

RATIO FORMATIONIS GENERALIS – 2016

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Forming a Dominican Preacher*

1. 'The aim of our formation is the making of a Dominican preacher, one who will be a preacher of grace and a true witness to Christ' (Rome 2010, nn.185, 200). It requires an environment characterized by prayer, poverty and study, by apostolic zeal and a sense of mission, by joy in liturgical celebration and common life. Its success is measured by genuine personal maturity, the practice of prayer, fidelity to the vows, community life, continual study, solidarity with the poor and a passion for the salvation of souls.

2. Formation begins in the stages of initial formation and continues throughout our lives. This is why most of this *Ratio Formationis Generalis* applies not just to initial formation but also to permanent formation. This single process of formation finds its unity in the purpose of the Order: the mission of preaching (Mexico 1992 n.27,2). Initial formation introduces us, therefore, into something that characterises the whole of our lives.

3. In our tradition formation means growing in discipleship as we follow Christ on the way of St Dominic. It is not just about academic study and it is not just about one period of our lives. It presupposes humility and docility, accepting that we need always to grow in knowledge and in virtue, to understand better, and to be renewed. Most deeply, of course, formation is the work of God's grace.

4. Our formation will seek to integrate the intellectual and pastoral dimension in the human and spiritual development of the brothers (*Pastores Dabo Vobis* §§42-59). Many general chapters have emphasised that our formation seeks to help the brothers to become more mature as men and believers, as religious and preachers. Brothers preparing for priesthood need a particular initial formation in preparation for their vocation, as do the co-operator brothers in preparation for theirs.

5. Our formation must attend to these aspects because it is the formation of apostles, after the pattern of life devised by St Dominic. Its paradigm is the school of apostolic life in which Jesus is the Master. So our first text for formation is Sacred Scripture. Jesus trained the apostles as preachers of grace by inviting them to share his company and to learn from his words and actions. He taught them how to pray and initiated them into the mysteries of his person and of his mission. His final formation of them was through the gift of the Spirit who sustained in them their love for the Master and their desire to follow him. St Dominic restored this school of apostolic life in view of his mission and we are called to live it in ways adapted to our time and circumstances.

6. We believe that we have been called by God to follow St Dominic and so to follow Christ in his preaching mission. We are called to grow into this mission by the Word of God, by the Church, and by our Constitutions. We are called also by the need of our brothers and sisters to whom we are sent to announce the Good News of salvation (cf. Trogir 2013 n.124). We are called especially by the poor, the blind, and the afflicted, by prisoners and offenders, by the oppressed and the marginalized (cf. Luke 4:18). All this urges us towards a permanent formation: the Word of God which abides in us, the studies which we pursue, the men and women we meet, the mentalities which challenge us, the places and events in which we are immersed.

B. *The purpose of the Ratio Formationis Generalis*

7. The *Ratio Formationis Generalis* contains general spiritual principles and fundamental pedagogical norms for the formation of the brothers (LCO 163). It recalls and develops the prescriptions of LCO 154-251-ter, as well as the acts of general chapters. It describes the spirit and context of formation in our Order and draws some conclusions of a practical nature. It leaves to each province the task of applying and adapting these principles and norms according to the specific requirements of each province.

8. The *Ratio Formationis Generalis* is addressed to all the brothers. Each one retains a primary responsibility for his formation, under the guidance of masters and other formators where appropriate, and always in response to the grace of the vocation we have received (cf. LCO 156).

9. The *Ratio Formationis Generalis* is addressed in a particular way to brothers who are given a specific responsibility for initial or permanent formation, to guide them in their tasks.

10. The *Ratio Formationis Generalis* is to be read along with the *Ratio Studiorum Generalis*. Study is an essential part of our form of religious life. The work of study is not an alternative to apostolic work but is a necessary part of our service of the Word of God. Because study is integral to our form of life, it is related to prayer and contemplation, to the ministry of the Word, and to our life in community. So our formation can never be considered without reference to study nor our study without reference to the other aspects of formation.

11. It is essential for the sake of brothers in initial formation that good contact is maintained especially between regents and directors of studies on the one hand, and masters of formation on the other. The overall progress of brothers in initial formation is overseen also by the provincial and local councils of formation.

12. Guidelines for the production of the *Ratio Formationis Particularis* are given in the Appendix to this *Ratio Formationis Generalis*.

I. DOMINICAN FORMATION

A. *Fundamental values of Dominican life*

13. Formation means the progressive initiation and integration of brothers into our way of life with its mission of preaching as described in the Fundamental Constitution, in LCO 2-153, and in the acts of the general chapters.

14. Dominican life requires prayer, poverty, community life, study and preaching. Our vocation is contemplative, communitarian and missionary. Its source is a thirst for God and a desire to preach the compassion and friendship of God, directed towards the fullness of justice and peace, a desire established and formed by God's grace.

The evangelical counsels

15. Our constitutions understand the vows in relation to the following of Christ, the service of the Church, and our personal freedom for these tasks. In professing the evangelical counsels we seek to be conformed to Christ obedient, poor and chaste. These gifts of grace, received in our profession, enable the deepest desires of human nature to serve our search for God, the preaching of the Gospel and the care of others. Living the evangelical counsels makes us witnesses of the kingdom that is coming. In forming apostles and preachers we can never forget that our human nature is wounded by sin and needs to be healed by grace. Where we seek to possess material goods, other people, and power, it enslaves us. By contrast, the gifts of grace bring freedom. We receive these gifts and develop them in living our vocation fully.

16. Our deepest human desires – for autonomy and achievement, for marriage and family life, for property and satisfying work – are distinct but it is helpful to consider them together and in our profession we name only obedience. We profess obedience to God, to Mary, to St Dominic, to our superiors, according to the institutions of the Order, including therefore our characteristic form of capitular government. St Dominic asked the brothers to promise him 'community and obedience' (LCO 17 §1).

Obedience

17. Obedience is the heart of our religious life, as we seek to imitate the love and obedience of Jesus for the Father. Entrusting ourselves to Him, and to each other, we seek to live together with the freedom for which

Christ has set us free, mature men capable of sharing in the projects and responsibilities of the community. Formation in obedience begins immediately and continues throughout our lives as we learn to practice a genuine dialogue: listening openly and receptively to each other, speaking frankly and charitably to each other, learning how to work together, to moderate meetings, to resolve dialogue into determinate action, to be obedient to such determinations and to contribute generously whatever our particular responsibility in the community. The witness of obedience corrects distorted ideas of freedom and living it authentically enables us to confront abuses of power credibly and in solidarity with those who are voiceless and excluded.

Chastity

18. LCO speaks of the Christological, ecclesial, apostolic and eschatological meanings of consecrated chastity which unites us to Christ in a new way, strengthens our hearts for preaching, and heals our wounds. It gives us a new kind of availability to people, a deeper respect for each person, and a freedom to welcome and receive all with the compassion and tenderness of Christ For such a commitment 'it is essential that the brothers grow in physical, psychological and moral maturity' (LCO 27 §II) Those with responsibility for formation must assist this growth in every possible way. At each stage of initial formation, and from time to time in permanent formation, there is to be serious reflection and sharing on affective life and maturity, sexuality, celibacy and chaste love (Bologna 1998, n.90). The general chapter of Providence gave a fuller context for this (Providence 2001, nn.348-349) and the general chapter of Trogir endorsed it (Trogir 2013, n.142). Issues that are to be explicitly considered are homosexuality, the use of social media, pornography, and paedophilia (along with the province's guidelines concerning abuse).

Poverty

19. Relying on divine providence in imitation of Christ and the apostles, we live as poor men sharing all we earn and all we are given. As mendicants we live in simplicity and detachment, ready to move and to adapt for the sake of the preaching of the gospel. Living simply and even austerely as Jesus did, we grow in freedom and our preaching gains credibility. Evangelical poverty creates a solidarity among ourselves and with the poor, especially those closest to us. We observe it also by working hard at the tasks we have been given, and by our efforts to promote economic justice and a spirit of sharing amongst people.

Compassion

20. We seek God's mercy on coming to the Order and our formation ought to educate us in compassion. The theological, spiritual, apostolic and mystical traditions of the Order teach a wisdom of the heart which encourages us to sympathise with the sufferings and difficulties of people and bring them into our prayer. We are to be pastoral theologians and theological pastors, always aware, as St Dominic was, of those who suffer. We learn to bring to people the Word that heals, forgives, reconciles and renews by receiving and appreciating that Word in our own lives.

