list could go on and on. Each culture, then, depicts Mary according to what is familiar and familial to it. But regardless of how diverse and vast these images of Mary may be, deep in our hearts and in faith, we all have come to love the Jewish girl who in her later years dared to stand closely at the foot of the cross:

“Stabat Mater dolorosa iuxta crucem lacrimosa Dum pendebat Filius” “At the cross her station keeping, Stood the mournful Mother weeping, Close to Jesus to the last”

He is the Beginning, the first-born from the dead, so that he should be supreme in every way; because God wanted all fullness to be found in him and through him to reconcile all things to him, everything in heaven and everything on earth, by making peace through his death on the cross” (Colossians 1:13-20).

Furthermore, this image of Mary or symbol of Mary provides a narrative frame that can guide us into what we want to say about Mary in relationship to creation, especially because it gives to us two corresponding questions that take us along the way. As we contemplate Mary by the cross, we cannot help but ask how did Mary arrive to this place? And, what happened after the time of the cross? We know from our faith and Marian devotions, that Mary has always been a model for us Christians to emulate. Since the beginning of our faith, Mary has been looked upon as the first disciple, the first to show us the way to Jesus the Christ. With this guiding image and questions in mind, then, I want to present to you seven ways in which Mary models for us what our care of creation can be. What I propose to do, then, is to look specifically at the devotion of the *Seven Sorrows of Mary* and interpret them as the seven basic steps of Mary's fiat on the “*way to creation.*” As we have noted above, this, particular interpretation finds its grounding in the biblical passages and tradition of the early believers. To put it more concisely and assertively, to relate *Mary to Christ is to relate Mary to creation.* Not in a pantheistic fashion where we seek to dissolve important differences between God and creation, but in a relational manner that allows us to see how creation comes from and returns to God in Christ. Stated simply, what these seven ways or steps of Mary exemplify for us in nothing more than the *solidarity of Mary with creation.*

Let us remember that Mary's life and vocation is only fully meaningful in the light of Christ. In our daily prayers we never tire of saying: *Ave Maria, gratia plena.* Indeed, Mary's relationship with Christ allows us to really see how all of creation is capable of

radiating this *gratia plena* or fullness of grace and fullness of life. My proposal to you this day is that only by imitating her intimacy with the cross—only by walking with Mary on this road to Creation—will we be able to really get a fuller glimpse of her care of creation. We need to remember that Mary’s love is full of grace; which means that it is capable of loving like God loves the world in Christ.

My sense is that you know these steps very well; reinterpreting them in the light of creation may not be too much to ask of you. There is another spiritual lesson implicit for all of us in these seven steps or sorrows, and it has to do with the very idea of “sorrowfulness.” Sorrow, like, “joy” belong to that category of language that is relational and ambivalent. Neither sorrow nor joy are superficial or one dimensional emotions. On the contrary, sorrow and joy emerge out of deep relationship with others, and only after having been in deep relationship with others can we really claim to house these sentiments in our hearts. Like Mary’s heart, our hearts are never just pierced with sorrow alone or joy alone. We have to remember, that our Christian *via crucis* (our walk in sorrow) is also a *via resurrectionis* (our walk in joy of the resurrection). Let us, then, begin our walk with Mary so that we, too, can know how she arrives at the cross and what happens after the time of the cross.

The First Step:

Mary Accepts in Faith the Prophecy of Simeon

This particular meditation of the first sorrow of Mary invites our hearts and imagination to journey with Mary on her way to the temple, where she presents her child as was customary. But in this devotional act of Mary, we are told, she is also presented with some news. The words of Simeon reveal or prophesy to Mary that the “gift” before us, Jesus, will be rejected and her heart pierced:

“Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother: ‘This child is destined to be the downfall and the rise of many in Israel, a sign that will be opposed and you yourself shall be pierced with the sword so that the thoughts of many hearts may laid bare’” (Luke 2:34-35).

It seems to me that a great part of what makes this particular prophecy meaningful is not so much the fact that Simeon had the gift of prophecy—although that is impressive and significant in any age—but that Mary listens to it and is not deterred from her path.

