

UK version

Society of the Sacred Heart

Chapter 1970

3 October – 28 November

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3 October 1970

EXTRACTS FROM MOTHER BULTO'S TALK

at the Opening of the Chapter

We are about to begin this Chapter, whose importance none of us minimize. The whole Society is watching us - some with a certain anguish, others with high hopes - and is awaiting clear guidance as serene as it is daring, which will unite us all and encourage us to go forward.

Taking the Society as it is today, with its needs, its hopes and its possibilities, I think we all want to reaffirm our will to put Christ at the centre of our life - His love, of which His Heart opened on the cross, remains the ever meaningful symbol.

We want to deepen our fidelity to our religious consecration and to our own vocation, in no way diminishing their demands, and with the conviction that the ideal of the Society will always be existential if it remains true to the Gospel and unites fidelity with constant desire for growth and development. During our work fidelity to Christ must be our constant care, referring all things to Him, the supreme and decisive criterion in our choices.

This fidelity to Christ will make us seek with evangelical daring to live our unity and pluriformity in a strongly effective and dynamic way. Saint Madeleine Sophie who suffered so much to keep the Society one, will be with us at this time, as we try to move, by different ways and at a different pace, towards a common goal. To do this we must develop an awareness of our personal and collective commitment; looking towards the same ideal we shall find that enthusiasm, solidarity and solicitude, so characteristic of the primitive Christian community as of our own early communities.

All this will lead us to commit the Society more deeply to her apostolic mission. As religious of the Sacred Heart how are we to convey to the world, as much by our life as by our work, the message of the wholly gratuitous love of God revealed in his Son? This will exact an attitude of courageous listening, of self-criticism and seeking, a broad vision of the world and of the interests of the Kingdom, with its demands for detachment, abnegation, availability. Our personal and community life must be a sign of the kingdom already present on earth: a sign too, of the Fatherhood of God, of the brotherhood of all men in Christ. With these wide horizons before us we can easily leave aside useless discussion of inessentials.

On the other hand we must interpret in the light of the Gospel each different situation as it arises. This presupposes not only awareness but also acceptance of what is new. Has not the Gospel always been the great Novelty, which calls in question our routine, and, condemning our inertia, shakes us out of sheer passivity? Unless we accept unequivocally the challenge of the Gospel our undertakings will remain superficial. Let us have the balance, the courage and the love needed to make the response of the Society wholehearted, deep and unanimous. This response must not be endangered by either excessive fear or impatience or - God forbid - by any division. Renewal is the task of each and all of us.

The gospel-challenge is addressed in the first place to each one of us. For if the Society exists at all it is through each individual God-given call. This deep, life-giving renewal will demand of each member of our great community a tremendous effort of conversion in humility, faith and trust, to rediscover the freshness, the inner thrust of our first encounter with Jesus when He invited us to leave all for Him and for his Kingdom (Lk. 10.29). Could we not look upon this Chapter as a new, very serious, very demanding call that Christ addresses to each one of us, and through us, to the Society?

With our Lady and helped by her prayer may we

place what is best in ourselves at the disposal of all, so that we can say to our Lord in all sincerity: "We are gathered together here and with us all the Society united in one desire: to seek and carry out your will today".

May faith and hope clarify our vision of the future. We are rich in virtue of a wonderful heritage which can give new life.

Let us go forward then in a spirit of prayer, of great and trustful union, of unconditional love for our Lord, strong in his Peace and sure of his Presence. What then could we lack?

**THE SOCIETY OF THE SACRED HEART
AN APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY**

The Society of the Sacred Heart, an Apostolic Institute wants to live today,
according to St. Madeleine Sophie's charism, its mission of showing men the love of God who became man.

In prayer and in its common search the 1970 Chapter has become conscious of a challenge from the world:

"God loved the world so much that He gave his only Son". (Jn. 3:16)

The Chapter experienced,
with all the urgency of conversion,
the need for a new life,
a life that must be both fraternal and totally at the service of others,
a truly evangelical life.

It calls for a response from each one of us,
religious of the Sacred Heart, who through prayer, work,
suffering and joy
share in Christ's work.

May our Lady, Mother of the Church,
help us to live in faith and in openness to the Spirit.

"The Word was made flesh, He lived among us." (Jn. 1:14)

In these times when men constantly question the meaning of life and wonder what the future can hold for such a divided world, surely it is an urgent task for us to show that the Incarnation is *now*, to show Christ's love ourselves: the love of Jesus who lived as a brother of men and who freely gave his life for his friends.

