

STATUTES AND DOCUMENTS

LAY CANOSSIAN ASSOCIATION

*Statutes
and
Documents*

Statutes



INTRODUCTION

Magdalene of Canossa, moved by the Holy Spirit and prompted by zeal for “the glory of God and the good of our neighbour”,¹ from the beginning of her work, singled out and formed lay people called to participate in the charism of “her least Institute”.²

Her aim was very clear: to increase the number of apostles willing to cooperate in spreading the Kingdom of God in the world through the proclamation of the Gospel and the witness of charity,³ contemplated in Christ Crucified and made visible in His Mother at the foot of the Cross.⁴

In dialogue with the Pastors of the Church and attentive to the needs of the places in which her Religious Family was established, Magdalene drew up “Plans for the Tertiaries”, that is, projects for adults who, remaining in the lay state, shared her spirituality, her style of life and her great apostolic passion: “above all to make Jesus known”. In order to nourish their apostolic charity, she would offer them various initiatives for formation.⁵

In the history of the Institute, the laity shared in the charism in different ways: societies, unions, associations and groups. In the variety of names and forms of actualization, one essential element remains constant: the awareness of a charismatic gift that does not exhaust itself in the religious Institutes of the Sons and Daughters of Charity. By the power of the Holy Spirit, this gift is shared by all the lay people who feel called to the “perfection of charity”⁶ according to the understanding that Magdalene of

¹ Ep. II/2, pp. 1415-16.

² UR, p. 175; UR, p. 17-18.

³ R.S.S., P. 1, p. 233.

⁴ Jn 19, 25-27.

⁵ UR, p. 147; Plan for the Tertiaries, ms.; Ep. II/2, p. 1405.

⁶ PL, p. 136; ChL 16a.

The Logo of the Association

It represents the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ, the Greatest Love, “the Word of God incarnate, crucified and risen, Lord and Centre of the cosmos and history... Light of the world.” Beside her Son, Mary stands, “completely open to the will of God and unconditionally docile to His Divine Word.” Jesus and Mary are, near the Cross, love and salvation. The logo is a constant invitation for the Lay Canossian to contemplate the unfathomable Mystery of the Love of the Trinity and to communicate it to all his brothers and sisters in daily life. “Inspice et Fac”, “Contemplate and Act.”

Canossa had of the Gospel, beginning from the Paschal Mystery.

On May 1, 1950, the Church approved the “Statutes of the Canossian Collaborators” and in later years it needed to be reformulated, keeping in mind the challenges of the contemporary culture and the sensitivity of the laity of our times.

The XI General Chapter of the Institute of the Daughters of Charity, in 1984, re-read the prophetic insights of the Foundress in the theological-pastoral perspectives of Vatican Council II and of the directives of the Church. Accordingly, it reaffirmed that the vocation of the laity to share the Canossian charism is a special gift of God to the Church and for the Church.

The General Council of the Daughters of Charity, in view of the re-vitalization of the charism in its “lay form”, urged by the Church and with the consent of the XII General Chapter of the Institute, celebrated in 1990, resolved to renew the Statutes of the Association of “Lay Canossians”, so that the members might live in depth a greater vitality and ecclesial co-responsibility, together with the other members of the Canossian Family.

NB. The impersonal noun is considered to include both feminine and masculine.

PRESENTATION

Dear Lay Canossians,

In presenting the updated version of the STATUTES of the Lay Canossian Association to the Institute of the Canossian Sisters, the Institute of the Canossian Fathers, the “Lay Canossian Association”, it is opportune to outline, at least, the essential phases of the itinerary which led to this goal and the reasons which animated it.

The fundamental reason of this laborious itinerary is certainly the duty and the desire of stimulating and strengthening the common commitment of animation and formation of Lay Canossians.

The two Canossian Religious Institutes had always desired the animation and formation of the Laity, trying to educate numerous collaborators in the Lord’s most generous spirit and in apostolic charity, which St. Magdalene described in her Plans, above all, for the Tertiaries.

The reawakening of the ecclesial awareness of the identity and mission of the laity in the Church, also urged the Canossian Family to rediscover this special vocation, so dear to our Mother Foundress, and the duty of Religious in sharing the richness of the Institute’s charism. From this renewed consciousness and attention to the lay world new experiences in the field of laity came into being in the Canossian world: lay aggregations, inspired by the charism of charity of St. Magdalene, itineraries of formation for groups of laity and collaborators, present or close to the Canossian ministries, moments of gathering together like International Congresses, in which various expressions of the lay Canossian world meet together.

It was precisely at the International Congress of the Lay Canossian Family of 2000, in Rome, that the challenge arose from both Religious Institutes to make a common journey and plan of action.

From 19th February 1991, the Canossian Sisters already had Statutes approved by the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life. In February 2003 Father General of the Sons of Charity, Fr. Antonio Papa, asked Mother General of the Daughters of Charity, M. Marie Remedios, for the opportunity to share the Statutes and to revise them together in order to make the necessary changes and include the different groups. The objective which we hoped to achieve was that all Lay Canossians in the world, in the same way bound to one or other of the two Congregations, could follow the same journey. Mother General was open to this request.

In August 2003, during a meeting, an Outline of the Statutes was taken into consideration; it was an open and flexible outline, in which the different realities could identify themselves. A working group, composed of Lay Canossians, Sisters and Fathers, was set up. In a short time they succeeded in preparing the first draft. In 2006 the draft of the text was ready and sent to the various Canossian realities, Canossian Sisters and Fathers, and the Lay Canossians, for a first evaluation. Today, after having integrated numerous and different observations and suggestions, the Statutes have been presented to and approved by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, and now are to be presented to the Canossian Family, so that they may be accepted by mutual consent.

From the richness of the text which reflects the new mentality of the latest documents of the Magisterium regarding Laity, and taking into consideration the diversity of places, traditions and contexts, essential guidelines emerged, so that a person may consider himself to be a "Lay Canossian":

- a journey of formation at personal and group level as described in the Statutes;*
- growth of a lay spirituality, centred on the experience of Christ Crucified and Risen, together with Our Lady of Sorrows;*

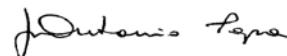
- witnessing a journey of fraternity and "union of hearts";*
- daily growth in the virtues of docility, patience, meekness and gentleness according to the Lord's most generous spirit;*
- witnessing and participation in the mission through the lay modality, with particular attention for those forgotten, the little ones and the poor;*
- a sign of aggregation, which identifies that the Lay Canossian belongs to the Association.*

The same Statutes, though fully recognizing the identity and the mission characteristic of lay people and their natural capacity to draw from the charism and to make it their own, living it in an original way, entrust the duty of discernment and vigilance to the Religious Institutes in the persons of the Superiors General, so that the charism may be accepted, lived and handed on in its integrity.

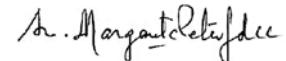
These Statutes propose to promote the unanimous and common action of both Religious and Lay people in the richness of their different contributions.

With joy we offer the world and the Church the beauty and vivacity of the charism, received as a gift for the "Divine Glory."

Rome, 1st March, 2011



Fr. Antonio Papa
Superior General



M. Margaret Peter
Superior General



CONGREGATION
FOR INSTITUTES OF CONSECRATED LIFE
AND SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE
Prot. n. V. 8-1/90

DECREE

The Institution named "Lay Canossians" belonging to the religious Institute of the Canossian Daughters of Charity, whose Generalate is in the city of Rome, is a public Association of faithful in which the members are called to live the charism and the spirituality of the Canossian Family in the world.

The aim of the Association is the active participation of the members in the life of the local Church, collaborating also in the specific ministries of the Daughters of Charity: education, evangelization, pastoral care of the sick, formation of laity and spiritual exercises.

The Superior General of the Institute, on behalf of the General Chapter, has presented the Statutes of the said Association, to the Apostolic See for final approval.

This Congregation for Institutes of consecrated life and Societies of apostolic life, after carefully examining the Statutes, with the present Decree, approves and confirms them, according to the original written in Italian, which is preserved in its Archives as required by Canon Law.

Notwithstanding any disposition on the contrary.

Given in Rome, February 19, 1991.



CONGREGATION
FOR INSTITUTES OF CONSECRATED LIFE
AND SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE
Prot. n. V. 8-1/91

DECREE

The Association of the faithful *Lay Canossians*, whose members are called to live, in the world, the charism and the spirituality of the Canossian Daughters of Charity and the Canossian Sons of Charity, founded by Saint Magdalene of Canossa, is a public association of the faithful recognised with a decree of the Sacred Congregation for Institutes of consecrated life and Societies of apostolic life of 19th February 1991.

Following the decision of sharing the Statutes *Lay Canossians* of the Canossian Daughters of Charity with the Canossian Sons of Charity, so that all Lay Canossians bound to the two Institutes may carry out the same journey, and considering the necessity of up-dating the same Statutes, so that the charism of Saint Magdalene of Canossa may maintain its relevance for today and spread throughout the world, the two Superiors General of the two Institutes mentioned above, on 25th January 2011, jointly presented to the Apostolic See the request for approval of the modifications to the Statutes of the Association.

This Congregation for Institutes of consecrated life and Societies of apostolic life, after careful examination of the contents, with the present Decree

approves

ad experimentum for five years
the text of the Statutes, with the included modifications,
of the Association *Lay Canossians*,
according to the original in the Italian language
conserved in its archives. In spite of any contrary disposition.

From the Vatican, 8th February 2011, Memory of Saint Bakhita.

Sr. Enrica Rosanna, F.M.A.
Sottosegretario

Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R
Arcivescovo Segretario

I. IDENTITY OF THE LAITY IN THE CHURCH

*You did not choose me, no, I chose you;
and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit,
fruit that will last.*

Jn 15:16

*Even the setting up of the Tertiaries ... that I told you about
gives me great hope for a positive result.*

Magdalene

1. All the faithful, disciples of Jesus, constituted as **the people of God** God's people through baptism and "participating in their own way in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ, are called, each one according to his particular condition, to exercise the mission which God entrusted to the Church to fulfil in the world"⁷:

- to celebrate the grace of salvation
- to proclaim the Gospel
- to witness hope
- to live charity.

"One is the People elected by God; common is the dignity of the members".⁸

From this fundamental equality among all Christians, through a particular gift of the Holy Spirit, various choices of vocations and ministries are derived.⁹

"Because of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will".¹⁰

Their identity and their original dignity are manifested only within the ministry of the Church as a mystery of communion.¹¹

⁷ C 204, 1.

⁸ LG 32.

⁹ ChL 9e, ChL 15a, ChL 45b.

¹⁰ LG 31.

¹¹ cf LG 4.

As members of the same family, the lay faithful concretize their vocation in a variety of gifts that expresses implicitly their complementarity and the co-responsibility of all members of the Church.¹²

“The lay faithful must unite their efforts, with a view to cooperation and exchange of gifts, in order to participate more effectively in the Church’s mission”.¹³

the lay person and his gifts

2. The lay person, who is characterized by his secularity, is called “to develop and make effective all those latent Christian and evangelical possibilities, which already exist and operate”¹⁴ in the complex social reality.¹⁵ The direct duty to work for a just ordering of society is proper to the lay faithful. As citizens, they cannot relinquish their participation in the many different economic, political, socio-educative and cultural areas which influence the way of living personal, family, civil and ecclesial relationships.

Strongly formed, with inner freedom, courage and intelligent creativity, they seek to transform the restless search for well being and power into evangelical gratuitousness and service, “dedicating themselves to others with heartfelt concern”.¹⁶

3. In the Church-Communion the lay states of life are so connected among themselves that they are related to one another, though having a “commonly shared Christian dignity and a universal call to holiness in the perfection of love.”¹⁷

Therefore, the lay faithful, fully inserted in the culture of their time, witness and remind the religious of the

meaning of temporal realities: the Kingdom of God which is “at hand”, while the religious witness to them the “yet to come” of every human reality and the striving towards the Kingdom of God that is anticipated through fidelity to the evangelical counsels.

Lay people and religious express different but complementary modalities in living the charism in mutual relationship and service.¹⁸

“at hand” and
“yet to come”

II. IDENTITY OF THE LAY CANOSSIAN

*I implore you to live a life worthy of your vocation.
Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness,
gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity
of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together.
Eph 4:1-3*

*The Institution of the Tertiaries¹⁹ of the Daughters of Charity,
who, bound simply with the tie
of this great virtue (charity), dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows,
are animated by the same spirit.
Magdalene*

4. The Spirit raised up Saint Magdalene of Canossa and nurtured in her a singular experience of the Crucified Lord, encouraging her to live the Gospel with a “most generous” charity in the service of the little ones, the poor and the suffering.

Driven by charity, which “is a fire that spreads out and tries to embrace everything”,²⁰ she succeeded to involve, in a concrete way, even lay people in the charitable,

the Foundress,
woman of God

¹² cf CC n. 65, 66.

¹³ VC 54.

¹⁴ EN 70.

¹⁵ ChL 15h, LG 36, Deus Caritas Est n. 29.

¹⁶ Deus Caritas Est n. 31.

¹⁷ ChL 55, 55d, AA 4.

¹⁸ RoL Canossian Sons of Charity, n. 73, n. 156.

¹⁹ The term “Tertiaries”, used by Magdalene, at present refers to the Lay Canossians.

²⁰ R.s.s., P1, p. 199.

cultural and apostolic activities of the two Institutes. Through her ardent desire of “working together so as to make everyone know and love Christ”,²¹ Magdalene prepared collaborators and, in particular, the Lay External Tertiaries, bound by the virtue of charity, dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows, committed to bearing open witness to a living Christianity becoming leaven of goodness and virtue among God’s people.

**the lay person
and
the charism**

5. The lay person, attracted by the charism of Magdalene of Canossa, is called to live the love of Christ Crucified in the secular dimension for “the glory of the Father and the salvation of humanity”.²²

Inserted fully in the social and ecclesial realities of his time, he makes present the gratuitous love of the Father by the witness of life and active charity, which becomes an evangelical proclamation. Attentive to the manifold forms of human poverty, he promotes life, shares in the suffering and needs of his neighbours²³ and is sensitive in respecting and preserving creation.

**the Greatest
Love**

6. The Lay Canossian, formed by the Greatest Love, Jesus Crucified, relates to the Father with filial trust. He becomes His disciple, he is attentive to welcoming God’s presence in the events of life and chooses God’s will as his own.

Entrusting himself to God, he lives the joys, the trials of each day and the experience of suffering in the light of the Paschal Mystery.

The unconditional love of Christ empowers him to bring peace, unity and joy to his family, profession and commitment in social and pastoral spheres.²⁴

In Mary, Mother of Charity at the foot of the cross, he finds a Model of faith, fortitude and gratuitous giving.²⁵ The Lay Canossian, in the shadow of the cross, feels within himself the same love that Our Lady of Sorrows had and, from Her, he learns progressively to live the virtues characteristic of the Canossian charism: patience, docility, meekness and amiability, recommended by Magdalene to the lay people of her time.

spirituality
of the Lay
Canossian

7. Contemplating Jesus Crucified and Our Lady of Sorrows, the Lay Canossian deepens and lives his Christian existence by integrating faith with daily life, nurturing intensely his spirituality through:²⁶

- responsible and active participation in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church
- listening to and meditating on the Word of God
- personal, family and community prayer
- the evangelical commitment within the temporal realities
- the trusting love of Mary, Mother of charity.

In particular, the Lay Canossian keeps alive his devotion to Mary, invoking Her frequently and entrusting his problems to Her, turning to Her as the source of mercy, peace and hope.

Magdalene of Canossa proposes to the Lay Canossian:

- daily recitation of the seven Hail Marys, as a time of communion
- recitation on Saturday of the Seven Sorrows of Mary most Holy
- participation in the Marian feasts,²⁷ especially 15 September, Solemnity of Our Lady of Sorrows
- participation in the Spiritual Exercises.

²¹R.s.s., P1, p. 180.

²²R.s.s., P1, p. 239.

²³LG 38, AA 7, AA 8.

²⁴ChL 53c, AG 21.

²⁵Jn 19:25, MC 20.

²⁶ChL 59c, Ep. III/3, p. 1834.

²⁷cf R.s.s., P1, p. 46.

lifestyle 8. Called to be, like Magdalene of Canossa, “an expert in humanity”, the Lay Canossian cultivates a simple, humble and joyous lifestyle, “willing to dedicate time, energy and resources to the service of others, especially those who are most in need.”²⁸ He commits himself each day to realize this lifestyle within a personal project, cultivating in a special way all his relationships, modelling them on respectful and serene welcoming of everyone, allowing the “most amiable, most generous and most patient” spirit of Jesus to transpire.²⁹

III. MISSION OF THE LAY CANOSSIAN

*Blessed are the poor in spirit... Blessed those who mourn...
Blessed the gentle... Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for what is right....
Blessed the merciful... Blessed the pure in heart...
Blessed the peacemakers ...*

*Blessed those who are persecuted in the cause of right ...
Blessed are you when people abuse you...
Mt 5:3-11*

The filial devotion, which the Tertiaries must profess to Our Lady of Sorrows, must consist mainly in the imitation of her, in the exercise of patience, docility, meekness and gentleness. And this, not only for their own sanctification, but to facilitate the freedom of exercising the works of charity.
Magdalene

charism of Charity 9. The desire of the Lay Canossian is that of living charity, “a fire which spreads and seeks to embrace everything.”³⁰ The charism of charity makes the Lay

Canossian courageous and creative in living and witnessing the Gospel in every field: the family, the world of work, of culture, of politics and economics,³¹ and in the social and educational fields.

He is particularly attentive to the theme of justice, peace and integrity of creation.

The Lay Canossian is co-responsible with the whole people of God, for the mission of the Church. He participates actively in the life of his local Church³² and collaborates, according to his possibility, in the ministries of charity where they are present in the two Religious Institutes.

It is, in particular, in the family that the Lay Canossian expresses his most important commitment, making himself the instrument of union and communion, taking care of life in all its seasons, nurturing family relationships and, in particular, becoming a model of prayer and witness of virtues in the education of his children. Besides his own family he helps other families being available when they are in difficulty.

10. The mission of the Lay Canossian is that of living the Canossian spirituality, which he has received as a gift, in the reality in which he lives. It is also directed in a specific way to those who are more in need and is characterized by:

- a special attitude to see and to serve the Crucified One in “the crucified brothers and sisters”, the least of society, those far away from God, and those whose dignity as children of God is disfigured³³
- the community dimension of service in collaboration with everyone, in a welcoming openness to the diversity of culture, mentality and religion

mission

²⁸ Ep. II/2, p. 1427.

²⁹ UR pp. 18-19.

³⁰ R.s.s., P. 1, p. 199.

³¹ 1 Cor 9,19.22-23, EN 70.

³² ChL 25d, ChL 27b.

³³ R.s.s., P 1, p. 233.

“ad gentes” – the universality and missionarity with the desire to promote and evangelize everyone, even through a commitment “ad gentes”.

A specific accompaniment, sustained by solid Spiritual Direction, is offered to and required of the members of the Association, who are called to serve “Ad Gentes”.

IV. ASSOCIATION OF “LAY CANOSSIANS”

May the Lord be generous in increasing your love and make you love one another and the whole human race as much as we love you. And may He confirm your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless in the sight of God, our Father.
1 Th 3:12-13

In order to gather together these Tertiaries with equal tenderness, security and simplicity, the Daughters of Charity may choose those with more common sense and those desirous to lead a truly Christian life, after having evaluated them for some time and having made known to them the aim of the Institution so as to put this aim into practice.
Magdalene

11. The Association of “Lay Canossians” is composed of people baptized in the Catholic Church who participate, in the world, in the Canossian charism and in communion with the two Religious Institutes.³⁴

The lay person who decides to belong to the Association declares his commitment in one of the two modalities established by the Provincial Regulations and every year, on the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows or the Foun-dress, renews his Promise or Prayer of Entrustment

Promise
or Prayer of
Entrustment

and receives the “sign” of belonging to the Association. The Association is regulated by the Statutes and by the norms of Canon Law regarding associations of faithful in the Church.

The International Regulations, approved by the two Superiors General, indicate the modalities for the con-duction of the Association. It may be modified by the International Coordinating Team.

Keeping in mind the process of inculcation of the charism and the local needs, the Provincial Regu-lations, approved by the Provincial Superiors, must be faithful to the present Statutes and International Regu-lations and they must manifest their spirit and mission. They are elaborated by the Provincial Coordinating Team in dialogue with the Provincial Council and a copy is sent to the International Coordinating Team as a sign of communion.

12. Among the members of the Association, some may decide to express their dedication to Christ by making one or more private vows³⁵ in keeping with their spe-cific lay identity.

Lay Canossians may freely choose and decide to make an experience of community life.