Study and contemplation

21. Study and contemplation go together for us. Although there is a *Ratio* for studies in the Order, intellectual formation is not a separate compartment isolated from the rest of our formation. Study is an essential part of our spirituality, of our form of religious life, and of our mission in the Church.

22. Our study begins and ends with the Word of God. For us, contemplation means seeking to understand the Word that is Christ and so be united with him as the Way of Truth that leads to Life (St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, III, prologue). Our study is always undertaken with a view to a deeper love of God and to evangelization, to understanding more profoundly the call of the Gospel and the needs of humanity. The brothers are to be introduced to *lectio divina*, a meditative study of the Scriptures and a practice that bears fruit in personal spirituality and in preaching.

Silence and cloister

23. 'Silence is the father of preachers' is a saying handed on in our tradition. Brothers need to be formed for solitude and silence so as to make good use of times for study and prayer, to free their minds from distractions, and simply to ponder the mysteries of the faith. The modern means of communication reach inside the cloister and inside our rooms. We need to be formed in wise use of the internet and especially the social media, appreciating how they can assist us but learning also how to avoid the negative effects they can have for brothers personally and for community life. Brothers in formation will be helped to see how our way of living needs the support of penitential practices (cf. LCO 52-55), the most important of which for us is study (LCO 83).

Personal prayer

24. St Catherine of Siena speaks of prayer as 'the cell of self-knowledge' and Sirach teaches us that 'the prayer of the humble person pierces the clouds' (35:17). Personal prayer is essential for the self-knowledge without which personal maturity is impossible. Initial and permanent formation will frequently consider the teachings and practices of prayer that are found in the traditions of the Order and the Church.

The sacred liturgy

25. 'The celebration of the liturgy is the centre and heart of our life, the basic source of our unity' (LCO 57). This refers not only to the Eucharist but also to the Liturgy of the Hours which structures our day and to which St Dominic was always faithful. Dominicans are formed to participate in the liturgy by participating in the liturgy. The liturgy draws us out of ourselves, to pray with Christ and the Church and so to grow in compassion for all. Through the variety of seasons and rites, celebrating the liturgy in its diversity, we praise God and our communion with Him is deepened. LCO 105 §II describes the Eucharist as 'the source and summit of all evangelization' while LCO 60 calls us to frequent reception of the sacrament of penance and reconciliation.

26. The liturgy is a privileged place for hearing the Word, receiving it in joyful celebration, and allowing ourselves to be formed by the power of its truth. A goal of formation is to bring the brothers to realise how our service of the Word of God brings together everything in our lives: we contemplate the Word of God in prayer and study, we welcome the Word and celebrate it in the sacred liturgy, we allow the Word to shape our lives through the other observances of conventual life, and we proclaim the Word through preaching.

The Rosary and other devotions

27. Devotion to Mary, the Mother of God, is at the heart of Dominican spirituality. In the Rosary we are with Mary, pondering the mysteries of the Word made flesh. Another essential resource for us is the example, the teaching and the prayers of the Order's saints. In addition it is important to introduce brothers to the popular devotions that are valued by believers, especially to those associated with the Order.

Fraternity

28. A common fraternal life is part of any *sacra praedicatio*, part of our preaching. We see this in the apostolic brotherhood gathered around Jesus, and in the first Christian communities. Preachers are sent to bring to other places the shared life of prayer and charity they have experienced. Each community is ecclesial, a school of Christian life. Our appreciation of this fraternity must extend beyond our own community to include the other branches of the Dominican family as well as the community of the local Church.

Preaching

29. Dominican preaching requires and illuminates approaches to formation. It seeks to be prophetic and doctrinal, marked by an evangelical spirit and sound teaching (LCO 99 §I), open to dialogue and yet not afraid to be critical. Our formation prepares preachers who will be zealous like the apostles and creative like

the prophets. We are called to stimulate people's desire to know the truth (LCO 77 §II) and to help the Church to find new ways to that truth (LCO 99 §II). We seek to form men who will be imaginative in engaging with changing situations where new realities are coming to birth.

30. Initiation into the preaching of the province is to be continual and supervised, strengthening the passion of the brothers to preach the gospel. In initial formation the brothers are introduced to a range of apostolic activities, especially in contexts where people are seeking knowledge and truth, where people are suffering and seeking hope, and where there are opportunities for direct teaching and preaching. As well as learning to undertake these activities, they must also learn to work with others, with brothers and other members of the Dominican family, with priests and other religious, and with lay people.

Mission

31. While brothers belong to a particular province, and are formed for that province, their formation will never forget the universal character of the Order and its mission throughout the whole Church. It will be a formation in availability, adaptability and mobility in line with the universal missionary character of our vocation.

32. While the mission of preaching the Gospel is perennial, specific priorities for the Order's mission are identified from time to time, especially at general chapters (e.g., Quezon City, 1977; Avila, 1986; Rome, 2010). Part of the task of formation is to help the brothers to appreciate and to embrace these priorities, which ought also to give shape to the programmes of formation.

B. The process of integration into Dominican life

33. Our formation initiates us into the following of Christ along the way devised by St Dominic. We do it by living in the way described in Section A above. All of this constitutes the 'Dominican culture' into which we are initiated through the process of formation. While integration into Dominican life is progressive, it must include, in all stages and in appropriate ways, all the elements which make up our life.

Maturity

34. All aspects of formation require time. LCO describes the kind of maturity we need: physical, psychological and moral (LCO 27 §II). Such maturity is seen in a stable personality, the ability to make weighty decisions, and the acceptance of personal responsibility (LCO 216 §I). It means a good sense of personal autonomy combined with a sense of the other person and the interests of the community, the ability to find balance in a lifestyle that makes varied demands, freedom from addictive and compulsive behaviour, the ability to live with tensions and to deal with conflicts, being at ease with people no matter what their race, age, gender, or social position. Formation seeks to help brothers mature in all these ways. The work of Thomas Aquinas on human action, passions and virtues, offers a solid starting point for reflecting on psychological maturity and moral development. His work ought to give shape to our formation, in conversation with the best of contemporary thought and experience in these areas.

35. People mature also through making mistakes, learning how to continue in spite of them while often also learning important things from those mistakes. We 'seek mercy in the company of others' (Caleruega 1995 n.98.3): a mature person is one who can receive mercy and show it to others.

36. The experience of the Cross is at the heart of Christian life, a life lived in 'affliction and joy' (1 Thess 1:6). We need to be helped, at any stage of life, to integrate experiences of failure, disappointment and loss with faithfulness to our vocation. One task of formation is helping brothers to mature by letting go and moving on where this is what ought to be done. Formation helps the brothers to prepare themselves for paschal moments in the life of the preacher.

37. Formators and others are often called on to accompany brothers in times of crisis. This too is a necessary part of growth and maturing. There are times when it seems that the Lord is asleep as our boat is tossed around, but we can always call on him and on the help also of our brothers and sisters, to restore calm and be prepared for the fresh challenge that will come to us on the other shore. We ought to pray regularly for brothers experiencing difficulty, that God will reveal his presence to them and send to them a person able to help.

38. Initial formation continues over many years, and permanent formation for the whole of our lives, so it will at times feel tedious. This is another challenge and opportunity for maturing, to persevere in the daily living of our vocation, in regular observance, so as to live that vocation with constancy and depth (Providence 2001, n.355).

39. A basic human maturity is essential in those who are given particular responsibilities for formation as well as in those assigned to communities of formation. This is particularly necessary in order to provide positive role models for brothers in initial formation and to avoid any kind of exploitation of the brothers in formation by senior brothers.

40. Formators must work against a common tendency, especially in the years of initial formation, to infantilize brothers. On the other hand there is the contemporary phenomenon of an 'extended adolescence' along with a culture of dependence and entitlement in the younger generations. This presents new challenges for formation, particularly in regard to community life, poverty, and obedience. The nature of the freedom in Christ which St Dominic wanted his brothers to have can lead some to regress in how they respond to authority. The reasons for rules and expectations are to be explained and brothers are to be prepared to account for their behaviour.

