

INSTITUTE OF THE SERVANTS OF CHARITY



CONSTITUTIONS  
and  
REGULATIONS

*Addenda*

*For internal use of the Congregation of the Servants of Charity -  
Opera Don Guanella  
April 2014*

**NOTE**

In this provisional *Addenda* - have been reported the amended articles and new articles issued by the 19th GC with the approval granted by the Holy See.

The 'bold - italic in the articles represents the added or changed parts; marked 'bis' indicates a new article added.



CONGREGAZIONE  
PER GLI ISTITUTI DI VITA CONSACRATA  
E LE SOCIETÀ DI VITA APOSTOLICA

Prot. n. C. 46 – 1/2013

**BEATISSIMO PADRE,**

il Superiore Generale della Congregazione dei Servi della Carità Opera Don Guanella, in nome del Capitolo Generale, chiede a Vostra Santità l'approvazione delle modifiche delle Costituzioni del suo Istituto.

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La Congregazione per gli Istituti di vita consacrata e le Società di vita apostolica, esaminate le modifiche, con il presente Rescritto le approva e le conferma, secondo il testo redatto in lingua italiana e presentato con la lettera del 5 marzo 2013, di cui è conservata copia nel proprio Archivio.

Nonostante qualsiasi disposizione in contrario.  
Città del Vaticano, 11 aprile 2013.

P. Sebastiano Paciolla, O. Cist.  
Sottosegretario

P. Mariano Babula, C.S.M.A.  
Capo Ufficio



we are sent to the poor

3 In union with Jesus, the Good Shepherd and compassionate Samaritan, our Founder, though desirous of helping and saving everyone, loved in a special way the most abandoned and suffering and lavishly gave himself without measure to provide them with “Bread and the Lord”.

Like him, we are sent to evangelize the poor, arousing in them reasons for hope, by revealing the love of the Father. Therefore we become instruments of Providence through the exercise of the works of mercy and the ministry of pastoral charity.

Among those who are tried most in body and spirit and deprived of human support, we care for children, the elderly and *developmentally disabled persons*, “I buoni figli” - as people who qualify our apostolate. *We remain open to care also for persons who are psychically fragile (unstable) and socially marginalized.*

sharers in the Guanellian family

5 Around his servant, Father Louis Guanella, the Lord has given rise to a large family consisting of the Servants of Charity, the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence the Cooperators *and the Associates*.

Each sector, in different ways and in reciprocal collaboration, partakes of the spirit and mission of the Founder and shares the responsibility for the spirit and mission as well.

We, in particular, bring to the whole family the gift of the priesthood, making a specific contribution in motivating toward unity and support in their common vocation.

guided by the superior

24 The superior in the community represents the Lord Jesus who gathers and protects the disciples in the love of the Father.

He is the man of communion: his main task is the pastoral guidance of the brethren *and of all those who cooperate* to build a community of one heart and soul, and dedicated to the mission of the Institute.

With a heart of a father, of a brother and of a friend, the superior dialogues with the confreres seeking the will of God together. He animates and coordinates the efforts of all, allowing a just autonomy and freedom in the execution of their duties.

He helps each member to develop his individual abilities, to grow in zeal. and to correct deficiencies.

He presides therefore as one who serves, loving much and making himself loved, being himself a sign of that charity which he strives to instill in the brethren through the ways of the heart.

he brethren acknowledge his authority with faith and accept him out of love for Christ. They follow him and help him to bear the burden of his ministry.

with a regular

25 We live *our fraternal communion primarily* in local communities *or in residences lawfully established either within our centers of apostolate or outside.*

Acknowledging that the character of our community life is apostolic, still each one of us resides in his religious house and does not leave it without the permission of his superior.

Part of the house is always to be reserved exclusively for the living quarters of the confreres.

We observe the necessary discretion in the use of media of social communication, to avoid whatever may be harmful to our vocation or may be dangerous to our consecrated chastity.

*care for human life and for the integrity of creation*

64 bis *Aware of such great dignity we proclaim and spread the Gospel of Life and promote a culture that protects the sacredness of the human person in every stage of his\her development, from conception to natural death, in whatever condition of health or sickness, normality or disability, wealth or poverty.*

*Consequently, we support organizations, movements and individuals who work for peace, for a just distribution of resources and for the respect of the integrity of creation, as praiseworthy ways of fostering human development.*

persons psychically fragile and socially marginalized

67 bis *Inspired by the sensitivity and creativity of the Founder we pay attention to the new forms of poverty caused by social and cultural changes and remain open to care also for persons psychically fragile and therefore socially marginalized, hurt in their relationships, affective life and working ability.*

*In this way we make larger 'the tent of charity' in which we enhance the integral wellbeing of every person and his\her dignity as God's child.*

“the flock without a shepherd”

68 Sharing the compassion of the Lord, the Institute directs itself to that portion of the people of God who live like sheep without a shepherd.