Statutes
Canon Law

International
Regulations

Provincial
Regulations

private vows

community life

V. FORMATION OF THE LAY CANOSSIAN

His state was divine, yet He did not cling to His equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave, and became as men are; ... He was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross.
Ph 2:6-8

³⁴ C 303.

³⁵ C 207, 2.

In order to remain faithful and likewise to keep alive the same spirit, those Tertiaries who have the possibility, may gather together with the Superior of the Daughters of Charity who, after having instructed and encouraged them, will sustain their charitable works and will try to improve the good undertaken.
Magdalene

process of formation

13. Formation is the work of the Father who wishes to reproduce in each one the image of His Son, Crucified and Risen. Thus the formative process of the Lay Canossian is carried out above all by the strength of the Spirit who guides all baptized people to the fulfilment of their identity and mission in Christ. To reach this objective, the Association plans, proposes and ensures suitable formative journeys, drawn from the Plan of Formation that foresees Initial and On-going Formation. Through formation, the Lay Canossian learns to give new meaning to his existence in the light of the Canossian charism, according to the specific characteristics of the lay vocation.

work of God

14. Our whole life is signed by the constant formative action of God, therefore even Initial Formation is proposed and welcomed in the overall plan of On-going Formation³⁶.

On-going Formation

On-going Formation,³⁷ which begins after the Lay Canossian's consent to Christ by means of the Promise or Prayer of Entrustment, lasts the whole of his life. It takes place in his daily relationships and commitments and constantly guides the Lay Canossian in the deepening of his identity and mission. It helps him to be responsible for his own formation, sustained by suitable means and adequate texts, and through personal and group itineraries at provincial and international level.

³⁶ ChL 60.

³⁷ ChL 57.

Initial Formation

Initial Formation, from the first contact of the lay person with the Canossian Family till the decision to be a member of the Association, gradually leads the person to become aware of his identity as a Lay Canossian and takes place according to the Plan of Formation of the Lay Canossians prepared by the Formation Team.

Formation for Private Vows

A specific accompaniment, sustained by solid Spiritual Direction, is offered to and required of the members of the Association, who are called to consecration in the world through private vows.

Formation Team

15. The responsibility for the formation of Lay Canossians is entrusted to the Formation Team which draws up formative programmes to be sent to local groups and values also the existing structures and proposals of the Association and of the local Church.

The functions of the members of the Formation Team are complementary and their formative action must propose ways of integrating life with the Word of God, the Church and the charism through personal and/or group communication.

Such functions are specified in the Provincial Regulations.

The Initial and On-going formative itineraries find their sources and point of reference in the Word of God, in Church documents, in the Teachings of its Social Doctrine and the texts of our Canossian spirituality, suitably introduced and deepened.

The process of formation of the Lay Canossian finds its strength in prayer, above all, in the participation of the daily Eucharist, whenever possible, and in the sacrament of Reconciliation and, even more, in the discovery of the presence of God's action in his life.

VI. ORGANIZATION OF THE LAY CANOSSIAN ASSOCIATION

Each one of you has received a special grace, so, like good stewards responsible for all these different graces of God, put yourselves at the service of others.

1 Pt 4:10

Divine Wisdom who loves, in every age, to bless abundantly the works dedicated to the Holy Mother of God, desires now to scatter her divine mercies on the Institution of the Tertiaries.

Magdalene

structure 16. The organizational structure is oriented to guarantee the realization of the formation processes and the aims of the Association: one's own sanctification, the care of one's own family and the charitable service of one's neighbour.³⁸ The fundamental principles guiding the functions and relationships within it are co-responsibility, interdependence and complementarity.

Coordinating Team 17. The Association is organized at local, provincial and international levels with their respective Coordinating Teams, constituted by the Coordinator, the Secretary, the Bursar and by the Canossian Sister Animator and the Canossian Father Animator, where the two Religious Institutes exist.

International level On an international level, the members of the Coordinating Team, whose service is of five years, are renewed according to the procedure established by the International Regulations, with the possibility that all the members of the International Coordinating Team

or some of them may be nominated for a second five-year term.

The Coordinating Team is presided over by the President-Coordinator who has the responsibility of representing the Association, convoking meetings, maintaining contacts with the two Religious Institutes, the Provincial Coordinating Teams, Local and Church Organizations. She/he is a member, by right, of the Lay Canossian Family. On an international level, the Sister Animator and the Father Animator will be nominated by their respective Superior General.

The duration of the Provincial and Local Coordinating Teams is of three years, with the possibility of a second three-year term.

The Provincial Regulations indicate the modality of nomination or election for the constitution of the Team at provincial and local level.

The Sister Animator and the Father Animator are nominated by the respective Major Superiors, on a provincial level, while, on a local level, they are chosen in dialogue with the local community.

In those areas where the two Institutes are not present, when possible, the Provincial Coordinating Team assures that the Lay Canossians may be followed in their formation according to times and modalities it retains adequate by an Animator.

18. The International Convention is held every five years. Those who take part as members by right are:

- the two Superiors General and the reference General Councillors
- the International Coordinating Team
- the Provincial Coordinator
- and other members:
- the Provincial Sister Animator and the Provincial Father Animator
- a Delegate for each Province, elected or nominated

Provincial and Local level

International Convention

³⁸ cf R.s.s., Piano Terziarie, p. 24, 46-47.

	<p>by the Provincial Assembly according to the Provincial Regulations, whose number must not be inferior to the members by right.</p>	
service	<p>19. The Provincial Coordinating Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promotes communion among members and groups, fostering communication and solidarity among them - offers support and encouragement to those in difficulty - approves and evaluates the formative itineraries - admits new candidates to the Association - administers the material goods of the groups. 	
request accepted	<p>20. The lay person becomes a part of the Association when his request is accepted by the Local Coordinator, who evaluates it together with the other members of the Team and informs the Provincial Coordinating Team.</p>	<p>Headquarters</p>
resignation	<p>If the Lay Canossian, for personal reasons, decides not to belong anymore to the Association, he communicates it to the Local Coordinator. In its turn the Local Coordinating Team may ask a Lay Canossian to leave the Association³⁹, according to a modality that safeguards the respect of the person and charity.</p>	
administration of goods	<p>21. At various levels, the Coordinating Team administers the goods belonging to the group in an evangelical spirit of justice, charity and solidarity with the poor⁴⁰. Every Provincial Coordinating Team, consulting the International Coordinating Team, contributes the tenth part of its finances every year for the needs of the Association, according to its own possibility.</p>	<p>fidelity</p>

³⁹ C 316, 2.

⁴⁰ SRS. 39.

the charism of the “Greatest Love” all states of life are deeply united in the “mystery of communion” and are coordinated actively and harmoniously in the one mission.⁴²

Lay Canossians together with the Canossian Sisters and Canossian Fathers form a single spiritual Family, tending to cultivate unity of spirit, dialogue and fraternal collaboration by sharing the co-responsibility to incarnate and transmit the charism of Magdalene for mutual enrichment and more significant apostolic fruitfulness. The sharing of the charism, in different modalities of life, takes place according to the spirit of “autonomy in communion.”⁴³

spirituality 25. The deepening of spirituality, according to the charism of St. Magdalene of Canossa, “Jesus Crucified who breathes nothing but love”⁴⁴, and “Our Lady at the foot of the Cross”⁴⁵, fosters mutual charity for the spiritual and apostolic benefit of the “charismatic complementarity in the mutual exchange of gifts.”⁴⁶ In sharing experiences and reflections everyone discovers and highlights new aspects of the same charism.

The sharing of the charism by Lay Canossians strengthens their duty of witnessing to Christ in the “sphere of their professional life.”⁴⁷ They, too, are responsible for its growth and its relevance today. They have to re-interpret the Canossian spirituality and align it with the secular nature of the Laity.⁴⁸

⁴² M. ELIDE TESTA, Statutes “Lay Canossians”, Letter of Promulgation, Rome, 1991, p. 5.

⁴³ Secular Third Orders Today, Rome, 1978, p. 12.

⁴⁴ R.s.s., P. 1, p. 93.

⁴⁵ Letter to Domenica Faccioli, n. 1105.

⁴⁶ Secular Third Orders Today, Rome, 1978, pp. 17-19.

⁴⁷ AG 21.

⁴⁸ M. ELIDE TESTA, Letter of Promulgation, International Statutes, 1991, p. 5.

The witness of Lay Canossians stimulates Consecrated people to a greater authenticity.

Thus, while both religious and laity “maintain their proper functions and specific obligations”⁴⁹, “they reveal that absolutely new bond of unity and universal solidarity which they draw from the mystery of Christ”⁵⁰.

26. The Lay Canossians and the Canossian Religious Sisters and Fathers share special moments of: fraternal sharing

- prayer and fraternal life, especially on the occasion of celebrations of the Canossian Family, like the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows (September 15), of our Foundress (May 8) and of St. Bakhita (February 8)
- events of joy and suffering that influence the life of the Association and of the Religious Canossian Family
- moments for communication and evaluation of the fidelity to the same charism, to the signs of the times, and to the directives of the Church
- experiences and information relative to the life and pastoral activity of the Canossian Religious Family
- planning and implementation of the formation programmes
- joint service to the “poorest” in social-pastoral activities.

27. The same charism is the bond that unites all the members of the Canossian Family. relations

The Coordinating Team of the Association “Lay Canossians”, at various levels, relates with the Institutes of the Daughters and Sons of Charity through the Sister Animator and the Father Animator who are nominated by their respective Major Superiors.

⁴⁹ Secular Third Orders Today, Rome, 1978, p. 12.

⁵⁰ ibidem.

Responsibility of Animators is to:

- represent their Religious Institutes and guarantee the charism
- collaborate with the respective Teams
- promote the connection with other Coordinating Teams at various levels
- plan formative programmes with the members of the Formative Team
- be available to the members of the group
- follow the guidelines given by the International Co-ordinating Team.

the authenticity

“The overall direction”⁵¹ of the Association “Lay Canossians” is the competence of the Superiors General of the two Institutes of the Daughters and Sons of Charity, called by the Church to guarantee the authenticity of the charism. They are the primary promoters of the unity of the Canossian Family and of the fidelity to the charism of Magdalene of Canossa.

⁵¹ C 303.

International Regulations



FORMATION OF LAY CANOSSIANS

Statutes, Chapter V

*Use well the gifts God has given you:
each one must put the special grace
he has received at the service of others ...
so that in everything God may receive
the glory through Jesus Christ.*

1 Pt 4:10-11

*The spirit of my Institution
has charity as its foundation.*
Magdalene

1. The itinerary of Formation must be lived: formation itinerary
 - at a personal and group level, according to the needs of the lay people
 - in continual growth of lay spirituality
 - in daily life, exercising the virtues proper to the Lay Canossians: patience, docility, meekness, gentleness, as well as the virtues of humility and obedience to the Father, according to the most amiable, most generous, and most patient spirit of Jesus.
2. After an adequate time of initial encounter and knowledge of the Association, the person may ask to be accepted in order to start a formative journey: acceptance
 - he presents a written request to the Local Coordinating Team of the Lay Canossians
 - the request will be accepted after adequate discernment of the Local Coordinating Team, which will inform the Provincial Coordinating Team.
3. The initial stage of formation consists of: first stage
 - participation in formative meetings at the times established by the Provincial Regulations (weekly, fortnightly, monthly)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – gradual commitment in living Christian and Sacramental life – participation in prayer meetings, moments of fraternity and days of Recollection. <p>commitment 4. After the stage of Initial Formation the Lay person who desires to commit himself by the Promise or Prayer of Entrustment, presents his written request to the Local Coordinating Team which informs the Provincial Coordinating Team.</p> <p>Promise or Prayer of Entrustment Through the Promise or the Prayer of Entrustment, received by the Local Coordinating Team, the Lay person officially becomes part of the Association. The name of each Lay Canossian is written in a special register of the Local Group together with his personal data and a brief curriculum vitae. In the same register he will convalidate being part of the Association by his signature and those of the Coordinator and Animator.</p> <p>renewal The Promise or Prayer of Entrustment is annually renewed by all Lay Canossians together with new members, if there are any, either during the Eucharistic Celebration or another liturgical prayer, on September 15, the Solemnity of Our Lady of Sorrows or May 8, Feast of St. Magdalene. For those who, for serious reasons, cannot be present, the Local Coordinating Team will choose another date.</p> <p>rite The rite takes place in a House of the Institute and, if circumstances permit, in a public Church.</p> <p>sign Having pronounced the Promise or the Prayer of Entrustment, the member is enrolled in the Register of the Association which he signs and will receive the Lay Canossian medal, as a sign of belonging. The names of the enrolled members of the Association, together with their personal data and a brief curriculum vitae, are sent to the General Curia, to the International Animator and the International Coordinating Team.</p>		<p>5. The objective of formation is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – promote the growth of the Lay Canossian in faith and love according to the “Great Exemplar, Jesus Crucified” – strengthen human and Christian virtues together with the charismatic virtues, lived in daily life, with particular attention to fraternal charity and avoiding everything that may hinder the union of hearts – cultivate the particular characteristics of lay spirituality and apostolate according to the teachings of the Church – be in communion with the whole Canossian Family and celebrating together, if possible, the Feasts of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our Lady of Sorrows, St. Magdalene and St. Bakhita – maintain relations of friendship with those who, for different reasons, even after having taken their Promise or Prayer of Entrustment, may give up and leave the Association.
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ORGANIZATION OF THE LAY CANOSSIAN ASSOCIATION

Statutes, Chapter VI

6. The International Coordinating Team

- promotes the growth and the development of the Association
- meets systematically during the year every two months, or more often according necessity
- programmes a five year plan for the journey of the Association, choosing “themes” for annual animation
- programmes and organizes formative meetings
- supports the Provincial Coordinating Teams in their systematic planning

International Coordinating Team

- updates itself about important Church realities, spirituality and problems of social justice in order to share these with the Provincial Coordinating Teams
- administers the goods of the group in an evangelic spirit of justice, charity and solidarity with the poor and gives a regular report to the members of the Association every five years during the International Convention
- draws up and submits the Report of the Association's progress every five years during the International Convention
- approves formative itineraries together with the Formation Team.

International President-Coordinator

7. The International President-Coordinator
 - represents the Association
 - keeps contacts with the Superiors General
 - is a member by right of the International Commission of the Lay Canossian Family
 - convenes the meetings, presides over them, coordinates activities and assures the implementation of the resolutions
 - keeps contacts with the Provincial Coordinating Teams, other expressions of the Canossian Family and lay and ecclesial Organizations
 - collaborates in the publication of the Association's Newsletter at international level.

International Secretary

8. The International Secretary
 - collaborates with the International Coordinating Team in the preparation of the meetings of the same Coordinating Team
 - sends information and communications to the Provincial Councillors
 - draws up and keeps the minutes of the meetings of the International Coordinating Team

- takes care of the minutes, documentation, filing the Newsletters and Chronicles with accompanying photos, being attentive to the construction of a historical memory of the Association
- updates the web site of the Association where formative texts, information, documentation, statistical data can be found.

9. The International Bursar

- takes care of the administration of the Association, the financing of the formation of the Association members and of various vocational initiatives
- promotes and encourages economic solidarity, based on the contributions of the members by means of an annual membership fee
- takes what is needed from the economic resources, both from within and outside the Association, in order to support the various activities and initiatives at Local, Provincial and International level
- presents the annual projection of a budget and the annual final balance to the International Coordinating Team
- gives a regular economic report to the members of the Association every five years during the International Convention.

International Bursar

10. The International Coordinator of Formation

- collaborates with the International Coordinating Team to elaborate a Plan of Formation: Initial Formation, On-going Formation and the Formation of Formators
- promotes animation of Lay Canossians
- shares formative material with the Provincial Coordinating Teams.

Formatter

11. The International Canossian Sister Animator and the International Canossian Father Animator:

International Animators

- represent the two Canossian Religious Institutes and guarantee fidelity to the charism
- collaborate with the respective General Councillor in charge of the Lay Canossians
- promote activities and the formation of the Lay Canossians at all levels, assuring themselves that they are according to St. Magdalene's spirit
- collaborate, as members of the International Coordinating Team, for the life and commitment of the same Coordinating Team
- promote the formation of Animators at Provincial level
- animate the communities of the respective Religious Institutes regarding the lay Canossian vocation
- maintain contacts with those responsible for the Lay Family.

**International
coordinating
Team**

12. International Coordinating Team:
at international level the members of the Coordinating Team are renewed according to the following procedure:

- three months before the International Convention, every Canossian Province, that is, the Lay Canossian Provincial Coordinating Team in dialogue with the Provincial Superior, must consider whether there is a Lay Canossian capable and available to carry out the responsibility of Coordination at an International level, and send the name to their respective Superiors General and the International Coordinating Team together with a brief curriculum vitae of this Lay Canossian
- during the International Convention these nominations will compose a list of names that will be presented to the Delegates taking part in the Convention who will vote five names from which the Superiors General will nominate the President-Coordinator

- in dialogue with the President-Coordinator, just nominated, and the Superiors General, the nomination of the Secretary and the Bursar will take place
- at International level, the Canossian Sister Animator and the Canossian Father Animator will be nominated by the respective Superiors General.

In the case that there are no candidates, the Delegates who take part in the Convention will indicate five names from which the Superiors General will nominate the President-Coordinator.

If no names are suggested the Superiors General will nominate the President-Coordinator.

13. The International Convention

- is celebrated every five years
- is formed by the International Coordinating Team, Provincial Coordinators, Provincial Animators and Delegates for each Province
- votes from the list of names presented a short list of five names from which the International President-Coordinator will be nominated
- evaluates the journey made so far and the objectives fulfilled by the Association
- deepens specific themes suggested by the International Coordinating Team, after consulting the Provincial Coordinating Teams
- plans the future itinerary in continuity with the previous one, trying to respond to the concrete challenges of the religious and social context.

**International
Convention**

14. The Provincial Convention

- is celebrated every five years
- is held after the International Convention, according to the modalities established by the Provincial Regulations; it may be formed by the Local Coordinating Teams and by Delegates elected by the

**Provincial
Convention**

	<p>Groups or by the Assembly composed of all the Lay Canossians of the Province who belong to the Association or by another modality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – presents the themes developed in the International Congress and Convention – proposes changes to the Provincial Regulations – evaluates the journey accomplished and the objectives reached by the Association – deepens specific themes, after consulting the Local Coordinating Teams – plans the following journey in continuity with the previous ones, trying to answer the concrete challenges of the religious and social context. 	
Provincial Coordinating Team	<p>15. The Provincial Coordinating Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – is renewed according to the modality of nomination or election as established by the Provincial Regulations – promotes the growth and development of the Association – meets systematically – proposes common activities at Provincial level – animates local groups – encourages the participation in lay and ecclesial organizations – promotes knowledge of the charism in lay ambits – establishes the annual membership fee for the Lay Canossians of the Province. At the beginning of each year the Province gives 10% for the needs of the International Coordinating Team, and the rest for the needs of the Provincial and Local Coordinating Teams – dismisses a member according to what is stated in Statutes n. 20. 	
Provincial Coordinator	<p>16. The Provincial Coordinator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – convenes and presides over the meetings of the Provincial Coordinating Team 	
		<p>17. The Provincial Secretary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – keeps the minutes of the meetings of the Coordinating Team and gives them to the members of the same Team – gives information about the meetings of the Team and places relative information in the archives – takes care of the register of the members and the material of the various provincial events – follows, in a special way, the work of the local secretariats of the Association. <p>18. The Provincial Bursar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – promotes and animates economic solidarity based on the annual contribution of the members, obtains other economic resources both from within and outside of the Association – sustains various activities, creative initiatives, formation of members, and encourages a 10% contribution to be sent to the International Coordinating Team – presents the projected budget and the final balance of the expenses, every year, to the Provincial Coordinating Team.

Provincial Secretary

Provincial Bursar

Provincial Animator	19. The Provincial Animator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – represents the Canossian Religious Institutes – promotes relations with the International Animators – is responsible for the formation of local Animators – prepares formative itineraries with the Local Animators, according to the directives of the International Coordinating Team – meets regularly the Local Animators for consultations, discernment and planning.
Provincial Councillor of reference	20. The Provincial Councillors of reference for the Association:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – document and inform the Provincial Council regarding the life of the Association – are informed periodically about the life of the Association – participate in extraordinary and special activities of the Association at provincial level: general planning, plan of formation – participate in the animation of local Animators – participate, when possible, in formation meetings and the animation of groups at provincial and International levels.
Local Coordinating Team	21. The Local Coordinating Team
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – meets and commits itself to monthly meetings – prepares and implements the annual planning of formation according to the indications of the Provincial Coordinating Team – gives information to the local group – keeps contacts with other groups – maintains relations with the Canossian Religious Institutes and the Local Church – accepts and admits the new candidates to the Association, informing the Provincial Coordinating Team – provides for its own financial support with suitable initiatives.