That is why we now face a serious decision:
either we live this brotherly love in truth, in
the spirit of the
Beatitudes,
or our life becomes utterly meaningless.

We want this new life to be founded, as it always has been, on prayer: it is "in Christ" that we must build our fraternal communities, within, not apart from, the world. Only communities such as these will have the strength to take up the challenge of the world where so many of our brothers suffer and are prevented from living in a way worthy of men. This demands of us total conversion. Only at such a price will our communities become a living presence, proving that selfishness can be overcome by persevering effort, and that the oneness of all men in the Father has already begun.

"May they all be one ... so that the world may believe it was you who sent me ... and that I have loved them". (Jn. 17:21-23)

It is through this prayer, as vital today as ever, that our unity is rooted in diversity, forcing us to make together several fundamental choices converging on the same Centre,
the Heart of Christ.

* * *

An International Community,

united and necessarily pluriform, we want to live in full awareness of our communion and to accept the practical consequences of sharing responsibility and of co-operating at an international level, in view of wider and more effective service. This demands understanding and respect for the character of each country; it demands too that we strive together to strengthen the bonds which unite us in the same Spirit.

In a world torn apart, where the Church struggles to restore all things in Christ, our union will be a sign of the brotherhood that is open to all men.

* * *

At a time when the integral development of man is a task of prime importance, we reaffirm our mission as educators in the service of the Church.

Facing the future, we are responsible for living out this mission creatively.

It is Christ's own love which urges us to meet the needs of men crushed by a life of subjection and ignorance, and above all, those of young people searching for the meaning of life.

Let us work towards the growth of a faith strong enough to embrace a secularised world; towards a genuine appreciation of the values of the spirit, and towards the development of a social conscience which impels to action.

We must therefore re-examine the apostolic value of our works and act accordingly.

* * *

In the light of the Gospel and of contemporary society we wish to affirm our solidarity with the poor.

Christ who emptied Himself and gave his life to set us free has made us his own, thus we too are committed to this work of liberation. We want, wherever we are, to be one with the poor, and this should be seen in our life. It will demand of us hard work, complete availability, and the total stripping of self.

Together we shall seek realistic ways of enabling those conscious of an urgent call to fulfil it.

* * *

In a world hungry and thirsty for justice, our attitude must be one of solidarity with the Third World suffering from poverty and oppression.

This solidarity must shake us right out of ourselves. It will exact from us a serious effort to work for a better distribution of the goods of this world; it will give us an appreciation of the culture and traditions of other countries and rid us of power-seeking and paternalist attitudes.

This choice implies, according to the needs and possibilities, the planning of works in a world perspective, which will issue in bold action. It will also lead us to take a firm stand in face of the dehumanising structures of a consumer society.

* * *

But desire for universal brotherhood, for solidarity and service, will be genuine only in so far as it is lived out in evangelical communities.

Ⓟ * *

We undertake to work for the renewal of fraternal community life, the indispensable condition for the future of our religious life and for an authentic response to the challenge of the Church and the world.

Each community must establish its own style of life, evaluated in faith in the light of the Gospel.

Certain elements are fundamental:

- A serious life of prayer centred on the Eucharist and the Word of God; a contemplative outlook upon the world, which pre-supposes time given to prayer, alone and with others; an atmosphere conducive to a living experience of God, both for ourselves and for those who come to us.

- Genuine personal relationships which will give substance to our commitment to a life of universal love in Christ; acceptance of one another and sincere forgiveness in friendship and joy.

- The sharing of all we are and all we have in a style of life which is simple, austere and welcoming.

- A common seeking for the will of the Father in total availability, served in all simplicity by a Christ like authority.

- A striving for discernment which will open us to the human values of a secularised world where Christ is at work.

- Living among men in such a way that the community of mankind is better loved and better served.

Strong in the certainty that Christ is with us and that He calls us to a continuous conversion we can go forward in joy and hope.

* * *

With this basis of unity, the provinces have pledged themselves to work out the concrete application of these guidelines according to the needs of their countries, the call of the Church and local possibilities.

The Centre, having received these decisions, will communicate them to the whole Society.

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FORMATION

I. Initiation to Religious Life

In response to God's call the community and the candidate to religious life seek together a way of living according to the Gospel in the Society of the Sacred Heart.