The Institute devotes itself to the pastoral care of souls from the low socio-economic class, even in parishes entrusted to us, where the ministry of evangelization and worship combines with active expressions of aid to the poor. *Our parishes and pastoral communities should therefore bear the hallmark of “samaritan parishes”.*

Although not directed to a strictly missionary aim, the Institute works in mission lands with activities that are characteristic of its charism for the expansion of the reign of God and for the development of the young Churches.

Placed under the patronage of St. Joseph, the Institute spreads throughout the world the apostolate of prayer for the dying, so that they also may pass unto eternal life comforted by the Lord Jesus and by the Virgin Mary.

The Institute regards it as its duty to make use of the means of social communication, in order to expand the boundaries of charity.

in communities that are animating core of the charism

71 bis *In our communities and centers of apostolate we are called to take up not only an organizing role but to become ‘animating core’ that evangelizes with a life style which promotes, stimulates, draws in and bear witness to the inexhaustible richness of the charism.*



*Therefore each community, in carrying out its mission, is constantly evangelized through the listening and faithfulness to Word of God; likewise it evangelizes by cherishing what enhances its apostolic fruitfulness: prayer, a transparent fraternal life, presence among the poor, the pedagogical and spiritual patrimony of the Institute*

jointly responsible

75 *The mission is a grace and vocation entrusted by the Lord to the entire Institute and to the lay people who share its project and enrich it with their human and spiritual resources as well as with their specific professional competences.*

*Both, confreres and lay, share in different ways the common mission of which they are jointly responsible, according to the richness of the gift received.*

All should act in the name of the community, in an intimate solidarity among themselves, making themselves all things to all in order to win over as many as possible to charity

clerics and brothers

76 *The Institute carries out its mission in the Provinces in which is subdivided and primarily in the local communities which should be always aware of being active centers of evangelical charity.*

So that the mission might be carried out with a wider variety of gifts, the Founder wanted an Institute made of Clerics and Brothers.

To the tasks of their religious vocation, priests and deacons unite also those tasks that flow specifically from the Holy Orders. They are therefore available for all services which are necessary for carrying out the project of the Institute, permeating all of their activities with a priestly ministry. In particular they bring to their work the ministry of the Word, of pastoral guidance and sacramental action. In the Founder they have a model for living the compassionate charity of Jesus, the good Shepherd.

The Brothers, as lay religious, offer to the mission their ability, experience and professionalism, enlivening all these with evangelical witness. They make themselves available to the poor and serve them according to the style of the good Samaritan. They predispose their hearts to accept the sanctifying action of the priestly ministry and, by their holy life, edify the Church and praise the Lord.

with the Guanellian Family

77 Along with us, and engaged in the same mission and work *the Lord has called the Daughters of Saint Mary of Providence and, in various forms, the guanellian Cooperators and the Associates.*

Toward the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence we cultivate fraternal dialogue and cooperation in the spirit of unity which our Founder wished to establish between the two Institutes.

We are available to share initiatives of studies, formation, apostolic activities without hindering our reciprocal autonomy of governance and administration of temporal goods.

In the Cooperators *and in the Associates* we recognize the grace of a specific vocation which urges us to proceed and to work together. While we respect the autonomy of their association, we encourage them to love the poor, to cooperate with the Institute, and we help them to nourish their dedication with our Guanellian spirituality.

and with other collaborators

78 Often other people associate with us, who wish to share our projects of good works: benefactors, alumni, friends, and volunteers. Their contribution is precious. For us it is a gift from Providence; for themselves it is a grace of partaking in the Kingdom of charity.

We regard as especially valid the cooperation offered to us by the relatives of our recipients.

With those who take part directly in our activities because of employment, we do not limit ourselves to a rapport of justice and mutual respect, but we seek an effective understanding in pursuing the goals of the house according to the spirit of the Institute.