Furthermore, there is another side to this exchange between Mary and Simeon, namely, the inability of those around this story to see the gift before them. Mary’s heart is pierced precisely because what should bring us great joy is dismissed, unrecognized and opposed. In scriptural language and imagery, we see that before the gift of life, there is often blindness and rejection. Even those close to this gift of life in Jesus are scattered before the cross. More dramatically, we can see that it is only the one thief that truly recognized the beauty and grandeur before him in the cross. But, unlike Mary, this one thief is there close to the cross not by his own free will, but by the force of justice.

Despite this prophesy and the human blindness and opposition that follows, Mary’s fiat, her prior yes to the angel Gabriel, was sufficient enough to sustain the news she received. At this early start of our walk with Mary, we can already witness a particular

faith that is rooted in commitment. Mary's commitment in faith models for us the authentic response before the gift of life all around us: In Mary, dismissal is transformed into acceptance, blindness changes to surrender, and opposition becomes total embrace.

Now as we turn our gaze to creation, we can see how Mary's example of faithful commitment can guide our own relationship to go-before-creation. Like Mary, we are freely invited to stand before the cross of creation, that is, before the beauty and goodness that surrounds our lives. Physicists and scientists tell us that before us we have 14 billion years of ongoing beauty and goodness. The question that Mary poses to us, then, is how are we to accept, surrender and embrace this beauty of creation. You and I know that these 14 billion years before and in creation have not always been what they should be.

Along the way, we have transformed what should have been acceptance of creation into *disregard*; we have changed what should have been surrendered to creation into *domination*; and we have made what should have been an embrace of creation into separation and *division*—with us humans pretending to be above the created cosmos. Perhaps, we can say that this first step of Mary's acceptance in faith before the unfolding beauty and goodness of creation is one of *humility*. In this way, Mary shows us the way out of *hubris* or arrogance, especially before a created world and cosmos that waits for our care.

The Second Step: Mary Flees into Egypt with Jesus and Joseph

As indicated above, our care of creation will require that we dig deeply into our truest self in order to rid ourselves of the prideful arrogance that seeks to manipulate and control nature for our own selfish purposes and gains. Like King Herod in Mary's story, we often seek *to destroy* rather than to build up the great *Oikoumene*, the great *cosmic family* or household of our lives.

"The angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph with this command: 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you otherwise. Herod is searching for the child to destroy him.' Joseph got up and took the child and his mother and left that night for Egypt" (Matthew 2:13-14).

I am sure you have often wondered about this horrific episode in Mary's life. Even in our own days, we know that many people are still forced to leave their household and land in search of greater human flourishing. Our own neighborhoods, cities and states are replete with the "fleeting Mary, Joseph and child" knocking at our doorsteps. Unfortunately, we know that for many who come to us searching for our hospitality, the doors of our greater *Oikoumene* are not readily open. More and more, we are seeing that the potential for human hospitality can quickly give way to hiding behind regulations, and inhumane laws that do very little to build up the human household. What is most devastating for our purposes in this reflection is the division that these so called "legal" regulations are creating between creation and the humans within it. Let me Explain, we no longer are able to imagine a care of creation that is *inherently linked* to care of human beings. A quick illustration of this separation between care of creation and care of human beings is seen in the way we go about certain ecological

practices and seemly remain aloof about the immigrant and migrant issues that face many of our communities. Put rather bluntly, it can be more comfortable for us to worry about recycling than it is to work for justice for immigrants and migrants. The point here is not that we have to choose one or the other; on the contrary, the point is that ecology and human care go hand in hand. We cannot pretend or allow others to separate and destroy this inherent connection. To destroy this unity between the two is to allow King Herod to have the upper hand. We have to remember that Joseph heeds the voice of the angel and does everything in his power to exercise his vocation.

There is a wonderful *symphony of relationship and responsibility* illustrated in this second step for us to notice. The symphony of relationship and responsibility involves the Angel, Joseph, Mary and the Child. It is a symphony because the work or responsibility required here involves *all*. All have to work in collaboration and coordination with each other for there to be a successful outcome. The story tells us that all left that night for Egypt. In a sense, we can also say that our *night for Egypt* is now. The darkness of the night we face as we seek to unite ecology and human care will not be easy. It takes all of us working together; it takes all of us recognizing the voice of the angle in our respective consciences. For this symphony of relationship and responsibility to work well, we will need to broaden our own sense of what it means to really be a *cosmic family* that involves all kinds of life and energy. Furthermore, we have to open our minds and heart and realize that the darkness of the night is not monolithic or one-dimensional. Each one of us have to face and respond like Joseph and Mary to the voice of God. Hence, there will be great diversity and a great symphony of responses: from leaving lands of origin, crossing all kinds of dessert lands and deep waters, to speaking out against inhumane regulations and laws that chip away at our human propensity to be hospitable.