RELATION OF THE LAY CANOSSIAN ASSOCIATION WITH THE TWO CANOSSIAN RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES

Statutes, Chapter VII

22. The Superiors General of the two Canossian Religious Institutes, directly responsible for the “Lay Canossian” Association have the duty to:

- keep the spirit of St. Magdalene alive and authentic in the Association, personally or through the Councillors of reference
- promote coordination and exchange at provincial and international level and collaboration particularly in the area of formation
- invite the International Coordinating Team of the Lay Canossians to inform and collaborate in the General Chapter or in other meetings of the Canossian Institutes
- make sure that the Lay Canossians receive charismatic formation and invite religious communities to share moments of prayer and apostolic service.

23. The General Councillors of reference for the Association:

- communicate the institutional guidelines of the two General Councils
- document and inform the General Councils
- are informed periodically about the life of the Association
- participate in the extraordinary and particular activities of the Association: general planning, the plan of formation, revision of the Statutes, organisation of international events
- participate in the International Congress of the Lay Canossian Family and in the International Convention of the “Lay Canossian” Association

Superiors General

General Councillors of reference

- participate, when possible, in meetings of formation and in group animation.

communion 24. The members of the two Religious Institutes and the Lay Canossians, sharing in the same charism, belong to the Canossian Family by a special spiritual bond:

- are responsible, so that the charism will not die out, but may shine forth and bear fruit for the good of the Church and for God's glory
- are committed to live fraternal charity in open and trustful dialogue
- participate in the joyful and sad moments of the life of the Canossian Family
- are remembered reciprocally every day, in prayer, and pray in a special way for vocations to different expressions of the Canossian Family
- offer prayers for the departed members of the Canossian Family.

Formation



THE LAY PERSON IN THE CHURCH

*You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world.
In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men,
so that, seeing your good works, they may give
praise to your Father in heaven.*

Mt 5:13-16

*The aim of this Company is to honour
Our Lady of Sorrows through the exercise of Charity.
Magdalene*

Lumen Gentium explains that lay people, incorporated into Christ by Baptism and thus constituted as God's people, carry out in the Church and in the world the mission which is specific to Christian people. Their secular character is proper and peculiar to the Laity. In fact, lay people, by their very vocation, must search for the Kingdom of God using temporal things and ordering them according to God: "they are called by God that, being led by the Spirit of the Gospel, they may contribute to the sanctification of the world, as from within like leaven, by fulfilling their own particular duties. Thus, especially by the witness of their life, resplendent in faith, hope and charity they must manifest Christ to others."⁵²

identity
of the
lay person

The lay person, like a living instrument of the Church's mission, according to the new indications arising from the ecclesiastical teachings, must incarnate the style of co-responsibility and communion, "it is the lay person's duty to promote the new style of pastoral activities, the interpretation of the new signs of life in the Church so as to become the one who is able to open new paths to evangelization in collaboration with the hierarchical apostolate so as to become co-responsible of a common evangelical passion."

a living
instrument

⁵² LG 31.

**evangelical
counsels**

In Lumen Gentium the Church invites Christians to practise the evangelical counsels and exhorts them to perfection: “You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect”⁵³ for the sake of holiness and the participation in the divinity of God, received in baptism. Each one, however, according to his own gifts and duties must steadfastly advance along the way of a living faith, which arouses hope and works through love.

**ways to
holiness**

The ways to reach holiness are charity, listening to the Word of God, receiving the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, daily prayer, active service for one’s brothers and sisters.

**people
of God**

Lay people, “inasmuch as they have been incorporated into Christ through baptism, have been constituted as the people of God and, for this reason, made sharers in their own way in Christ’s priestly, prophetic and royal function ...”⁵⁴

“All the Christian faithful have the duty and right to work so that the divine message of salvation reaches, evermore, all people in every age and in every land.”⁵⁵

formation

For the mission which has been entrusted to all baptized people, the decree on the Apostolate of Lay people of Vatican Council II stresses the importance of formation, its principles and suggests various modalities. In fact, it speaks of a “many-sided and complete formation”, of a “formation that should be continued all through life” and presupposes that lay people “should be integrally formed from the human, spiritual and doctrinal points of view.” Also, “there is need, right

⁵³ Mt 5:48.

⁵⁴ C 204.

⁵⁵ C 211.

from the start of formation, to learn gradually and prudently to see all things in the light of faith, to judge and act always in its light, to improve and perfect oneself by working with others, and in this manner to enter actively into the service of the Church.”

THE LAY PERSON AND THE CANOSSIAN CHARISM

Keep doing all the things that you learnt from me and have been taught by me and have heard or seen that I do. Then the God of peace will be with you.
Ph 4:9

It is absolutely necessary that the person who wishes to unite herself to this Company should be well informed about the true spirit of the Institution.

Magdalene

From the beginning of her work, Magdalene desired that lay people would collaborate with her in a deep apostolic spirit so as to be able, through these well prepared people, to spread and strengthen the life of the Church. She wished that every Christian would work to proclaim the Kingdom of God in his social environment. Thus, various initiatives sprang up, such as the Country Teachers, the Tertiaries, the Confraternity of Our Lady of Sorrows, Spiritual Exercises for Noble Ladies, finalized to create synergy between the Institute and Lay Collaborators according to the Canossian spirit.

**identity of the
Lay Canossian**

The elements that characterize Canossian identity are the work of evangelization and the work of charity, in collaboration with the Church and civil organizations of the area. Canossian laity was defined in a Seminar on formation thus: “Men and women who, having received the gift of the Canossian charism and having been suffi-

**charism of
charity**

ciently formed, share the passion for the love of God and the service of the poor and the little ones. They live the charism of charity in the lay state modelling themselves on it and on evangelical values, witnessing their faith in Christ, love for the poor and hope in God alone. They dedicate themselves to the apostolate, particularly in the spheres of education, catechesis, recreational activities and charitable service. They work so as to respond to the urgent needs of their brothers and sisters, according to their particular attitudes, following the tradition marked out in the experience of the Tertiaries and in that of the Confraternity of Our Lady of Sorrows.”

In Mary, Mother of Charity at the foot of the cross, the Lay Canossian finds a model of faith, strength and self-giving. From Mary he gradually learns to live the virtues proper to the Canossian charism: patience, docility, meekness, gentleness, a most amiable, most generous and most patient spirit.

Contemplating Jesus Crucified and the Virgin Mary, the Lay Canossian should tend to unify faith and life constantly by intensely nurturing his spirituality through personal, family and community prayer, listening to and meditating on the Word of God, participating in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church and in evangelical commitment in the temporal order.

The promotion of the laity is an essential part of the Canossian charism. Magdalene regarded lay people with esteem, trust and respect and she valued their apostolic potentialities. Every lay person was for her a person called and sent to announce the love of God to all men and women. “To appreciate the laity and to form them is the fundamental purpose of all the different initiatives of Magdalene: Seminars, Spiritual Exercises, Plans for the Tertiaries, Associations and Pious Unions. Our Mother is convinced that no one can be an apostle without being prepared, because the apostolate is the expression of a heart in love with Christ, burning with the zeal for God and for the salvation of humanity.”

In formation, Magdalene stressed the necessity of a particular attention to the person aimed at a personalized itinerary and invited the formator “to discover first of all their spiritual needs and the extent of their instruction in order to train them suitably ... study their inclinations, temperament, talents and abilities ...”⁵⁶; she also affirmed the primacy of interior life and always reserved the first place to a relationship with God.

INITIAL FORMATION

*I run the way of your commandments,
since you have set me free.
Ps 119: 32*

*Each one of them should be very attentive
so as to become an example and
source of union in their own family.
Magdalene*

gradual process The Lay Canossian undertakes a gradual process of formation, individual and in group, which is composed of Initial Formation and, following the Promise or the Prayer of Entrustment, On-going Formation according to the objectives and modalities established by the following guidelines.

general objective The general objective is to deepen one's identity as a baptized person and as a Lay Canossian in order to be, in the family, in the Church and in the world, living Charity which is nourished at the foot of the cross by contemplating Christ Crucified and Our Lady of Sorrows.

specific objectives Human Dimension

harmonic growth

- to tend towards harmonic and full growth of the person
- to assume an attitude of listening to oneself, others, the world
- to interpret the signs of the times and urgent social needs
- to personalize, in family, social and ecclesial spheres, the attitudes typical of Magdalene of Canossa: gratitude, gratuity, charity, fortitude, serenity, hope, self-surrender.

Christian Dimension

growing in faith

- to live one's life as the gift of God, the Father, who loves us in a gratuitous way, and as a call (vocation)
- to listen to and meditate on the Word of God
- to strengthen one's faith through personal prayer and liturgical and sacramental life
- to deepen the sense of belonging to the life of the Church by participating in it actively
- to live charity by giving particular attention to the poorest
- to proclaim faith in Christ Crucified and Risen by bearing witness to Him.

Charismatic Dimension

Formation of the heart:

- to live prayer as “mental prayer of the heart”: meditation-contemplation in its affective dimension.
- to educate the Lay Canossian in the “formation of the heart” and search for interior balance so as to live serene interpersonal relationships, aware that by meeting the other person we meet Christ.
- to form in the spirit of communion and of family, so as to grow in sharing and in co-responsibility of gifts received.

Christ Crucified:

- to learn to recognize “the presence of the Father through the unfolding of events” and progressively becoming willing to “choose as one's own will, His Will and letting oneself be formed by the Greatest Love, Jesus Crucified”.
- to live daily action according to the “Spirit of Jesus Christ: spirit of charity and gentleness, spirit of meekness and humility, spirit of zeal and fortitude, a most amiable, most patient, most generous spirit.”

Our Lady of Sorrows:

- to look to Mary at the foot of the cross as a model, in order to imitate her in her faith, strength and gratuity.

Modalities of formation are:

modalities

- Meditation
- Examination of conscience in the light of the Word of God
- Analysis and critical interpretation of social reality today
- Lectio divina
- Participation in the life of the Church and in the Sacraments

interior balance

The Greatest Love

Our Lady of Sorrows

- Experience of sharing and charitable works
- Discernment
- Systematic meetings of local groups
- Spiritual Exercises
- Personal study in depth

sources The sources of Formation are:

- Sacred Scripture
- Documents of the Teaching of the Church
- Founding text for the Canossian laity: Plan of the Tertiaries
- Charismatic texts: Memoirs, Unabridged Rule, Spiritual writings of Magdalene of Canossa
- Bibliography of the Canossian Family

time The formative itinerary includes both Initial and On-going Formation. Initial Formation leads the person to a gradual understanding of the vocation and identity of the Lay Canossian. The itinerary contemplates at least two years of preparation, the insertion in a local group with the accompaniment of a Sister or a Father and concludes with the Promise or prayer of Entrustment according to what is established in the Provincial Regulations.

contents The essential contents of Formation for the Lay Canossian are drawn up from:

- The life of Saint Magdalene
- The Canossian Spirituality and Charism
- The Statutes of the Lay Canossian Association
- The Plan of the Tertiaries

On-going formation On-going Formation, that begins after the Lay Canossian's consent to Christ by means of the Promise or Prayer of Entrustment, lasts the whole of his life. It takes place in his daily relationships and commitments and constantly guides the Lay Canossian in the deepening of his identity and mission. It helps him to be re-

sponsible for his own formation, sustained by suitable means and adequate texts, and through personal and group itineraries at provincial and international level.

CONSECRATION WITH PRIVATE VOWS

*Set me like a seal on your heart,
like a seal on your arm,
for love is strong as death.
Song of Songs 8,6*

*Consecration is God's gift,
offered to us for His glory and
the good of our brothers and sisters.
Magdalene*

Consecration, through one or more vows, dates back to the primitive Church. The term “consecration”, comes from “consecrate”, that is, “to make sacred”, belonging to the order of things reserved for God. “Consecration” signifies an act that unites to God through a tie so binding that the person must be set aside for the Lord. God chooses and the person must necessarily respond to His initiative; therefore to be consecrated involves the encounter and convergence of two wills: that of God and that of the person who responds by self-giving.

The person becomes a sign of Christ's love for the Church and commits oneself by a vow. A vow is “a deliberate and free promise made to God about a possible and better good; it must be fulfilled by reason of the virtue of religion.”⁵⁷ The privileged content of the vow is to live the example and the counsels shown by Jesus in His earthly life to some of His disciples, inviting them

consecration

vow

not only to accept the Kingdom of God into their lives but also to imitate more closely His style of life.⁵⁸

"it involves more" In the Preface to the Rules of the Institute of the Daughters of Charity, St. Magdalene stresses in the spiritual journey that "it involves more" which is an invitation even for the Lay Canossians to live the imitation of Jesus Crucified more deeply.

The Statutes of the Lay Canossian Association indicate specific accompaniment for those who seriously desire to commit themselves, through consecration in the world, with private vows.⁵⁹

formation for consecration Formation for Consecration converges, in a special way, with "Inspice et Fac secundum Exemplar", "Contemplate and Act according to the Model", essential rule of life that requires persevering contemplation and ardent imitation of the virtues that our Great Model, Jesus Christ, gave us as an example on the cross. Christ invites us to follow Him and to live according to His lifestyle.

in the Crucified One the crucified ones The consecrated Lay Canossian contemplates the Crucified One like Mary who, at the foot of the cross, became a Mother. As Magdalene loved to stop in deep contemplation in front of the Crucified One and in the Crucified One loved the crucified ones, the poorest, in whom Jesus identified Himself, thus the Lay Canossian rediscovers the way of imitating Christ and Our Lady of Sorrows. Welcoming Magdalene's invitation, the Lay Canossian "will try responsibly to become an example and element of union within the family by exercising patience, docility, meekness and gentleness", virtues which are summed up in the virtue of charity. He lives

his consecration in the spirit of Magdalene's charism because he feels part of the Canossian Family.

vow of patience

The consecrated Lay Canossian commits himself to live the vow of patience by accepting sorrow, difficulties, adversities, troubles, disagreements and death with a serene and tranquil state of mind, keeping under control his emotiveness. He uses the necessary calm, constancy, diligence and unlimited perseverance in activities. He lives patience as an expression of his faith in God's patience which expresses and makes present His mercy, as a reflection of His charity by accepting and putting up with one's neighbour and bearing one another's burdens.

He learns to wait on God's time and on those who live with him and to recognize God as the Just One who works continually in history.

He lives expectation like Mary from the day of the Annunciation to the "Mount of Lovers", that is, Calvary, in the "most patient spirit of Jesus."

vow of docility

With the vow of docility the consecrated Lay Canossian lets himself be taught through listening to the Word of God and learns how to discover the action of the Holy Spirit who guides him to recognize the ways of the Lord in his existence. He seeks moments of silence and prayer so as to accept truth and divine wisdom. Like Mary, the Mother of God, "unconditionally docile to His Word ... she lives completely attuned to that Word; she treasures in her heart the events of her Son, piecing them together as if in a single mosaic"⁶⁰, the consecrated Lay Canossian, in his journey of docility, has the strength to commit himself to discern daily life in the light of the Word of God and tries to live love in a generous way so as to understand what the Lord is asking of him every day.

⁵⁸ Mt 19:16-21; VC 14.

⁵⁹ Statutes 14.

vow of meekness The consecrated Lay Canossian pronounces the vow of meekness and commits himself to recognize that he is part of the universe and not the whole universe. He learns to repress feelings of anger which disturb the soul, to accept, with kindness, cordiality and a serene aspect, the people who approach him and excuse any injustice received.

He knows how to share the shareable; he carries out his service with gratuity and humility and corrects fraternally in the “most amiable spirit of the Crucified One.”

vow of gentleness The consecrated Lay Canossian pronounces the vow of gentleness, showing love in his way of being, in his words, in the tone of his voice and in the way he acts, and he tries to attain a gentle character.

He chooses consistently when, what and how to say something, and when to keep silence, when to act and when to wait, in order to be incisive and constructive in the world in which he lives.

He does not take anything for granted but deepens his sensitivity so as to recognize love, sacrifice, the good qualities and merits of others.

vow of charity The consecrated Lay Canossian accepts, as a special gift of God, the call to love constantly as Christ loves, living always in His loving presence in total self-giving, recognizing and living the primacy of the Virginity of heart. He sees the face of Christ in every brother, sister, in the situations of poverty today, and the divine will in daily reality. He frees his heart from every tie which prevents him from discovering the presence of God. Love has no limits, it goes as far as dying on the cross and love in action is service expressed through gestures of attention, giving, forgiveness and daily generosity.

vow of humility “Charity in humility and humility in charity”: Magdalene could not separate them because “Jesus Christ was the

universal mirror of all the virtues, but it was only of humility that He proposed Himself as the Exemplar”; “Learn from me since I am meek and humble of heart”⁶¹ and “He humbled Himself until death and death on a cross.”⁶² The vow of humility leads the consecrated Lay Canossian towards interior freedom and fidelity to the Father’s plan by welcoming the diversity of others and by accepting all that God presents each day. He tries to live fully the love of Christ and with ardent zeal “makes Him known and loved”, while remaining in all humility and the annihilation of the cross.

Magdalene, reflecting on the “spirit of poverty”, identifies it with the choice of “God alone” and feels in her heart the vibration of the evangelical beatitude reserved to the “poor in spirit” remembering the “One who was stripped of everything, except His love.”

The consecrated Lay Canossian tries to live the spirit of poverty in openness to the action of the Spirit who allows him to live in “contemplation and adoration” of the world, the work of God, to rejoice for what is beautiful and good and to have a free heart in order to welcome the “presence of the Trinity” and his brothers and sisters.

He places his trust in Providence, renouncing superfluous things and trying to live a harmonious, simple and sober life.

He feels the need to forgive and be forgiven, accepting everything that happens as a clear expression of God’s love in his life.

By contemplating God Magdalene places at the centre of her existence Christ Crucified and Risen, the great Model of obedience to the Father: “From the perfect

vow of poverty

vow of obedience

⁶¹ Mt 11:29.

⁶² Ph 2:6-8.

holocaust offered by Christ one learns to obey in the most perfect way.” Obedience is the most perfect and significant expression of love for God.

The consecrated Lay Canossian recognizes the Will of God, revealed or vaguely sensed, as the incarnation of divine Love in his journey of faith and tries to conform his life to God’s will, expressed in the Gospel and daily situations.

He is always open and available to the needs of the Church and society, interpreting events with the eyes of charity and faith, accepting them with serenity and trust in Providence.

**vow
of apostolate**

St. Magdalene, convinced that the apostolate is the expression of a heart in love with Christ and burning with zeal for the Father and for the salvation of humanity, inspires the consecrated Lay Canossian to give himself through the vow of apostolate in the service of the Church and in communion with its pastors.

He dedicates himself with joy in making Christ known and loved through his witness of life and evangelization, in bringing peace and unity within the family, his work place, his social commitment, and in reconstructing lovingly the image of the Son of God once again crucified in the poor, in the little ones, in those who suffer, in the marginalized through works of charity in a spirit of humility and gratuity.

formation

The formation of the consecrated Lay Canossian converges in the deepening of the value of consecration, the vows, a gradual and constant journey of self-giving to the God of the Covenant, following the charism of St. Magdalene. Formation must reach the depths of the Lay Canossian so that in the ordinary situations of life he may reveal his belonging to God by an itinerary of progressive assimilation to the sentiments that Christ had towards the Father.

Following the spirituality and charism of the Foundsress, the formation required must involve the whole of the person taking into consideration all the human dimensions and helping him to live spiritual and temporal realities in unity; formation is also permanent since God continually works in each person, calling him “to grow, to mature continually so as to bring more fruit.”

The contents of formation deal with:

- the knowledge and deepening of consecration and a life of consecration
- the knowledge and deepening of the value of the vows
- the historical knowledge of lay consecration
- the deepening of the value of each single vow lived in daily life
- the deepening of Canossian spirituality and charism in the journey of consecration even in the secular ambit.

contents

The sources from which to draw are:

- the Word of God
- the Teachings of the Church
- the Unabridged Rule
- Charismatic texts
- the Statutes

sources

Formation takes place monthly. It regards the themes of consecration and vows at biblical, ecclesial and charismatic levels.

formation

A commitment of systematic time dedicated to daily prayer and meditation is required. They guide the candidate in the formation of heart and in the acceptance of the will of God. In prayer one receives from the Holy Spirit the grace to contemplate, in a special way, the Mystery of the Lord’s Death and Resurrection for all,

prayer

and to penetrate the boundless riches of His love so as to love Him and make Him loved.

Spiritual Exercises The Spiritual Exercises are a precious occasion to discover and celebrate always the wonders the Lord works and continues to work in each person. It is a time of annual evaluation in order to live more deeply and concretely the Gospel and one's commitments. These days of intimacy with God are lived in silence and recollection so that return to ordinary life may be the expression of the love received from Christ.