In this search each one will try to give her true self. Both community and candidate thus gain from one another fresh vigour for their encounter with Christ, of which the living celebration of the Eucharist is both source and expression.

Through her life in the local community the candidate should become aware of the wider concrete commitments of the international community. And so from the beginning she will come to understand and to accept the pluriformity of her congregation, one in Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life. (Jn. 14).

The candidate will need to make no artificial break with her former life. In her new community the joy and mutual respect that she finds will contribute to her all-round development and help her to enter readily into the demanding freedom of the children of God.

Fully aware that the candidate is preparing for her commitment to religious life the community will ensure:

- a simple and exacting style of life which will help her to grow in self-discipline and community spirit;

- the indispensable conditions- surroundings, atmosphere, time - for meeting Christ in prayer both silent and shared, where she will learn to listen to the Word of God in Scripture, in relationships and in events, and to respond in faith;

- a prolonged period set aside for reflection and prayer. The candidate's spiritual training, her introduction to the tradition of the Society (its history, writings, Constitutions) as well as its present seeking along the lines of the decisions of the Chapter of 1970, and its mission to educate, will be the responsibility of the formation team;

- serious work, without which her formation would remain superficial.

The formation team is responsible for the novices until their first commitment.

Until her final commitment the young religious continues to explore her vocation in a community, who review the position with her from time to time.

During this period the formation team are available for the young religious who wish to consult them.

Until the final commitment a training adapted to each religious must be seriously envisaged. This is the responsibility of the provincial team and should include:

- scriptural and theological formation, indispensable for nourishing a spiritual and apostolic life in a world becoming progressively more secularised;
- growing familiarity with the writings of the Society;
- professional training undertaken or continued. In conscience, adequate preparation is necessary for professional work and for the new forms of the apostolate;
- education in communication (group dynamics, mass media, study of languages);
- an experience of professional work, realistic and adequately sustained;
- some experience of work with the under-privileged is recommended.

The various aspects of this formation are to be considered as much from the point of view of the individual's needs as of those of her country. When planning a serious formation, the practical implications of the Chapter's guide-lines should be borne in mind, and the training orientated to the task that lies ahead.

All the different experiences of the years of initiation are directed to the same end: commitment to God forever.

The Society emphasises the importance of serious and deep preparation:

- time for concentrated and prolonged reflection and prayer including the long retreat;
- study of the theology of religious life today;
- a deepening understanding of the Society and its history.

In the Spirit of the Chapter of 1970 which stressed unity in pluriformity, the Central Team will offer every religious the opportunity to make this preparation in an international group which will create its own style of life, both simple and exacting. Again, in the spirit of the Chapter of 1970, with its stress on pluriformity in unity, the Central Team will leave to the Province the possibility of organising this preparation if it is judged necessary, and of determining the programme on the lines indicated above.

This preparation will culminate in the mutual, definitive commitment of the young religious and the international community of the Society.

This is why it is desirable for the young religious to have an international experience before profession when possible.

Members of the international formation team must have the opportunity to know one another, to make their plans in advance, and to be in touch with the young religious, so that a programme adapted to their needs can be arranged.

Profession may be made in one's own country even if the preparation has taken place elsewhere.

II. Practical Information according to 'Renovationis Causam'

1. The initiation to religious life

Takes place in two stages:

- a) from entering a community to the first commitment, a period of 2 - 4 years;
- b) from the first commitment to the definitive commitment, a period of 3 - 9 years.

2. The first commitment.

The candidate binds herself to the Society of the Sacred Heart by promise.

She promises to live according to the evangelical counsels in the community of the Sacred Heart, thus preparing herself for the total gift of self to God in her definitive commitment.

The promise constitutes a reciprocal commitment between the young religious and the Institute of which she becomes a member. The young religious may choose her own wording for the promise. This formula must be approved at provincial level.

N.B. The present young professed and the novices who entered before 1970 may renew or make their first commitment either in the form of temporary vows or in that of a promise.

3. *Each province is responsible for:*

formation team; - the preparation of the members of the
the content of formation;
and must submit to the Centre:
- the conditions of admission;
- the conditions for separation from the
Institute;
- the criteria for evaluation;
and also the methods of formation planned in
the light of
'Renovationis Causam'.

III. Some aspects of the continuing formation of every Religious

The new horizons open to religious life are described in the paper on the apostolic community. It is essential to create the conditions in which these can be explored.