What is ultimately important is that we not destroy our intimate connection between what is familiar and familial. The cosmos, the earth, the rivers, the air we breathe are found in the neighbor and stranger at our door step. The “child” before us, demands that we do all we can to make sure we remain one cosmic and undivided family.

This, then, is our dream; and our dream tells us that the night we face is one with the promised of light. The sorrow we embrace is pregnant with the joy we shall see. So we continue to walk with Mary to Egypt and to Jerusalem where we shall find what we are looking for and truly need.

The Third Step: Mary Seeks Jesus Lost in Jerusalem

It is interesting to note how, in this third step, Mary and Joseph have to return back to Jerusalem. Their journey away from it, takes them back to it. It needs to be said that in biblical times Jerusalem was the place of “world-power.” So Mary and Joseph’s journey back to Jerusalem is full of connotations in terms of religious, social, economic and political power.

“At the end of the feast, the child Jesus remained behind unknown to his parents. Thinking he was in the party, they continued their journey for a day, looking for him among their relatives and acquaintances. Not finding him, they returned to

Jerusalem in search of him” (Luke 2:43-45).

Given the power dynamic that Jerusalem represents in this journey, it is important for us to pause and explore more critically the unfolding roles of Mary and Joseph in the midst of this world-power. At first glance, we can easily conclude, rather pragmatically, that given their *parental authority* it is only right that they should return to Jerusalem in search of what is rightly theirs—their son, who is still a minor.

Who among us, for example, would be so callous as to abandon a defenseless child in such an urban city—it would simply be wrong to even think that such act could be justifiable. So, we are content and glad to see Mary and Joseph exercise such laudable parental care. Yet, there seem so be more to this story; we can extrapolate further lessons from it. We know from the narrative of the story that when they find Jesus at the temple, Jesus is in conversation with the religious authority of Jerusalem—whose power, by the way, expanded to the social, economic and political landscapes. There is something here for us to be attentive to, especially as it relates to Mary and Joseph. As the narrative unfolds, we see that Jesus informs his parents that he must be in his *Father’s house*. The scripture tells us his parents did not fully comprehend what Jesus was saying. When we look at the different human dynamics at play, we begin to get a better sense of what is actually unfolding. On the one hand, we have the conversation between Jesus and the teachers of the temple—the doctors of the Law; and on the other, we have the exchange between Jesus and his parent—the teachers of the household—where all learning ought to have a proper starting place. And in the center of this confrontations, that is to say, in the middle of this face-to-face exchanges, the young Jesus reminds all that there is yet a higher authority—a prior voice that has to be attended to: *“Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”*

I propose to you that the reference to the “house” in Jesus’ statement can be interpreted as a corrective for all of us, especially all of us who are busy in our own journeys of life.

The Fourth Step: Mary Meets Jesus on the Way to Calvary

The confrontation or the face-to-face conversations in Jerusalem between the powers of the world and the word of God ended up in the form of a wooden cross on the way to Calvary: the wisdom that had been freely given at the center of power turnout to be too much to bear.

“As they led him away, they laid hold of Simon the Cyrenean who was coming in from the fields. They put the cross beam on Simon’s shoulders for him to carry along behind Jesus. A great crowd of people followed him, including women who beat their breasts and lamented over him” (Luke 23:26-27).

I suspect that many of us gathered here today have had our share of crosses to bear, and have plenty of personal experiences in carrying our own crosses. Perhaps where there might be differences is when we look at *whose cross* we are willing to carry. The burden of the cross can—at least—feel differently when it is of our own making, than when it is not.

