

Constitution 1

God's Call

1. "Come. Follow me." It was the Lord Jesus calling us.
2. We were already his, for we bore the name of Christians. We had already been initiated into his church. We had been washed in baptism and confirmed in our belief and given the Eucharistic nourishment in memory of him. But there seemed to come a time when the Lord was calling us to take some further step.
3. We heard a summons to give over our lives in a more explicit way. It was a call to serve all people, believers and unbelievers alike. We would serve them out of our own faith that the Lord had loved us and died for us and risen for us and that he offers us a share in his life, a life more powerful and enduring than any sin or death.
4. It was a call that came to us from without, but also one that arose up within us, as from his Spirit.
5. We asked how we might follow, and we found many footprints on the road. A great band of men had passed this way, men who had made and lived by their vows, men who had walked side by side in their following of the Lord. They beckoned us to fall in step with them. We wanted to be part of the family they formed in order to share in their life and work.
6. This family is the Congregation of Holy Cross, founded by Basil Anthony Moreau. We are a community of pontifical right: men living and working under the approbation and authority of the successor of Peter. We are a religious congregation composed of two distinct societies of clerics and of laymen bound together in one indivisible brotherhood. Ours is a common founder, tradition, rule, government, way of life and mission.
7. Our commitment is an invitation for our fellow Christians to fulfill their vocation, and for ourselves it is a concrete way of working with them for the spread of the gospel and with all for the development of a more just and human society.
8. We wished to abandon all to follow Christ. We learned in time that we still had it within ourselves to hold back. We wish to be wholehearted yet we are hesitant. Still, like the first disciples we know that he will draw us along and reinforce our loyalties if we yield to him.

Constitution 2

Mission

9. God so loved the world that he sent his only Son that we might have life and have it abundantly. In the fullness of time the Lord Jesus came among us anointed by the Spirit to inaugurate a kingdom of justice, love and peace. His rule would be no mere earthly regime: it would initiate a new creation in every land. His power would be within and without, rescuing us from the injustice we suffer and also from the injustice we inflict.
10. This was the good news that many misunderstood and many rejected. The Lord Jesus was crucified. But the Father raised him to glory, and Christ breathed his Spirit into his people, the church. Dying and rising with him in baptism, his followers are sent to continue his mission, to hasten along the kingdom.
11. The same Spirit moved Father Moreau to found the community of Holy Cross in which we have responded to the call to serve Christ. We live and work as priests and brothers together. Our mutual respect and shared undertaking should be a hopeful sign of the kingdom, and they are when others can behold how we love one another.
12. As disciples of Jesus we stand side by side with all people. Like them we are burdened by the same struggles and beset by the same weaknesses; like them we are made new by the same Lord's love; like them we hope for a world where justice and love prevail. Thus, wherever through its superiors the congregation sends us we go as educators in the faith to those whose lot we share, supporting men and women of grace and goodwill everywhere in their efforts to form communities of the coming kingdom.
13. Christ was anointed to bring good news to the poor, release for prisoners, sight for the blind, restoration for every broken victim. Our efforts, which are his, reach out to the afflicted and in a preferential way to the poor and the oppressed. We come not just as servants but as their neighbors, to be with them and of them. It is not that we take sides against sinful enemies; before the Lord all of us are sinners and none is an enemy. We stand with the poor and the afflicted because only from there can we appeal as Jesus did for the conversion and the deliverance of all.
14. The mission is not simple, for the impoverishments we would relieve are not simple. There are networks of privilege, prejudice and power so commonplace that often neither oppressors nor victims are aware of them. We must be aware and also understanding by reason of fellowship with the impoverished and by reason of patient learning. For the kingdom to come in this world, disciples must have the competence to see and the courage to act.

Constitution 2

Mission

continued ...

15. Our concern for the dignity of every human being as God's cherished child directs our care to victims of every injury: prejudice, famine, warfare, ignorance, infidelity, abuse, natural calamity....
16. For many of us in Holy Cross, mission expresses itself in the education of youth in schools, colleges and universities. For others, our mission as educators takes place in parishes and other ministries. Wherever we work we assist others not only to recognize and develop their own gifts but also to discover the deepest longing in their lives. And, as in every work of our mission, we find that we ourselves stand to learn much from those whom we are called to teach.
17. Our mission sends us across borders of every sort. Often we must make ourselves at home among more than one people or culture, reminding us again that the farther we go in giving the more we stand to receive. Our broader experience allows both the appreciation and the critique of every culture and the disclosure that no culture of this world can be our abiding home.
18. All of us are involved in the mission: those who go out to work and those whose labors sustain the community itself, those in the fullness of their strength and those held back by sickness or by age, those who abide in the companionship of a local house and those sent to live and work by themselves, those in their active assignments and those who are still in training. All of us as a single brotherhood are joined in one communal response to the Lord's mission.
19. Periodically we review how well our ministries fulfill our mission. We must evaluate the quality, forms and priorities of our commitments as to how effectively they serve the needs of the church and the world.
20. Our mission is the Lord's and so is the strength for it. We turn to him in prayer that he will clasp us more firmly to himself and use our hands and wits to do the work that only he can do. Then our work itself becomes a prayer: a service that speaks to the Lord who works through us.