This life will involve us in new discoveries. It is for each one of us to be open to this formation and to collaborate by pooling individual experiences.

1. Education in personal relationships:

- a climate of freedom and respect which will give the courage to be oneself;
- smaller communities in which true personal relationships can be achieved;
- an easier and more homely access to our communities, greater warmth and simplicity in our welcome - these will foster a new spirit of hospitality and sharing;
- learning to take part more naturally in mixed and diverse society;
- the discipline of dialogue in which we learn to listen to each other, with the help of specialists and through group techniques;
- education for co-responsibility: accurate information, critical discernment, decision.

2. Appreciation of the values of secularisation

Secularisation is a universal phenomenon, a trend of civilisation varying in form from country to country. It involves a progressive desacralisation of certain aspects of our life (habit, house, etc.) which had become inseparable from the deeper reality of religious life and have accentuated our separation from the world. Religious must accept this situation frankly and with open eyes. It means that we must recognise temporal values.

"All things were created as having their own stability, truth and goodness, their own laws and order". (Gaudium et Spes 36).

These temporal values include:

- work (or profession);
- leisure occupations: to know how and why to choose or renounce;
- clothes, as the expression of someone who is approachable, ‘a man among men’, while choosing to live in Gospel simplicity;
- money: education in drawing up a budget and in the honest and generous use of money.

3. Seeking to live our commitment within the community.

In community we try to witness to Love:

- total commitment to Jesus Christ, inseparable from total gift of self to others;
- atmosphere of joy and affection;
- concern for those who are lonely, for the sick;
- openness to friendship as a gift of God;
- development of one’s gifts as a woman;
- an appreciation of aloneness with God.

In community we try to live in inward freedom:

- hoping in God through all insecurity;
- sharing everything, proof of brotherly love;
- a simple life, resisting the pressures of a consumer society;
- concerned to meet the needs of those around us;
- a cheerful attitude, which will help us to bear the fatigue of hard work, and, at times, of overwork
 - the normal lot of the poor;
- co-responsibility: weighing-up decisions concerning the budget and balancing the accounts.

In community we seek God’s will:

- recognising the call of the Spirit in the discernment of the community; this implies the discipline of

mutual acceptance, of evaluation, of a periodic review of community living;

- learning to transcend self: to render account; to take a community decision; to help one another achieve responsible obedience; to accept whole-heartedly a decision which one could not have made alone;
- to discern the hidden challenge of the world around us, and to take it up.

In all this each community will find ample scope for creative action.

4. Personal Formation.

In an evolving world it is essential to keep doctrinal and professional training up to date:

- doctrinal formation, for theology illumines spiritual and religious life. It is

desirable that all should deepen their knowledge of scripture and theology, and that some specialists be trained to help in this continuous seeking which today characterises religious life;

- professional training: planning of serious and continued preparation for better

service must be undertaken. Foreseeing that we shall not be able to do the same work all our lives, we should prepare for a decreasing activity.

* * *

GOVERNMENT - FINANCE

GOVERNMENT

Introduction

"For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually members of one another." (Rom. 12:4:5).

Respect for each human person is free and responsible and recognition of the interdependence of all the religious in their commitment to a fraternal life in community, are at the root of the principles of participation and co-responsibility in the government of the Society at every level.

Liberty and authority are from God: they are exercised through responsible obedience. Together, all are committed to seek, in the light of the Holy Spirit, the Will of the Father. Thus, expressed through obedience and authority and at the heart of community living, co-responsibility demands that in the spirit of the Gospel each one should share in the government according to her function.

Genuine co-responsibility in building community, necessary if the Society is to fulfil her mission in the Church in living fidelity to her charism, is achieved through:

- dialogue
- communication
- subsidiarity
- experimentation
- evaluation

Our unity in Christ is demanding; it calls for an awareness of the Society's new dimensions as an **INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY:**

communities
of

- respect for the pluriformity of provincial
- pooling of experiments and their evaluation, and

resources both human and apostolic;
both necessary in view of greater co-responsibility.

Each religious of the Sacred Heart, strongly united with all the members of the Society and living by its spirit, belongs simultaneously to three communities

- the local community
- the provincial community
- the international community

and shares their life. She thus learns to look beyond her own limited horizons, in a spirit of service both living and world-embracing.