I suspect Simon might have much to say here. For him, coming from the fields, after a long-day's work, exhausted, and seeking a nice and restful meal at home is what he might have had in mind as he crossed his usual path. Yet, this restful oasis he might have had in mind turned out to be farthest from the truth. Instead of having a nice meal at home, he ends up with a cross on his shoulders. In some ways, this social behavior we see described in this story is not unlike our current social ethos that often seeks to evade social responsibility for the common good. It is often preferable to pass the cross on to someone else. In our lives, we seldom choose to burden ourselves with social ills because we see them as peripheral to what really matters to "me." This individualistic ethics also transcends our own personal lives; we can already point to our societal structures and global context and discover in it remnants of this selfish individualism in the form of greed.

But, today, I want to look at the other side of this global reality that is also just as true and visible. Without having to go too far back in history, we can note that even in our own lifetime, we have had our share of crosses to bear. We have seen wars, catastrophic natural disasters, and vast amounts of social violence.

And in the midst of these crosses, like Simon, we, too, have had to adjust our cadence and direction. And in doing so, we have been able to glimpse at the grandeur of the human spirit; we have been able to see how beautiful, true and good the human spirit can be when it actually bears the burden of others in its own shoulders.

We, too, have been surrounded by an ever increasing level of voices and crowds of people that have join our walk behind Jesus. We have witnessed and have seen Muslims, Christians, Jews, Secular Humanists, Buddhist, Agnostics and many more join hands in mutual cooperation and support. Men and women, old and young continue to come from many fields to lighten the burdens of others. It would be wrong to conclude that the way to Calvary is only composed of righteous indignation for having to carry another's burden; or worse, to conclude that the road to Calvary is reserved for the few whose creed, culture and cult resembles my own. It seems to me that when Mary runs to meet Jesus on the way to Calvary, she is being mindful and receptive to the goodness of the crowd of people following her son. There is something beautiful in seeing Mary join this crowd of people on the way because it shows us what really matters—that we walk together.

As Mary comes near to us, and as she leads us closer to the cross, we see that care of creation involves all of us. In running to the indiscriminate "crowd," Mary shows us how our care is truly ecumenical—that is to say, an inclusive labor of love that takes all of us. The cross and burden that we carry with Mary is light because there are many shoulders holding it. To put it more plainly, to envision ecology—care of creation—without *koinonia* (communal support) is unnecessary, and is not what we have and see in Mary. Let us be on our way. Together with our Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Secular Humanist brothers and sisters, let us join the crowd, freely, like Mary.

The Fifth Step: Mary Stands Near the Cross of Her Son

It is important for our reflection to note that Mary's move into the crowd is not an impersonal nearness, but, on the contrary, it is a movement that makes possible the intimacy of personal relationships. Her nearness to the crowd is the way to our nearness to the cross. In practical terms, her nearness to the cross is how our sense of genuine relationship with reality gets re-ordered.

"Near the cross of Jesus there stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. Seeing his mother there with the disciple whom he loved, Jesus said to his mother, Woman, there is your son." In turn he said to the disciple, "There is your mother" (John 19:24-27).

As we join Mary's movement to the crowd and into intimacy with the cross, we need to acknowledge that what is before us is an instance of Mary's faithfulness to her vocation. We recall how Mary's "yes" to the angel Gabriel meant a new life in total surrender or fidelity to God's will.

So when Jesus says to his mother, "Women, there is your son," we see an instance of Mary's motherhood expanded beyond biological categories. Similarly, when Jesus addresses the disciple and says, "There is your mother," we see what it means to be a disciple of the Lord, in personal relational terms. Standing by the cross means that both Mary and the disciple are radically open to the will of God expressed in Jesus' words.

In this context of radical faithfulness to God's will, Mary's fidelity mirrors for us what it means to be a true disciple of the Lord. As the privileged Mother of God—*Theotokos*—Mary does not stand aloof from the ordinary struggles and challenges of life; but rather, in carrying God in her womb, she unites more intimately with the whole of humanity and creation. In more relational terms, we can say that Mary's fidelity can be interpreted as accompaniment. Mary is the first disciple to *accompany* all of humanity and creation in the manner of God. This mode of Mary's accompaniment with humanity and all of creation is grounded first and foremost in her very accompaniment of Jesus.

Only in accompanying Jesus, by and in the cross can new forms of relationships spring forth for all of us. Like Mary and the disciple, we have to be ready to radically open our minds and hearts to the ever new possible relationships that are borne out of our own discipleship and fidelity to Jesus.