Constitution 3

Prayer

- 21.** God has breathed his very breath into us. We speak to God with the yearning and the words of sons to a Father because the Spirit has made us adopted children in Christ. The same Spirit who provides us with the energy and impetus to follow after the Lord and to accept his mission also gives us the desire and the utterance for prayer.
- 22.** Our thoughts are not easily God's thought, nor our wills his will. But as we listen to him and converse with him, our minds will be given to understand him and his designs. The more we come through prayer to relish what is right, the better we shall work in our mission for the realization of the kingdom.
- 23.** We pray with the church, we pray in community and we pray in solitude. Prayer is our faith attending to the Lord, and in that faith we meet him individually, yet we also stand in the company of others who know God as their Father.
- 24.** Before the Lord we learn what is his will to be done, we ask that no one lack daily bread, we dare to match forgiveness for forgiveness and we plead to survive the test. We desire that his name be praised, that his kingdom come and that we be his faithful servants in the planting of it.
- 25.** We find prayer no less a struggle than did the first disciples, who wearied of their watch. Even our ministry can offer itself as a convincing excuse to be neglectful, since our exertions for the kingdom tempt us to imagine that our work may supply for our prayer. But without prayer we drift, and our work is no longer for him. To serve him honestly we must pray always and not give up. He will bless us in his time and lighten our burdens and befriend our loneliness.
- 26.** When we do serve him faithfully, it is our work that rouses us to prayer. The abundance of his gifts, dismay over our ingratitude and the crying needs of our neighbors--all this is brought home to us in our ministry and it draws us into prayer.
- 27.** There can be no Christian community which does not gather in worship and in prayer. It is true of the church and true as well of Holy Cross. The Lord's supper is the church's foremost gathering for prayer. It is our duty and need to break that bread and share that cup every day unless prevented by serious cause. We are fortified for the journey on which he has sent us. We find ourselves especially close as a brotherhood when we share this greatest of all table fellowships.

Constitution 3

Prayer

continued ...

28. Though we are an apostolic congregation with attachments and responsibilities that draw us into other worshipping communities, we in Holy Cross also have the need, in some regular rhythm resolved upon in each house, to pray and worship together. It is especially fitting that we join in the two chief hours of the church's daily worship, morning prayer and evening prayer, and that we all free ourselves to take part. Beside the church's formal prayers we also have the benefit of sound popular devotions like those to the Mother of God.
29. The feasts of the liturgical year will unite some of us as a community but call others away. Our own feasts, however, should give all of us the occasions as a family to pray and celebrate together. Chief among these is the solemnity of Our Lady of Sorrows, the day of remembrance in the entire congregation, for she is the patroness of us all. We celebrate also the solemnities of the Sacred Heart and of Saint Joseph, the principal feasts of the priests and the brothers. There are as well the feasts of our saintly predecessors in Holy Cross. As a congregation we have our own cycle of observances when we gather for professions, ordinations, jubilees and funerals.
30. Beyond the liturgy that convokes us into church and congregation, there is the prayer we each must offer to the Father quietly and alone. We contemplate the living God, offering ourselves to be drawn into his love and learning to take that same love to heart. We enter thus into the mystery of the God who chose to dwell in the midst of his people. His eucharistic presence is the pledge of that. It is especially appropriate then for us to pray in the presence of the reserved Eucharist. Each of us needs the nourishment of at least one half-hour of quiet prayer daily. We need as well to assimilate sacred scripture and reflectively to read books on the spiritual life. Members of Holy Cross will regularly meditate on these constitutions, which are a rule for their lives.
31. Each of us has the need to draw aside from his occupations and preoccupations every year for a retreat of several days undisturbed prayer and reflection. In that pause we aim at being solely attentive to the movement of the Spirit. We may see our life and our work in a fresh and brilliant light; we may find the conviction to respond to the Spirit and to change the course into which habit and convenience may have settled us. Prolonged prayer such as this can be intense enough to rekindle our love for and commitment to the Lord, which have a way of burning low. Likewise periodic days of recollection refresh our dedication.
32. It is not merely we who pray, but his Spirit who prays in us. And we who busy ourselves in announcing the Lord's kingdom need to come back often enough and sit at his feet and listen still more closely.

