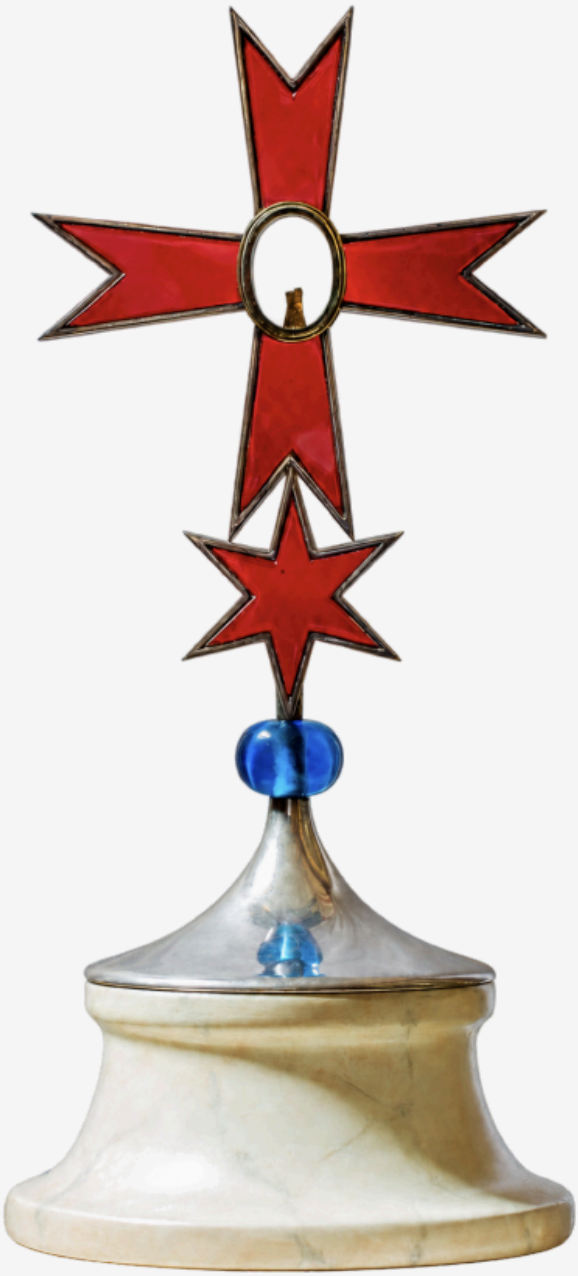
Crusaders
with the Red Star

# Constitutions



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# Character and Purpose of the Order

1. The Order of the Crusaders with the Red Star is a priestly order of pontifical right. Its members take solemn vows according to the Rule of our holy Father Augustine and the present Constitutions.

2. The Order works in the Czech Republic and in Vienna, the capital of the Republic of Austria, at the Church of St. Charles Borromeo.

3. The Superior General of the whole Order is the Grand Master.

4. Since the aim of all piety is Christian perfection, which consists in perfect love, we too must above all take care to fix our eyes on Jesus Christ, the author of our faith and of our calling, and to climb resolutely along the path of his commandments and counsels to the very summit of perfect love. For we have been called to renounce worldly interests completely and to dwell together in mutual harmony in the house of God, and there to keep everything the Lord Jesus has commanded us.

5. With constant effort we must willingly fulfill to God the vows of our consecration, through willing obedience, constant chastity and voluntary poverty, as prescribed in the Rule of our Father St. Augustine, which we have solemnly bound ourselves to observe. Let no one neglect or break his vow, for rash vows do not please God. In addition to these solemn vows, each of us shall faithfully observe the Rule and, for greater piety and zeal, not as a pretext for disobedience, resistance or excuses, shall also follow the Constitutions.

6. Furthermore, our Order takes as its task the care of the sick, the needy and the poor. Let the individual members of the Order therefore constantly grow in patience, humility and the other virtues, so that they may be able to help their suffering neighbors as much as possible, according to the words of Christ: “Whatever you did for one of the least of these my brothers, you did for me!” (Mt 25:40).