41. To be a disciple means remaining faithful to the Word, abiding in the truth and so finding true freedom (John 8:31-32). There is a strength in our life because it is centred simply on the quest for truth: it gives us stability, doctrine to guide us, fraternal communion in the friendship of Christ, a freedom strengthened by obedience (LCO 214 §II).

42. Even before solemn profession brothers are to be educated in the function of Dominican government (Rome 2010 n.194). They are to be included in community meetings, participating in processes of discernment and decision except in matters for which solemn profession is required. They will see in practice that in our form of government, based on mutual trust and respect, listening and sharing with others are essential. Dominican government is responsible, participatory and consensual, it presupposes an evangelical freedom and an obedience that is not out of fear (Bogotà 2007 n.207, f).

43. Brothers will be reminded of the importance of friendship and that genuine friendship is never exclusive or inimical to community life. The gift of friendship is to be welcomed, whether it is between brothers or with people outside the Order. Good experiences of friendship help in the mature integration of a religious vocation. However any friendship, even when in conformity with the vow of chastity, has to be coherent with the exclusivity of our relationship with God.

44. A challenge for formation is to help the brothers to establish a new relationship with their families, from within the choice of a consecrated life and where the brother must help his family to understand the path he has chosen. Responsibilities towards one's family of origin can vary from culture to culture and sometimes create tensions with the responsibilities that come with profession. These issues need to be addressed as soon as possible in the course of initial formation so that family relationships do not become an obstacle to a brother's full integration into the community. We must acknowledge family responsibilities and how they are understood culturally, help brothers to meet those responsibilities, and at the same time not allow them to damage the kind of belonging our profession requires.

45. In some parts of the Order the programme of formation is shared with other members of the Dominican Family, particularly with the nuns and with the sisters. Even where this is not the case, our formation must also initiate the brothers into the life of the Dominican family. It is another context in which we learn how to

share life with others, women as well as men, religious as well as lay people, where we must practice dialogue, solidarity, and fraternal reconciliation.

46. Love of the Church is at the heart of our vocation. Integration into Dominican life is integration into the life of the Church: it is in this place and in this way that we live out our membership of the Body of Christ. We are at the service of the Church in ways appropriate to our charism and our mission is always to be related to that of the Church in a particular place.

C. The contexts of formation

47. There are different contexts for formation in the Order depending on levels of education, social and political situations, and religious and ecclesial circumstances. To be considered also are the size of novitiate and studentate groups, the age at which men are admitted, traditions and customs specific to each province, and even to different regions within the one province. Formation has the task of initiating into our way of life brothers of different cultures and mentalities, while simultaneously offering them the fullness of Dominican life thus opening them to a larger and consequently more catholic communion. Another consequence of this diversity is that formators and the formation communities are asked to be open to new possibilities.

48. Formation takes on specific modalities in the different stages of initial formation, in formation for a particular vocation within the Order, in formation for a particular ministry, and in permanent formation for the different stages of life.

49. Local and regional resources for education and human formation, whether in the Dominican family, in the local Church, organised by regional conferences of religious or in inter-congregational collaboration, can normally be used in support of a Dominican formation that is holistic and permanent. However, initiation into Dominican life ought to take place in a convent (cf. LCO 160-161, 180 §I, 213 §II). In areas where such formation, or inter-provincial collaboration, is not feasible for cultural, geographical, or other reasons, permission to establish exceptional models of formation should be submitted to the Master of the Order for approval.

50. Each person brings a unique personal background and history with him, a new way in which the grace of a Dominican vocation has been working. Formators need to be aware of the needs of each individual as well as the dynamics within groups and he needs to be wise and patient with the rhythm of development of each brother (Bogotá 2007, n.200).

51. In some contexts men are significantly older when entering the Order. Care needs to be taken to ensure that such candidates have sufficient flexibility and openness to adapt to Dominican life. Sometimes men join as priests or having been in a seminary or in another religious institute. After simple profession men who are already ordained priests remain in formation under the care of a master to continue their initiation into Dominican religious life and to prepare adequately for solemn profession. The *Ratio Formationis Particularis* will consider the age limit for the admission of candidates as well as adaptations that may be needed to receive older men and men who are already ordained.

52. Where the desire to join the Order follows on a conversion or re-conversion to the faith, it is important to help the person to be clear that his conversion and his vocation are related but are also distinct. It is essential that men experience the ordinary life of the Church for a number of years before applying to join the Order. This will help them to grow in the faith and to appreciate the grace of a call to be a preacher at the service of the Church.

53. In contexts where religious life and priesthood offer a higher standard of living than would be generally available, or gives a status within the society, formators must help brothers to purify their motivation in wanting to be Dominicans and to live as the evangelical counsels require.

54. There can be significant differences between cultures concerning questions of sexuality, sexual orientation, human intimacy and attitudes to women and men. It is necessary to speak about these questions in initial and in permanent formation and to base our attitudes and behaviour on what we learn in the gospels.

55. In regard to sexuality, the questions presented for formation are about learning to live chastely as well as about integration in the life of the community so as to participate joyfully in its preaching mission (cf. Timothy Radcliffe, Letter to the Order, 'The Promise of Life').

56. Each generation is to be won for Christ and likewise each generation brings something new to the Order, new experiences, new questions, new apostolic zeal. Formators must work to ensure that each generation of brothers is enabled to grow, to bring its gifts to the Order and gradually to share responsibility for the Order with the older brothers. They must also work to ensure that our traditions are passed on to the new generations and that younger brothers are disposed to receive and to learn from those traditions.

II. PERSONS INVOLVED IN FORMATION

A. *The community in formation, the community of formation*

57. As a *sacra praedicatio*, every Dominican community is a school for preachers and a community in formation. This is true of every community, not only of the communities of initial formation. Each one is to be a place where the permanent formation of the brothers is encouraged and facilitated.

58. While every member of the province shares in the responsibility of formation, brothers assigned to communities of initial formation have a particular responsibility (cf. LCO 161). With the superiors and masters of formation, they accompany the process of growth in Dominican life and apostolic zeal of those in formation. The solemnly professed brothers ought to have the ability and desire to be with those in initial formation, where all who are assigned are jointly responsible for the formation of the Order's newest members.

59. The first task of a formation community is to be a good Dominican community. The community will be challenged by the brothers in formation to renew its life, but it must also take seriously its responsibility to inculcate in the younger brothers the fundamental values of Dominican life (Section I A above). The most powerful witness and teacher of fraternity for the younger brothers is a formation community that is living and functioning well.

60. The community of formation ought to be composed of brothers who have a deep Dominican spirituality, with varied gifts and apostolic engagements, who respect and encourage intellectual life, are kind and open to dialogue, who trust each other, are emotionally mature, know how to listen, and are capable of reconciliation (cf. LCO 160, 180 §I, 215 and Bogotá 2007 n.216). Where possible, one or more co-operator brothers ought to be assigned in the communities of initial formation so that there is a living witness to this vocation for the brothers in formation and a support for new vocations to this precious vocation in the Order.

61. Initial formation presupposes a conventual life strong enough to receive and to form new members, well-prepared masters, and a sufficient number of novices or students. Where it is difficult for a province or other entity to sustain its own communities of formation, there needs to be collaboration between provinces, particularly in the same region.

62. It is important that where possible brothers are formed in their own entity but it is also important that they have the best possible formation. Where there are few vocations to a province consideration is to be given to sending new brothers to novitiates and studentates where they will have a good number of contemporaries. This is especially the case where there is a significant gap in age between the older brothers of a province and the brothers in formation. A very important part of formation is sharing life with one's peers who often have an important formative influence. Keeping a single novice in a novitiate, or too few students in a province, is to be avoided.

63. As part of the annual canonical visitation of the prior provincial (cf. LCO 340), each community of initial formation is to see whether the work of formation is in fact a primary and integral part of the community project, and whether the brothers of the community are collaborating well in that work.

64. After the annual visitation of the communities of initial formation, the provincial with his council shall review the environment in which formation is taking place as well as the implementation of the formation programme. They must ensure that the conditions required for a good formation community are present in both the novitiate and the studentate. Where there are difficulties the provincial council of formation must also be informed.

