

Commissio Constitutionum

Proposed Revision of Chapter XII

CHAPTER XII

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL
AND THE LIFE OF FAITH

Rome — General Curia — 2010



General Curia of the Capuchin Friars Minor

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To all the brothers in the Order

Dear Brothers,
May the Lord give you peace.

In presenting the proposals for the revision of Chapter 12 of our Constitutions I wish first of all to congratulate the Commission for completing the work in the time they had intended, namely, to draft a proposed text for each chapter by the end of 2010.

We now have in our hands the Proposed Text of our Constitutions, chapter by chapter, and each of us is asked to continue to consider the subject in depth and to make our views known.

During this coming year the Commission will complete its work by incorporating into the draft the observations that have been received as well as those that are still to come. Thus I am certain that the next Chapter will have a working document at its disposal on which it can work expeditiously to provide a text that is ready for presentation to the whole Order. The process of approval by the Holy See will then follow.

But let us come to Chapter 12 of our Constitutions! In the first place it deals with our missionary commitment, clearly reminding us of the original insight of our Seraphic Father Saint Francis, who was the first Founder of a Religious Order to place a specific Chapter on the Missions in his Rule of Life: "Concerning Those Who Go Among the Saracens and Other Infidels."

Thanks to a more profound reflection on ecclesiology, after the close of the Second Vatican Council we began to speak less about "missions" in the plural with reference to specific territories, and spoke instead of "mission" in the sense of a mandate or commitment entrusted to an entire body or to an individual person. This was linked to the commandment that the Saviour Himself gave to His disciples: "Go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature." (Mk.16, 15).

Today we speak of a "New Evangelisation", mainly referring to countries which have a Christian culture traditionally but are marked by a strong process of secularisation. All of this tells us that things are evolving and that we have to take note of this. Thus, while inviting you to read the proposed text carefully, we note that it briefly sets out motives, considerations and challenges.

In particular I ask this of brothers who belong to Circumscriptions in which a forceful and lively debate is under way about whether it is appropriate to be involved in the missionary field. In many cases the debate started with the appeal by the General Definitory to young Circumscriptions who had been blessed by an increase in vocations to undertake specific missionary commitments in other countries, in poor regions or in places far removed from the main centres in their vast territories. I have to say that we meet with significant resistance to accepting such responsibilities. This has often been linked to the persistent idea that brothers from European or North American Provinces are the ones who should be "missionaries".

To be honest and truthful I also have to say that the Indian Provinces have become involved in missionary service making themselves generously available, and they are doing this with great commitment.

With regard to the invitation to send brothers to other countries either for initial evangelisation or to collaborate with those already involved, I have found that some brothers insist on repeating that they already

have plenty to do where they are and that there is no reason for them to go to other places. There is nothing surprising or novel about this statement, indeed I should say that it is a "natural" reaction.

The situation was the same at the time of Anastasius Hartmann, who was the first Procurator General for the Missions in our Order. The same objection was made to him, but that did not stop him from proposing missionary service in the clearest terms. (Cf. n. 2, 2 of the Circular Letter "Mission at the Heart of the Order").

Provinces which decided to take up a missionary project very soon discovered that the sacrifices they made in responding affirmatively to the call translated into blessings for them. Of course the task is not easy, but is undertaken in fulfilment of the Lord's command to go into the whole world to proclaim His Gospel.

I will not go into the details of the choices made by the Commission, but confine myself to inviting you to read with care so that you sense the reflection of a glorious period in the Order's history, and nourish the hope that the Order will achieve new positive achievements in future. If anyone needs greater motivation in this area let him read the text and allow himself to be moved by it.

In addition to the topic of mission, Chapter 12 also deals with our life of faith and the juridical implications of the text of the Constitutions for the Order (nn. 183-185). The Commission left the section regarding the brothers' life of faith practically unchanged, while asking our opinion about transferring this last part to Chapter One. I leave it to you to read and evaluate this particular proposal and let the Commission know your views.

I offer the beautiful words that Francis left us at the end of Chapter 12 of the Later Rule as a prayer to accompany us in the common reflection that we will make on the Proposed text of Chapter 12: "Steadfast in the Catholic faith, let us observe poverty, humility and the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we have firmly promised" (Later Rule, 12). May the Immaculate Virgin, the Patroness of the Order, assist us and help us to be heralds of the Gospel by our lives.