Constitution 4

Brotherhood

- 33.** Our calling is to serve the Lord Jesus in mission not as independent individuals but in a brotherhood. Our community life refreshes the faith that makes our work a ministry and not just an employment; it fortifies us by the example and encouragement of our confreres; and it protects us from being overwhelmed or discouraged by our work.
- 34.** We grow close to one another as brothers by living together in community. If we do not love the brothers whom we see, then we cannot love the God whom we have not seen. In our common life we give an immediate and tangible expression to what we profess through our vows: in the local community we share the companionship, the goods and the united efforts of our celibacy, poverty and obedience.
- 35.** Our ordinary and desirable manner of living is in a local community, normally an established religious house. Where the formalities of such a house are inapplicable the local community is designated as a residence.
- 36.** If the needs of mission, studies or health dispose the congregation to assign a member to live outside a religious house, efforts should be put forth by both the individual and the community to ensure his access to fraternal companionship by his becoming a nonresidential member of a nearby local community or a member actively drawn into the fellowship of a region. If for any other reason the provincial, with the consent of his council and upon notification of the superior general, permits a member to reside outside a local house or residence, it must be for no more than one year.
- 37.** A community must reach out in purposeful and sensitive ways to members who are sick or sorrowful or often absent. When members retire or encounter a breakdown of health, we must have communities to receive and provide for them. We gather as a community to anoint any brother threatened by serious sickness or injury or disabled by age, and appeal in prayer for the recovery of his body and the generous perseverance of his spirit. And when we come to die, we need to know that especially then our confreres stand by us, for we are sustained and remembered all the more in their prayers.

Constitution 4

Brotherhood

continued ...

38. A local community has a superior to preside and govern and a council to assist him by giving advice and consent. But the shared welfare of a household benefits by the shared deliberations of all its members. For that reason the superior shall periodically convene the community to consider their common life and mission in the light of Christ's gospel. This local chapter will become for the community an instrument of reflection and renewal. Its deliberations will include the pragmatic concerns of daily life, but they must also be a way for men of faith to explore the life of the spirit with one another, lest we should speak least about what means most to us.
39. We are men who work. We are, as well, men who need to be revitalized after that work. Each local community needs to provide some measure of domestic privacy where we can be at home among ourselves and find an enclosure of silence for prayer, recreation, study and rest.
40. Those who care for us and for the kingdom will expect our way of life to be modest and simple. However, our local communities should be generous in continuing our tradition of hospitality to confreres, to those who labor with us, to our relatives and neighbors, and to the poor, especially those who have no one to have them in. The measure of our generosity will be the sincerity, the simplicity and the sensitivity of our welcome. But we shall have most to share with others by dwelling together as brothers in unity.
41. As men who share their lives in community, we come to know one another closely. Faults and shortcomings will make us each a trial to others from time to time. Differences of opinion, misunderstanding and resentment can and occasionally will unravel the peace in our community. Thus it is part of our lives to extend brotherly correction and apology to one another and in frank yet discreet ways to reconcile. Our very failures can then be transformed by God's grace into closer comradeship.
42. It is essential to our mission that we strive to abide so attentively together that people will observe: "See how they love one another." We will then be a sign in an alienated world: men who have, for love of their Lord, become closest neighbors, trustworthy friends, brothers.

Constitution 5

Consecration and Commitment

43. We accept the Lord's call to pledge ourselves publicly and perpetually as members of the Congregation of Holy Cross by the vows of consecrated celibacy, poverty and obedience. Great is the mystery and meaning within these vows. And yet their point is simple. They are an act of love for the God who first loved us. By our vows we are committed to single-hearted intimacy with God, to trusting dependence upon God and to willing surrender to God. We wish thus to live in the image of Jesus, who was sent in love to announce God's rule and who beckons to us to follow him.

44. We profess vows for the sake of this same mission of Jesus. In consecrated celibacy we wish to love with the freedom, openness and availability that can be recognized as a sign of the kingdom. In consecrated poverty we seek to share the lot of the poor and to unite in their cause, trusting in the Lord as provider. In consecrated obedience we join with our brothers in community and with the whole church in the search for God's will. We do not imagine that those who commit themselves in other ways to the following of Jesus are thereby hindered in their service of neighbor. On the contrary, we find in them willing and complementary partners in shared mission. We want our vows, faithfully lived, to be witness and call to them as their commitments, faithfully lived, are witness and call to us.

45. We dedicate ourselves as well to be prophetic signs through these vows. We are sojourners in this world, longing for the coming of the new creation as we seek to be stewards on this earth. The world is well provisioned with gifts from God's hand, but the gifts are often worshiped and the Giver is ignored. We want to live our vows in such a way that our lives will call into question the fascinations of our world: pleasure, wealth and power. Prophets stand before the world as signs of that which has enduring value, and prophets speak and act in the world as companions of the Lord in the service of his kingdom. We pray to live our vows well enough to offer such witness and service.

46. Our vows bind us together in community. We commit ourselves to share with one another who we are, what we have and what we do. Thereby we form a community as did those who first believed in Christ's resurrection and were possessed by his Spirit. The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul. No one claimed as private any possession as everything they owned was held in common. With one mind they shared the same teaching, a common life, the breaking of the bread, and prayer.

Constitution 5

Consecration and Commitment continued ...