Formator The Formator, with the Coordinator of the group, commits himself to accompanying the spiritual journey of the candidate with perseverance. Systematic encounters are planned for a particular period of time according to the needs of each candidate and following the guidelines of the Plan of Formation of the Association.

The Lay Canossian is required, after having made his Promise or Prayer of Entrustment, to make a further journey of formation regarding consecration to God in the lay state.

Spiritual Direction Spiritual Direction is not only encouraged but is essential for better discernment before assuming the bond of private vows.

taking the vows After three years of deepening one's personal formation, the Lay Canossian, with the approval of the Provincial Coordinating Team, may pronounce one or more vows, privately, with his Confessor who will follow his journey of consecration.

renewal The renewal of one's vow or vows is annual, and always in a private form with his Confessor.

PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. How do you relate to Christ Crucified so as to nourish and live your union evermore deeply with Him in prayer? relation
2. Do the means offered to you, such as the Word of God, meditation, Documents of the Church, stimulate you in your spiritual journey so as to help your brothers and sisters to know and to love Jesus? means
3. For Magdalene the Eucharistic celebration was a source from which to draw strength in consolidating her love for Jesus. How do you live this Sacrament in your life? Eucharist
4. How do you live your commitments at various levels in daily life so as to strengthen your relationship with Jesus and be a witness among your brothers and sisters? commitment
5. Have you been faithful and serious in living your vow or vows and your personal project? fidelity
6. How much attention have you given to the charismatic style and charismatic spirit? charism

PERSONAL PROJECT OF THE CONSECRATED LAY CANOSSIAN

Objective Live love, gratuity and the mercy of Christ, Crucified and Risen

My Situation Talents
Limits

unity	1. Unity of life: Being and Acting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Am I aware of being a daughter/son of God? - How do I serve my brothers and sisters with the gifts God has given me? - Which “Word of God” inspires me to give myself without reserve? 	spirituality
belonging	2. How do I discover and live my belonging to Christ in daily life?	transparency of life
means	3. Means that help my spiritual journey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do I live the Word of God? - How do I live my prayer life? - How do I live a Sacramental life? - What attention do I give to liturgical life? - Do I know how to see the Face of God in daily events? 	
service	4. Service in pastoral activities To whom do I direct my service of proclaiming the Good News? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to my family - to my work colleagues - to children - to the sick - to the poor and needy - to young people 	evaluation
style	5. Lifestyle In what way do I meet my brothers and sisters who need help? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - with simplicity - with acceptance - with humility - with joy - with serenity - with willingness - with gratuity 	Jesus' commandment
	6. Charismatic Spirituality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The spirit of the Crucified One - most amiable - most generous - most patient 	
	7. Values to live <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - visible daily actions that show God's love - untiring and creative zeal - credibility and transparency of life so as to proclaim Jesus Christ in an authentic and real way - personal and true fidelity, evaluation of commitments undertaken. 	
	8. Consecration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - do I try to live the total gift of self as praise and thanksgiving to God? - how do I live the journey of imitating Christ Crucified? - what is my commitment in living the vow or vows? - how do I live virginity of heart? - how do I live poverty of spirit? - what is my itinerary of faith that always conforms me to the Will of God? 	
	MISSIONARY FORMATION	
	<i>“As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.”</i> Jn 20:21	
	<i>Almost everytime I heard, during Mass, the Gospel text which reads: “Euntes in universum mundum”, I was deeply moved and filled with consolation.</i> Magdalene	
	The command of Jesus: “Euntes in universum mundum” ... “ Go out to the whole world” and the constant	

contemplation of the Crucified One “who breathes nothing but charity” finds a deep echo in Magdalene and fortitude so as to make her ready to suffer, “even to the risk of her life” and “to go, for God and for His service, even to the Poles, were it necessary.”

Magdalene underlined in a decided manner: “the spirit of the Institute is that of being detached from everything and from everybody, and ready to go anywhere for divine service, even to the remotest country.”

apostolic zeal

The boundless apostolic zeal found within the Canossian charism, in 1860, becomes reality in our first Mission of Hong Kong because of the courage of six Canossian Sisters who imitated love without measure, leaving everything and accepting everything, including inevitable sufferings.

From the beginning of the Mission, the missionary Sisters of Hong Kong communicated with Pavia: “very soon we needed the Tertiaries, young women who can adapt to this place as needs arise because things are very different here ... and please send us the Rules of the Tertiaries that were prepared by Milan.”

The qualities required of the Missionary Tertiaries are described: “... common sense, health, spirit of sacrifice and not too young in age.” They will dedicate themselves to visiting the “Hospital for Catholic women, the orphans, the Chinese Orphanage and women prisoners ... they will do what the Sisters could not do.”

From the beginning of the Canossian Mission, the missionary vocation vibrates in the hearts of the Tertiaries and today in the hearts of Lay Canossians.

universality

The mission of the Lay Canossian is characterized ... by the desire to promote and evangelize everyone, even by a commitment “ad gentes”. Openness to the whole world invites the Lay Canossian to give his time, his energies, his courage of detachment and following Christ

so as “to make Jesus known and loved” in other countries and in “any country”.

“Those people who are endowed with the proper natural temperament, have the necessary qualities and outlook, and are ready to undertake missionary work, have a special vocation, whether they are natives of the place or foreigners, priests, religious or lay people.” (AG)

A vocation for the mission is a gift of God that matures through the experience of encountering Christ and is strengthened by the courage to journey towards the unknown and is sustained by the presence of Mary and the apostolic fraternity.

gift of God

The signs of a missionary vocation, essential elements that help to discern the authenticity of this vocation, are:

- right intention
- desire to dedicate oneself to the universal mission so as to respond to Christ’s invitation “Follow me.”
- decision taken in freedom which is expressed in a spontaneous self-giving or solicited by a mandate received
- suitability or necessary virtues, qualities related to universal mission.

signs
of a vocation

The fundamental qualities for a missionary vocation qualities are the following:

- to be a presence of Christ in the geographic, socio-cultural context where one is called to live
- spirit of faith and a constant experience of prayer
- sense of Church in order to work humbly in the Local Church where one is inserted and live in apostolic fraternity, especially with the people who work in the same field of mission
- ability to live the spirituality and the charism of St. Magdalene

- fortitude of spirit and of sacrifice to face the difficulties of the first evangelization together with the capacity of understanding and sensibility to adaptation and inculturation by discovering and appreciating the authentic values of other cultures and religions.

witness The Missionary Lay Canossian is

- a witness who lives in Christ and who speaks of Christ as a person he has met, known and loved, the One who is the source of his radical love for others and the support of his own mandate; a person of prayer and contemplation who teaches others how to interpret the presence and the nearness of God in events
- animated by ardent apostolic zeal, he does not set any boundary to his generosity, completely willing to leave everything so as to follow the Lord, knowing that he is called for an evangelization without frontiers and to risk everything for the sake of Christ
- the one who lives fraternal charity without limits, “complete, universal, common love”, open to everyone with the same charity that Christ had, in a style of gratuity and disinterest, sobriety and simplicity.

missionary spirituality The spirituality of the missionary is expressed in living, above all, docility to the Spirit, allowing himself to be moulded by the Spirit in order to become more and more conformed to Christ and accepting the gifts of fortitude, discernment and frankness in proclaiming the Gospel in all truth.

The missionary is called to live the mystery of Christ who was “sent” to evangelize. “He emptied Himself to assume the condition of a slave and became as men are.” “For the weak I made myself weak. I made myself all things to all men in order to save some at any cost; and I still do this for the sake of the Gospel ...” Precisely because he is “sent”, the missionary experiences the

comforting presence of Christ who accompanies him in every moment of his life. “Do not be afraid.... I am with you.”⁶³ And he waits for Him in the hearts of every brother and sister.

In missionary spirituality, loving the Church and all people as Jesus loved them is another characteristic which is inspired by the same charity of Christ, composed of attention, tenderness, compassion, acceptance, willingness and interest for the problems of people. The missionary carries within himself the spirit of the Church, its openness and interest for all nations and peoples, especially the least and the poor. Only a deep love for the Church may sustain the zeal of the missionary. There is need to arouse a new “ardour of holiness” among missionaries and all the Christian community.

General Missionary Formation is essential in a missionary Church with its universal openness. The family, parish, school, groups and movements are called to cultivate in their members the missionary dimension and the responsibility of universal evangelization. In the ecclesial communities, all the educational activities should be characterised by an authentic missionary spirit.

The Church community becomes, inevitably, the appropriate terrain for specific missionary vocations for which a particular and accurate preparation is necessary.

Specific Missionary Formation of the Missionary Lay Canossian must be sound and complete and regarding particularly the human, spiritual, doctrinal and apostolic dimensions.

Human formation helps the person in his journey of maturity as a human person and a believer, a journey of

**ardour
of holiness**

**ecclesial
community**

**specific
missionary
formation**

**human
formation**

⁶³ Acts 18:9.

experience in humanity and Christian life. It sustains the development of wisdom, balance, dialogue, initiative and collaboration. It promotes the capacity to interpret evangelically the “signs of the times”, integrate faith and life, mediate reconciliation and peace.

spiritual formation Spiritual formation guides and deepens the vital meeting with Christ Crucified, the Greatest Love, through His Word, the Sacraments, a personal relationship that becomes a life of prayer and a journey of growing in Christian and charismatic virtues.

Spiritual formation, both practical and theoretical, is rooted in basic spiritual principles drawn from the Church's doctrine and from Canossian spirituality, capable of orientating the Missionary Lay Canossian.

doctrinal formation Doctrinal formation is a fundamental aspect of missionary formation and draws its essential contents from:

- Sacred Scripture
- Teachings of the Church, discovering always more the Mystery of Christ whose messengers and witnesses they will become
- Study of missiology, begun in his own place and completed in the local Church to which the Missionary Lay Canossian will be sent; this study must be constantly updated.
- Study of the language and the traditions of the place to which he will be sent.
- Study of sciences, that will be useful for his ministry, must be elaborated and well programmed.

apostolic formation Apostolic formation must prepare the Missionary Lay Canossian to communicate the message at different levels: proclamation, sacramental life, charity in community and in organization.

Specialized preparation depends on the different fields of mission in which he will operate.

His formation must favour the capacity to adapt, that will help him to insert himself in the local culture, according to the modality of incarnation lived by Christ. Jesus, in fact, took on the culture and life of the people of his time and He took flesh so as to renew and perfect it with the leaven of His presence. The Missionary Lay Canossian is accessible to every person, searching for adequate ways of communicating, renewing methods of proclamation and trying to know the history of social structures, customs, mentality, moral and religious traditions of the country of his mission.

Formation is important in the development of the capacity of analysis, planning and evaluation, in collaboration with other charisms and ministries, while respecting their limits.

The Missionary Lay Canossian must “dwell in the Heart of Christ Crucified”⁶⁴ and is sent with Him from the Father in order to evangelize the world. Jesus Crucified is the source and the centre of Canossian apostolic spirituality. It is Christ that reveals to him the Father's plan of salvation, the boundless charity shown to humanity, the redeeming power of His obedience consumed on the Cross. Jesus calls him to “stay with Him”, so that his presence in the world may bring “much fruit”.

In his relationship with Mary, Mother of God and humanity, Mother of Charity at the foot of the Cross, the only Mother, his love and apostolic zeal grow and are open to the needs of the world and making the Church bring more fruit.

The Missionary Lay Canossian, after having expressed his readiness to serve “Ad Gentes” to the Local Coordinating Team, a communication that is passed on to the

Jesus Crucified

Our Lady of Sorrows

service

International Coordinating Team, will receive the necessary preparation for the mission. The International Coordinating Team and the respective Superiors General of the two Religious Institutes will decide the time and the place of the mission where the Lay Canossian will carry out his service. In the process of discernment, they will consider the qualities and the potentialities of the Lay Canossian. The collaboration with the Provincial Coordinating Team in the mission country where the Lay Canossian will be inserted is indispensable.

missionary mandate The missionary mandate may be conferred either during the Eucharistic celebration or during a prayer service. The Ceremonial of the Institute 2002 is used for the mandate of Sisters and lay people.

FORMATION OF FORMATORS

*God found His people in the desert of the wilderness,
He protected him, reared him, guarded him as the pupil of His eye.
He spread out His wings to hold him, He supported him on His
pinions,
God alone was his guide.*
Dt 32:10-12

*It will be necessary that those who will be chosen as leaders
will operate in their respective towns.*
Magdalene

origins Since the work of human education is closely connected with fatherhood and motherhood, so the Canossian formation of formators has its origin and its strength in God, the Father, who loves and forms his children. It aims at the fullness of charity, the “most perfect Charity”, so that one may follow Jesus Crucified who expressed His love especially on the Cross: universal love, free and

gratuitous, for the Father and each person. Formation reaches its aim by caring for the person as a whole: mind, heart, will, memory, and for all one's life, evangelizing our senses, desires, sentiments and relationships.

The sources of formation, from which formators will **sources** draw, are:

- Divine Wisdom, which gives vitality and makes each formative plan efficacious and significant
- the Word that accompanies and guides through the Liturgy, Spiritual Reading and Meditation
- the Teachings of the Church
- the charism of the Institute
- life itself
- the General Plan of Formation in whose basic guidelines each lay person finds nourishment. Every day it forms his heart to the charism of the Greatest Love, strengthening the bond of Charity which, in the diversity of calls, makes him feel part of the same family which sprang from Magdalene's heart.

The formation of the formator must lead him to love as **objectives** Jesus loved on the cross, become gradually like Jesus Crucified and Risen, remain with Him and be for and like Him for the sake of the Kingdom, become a true Lay Canossian.

St. Magdalene underlined the importance of choosing well formators because the positive result of formation depends mainly on the impact of the educator.

Discernment is needed because not everyone is gifted for this mission.

The Canossian Formator must be a person:

- of faith, able to fulfil the mandate received as a call to conversion and an invitation to place more trust in God and in Our Lady of Sorrows;
- of prayer, since God is the normal reference point

**qualities
of the formator**

- not only in the Church but in daily life and his relationships with the Lay Canossians
- of communion with God in contemplating the Crucified One, the Greatest Love, and in imitation of His virtues, assuming a spirit of charity, sacrifice and generous giving of self
- expert in humanity, whose heart knows how to listen, forgive, understand and wait, an attentive heart for each person and especially for his growth in holiness and his needs
- open to the universality of the Church, promoting the missionary dimension in the members of the Association, their responsibility for universal evangelization and dialogue with other religions
- of apostolic zeal: the “passion” to make Jesus Christ known and loved by spreading the Divine Glory and collaborating in the salvation of many brothers and sisters
- of great honesty and capable of discernment, evaluating everything before God; to his professional competence he is able to harmonise his gifts of goodness, prudence and enthusiasm; he is a person dedicated to the work of formation “with all his heart” accepting sacrifice and self-giving for the sake of God’s Kingdom
- a flexible person, ready to modify plans and strategies so as to incarnate the Christian message, adapting himself, like Magdalene, to different categories of people, different cultures and their needs.

service The formator receives his mandate to accompany the Lay Canossians during their journey of formation. He

- offers the Lay Canossian the opportunity to gradually reach a balanced personality capable of deep and serene relationships with oneself, with others and with God; he guides him towards an authentic witnessing to the Gospel and the Charism and helps

- him to search for God alone and a simple life in an attitude of welcoming, prayer and an adequate response to local needs
- accompanies each person making him aware of his own gift and that of others, aware that growth is an interior event, an act of freedom so that he chooses to follow Jesus Crucified, the Divine Model; he tries to form the heart of each Lay Canossian which is the centre of his aspirations, sentiments and will, helping him to encounter the Heart of Christ and that of Our Lady of Sorrows
- helps the other to be open to the Spirit so that He may free him, purify him, mould him and make his heart burn with Charity
- forms a missionary awareness and nurtures apostolic passion in everyone arousing the urgency and the necessity to bring the Gospel to all peoples, within and outside one’s geographical boundaries and sustains the missionary call
- respects the project of the Lord in every person because in the Lord’s vineyard people can work in different ways and he tries to discover and identify those who may give more, as St. Magdalene said, and discerns in them the call of God to a more committed form of giving oneself spiritually and apostolically, always in a secular modality.

Concrete modalities, indicated by Magdalene, for the formation of formators: modalities

- necessity of instruction, acceptance and incarnation of the spirit of Christ, openness of heart towards the Lay Canossian so that he may decide freely to follow Christ
- openness of heart to God’s gift and great generosity
- moments of living together, longer formative periods intensely lived, sharing of life, trust, listening, prayer lived in community

- interpersonal encounters and special attention to the individual; validity and the effectiveness of the small group for greater incisiveness and a more accurate discernment.

commitment In specific formation to the apostolate, the formator will consider the following criteria:

- service to the Local Church: Magdalene was constantly attentive to the Local Church; in formation she kept in mind the ecclesial contexts in which people would have worked
- secularity: the lay apostle must be engaged in temporal realities as Christian leaven in their midst. Magdalene educated to a “secular” spirituality aiming at reconciling a life of piety and dedication to others with the fulfilment of the duties of his state
- awareness of their responsibility: they should also be ready to assume leading roles in apostolic activities
- choice of places where the need is greatest: the poorest countries are the apostolic field which Magdalene preferred, and similarly the formation of evangelizers and apostles of charity
- inculturation: adjustment to the different categories of people, various cultural contexts and various needs. For an authentic incarnation of the Christian message the apostle must be flexible and adaptable, always working for the Glory of God.

task of the Coordinating Team at all levels As humble collaborators of the Lord, the members of the Coordinating Team at all levels are the first formators and responsible for formation and have the duty to:

- guide and bear witness through their example to the commitment of following Jesus Crucified, Model from whom they learn to love everyone with perseverance, gratuity and openness
- take on charity as their norm of life, a virtue contemplated in Jesus Crucified who breathes nothing

but charity on the Cross in a journey of humility, meekness and patience allowing themselves to be guided by the wisdom of the Gospel and the charism of Magdalene

- promote, by means of their specific mandate, the “union of hearts” and being the first to give good example to Lay Canossians by favouring a life of communion, sharing in love as a prophetic sign of unity
- search for the will of God, guided by the Spirit, together with the Lay Canossians; dialogue and discernment are efficacious when they are lived in an atmosphere of faith, reciprocal trust and respect when listening to others
- keep their gaze fixed on the Lord so as to obtain His constant help in their service to the Association preserving integrally the treasure received through the charism and their call. Each member must feel responsible in discerning the “ways” of making known the gift of the Charism to others.

PERSONAL PROJECT OF THE LAY CANOSSIAN

Objective Live love, gratuity and the mercy of Christ, Crucified and Risen

My Situation Talents
Limits

1. Unity of life: Being and Acting

- Am I aware of being a daughter/son of God?
- How do I serve my brothers and sisters with the gifts God has given me?
- Which “Word of God” inspires me to give myself without reserve?

unity

belonging 2. How do I discover and live my belonging to Christ in daily life?

means 3. Means that help my spiritual journey

- How do I live the Word of God?
- How do I live my prayer life?
- How do I live my Sacramental life?
- What attention do I give to liturgical life?
- Do I know how to see the Face of God in daily events?

service 4. Service in pastoral activities

To whom do I direct my service of proclaiming the Good News?

- to my family
- to my work colleagues
- to children
- to the sick
- to the poor and needy
- to young people

style 5. Lifestyle

In what way do I meet my brothers and sisters who need help?

- with simplicity
- with acceptance
- with humility
- with joy
- with serenity
- with willingness
- with gratuity

spirituality 6. Charismatic Spirituality

The spirit of the Crucified One
most amiable, most generous, most patient.

GROUP PROJECT

Our reality

names of the members

-
-
-
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local reality

Characteristics of group:

strong points

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characteristics

weak points

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Journey of human growth

journeys

Journey of spiritual and charismatic growth

Journey of service and mission

Journey of evaluation

MODALITY OF COMMITMENT: THE PROMISE

“The lay person who decides to belong to the Association declares his/her commitment through one of the modalities stated in the Provincial Regulations.” (Statutes, art. 11)

One of the modalities is the PROMISE which may be expressed in the following form:

Called to live my baptismal consecration for the glory of God the Father and to proclaim the love of Christ Crucified to our poorest brothers and sisters, according to the example of St. Magdalene of Canossa

I

promise to tend towards Christian perfection participating in the world through the charism of the Canossian Family in the “Lay Canossian” Association,

in the presence of

Local Coordinator

and.....

Local Animator

May Mary, Mother of Charity at the foot of the Cross, illumine and sustain my journey. Amen.

After having pronounced the Promise or another formula, the Lay Canossian signs the register of the respective Local Group.