By the cross, we cannot afford to ignore Jesus' words calling us to new and life-giving relationships of mutual care. It is not that we humans are the only ones being re-ordered; rather, in the fullness of Christ all of creation finds new direction. At the end of the day, we have to remember that our fidelity to this new relationship with all of humanity and creation—this fullness in Christ—is made possible because of Christ's love for us: "*As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you*" (John 9:12). To be faithful to this call of Jesus implies that our humanity and creation are bound together in love. Mary's fidelity shows us that love cannot be divided or fixed, but is radically shared anew: "Women, there is your son."

This is the new relationship that is given to us in the cross: to learn to accompany the Earth in life-giving and reciprocal ways. No longer can we stand distant from all of creation, but are now challenged to find ways of befriending one another.

The air we breathe, the fruits of creation at our meal tables, and the ground that receives our mortal bodies are all manifestations of the care and friendship of Mother-Earth in this new \ relationship that springs from Christ. And as recipients of these gifts, we, too, have to give back in return.

Mary takes us to the cross, so that we can contemplate closely the mystery of Christ most fully present in the cosmic body we are personally learning to befriend. Our nearness to the cross is but our intimacy with the whole of creation:

“He is the Beginning, the first-born from the dead, so that he should be supreme in every way; because God wanted all fullness to be found in him and through him to reconcile all things to him, everything in heaven and everything on earth, by making peace through his death on the cross” (Colossians 19:-20).

The Sixth Step: Mary Receives the Body of Jesus Taken Down from the Cross

In our previous reflection, we asserted that the cross provides the venue for us to reorient our relationships with humanity and all of creation. It is in the cross and in meditating on the Mystery of the Cross that we begin to see our reciprocal relationship with the cosmos and Mother-Earth—a reciprocal relationship grounded in love. Now, this foundational love-relationship with humanity and all of creation goes even deeper because we are asked to receive its body.

“As it grew dark (it was preparation Day, that is, the eve of the Sabbath), Joseph of Arimathea arrived—a distinguished member of the Sanhedrin. He was bold enough to seek an audience with Pilate and urgently requested the body of Jesus. Pilate released the corpse to Joseph. Then, having brought a linen shroud, Joseph took him down” (Mark 15:42-46).

It is interesting to note the level of detail in this event the time of the event is mentioned, specific names are given, particular actions are noted and even particular characteristics are mentioned. It does not take long to feel the seriousness and importance of what is unfolding between Pilate and Joseph of Arimathea. We can even say that our mood changes as we grasp what is happening in this solemn exchange between ruler and distinguished personality.

Once again, we find ourselves before a recognizable mysterious “darkness;” but unlike the darkness of the night we found in the flight into Egypt, this growing darkness does not signal flight or fear but its opposite: *stillness*. It is the ancient biblical calmness echoed by the psalmist and so many believers and saints: *“Be still and know that I am God.”* For us, the stillness of this eve of the Sabbath is crucial because in it we find the very possibility of being able to receive the Body of Jesus. Only when we have learned to be still, that is, when we have truly embraced all of creation as the body of Christ, can we be ready to receive the Mystery. If we are honest with ourselves, we must recognize that

our prior receptions of the body of Christ have fallen short of the dignity and solemnity it demands.

Over the years and centuries, we have learned to receive this body of Christ in creation in purely mechanical ways. What should have been a labor of love with nature and creation has often been a labor of control and manipulation. The body of nature that should have been wrapped in linen of care and protection has been wrapped in pollution and destruction. For many, the body of creation is taken for granted. We have grown accustomed to receiving the fruits of creation with limited mindfulness and appreciation. It has become difficult for us to see the whole of the sun in the orange we enjoy, or to see the bees in the sweetness of the honey we often savor. Even as we move around our cosmic world, it is difficult for us to see the flowers and roses that often greet us with their scent and multicolored shapes. In short, the business of our lives prevents us from appreciating what is before us: *Life*.

Mary receives the body of Jesus taken down from the cross because she has been in the stillness of God: *Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus*. This is her stillness. She has, from the beginning, nurtured and loved the gift that was given to her. With care and tenderness she has wrapped the gift of Christ in her bosom. She shows us that, in love, we can truly prepare ourselves to receive the body of Christ—but the body of Christ not of our making, rather the body of Christ that is pure gift—gift all around us.