Local Level

The Religious of the Sacred Heart, as a member of the local community, is responsible for:

- contributing to the 'communion' of the group;
- developing her talents for the common good in view of a better service;
- sharing in group decision-making and assuming responsibility for the decisions made.

The Community is an ideal, a blue-print for life in common which becomes a reality each day in prayer and interpersonal relations. United in charity, the community presses on towards the same apostolic goal. Thus, the religious together are responsible for:

- choosing their own style of life in agreement with the rest of the province, and in accordance with their apostolate;
- creating a climate of freedom and mutual trust which will be conducive to the all-round development of each member;
- discerning those activities which will best enable each one to witness to her religious convictions;
- evaluating their apostolic community life and experiments in the light of the Gospel and the social conditions around them;
- taking decisions concerning the group.

The Superior, who represents the community, fosters and stimulates the spiritual growth of her sisters by her dynamic

leadership. She harmonizes the different tendencies, demands and aspects of community life. There will be times when she herself will have to take decisions; when, for instance, a consensus of opinion cannot be reached; when discretion demands a decision which will reconcile the good of the individual with the common good, or when the good of one person is in question. She keeps the Provincial informed about the life of the community and promotes contacts with the other communities in the province.

She also assumes the responsibilities laid down in the section on Financial Administration.

Length of service: 3 years with the possibility of prolongation for a further 3 years.

N.B. Each province decides whether there should or should not be local councils; whether the smaller communities should or should not have a superior.

Provincial Level

The Provincial Community is a group of communities sharing responsibilities for determining and attaining certain common objectives in order to ensure the Society's service of the Church in the context of a given country or region.

Certain organs of government will be common to all provinces:

The Assembly and the Provincial Team

Each province is free to set up further organs of government, assigning to them their different responsibilities according to the character of the country, or region, in order to ensure co-responsibility and active participation.

The Provincial Team is composed of the Provincial and a number of members: their number and the method of nomination shall be determined by the province. The Team, in its service of the provincial community, should always be sensitive to its desires, possibilities and needs. It will aim primarily at promoting the spiritual and apostolic vitality of the province and at ensuring its union with the other provinces and with the Centre of the Society.

The Provincial represents the Province and governs with a Team. She shares certain responsibilities with the other members of the Team, while retaining the ultimate responsibility before the Province and Central Government.

Responsibilities of the Provincial Government:

- to know the state of the Province so as to be able to plan;
- to draft a plan of action for the Province in keeping with the orientations of the General Chapter;
- to present annually for the approval of the Central Government the plans of the Province or their revision;
- to submit to the Central Government, after consultation with the persons concerned, the advisability of establishing or suppressing institutions;
- to organise the personnel of the Province, using discernment as regards individual vocations, while taking into account over-all planning at provincial and international levels;
- to coordinate apostolic works in line with the general pastoral plan where one exists;
- to undertake experiments in the apostolate which are in line with provincial planning as approved by the Central Government;
- to be responsible for formation and to submit its general lines to the Central Government;
- to admit candidates to the first stage of religious life or to dismiss them;
- to recommend to the Superior General the names of candidates for perpetual profession;
- to ensure the further formation of each religious;
- to set up and maintain effective means for the exchange of information, and to establish lines of communication with each local community and with the Centre, so that every religious can share in the life of the Province and of the Society;

- to help local communities live out the way of life they have chosen and to experiment according to specific objectives;
- to name local superiors and those in charge, after consulting the communities and/or the Province, and to support them in their role of spiritual leadership;
- to assume the responsibilities laid down for the provincial level in the section on Financial Administration;
- to convene the Provincial Chapter in preparation for the General Chapter.

Appointment of Provincial Superior:

The Superior General appoints the Provincial Superior after consultation of the Province. Nominations are sent direct to the Central Team.

Length of Mandate: 3 years with the possibility of a further mandate of 3 years.

N.B. The plan for the new Provincial Government should be submitted to the Central Government for approval in 6 months' time.

The existing organs of provincial government should take the necessary steps for drawing up a new scheme of government.

Provincials who have been given a mandate of 6 years could also make a consultation in their province at the end of 3 years.

International Level

The International Community consists of all the religious of the Sacred Heart throughout the world who, grouped in provincial communities, share the responsibility of fulfilling the Society's mission in the Church.

The General Chapter is a legislative body which represents all the members of the Society, ensuring their union in the same spirit and with the same apostolic aim adapted to the world of today.