The Promise is renewed every year, possibly on the occasion of the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows (September 15) or the Feast of our Foundress, St. Magdalene of Canossa (May 8).

MODALITY OF COMMITMENT: PRAYER OF ENTRUSTMENT

O Mary, Mother of Charity,
who, at the foot of the Cross,
accepted me as your daughter/son,

I

today entrust myself to your goodness and intercession
as a Lay Canossian.

I entrust to your motherly heart
my call to sanctity,
my daily commitment in my family, at work
and in my relationships.

Let me be attentive and available,
so that I may serve You in my brothers and sisters
with humble charity,
especially the least and poor of today.
May I reveal the Father’s love and care
in every encounter with others.

Mary, You who drew the spirit
of patience, docility, meekness and
gentleness from Jesus,
generate in me the spirit of your Son Crucified.

May all my life be lived
according to the spirit which You have given
to Saint Magdalene of Canossa,
the Spirit of the Greatest Love. Amen.

.....

Local Coordinator

.....

Local Animator

After having pronounced the Prayer of Entrustment or another formula, the Lay Canossian signs the register of the respective Local Group. The Prayer of Entrustment or any other formula is renewed every year, possibly on the occasion of the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows (September 15) or the Feast of our Foundress, St. Magdalene of Canossa (May 8).

Tertiaries Institution



SAINT MAGDALENE OF CANOSSA

Foundress of the Canossian Family

Magdalene of Canossa was a woman who believed in the love of the Lord Jesus. Sent by the Holy Spirit to her most needy brothers and sisters, she served them with the heart of a mother and the zeal of an apostle.

Born in Verona on March 1, 1774, of a noble and wealthy family, she was the third of six children. Through painful events such as her father's death, her mother's second marriage, illness and misunderstanding, the Lord guided her towards unforeseen paths along which Magdalene tentatively set out.

A call

Drawn by the love of God, at the age of seventeen she planned to consecrate her life to God and twice tried her vocation in the Carmel.

However, the Holy Spirit urged her to follow a new path: to allow herself to be loved by Jesus Crucified, to belong to Him alone, in order to dedicate herself totally to those afflicted by various forms of poverty. She returned to her family and, being compelled by sad events and the tragic political circumstances at the end of the 18th century, she nurtured her true vocation in the depth of her heart and went on with life at Canossa Palace, shouldering the burden of running her family's large estate.

A gift

With complete dedication Magdalene carried out her daily task and widened her circle of friends while at the same time remaining open to the mysterious action of the Holy Spirit who gradually moulded her heart and enabled her to share in the love of the Father for humanity, revealed by Jesus' complete and supreme offering of Himself on the Cross, and by the example of Mary, the Sorrowful Virgin Mother.

Moved by that love, Magdalene responded to the cry of the poor, hungry for food, instruction, understanding of the Word of God. She found them in the suburbs of Verona, where the echoes of the French Revolution, the occupation by various foreign powers and the Verona uprising, had left evident signs of devastation and human suffering.

A project

Magdalene sought and found her first companions, called to follow Christ, poor, chaste, obedient, who were to be sent as witnesses of His unconditional Love towards all people.

In 1808, Magdalene overcame her family's opposition and left Canossa Palace once and for all to begin, in the poorest district of Verona, what she knew in her heart to be the will of God: to serve the neediest people with the heart of Christ.

A prophecy

Charity is like a blazing fire! Magdalene opened her heart to the Holy Spirit who guided her to the poor in other cities: Venice, Milan, Bergamo, Trent ... In only a few decades the number of her houses increased, her religious family grew in the service of the Kingdom of God.

The love of the Crucified and Risen Lord burnt in the heart of Magdalene who, together with her companions, became a witness of that same love in five specific fields:

- Charity schools, geared towards integral formation of the person
- Catechesis, given to all classes of people, with special attention to those ignorant in Faith
- Assistance to the sick, given above all to women patients in hospitals
- Residential seminars, to train young teachers for rural areas and valuable helpers for parish priests in their pastoral activities
- Annual courses of Spiritual Exercises for Ladies of the nobility, with the aim of deepening their spiritual life and involving them in various charitable works. Later on, this last activity was offered to all who desired it.

Contemporary to Magdalene and her apostolic work, other witnesses of Charity flourished: Leopoldina Naudet, Antonio Rosmini, Antonio Provolo, the Cavanis brothers and Pietro Leonardi, all of whom founded Religious Institutes.

A Family

The Institute of the *Daughters of Charity* received between 1819 and 1820 its ecclesiastical approval in the various Dioceses where the communities were present.

His Holiness Pope Leo XII approved the Rule of the Institute with the Breve *Si Nobis* on December 23, 1828.

Towards the end of her life, after unsuccessful attempts with Antonio Rosmini and Antonio Provolo, Magdalene was able to start the male branch of the Institute which she had planned to set up since 1799.

On May 23, 1831, in Venice, she began the first Oratory of the *Sons of Charity* for the Christian formation of boys and men. She entrusted it to the Venetian priest Fr. Francesco Luzzo, helped by two laymen from Bergamo: Giuseppe Carsana and Benedetto Belloni.

Magdalene's active life ended when she was 61 years of age. She died in Verona surrounded by her Daughters on April 10, 1835. It was the Friday of Passion Week.

On December 7, 1941 Pope Pius XII proclaimed her Blessed.

On October 2, 1988 Magdalene was officially proclaimed a Saint by Pope John Paul II.

A mission

Above all make Jesus Christ known! This heartfelt concern of Magdalene's is the great heritage that the Daughters and Sons of Charity are called to live – a life of complete availability to God and service to others, "ready even to go to the most distant countries".

The Daughters of Charity left for the Far East in 1860. Today there are about 2700 Sisters present in the five Continents, grouped in 18 Provinces.

The Sons of Charity number 150. They work in various cities in Italy, Latin America, Africa, Philippines and India.

Both the Daughters and Sons of Charity, called “ad gentes”, make themselves receptive to “the seed of the Word”, present in every culture while giving witness to and proclaiming what they “have seen, heard, contemplated ...”: the LOVE of the Father who, in Christ, reaches out to every person so that all may have life. Through this giving and receiving, the charism is enriched and bears fruit for God’s Kingdom.

The charism which the Holy Spirit brought to life in Magdalene did not exhaust itself in the vitality of the two Institutes.

Today, Magdalene’s spiritual family includes numerous lay women and men who find in Canossian Spirituality the impetus to live their Christian vocation to the full and become witnesses of charity in the places where they live and work.

SYSTEM FOR THE TERTIARIES OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY

The reason why we want to form such an institution⁶⁵

Before 1823

The Divine Mercy, at the descent of the Holy Spirit, from the moment that He desired to establish the Holy Church, His tender Bride, which was then only present in the Cenacle in Jerusalem, Her Divine Bridegroom, seated at the right hand of his Father deemed it appropriate to teach the Church that her requests from heaven would be united on earth with the prayers of His Most Holy Mother. In fact, as with her humble supplications, she hastened the happy moment of the descent of the Word of God in her womb, so would she hasten with her passionate desire the solemn descent of the Holy Spirit on the first Christian community.

The Catholic Church, after 18 centuries from its beginning, both with definitions and prescriptions of its Popes and through the Ecumenical Councils, both with miraculous events and with inspirations, signs, prodigious works and revelations, kept on showing believers that Mary had to be their universal refuge.

Thus the Supreme Pontiff, St. Gregory the Great, through the revelation of an angel, recognized Mary as a sure remedy during the scourge of the plague. The Supreme Pontiff, Pius V, saw her as the one who is victorious over our enemies and the great Patriarch St. Dominic recognized her as the eradicator of heresies.

The glorious Father, St. Francis, together with St. Dominic, considered her as the one who asked the world to make penance; thus the great St. Peter Nolasco, with King James I of Aragon, recognized her as the liberator of slaves. To express in one simple word, the whole Church presents Mary as the universal help, guardian and protectress in every need, suffering and calamity.

To put it better, the Lord wanted to place her between heaven

⁶⁵ R.s.s., P. II, pp. 15-17.

and earth, as a rainbow, the symbol seen by Noah, so that in seeing her the Divine Justice would be disarmed.

In fact, at all times, when the faithful experienced great difficulties, it was sufficient to venerate one of her numerous privileges in a particular way, or to invoke, with trusting confidence and with new attributes her beloved name or to venerate, in a more devoted and solemn way one of her particular mysteries, to remove from the hand of God the fiery sword or at least to lessen its blows and to shorten its punishments.

Without mentioning the preceding centuries, it would be enough to remember the present time of great calamities, of which we are witnesses, that is: a universal war and a universal upheaval which made us fear not only the destruction of the Catholic Church, thus making impossible the proclamation of the words of Jesus Christ, but one was reasonably tempted to fear that Faith and holy Religion would be removed, since the way had already been opened to this great misfortune with the general corruption of customs and the contempt of every most holy law.

But it seemed this time that the Holy Church was on the verge of receiving from Mary that peace so much desired by the Supreme Shepherd and also by the faithful, under the particular title of Our Lady of Sorrows; the believers were urged by an interior illumination and by the example and encouragement of the above mentioned Supreme Pontiff, Pius VII. He animated the believers with his very ardent devotion and with the concession of abundant indulgences to those who venerated the Sorrows of Mary and he established her feasts, twice a year, in the Universal Church, something unprecedented.

We must find ways to render this fundamental devotion not only permanent and practicable, but also to live it in such a way that it may be acceptable to our most holy Mother Mary, and so that it may engage her merciful heart not only to maintain the present calm but to consolidate it evermore so that we may avail ourselves in such a way that it will become a path leading us to eternal peace, unchangeable and blessed.

To achieve this, we would like to form an Association or Company of people who, as Tertiaries of Mary, Our Most Holy Mother of

Sorrows, may practice and spread Her true devotion, by sanctifying themselves in the accomplishment of their daily duties and in so doing engage themselves in works of charity in their families and outside, when these do not clash with the exercise of charity within their family, always pursuing those benevolent works aimed at preventing, hindering and removing sin, the gravest cause of the bitter Sorrows of the Mother of God.

It is true that, during the last few years, through the intercession of our most holy Mother Mary, it pleased the Lord to begin an Institute dedicated to Her, that has a similar purpose but, being formed by a single Institute which carrying out so many Branches of Charity, cannot do everything, therefore the Institution of these Tertiaries would provide the accomplishment of those works that the Institute of the Daughters of Charity practise, but because of their state, the same Sisters would find it difficult to carry out alone.

Similarly, however, it would be difficult and almost impossible for the Tertiaries to establish and maintain themselves in a spirit of fervour for a long time, without someone supporting them and in whom they can find comfort and strength and be able to know and honour Mary with the above mentioned holy works of charity.

Therefore, it is necessary that a bond of charity be created between the two Institutions so that the Tertiaries may find comfort and Spiritual assistance in the Daughters of Charity and the latter may find in the Tertiaries those who guarantee, stand in and carry out all those activities which their Religious status prevents them from accomplishing. Now I would like to clearly explain the modality, practical activities and all that is necessary to carry out what is essential to achieve the establishment of this charitable Company.

CHAPTER I

People who can become Tertiaries of Mary, our Most Holy Mother of Sorrows, in the practice of Holy Charity⁶⁶

The aim of this Company is to honour and to serve Mary, our Most Holy Mother of Sorrows, in exercising holy Charity, trying to eliminate, from the members of their family and possibly others, sin which is the fatal cause of Mary's Sorrows. Therefore, every person of good behaviour, either a virgin or a widow, may enrol herself to become a Tertiary of this Company, provided she is sincerely willing to observe its statutes and its modalities, since it is everybody's duty, in whatever state they are, to honour our Most Holy Virgin Mary.

At the same time, she must commit herself to her own sanctification, maintaining the aim of the Company, while the way of applying these norms will vary according to the different situations of the other Tertiaries. And to achieve this, it is essential for each one to practise all the virtues proper to her state.

(N.B. There follows a blank space and there are no rules.)

CHAPTER II

By whom the Sisters have to be aggregated⁶⁷

It is convenient to speak of the two ways of aggregation: if we would like to know by whom the aspirants to this Company of Tertiaries have to be known, proposed, gathered together and aggregated, it is the duty of the Superior of the Daughters of Charity of the respective city where a Company of the same will be established. It is absolutely necessary that the person who desires to join the Company should be well informed beforehand of the true spirit of the Institution and fully knowing it, she may decide whether it is suitable to her. Similarly, the Superior has to take

into consideration all the circumstances of the person who wants to join.

If the established system is suitable, but the aspirant has some impediment, either in her own family or of any other kind, or she recognises that she does not possess the necessary qualities and dispositions to carry out this commitment, the Superior should persuade her to join some other Sodality of Christian piety.

The formal aggregation is carried out by putting the scapular of Mary, Our Most Holy Mother of Sorrows around her neck, according to the ritual of the Church and this will be done in the usual way by a priest who has the proper faculty.

(N.B. The draft is left incomplete and all other chapters are missing.)

PLAN OF THE INSTITUTION OF THE TERTIARIES OF THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY DEDICATED TO MARY, OUR MOST HOLY SORROWFUL MOTHER⁶⁸

November 17, 1823

Divine Wisdom, who at all times delights itself in blessing abundantly the works dedicated to the most holy Mother of God, lately wants to shower its divine mercies on our least Institute of the Daughters of Charity, which is devoted to Mary, our Most Sorrowful Virgin, and recognizes Her as our only Mother. Recently this Institute has started up and established itself in the Lombard-Venetian Kingdom.

The person who writes here is not only animated by the blessings with which the Lord has till now accompanied the small works of the Daughters of Charity, but is now longing to see Our Queen of Heaven even more glorified. She would now like to realize this plan and in so doing, somehow to extend the same Institute and substitute the Daughters of Charity, considering their reduced number, where they cannot reach.

⁶⁶ R.s.s., P. II, p. 18.

⁶⁷ R.s.s., P. II, p. 19.

To give a clear idea of the aim of this institution, first of all it is necessary to describe the Institute itself and its relative Branches, and thus arrive at deducing what the plan wants to obtain.

Hence, the real aim of the Institute of the Daughters of Charity is to empathize and feel compassion for the indescribable sorrows of the Queen of Martyrs and to recall these sorrows to our neighbours; to try our best to destroy and prevent, in ourselves and others, the evil one who is the cause of sin and sorrow.

As to the former activity, the Institute has its own rules which describe this aim to its members. Then, concerning our neighbours, the Institute tries to prevent evil by reviving in them the memory of our Lord and of his holy Mother, Our Lady of Sorrows, and at the same time, through the exercise of the various Branches of Charity, to provide for the main spiritual needs of our brothers and sisters.

Therefore it is proposed to strive, through the schools of charity and other benevolent teachings, to make up for the lack of education of the poor, the primary cause of their immoral behaviour; to stimulate them anew, according to the wish of Holy Church, to attend Christian doctrine in the parish, where even the Daughters of Charity teach and where they take in and attract young girls and women who flock to our Institute, both for the school or for instruction; at the same time they must see that they fruitfully frequent the holy Sacraments.

They are also dedicated to instruct, comfort and guide the poor sick and dying women in the hospitals; so that, after having received, with the right dispositions, the holy Sacraments, they may meet the Lord, or, recovering their health, may live the rest of their life in a Christian way.

To spread more effectively these Works of Charity, the Institute welcomes, for a given period of time, young women from the country to educate them as teachers so that when they return to their parishes they can practice the same works of charity for the advantage of the people of their village.

Furthermore, by receiving twice a year those ladies who desire to make the Spiritual Exercises, in this prolonged and prayerful encounter, the Institute tries to motivate them according to their

possibilities, to give greater moral and financial support to the other works of charity envisaged by the Institute.

Nevertheless, however vast is the plan of the Institute of the Daughters of Charity, it is not possible, however, to provide for some of the needs of the Diocese in which it operates. The reason for this is because we are dealing with a Congregation of women and moreover of virgins, who wisely must be guarded and defended with strict Rules, so necessary for preserving and defending their fidelity while they are operating in the Works of charity, but which also restrict and tie them at the same time.

Therefore, to provide assistance where the Institute cannot reach and, at the same time, to facilitate the spiritual wellbeing of many souls, the one who writes is thinking about extending the Institute, by establishing the Institution of the Tertiaries of the Daughters of Charity, who are simply bound by the sacred bonds of this great virtue, dedicated to Mary, Our Most Holy Mother of Sorrows, living in the heart of their families, practicing the same works of charity embraced by the Institute, using the same methods and with the prudence which will now be explained.

To bring about this Institution more easily, it seems more convenient to establish it in the simplest possible way, at least for the time being; therefore, the one who writes does not think of excluding virgins or widows who, being free from any bond and having a good character, are prudent and possess a strong and persevering piety.

Therefore, to unify these Tertiaries with the same gentleness, tenderness, security and simplicity at the same time, the Daughters of Charity may choose from the youth coming regularly to the Institute, or those among the Country Teachers educated by the same Institute. Those showing more common sense and who are very eager to lead a real Christian life, and after making sure they understand the purpose of this Institution and the way of putting it into practice, the Confessor of the House (since he has faculty) will enrol them in the Company of the Sorrows of the Virgin Mary, of whom they will always wear the scapular.

Whatever it is said about the young ladies who will certainly constitute the main group, is also valid for the admission of any

other widow or married woman. These often approach the Institute, either while bringing their girls to school, or in connection with catechetical instruction in the parish, or when meeting the Daughters of Charity during their hospital visits. The Daughters of Charity will meet devout widows and good married women, who sincerely yearn to be totally dedicated to God; and this is a rule, for the beginnings of this Institution.

Not only for its stability, but also to keep the same Spirit alive, and in order that the Institute may avail itself of its members for those works of charity which the Daughters of Charity cannot accomplish, those Tertiaries who can do so, once a month will meet with the Superior of the Daughters of Charity, who, after having reassured them in their undertaken choice, will affirm their activities. Then, keeping in mind the commitments of each of them, she will suggest those charitable works which are necessary: getting information about certain girls, visiting sick young girls and women, helping to solve difficulties in the hospital and similar situations. However, in these meetings the Superior must interest herself with improving the good work begun by the Tertiaries, either in the teaching of doctrine in their parishes, or in the surveillance of young girls, in short, in all their benevolent occupations of Charity.

The same can be done in rural villages, on a smaller scale, by the girls educated in the Institute. In this case it may happen that some are not capable for some motive or other, to take the role of a leader in the meetings recently established by the Institute. These young girls will be encouraged to return, once a year, to our House to make the Spiritual Exercises, and so they can easily discern which Tertiary may be appropriate as leader in their respective parishes.

In this case, it will become necessary that those chosen as leaders and who operate as such in their respective country parishes will take advantage of the same opportunity, frequenting the House of the Institute to make the Spiritual Exercises.

Having said this, we will now give an idea of what every Tertiary will have to do in relation to the real primary aim of the Institute.

As it has already been said, all of them will be dedicated to

Mary, Our Most Holy Mother of Sorrows, and therefore they will be enrolled in the Company of her Sorrows and they will always wear the scapular.

Every day they will recite 7 Hail Marys in honour of the Sorrowful Heart of Mary to obtain the grace of leading a holy life, of dying a good death and for the conversion of sinners, each one trying to spread the devotion to Mary, Most Holy and that of the most sacred Passion of Jesus, which was the cause of Her Sorrows.

Each one will try to attend Holy Mass, endeavouring to reflect, according to her ability, on the two above mentioned sacred realities: the Sorrowful Heart of Mary and the Passion of Jesus.

If the family members of those enrolled permit it, every day they may recite a third part of the Rosary and, on Saturdays, instead of the Rosary, they will pray the chaplet of the seven Sorrows of our Most Holy Mother Mary.

It would be a good thing if each one, without interfering with the counsels of her Confessor, could receive frequently the Holy Sacraments on the occasion of all Mary's feast days, including the two feasts commemorating her Sorrows.

According to her proper state, each one must strictly adapt her clothing, in style and form, in a most modest, simple and decent way.

Similarly, they will commit themselves to become an example and an element of union within their own family, since the loving devotion that these Tertiaries will demonstrate to Mary, Our Most Holy Mother of Sorrows, will consist mainly in imitating her in the exercise of patience, docility, meekness and gentleness.

And this is not only for their own sanctification, but also to facilitate a certain freedom to practice the works of Charity in conformity with the spirit of the Institute, which we will now briefly describe.

Concerning this, it is worthwhile to reflect that the first way to carry out each of the works of Charity embraced by the Institute is in training these Tertiaries in the above mentioned virtues, with commitment and care, within their own family. Each one of them, according to their own situation, must give her contribution to the education of young people of her own family, by instructing

them and being attentive that they receive the most Holy Sacraments; as far as she is capable she may give a helping hand in the teaching of catechism on Sundays and feast days, as well as lovingly assisting the sick members of her family.