47. By our vow of celibacy we commit ourselves to seek union with God in lifelong chastity, forgoing forever marriage and parenthood for the sake of the kingdom. We also promise loyalty, companionship and affection to our confreres in Holy Cross. Openness and discipline in prayer, personal asceticism, compassionate service, and love given and received in community are important supports toward the generous living of this commitment. Our hope and our need are to live blessed by faithful and loving relationships with friends and companions in mission, relationships reflective of the intimacy and openness of God's love for us.
48. By our vow of poverty we submit to the direction of community authority in our use and disposition of property, for we commit ourselves to hold our goods in common and to share them as brothers. All enumeration for our services, all income, gifts and benefits are ours to share or dispose of as a community. In all of this, our hope is that the common purse will be expressive of true reliance upon one another in Holy Cross and will free our hearts for possession by the Lord.
49. At the same time by this vow we forgo the use and enjoyment of our own material goods. Though any of us may own or acquire private property, we put it at a distance from our lives by assigning to others its administration, use and benefits. Inheritances, legacies and gifts, which by their very nature or by the intent of the donor are meant to be the personal property of a member of the community, are presumed to be his own. To accept or renounce an inheritance or legacy requires permission from one's local superior or director. As for gifts, this permission is required only to accept them. To dispossess himself of his property in whole or in part, a member in perpetual vows must have permission from the superior general and follow civil formalities.
50. By our vow of obedience we commit ourselves to adhere faithfully to the decisions of those in authority in Holy Cross according to the constitutions; we owe obedience to the Pope as well. We forgo the independent exercise of our wills in order to join with brothers in a common discernment of God's will as manifested in prayer, communal reflection, scripture, the Spirit's guidance in the church, and the cry of the poor. This vow includes the entirety of our life in Holy Cross, and through it we hope to discover and accept the Lord's will more surely.

Constitution 5

Consecration and Commitment continued ...

51. Our vows not only bind us in community; they are to mark our life as community. Open and generous and hospitable love is to characterize our houses and our service. As a congregation and in each of our local communities we are committed to the use of few belongings and to simple living. In the discernment of God's call we are a brotherhood at the service of the universal church under the pastoral direction of the Pope; and we are no less responsive to the needs of the local churches wherever we live and work. In what regards worship, pastoral ministry and our labor for the kingdom we are under the pastoral authority of the bishops.
52. We live our consecration in many lands and cultures. Our commitment is the same wherever we are, but we seek to express it in a manner rooted in and enriched by the varying contexts and cultures in which we live. In this way we hope to make our witness and service more effective for the kingdom.
53. When we profess our public vows, we declare

I (name) stand in the presence of Jesus Christ,
the Son of God and my Lord,
in the assembly of his church,
amid the Congregation of Holy Cross ***and before you,***
(name and office of the person receiving vows)
to profess my dedication and my vows.
I believe that I have been called by
the Father and led by the Spirit
to offer my life and my life's work
in the service of the Lord
for the needs of the church and the world.

Therefore I make to God forever/for...year(s)
the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience,
according to the constitutions of the Congregation
of Holy Cross.

May the God who allows and invites me to make this commitment
strengthen and protect me to be faithful to it.

54. The religious pronouncing the vows may propose for the approval of the provincial or his delegate modifications in this formula except in the invariable portion set forth in italics.

Constitution 5

Consecration and Commitment continued ...

55. Our consecration is a public one, for we are called to stand forth in service and witness. It is desirable therefore that we ordinarily be known and seen as members of the congregation. In conformity with the customs in the local church and the decision of our provincial chapters, we wear attire appropriate for religious. The symbol of the congregation, the cross and anchors, is worn to identify us as members of Holy Cross.

Constitution 6

Formation and Transformation

56. The disciples followed the Lord Jesus in his ministry of proclaiming the kingdom and healing the afflicted. Jesus also spent long days alone with his disciples, speaking to them of the mysteries of his kingdom and forming them to the point when they too could be sent on his mission. Later they would return for his comment and for a deeper hearing because of what they had experienced. Later still they were visited by the fire of his Spirit, who transformed their understanding of all he had ever taught them. We too are sent to his mission as men formed and in need of lifelong formation for his service.
57. We pronounce our vows in a moment, but living them for the sake of the kingdom is the work of a lifetime. That fulfillment demands of us more than the mere wish, more even than the firm decision. It demands the conversion of our habits, our character, our attitudes, our desires.
58. It is so with our commitment as Christians. Our consecration in baptism is a departure on a journey that requires us, as it does all his people, to be refashioned by the Lord's creating grace over and over again. Likewise with our lives in a religious community, we must have formed in us by God's enablement the living likeness of Jesus Christ.
59. The journey begins before our profession and ends only at our resurrection. We would be created anew to the point when we can say, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." It is the Lord who gives us both the desire and the accomplishment. For our part we must submit to the wisdom and the discipline that will purify us of our selfishness and will make us wholehearted in the service of his people.
60. Our experience in Holy Cross is demanding. It is joyful as well. And so it should give us a life to which we would happily invite others. The Lord's call will be heard in our steadfast witness to the gospel, the companionship we offer one another, the cheerfulness with which we serve in our mission without counting the cost, and the sincere welcome we openly offer men who join us. If we delight in our vocation, we will share it with others.
61. Candidates who come to the congregation deserve from us the cultivation of their maturity, faith, generosity, learning and ability to live in community. With them we assess their character and growth as Christians, and we both discern and assist them to discern whether they are disposed and able to move towards joining our congregation. The duration of each one's candidacy is determined by the provincial, and it is he who admits candidates to the novitiate.