Convocation: by the Superior General and the Councillors.

Composition: - ex-officio members
- elected members.

The Central Team will determine their number after consultation with the provinces.

Functions:

- to study and evaluate the state of apostolic religious life in the Society as shown by:
 - o the report of the Superior General,
 - o the report and recommendations of the Treasurer General,
 - o the report of the Communications Team,
 - o the reports of the Provincials,
 - o the work done in preparation for the General Chapter,and to act accordingly, keeping in view the present and future needs of the Church and of the world;
- to evaluate the mode of government since the last Chapter;
- to determine the procedure for elections at the international level, and put this into effect.

Frequency of Meetings: every six years

In exceptional circumstances the General Chapter may be convened:

- by the Central Team
- or at the request of 2/3 of the provinces.

The Central Team

Composition: The Superior General.

4 Councillors General. They are not responsible for geographical regions.

The Superior General represents the Society and governs with a Team.

Their first care being to keep alive in all the religious a sense of their responsibility for the charism and mission of the Society, the Central Team will:

- strengthen the international character of the Society;
- foster sensitivity to the values of fraternal living;
- direct apostolic resources towards the most urgent needs of the Church and the world;
- stimulate a continuous assessment of our collective responsibility towards a world in search of justice, development and peace;
- visit the provinces in order to acquire first hand knowledge of countries and persons, and share their life;
- help the provinces by showing concern in their interests, giving counsel and encouragement according to possibility and need.

Responsibilities to:

- nominate provincials after consultation in the provinces concerned;
- approve the structures of provincial governments and the planning of works in the provinces;
- receive the reports of the provinces and keep the Society informed concerning events and activities;
- establish or modify provinces or vice-provinces, after having consulted them;
- establish or suppress institutions on the responsibility of the Provincial concerned;
- admit candidates for perpetual profession on the responsibility of the Provincials;
- establish over-all planning and facilitate the exchange of personnel according to the needs of provinces and vice-provinces;
- set up various teams to serve the International Community;
- assume the responsibilities laid down, in the section on Financial Administration;
- convene and preside over International Assemblies;
- convene and preside over the General Chapter and determine the number of delegates;
- delegate its powers;
- replace a member of the Central Team in the event of her resignation, illness or death;
- exercise the powers granted by the Decree 'Religionum Laicalium' of 30 May 1966 and by the Decree of 27 November 1969.

The Superior General bears the ultimate responsibility both before the Church and to the Society.

Length of Mandate of the Superior General: 6 years with the possibility of one re-election.

In the event of the death of the Superior General the Central Team must inform the Society and choose one of its members to govern the Society in the interim. She will convene a Chapter of Election within 6 months.

In the event of the resignation of the Superior General the Sacred Congregation should be consulted as regards the procedure to adopt.

Length of Mandate of the Councillors General: 3 years, plus 3 years.

The Superior General may name new members after consultation with the Provincials.

International Assemblies: their object is to put into effect co-responsibility at an international level.

1. Assemblies of the Provincials:

- to share experience, discussing the experiments, new undertakings and problems of the provinces with a view to greater international cooperation;
- to consider together the over-all planning in the light of needs and possibilities;
- for continuous adaptation of the Society to the needs of an ever-evolving world.

2. Assemblies of Delegates from the Provinces:

- for the study of a topic or current of thought relevant to the life and mission of the Society;

These assemblies are convened alternately. They should if possible take place in different countries.

The Communications Team. A new mode of communicating and informing is necessary that we may profit more fully from being an international congregation, whose Centre could thus become a focal point of light and energy, giving fresh impetus for better service to the Church and the world. One member of this team will lead a group of specialists in this technique.

The Secretary General, named by the Superior General, will organise the work of the administrative secretariat.

The Finance Team will work with the Treasurer General, named by the Superior General.

Age Limit: Superiors and those in charge will not be named after the age of 65 years.

* * *

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Introduction

“...So do not be surprised that we attach so much importance to perfecting this essential part of Government. If we succeed in regulating it as well as we should, the advantages for the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus will be immense ...”
(Letter of St. Madeleine Sophie 12 March 1854)

Each religious must be able to take her share of responsibility in financial matters. Adequate formation will enable her to make community of goods effective.

The bursars, with the help of experts, specialise in financial administration.