65. The prior provincial needs to be confident that any brother being assigned to a community of initial formation is committed to its purpose. When he has to confirm the election of a prior in a convent of initial formation, he will enquire to know if the elected brother really desires to interest himself and participate in the formation of brothers and in their integration into the community. He ought also to ensure that the elected brother understands the responsibility of the master of formation and how he needs to work together with him.

66. Brothers assigned in communities of initial formation are to be supportive of the masters but not try to substitute for them. If they have criticisms of the brothers in formation they are to bring these to the master or raise them at the conventual chapter. If they have criticisms of the master they are to bring these to the conventual prior or to the prior provincial. The prior of the formation community is to speak about these matters in the regular chapter at least twice each year.

B. Brothers in formation

67. Because of the nature of a religious vocation, each brother has primary responsibility for his formation, i.e. for his progress in the following of Christ who calls him along the way of St Dominic. He fulfils this responsibility under the guidance of masters and other formators (LCO 156). It is not just a question of sharing an intellectual understanding but requires an active participation, a willingness to learn, and a readiness to collaborate. Without mutual trust the process of formation cannot succeed.

68. The principle that each brother has primary responsibility for his own formation is not to be interpreted by masters or by the brothers in formation in a way that would prevent appropriate intervention and correction. 'Subjectively' the brother has primary responsibility for his formation and 'objectively' the community and the masters of formation have a duty to assist him in fulfilling this responsibility.

69. As he grows in self-knowledge, each brother explores how his own experience is to be interpreted in the light of salvation history, so that his life becomes woven into that of Christ, in whom he is incorporated by baptism, and into that of the Order, into which he is incorporated by profession (LCO 265).

70. Brothers in initial formation should accept the help of the masters particularly in the discernment of their vocation, which is presumed to be a Dominican vocation but may not necessarily be so. It is precisely this that must be examined and verified particularly in the time of preparation for the novitiate and during the novitiate itself.

71. Brothers in initial formation should willingly accept correction from the master, accepting that it is intended for their good. Without the ability to give and receive fraternal correction there is no progress in the Dominican life. Brothers in initial formation are to be introduced to some form of regular and mutual fraternal correction.

72. For his human and spiritual maturing, as well as for progress in Dominican life, it is of great help to a brother in formation to have a regular confessor and/or spiritual counsellor to whom he can with confidence open his heart.

73. If there is misunderstanding between a brother in formation and his novice master or student master, either or both have the right and duty to seek the advice of the conventual prior. If the situation proves too conflictual so that it seems irremediable, either or both have the right and duty to seek the advice of the prior provincial.

C. Those responsible for formation

74. The masters are to be men of faith and prayer, upright in their way of living, with the ability to receive others kindly, to listen well to them and to understand what is involved in human and Christian maturing (Bogotá 2007 n.200). They are to be men who love the Order, with a lot of experience of its life and apostolic work, and who in their own lives have integrated well the different components of Dominican life.

75. The relationship of the master with the brothers in initial formation is to be that of a witness to and teacher of our way of life, a brother who will help foster mutual knowledge and appreciation, and who will show respect for each one's freedom and dignity. He is to be respected for his personal dignity and for his community responsibility.

76. Masters are to be left free of other major responsibilities and devote themselves to the work of formation as their principal ministry. They need to give adequate time and attention to the individual brothers in formation as well as to the group of novices or students. The master of novices or students can in no case reside outside the community of formation nor is he to have other responsibilities that oblige him to be absent for too long or too frequently.

77. The master must always be present when the conventual chapter or council discusses the progress of a brother in his charge or a question affecting his area of responsibility. It pertains to the masters of formation in the first place to give information from such discussions to novices and students, to identify clearly areas that give rise to concern and to help the brothers to respond to the concerns that have been raised.

78. Brothers appointed as masters of novices or students are to be given adequate time, as specified by the provincial chapter, to prepare themselves for taking up this responsibility (cf. Trogir 2013 n.133).

79. The masters are to be supported in their work by the whole province. This support is given by superiors observing what the constitutions require (LCO 185; 192 §II; 209; 214 §III; 370 §II) as well as in whatever other ways are deemed helpful.

80. The formation of formators is a perennial concern at recent general chapters. Experience shows that regional meetings of formators are of great importance in helping formators in their work. Such meetings are to be supported and facilitated by the provincials of each region.

81. Formators are to be open to participating in courses and formation events organised by local churches, by other religious or by other branches of the Dominican family. For questions that require special competence, or are particularly delicate, they are not to hesitate to ask for the help or supervision of qualified persons and to participate in training sessions organized for this purpose.

82. Masters are to ensure that novices and students who ask or need it, receive the spiritual or psychological accompaniment their particular situations require. In these cases, their role as masters cannot be replaced by the spiritual director or the psychologist. On the contrary, respecting the legitimate autonomy and confidentiality of these, it is up to the master to hold together the different aspects that constitute the experience of formation, seeking the good of the brother in formation (cf. CIC 240 §§1-2).

83. Formators need to be well informed about current trends and pressures on young people and wise in their understanding of the implications for those who come to join the Order (Providence 2001 n.348). Sometimes the virtues needed for religious life have been neglected or even worked against in their previous experiences. Their understanding of the faith, and of a religious vocation, may be seriously incomplete and immature.

84. In discerning for admission to the novitiate and to profession, it is important to remember that not all deficiencies can be remedied in the course of formation. Some of the men who begin formation with us may not in fact have a Dominican vocation and prudent decisions must be made for their sake and for the sake of the Order. Where there is a serious doubt that cannot otherwise be resolved a decision is to be made in favour of the Order. It is essential that there be good communication between the relevant masters of formation whenever brothers in formation move from one community to another.

85. The masters must attend to the specific needs of co-operator and clerical brothers to ensure that all are being prepared for their distinctive roles in the Church and in the Order's preaching apostolate, and for playing their proper part in the life and government of our communities (Rome 2010 n.198; Dominican Co-operator Brothers Study, 2013).

85a. The socius for fraternal life and formation (LCO 425 §II) assists the Master and the provinces in regard to initial and permanent formation (cf Bologna 2016 nn.306-07). LCO 427-bis says: *Ad socium pro vita fraterna ac formatione in Ordine praecipue haec pertinent:*

1° adiuvere Magistrum Ordinis in omnibus quae pertinent ad vitam fraternam et ad formationem religiosam fratrum, sive permanentem sive initialem;

2° omnes provincias adiuvere ut provideant ad formationem religiosam fratrum et ad florentiam vitae fraternae;

3° quando oporteat, congregare simul magistros fratrum formationem initialem habentium sicut et promotores formationis permanentis unius vel plurium regionum.

4° facilius facere provinciis innovationem et formationem formatorum, sicut et augmentum et executionem pianificationum provincialium ad formationem permanentem spectantium.

D. The formation councils

86. A council of formation is to be established in each community of initial formation (cf. LCO 158). Where there is more than one community of formation in a province there is to be also a provincial council of formation.

87. The local council of formation will evaluate regularly the manner in which the brothers in formation are integrating into the community and the manner in which the community is welcoming them. It can point out to the formators points which need attention. It will also treat of every matter raised by one of the members of the council and agreed for discussion by the majority of the members (cf. Bogotà 2007 n.209).

88. The local formation council will always include the prior, the master, the sub-master if there is one, and at least one other member of the community. In a studentate community it will include the person responsible for studies locally and may include a representative of the brothers in formation. The way of choosing the member(s) from the community and the student representative will be included in the *Ratio Formationis Particularis*.

89. The master of novices or students is the president of the local formation council, and he shall convoke it at least three times in each academic year. Where the novitiate and studentate are in the same community, the *Ratio Formationis Particularis* shall determine which of the masters is to preside at the local formation council.

90. The composition and tasks of the local formation council (LCO 158) shall be included in the *Ratio Formationis Particularis*.

91. The provincial council of formation is to be convoked and chaired by the prior provincial or by another brother as determined by the *Ratio Formationis Particularis*.

92. The tasks of the provincial council of formation are: to articulate and evaluate the provincial vision of formation within the broader context of Dominican formation; to co-ordinate what is done in the communities of formation to ensure continuity through the different stages of formation; to address questions

and difficulties that arise in initial or permanent formation; to reflect on the policy of formation in the province; to maintain an appropriate connection with the formation activities of the Dominican family; and to be available to assist the prior provincial and his council as and when requested. It will also review regularly the policy and strategies for promoting vocations in the province.