Like Joseph of Arimathea, we, too, have to be bold enough to seek with urgency the body of Christ in all of his manifestations. Our natural surroundings and the stillness it brings might just be the place for us to start.

The Seventh Step: Mary Places the Body of Christ in the Tomb Awaiting Resurrection

There is a wonderful irony in this seventh step. The dead Body of Christ, we are told, is placed in the tomb with flowers—by the garden—where life abounds: \

“They took Jesus’ body, and in accordance with Jewish burial custom, bound it up in wrappings of cloth with perfumed oils. In the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had ever been buried. Because of the Jewish Preparation Day they buried Jesus there, for the tomb was close at hand” (John 19:40-42).

Perhaps, part of the irony is meant to remind us of something very basic and primal, namely, the Garden of Eden. All of us know from hearing the stories of creation that new and abundant life commences there in the garden where Adam and Eve emerge from the very ground of the earth:

“God said, ‘let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all the wild animals and all the creatures that creep along the ground.’ God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created

them. (Genesis 1: 26-27).

“Yahweh God planted a garden in Eden, which is in the east, and there he put the man he had fashioned. From the soil, Yahweh God caused to grow every kind of tree, enticing to look at and good to eat, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil...Yahweh God took man and settled him in the garden of Eden to cultivate and take care of it” (Genesis 2:8-9; 15).

The invitation ought to be clear for us; the seventh step of Mary placing the Body of Christ in the tomb is an invitation for us to re-enter this garden of life and abundance. Having walked the path with Mary and Jesus, we are now ready to enter this new beginning of harmony with creation. As the story of Genesis reminds us, we have been placed in the garden in order to “cultivate and take care of it.”

Placing the Body of Jesus on the tomb, allows us to reorient our lives anew. Like Mary whose whole being remains attentive and responsive to the will of God, we now get to do the same. In the garden, we can more easily understand Mary’s basic vocation to magnify the holiness and grandeur of God:

“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; because he has looked upon the humiliation of his servant. Yes, from now onwards all generations will called me blessed for the Almighty has done great things for me” (Luke 1:46-49).

In the garden, Mary not only places the Body of Jesus, but she also remains there “awaiting the Resurrection.” In other words, Mary remains fully confident, knowing full well that abundant life will soon follow this sorrow. What at first glance may appear to us as death is seen by Mary as really the promise of the resurrection. She knows this abundant life—this resurrection—is possible because she has lived close to it all her life, both as the Mother of God, and as a young Jewish girl mindful of her spiritual prophetic heritage:

“Look, I am doing something new, now it emerges; can you not see it? Yes, I am making a road in the desert and rivers in wastelands. The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for bestowing water in the desert and rivers in the wastelands for my people, my chosen one, to drink. The people I have shaped for myself will broadcast my praises” (Isaiah 43: 19-21).

Can you not see it, asks the Prophet Isaiah. And, he adds, “The people I have shaped for myself will broadcast my praises.” Are all of us gathered here today, are we not the people shaped for God? Are we not meant to broadcast God’s praises? Let us, then, go into the garden, let us wrap the Body of Christ in creation in cloth with perfumed oils. There in our care for creation, we will find our Resurrection.

Conclusion

As we go to the garden of Resurrection, we recognize that Mary walks with us. And in our steps we take with us Mary’s care of creation: we follow her humility, her hospitality, her gratitude, her communion, her reciprocity, her reception and re-orientation.

Seven Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

The Church's social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society. Modern Catholic social teaching has been articulated through a tradition of papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents. The depth and richness of this tradition can be understood best through a direct reading of these documents. In these brief reflections, we highlight several of the key themes that are at the heart of our Catholic social tradition.

Life and Dignity of the Human Person

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. In our society, human life is under direct attack from abortion and euthanasia. The value of human life is being threatened by cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and the use of the death penalty. The intentional targeting of civilians in war or terrorist attacks is always wrong. Catholic teaching also calls on us to work to avoid war. Nations must protect the right to life by finding increasingly effective ways to prevent conflicts and resolve them by peaceful means. We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.

Call to Family, Community, and Participation

The person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society—in economics and politics, in law and policy—directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. Marriage and the family are the central social institutions that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined. We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.