We will later explain these possible devout activities and how they are connected with our Institution, because it ought to satisfy the piety of those Tertiaries, who, because of their circumstances, will not be able to serve others outside their families.

We now come to give an idea of the kind of benevolent work that, envisaged by the Institute, is carried out to the benefit of our neighbours by those Tertiaries who will be able to devote themselves to these works; and to do it in a clearer way, so to speak, as it seems fit, the various works of Charity will be adapted to the various states of life of the same Tertiaries.

Starting with the virgins: to these we would particularly like to entrust the accompaniment of young girls, who thus motivated, may be educated and prepared to receive, in due time and manner, the holy Sacraments of Confirmation, Reconciliation and the Eucharist. May they also keep them far from danger in the best way they can, trying to get them used to a modest way of dressing, so that, in the jobs they do for a living, they may be kept far from unwanted pitfalls.

May they stimulate the girls to frequently attend the teaching of catechism in the parish, and give attention to the young ones who, circumstances permitting, on Sundays and holidays of obligation may benefit from a few hours of amusement and relaxation. They may provide enjoyment where they are, or take them to a place where they can have fun. However, these virgin Tertiaries, if possible, should not have any dealing with the girls' families.

The Tertiaries must commit themselves with diligence to attend the Parish catechism teaching, serving in any leadership role they could be appointed to; those under forty should avoid taking on the role of a nurse.

As for the widows, especially those determined not to remarry and with no family commitments, it seems fit that they may accept any charitable work as well as taking on themselves the task of attending to the young girls who frequent the House of our

Institute, visiting the sick and dealing with problems frequently met by the Daughters of Charity in the various hospitals they visit.

One would similarly like to engage widows in Parish catechesis and urge them to accept and practice, according to the spirit of the Holy Church, the role of a nurse to take care of the sick Sisters who teach Christian doctrine and the sick Tertiaries, visiting them, according to the usual rules.

Finally, concerning married women, one thinks of entrusting to them some works of charity, always keeping in mind the various circumstances in which they may find themselves. If they don't have children, and having prudent deference towards their husband who might not always require their constant presence at home, they may, as in the case of the widows, carry out most of the works of charity: mainly being involved in Parish catechesis and accepting any leadership role offered them, if they are able to do so, keeping in mind the pettiness of the world, so that they may be listened to and also contribute, more than anyone else, to keep alive the teachings of the Church in the Parish catechesis, to the advantage of the faithful.

Likewise, married women, in similar situations, seem very suitable for visiting the sick in the hospitals and dealing with any difficulties that may present themselves, provided that their husband allows them to do so.

They could also provide a suitable shelter for some young girls and poor women once they leave hospital.

If they do have children of their own, then one would wish that, being Tertiaries, they would be occupied in taking greater care of their family, practising at home even more than elsewhere, the above mentioned three Branches of Charity, being vigilant not only over their own children but also over servants and domestic helpers; let them demand from their daughters modesty in the way of dressing and Christian behaviour in the home. It would be optimal that, if at all possible, they could accompany the whole family to receive the Holy Sacraments and to participate in the parish Christian catechesis, and if they have time, without neglecting their essential duties, they could also lend a helping hand in the teaching of catechism and in hospital visits, as it has been

said for the other married women, and, like them, carry out other works of charity.

Having given here a complete idea of the Project, the one who writes believes that it should be stated that till now the Institution has not yet started, however the possibility has been ascertained that it can be easily introduced among the limited works of charity embraced and practiced by the Institute.

However, when the one who writes may be assured that the whole thing is pleasing to our Supreme Shepherd, our Holy Father the Pope, and comforted by His apostolic blessing, she would draft from these outlines and from her personal experience, some modest Rules which would permit this devoted Company to give glory to God and service to Jesus Christ, our Lord, and to our Most Holy and Amiable Mother Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows.

Posted in Milan for Rome, 17 November 1823

AN HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF THE CANOSSIAN LAITY

1. Congregation of the Canossian Daughters of Charity

Thinking of Magdalene of Canossa means for us to be bound to that Charity which seeks, like fire, to embrace everything. It means to become aware and to be filled with marvel at what this charity, moved by the ardent zeal for God's glory and by the burning passion for everyone, has been able to achieve and to inspire. To this "weakest Instrument", as our Mother Foundress used to call herself, the Spirit has given the gift of a most compassionate and generous heart, which is in a constant attitude of listening to the Word of God and the needs of our brothers and sisters, especially the poorest.

Our Foundress sees in Jesus, the Crucified God-Man, not only the expression of the Greatest Love towards the Father, but also a passionate love for all who are marked by evil in its manifold expressions: ignorance, fragility, oppression, moral and material misery.

From the very beginning, Magdalene of Canossa makes use of many lay energies, whom she involves with shrewdness and warm strength in the project of the new Religious Institution and the spreading of communities and works. Even with the passing of time the presence of the laity becomes more meaningful because they love the Institute and contribute, at different levels and in different modalities, to its growth and apostolic vitality.

The general involvement of lay people in the apostolate and charitable works is, perhaps, a component of the great expansion in the history of the Institute of the Daughters of Charity and, at the same time, less easily visible in documentation at an archival level.

We wish to consider the unique accomplishments which have as their subject Lay people, brought about by Magdalene's creativity and motivated by the one and only constant aim of spreading, as much as possible and by every means, the divine glory. We refer to the "Branches" of the Country Teachers and the Spiritual Exercises for Noble Ladies, and to the "plant" of the Tertiaries, both in-

ternal and external, to the apostolic friendships with individual lay people. While the “perennial and continuous branches of charity” are directed to the beneficiaries of the charity of the Daughters, the others become their support. In the latter, the laity, inspired by the example and zeal of Magdalene, become protagonists and apostles of evangelization and of love towards those who cannot be reached by the Daughters.

Magdalene looks for collaboration among young girls of the middle-class, among the Noble Ladies of the cities, among young women more open to the apostolate, among friends and benefactors. To them she offers the charism she has received. For them she holds formation courses and retreats, she invents particular modalities of life for single people or for groups with the aim of transforming these people into ardent apostles.

a. The “branch” of the Country Teachers

This “branch” springs from the apostolic zeal of the Foundress, eager to “help in many places”, especially the people of the countryside and of small villages, not less needy than those of the cities.

The Country Teachers, “almost Daughters of Charity”, animated by the same spirit, are called to take the place of the Daughters, carrying on the “perennial and continuous branches” of the Institute in their native villages.

To be accepted as a Country Teacher, Magdalene sets definite conditions: they must be of impeccable conduct and enjoy the reputation of being people of honest habits, called to the virginal state, or widows who are living their state in a holy way and are determined not to remarry; they should have the inclination to carry out works of charity, ready to dedicate their whole life to divine glory and to the service of their neighbour.

Convinced that an apostolic vocation needs to be cared for and cultivated, Magdalene starts the “seminar”, an intensive course of study and of integral education; it lasts for seven months and takes place in one of the houses of the Institute. She intends to form future teachers so as to enable them to teach the girls of their own villages “reading, writing and arithmetic” and, in particular, those works proper to women, but above all she desires to lead them to

fall in love with the Lord Jesus and to be well-rooted in the spirit of charity, of sacrifice and of generous self-giving.

The formation of the heart is, therefore, directed to the personal sanctification of the Country Teachers in view of the apostolic mission awaiting them. Magdalene, a practical woman and apostle, gives detailed suggestions about the different modalities to be adopted by the Country Teachers in carrying out the three branches of charitable works in their villages: parish work, charitable schools and hospitals.

b. The “branch” of Spiritual Exercises for Noble Ladies

With the aim of sharing the charism of charity and of multiplying the active presence of lay apostles for the true establishment of the Kingdom, Magdalene starts the “branch” of Spiritual Exercises for Noble Ladies and, beside “co-operating in the salvation of those persons who will benefit from it,” she aims at “improving what is being done for the poor.”

She embraces with enthusiasm this work and rejoices in foreseeing the good effects that will be felt in the families of the Ladies of the nobility to the advantage of their servants, farmers, dependents and the beneficiaries of the charitable works of the Daughters.

The Spiritual Exercises are made in the houses of the Institute, where everything must lead Noble Ladies to recollection, meditation and prayer so that the desire to change their life may be kindled in them and thus help to prevent sin and to foster a more authentic Christian life among those who, in one way or another, come into contact with them.

The Noble Ladies are encouraged to fulfil their duties of justice with regard to their servants and farmers who work their land, to open themselves to the apostolate not only by assisting the poor materially, but by becoming themselves witnesses to the love of God in schools, in teaching catechism, in hospital and by supporting the good which the Country Teachers try to do in the rural areas.

The ultimate goal which Magdalene aims at, in instituting this “branch of charity”, is “to make it easier for these Noble Ladies to have the means by which they can gain a place in the midst of the poor in the Heavenly Kingdom.”

c. External Tertiaries

Initially the Tertiaries, in the mind of Magdalene, are a lay institution of virgins, widows or married women who live in their families and aim at their personal sanctification in the fulfilment of the duties of their state and, as far as these allow, in the exercise of the “holy works of charity”, with the specific end of preventing sins. They are lay vocations to the apostolate arising among the young girls who frequent the Institute or among the Country Teachers, or those who distinguish themselves because of their sound judgment and piety and who are genuinely desirous of leading a truly Christian life.

Magdalene draws up for the External Tertiaries a “Plan” or programme of life in which prayer is the foundation of the apostolic commitment to which they are called. Magdalene entrusts these lay apostles to Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows, whose devotion they have to spread and who remains their model in the practice of virtues, particularly of patience, docility, meekness and gentleness. Magdalene wants the Tertiaries to “be rooted on and in love with true virtue”.

Animated by the same spirit of the Daughters of Charity, the Tertiaries carry out in their villages the three “branches” embraced by the Institute, exercising their apostolic service according to their different state of life.

d. Internal Tertiaries

The characteristics of the Internal Tertiaries, a “simple congregation” which exists alongside and completes the Institute of the Daughters of Charity, are more and more clearly specified in the following Plans drawn up by Magdalene.

In the first Plan they are called “Daughters of the Sacred Heart of Mary Most Sorrowful”. Later they are “dedicated to honouring particularly the shedding of the most precious Blood of the Divine Redeemer and to console the most Sacred Heart of Mary”.

The Tertiaries of the Daughters of Charity are virgins or widows of upright conduct, with a clear apostolic vocation and make profession of the temporary vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. They offer all their activities “for the exaltation of Holy Mother

Church” and strive after their personal sanctification “with a well-ordered life” of prayer, mortification and dedication to the apostolate.

The institution of the Tertiaries has as its specific aim “that of forming labourers who work in the vineyard of the Lord and help the Institute of the Daughters of Charity in those charitable undertakings which they are not able to carry out.”

Magdalene speaks of them as “sisters” united to the Daughters in spirit, in devotion to the Sorrowful Mother, in the common search for God’s greater glory and in a lifestyle of charity and humility.

After 1864, the institution of the Internal Tertiaries, in Italy, dissolves gradually, so as to “avoid publicity”.

Some of the Tertiaries form a new religious Institute, the Precious Blood Sisters of Monza, others join the Canossian Sisters.

The initiative of the deaf-and-dumb Tertiaries in Venice remains a historical and isolated case. They were formed “to sanctify and to be of help in the School for the deaf-and-dumb”. The document of 1894 refers to them.

In the Far East, M. Lucia Cupis gives life to a fervent group of Chinese Tertiaries, approved by Pius X himself. The institution flourishes and in 1923 it develops into a new religious Congregation of Chinese Sisters, directly dependent on the apostolic Vicariate of Hong Kong.

The few remaining Tertiaries, in Italy and abroad, are absorbed into the Institute of the Daughters of Charity. They are called “Canossian Aggregates” (Rule of 1927) and “Sister Collaborators” (Rule of 1935).

New groups of apostolic vitality “spring from the Canossian tree” and they draw their original inspiration from the project of Magdalene to multiply “the labourers for the vineyard of the Lord.”

The “Pious Union of the most Holy and Sorrowful Mother” is formed only of virgins and alongside it that of “Mothers of Christian Families”. The “Congregation of the Verona Noble Ladies named after the most Holy and Sorrowful Mother” is characterized by periodical meetings for prayer and the Eucharistic celebration. The “Society of the Sorrows of Mary Most Holy” is oriented

especially to the sanctification of its members and their neighbours through apostolic works.

All these initiatives spring up in order to awaken in lay women the consciousness of their potentialities for doing good and of the resulting responsibility to live, witness and proclaim the Gospel according to their state of life, but with a common passion and zeal.

It is difficult to know, with historical precision, how these initiatives of promotion of the laity have developed in the Institute during this present century. The documents available are too few and do not allow us to see whether these initiatives have been preserved and with what spirit and vitality. These lay groups led to a marvellous re-launching today, aroused by the Holy Spirit.

In 1936, the Superior General, M. Antonietta Monzoni, entrusts M. Orsolina Grillo with the task of forming groups of "Canossian Co-workers" to assist the Daughters in their apostolic activities.

The first "Catechist Co-workers of the Holy Angels" come into being in Bergamo in 1943; they are virgins dedicated to do good in general and to the works of charity". Three lay teachers, Zanolini, Galbusera, Ambrosiani, become deeply interested in the new mission trying also to develop this newly formed Association, approved by the Bishop of Como for his Diocese. The Statutes, composed of six articles, state briefly the nature, purpose, mission and the organization of the Canossian Co-workers, their norms of life and the spiritual benefits of belonging to the Association. The Statutes are approved by the Holy See on May 1, 1950.

In the 1970's, a small "spiritual family", set up by Marisa Gini, called "Secular Missionaries of Magdalene of Canossa" is formed. In 1978 the first members take their vows in the hands of Marisa Gini, elected Superior of the group. They intend to assume in themselves the secularity of the Country Teachers, the consecration of the Tertiaries and the apostolic spirit of both.

The Institute of the Daughters of Charity, particularly during their General Chapter of 1978, takes to heart the problem of the Lay Canossian movement and entrusts to a Sister, delegated by the General Council, the task of studying, animating and suggesting new ways which are more suitable to the present time in fidelity to the charism. In Italy and abroad attempts at renewal begin. Small

groups and lay movements spring up around the nucleus of the Co-workers. They are unified by the common purpose of "collaborating in the apostolate of the Church according to the inspiration of Magdalene of Canossa", in the catechetical, educational and charitable spheres.

A large Lay Canossian Movement springs up as a result of the General Chapter of 1984 which will subsequently lead to the "celebration" of meetings at provincial and international level.

The General Chapter of 1990 feels the need to renew the Statutes of 1950 and on June 29, 1991, the Superior General, M. Elide Testa, promulgates the Statutes of the Lay Canossian Association, approved by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. The Association renews with enthusiasm its own vocation and its commitment; various meetings at international level take place.

With the characteristic of a family spirit, the Lay Canossian Family, which walks with the Church and values the different ways of the spreading of charity, constitutes the Lay Canossian Family International Commission, in which the representative members of the different expressions of the Lay Canossian Family participate.

In 2006, in Verona, the IV International Congress of the Lay Canossian Family develops the theme: "Prophets of Communion" and in this same Congress the document "Chart of Communion" is approved as an instrument of more intense and effective communion among all the Lay Canossians.

In the year 2000 the idea takes shape of a common journey between the two Canossian Religious Institutes. In 2003 the Superior General of the Institute of the Sons Charity, Fr. Antonio Papa, asks the Superior General of the Institute of the Daughters of Charity, M. Marie Remedios, if it would be possible to join the groups of their Lay Canossians to our Association in order to start a common journey of formation and witness of the gift of Magdalene and her mission in the world. The proposal is accepted with openness and great readiness. The journey of communion and union begins its way; everything is for the Divine Glory and the good of God's people.

2. Congregation of the Canossian Sons of Charity

One of the most qualifying characteristics of the Institute of the Canossian Sons of Charity, over the last 150 years, is the participation of lay people in its life. This fact has a historical explanation expressed in the following three reasons:

- first of all, the number of religious assigned to the single communities was always limited to two or three people, therefore external collaborators were necessary
- secondly, the charismatic intuition of the first religious members who wanted to carry on the work of the “Oratorio” (S. Giobbe) with the collaboration of lay people
- finally, the inspiration of the Foundress who desired this movement of adults.

The same “Rescritto di lode” of Pope Gregory XVI of 1831, given in the same year of foundation, proved this. The Rescritto of Gregory XVI, which the Pope sent to Magdalene of Canossa, praises the opening of a House in the parish of Saint Jeremiah in Venice. It had an “Oratorio”, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, Mother of Sorrows, “in order to gather together men of every age and condition both to guide them on the right path of eternal life with the mediation of the divine truths, and to instruct them with the proclamation of God’s Word in order to persevere in it.”

Without doubt the first place was given to children and boys who were always mentioned in the first documents, but also adults found an important place in the work of the “Oratorio”.

Explicitly they mentioned a Chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mother of Sorrows, from whom the name of the movement for adults was deduced. Perhaps Belloni and Carsana felt the need to structure this movement of men and called it Congregation of Our Lady of Sorrows and, in order to render it more effective and secure, they enrolled it in the Marian Associations organised by the Jesuits of Rome. Such an enrolment was made on June 25 1840, not even a decade after the institution of the “Oratorio”.

The Congregation of Our Lady of Sorrows was considered to be a movement of re-evangelization, spiritual renewal and sacramental life. A further goal was that of keeping alive the formation

received in the “Oratorio” from childhood to adult age. The lay people, dedicated to the “Oratorio”, came from the Congregation of Our Lady of Sorrows.

In the years after Vatican Council II, the analysis of the situation of the Congregation was made in the light of the new impulses which emerged from the Council. It was considered that, while in the past years the “Oratorio” received its identity and characteristics from the Congregation, now the Congregation was to be kept separate from the life of the “Oratorio”. While the conservation of the spirit of the Marian Congregation was greatly felt, there was also a need for renewal, suggested by the different modalities of belonging. “The creation of a Marian Congregation expresses a family atmosphere in relation to the Institute of the Canossian Fathers, being animated by the same spirit and able to cooperate with its aims.”

In 1974, a meeting was held in Feltre for those responsible for ex-students and friends of the Canossian Work. The intention was to discuss the possible union of the Associations of Venice, Conselve and Feltre and to promote a lay movement at Congregational level. In that meeting a Lay Movement of the Canossian Works was constituted and was called “Our Family”.

It had to include different components:

- Lay brother collaborators, committed to live a Christian spirituality in the spirit of the Institute,
- ex-students and friends who participate in the life of the Institute from which they had drawn spiritual help,
- Canossian young people committed to the animation of youth.

On that occasion the foundations were laid for the union of the three Associations: Venice, Conselve and Feltre.

On May 29 1983, in Venice, the *Statutes of the Canossian Family* were promulgated. They gave life to the lay movement “Canossian Family” so as to connect different groups which worked with the Canossian community through a joint organization open to the service of the Church and to a greater response to the needs of today’s society.

The Canossian Family was thus composed of:

- collaborators and animators,
- brothers of the Marian Congregation
- ex-students, friends, sympathizers and benefactors.

The first and the second group participated, in a strict sense, in the active life and the spirit of the Congregation; the third one, instead, promoted and maintained contact with all those who felt the desire to be united to the Institute and with those who had received education and gifts from the Institute.

In Rome, February 1997, Fr. Sergio Pinato approved, ad experimentum, the Statutes of Canossian Secular Brothers and Sisters where, among its goals, the spirit of collaboration and the bond with the Church strongly appear: "They, with the Canossian Religious, with the zeal of love for Jesus Crucified and Mary, Mother of Sorrows, collaborate in serving the poor and the least. Their ecclesial service is expressed in the real situations of the local Church through an auxiliary collaboration with the responsible authority and in the specific service of the Canossian Institute."

In Fasano, December 1999, these Statutes, called Rules of Life of the Lay Canossian Family, were re-elaborated and became an orientation for a small group of young people who, together with a Canossian Father, from 1993, began a formative journey as secular Brothers of the Congregation of Our Lady of Sorrows according to the tradition of Venice.

In the Guidelines, issued by the General Council of 1999, we can read: "we are searching for the collaboration of the Canossian Sisters, present in the same places as we are, and favouring the encounter and, if possible, also the union with the lay movement of the Canossian female Institute, respecting the choices which the Spirit inspires to everyone"

In the year 2000, the idea of a united journey between the two Canossian Religious Institutes comes into being. In 2003 the two Institutes begin the journey of union and communion with open hearts and great readiness; everything is for the Glory of God and the good of God's people.