93. The provincial council of formation will include the prior provincial, the masters of novices and students, the promoter of vocations, the regent of studies, moderators of studies, and the provincial promoter of permanent formation. It may include also the priors of the formation communities, a co-operator brother, other brothers and a representative of the student brothers. The *Ratio Formationis Particularis* shall specify the membership of this council, it shall say who is to convoke and preside at it, and it shall determine how the student representative is to be chosen.

94. The provincial council of formation will review regularly the programme of initial and permanent formation to ensure the unity and continuity that are essential in the formation process.

95. Councils of formation, both local and provincial, must remain attentive to social and cultural changes in their region and study the implications of these for vocations and for formation.

III. STAGES OF INITIAL FORMATION

A. The promotion and direction of vocations

96. In order to foster vocations we ought to strengthen our apostolic work with young people, encourage young friars to join in promoting vocations, invite the collaboration of the whole Dominican family, especially the prayers of the nuns, and encourage our communities to live visibly the rich dimensions of Dominican life (cf. Rome 2010 n.188).

97. The promotion of vocations is a task for every brother and for each community. We do it through regular times of prayer for vocations, through fidelity to regular observance and common life, through the apostolic witness of our communities, by discussing the Order and its mission with all who are interested, and by extending hospitality to those discerning their vocation.

98. Each province and vice-province shall appoint a promoter of vocations. Where possible this is to be the brother's primary task. He shall use all modern means of communication and information technology in carrying out his mission.

99. The promoter of vocations works to make the Order known and to inform people about its mission. The director of vocations accompanies more closely men who have indicated an intention to join the Order. In some provinces such direction or accompaniment takes the place of a postulancy or pre-novitiate. The promotion and direction of vocations may be undertaken by the same brother or the tasks may be shared. In either case the brothers concerned are to be allowed the time and resources necessary for their work.

100. The promoter and director of vocations must ensure that aspirants get to know a good number of the brothers and that a good number of the brothers gets to know them. The brothers will assess their level of human and spiritual maturity, help them to clarify their vocation and work with them to understand and deepen their motivation.

101. In order to understand something of how an aspirant's personality and Christian vocation have been formed, it is important that directors of vocations meet some members of his family.

102. The co-operator brothers are to be involved in determining how their vocation is promoted. Where a co-operator brother of the province is not available to help with vocations promotion or direction, brothers from other provinces may be invited to assist in this work.

103. Brothers promoting vocations will promote all the vocations in the Dominican family: friars, nuns and sisters, priestly and lay fraternities, and secular institutes (cf. Trogir 2013 n.148). In particular they will take care to promote explicitly the vocations of both clerical and co-operator brothers and will help aspirants to discern to which of these they are being called.

104. Regional meetings of superiors and formators provide a forum in which experiences in promoting and directing vocations can be shared as well as experiences in preparing brothers for the work of promoting and directing vocations.

105. The length of time a man ought to wait between his first contact and before applying to join the Order will vary according to individual circumstances and local customs. It depends also on the time and mode of preparation for the novitiate that a province has in place.

B. Preparation for the novitiate

106. How aspirants are helped to prepare for the novitiate varies across the Order. The goals of this period are to know the candidate well, to discern his motivation and to judge when he is ready for the novitiate. In some provinces the director of vocations prepares men for the novitiate which begins after a short postulancy. In others this period is institutionalised in a pre-novitiate (LCO 167 §III) which includes a first experience of communal living. This allows the brothers of the Order who live with the aspirants to make a judgement on the basis of living with them from day to day. It is important that aspirants have had an experience of living with others in a context other than that of their family.

107. The *Ratio Formationis Particularis* will articulate clearly what the province's goals are for this time of preparation. It is for the provincial chapter, or the provincial and his council, to determine the manner and duration as well as the place of the 'preparation for the novitiate' (LCO 167 §II).

108. Whatever form it takes, it is essential that postulancy or prenovitiate not take away from the novitiate, which must maintain its special character as the time of initiation into Dominican religious life (Trogir 2013 n.144).

109. The time of preparing for the novitiate will provide a gradual transition, allow time for spiritual and psychological adjustment, and help the aspirant to understand the necessary changes he must make when he enters religious life. Aspirants are helped also to reflect on the vocation of the priest and of the co-operator brother in the Order and to discern about this in their own case.

110. Those preparing for the novitiate are to be encouraged to get to know some communities of the province.

111. Criteria for admission to the Order are given in LCO 155 and 216 §I. Provinces in the same region are to work together to ensure consistency in applying these criteria.

112. Aspirants cannot be expected to have perfect motivation, nor to be ready in every way to begin formation in the Order. However, a desire to listen to God and to serve the Body of Christ through preaching must be clearly present (Trogir 2013 nn.139, 149).

113. The *Ratio Formationis Particularis* determines the membership and *modus operandi* of the admissions board (LCO 171-173).

114. The *Ratio Formationis Particularis* will provide guidance about the advisability and the role of psychological evaluation in the process of admission. This is a delicate matter and the rights of the aspirant must be respected (see Congregation for Catholic Education, *Guidelines for the Use of Psychology in the Admission and Formation of Candidates for the Priesthood*, 13 June 2008). The psychological evaluation can be extremely useful in guiding aspirants in their human and spiritual growth, and in guiding the

admissions board. However, it must be understood that the psychological advice does not usurp the work of evaluation by the admissions board. The responsibility of admitting aspirants remains with the province (LCO 171).

115. The brother or brothers responsible for preparing aspirants for the novitiate shall furnish a report to the admissions board. This report is to be sent to the prior provincial at the same time as the recommendation of the admissions board.

116. In addition to the report mentioned above (n.115), the aspirant is to be interviewed by the members of the admissions board. Inquiries should be made about the candidate's background up to now, about his academic performance and about any work experience. Letters of reference are to be sought from individuals with knowledge of the aspirant, and safeguarding and child protection requirements of church and civil law must also be fulfilled.

117. When a man has been accepted for the novitiate, the master of novices will verify that all the conditions required by our laws are fulfilled and that all the necessary documentation has been gathered (CIC 642-645; LCO 168-170). Local rules on disclosure of personal information must always also be respected. The *Ratio Formationis Particularis* will include a policy for the retention of documents.

118. When an aspirant has already been refused entry into one of our novitiates, he cannot be validly admitted to another without a written report from the provincial of the province that refused him. This report ought to explain clearly the reasons for the province's decision. It is to be submitted to the admissions board of the province to which he is now applying and be included in the board's report to the prior provincial.

119. In countries where young religious are bound to military or civil service the *Ratio Formationis Particularis* is to specify the conditions under which these services are to be fulfilled.

C. The novitiate and simple profession

120. The novitiate initiates brothers into our way of life, which is the following of Christ in the way devised by St Dominic, a way of life characterised by religious consecration, regular observance, poverty, common fraternal life, liturgy and prayer, study, and the ministry of the Word (LCO 2-153).

121. The novitiate ought to have something of the character of a 'desert experience' with many opportunities for solitude and prayer. It is a period of initiation in which the brother's entry into a new way of living ought to be clearly marked by rites of passage, particularly the rite of clothing with the habit. The novitiate ought to provide the conditions necessary for the brother to experience a new depth of encounter with God and with himself, as well as introducing him to the reality of common fraternal life and to the apostolic mission of the Order. The novitiate is above all else a time for reading the Bible, seeking to understand its meaning through prayer and study, while learning also about the conditions and needs of people in the world.

122. The master of novices is responsible for formation in the novitiate. He is helped by the local formation council and, possibly, by an assistant. The novitiate programme is established by him and is to be submitted to the prior provincial for approval. He should remember also the role of the formation community in assisting him in the formation of the novices (see LCO 181 and Part II, Section A above). He is to meet frequently with the novices, both individually and as a group.

123. Although study is an essential part of the novitiate, and a curriculum is given in LCO 187, these studies are not to be undertaken in an academic way. Brothers are to be allowed plenty of time to read and reflect in the areas identified in the novitiate curriculum, above all to read the Bible. All other studies are to be suspended for this year.

124. The novitiate aims at helping the novice to a mature discernment regarding his vocation (LCO 186). It is also the beginning of formation in our way of living, as the novices begin to internalise, through living them, the values and attitudes of St Dominic's apostolic charism.