Br Mauro Jöhri
General Minister OFM Cap

Points for fraternal reflection

The mark of the spiritual energy of our Capuchin fraternity becomes evident essentially in the missionary drive among the brothers and the desire to *share the beauty of the union of all people with Christ*. On the other hand the most obvious sign of crisis would be the weakening of the passion to share the Gospel. The cultural, social and religious changes that have taken place throughout the world test our apostolic and missionary vocation. They should allow us to discover even more the immense riches of Christian revelation arming us with new methods of evangelisation, which are more precise and better adapted to the situation. In this way *our life of faith is expressed in being available for missionary activity in its various expressions*.

1. *Do you think that there is an authentically missionary spirit among the brothers of your circumscription?* Do we all really feel in the daily life of our fraternities that "we are on a mission"? Are missionary vocations and availability for mission encouraged in your fraternity? Is there interaction between brothers who were sent to different cultures to proclaim the Gospel and the fraternity from which they came? What are the difficulties that block the development of missionary vocations amongst us? What initiatives should be undertaken in your circumscription to foster the missionary spirit and willingness to be available to be sent to proclaim Christ where He is not yet known?
2. Because of the spread of secularisation in many places where our Order exists vigorous and *new evangelisation*, about which the Church has spoken more and more specifically from Paul VI, to John Paul XXII, to Benedict XVI, has become necessary. Do you think that our brothers are interested in this subject? What experiences are present in your circumscription and your fraternity with respect to new evangelisation? What forms of new evangelisation could our Order promote which are in line with our charism?
3. *The encounter of various cultures and religions represents a new situation for the evangelising mission of the Church.* The new situation constitutes a great opportunity as well as having some risks. For example, if it is not well understood, this situation could lead to a kind of *relativism* with respect to revealed truth, and even to a certain feeling of *the futility of detailed evangelisation*. How can we be *witnesses to Christ being unique*, the centre of the cosmos and of history, while knowing how to fully live ecumenically with other Christian denominations and in *dialogue* with other religions? How can such encounter and dialogue become an occasion for an evangelical witness that is capable of evaluating the grain of truth that is present in different expressions of religion? Are the noteworthy experiences in your circumscription with regard to this matter?
4. *We must not undervalue our life of faith; rather we are continually invited to deepen it and renew it.* Is the prospect of growth in faith in order to share it more authentically alive amongst us? Aware that our faith becomes mature in commitment to mission are we prepared "to give witness" to our hope before the people of our day?
5. For Francis of Assisi *the Catholicity of the faith* was essential when discerning a vocation to our Order. Do you think that this is sufficiently noted in our formation and do you think that *sentire cum ecclesia* (*thinking with the Church*) is sufficiently noted in our life of faith and the fundamental concerns which are lived out in the People of God and that are spoken about in the voice of the living magisterium of the Church?

COMMISSIO CONSTITUTIONUM

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL AND THE LIFE OF FAITH *PROPOSED REVISION DEL CHAPTER XII*

INTRODUCTION

The Commission drafted the *Proposed revision* (PdR) of *Chapter XII of the Constitutions* during its tenth plenary session, 22 November – 4 December 2010. The draft is based on the personal contribution of one of the members of the Commission. The proposed text has been studied in depth re-worked a number of times. Finally it was approved on 3 December 2010.

The changes introduced to the Text presently in force mainly concern Article I. As usual, the explanatory notes provide the reasons for the choices made by the Commission, and the justification for each variation and addition made to text.

It is timely however to dwell a moment on the particular considerations that have guided the work of the Commission during its Tenth Plenary Session. These concern:

1. The meaning and setting of the Order's missionary activity today;
2. The problem concerning the location of the final numbers (183-185) of Constitutions about the *Laws of the Order*.

Let us clarify the *status quaestionis* of each of these aspects.

I. The missionary commitment of the Order

1. *Status quaestionis*

The Constitutions formulated by the General Chapter 1968 were still tied to the concept of mission as pastoral activity carried out *in certis territoriis a Sancta Sede qua talibus agnitis*. Those territories took on the name "missions" (*quae communiter missiones nuncupantur*).¹

The development of ecclesiology produced by the Second Vatican Council, and the urgent need of a *new evangelisation* recognised by the Apostolic Exhortation of Paul VI (*Evangelii nuntiandi*, 8 December 1975) and subsequent insistence by John Paul II which "systematically explored in depth on numerous occasions"² have led to a rethinking about the concept of mission. Our Order entered this new theological and pastoral field, especially by means of PCO III (Mattli 1978) and the General Chapter of 1982. That Chapter introduced this text into the Constitutions:

"All those brothers are regarded as missionaries who in any continent or region bring the joyful news of salvation to those who do not believe in Christ" (Const.174.5)

However, the following passage was immediately added:

"But we recognize the special situation of those brothers who engage in missionary activity in the service of new established Churches." (Const.174.6)

Therefore framework of Article I of Chapter XII of the Constitutions remained closely connected to this second passage and relied upon it: completely focused on the narrow, traditional meaning of missionary activity: Nonetheless, beginning precisely with the General Chapter of 1982, Constitutions themselves recognise

¹ Cf. Const. 1968, n.165.