Constitution 6

Formation and Transformation continued ...

62. The novitiate is the beginning of life in the congregation. Novices are helped to form themselves in meditation and prayer, in the mutual services of a common life, in apostolic service, and in knowledge of the history and spirituality, character and mission of Holy Cross. In short they are challenged and helped to open their hearts to the gospel, to live under the same roof with one another, and to create a brotherhood of disciples. The novitiate is their apprenticeship in celibacy, poverty and obedience. The director, or master of novices, appointed by the provincial and under his authority, has full personal responsibility for the formation of the novices.
63. The provincial reviews the qualifications of candidates for valid admission and with the consent of his council admits them to the novitiate. He determines as well the date and the manner in which the novitiate period begins.
64. The novitiate takes place in a house designated by the superior general with the consent of his assistants. Its duration is at least twelve months in the novitiate house, and no more than two years, including brief periods of active ministry. Absences are regulated according to canon law. The novitiate concludes with profession of temporary vows, to which a novice is admitted by the provincial. His vows are received, as at every later state of profession, by the provincial or his delegate, unless the superior general receives them.
65. Prior to his profession the novice freely cedes the administration of his goods to whomever he wishes, and disposes of their use and benefits for the entire period of vows. This he does in written form, valid under civil law, with the stipulation that it is revocable.
66. No one admitted as a novice for one society in Holy Cross may transfer to the other society except by agreement of the provincial(s) concerned with the consent of the provincial councilors and by permission of the superior general given with the consent of his assistants.

Constitution 6

Formation and Transformation continued ...

67. This profession of vows is ordinarily followed by a program of formation that involves new members in further study and internship directed towards their eventual form of service and the needs of our mission. All members are given theological and pastoral training for a lay or ordained ministry. They are encouraged to reflect upon their apostolic, community and life experience in the light of the gospel and systematic theological inquiry. They are likewise brought to a deepening of their spiritual life and prayer, especially through the relationship of regular spiritual direction. In the meantime the maturity, judgment and generosity needed for mission and common life are both cultivated and evaluated. Thus each time the provincial admits a member to renewal of his vows, it represents our affirmation of his growth towards a character that is soundly human, explicitly Christian and better prepared for a lifetime in Holy Cross.
68. The period of initial formation in annual vows after the novitiate is for at least three years and ordinarily no more than six years. It may be extended in individual cases up to another three years by the provincial. It concludes with the profession of perpetual vows, to which a member is admitted by the superior general. This profession is preceded by a time of immediate preparation determined by the provincial.
69. Before pronouncing these vows, the member makes a will which must be valid according to civil law and provide for all present or future property. Any change in this will or in his earlier cession of administration and disposition of benefits requires the permission of the provincial. Permission of the local superior or director suffices for a change in one's will when urgency does not allow recourse to the provincial, for routine acts required by civil law, and for the disposition of property. If a religious leaves the community, this cession of administration is thereby nullified and his will is returned to him.
70. Those who come to us from other religious institutes, if they are in perpetual vows, follow a program of at least three years determined by the provincial in accord with canon law.
71. All should be provided the opportunity for the best pastoral and theological training and advanced education that is appropriate and that, as a community committed to poverty, we can provide. But since everyone in the congregation should, for the benefit of his ministry and of himself, cultivate an inquiring and well-nourished mind broadened by his experience and reflection, there is no age when we can lay aside further systematic or experiential learning, or continuing education.

Constitution 6

Formation and Transformation continued ...

72. We should give members in initial formation access to the distinctive benefits of being in the Congregation of Holy Cross. We are a community of clerical and lay religious. Initiation for members of each society is more complete if they have some experience of the other society. Cooperative formation programs between societies and provinces and, if feasible, with our sisters in Holy Cross make these advantages even more accessible. Also, since we are a worldwide congregation, there is benefit when some can receive a portion of their formation in other provinces or districts or cultures.
73. Opportunity for direct supervised experience of the life, suffering and hopes of the poor should be provided during initial formation and for the sake of ongoing formation as well. For religious of every age this can be an experience that is both formative and transforming.
74. Initial formation is supervised and principally provided by members of the congregation in perpetual vows. The staff of a house of formation shares the responsibility with the superior for the development of all the members in the program. They should be effective educators in the faith, have extensive experience of life and ministry in Holy Cross and be adequately prepared for their tasks. They work together as a team and live in one community with those in formation. The formation programs are arranged to permit each person to assume appropriate responsibility for his formation and to allow both him and the congregation to discern the reality of his vocation.
75. At the completion of initial formation the supervision proper to that period comes to an end. But it is precisely at this time of transition to more autonomy, when we feel less accountable for our personal, communal and apostolic lives, that we form habits that are long-lived. The provinces provide for this transition in the life and work of members so that formation truly continues.
76. It is commonly imagined that our formation is most extensive when we are beginners. But often our most radical formative experiences come upon us when we are well into adulthood. Indeed, we can better grasp and accept profound self-scrutiny, the questioning of our established assumptions and ambitions, and deepening initiation into Christ when we have walked the path of adult experience and responsibility. Programs of continuing renewal in the community are one very helpful way of sharing that lifelong formation.