125. This time of progressive apprenticeship in the different elements of our life will give priority to spiritual and community life as well as the development of a strong practice of prayer, both personal and liturgical.

126. Novices are to be given a practical initiation into the Church's liturgy and sacramental practice. The master of novices will instruct them about personal and liturgical prayer, and teach them how to integrate these in their daily living of our life. He will endeavor to instill in them a love for the Order's liturgical life as well as an appreciation of its crucial importance for forming and sustaining the Dominican preacher.

127. Dominican liturgy is that of a fraternal community sharing a life and mission that are centred on the Word of God. The master of novices will help the novices to see how the discipline of personal study is supported by the liturgical life of the community. The novices will be introduced to the Order's rich traditions of hymnody and plainchant, and to its traditions of devotional prayer, in particular to Mary, Mother of God (LCO 129).

128. While it is primarily a time for spiritual growth and the discovery of community life, the novitiate ought to include an introduction to the challenges of the apostolate. Novitiate formation is to be 'not just theoretical but practical, with an opportunity for some participation in the apostolic activities of the Order' (LCO 188). The apostolic priorities and orientation ordained by general chapters should guide the selection of these activities.

129. Integrated with this programme of formation and linked with it, regular meetings will permit the novices to discuss their life in the novitiate and will also initiate them into the practice of chapters (cf. LCO 7 §III).

130. The novitiate community and, more broadly, the whole province have their role to play in the integration and formation of novices, in ways which the master of novices and the prior provincial will take care to determine and recall. Nevertheless the task of discernment falls in a particular way to the master of novices (cf. LCO 186).

131. Brothers should realise that in making simple profession they are already committing themselves totally to Christ and to the Order. In a culture that values freedom of choice and changes of job it can be more difficult to impress on young men the definitive character of profession. They are to be helped to appreciate that Christ will sustain them in their profession when it is Christ who has called them to follow him along this way.

132. The criteria for admission to profession are the psychological, moral and religious maturity of the novice, the seriousness of his prayer life, his suitability for study, his disposition for apostolic work, his love for the gospel, his compassion for the poor, the sinner, and the un-evangelised, and his capacity to live the vowed life and the common life proper to our Order. Those who examine him and those who vote on him need to be confident that he understands the step he is taking and that he freely takes on the obligations of profession.

133. Profession is first made for one, two or three years, as determined in the statute of the province, and may be renewed as determined in the same statute. There must be at least three years, and there cannot be more than six years, of simple profession (cf. LCO 195 §II; 201 §I).

134. In provinces in which the statute allows a first profession for either one year or three years, these two possibilities are to be carefully considered between the master of novices and each novice (cf. LCO 195 §II). It must only be in exceptional circumstances that brothers make profession for one year and continue renewing it for single years.

135. The prior provincial needs to be satisfied that a novice asking to make profession has been properly informed about the vows and formed for living them. The brothers examining novices for profession must also be satisfied on this point.

136. A novice who has made perpetual or solemn profession in another congregation does not make simple profession at the end of the novitiate but a decisive vote of the conventual chapter and council is still required, on the basis of which he will either continue the period of probation, with the permission also of the prior provincial, or he will return to his own institute (cf. LCO 201 §II).

D. The studentate

137. In the years between simple and solemn profession, academic study occupies a privileged but not exclusive place in the formation of the brothers. It is a time of maturing, and of deeper integration into Dominican life as well as of continued growth in the faith.

138. While there is an appropriate emphasis on study during these years, the brothers are to be helped to integrate their intellectual formation with the other aspects of our form of religious life with which that formation is intimately connected. Spiritual and religious development remains the first priority during these years (LCO 213 §§I-II).

139. It is for the master of students to help student brothers integrate harmoniously the different demands being made on them. In respecting the stages of initial formation and the priorities which each involves, care must be taken that the overall character of Dominican life (the balance of its various elements and fundamental values) remains present. Study is not to be stressed to the detriment of the life of prayer; and any tension between community life and study on the one hand, and apostolic life on the other, is never to be resolved by the rejection of one or the other.

140. If the brothers do their studies outside an institution of the Order, it is fitting that, in their community, the specific character of Dominican study is to be presented to them. Supplementary courses in Dominican philosophy and theology, in particular the contribution of Thomas Aquinas, as well as in Dominican teaching about the spiritual life, are to be provided according to the requirement of the *Ratio Studiorum Generalis*.

141. The master of students is to give explicit guidance and formation through regular individual meetings with student brothers and through meetings of the studentate as a group. He is to remind them of the value of having a regular confessor and help them to find more intensive spiritual guidance or counselling support where necessary. He should remember also the role of the formation community in assisting him in his work (see Part II, Section A above), other brothers in the community always respecting his specific responsibility as master.

142. The *Ratio Formationis Particularis* will indicate whether the master of students acts also as director of pastoral formation, and, where this task is given to another brother, it is to say how he is to be appointed. It is up to the master of students to assure at the same time the necessary spiritual accompaniment and theological reflection to aid the student brothers to evaluate and deepen their experiences with a view to the integration of the apostolic dimension into their Dominican life.

143. This progressive integration is done through practical and well-defined apostolic experiences during the academic year, more intensive experiences during the school holidays, and including also the possibility of interrupting the cycle of studies (cf. n.149 below).

144. These apostolic experiences must ensure that the student brothers will have contact with the world of the poor, the exploited and the marginalised, gradually introducing them in this way to the frontiers of Dominican life and mission

145. The master of students is to be kept informed of the nature and demands of pastoral formation, particularly where pastoral commitments require a brother to be absent from community activities.

146. He will also ensure that the brothers have holidays and other free time. These should be for rest and enrichment, allowing them later to use more profitably the time devoted to study and to the apostolate.

147. Brothers in formation will be encouraged to develop their talents, to engage in sports and other physical recreation, to participate in cultural activities, to appreciate literature, music and art, and to be healthy in diet, sleep, etc.

148. Where possible, student brothers are to spend time in other convents of the province, in order to experience the life and ministry of a community other than the community of formation. This ought to help the student brother to integrate the different elements of our life in another setting. It also gives an opportunity to members of other communities to assess the progress of the brothers in formation.

149. Exchanges between provinces with a view to learning foreign languages, engaging in apostolic work, visiting convents and houses of particular interest, taking part in meetings between students of the same region etc., are to be encouraged and supported. Every brother in initial formation ought to have the opportunity to live in another culture and to learn another language. If it is deemed necessary for formation, studies may be interrupted for the sake of apostolic or other activity (cf. LCO 164; 225 §II). Such exchanges also help students to appreciate the universal mission of the Order.

150. To avoid all conflict concerning jurisdiction, the *Ratio Formationis Particularis* is to define clearly the role of the master of students in matters of responsibility such as permissions and dispensations, holidays and pastoral placements etc.

151. In preparation for the ministries of reader and acolyte, as well as for ordination as deacon and priest, there must be a proper education, practical as well as theoretical, about the liturgical duties these ministries involve, about the spirituality that ought to characterize those who exercise them, and about the apostolic commitments they entail.

152. The modalities for the institution of brothers as lectors and acolytes are to be given in the *Ratio Formationis Particularis*. These institutions take place between simple profession and solemn profession (LCO 215-bis).

Formation of co-operator brothers

153. Provinces must decide the arrangements for the post-novitiate formation of both co-operator and clerical brothers. Depending on local circumstances and the traditions of a province, there may be separate studentates for co-operator and clerical student brothers. This is to be specified in the *Ratio Formationis Particularis*. Whatever those arrangements may be all brothers are to receive the same human and spiritual formation up until solemn profession.

154. The *Ratio Studiorum Generalis* describes the intellectual formation necessary for a Dominican preacher. This formation is common to clerical and co-operator brothers. Clerical students also pursue the course of studies required by the Church for ordination. Co-operator brothers either follow the same programme of studies, or receive another theological and professional formation, depending on the role in the mission of the province that is envisaged for them. The regent of studies and the master of co-operator brothers are to organize a programme of formation for co-operator brothers in formation (LCO 217). This must always include the formation of co-operator brothers for lay ministry in the Church.