7. For many centuries our consecration was called “hospitaller”. This was not only because we cared for the sick and the poor, but also because in the love of Christ we kept our doors open to everyone who came. The Order continues in this tradition of hospitality.

8. We are concerned not only with the corporal works of mercy, but above all with the needs of the soul, especially through spiritual care, and chiefly by helping people in various spiritual and psychological crises.

# Religious Consecration

### General Principles

9. Through the sacrament of baptism we die to sin, rise to new life and are consecrated to God (cf. Rom 6:4–10). By embracing the evangelical counsels, by which we freely respond

to God's call, our baptismal consecration is not only confirmed but also more fully manifested, and we can receive its fruit more abundantly as we inwardly surrender ourselves to God in obedience (cf. Lumen Gentium 10 and 44).

**10.** Since baptismal conversion is strengthened by the spirit of penance (cf. Mk 1:15), we are to carry our cross above all by freely dedicating ourselves and constantly devoting ourselves to the tasks and duties of common life with its daily burdens, as well as to study and the apostolate.

**11.** Let the members of the Order wear the traditional religious habit as a sign of their consecration and a witness to poverty (cf. can. 669 § 1).

**12.** Let the members wear the religious habit wherever it is appropriate and according to their own judgment.

**13.** Profession is to be made in the form proper to our Order, as prescribed by the Order's ritual. The record of the vows, signed by the professed member and by the person who received his vows, is kept in the Order's archive. In the case of solemn profession, the superior who received it must report it to the parish where the religious was baptized.

## On Chastity

**14.** Chastity for the sake of the Kingdom of God, which stands out among the other evangelical counsels, is to be valued as an outstanding gift of God's grace and a source of many goods (cf. Lumen Gentium 42).

**15.** The vow of chastity includes the obligation of perfect continence in celibacy (cf. can. 599).

**16.** Let us not rely on our own strength but rather on God's help. Let us use prayer and mortification and strive to control our senses. Let us also not forget natural means, so that we may avoid everything that endangers our witness and face it with strength of spirit (cf. Perfectae Caritatis 12).

**17.** Moreover, chastity, which greatly fosters fraternal relationships, is more surely preserved in fraternal community, because the bond of friendship among brothers more easily overcomes the dangerous sense of loneliness.

## On Poverty

**18.** Evangelical poverty is understood to mean that, following the poor Christ, we not only hold everything in common with the other members, without any property of our own, but also, with hearts free of the desire for earthly things, use them sparingly.

**19.** With regard to poverty, it is not enough to submit to superiors in the use of goods. The members of the Order must also be truly poor in spirit, for they have their treasure in heaven (cf. Perfectae Caritatis 13).

20. The vow of poverty includes dependence and limitation in the use and disposal of goods according to the norms of the Constitutions (cf. can. 600).

21. Before their first vows, let novices cede the administration of their property to whomever they wish and freely decide on its use (cf. can. 668 § 1). To change these dispositions for a serious reason, and for any decision concerning property, they need the permission of the Grand Master (cf. can. 668 § 2).

22. A member in solemn vows loses the right to acquire and possess property. Therefore, within sixty days before solemn vows, he is to renounce his property in a form that is also valid in civil law (cf. can. 668 §§ 4, 5).

23. Anyone who violates the vow of poverty is to be admonished and, if he does not amend, punished by the Grand Master according to the gravity of the offense.

24. Whatever a member of the Order acquires for himself, he acquires for the Order. Whatever he receives by way of salary, allowance or support belongs to the Order (cf. can. 688 § 3).

25. Let each member receive from the superior, out of the common property, what he needs. Let him handle the goods and money entrusted to him sparingly and economically, in the spirit of the vow of poverty.

## On Obedience

26. Through religious obedience we offer the surrender of our will as a sacrifice to God, unite ourselves with his saving will and become still more fully conformed to Christ, who for our sake became obedient unto death (cf. Phil 2:8).

27. The vow of obedience includes the obligation to submit one's will to superiors, who represent God when they command something according to the Rule and the Constitutions (cf. can. 601).

28. By reason of their vow, the individual members of the Order are also bound to obedience to the Supreme Pontiff as their highest superior (cf. can. 590 § 2).