Rights and Responsibilities

The Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Therefore, every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities--to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected--the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to the organization and joining of unions, to private property, and to economic initiative.

Solidarity

We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world. At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace. Pope Paul VI taught that "if you want peace, work for justice."¹ The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers. Our love for all our sisters and brothers demands that we promote peace in a world surrounded by violence and conflict.

Care for God's Creation

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.

References on Catholic Social Teaching

The following are papal encyclicals relating to Catholic Social Teaching. They are available on the Vatican Website at www.vatican.va Click on “Holy See” or the language of your choice and then click on “Supreme Pontiff” and select the Pope that authored the encyclical and then click on “Encyclicals” and then the encyclical you wish to read.

Document Title	English Document Title	Pope	Date
Rerum Novarum	Of New Things	Leo 13	1891
Quadragesimo Anno	In the 40 th Year (since Rerum Novarum)	Pius 6	1931
Mater et Magistra	Christianity & Social Progress	John 23	1961
Pacem in Terris	Peace on Earth	John 23	1963
Dignitatis Humanae	Dignity of the Human Person	Paul 6	1965
Populorum Progressio	On The Development of Persons	Paul 6	1967
Humanae Vitae	Of Human Life	Paul 6	1968
Octogesima Adveniens	In the 80 th Year (since Rerum Novarum)	Paul 6	1971
Laborem Exercens	On Human Work	JnPI 2	1981
Sollicitudo Rei Socialis	On Social Concerns	JnPI 2	1987
Centesimus Annus	In the 100 th Year (since Rerum Novarum)	JnPI 2	1991
Evangelium Vitae	The Gospel of Life	JnPI 2	1995
Deus Caritas Est	God is Love	Ben 16	2005
Caritas in Veritate	Charity in Truth	Ben 16	2009



SECULAR ORDER OF THE SERVANTS OF MARY

Certificate of Promise

Trusting in the Lord's grace,
I promise to God
before you, our Spiritual Assistant
and you, my sisters and brothers,
to live the commitment
of my baptismal consecration
more intensely.
I will be faithful
to my family and social obligations,
and observe the Rule and Statutes
of the Secular Order of Servants of Mary,
in order to share your vocation
of service and loving union,
drawing inspiration always from Mary,
Mother and Servant of the Lord.

May the intercession of Our Lady,
and your love
support me in this commitment.

NAME

OSSM COMMUNITY

CITY, STATE

SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT

PRIOR/ESS

DATE



ORDEN SEGLAR SIERVOS DE MARIA

Certificado de la Promesa

Confiando en la gracia del Señor, ante ti, Padre
y ante ustedes, mis hermanos y hermanas,
prometo a Dios vivir más intensamente
los compromisos de la consagración bautismal
y de observar, según mi condición familiar y social,
La Regla y los Estatutos
de la Orden Seglar
de los Siervos de María
para participar en su misma vocación
de servicio, y comunión fraterna,
inspirándome constantemente en María,
Madre y Sierva del Señor.

La intercesión de la Virgen, nuestra Señora,
y la caridad de ustedes,
sostengan mi compromiso.

NOMBRE

FRATERNIDAD

CIVIDAD, ESTADO

ASISTENTE ESPIRITUAL

PRIOR/A

FECHA



SERVITE COMMUNICATIONS

COMUNICACIONES SERVITAS

2 Corinthians 6:9-11

known, yet regarded as unknown;
dying, and yet we live on;
beaten, and yet not killed;
sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;
poor, yet making many rich;
having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

2 Corintios 6:9-11

**Pasamos por desconocidos, aunque nos conocen;
Nos dan por muertos y vivimos;
Aunque estemos afligidos, permanecemos alegres.
Tenemos apariencias de pobres y enriquecemos a muchos; Parecer que no
tenemos nada y todo lo poseemos.**

Section Contents/ Contenido de sección

- 1. Communication between Local Communities, the Regional Councilor and the National Office**
- 2. Servite Family Links**
- 3. Servite Publications/Publicaciones Servitas**
- 4.**

Communications Between Local Communities and the Regional Councilor and the National Office

There should always be an open line of communication between the communities and their Regional Councilor and the National Office.