They help the communities - especially those responsible for the accounts in small communities - by their understanding charity. They will supply the information needed for the making of decisions and are responsible for seeing that these are carried out. They will gladly give their sisters the guidance necessary if all are to share as far as possible the cares of the bursar whose business it is to facilitate the realisation of community projects. Together, all will come to understand that finance, or the use of money, is an instrument in the service of our mission.

In an international community financial administration carefully studied and properly understood makes it possible to reach out beyond local or provincial preoccupations and to accept co-responsibility at every level, so as to be able to help the Third World.

Thus, each community, conscious of its mission to follow Jesus Christ poor, and to serve Him in his members, will know how to use the resources entrusted to its stewardship for the service of those most in need.

* * *

Local Level

The Community

1. Takes a share in drawing up the annual budget of the community, including all personal budgets, if this practice has been adopted;
2. in establishing this budget the provision should be made for the needs of the provincial community, either by a contribution to the provincial fund or by handing over all salaries to the province. These expenses include the continuing formation and the retirement of our religious;
3. studies the annual balance sheet before sending it to the Provincial Bursar. In small communities one of the members will be in charge of the money, and will report to the Provincial Bursar according to the methods established by the provincial team;
4. acts; in accordance with the principle of ‘Community of Goods’ on such matters as salaries, and gifts to or from individuals or the community;
5. takes to heart the demands of social justice and works courageously towards their implementation;
6. follows; the Administrative Directives established in the Province.

The Superior or Person in Charge with the Local Bursar:

Responsibilities:

1. To administer the temporal goods of the community following the directives and methods established at provincial and local level.
2. To study the Administrative Manual and to follow its directives.

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Provincial Level

The Provincial with her Team and the Provincial Bursar:

Responsibilities:

1. To administer with professional aid, the financial resources of the province according to the directives of the Church, the General Chapter and the Administrative Manual, and in accordance with Civil Law.
2. To initiate a professional study of the title deeds of the property of the Society and also ascertain whether the Instruments and Articles of Government (Bye laws) of Colleges and Schools etc. safeguard these rights of property.
3. To draw up with expert aid, (sociologists, accountants, lawyers) a Financial Plan of the present and foreseeable resources and obligations for the coming years (Administrative Manual); to present this Plan to the Central Team for approval.

4. To reassess this plan each year in the light of new situations and report to the Central Team (Administrative Manual).
5. To approve the sum indicated by the Provincial Bursar and the Administrative Committee as the contribution of the Local Communities to the Provincial Fund; to approve the sum to be recorded to the local communities, according to the method established in the Province (Provincial level, No. 11).
6. To keep the communities informed regarding the financial state of the Province.
7. To assume the common responsibility in regard to the international community, sharing in the expenses of the central administration by sending the annual contribution of the Province.
8. To study the Provincial Budget so as to submit it to the Central Team for approval. At the end of the year to study the Balance Sheet of the Province drawn up by a Chartered Accountant before sending it to the Treasurer General.
9. To approve the budgets of local communities and of works which depend on the Province, as also of such extraordinary expenses which must be covered at this level.

10. To make certain that the act of Renunciation of Goods made by the religious of the Province is valid under the Civil Law of the country.
11. To draw up the administrative directives special to the Province.
12. It rests with the Province, given the wide diversity in situation, to study the juridical and financial position of works, whether administered by seculars or by nuns and to determine the specific responsibilities arising there from for those concerned.

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International Level

The Superior General, her Team, and the Treasurer General.

Responsibilities:

1. To exercise authority over the material resources of the Society and to entrust the administration of such resources to competent persons.
2. To approve the Budget and evaluate the accounts of the Central Administration.
3. To keep the Provinces informed regarding the financial state of the Central Administration.
4. To require a contribution from the Provinces of the Society, according to the needs of the Central Administration and according to the state of the Provinces.
5. To approve the Financial Plans of the Provinces (No. 3 Provincial Level).
6. To make a financial plan for the Funds of the Central Administration based on its present and future resources and obligations.
7. To approve any decision to sell property.
8. To approve any decision to contract long-term loans.
9. To approve the Provincial Budgets and receive the Annual Balance Sheets of the Provinces.
10. To approve all outlay over and above the sum authorized at Provincial Level

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CONCLUSION

"If it were given to me to live a second time, it would be to live only in obedience to the Holy Spirit and to act through Him alone".