² BENEDICT XVI, Apostolic Letter in the form of *motu proprio* "Ubicumque et semper" (21 September 2010)

that “the particular Churches have already have already acquired the more important part in the work of evangelisation” (n.175,2).

Furthermore, in the Order’s structure or distribution, the Constitutions (cf. chap. VIII) envisage circumscriptions that are properly missionary. Called *Custodies* or *Missiones*, these depend upon Provinces while remaining distinct from the Provinces or Vice-Provinces themselves themselves (cf. *Const.* 110, 1.4; 135-139). In recent decades, however, the Order has experienced a surprising growth in vocations precisely with missionary territories and in these places today the Order also has many Provinces and Vice-Provinces. For this reason, it does not seem entirely adequate to consider or refer only to Custodies missionary work undertaken within a determined territory (cf. *Const.* 110,4) when other circumscriptions of the Order (Provinces and Vice-Provinces) also carry out missionary activity in contexts that are still considered to be *missionary territories* and which are still largely dependent upon the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples (*de Propoganda Fide*).

At this level it is relevant to observe that the missionary dimension is fundamental to the nature of the Church and each particular Church. According to the expression attributed to Paul VI, “a church that is aware of itself becomes missionary.” Within the hierarchical and juridical structure of the Church there is no room for distinctions between Churches and missionary circumscriptions and Churches and *non*-missionary circumscriptions. Such a distinction does not exist in the CIC nor in John Paul II’s Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus* (28 June 1988; cf. articles 85-92). That so many church circumscriptions (actually more than a thousand) come under the competence of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of People (or *de Propoganda Fide*) is to be understood as administrative and organisational fact, not a doctrinal and theological one.

Similarly, since our life is in the Church and our Order “is an integral part of the mystical body of Christ” (*Const.* 109,1), it should be said that our self-awareness of ourselves as Capuchin friars minor and the Order’s self-awareness must necessarily lead the Order naturally to see itself as missionary. This is basis of the statement: “Mission at the heart of the Order.”³ It does not appear to make much sense to continue to speak about missionary circumscriptions (*Custodies* and *Missiones*)⁴ when all the circumscriptions of the Order are missionary and are called to live out their missionary character, because to be Capuchin is to be missionary.⁵

On the other hand, for decades the Order has undergone aging and an inexorable decrease in countries of ancient Christian tradition. Nonetheless the Order still very active in those countries which today, beginning with Europe, are dominated by secularisation and de-Christianisation. These present a significant challenge for the apostolic commitment of the Church, and our Fraternity within the Church. However, while the phenomena of secularisation and de-Christianisation are of special interest especially the so called “western world”, these have an influence also on other areas of the world in various ways.

2. The Teaching of the Magisterium

In regard to missionary activity, our renewed Constitutions of 1968 and 1982 depend upon the Decree *Ad Gentes* of the Second Vatican Council. However, “after the Council the question of missionary work was dealt with in the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, in the light of the problems of the missions in these final years of our century. In the future too, the Church must continue to be missionary: indeed missionary outreach is part of her very nature. With the fall of the great anti-Christian systems in Europe, first of Nazism and then of Communism, there is urgent need to bring once more the liberating message of the Gospel to the men and women of Europe.(39) Furthermore, as the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* affirms, the modern world reflects the situation of the *Areopagus of Athens*, where Saint Paul spoke(40). Today there are many ‘areopagi’, and very different ones: these are the vast sectors of contemporary civilization and culture, of politics and economics.

³ Br. MAURO JÖHRI, *Circular Letter* n. 5: Mission at the heart of the Order” (29 November 2009)

⁴ On this question refer to what has been put forward regarding the structure of the Order in the Proposed Revision of Chapter VIII of the Constitutions.

⁵ *Circular Letter* n.5, n.1.3

The more the West is becoming estranged from its Christian roots, the more it is becoming missionary territory, taking the form of many different 'areopagi'."⁶

In particular, the Encyclical *Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990), twenty-five years after the Decree *Ad Gentes*, underlined the "diversity of activities in the Church's one mission" that

"... arises from the variety of circumstances in which that mission is carried out. Looking at today's world from the viewpoint of evangelization, we can distinguish three situations.