Constitution 6

Formation and Transformation continued ...

77. Lifelong formation is lifelong growth. As a daily aid for self-knowledge and self-governance, the examination of conscience allows us to find how we succeed or fall short in both our common life and our mission. A grace more powerful still is given in appropriately frequent sacramental confession, whereby each of us opens his conscience to the Lord, to the Lord's minister and to himself and there finds reconciliation with his neighbors and pardon from the Lord, who gave his life lest any of us be lost to him. Spiritual direction becomes even more advantageous as we grow older in the congregation, for as we gain in seniority and responsibility in our work, we may find it more difficult to account honestly to ourselves in God's sight for what we are doing with our life and why. All of these practices are part of ordinary and desirable formation throughout our lives. And all of them assist us to fasten our minds and our hearts more attentively and more generously upon the Lord and our service to his people.

78. Notwithstanding our concern that every priest and brother in Holy Cross benefit from a lifelong formation into Christ, we also know that some of the most decisive transformations are God's gracious gift to us not when we conform to his will but when we have gravely failed him. For one man the crisis may come as a breakdown, a failure to negotiate one of life's passages. For another it may be a long course of self-indulgence and deception ended by collapse. However the benefits of our formation may disintegrate, however we may fall, we need the supportive confrontation and sensitive encouragement of our confreres for us to be rehabilitated. This is the way some of the wisest and strongest men in our community have, by God's grace, been raised up among us. Similarly Peter became the Lord's true and reliable disciple not during the days he followed in Galilee but after he disowned his Lord and wept and was given the opportunity not to become as he once was but to serve as he never had served.

79. Thus we learn that formation and transformation are both the Lord's gifts which we as a community can help one another to receive.

Constitution 7

Authority and Responsibility

- 80.** There can be no community among us unless our common life and mission are governed by deliberations and decisions that draw us all towards a unity of thought, sentiment and action. To those deliberations and decisions we are all obligated--as men pledged to obedience--both to contribute and to respond.
- 81.** We must be responsible--each of us--for the conformity of our lives to the gospel and for the harmony of our ministries with the mission of Christ. In chapter or in council or as individuals, we owe it to our confreres to enter into frank and respectful exchange about the decisions that are to be taken which affect us all. The Spirit of the Lord may choose any of us to speak the truths we all need to hear. Our vow of obedience itself obliges each of us take appropriate responsibility for the common good.
- 82.** Authority is a ministry among us and to us and is vested in our superiors, who act in conformity with our constitutions and statues. They elicit and open themselves to dialogue among the membership, preside over the reaching of consensus if possible, and then see that decisions are made. Whether he acts on his own judgment or after consultation or with required consent by others, a superior must frame his decisions as ones that he can best sustain in conscience.
- 83.** The first obligation of a superior is to preach and to witness the gospel to his confreres. He must hold before us the call of the Lord and lead us in a communal and individual response. He must also summon us to the fulfillment of our commitments as members of Holy Cross.
- 84.** The superior must also preside. Every member is responsible for the common good, but it is the superior's task to call forth this sense of communal responsibility in each of us. He draws our individual contributions into union with those of others for the sake of our life and mission together.
- 85.** The superior is also a pastor charged with the spiritual and physical welfare of every individual member. He owes us encouragement, gratitude, correction, solicitude and whatever else each one may need. With tact and prudence he cares for the total well-being of each person as well as of the community.
- 86.** A local community is established by the provincial according to the norms set by the provincial chapter. Those norms will take into account the needs of the common purse, the common table and common prayer.
- 87.** Houses are established by the provincial with the written consent of the diocesan bishop, and they may be suppressed by the superior general after consulting the bishop. Residences may be suppressed by the provincial.

Constitution 7

Authority and Responsibility

continued ...