29. If anyone is given a task or entrusted with an office, let him accept it humbly and willingly and strive to carry it out conscientiously, with greater effort and zeal than if it were his own affair. If, on the other hand, someone is relieved of his office or duty, let him calmly and without grumbling lay it down in the hands of the superior and report on how he has carried it out.

30. If the Grand Master commands something in writing or before two witnesses, under the vow of obedience, it is an especially binding command.

31. Let superiors therefore strive to exercise the authority they have received as a task in service of the members of the Order. Let them listen to the members kindly and sincerely, while maintaining their firm authority (cf. can. 618).

# Life with God

**32.** According to our vow, we perform divine service when we reverently serve God, when we converse with him in our hearts, and when we gather together and adore him. But we fulfill the work of God's glorification especially when we take part in the sacred liturgy.

**33.** Since the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed and at the same time the source from which all her power flows, it must also be the summit and source of our whole spiritual and apostolic life.

**34.** Everything is to be directed so that the liturgy of the Catholic Church may be a true glorification of God and a spiritual encouragement for the faithful. Each superior shall ensure that the church is properly arranged and worthily and tastefully furnished.

**35.** The Eucharistic mystery of the sacred liturgy is the center of all Christian life (cf. Eucharisticum Mysterium 1).

**36.** The celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, especially in choir, as a participation in the prayer of the Church, is the natural duty of all members of the Order in solemn vows and of clerics, who, if they are not present, are obliged to fulfill their obligation outside choir. Professed members in temporary vows and novices also take part in the common prayers.

**37.** The Liturgy of the Hours is celebrated with dignity and devotion, according to the general norms of the Church and the directory of the Order. For a serious reason, the superior may dispense from common prayer in choir.

**38.** Since the sacrament of reconciliation not only frees us from sins but is also a source of greater grace and reconciles us with God, let superiors take care that all, including novices, receive the sacrament of reconciliation frequently. They have the right to choose their confessor.

**39.** Let superiors also take care that each member of the community devotes at least half an hour a day to meditation, for this is the source of all spiritual life. It is fitting that in their free time members visit Christ in the tabernacle on their own and honor the Virgin Mary by meditating on the mysteries of the holy rosary.

**40.** In addition to the fasts observed by the whole Church according to its precepts, the Order's fasts are observed at supper on the vigils of the following solemnities and feasts of the Order:

- The Epiphany of the Lord (January 6)
- Sts. Fabian and Sebastian (January 20)
- St. Agnes, day of her death (March 2)
- The Finding of the Holy Cross (May 2)
- The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (August 15)
- St. Augustine (August 28)
- The Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14)

- St. Francis of Assisi (October 4)
- St. Agnes (November 13)
- The Blessed Virgin Mary, conceived without the stain of original sin (December 8)

41. The members of the Order are obliged to celebrate the Order's proper feasts and to keep the prescribed fasts of the Order, unless the Grand Master dispenses them.

42. Once a year all shall take part in a spiritual retreat lasting several days. Those engaged in pastoral care shall also make it, at a suitable time and with the knowledge of the superior.

43. Superiors shall always take care that all take part in Holy Mass each day. It is recommended that the other persons of the house also attend this Mass.

44. According to ancient custom, the members of the Order are to remember their deceased brothers, relatives and the benefactors of the Order.

## Common Life

45. True unity of hearts requires a real and sincere common life according to the Rule and the Constitutions, so that all of us may share in the same way of life in a spirit of love.

46. Each shall strive to love his brothers with the love that is the bond of peace and perfection, and shall do everything possible to ensure that harmony prevails in the monastery, for this is the most fundamental requirement of a religious community. The older members shall set the younger a shining example by their virtuous life, and the younger shall obediently follow it. No one may despise or insult anyone. If fraternal charity is violated, those concerned shall be reconciled as soon as possible.

47. Let all members behave considerately toward one another.

48. Religious are to live in their own religious house, which they shall not leave without the permission of the superior, and are to maintain common life. In the case of a long absence from the house, the major superior may, for a just reason and with the consent of his council, permit a member of the Order to live outside a house of the institute for no more than one year, unless the reason is the treatment of illness, study or the exercise of the apostolate in the name of the institute.