To those whom the Lord sends to help us in the assistance of the poor we offer the possibility of knowing and living the Guanellian message *as members of the Guanellian Lay Movement (GLM) that animates and coordinates the guanellian laity.*

*guided by the Ratio*

85 bis *The formation process of the Servants of Charity finds in the Ratio Formationis a secure and*

*concrete guide that indicates principles, operational criteria, pedagogical dynamisms and norms to be followed.*

*Each one of us, in pursuing the ongoing formation throughout all the stages of his life, draws from the Ratio the essential elements for a continuous growth in the charismatic identity and in the sense of belonging to the Congregation.*

*The formators find in the Ratio a systematic orientation for performing the formation, in the different stages that the candidate has to pass through in the variety of cultural contexts in which he lives.*

its composition

115 Members of the general chapter:

- the superior general
- the general councillors
- the latest superior general emeritus
- the general treasurer and the general secretary
- the provincial superiors and the superiors of the vice-provinces
- *the superiors of the Delegations, according to the respective proper Law.*

Also the following will attend upon election or invitation, according to the general regulations:

- the delegates from the provinces and vice-provinces
- not more than three confreres, with right of active and passive vote, invited by the superior general.

The number of the members elected must be larger than the number of the participants with right or invitation.

its composition

127 Members of the provincial chapter:

- the provincial superior
- his councillors
- the provincial treasurer and provincial secretary
- *the superiors of Delegations which depend on the Province*
- the superiors of the communities with a number of confreres established by the general and provincial regulations.

The following will also attend because of election or invitation according to the same regulations:

- the delegates of the local communities
- the confreres, not more than three, invited with right of active and passive vote by the provincial superior.

The number of delegates must be larger than that of those who attend because of right or invitation.

his office and appointment

139 The local community is presided by a superior, who is the main responsible for its religious life, the fulfillment of its mission, and for the administration of its goods.

He has his own ordinary authority and governs according to the constitutions and regulations in cooperation with his councillors, and in communion with the provincial and general governments.

He must be a priest, perpetually professed for at least three years. He is appointed by the superior general, and after proper consultation among the members of the province.

He remains in office for three years and may be confirmed for a period determined by our law.

*When the complexity and the effectiveness of our apostolate will require it, the Provincial superior with his council may appoint either a religious or a competent lay to take up the direction of particular sectors of the mission project or some significant task, while clearly reserving to the local superior and his council the last word on main decisions and orientations.*

#### faculties and tasks

**141** In each community there is a local council composed of the superior and of a number of confreres proportionate to the needs of the house. In the small communities all the perpetually professed confreres constitute the local council. In the houses with at least five members the councillors are appointed by the provincial superior with the consent of his council.

The councillors cooperate with the local superior in governing and motivating the community, especially with their advice and vote.

The first councillor is the vicar to the superior and his most immediate collaborator. He substitutes

for the superior with ordinary vicar power when the superior is absent or impeded, upon special request from him, or when the office of superior becomes vacant. The vicar, therefore, must be a priest and perpetually professed.

The number, methods of appointing and the boundaries of the faculties of the councillors are established by the Regulations.

*The local council, with the approval of the provincial superior and his council, may avail of the support of lay collaborators if that is deemed necessary or useful for the fulfillment of the mission of the community.*

offices and tasks

142 So that the multiple functions of the community may develop efficiently by taking advantage of the various personal talents of the confreres *and lay collaborators* the Regulations foresee different offices and tasks, according to the nature of the community.

The administration of the temporal goods is ordinarily entrusted to the local treasurer *who may be religious or lay*.

*When a lay person is appointed as treasurer, his area of competence will be limited to the administration of the work of apostolate of the house.*

*He will serve under the authority and ultimate responsibility of his respective superior and council on whom he depends and to whom he is accountable in his work, following the proper law, both universal and particular.*

## treasurers and administration

146 The legitimate superior, at the general, provincial or local levels, is the person primarily responsible for the administration of goods. However, he does not customarily exercise it.

*At the general and provincial level the administration is entrusted to a competent confrere who may be assisted by lay personnel, duly appointed by the respective superior.*

The administration is entrusted to the treasurers, under the direction and the control of their respective superiors and councils, in conformity with the canonical dispositions and with our own law, observing the laws existing in the various countries.

The expenses and the juridical deeds of ordinary administration are validly made by the superiors as well as by the treasurers, within the limits of their office.

Acts of extraordinary administration must obtain the written consent of the competent authority in order to be valid.

A religious *or a lay* personnel who incurs debt or other financial responsibilities without a written legitimate authorization, *is the only person responsible* in the eyes of the Institute, the Church and the civil authority.