- 88.** The local community is under the authority of a superior or, if the community does not fulfill the requirements of the religious house, of a director. They are appointed by the provincial, after consultation with the local community and must have been in perpetual vows for at least one year. Superiors are appointed to a term of three years and reappointment beyond a second consecutive term requires the consent of the superior general. Directors exercise delegated authority in the name of the provincial and are appointed for variable terms, but ordinarily for not more than six consecutive years.
- 89.** The superior or director is assisted by a local council to provide advice and consent. In larger communities the local council is composed of at least three members. In smaller communities all the members may constitute the council. Councilors serve for terms coextensive with that of the superior and are eligible for consecutive terms. They are members in perpetual vows. In exceptional cases a member in temporary vows for at least four years may be appointed but not elected as councilor, though he may never be assistant superior or assistant director. In a house which contains members of both societies in substantial proportions, each society should be represented by at least one member on the council.
- 90.** A district is a sector of a province outside its geographical boundaries but under its jurisdiction. It is erected by the provincial chapter with the approval of the superior general. It has the autonomy necessary to develop its common life and ministries and is governed under norms set by the provincial chapter.
- 91.** A district superior is elected or appointed according to the district norms to a term of three years renewable consecutively not more than twice. He must have been in perpetual vows for at least three years. He is assisted by a council of at least three members. If one society is less numerous than the other but its members form a substantial part of the district, each society should be represented by at least one member on the council.
- 92.** Suppressed by the General Chapter of 1998.
- 93.** A province is a sector of the congregation which has a high degree of autonomy. It is erected by the general chapter and is under a provincial superior. It comprises a number of local houses and members and sources of finance sufficient to support and develop its ministries, vocation promotion, formation and common life. In exercising autonomy over its own common life and its participation in the mission of the congregation, a province nevertheless acts in dependence upon the superior general and in collaboration with the other provinces.

Constitution 7

Authority and Responsibility

continued ...

- 94.** Provinces are either homogeneous or mixed: that is, composed of members of one society, priests or brothers; or of both societies.
- 95.** The highest authority in a province is vested in the provincial chapter, which must discern and decide the largest issues of the common good. Unless in particular circumstances the superior general has permitted an alternate method of constituting the chapter membership, it is composed of capitulants ex officio: the provincial who presides, the assistant provincial, district superiors, elected provincial councilors and, unless the preceding provincial chapter has decided otherwise, appointed provincial councilors; and of capitulants elected by the members of the province. Elected capitulants must be more numerous than those ex officio. In a mixed province the delegates are elected by and from the two societies in proportion to the number of province members with active voice in the respective societies.
- 96.** The provincial chapter meets ordinarily every three years. It analyzes the state of the province's common life and mission, determines major policies for the future, elects officers and delegates within its competence, and erects and oversees the development of districts. It requires the presence of two-thirds of the capitulants for valid acts.
- 97.** The province is guided and governed by a provincial, who holds personal authority over all members and houses. He is elected by a two-thirds vote of the provincial chapter or by an alternate method as provided in the statutes; his election is confirmed in writing by the superior general. He is elected to a term of six years, and may be elected to one consecutive term of three years. He must have been in perpetual vows for at least five years. Should he seek to resign, he must first consult with his council and then he must submit his resignation to the superior general. Should his office become vacant, the assistant becomes the acting provincial. The superior general, having consulted the province membership, either instructs the acting provincial to hold an election or appoints him as provincial until the next provincial chapter.
- 98.** The provincial council is composed of at least four members, two of whom are elected by the provincial chapter. After receiving the provincial's recommendations, the superior general appoints the other councilors and confirms the provincial's designation of the assistant, the secretary and the rank of the councilors. All serve for terms of three years. The assistant provincial is the vicar of the provincial. Should a councilor seek to resign, he must first consult with the provincial and then he must submit his resignation to the superior general.

Constitution 7

Authority and Responsibility

continued ...

- 99.** The highest authority in the congregation is vested in the general chapter, which must discern and decide the largest issues of the common good and regulate relations between the societies and among the provinces. It includes as capitulants ex officio: the superior general who presides, the general assistants, the provincial and the vice-provincials. The number of elected capitulants exceeds that of the capitulants ex officio. Capitulants are elected from and by the societies according to parity such that the societies are represented by equal numbers of capitulants exclusive of the superior general. The superior general meets and votes with both societies when they act separately.
- 100.** The general chapter meets ordinarily every six years. It analyzes the state of our common life and mission, promotes and safeguards the heritage of the congregation, reviews and amends the statutes, issues decrees, recommendations and declarations, elects the superior general and the general assistants, and erects, divides or suppresses provinces. It requires the presence of two-thirds of the capitulants for valid acts.
- 101.** The congregation is guided and governed by the superior general, who holds personal authority over all provinces, houses and members. He is elected by a two-thirds vote of the general chapter to a term of six years, or until the next ordinary general chapter, and may be elected to one other consecutive term. He must be a priest and have been in perpetual vows for at least ten years. Should his office become vacant, the first assistant convokes an extraordinary general chapter within six months to elect a superior general for the remainder of the term. With the consent of the other assistants he may await the next ordinary chapter if it is to be held within one year. During the interim he functions as acting superior general and actions requiring holy orders are carried out by the first priest assistant.
- 102.** Should the superior general feel obliged to resign during his term of office, he should consult the general assistants and then present his resignation to the Holy See unless an extraordinary general chapter is in session at the time. Only the Holy See can depose the superior general.
- 103.** The superior general is assisted by a general council whose four members are elected in the general chapter, two each by and from the two societies. All serve for terms coextensive with that of the superior general. The assistants hold rank alternately by society, the first assistant always belonging to the society other than that of the superior general. The first assistant is the vicar of the superior general. The general secretary and the general steward are appointed by the superior general and act under his authority.