49. Anyone who is aware or convinced that he has done wrong before the others should admit his fault, so as to obtain God's forgiveness and at the same time humbly ask for a fitting penance. Let the superior or his deputy carefully consider the kind of offense and the person who committed it, and determine the satisfaction accordingly. Like an experienced physician who treats deeper wounds with stronger remedies, let him deal more strictly with graver offenses, so that a light punishment may not become an occasion for a new lapse. Let the offender accept the penance imposed with gratitude and strive to amend.

**50.** No one shall nurse hatred in his heart. But whoever has no thought for his salvation and refuses to admit his fault voluntarily, or defends it and refuses to do penance for it, shall be punished more severely by the Grand Master.

**51.** To prevent defamation or slander and to avoid wronging the innocent, a case that is not entirely clear or that raises any doubt shall be very carefully investigated.

**52.** The members of the Order take their place in the community according to their rank. They show each other due respect. They are appointed to tasks or duties in the Order by the will of the superiors, with regard to their abilities. The Grand Master holds the first place in all houses of the Order. Local superiors yield the first place in their community only to the Grand Master or the Visitor General.

**53.** Anyone who intends to publish anything or to collaborate with any mass medium shall request special permission from the Grand Master. He or the censors appointed by him shall first review and assess writings, articles and information intended for the mass media.

**54.** Enclosure is observed in the inhabited parts of the monastery. The areas subject to the norms of enclosure shall be precisely defined by the Grand Master and also visibly marked.

## Formation of Members

**55.** The members of the Order shall constantly strive to “run with perseverance the race set before us” (cf. Heb 12:1) and to grow continually in the knowledge of our God (cf. Col 1:10). Two kinds of formation serve as an instrument and help for all this: initial and ongoing. Initial formation takes place chiefly in the novitiate and is further strengthened during the period of first vows under the guidance of the master of clerics. Its aim is to make one's own all the truths of our faith, to introduce the theory and practice of the spiritual life, to deepen the understanding and celebration of the sacred liturgy, and to acquaint the member with the Order and its history. The initial formation of a religious is completed by solemn vows. After these, ongoing formation begins, for which each member of the Order is responsible in his conscience. Ongoing formation consists in constantly deepening what was instilled by initial formation and in a continual effort toward a deeper life with God and in God.

### Entry into the Order

**56.** Anyone who wishes to be admitted to our Order shall apply in writing to the Grand Master. Only the Grand Master, with the approval of the General Council, has the right to admit to the novitiate.

**57.** Superiors must first verify whether applicants meet all the legal requirements necessary for valid admission and whether they enjoy a good reputation. They shall also seek to

establish whether applicants truly desire religious life with a sincere intention, whether they are physically and mentally healthy, and whether they have the necessary qualities.

**58.** The following are invalidly admitted to the novitiate:

- anyone who has not yet completed his seventeenth year of age
- a spouse, while the marriage lasts
- anyone bound by a sacred bond to any form of consecrated life or incorporated into a society of apostolic life, without prejudice to can. 684
- anyone who enters the institute under the influence of force, grave fear or fraud, or whom the superior has admitted under the influence of the same circumstances
- anyone who has concealed his incorporation into a religious institute or a society of apostolic life

**59.** Before entering, each applicant shall submit certificates of baptism, confirmation and single status, and a written recommendation from his spiritual director. The provisions of canon law apply to the transfer of diocesan priests and religious.

**60.** Before beginning the novitiate, applicants shall make a spiritual retreat.

## Novitiate

**61.** To be valid, the novitiate must be made in a house designated for this purpose by a written decision of the Grand Master with the consent of his council (cf. can. 647).

**62.** To be valid, the canonical novitiate lasts one year. If there is doubt about a novice's suitability, the Grand Master may extend the probation, but by no more than six months (cf. can. 653 § 2).

**63.** An absence from the novitiate house exceeding three months, whether continuous or interrupted, renders the novitiate invalid. An absence exceeding fifteen days must be made up (cf. can. 649 § 1).