(Letter of Saint Madeleine Sophie 1811)

Religious of the Sacred Heart and heirs of our Holy Mother, we all inherit the patrimony bequeathed to us by so many of our sisters who have prepared the way for us. We know that her spirit lives on in us and urges us to go forward along the same path into the unknown. And so, following her example of fidelity to the Church, we press on in the renewal of our religious life according to the demands of Vatican II, highlighted already in the Special Chapter of 1967:

a return to the Gospel
according to the spirit of the foundress,
to meet the needs of the world.

This threefold demand is already expressed in the pivotal theme of our Constitutions:

Union and Conformity with the Heart of Jesus

To contemplate his Heart we have no need to turn away from this earth, the home of God made Man. Christ is present, hidden in the heart of the world. Earth could not hold him in death; he lives and the whole world of time and space is transfigured through his risen life. He is present in the unconscious waiting of creation in travail; he is at work in the efforts of man to build a world of justice and brotherly love. It is in this very humanity whose fear and loneliness and love he shared that his GLORY must shine forth.

Inherent in our religious vocation, then, is a call to contemplate the Heart of Christ through the pierced heart of mankind. Union and conformity with Jesus commits us to a life in the world even as he was 'in the world': a neighbour and at the service of all. "Have this mind in you which was in Christ Jesus". (Phil. 2:5).

Our pluriformity will become more marked. Uniformity can no longer exist when we live in such varied milieux and at a time when national characteristics are becoming more sharply differentiated. Will our union, for which Saint Madeleine Sophie prayed and suffered so much, be weakened? Fresh from our experience in this Chapter of 1970 we reply: pluriformity, far from separating us, strengthened and enriched our unity in Christ. When outward resemblance is lessened, the inward and essential reality shines out more clearly. The effort to meet one another at depth with respect and understanding of this pluralism gave new strength to our union. For all of us this is a sign of hope.

And so, to remain faithful today implies a measure of change: to go beyond the letter of the law to the spirit and life within. "Times change", wrote Our Holy Mother in 1831 to Mother Duchesne, "and we must change by modifying our outlook." For her the one thing necessary was to make known the love of God revealed in Christ: for us too this is the first criterion of our renewal.

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**Some thoughts shared by Mother Camacho
at the closing session of the Chapter***

"Lifting up his eyes and seeing that a multitude was coming to Him, Jesus said to Philip: 'How are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?' This He said to test him, for He himself knew what he would do." (Jn. 6:5-6).

The disciples made some suggestions, conscious of their poverty, but spontaneously trusting that Jesus knew what He would do and was only putting them to the test.

God is putting us to the test too; together we have to find the practical application of our guidelines; that is what we have to give, confident that He knows better than we do what He is going to make of them.

We must first of all retrace together the road that leads to an attitude of poverty, that is to say, of hope, for poverty and hope are one and the same. This process will be worked out in community; it is there we shall experience the poverty of seeking together.

There we shall try to learn discernment. It is for the community to support each person so that all help one another to see more clearly, and each one feels that she is loved, in spite of a possible tension between implementing the Chapter decisions and respect for personal conviction.

In community we should train ourselves to be true educators. We can educate others only in so far as we ourselves become truly human, simple, integrated, and thus able to give light to others and respond to a world which asks so many questions.

The community must understand in faith the phenomenon of secularisation, which can lead us to live more fully in the presence of God and meet Him everywhere. But living in the presence of God means renouncing one's idols. Community discernment is needed to enable us to accept these true values, to make us live in the presence of God, without idols.

The community will also help us to an understanding of our international character. Our own interior poverty must make us open to others. Communities cannot, must not, turn in on themselves, nations cannot be self-enclosed and self-sufficient. We all need each other. The most radical stripping is the detachment from one's own culture. We must reach this utter poverty; we must make this international spirit our own, concerned to learn from, and to help one another.

This openness must also be openness to the needs of the world. We must have at heart the needs of suffering countries. Let us be where God wants us to be, but let us also be ready, as a community, to help those to whom God has given this urge to meet the most pressing needs.

All our options are closely connected at a deep level and all must be lived out in united discernment and in community friendship.

During this Advent season, when, with our Lady, we are waiting for Jesus who comes and who will unite us in great hope, we are also experiencing an advent of religious life, imminent, because of our determination to live our renewal in true hope, true, because it is poor.

*Note for the English translation:

This was a spontaneous talk and we have tried to give a faithful rendering.