155. Care is to be taken to form the co-operator brothers to participate fully in the life and mission of the Order. A suitably qualified senior co-operator brother should be involved in their formation. He is to help them to know the history of this vocation in the Order and to follow Christ, according to their specific vocation, along the way of St Dominic.

156. In the years of formation the brothers are to be warned about the temptation of 'clericalism', not just in relating to people outside the Order but also in relating to non-ordained members of the Order.

157. Where the studentate community is being moved to another convent, or a new studentate community is being established, the Master of the Order must be consulted and not just informed.

E. Solemn profession

158. A brother can be admitted to solemn profession after three years of simple profession. With solemn profession a brother gains active voice and participates fully in the conventual chapter.

159. The master of students is to remind brothers that, in case of doubt or hesitation, they have the possibility of prolonging their time of simple profession, not however for more than three years (cf. LCO 201 §I).

160. In addition to the examination and vote of the conventual chapter and council, and along with the written report of the master of students, the prior provincial or his delegate is bound to have a thorough interview with the brother who is to be professed concerning the step he is going to take.

161. Clerical brothers remain under the authority of a student master until their initial formation is completed with their ordination to the priesthood (cf. LCO 221). At the same time, their relationship with him, and the character of the formation he gives, will change in line with their position in the community as solemnly professed brothers.

162. Co-operator brothers remain under the authority of a master until their formation is completed, either with solemn profession or with the completion of their institutional studies or professional training, whichever is later. Where their initial formation ends with solemn profession, the local superior or another brother appointed by him is to accompany them for the first two years after solemn profession.

163. In preparation for solemn profession, brothers are to be helped again to appreciate the obligation of praying the Liturgy of the Hours each day, even when they cannot be present for choral office.

F. Diaconate and priesthood

164. The mission of preaching is the specific mission confided to the Order by the Church. By our profession we are ‘dedicated in a new way to the universal Church, fully committed to preaching the Word of God in its totality’ (LCO 1, III).

165. The ministry of the word is intimately connected with the sacraments and finds its completion in them (cf. LCO 105). Thus there is a natural link between the Order’s mission of preaching and diaconal and priestly ministry in the Church.

166. In presenting brothers for ordination to the diaconate or to the presbyterate, the requirements of our constitutions and of the Church’s law are to be carefully observed (CIC 1031 §I; 1032; 1035-1036; LCO 246-248).

167. Aptitude for preaching within the context of the Sacred Liturgy is one of the essential elements to be considered in presenting brothers for ordination.

168. At his own request or at the decision of the prior provincial, and for serious and well-founded reasons (CIC 1030), a brother may remain a deacon for a period of time after the completion of his institutional studies.

169. Brothers who are deacons are to be given sufficient opportunities to exercise their proper ministry.

170. While there will be a natural sense of ‘graduation’ at the end of institutional studies, particularly where it coincides with ordination to the priesthood, our formation continues, not just in the years immediately following solemn profession or ordination, but throughout our lives.

IV. PERMANENT FORMATION

A. *General principles: community in / of formation, 'masters' of permanent formation, the brothers themselves*

171. From its foundation the Order is called to the proclamation of the Word of God, to preach everywhere the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (LCO 1, I). By our profession, we are consecrated to live the *sacra praedicatio* in its totality, something that becomes fully evident when the regular life of the brothers and their various preaching apostolates form a dynamic synthesis rooted in the abundance of contemplation (cf. LCO 1, IV).

172. To be a preacher is to be in constant dialogue with the Word of God through contemplation and study, prayer and fraternal life, constantly adapting to changing times and circumstances. We read in the Scriptures of encounters with God, where people, addressed by his Word, are called into friendship with God and to mission. We see that such an encounter requires a disposition open to conversion and unceasing renewal. For this reason the preacher is called to engage seriously in permanent formation.

173. It means for the brothers a particular form of continued renewal and maturing according to the different stages of their life, so that they may be true to what they preach in word and example. Through permanent formation we remain attentive and seek to understand the developments and concerns of the world, and to interpret the social and political reality of our time. Maintaining hope and sharing faith, we grow in human and emotional integration, and build a preaching community at the service of God's people (Trogir 2013 n.124). It is in renewing us constantly, through permanent formation understood in its broadest and deepest sense, that, marked by both the divine life (2 Peter 1:4) and by the human experiences in which we share, we can seek to find solutions to the questions with which we are confronted, whether at the personal or social levels.

174. Permanent formation inevitably concerns the whole person of the religious, his human, intellectual, spiritual and apostolic formation. The *Ratio Studiorum Generalis* gives some guidelines for permanent intellectual formation whereas this *Ratio Formationis Generalis* focuses more on permanent formation from the human, spiritual and apostolic perspectives. It is essential that these four main aspects of permanent formation remain in balance with each other. The end of permanent formation is to integrate the graces of conversion and of spiritual transformation offered by God and that concern the wellbeing and holiness of the whole person. The more intellectual dimension of acquiring new skills and of updating for the purpose of preaching or pastoral ministry is subordinated to this end.

175. As is the case with initial formation, permanent formation is the responsibility in the first place of the brother himself. At the same time, since initial formation is always under the guidance of a master, so too is permanent formation. By analogy we can say that a first 'master' in permanent formation is the community itself in which the brother lives.

176. Traditionally, each Dominican convent is a school of the *sacra praedicatio*. The 'master' of this school is the communion of the brothers united in one heart and one mind, intent on God (Rule of St Augustine). The quality of permanent formation in a community will reflect the strength of communion among the brothers and the sacrifices they make for engaging holistically with that formation. Mutual understanding and fraternal communion (cf. LCO 5) are rooted in sharing life together and sharing the Word of God together. This requires the human and spiritual maturity that ought to mark the witness of the *sacra praedicatio*. By participating fully in the life of the convent (regular chapters, community discussions, conventual preaching, community retreats, fraternal life, recreation, etc.) the brothers experience what Reginald of Orléans noted when he said that he 'had received more from the Order than he gave to the Order'.

177. In the local community particular responsibility for the permanent formation of the brothers rests with the prior, assisted by the conventual lector (LCO 88; 326-bis) and the conventual chapter (LCO 311).

178. In addition to what is mentioned in LCO, the conventual lector will

- present the community with a plan for permanent formation for the year,
- promote theological reflection on the community's concrete apostolic experience,
- encourage the brothers to take part in meetings and courses concerned with permanent formation, whether in their own priory or province, in the diocese or in other centres.

179. The programme for permanent formation is to be included in the community project for each year. It is to be assessed in the prior's reports to the prior provincial or to the provincial chapter, especially in the report at the end of his term (LCO 306).

180. In the province responsibility for permanent formation belongs to the Prior Provincial, assisted by the Promoter of Permanent Formation (LCO 89 §I, 89 §III, 251-ter) and by the Regent of Studies where academic study is concerned. They will be concerned to support the efforts of local communities and to arrange events for the province as a whole.

181. The *Ratio Formationis Particularis* will establish the general framework, specific objectives and concrete modalities for permanent formation in the province, taking into account the province's life and mission.

182. Provinces of the same region are encouraged to cooperate in offering workshops for permanent formation in the different languages and cultures of the Order.

183. The socius for fraternal life and formation will foster communication among the provinces to exchange experiences and resources for permanent formation. The general chapter will propose topics for discussion that will serve as a frame of reference for the whole Order.

B. Transition, first assignation

184. Experience shows that the first assignation at the end of his initial formation is one of the most important transitions a brother has to make. Brother Damian Byrne's letter on 'First Assignations' (May 1990) is often mentioned throughout the Order as a very important document. Superiors, having consulted formators, are to take care to assign brothers after their initial formation to communities and missions that are supportive of their vocation. The prior provincial must ensure, along with the superiors of the communities to which they will be assigned, that a suitable brother or qualified other person accompanies them for the first two years after the end of their initial formation. It is important to avoid the extremes of leaving a brother entirely alone and of putting in place a system of mentoring that would be oppressive.

185. There ought to be an annual meeting for the brothers of a province who have completed their initial formation in the previous six years. At this meeting they should reflect on the experience of integration in a community after initial formation, the challenges of apostolic ministry, and any other issue they consider relevant. Where a province has only a small number of such brothers they are to organize common meetings in cooperation with neighbouring provinces.