CHARTER OF COMMUNION OF THE LAY CANOSSIAN FAMILY

"Charity is a fire which spreads more and more and tries to embrace everything".
(St. Magdalene of Canossa)

St. Magdalene of Canossa and the Laity

Magdalene of Canossa, endowed with an extraordinary vitality, captivated by Christ Crucified, the *Greatest Love*, inspiring motive of her life and that of each person, activates all her energies of *mind, heart and action* to bring to everyone and everywhere the PRESENCE and LOVE of JESUS.

In her project of love, which impels her to search for and *spread the Divine Glory* with extraordinary creativity, she involves people of every walk of life so that all may become announcers of salvation for every brother and sister and witnesses of mercy.

She is outstanding for her prophetic clarity expressed through her continual search for communion and her attention to the needs of the Church and the world.

Thinking of the Tertiaries, Magdalene writes:

"... to procure the spiritual good of many, the writer thinks of instituting the Tertiaries, dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows, who, while living in their families, ought to practise the exercises of charity."

Already in the Church of her time, Magdalene had singled out the laity's mission, anticipating by a century, the thought matured by the Vatican Council II.

"The lay faithful have an essential and irreplaceable role: through them the Church of Christ is made present in the world, as a sign and source of hope and of love."

Even today

“The Lay Canossian Family walks with the Church and values differences, considering them a source of wealth both for dialogue and the spreading of Charity in its manifold expressions.”

The Lay Canossian Family consists of the following groups:

- Association of Lay Canossians
- Confraternity of Our Lady of Sorrows
- Lay Canossian Brothers and Sisters
- Canossian Fraternity
- Secular Missionaries of Magdalene of Canossa: an institution of consecrated secular life
- The Missionary Lay Canossians

The Lay Canossian Family is open to Lay Canossian Movements which the Spirit will raise up.

The laity formed, accompanied and supported by St. Magdalene's spirit, together with the Canossian Sisters and Fathers, draw from their common roots the strength to witness. In our time, they recognize new opportunities to live out and spread the charism of charity in a journey of communion.

1. The Journey to holiness

We feel the vocation to holiness as a sign of God's infinite love and an essential dimension of the newness of the Christian and charismatic call. In it we can fulfill the project willed by God the Father for our life, and cooperate so that each person may encounter Christ, the Saviour of the world. We are called to be identified with Christ Crucified who breathes nothing but charity.

“Let them choose women of strong piety ... eager to live a solid Christian life.”

“Our Lord will give you the grace of becoming holy in the conditions you live in.”

“Humility is both the foundation and the support of all other virtues.”

2. The witnesses of Jesus Crucified, the Greatest Love

We follow Christ Crucified in our daily life, where we are called to be “a presence of the Greatest Love” with a simple, humble and joyful lifestyle, making ourselves apostles of charity where the need is greatest.

Magdalene communicated her charism, gift of the Holy Spirit, to the whole Church, involving, by the fire of charity which embraces everybody, the various states of life. She started different and significant forms of participation in the mission of the same charism. Like her, we too, look for new ways to put ourselves at the service of the Spirit.

“Above all make Jesus known.”

3. Spirit of prayer

We are convinced of the importance both of prayer and meditation, so that the relationship with God may become more intimate and deep. It is important for us to nourish our spiritual life by receiving the Sacraments frequently. In our personal prayer we commit ourselves to remember the Passion of Christ and to nourish the devotion to Mary, Mother of Sorrows at the foot of the Cross.

“These young ladies will be encouraged to return, once a year, to our House to make the Spiritual Exercises.”

4. Commitment regarding formation to christian life, charism and mission

We are conscious that formation is a continual process of maturation in faith under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Formation takes place in our daily life and relationships, revitalizing our Christian life with the specific charismatic dimension. The foundation of this process of maturation is Jesus Crucified, the expression of the Greatest Love of the Father. In Mary we find the model of faith, fortitude and gratuitous giving.

The Formation Plan gives clear guidelines regarding this, helps to highlight what is common to all and is a tool that encourages the laity themselves to be formators.

“Formation is an indispensable and essential means to re-read the charism in its participation in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ.”

“Those Tertiaries who can do so, will meet with the Superior of the Daughters of Charity once a month. The Superior, after having strengthened them in their vocation, keeping in mind the commitments of each one of them, will support them in the charitable activities that are needed at that moment.”

“Each should give, as far as she is capable, a helping hand in the teaching of Catechism.”

5. Spirit of charity and sharing

Attentive to the problems of our own time, we look for new ways of bringing Christ's message of love to our surrounding realities. We commit ourselves to serve our neighbour according to the various circumstances of life making available the gifts we have received according to each one's possibilities.

In the Spirit which builds, animates and fosters communion we experience the joy of the Church-communion. The complementary nature of our various vocations and the different states of life are aimed at the dynamism of the one mission: to witness to the Gospel and make it known to every person, especially to the poorest.

“Great hearts, great hearts: let us imitate that great heart which on Calvary offered Her own Son's life for humanity.”
“Jesus is not loved because He is not known.”

6. Like Mary, humble instruments in God's hands

We exercise the virtues of patience, docility, meekness and gentleness, in imitation of Our Lady of Sorrows, so as to become an example of unity in our families.

“Similarly, they will take the maximum care to become the example of unity in their own family, since the filial devotion that these Tertiaries will profess to Mary, Our Most Holy Mother of Sorrows, will mainly be in imitating her in the exercise of patience, docility, meekness and gentleness.”

7. From the sense of belonging to the spirit of communion

We cultivate a strong sense of belonging to the Canossian Family. The relationship between the different parts of the Lay Canossian Family and the two Religious Congregations of the Daughters and the Sons of Charity, is based on the dignity of Baptism and on our common spiritual heritage. It is marked by communion and mutual support. It is realized both through collaboration and dialogue.

To the Religious we recognize a particular role in the discernment of the charismatic authenticity of new groups.

In the letter of 8 December 2002, the two Superiors General, writing to the Formative Commission of the Lay Canossian Family, affirmed:

“We recognize the Lay Canossian Family as a reality of communion which gathers together all the various aggregations of animation and formation of lay people who draw explicitly their inspiration from Magdalene's charism. This charism was

shown through Magdalene's life and writings, was confirmed by the canonization of the Church and was transmitted and spread by the two Congregations which were born from her heart of Foundress and Mother.

... The Major Superiors of the two Congregations are entrusted with the duty to discern the charismatic authenticity of the different aggregations..."

The various components or aggregations of the Lay Canossian Family are open to communion, to the exchange of mutual spiritual goods and to mission.

To the leaders of the different lay Canossian expressions, is entrusted the duty to accompany the discernment of each lay person and to keep alive the value of communion.

8. International Commission of the Lay Canossian Family

Since we all belong to the same Canossian Family, we feel the need to express our communion through an International Commission representing each expression of the Lay Canossian Family.

The Commission has the duty to plan formative itineraries, marked by significant moments, always respectful of the different incarnations of the charism and the various local needs. It is also the mandate of the same Commission to re-read and deepen, in a lay dimension, the inheritance that Magdalene left us. This is carried out in dialogue to the two Religious Institutes.

The Commission promotes:

- The preparation and the sharing of formative material
- The building up of communion
- Moments of celebration
- Opportunities for formation together
- The relationship between the different lay expressions
- The relationship between the Lay Family and the two Canossian Religious Institutes.

The official members of the Commission are the leaders of each expression of the Lay Family and a representative of each Canossian Religious Institute. To them is entrusted the duty to add other members to the same Commission whenever they deem it necessary.

"It is necessary that a bond of charity be created between the two Institutions, so that the Tertiaries may find comfort and spiritual assistance in the Daughters and the Sons of Charity and the latter may find in the Tertiaries people who are vigilant and cooperate in all their ministries."

Like Mary, Mother of Charity at the foot of the Cross, we try to be humble instruments of God. We entrust to her motherly intercession and to St Magdalene of Canossa the whole Canossian Family.

"For reasons of justice, truth, gratitude and devout affection, I beseech all of you to consider Mary as your one and only Mother."⁶⁹

This document is approved by the 4th International Congress of the Lay Canossian Family.

Verona, St. Fidenzio - August 2006

⁶⁹ UR, p. 21.

The Greatest Love



PRAYERS

My Lord and my God,
the knowledge of being created only for you
makes me confess with all the fervour of my spirit
that all that is to be found in my body and soul,
all that I do with my eyes,
mind and heart
must be directed to You,
and consecrated to the glory of your name,
in union with the sufferings of Jesus Christ.
Lord, I wish to be yours,
but I feel my misery, I know my weakness
and I fear my inconstancy.
You are almighty,
strengthen my will, purify my heart,
and make me conquer my enemies.
Meanwhile, in so far as I can,
I intend to do everything for you alone
with the same intention
that Jesus Christ, Mary, Most Holy,
all the Saints in heaven and all the righteous on earth had.
AMEN!

Magdalene of Canossa

Offering to the Heart of God

O, my God! If you do not ask anything other than
the heart of your daughter,
here it is, my Beloved, I place it
in those most Holy Hands of which I adore the Holy Wounds.
I give it to You for your many blessings and
I am sorry that I have only one heart.
I would like to have a thousand hearts
to offer and to give them all to You,

my Only Supreme Good.
But I promise that this will be always the inspiration
of all the homage which in life I will give you,
and since no one can carry it away,
take care of it as if it were your own,
so that when, one day, I must present myself before you,
I may have the fortune to find in your hands
this heart of mine as the proof
of my faithful service which I humbly render you
and the great love I have for you. AMEN!

Magdalene of Canossa

Eternal Father, I offer you

Eternal Father,
I offer you the passion, the death
and blood of Jesus Christ;
all that He suffered and did in this world.
I ask you in His Name, through His infinite merits,
through the sorrows and merits of Mary, Most Holy,
and all the Saints in heaven,
to protect and spread the Church and our Institute.
AMEN!

Traditional Canossian Prayer

The Creed of the Canossian Family

I BELIEVE that God Alone and His glory are the only aim of the Canossian Family.

I BELIEVE that Jesus Christ is the “treasure”, the purest and most perfect expression of love that we contemplate.

I BELIEVE that Christ Crucified is the great Model of the Sons and Daughters of Charity, the Secular Missionaries and the Lay Canossians. He is the unchangeable norm of life in our ministries of charity.

I BELIEVE that our basic mission, springing from the contemplation of Love Crucified is, above all, that of making Him known and loved to the farthest ends of the earth.

I BELIEVE that our precious charismatic heritage is to be especially attentive to the poor, always and everywhere, to give them their human dignity and more so, their dignity as children of God.

I BELIEVE that our Family is called to live the weakness of the Cross, by expressing an authentic style of humble love in all we do.

I BELIEVE that the first witness to give to those we meet is that of fraternal communion animated by the most amiable, most patient, most generous spirit of Jesus Christ.

I BELIEVE in the special protection of Mary, Mother of Love at the foot of the Cross, on all the members of the Canossian Family.

I BELIEVE that the Spirit who has inspired the Canossian Charism in the Church will lead it in dynamic fidelity towards its fulfilment, according to the loving plan of God, the Father.

CANOSSIAN CELEBRATIONS

8 th February	St. Josephine Bakhita: returns to the Father's House
8 th February	Fra. Giovanni Zuccolo, Servant of God: returns to the Father's House
1 st March	St. Magdalene: was born in Verona
2 nd March	St. Magdalene: was baptised
19 th March	St. Joseph: “let them not forget to invoke him frequently” (St. Magdalene) Decree of approval of the Institute of the Sons of Charity
10 th April	Magdalene: after a life spent in unconditional love, she returns to the Father's house
29 th April	Novena in preparation for the Feast of St. Magdalene

8 th May	Feast of St. Magdalene; foundation of the Institute of the Daughters of Charity
23 rd May	Foundation of the Institute of the Sons of Charity
1 st July	Commemoration of the Most Precious Blood
7 th July	Fr. Angelo Pasa, Servant of God: returns to the Father's House
7 th August	St. Cajetan of Thiene: Protector of the Work
8 th September	Seven days preparation for the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows
15 th September	Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows
27 th September	St. Vincent De Paul, Patron of the Institute
29 th September	St Michael, the Archangel: Protector of the Universal Church and of the Institute and Defender of the Work
4 th October	St. Francis of Assisi: Protector of the Institute
21 st December	Pontifical Approval of the Institute of the Sons of Charity
23 rd December	Pontifical Approval of the Institute of the Daughters of Charity

ABBREVIATIONS: INITIALS AND SOURCES

Teachings of the Church

AA	<i>Apostolicam Actuositatem</i> . The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, Vat. II, 1965.
AG	<i>Ad Gentes</i> . The Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, Vat. II, 1965.
ChL	<i>Christifideles Laici</i> . Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, On the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World, John Paul II, 1988.

C	<i>Code of Canon Law</i> , Rome 1983
CC	<i>Comunione e Comunità nella Chiesa Domestica</i> . Document of CEI, (Episcopal Conference, Italy), 1981.
EN	<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i> . Evangelization in the Modern World, Apostolic Exhortation, Paul VI, 1975.
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i> . Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Vat. II, 1964.
MC	<i>Marialis Cultus</i> . To honour Mary – Apostolic Exhortation for the right ordering and development of devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Paul VI, 1974.
SRS	<i>Sollicitudo Rei Socialis</i> . Encyclical Letter on the social concern of the Church, John Paul II, 1988.
VC	<i>Vita Consecrata</i> , Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, John Paul II, 1996.

Institute

A.C.R.	Archivio Canossiano Roma.
EP	MADDALENA DI CANOSSA, <i>Epistolario</i> , by E. Dossi, ed. Pisani, Isola del Liri, 8 Vol., 1967-83.
PL	<i>The promotion of the Laity today in the Church and in the Institute</i> – Act of the XI General Chapter, Rome 1984.
PT	<i>Plan for the Tertiaries</i> .
UR	MAGDALENE OF CANOSSA, <i>The Rules of the Congregation of the Daughters of Charity, Unabridged Text</i> – Milanese Manuscript, English Translation, Ed. Scuola Tipografica S. Pio XI, Rome, 1981.
RoL	<i>Rule of Life of the Canossian Daughters of Charity</i> .
RoL	<i>Rule of Life of the Canossian Sons of Charity</i> .
R.s.s.	MADDALENA DI CANOSSA, <i>Regole e Scritti Spirituali</i> , by E. Dossi, ed. Pisani, Isola del Liri, 2 Vol., 1984-85.
ms	MAGDALENE OF CANOSSA, <i>Plan for the Tertiaries, (manuscript)</i> Archives, Rome.

REFERENCES FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE, THE TEACHINGS OF THE CHURCH AND DOCUMENTS OF THE INSTITUTE

related to the notes indicated in the Text

(1) Ep. II/2, pp.1415-1416 (Plan B. 6-6 of 1799)

Some persons wishing to dedicate themselves to the glory of God ... are thinking of starting a Congregation, or Pious Union, with the aim of fulfilling the two great Precepts of Charity: to love God and to love neighbour, and consequently, through this means, to sanctify themselves and to meet also the needs they find in their places.

Therefore, all the rules, the dispositions, the methods, all practices ... are to have as their primary aim the possession of perfect love, possibly procuring the most intimate, cordial, familiar and continuous union with God, while at the same time encouraging others to work in favour of one's neighbour for the sake of Him alone.

(2) UR p. 175

It was already said in the General Plan for the Institute that as a charitable Institution it must give itself in every way for the good and salvation of our neighbours. On the one hand it is impossible to have the number of Daughters of Charity necessary to meet the needs of all the towns and especially those of the small villages. On the other hand, it would become a very easy thing to help many of these places by having a kind of seminar in our House. In this, some country girls may be accepted from their villages for a determined period of time in order to train them for this purpose. Here we are giving some idea so as to take away the impression that this service is either not feasible, too dangerous or too much of a distraction for the House.

UR, p. 17-18

There is no doubt that all the holy Institutes have proposed the assiduous contemplation of the Life and Passion of Jesus Christ or a more perfect imitation of His Life in their holy Institutes. This Institution too, therefore, which is the last and least in the Church of God, would be off the path if we wanted to propose any other aim but this.

(3) R.s.s., P. 1, p. 233

(...) Since holy charity is like a fire that always seeks to spread itself, we will now talk about two other works of charity connected with the ministries of the Institute ... which will help to spread and perfect our practices.

The first is the formation and education of the country girls to spread and facilitate the instruction of the youth and to make the school of Christian Doctrine flourish again, beside providing, even though indirectly, assistance for the sick women of the rural areas.

The second is to accept those Noble Ladies who wish to make the Spiritual Exercises at two different times during the year...

(4) Jn 19:25-27

Near the Cross of Jesus stood his Mother and his Mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Seeing his mother and the disciple He loved standing near her, Jesus said to his Mother, "Woman, this is your son." Then to the disciple He said, "This is your mother." And from that moment the disciple made a place for her in his home.

(5) UR, p. 121

Therefore what the Sisters must have in view in this holy work is to welcome these children as they would welcome Our Divine Saviour. Let them try to form them all for Him by instilling in them a tender but solid piety, by instructing them little by little in the matters of their Holy Faith, by watching that they receive well, often and with fruit the Holy Sacraments. Above all, and everything is included in this, let the Sisters bring the children to the knowledge of Jesus Christ as He is not loved because He is not known.

Plan for the Tertiaries (manuscript)

No matter how vast the Institute of the Daughters of Charity seems to be, it can care for only the smallest part of the needs of the Diocese where it is established. Therefore, in order to reach out where the Institute cannot, the writer thinks of extending the Institute by organizing the Institution of the Tertiaries of the Daughters of Charity, whose members are simply committed by the sacred bond of this great virtue (charity) ... living in their families and practising the works of charity embraced by the Institute (...) The one who writes is thinking of not excluding from this Institution beside virgins and widows, also married women, following, though not very closely, what St. Francis of Assisi did, adapting to the different states of life the works of charity contemplated. (...) Once a month those Tertiaries who can, will get together with the Superior of the Daughters of Charity, who, after encouraging them to continue in their commitment, will entrust to them those works of charity for which she needs help. For example, to follow up a girl (...), some work in the hospital, ... (17.11.1813).

Ep. II/2, p. 1405

To extend and propagate this benefit among the people, the Institute is engaged in the education of the Rural Teachers

who are formed not only in skills but in the spirit of Charity, for the benefit of their rural communities so that it will be possible to teach Christian Doctrine in our Dioceses as the Bishops wish.

(6) PL, p. 136

Even during the time when Magdalene was alive and working in the newly born Institute, but more so later on, one sees in the small Canossian world, a flowering of typically lay initiatives: Tertiaries, Societies, Unions, Associations, Groups ...

ChL 16 a

We come to a full sense of the dignity of the faithful if we consider the prime and fundamental vocation that the Father assigns to each of them in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit: vocation to holiness, that is, the perfection of charity. Holiness is the greatest testimony of the dignity conferred on a disciple of Christ.

(7) C 204, 1

Christ's faithful are those who, since they are incorporated into Christ through baptism, are constituted the people of God. For this reason they participate in their own way in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ. They are called, each according to his or her particular condition, to exercise the mission which God entrusted to the Church to fulfil in the world.

(8) LG 32

By divine institution holy Church is ordered and governed with a wonderful diversity. "For just as in one body we have

many members, yet all the members do not have the same function, so all together we form one body in Christ, but individually we are members one of another.” (Rom 12:4-5).

(9) ChL 9e

Incorporation into Christ through faith and sacraments ... constitutes the Christian’s most basic “feature” and serves as the basis for all the vocations and the dynamism of the Christian life of the lay faithful ...

ChL 15a

The newness of Christianity is the foundation and title for equality among all the baptized in Christ, for all the members of the People of God: “As members, they share a common dignity from their rebirth in Christ, they have the same filial grace and the same vocation to perfection. They possess in common one salvation, one hope and one undivided charity.” (LG 32).

ChL 45b

We can make a further application of the comments of St. Gregory the Great regarding the extraordinary variety of ways the Church becomes “present” in life; one and all are called to work for the coming of the Kingdom of God according to the diversity of callings and situations, charisms and ministries. This variety is not only linked to age, but also to the difference of sex and to the diversity of natural gifts, as well as to careers and conditions affecting a person’s life. It is a variety that makes the riches of the Church more vital and concrete.

(10) LG 31

By the reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and

directing them according to God’s will. They live in the world, that is, they are engaged in each and every work and business of the earth and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life which, as it were, constitute their very existence. There they are called by God so that, being led by the spirit of the Gospel, they may contribute to the sanctification of the world, as from within like leaven, by fulfilling their particular duties. Thus, especially by the witness of their life, resplendent in faith, hope and charity they must manifest Christ to others.

(11) LG 4

Hence the universal Church is seen to be “a people brought into the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

(12) CC 65, 66

All exercise the one, unique priesthood of Christ ... From here emerges the co-responsibility of all the members in the Church, both within the community and in the presence of the entire world to which the Church is sent.