**64.** The aim of the novitiate is to form the spirit of a good religious through the study of the Rule of St. Augustine and the Constitutions, through meditation and persevering prayer, and through instruction on everything concerning the vows, and so to achieve the formation of a proper religious.

**65.** Novices are to receive the sacraments regularly, especially the sacrament of reconciliation, and they have the right, with the knowledge of the novice master, to choose their confessor.

**66.** The time of the novitiate is to be fully used for the work of formation, and therefore novices shall not be occupied with studies and tasks that do not directly serve this formation (cf. can. 652 § 5).

**67.** During the novitiate, the novice master shall keep the Grand Master continually informed about the life, conduct and suitability of the novices. At the end of the novitiate, the Grand

Master, with the consent of his council, shall admit the novice to vows if he is found suitable; otherwise he shall dismiss him.

**68.** A novice may freely leave the Order, or the Grand Master may dismiss him for a serious reason.

**69.** Before taking vows, the novice shall make a spiritual retreat.

## Novice Master

**70.** The novice master and his assistant are appointed by the Grand Master for a term of three years from among the members of the Order in solemn vows, with the consent of his Council.

**71.** The care of the novices' formation and the direction of the novitiate belong exclusively to the novice master. Apart from the Grand Master and the Visitor, no one may interfere in this office.

## Temporary Vows

**72.** First vows are taken for three years. If appropriate, the Grand Master may, on the proposal of the novice master, extend the period of temporary vows, but in such a way that the entire time during which a cleric is bound by temporary vows does not exceed nine years (cf. can. 657 § 2).

**73.** For the validity of temporary vows it is required that:

- the person taking them has completed at least his eighteenth year of life
- he has validly completed the novitiate
- he is freely admitted to the vows, according to the norms of law, by the competent superior after hearing the opinion of his council
- the vows are expressly made, without force, grave fear or fraud
- the vows are received by the lawful superior, personally or through a representative

## Solemn Vows

**74.** When the period for which temporary vows were taken has ended, a professed member who requests it and is found suitable may be admitted to solemn vows (cf. can. 657 § 1).

**75.** In addition to the conditions mentioned in can. 656, nos. 3, 4 and 5, and others established by proper law, the validity of perpetual vows requires:

- an age of at least twenty-one completed years
- previous temporary vows for at least three years, without prejudice to can. 657 § 3

## Formation

**76.** The religious formation of those in temporary vows shall take place according to the established norm, so that their religious life may become ever fuller and richer.

77. Throughout their studies, clerics in temporary vows shall be entrusted to the special care of the master of clerics, whom the Grand Master appoints from among the members of the Order in solemn vows, with the consent of his Council. The task of the master of clerics is to form the students by appropriate admonition, instruction and encouragement, so that they may be prepared for the priestly vocation and its duties.

78. The education of those preparing for priestly ordination is governed by the provisions of law and the directives of the Order (cf. can. 659 § 3).

79. During their studies, clerics shall not be given any tasks that could hinder their study or their attendance at school.

80. A religious may receive diaconal and priestly ordination only after solemn profession.

81. The Grand Master has the right to grant dimissorial letters to his subjects for diaconal and priestly ordination (cf. can. 1019 § 1).

### Ongoing Formation

82. Let the members of the Order fulfill all their duties, studies and entrusted tasks at the appointed time, with zealous concern to benefit the Order as much as possible and to work for its flourishing. Let superiors give them the necessary help and time for this (cf. can. 661).

83. In the monastery, due care shall be given to the library, so that the members of the Order may draw from it the knowledge needed for themselves and for others.

## Apostolate of the Order

84. Hospitality is proper to our Order; through it our spirituality is expressed and truly lived. Following the example of Jesus Christ and his disciples, we too are called to heal human hearts, wherever we are sent, by proclaiming the joyful message, and to lead them to salvation. It follows for the members of the Order that, wherever they work, they not only devote due care to the pastoral ministry entrusted to them by the diocesan bishop but, following the example of the Good Shepherd, also give increased attention to those who have not yet come to know God's message or who have strayed from the path of truth and love.