186. Brothers should not be expected to undertake pastoral or apostolic ministries that require specialist formation without being given the opportunity to undergo that formation. Brothers are to be prepared well for the specific demands of parochial and other pastoral responsibilities.

187. One of the tasks for the newly ordained Dominican priest is that of integrating his priesthood with his life and spirituality. Experienced brothers are to be willing to share from their experience in this matter. In a similar way experienced brothers ought to accompany younger co-operator brothers for the first two years after completion of their initial formation.

188. Older brothers need to be alert not just to the ministerial needs of younger brothers but to the experiences of loneliness, generational difference, and loss which can characterise the first years away from a supportive community of formation (Providence 2001, n.362).

189. The first assignation is not the only significant moment of transition in a brother's life. There are other such moments that come with changes of assignation, the different stages of life, changes in health or family circumstances, old age, and so on. The community ought to be attentive to these transitions and, through its programme of permanent formation, offer moments to discuss and reflect on them. We can say therefore that there are stages also in permanent formation.

C. Issues for permanent formation

190. Permanent formation is to be particularly focused on preaching. It ought, for example, to help the brothers to use well the modern media of communication (Oakland 1989 nn.56, 59-60).

191. There are to be regular sessions of permanent formation concerning the vow of chastity. These are to include a consideration of the province's guidelines concerning ministry and contact with young and vulnerable people. These sessions ought to consider also the question of professional and ministerial boundaries and other aspects of appropriate ethical behaviour (Rome 2010, n.199).

192. The liturgy is always the principal director of our spiritual lives, which are rooted in the Word of God. Communities ought therefore to reflect regularly on questions connected with the liturgy: its theology and history, its current practice, and especially its place in the spirituality of the Dominican preacher.

193. The ordinary accompaniment of each other in community life gives us the fraternal correction and encouragement we need for normal circumstances. But there will be times in the life of each brother when he needs, explicitly and concretely, the mercy he asked for on joining the Order. Each brother needs to be humble enough to seek help when it is necessary and the community kind and wise enough to give it. Invited to 'confess our sins to one another' (James 5:16), we ought at least to be sensitive to each other and to support each other in our weaknesses and vulnerabilities, as well as making frequent use of the sacrament of penance and reconciliation.

194. The senior brothers in a community ought to be a source of wisdom for the brothers. The community is to be mindful of their needs, and is also to ensure ways in which they may continue to participate meaningfully in its life.

195. Gatherings of the senior brothers of a province are encouraged in order to reflect theologically on the spirituality of aging as well as to address the particular matters that arise for them. Such gatherings ought also to include meetings with younger brothers in order to reflect together on generational differences and strengths.

196. The outcome of such gatherings of senior brothers, whose rich experience provides a certain vantage point for Dominican preaching, ought to be shared with all in the province and be discussed in local communities.

D. Identity and mission

197. The demands of conventual religious life and the demands of apostolic preaching can sometimes be in conflict. Brothers may, from time to time, come to prefer the consolations of one to the detriment of the other. Permanent formation must focus frequently therefore on the dynamic relationship between our common fraternal life and our preaching mission.

198. We must be willing, and helped, to reflect on the tensions generated by modern life and their implications for traditional ways of living. These are never simply outside ourselves, affecting other individuals and communities. They are tensions within ourselves and within our communities that need to be understood and to which we ought to respond. It means engaging not only with the questions put to faith by science and philosophy but with the questions put to ways of living and practising the faith.

199. Our form of government cannot work unless we continue to learn and practise the art of dialogue, listening to each one, being prepared to consider other points of view, being ready to help out, being prepared to take initiatives. 'Our preparation for the art of dialogue is never done once and for all, and everyone has to perfect it and learn it over and over again' (Bologna 1998 123, 3).

200. Permanent formation ought to help us have confidence in God and respect for others. Its final purpose is to bring healing, hope and renewal into our lives and the lives of all entrusted to our care.

APPENDIX

A. The purpose of the Ratio Formationis Particularis

- i. Each province is to draw up a new *Ratio Formationis Particularis*, adapting the general principles and filling out the basic structures given in this *Ratio Formationis Generalis*.
- ii. The *Ratio Formationis Particularis* makes concrete the norms given in the *Ratio Formationis Generalis* according to the specific needs and concrete situations of each province.

B. Preparing the Ratio Formationis Particularis

- iii. The prior provincial and his council will determine the way in which the *Ratio Formationis Particularis* is to be drafted and reviewed.
- iv. Each *Ratio Formationis Particularis* is to be submitted to the Master of the Order for final approval.
- v. The socius for fraternal life and formation will assist the provinces in the preparation of the *Ratio Formationis Particularis*.

C. Contents of the Ratio Formationis Particularis

- vi. The *Ratio Formationis Particularis* must:
 1. consider the age limit for the admission of candidates as well as adaptations that may be needed to receive older men and men who are already ordained;
 2. include the composition and tasks of the local council of formation as determined by the provincial chapter or by the provincial and his council (LCO 158);
 3. determine whether the local council of formation will include more than one representative of the community and a representative of the student brothers, and if so how these are to be chosen;
 4. where the novitiate and studentate are in the same community, determine who is to convoke and preside at the local council of formation;
 5. determine the membership of the provincial council of formation;
 6. if a representative of the student brothers is to be a member of the provincial council of formation, determine how this brother is to be chosen;
 7. determine who is to convoke and preside at the provincial council of formation;
 8. articulate clearly what the province's goals are for the time of preparation for the novitiate;
 9. determine the membership and *modus operandi* of the admissions board;
 10. provide guidance about the advisability and the role of psychological evaluation in the process of admission;
 11. include a policy for the retention of documents;
 12. in countries where young religious are bound to military or civil service, specify the conditions under which these services are to be fulfilled;
 13. define the role of the master of students in matters of responsibility (permissions, holidays, pastoral placements, dispensations, etc.);
 14. indicate whether the master of students is to act also as director of pastoral formation, and if not to determine how that director is to be appointed;
 15. determine the modalities for the institution of brothers as lectors and acolytes;
 16. specify where relevant whether there will be separate studentates for co-operator and clerical brothers;
 17. establish the general framework, specific objectives and concrete modalities for permanent formation in the province.

D. Notes for a contract when novices or students are formed in another province

vii.

1. Name of the province of affiliation (cf. LCO 267-268)
2. Name of the receiving province
3. Name of the brother
4. His date of birth
5. His date of profession
6. Copies of the identity documents of the brother as well as his blood group and any other relevant medical information
7. Next of kin contact information in case of emergency
8. A report from the admissions board / master of novices / master of students describing the brother's character and progress, and indicating any areas of concern
9. The length of time the brother is expected to be in the formation programme of the receiving province
10. Confirmation that the regent of studies of the brother's province is responsible for overseeing the brother's study programme. If this is done by a brother delegated by the regent, the name of this delegate should be given. What his province wants the brother to study should be communicated clearly to those responsible for intellectual formation in the receiving province.
11. A novice has only one master of novices and a student has only one master of students. Where a brother is entrusted to another province for part or all of his formation it means that the brother's province trusts the formation programme and personnel of the receiving province (cf. LCO 162, 191-192, 196-198, 202, 206).
12. Indicate how often each year the brother will be visited by his own provincial or regent of studies (cf. LCO 340)
13. Indicate when his own provincial will receive from the master of novices the two reports on a novice's progress (cf. LCO 185)
14. Indicate when his own provincial will receive from the master of students the annual report on a student brother's progress (cf. LCO 209, 214 §III)
15. Indicate when his own provincial will receive from the local moderator of studies the annual report on the brother's academic progress (cf. LCO 209)
16. Clarify the rights and obligations that go with the kind of assignation the brother receives (cf. LCO 208, 270 §§III-V, 271 §§III-V, 391.6, Appendix 16)
17. Indicate where the brother will spend the time between academic terms, especially the feasts of Christmas and Easter, as well as the summer break
18. Indicate how the pastoral placements of the brother are to be arranged and who is to be responsible for directing them
19. Indicate what the arrangements are for the brother's *ad honesta* and other personal financial needs
20. Say who is to give permission for extraordinary expenses
21. Clarify what is to happen with money earned by the brother (cf. LCO 548.5, 600)
22. Clarify the situation regarding health insurance
23. Indicate how often each year the brother may return to his own province
24. This contract accompanies the assignation of the brother and does not replace it