(13) VC 54

One of the fruits of the teaching on the Church as communion has been the growing awareness that her members can and must unite their efforts, with a view to cooperation and exchange of gifts, in order to participate more effectively in the Church’s mission.

(14) EN 70

Lay people, whose particular vocation places them in the midst of the world and in charge of the most varied temporal tasks, must for this very reason exercise a very special form of evangelization.

Their primary and immediate task is not to establish and develop the ecclesial community, this is the specific role of the pastors – but to put to use every Christian and evangelical possibility latent but already present and active in the affairs of the world.

Their own field of evangelizing activity is the vast and complicated world of politics, society and economics, but also the world of culture, of the sciences and the arts, of international life, of the mass media. It also includes other realities which are open to evangelization, such as human love, the family, the education of children and adolescents, professional work, suffering.

(15) ChL 15h

The “world” thus becomes the place and the means for the lay faithful to fulfil their Christian vocation, because the world itself is destined to glorify God the Father in Christ. (...) Thus for the lay faithful, to be present and active in the world is not only an anthropological and sociological reality, but in a specific way, a theological and ecclesiological reality as well. In fact, in their situations in the world God manifests his plan and communicates to them their particular vocation of “seeking the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God.”

LG 36

Moreover, by uniting their forces, let the laity so remedy the institutions and conditions of the world when the latter are an inducement to sin, that these may be conformed to the norms of justice, favouring rather than hindering the practice of virtue. By so doing they will impregnate culture and human works with a moral value. In this way the field of the world is better prepared to receive the seed of the divine Word and the doors of the Church are opened more

widely through which the message of peace may enter the world.

Deus Caritas Est 29

The mission of the lay faithful is therefore to configure social life correctly, respecting its legitimate autonomy and cooperating with other citizens according to their respective competences and through their own responsibility. Even if the specific expressions of ecclesial charity can never be confused with the activity of the State, it still remains true that charity must animate the entire lives of the lay faithful and therefore also their political activity, lived as “social charity”.

(16) Deus Caritas Est 31

We are dealing with human beings ... They need humanity. They need heartfelt concern ... In addition to their necessary professional training, these charitable workers need a “formation of the heart”: they need to be led to that encounter with God in Christ which awakens their love and opens their spirits to others. As a result, love of neighbour will no longer be for them a commandment imposed, so to speak, from without, but a consequence deriving from their faith, a faith which becomes active through love.

(17) ChL 55

In Church-Communion the states of life, by being ordered one to the other, are thus bound together among themselves. They all share in a deeply basic meaning: that of being the manner of living out the commonly shared Christian dignity and the universal call to holiness in the perfection of love. They are different yet complementary, in the sense that each of them has a basic and unmistakable character which

sets each apart, while at the same time each of them is seen in relation to the other and placed at each other's service.

ChL 55d

Thus the lay state has its distinctive feature in its secular character. It fulfills an ecclesial service in bearing witness and, in its own way, recalling for priests, women and men religious, the significance of the earthly and temporal realities in the salvific plan of God. In turn ... the religious state bears witness to the eschatological character of the Church, that is, the straining towards the Kingdom of God that is prefigured and in some way anticipated and experienced even now through the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience.

AA 4

Divine love ... enables lay people to express concretely in their lives the spirit of the Beatitudes.

(18) RoL, Canossian Sons of Charity 73, 156

We must have bigger hearts to grasp the true demands of the poor and the young. It is important, for this reason, and according to our tradition, that we work together with the laity and promote, in our works, their dynamic and responsible involvement, respecting their proper autonomy. They, more than us, live immersed in local realities, and they can understand better than us, certain situations.

Let us seek to transmit to them our eagerness to love and serve the poor and the marginalized, because they also are granted the grace not only to believe in Christ, but even to suffer for Him, sustaining our same struggle for the Gospel.

To the extent that we accept ourselves in community, we may become a welcoming and hospitable community, pro-

moting, as our first Fathers did, the participation of the laity in our apostolate. We must encourage their communion with us so as to arouse in them the witness of faith, love for the poor and hope in God alone.

(19) The term "Tertiaries", used by Magdalene, today is referred to the Lay Canossians.

(20) R.s.s., P. 1, p. 199

Since charity "is a fire that spreads and tries to embrace everything in its path," so this fire would be too limited for the Daughters of Charity, if they were to restrict their cares in this important branch, as it is that of the schools of charity to the only house of the Institute (...) they will open other schools in other parts of the city ...

(21) R.s.s., P. 1, p. 180

Therefore the Sisters should have in this holy ministry the aim of accepting these girls, (...) making them know Jesus Christ because He is not loved since He is not known.

(22) R.s.s., P. 1, p. 239

... It is good to form them to a true spirit of sacrifice so that they will be ready to give up their freedom and their likings, even though these may be holy, in order to devote themselves to the Glory of God and the good of souls.

(23) LG 38

Every lay person must stand before the world as a witness to the resurrection and life of the Lord Jesus and a sign of the living God. All the laity as a community, and each one according to his ability, must nourish the world with spiritual fruit (cf

Gal 5:22). They must diffuse in the world that spirit which animates the poor, the meek, the peacemakers whom the Lord in the Gospel proclaimed as blessed (cf Mt 5:3-9). In a word, "Christians must be to the world what the soul is to the body."

AA 7

The laity must take up the renewal of the temporal order as their own special duty. Led by the light of the Gospel and the mind of the Church and motivated by Christian charity, they must act directly and in a definite way in the temporal sphere. As citizens they must cooperate with other citizens according to their own particular skill and their own responsibility. Everywhere and in all things they must seek the justice of God's kingdom.

AA 8

Therefore, the laity should hold in high esteem and, according to their ability, aid the works of charity and projects for "social assistance", whether public or private, including international programmes whereby effective help is given to needy individuals and peoples. In so doing, they should cooperate with all men of good will.

(24) ChL 53c

"... It is very important to make clear that Christians who live in situations of illness, pain and old age are called by God not only to unite their suffering to Christ's Passion but also to receive in themselves now, and to transmit to others, the power of renewal and the joy of the risen Christ (cf 2 Cor 4:10-11; 1 Pt 4:13; Rom 8:18 ff.)."

AG 21

Let lay people be one with their fellow countrymen in sin-

cere charity, so that there appears in their way of life a new bond of unity and of universal solidarity, which is drawn from the mystery of Christ. Let them also spread the faith of Christ among those with whom they live or have professional connections, an obligation which is all the more urgent, because many people may hear of Christ and of the Gospel only by means of the laity who are their neighbours. In fact, wherever possible, the laity should be ready to cooperate more directly with the hierarchy, to fulfill a special mission of proclaiming the Gospel and communicating Christian teaching, so that they may add vigour to the young Church.

(25) Jn 19:25

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his Mother and his Mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala.

MC 20

This union of the Mother and the Son in the work of redemption reaches its climax on Calvary where Christ offered himself as the perfect sacrifice to God (Heb 9:14) and where Mary stood by the cross (cf Jn 19:25), suffering grievously with her only-begotten Son. There she united herself with a maternal heart to His sacrifice, and lovingly consented to the immolation of this victim which she herself brought forth and was also offering to the eternal Father.

(26) ChL 59 c

In discovering and living their proper vocation and mission, the lay faithful must be formed according to the union which exists from their being members of the Church and citizens of human society (...). The Second Vatican Council has invited all the lay faithful to this unity of life by forcefully decrying the grave consequences in separating faith

from life, and the gospel from culture: "The Council exhorts Christians, as citizens of one city and the other, to strive to perform their earthly duties faithfully in response to the spirit of the Gospel. They are mistaken who, knowing that we have here no abiding city but seek one which is to come, think that they may therefore shirk their earthly responsibilities; for they are forgetting that by faith itself they are more than ever obliged to measure up to these duties, each according to one's vocation."

Epistolario, III/3, p. 1834

What matters most, and in fact is the real aim of the Institute, is to form the heart of the girls imbuing them with the spirit of Charity. Therefore their training must be done on the basis of those principles that a true Christian education demands.

(27) R.s.s., P. 1, p. 46

Every day they will recite seven Hail Marys, in honour of the Sorrowful Heart of Mary, to obtain the grace to lead a holy life, and die a good death, the conversion of sinners, each one trying to spread the devotion to Mary, Most Holy, and the bitter cause of her Sorrows in the whole world, that is the most sacred Passion of our Lord Jesus.

Each one will try to attend Holy Mass, endeavouring to reflect, according to her own ability, on the two above mentioned sacred realities.

If the members of the family permit it, every day they may introduce the good custom of praying a third part of the Rosary and, on Saturdays, instead of the Rosary, they will pray the chaplet of the seven Sorrows of our Most Holy Mother Mary. It would be good ... that each one could receive frequently the Holy Sacraments; may one do so with devotion in all the festivities of our Most Holy Mother Mary, including the two Feasts commemorating Her Sorrows.

(28) Epistolario, II/2, p. 1427

We accept some good girls from rural areas, who are eager to dedicate themselves to Christian education and instruction of the poor girls of their own villages in order to form them for this purpose, and prepare them to carry out their work with a true spirit of charity, for love of the Lord.

(29) UR, pp. 18-19

It means animating all our actions and work with the Spirit of Jesus Christ, a spirit of charity, gentleness, meekness and humility, a spirit of zeal and fortitude, a most amiable, most generous and most patient spirit.

(30) R.s.s., P. 1, p. 199

Since charity "is a fire that spreads and tries to embrace everything in its path," so this fire would be too limited for the Daughters of Charity, if they were to restrict their cares in this important branch, as it is that of the schools of charity to the only house of the Institute (...) they will open other schools in other parts of the city ...

(31) 1 Cor 9:19-20.22-23

Although I am free in regard to all, I have made myself a slave to all so as to win over as many as possible. I made myself a Jew to the Jews, to win the Jews; that is, I who am not subject to the Law made myself subject to the Law ... For the weak I made myself weak, to win over the weak. I made myself all things to everyone, to save at least some. All this I do for the sake of the gospel, so that I too may have a share in its blessing.

Their own field of evangelizing activity is the vast and complicated world of politics, society and economics, but also the world of culture, of the sciences and the arts, of international life, of the mass media. It also includes other realities which are open to evangelization, such as human love, the family, the education of children and adolescents, professional work, suffering.

(32) ChL 25d

The Second Vatican Council strongly encourages the lay faithful actively to live out their belonging to the particular Church, while at the same time assuming an ever-increasing “catholic” spirit.

ChL 27b

The lay faithful ought to be ever more convinced of the special meaning that their commitment to the apostolate takes on in their parish. Once again the Council authoritatively points this out: “The parish offers an outstanding example of the apostolate on the community level, inasmuch as it brings together the many human differences found within its boundaries and draws them into the universality of the Church. The lay faithful should accustom themselves to working in the parish in close union with their priests, bringing to the Church community their own and the world’s problems as well as questions concerning human salvation, all of which need to be examined together and solved through general discussion. As far as possible the lay faithful ought to collaborate in every apostolic and missionary undertaking sponsored by their own ecclesial family.”

(33) R.s.s., P. 1, p. 233

(...) Since holy charity is like a fire that always seeks to spread itself, we will now talk about two other works of charity connected with the ministries of the Institute ... which will help to spread and perfect our practices. The first is the formation and education of the country girls to spread and facilitate the instruction of the youth and to make the school of Christian Doctrine flourish again, besides providing, though indirectly, assistance for the sick women of the rural areas. The second is to accept those Noble Ladies who wish to make the Spiritual Exercises, at two different times during the year.

(34) C 303

Associations whose members share in the spirit of some Religious Institute while in secular life, lead an apostolic life, and strive for Christian perfection under the higher direction of the same Institute, are called Third Orders or some other appropriate name.

(35) C 207, 2

There are members of the Christian faithful from both these groups who, through the profession of the evangelical counsels by means of vows or other sacred bonds recognized and sanctioned by the Church, are consecrated to God in their own special way and contribute to the salvific mission of the Church; although their state does not belong to the hierarchical structure of the Church, it nevertheless belongs to its life and holiness.

(36) ChL 60

The situation today points to an ever-increasing urgency for a doctrinal formation of the lay faithful ... This is especially

true for the lay faithful who have responsibilities in various fields of society and public life. Above all, it is indispensable that they have a more exact knowledge, and this demands a more widespread and precise presentation, of the Church's social doctrine, as repeatedly stressed by the Synod Fathers in their speeches.

(37) ChL 57

In this dialogue between God who offers his gifts, and the person who is called to exercise responsibility, there is the possibility, indeed the necessity, of a total and ongoing formation of the lay faithful.

(38) R.s.s., Piano Terziarie, p. 24

In order to reach out where the Institute cannot, the one who writes thinks of extending the Institute by organizing the Institution of the Tertiaries of the Daughters of Charity, whose members are simply committed by the sacred bond of this great virtue (charity)... living in their families and practising the Works of Charity embraced by the Institute.

ibidem pp. 46-47

And this is not only for their own sanctification, but also to facilitate a certain freedom to practice the Works of Charity in conformity with the spirit of the Institute ... Concerning this, it is worthwhile to reflect that the foremost way to exercise oneself in the Works of Charity embraced by the Institute, is in training these Tertiaries in their families in the above mentioned virtues with commitment and care.

(39) C 316, 2

A person who has publicly rejected the Catholic faith, has de-

fected from ecclesiastical communion, or has been punished by an imposed or declared excommunication cannot be received validly into public associations. Those enrolled legitimately who fall into these situations, after being warned, are to be dismissed from the association, with due regard for its statutes and without prejudice to their right of recourse to the ecclesiastical authority.

(40) SRS 39

By virtue of her own evangelical duty the Church feels called to take her stand beside the poor, to discern the justice of their requests, and to help satisfy them, without losing sight of the good of groups in the context of the common good.

(41) PL, p. 86

It is an act of fidelity to our charism to involve lay persons and groups who find in our spirituality the impetus to live their Christian vocation to the full.

(42) M. Elide Testa, *Statutes "Lay Canossians", Letter of Promulgation*, Rome 1991, p. 5

The foundational charism belongs primarily to her (the Church), in whom all states of life are deeply unified in the "mystery of communion" and are dynamically and harmoniously coordinated in her only mission.

(43) Terzi Ordini Secolari Oggi, Roma 1978, p. 12

The reality that the common charism lived in different conditions and situations by all the members of an Association, whether they are women religious, men religious or laity, enriches the same Family and permits a more universal realization of its mission. This shared charism and reciprocity

of life depicts “autonomy in union”.

(44) R.s.s., P. I, p. 93

If a special treatise on fraternal charity for every Christian would seem useless because the commandment of charity was given by Jesus Christ and he called it his commandment, much more it would seem superfluous for the Daughters of Charity because they carry that name, and the Institute is dedicated to the perfect practice of the two precepts of charity, and to the special imitation of “Jesus Christ Crucified who lives nothing but charity”, not less this very Institute (...) whose daughters are so committed, that almost it would be enough to say that they are observant of the Rules, that is to say, charity and mutual union.

(45) Letter of the Institute to Domenica Faccioli, n. 1105

Dear daughter, remember the fortitude of Mary Most Holy at the foot of the true Cross, and since rightly you boast of being her daughter, it would be better to be convinced that, in order to be really so, you must imitate Her. I have been telling you for many years that the Lord wants from you a complete detachment. I know you believe you are already detached, but if you really were so you would not feel so much pain about the things that you tell me. Trust in God both for yourself and for every circumstance, abandon yourself in the heart of Mary Most Holy and you will find yourself completely at peace.

(46) Terzi Ordini Secolari Oggi, Roma 1978, pp. 17-19

A deepening of this spirituality enhances participation and “charismatic complementarities in reciprocal attitudes”, and kindles mutual charity for spiritual, community and apostolic growth. The principle of “unity of charism in the

plurality of expressions” applies when the religious charism finds resonance and articulation in the secular reality. Both the religious and the laity embrace a vocation to live the same charism in different conditions of life and in taking the same founder or foundress as a model and teacher.

(47) AG 21

Let them be one with their fellow countrymen in sincere charity, so that there appears in their way of life a new bond of unity and of universal solidarity, which is drawn from the mystery of Christ ... In fact, wherever possible, the laity should be prepared, in more immediate cooperation with the hierarchy, to fulfill a special mission of proclaiming the Gospel and communicating Christian teachings, so that they may add vigor to the young Church.

(48) M. Elide Testa, *Statuto “Laici Canossiani”, Lettera di Promulgazione*, Roma 1991, p. 5

You are the legitimate heirs of the charism of St. Magdalene, ample and creative by its nature and history. This commits you to be responsible for its growth and realization in our time. It is your duty to re-interpret the Canossian spirituality so that it may conform to the secular nature of the laity.

(49) Terzi Ordini Secolari Oggi, Roma, Roma 1978, p. 12

Men and women religious receive help and stimulus to be more authentic in their way of living. Thus, while both, religious and laity, maintain their own functions and specific obligations, “they reveal that absolutely new tie of unity and of universal solidarity drawn from the mystery of Christ.” All the members are encouraged to learn from each other, to listen and to share: “to each is given a particular manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” (1 Cor 12:7)

(50) **ibidem**

(51) **C 303**

Associations whose members share in the spirit of some Religious Institute while in secular life, lead an apostolic life, and strive for Christian perfection under the higher direction of the same Institute, are called Third Orders or some other appropriate name.

(52) **LG 31**

They live in the world, that is, they are engaged in each and every work and business of the earth and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life which, as it were, constitute their very existence. There they are called by God that, being led by the spirit of the Gospel, they may contribute to the sanctification of the world, as from within like leaven, by fulfilling their own particular duties..

(53) **Mt 5:47-48**

And if you save your greetings for your brothers, are you doing anything exceptional? Even the pagans do as much, do they not? You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect.

(54) **C 204**

The Christian faithful are those who, ... made sharers in their own way in Christ's priestly, prophetic, and royal function, are called to exercise the mission which God has entrusted to the Church to fulfil in the world, in accord with the condition proper to each.

(55) **C 211**

All the Christian faithful have the duty and right to work so that the divine message of salvation more and more reaches all people in every age and in every land.

(56) **UR 180**

Thus, having received the girls, the Novice Mistress and her Assistant will try to discover their inclinations, temperament, talents, abilities, the conditions in which their families live and the particular needs of their village. To this end the Sister will allow them to talk a lot without ever showing amazement at anything they may say. They should only be attentive that although these girls are all good, there may be some one among them whose simplicity merits being respected. In this case the Sisters make her talk separately.

(57) **C 1191, 1**

A vow, that is, a deliberate and free promise made to God about a possible and better good, must be fulfilled by reason of the virtue of religion.

(58) **Mt 19:16-22**

"Master, what good deed must I do to possess eternal life?" ... Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go and sell what you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." But when the young man heard these words he went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth.

VC 14

The evangelical basis of consecrated life is to be sought

in the special relationship which Jesus, in his earthly life, established with some of his disciples. He called them not only to welcome the Kingdom of God into their own lives, but also to put their lives at its service, leaving everything behind and closely imitating his own way of life.

(59) Statutes 14

A specific accompaniment, sustained by solid Spiritual Direction, is offered to and required of the members of the Association, who are called to consecration in the world through private vows.

(60) Verbum Domini 27

From the Annunciation to Pentecost Mary appears as a woman completely open to the will of God. She is the Immaculate Conception, the one whom God made “full of grace” and unconditionally docile to His Word. Her obedient faith shapes her life at every moment before God’s plan.

(61) Mt 11:29

Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.

(62) Phil 2:6-8

His state was divine, yet He did not cling to His equality with God but emptied Himself to assume the condition of a slave, and became as men are; and being as all men are, He was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross.

(63) Acts 18:9

One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: “Do not be afraid to speak out, nor allow yourself to be silenced: I am with you, I have so many people on my side in this city that no one will even attempt to hurt you.”.

(64) Ep. III/4, p. 2555

Tell them in my name, and they must remember, that the real convent of the Daughters of Charity is the heart of Jesus Christ.

(65) R.s.s., P. II, p. 15

The reason for which is thought to form this Institution.

(66) R.s.s., P. II, p. 18

People who can become Tertiaries of Mary, our Most Holy Mother, in the practise of Holy Charity.

(67) R.s.s., P. II, p. 19

By whom will the Sisters have to be aggregated.

(68) R.s.s., P. II, p. 43-49

Plan of the Institution of the Tertiaries of the Daughters of Charity dedicated to Mary, our Most Holy Mother of Sorrows.

(69) UR 21

It is Our Lady of Sorrows who was constituted Mother of Charity under the Cross when, at the words of her Divine

Son, she gathered all of us, sinners though we are, to her heart. I beg all of you to regard her always as your one and only Mother, as a duty of justice, truth, gratitude and humble, devout affection.

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