Constitution 7

Authority and Responsibility

continued ...

- 104.** The council of the congregation is a consultative body whose members are the superior general, who convenes its meetings and presides, the general assistants, the provincials, the vice-provincials, and, as provided in the statutes, the district superiors. Other persons may be invited to attend. The council concerns itself with the ongoing life and mission of the congregation. It also provides the superior general with wider consultation in his duty to unify congregational planning, especially for new international works and foundations.
- 105.** Active voice, or the right to vote, belongs to all members of the congregation in perpetual vows or who have been professed for at least four years. Full or limited active voice may be extended by a provincial chapter to other members.
- 106.** Passive voice, or the right to be elected to office, belongs to all members of the congregation in perpetual vows, subject to the provisions of the constitutions and statutes.
- 107.** When the provincial is a brother, all acts involving ordination or ecclesiastical jurisdiction are carried out by his first priest councilor or they are referred to the superior general.
- 108.** The congregation at the general level, the provinces, the vice-provinces, the districts and the local houses all have the right and capacity to acquire, possess, administer and alienate material goods. This property is administered in accord with the statutes, chapter decrees, canon law and civil law, and consistent with the respective authority of higher superiors. It is administered as the goods of a congregation of men vowed to poverty among themselves and committed to social justice among the poor in this world.
- 109.** If a member seeks temporary or permanent separation from the congregation or if the congregation deems it necessary to dismiss a member, the norms of canon law are observed. Those who have been legitimately separated may be readmitted according to the norms of canon law.
- 110.** The statutes of the congregation are amended by an absolute majority of the general chapter. The constitutions are amended by a two-thirds vote of the general chapter with the approval of the Holy See.
- 111.** All members of the congregation shall ratify and embody their fidelity to the Lord and their brotherhood in Holy Cross by observing these constitutions with a sincere and unreserved obedience.

Constitution 8

The Cross, Our Hope

- 112.** The Lord Jesus loved us and gave up his life for us. Few of us will be called to die the way he died. Yet all of us must lay down our lives with him and for him. If we would be faithful to the gospel we must take up our cross daily and follow him.
- 113.** The cross was constantly before the eyes of Basil Moreau, whose motto for his congregation was Spes Unica. The cross was to be "Our Only Hope."
- 114.** Jesus entered into the pain and death that sin inflicts. He accepted the torment but gave us joy in return. We whom he has sent to minister amid the same sin and pain must know that we too shall find the cross and the hope it promises. The face of every human being who suffers is for us the face of Jesus who mounted the cross to take the sting out of death. Ours must be the same cross and the same hope.
- 115.** To struggle for justice and meet only stubbornness, to try to rally those who have despaired, to stand by the side of misery we cannot relieve, to preach the Lord to those who have little faith or do not wish to hear of him ... our ministry will hint to us of Jesus' suffering for us.
- 116.** To spend ourselves and be spent for the needs of neighbors; to be available and cheerful as a friend in Holy Cross and to give witness while others hesitate; to stand by duty when it has become all burden and no delight ... community too can draw us nearer Calvary.
- 117.** Whether it be unfair treatment, fatigue or frustration at work, a lapse of health, tasks beyond talents, seasons of loneliness, bleakness in prayer, the aloofness of friends; or whether it be the sadness of our having inflicted any of this on others ... there will dying to do on our way to the Father.
- 118.** But we do not grieve as men without hope, for Christ the Lord has risen to die no more. He has taken us into the mystery and the grace of this life that springs up from death. If we, like him, encounter and accept suffering in our discipleship, we will move without awkwardness among others who suffer. We must be men with hope to bring. There is no failure the Lord's love cannot reverse, no humiliation he cannot exchange for blessing, no anger he cannot dissolve, no routine he cannot transfigure. All is swallowed up in victory. He has nothing but gifts to offer. It remains only for us to find how even the cross can be borne as a gift.

Constitution 8

The Cross, Our Hope

continued ...

- 119.** Resurrection for us is a daily event. We have stood watch with persons dying in peace; we have witnessed wonderful reconciliations; we have known the forgiveness of those who misuse their neighbor; we have seen heartbreak and defeat lead to a transformed life; we have heard the conscience of an entire church stir; we have marveled at the insurrection of justice. We know that we walk by Easter's first light, and it makes us long for its fullness.
- 120.** There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother Mary, who knew grief and was a Lady of Sorrows. She is our special patroness, a woman who bore much she could not understand and who stood fast. To her many sons and daughters, whose devotions ought to bring them often to her side, she tells much of this daily cross and its daily hope.
- 121.** If we drink the cup each of us is poured and given, we servants will fare no better than our master. But if we shirk the cross, gone too will be our hope. It is in fidelity to what we once pledged that we will find the dying and the rising equally assured.
- 122.** The footsteps of those men who called us to walk in their company left deep prints, as of men carrying heavy burdens. But they did not trudge; they strode. For they had the hope.
- 123.** It is the Lord Jesus calling us. "Come. Follow me."