Communication is critical to keep communities connected to the National Office and the National Office connected to the needs of the Local Communities..

Communication allows information and ideas to be shared, communities feel informed and this affects the overall success of the Secular Order.

Monthly community and council meeting minutes must be sent to the Regional Councilor and the National Office in a timely manner.

These minutes must reflect what happened at the community and council meeting and need to include changes in the community census such as names of inquirers, those in formation, and those who have made their Promise as well as dispensed, deceased members and name and address of those who have moved away. Date of planned and actual Promise Ceremonies need to be included.

Questions and/or concerns should be directed to the councilor.

The councilor in turn will send copies of the summary of the National Council meeting minutes to each community in his/her region.

Servite Family Links

Enlaces de la Familia Servita

Secular Servites - <https://sites.google.com/site/secularservites/useful-links>

OSM General Curia - <http://www.servidimaria.org/>

U.S. Province - <http://www.servite.org/>

National Sanctuary of Our Mother of Sorrows, Portland, OR - <http://www.thegrotto.org/>

Canadian Province - <http://www.servitesdemarie.org/>

Province of Saint Mary of the Andes (Chile, Bolivia, Argentina, Peru) - <http://www.siervosdemaria.cl/>

Mexican Province - <http://www.siervosprovmex.net/>

Spanish Province - <http://www.siervosdemaria.com/>

Servants of Mary Center, Haiti - <https://sites.google.com/site/servantsofmarycenterhaiti/haiti-relief-aid>

KwaZulu Natal - <http://www.ingwavuma.org/>

Servite Publications

Secular Servite News:

This Newsletter is published three times a year for the Secular Servite Communities. It includes news and activities of different communities. It keeps communities up to date on pertinent and current information from the National Office. This might include new communities, the number in formation and promise dates. Communities are strongly encouraged to submit articles and pictures on a regular basis. Copies can be read on-line at www.secularservites.org. For hard copies contact the National Office or your councilor.

Servites Today:

This publication provides national and international news and events of the Servite family worldwide. It covers activities of the friars in the USA, Latin America, India and South Africa including those celebrating 25 and 50 year anniversaries and those who have died. It gives an overview of Servite Saints, Blessed and their feast days, current events in the church and the world at large. This US based publication is published three times a year and has a readership of approximately 800-900 people. Copies can be obtained by contacting the National Office or can be read on line at www.servite.org under publications.

Cosmo/Cosmo on line:

This brief international bulletin from Rome is published monthly by the General Secretary for Communications. It covers international news and events of the Servite family. Additional information might include a summary of Vatican News and updates. This publication can be read on line at: www.secularservites.org.

Publicaciones Servitas

Secular Servite News

Este boletín de noticias se publica tres veces al año para las comunidades seglares de los Siervos de María. Incluye noticias y actividades de las diferentes comunidades. Mantiene a las comunidades al día con información pertinente y actual de la Oficina Nacional. Esto puede incluir nuevas comunidades como también el número de miembros en formación y las fechas de la ceremonia de la Promesa. Se les pide a las comunidades que sometan con frecuencia artículos y fotos de sus actividades. Este boletín se consigue en el sitio web de la Orden Seglar: www.secularservites.org. Si desea una copia se puede comunicar con la Oficina Nacional o su Consejero Regional.

Servites Today

Esta publicación provee noticias Nacionales como Internacionales y eventos de la Familia Servita de alrededor del mundo. Esta publicación cubre actividades de los Frailes de los E.E. U.U., Latino América, India, y Sudáfrica. También incluye información sobre los frailes que cumplen 25 o 50 años de aniversario y los nombres de los frailes que han fallecido. Da un resumen de la vida de los Santos y Beatos de la Orden y sus días de fiestas, como también eventos de la Iglesia local y mundial. Esta publicación estadounidense se publica tres veces al año y tiene aproximadamente 800-900 lectores. Copias pueden ser obtenidas de la Oficina Nacional o de la página web www.servite.org.

Cosmo/Cosmo on line

Este breve boletín es publicado mensualmente en Roma por el Secretario General encargado de las Comunicaciones. Cubre eventos y noticias internacionales de la Familia Servita. También incluye eventos y noticias del Vaticano. Este boletín se encuentra en la página web de la Orden Seglar: www.secularservites.org.