First, there is the situation which the Church's missionary activity addresses: peoples, groups, and socio-cultural contexts in which Christ and his Gospel are not known, or which lack Christian communities sufficiently mature to be able to incarnate the faith in their own environment and proclaim it to other groups. This is mission ad gentes in the proper sense of the term.

Secondly, there are Christian communities with adequate and solid ecclesial structures. They are fervent in their faith and in Christian living. They bear witness to the Gospel in their surroundings and have a sense of commitment to the universal mission. In these communities the Church carries out her activity and pastoral care.

Thirdly, there is an intermediate situation, particularly in countries with ancient Christian roots, and occasionally in the younger Churches as well, where entire groups of the baptized have lost a living sense of the faith, or even no longer consider themselves members of the Church, and live a life far removed from Christ and his Gospel. In this case what is needed is a 'new evangelization' or a 're-evangelization.'" (n. 33).

The following paragraph in *Redemptoris missio* is no less significant:

⁶ *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (10 nov 1994) , n. 57. Previously the post-synodal Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (30 December 1988) stated: "Whole countries and nations where religion and the Christian life were formerly flourishing and capable of fostering a viable and working community of faith, are now put to a hard test, and in some cases, are even undergoing a radical transformation, as a result of a constant spreading of an indifference to religion, of secularism and atheism. This particularly concerns countries and nations of the so-called First World, in which economic well-being and consumerism, even if coexistent with a tragic situation of poverty and misery, inspires and sustains a life lived "as if God did not exist". This indifference to religion and the practice of religion devoid of true meaning in the face of life's very serious problems, are not less worrying and upsetting when compared with declared atheism. Sometimes the Christian faith as well, while maintaining some of the externals of its tradition and rituals, tends to be separated from those moments of human existence which have the most significance, such as, birth, suffering and death.... On the other hand, in other regions or nations many vital traditions of piety and popular forms of Christian religion are still conserved; but today this moral and spiritual patrimony runs the risk of being dispersed under the impact of a multiplicity of processes, including secularization and the spread of sects. Only a new evangelization can assure the growth of a clear and deep faith, and serve to make these traditions a force for authentic freedom. Without doubt a mending of the Christian fabric of society is urgently needed in all parts of the world. But for this to come about what is needed is to first remake the Christian fabric of the ecclesial community itself present in these countries and nations." (n.34) "Whole countries and nations where religion and the Christian life were formerly flourishing and capable of fostering a viable and working community of faith, are now put to a hard test, and in some cases, are even undergoing a radical transformation, as a result of a constant spreading of an indifference to religion, of secularism and atheism. This particularly concerns countries and nations of the so-called First World, in which economic well-being and consumerism, even if coexistent with a tragic situation of poverty and misery, inspires and sustains a life lived "as if God did not exist". This indifference to religion and the practice of religion devoid of true meaning in the face of life's very serious problems, are not less worrying and upsetting when compared with declared atheism. Sometimes the Christian faith as well, while maintaining some of the externals of its tradition and rituals, tends to be separated from those moments of human existence which have the most significance, such as, birth, suffering and death.... On the other hand, in other regions or nations many vital traditions of piety and popular forms of Christian religion are still conserved; but today this moral and spiritual patrimony runs the risk of being dispersed under the impact of a multiplicity of processes, including secularization and the spread of sects. Only a new evangelization can assure the growth of a clear and deep faith, and serve to make these traditions a force for authentic freedom. Without doubt a mending of the Christian fabric of society is urgently needed in all parts of the world. But for this to come about what is needed is to first remake the Christian fabric of the ecclesial community itself present in these countries and nations." (n.34)

“Missionary activity proper, namely the mission ad gentes, is directed to “peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ,” “who are far from Christ,” in whom the Church “has not yet taken root” and whose culture has not yet been influenced by the Gospel. It is distinct from other ecclesial activities inasmuch as it is addressed to groups and settings which are non-Christian because the preaching of the Gospel and the presence of the Church are either absent or insufficient. It can thus be characterized as the work of proclaiming Christ and his Gospel, building up the local Church and promoting the values of the kingdom. The specific nature of this mission ad gentes consists in its being addressed to “non-Christians.” It is therefore necessary to ensure that this specifically “missionary work that Jesus entrusted and still entrusts each day to his Church” does not become an indistinguishable part of the overall mission of the whole People of God and as a result become neglected or forgotten.

On the other hand, the boundaries between pastoral care of the faithful, new evangelization and specific missionary activity are not clearly definable, and it is unthinkable to create barriers between them or to put them into watertight compartments. Nevertheless, there must be no lessening of the impetus to preach the Gospel and to establish new churches among peoples or communities where they do not yet exist, for this is the first task of the Church, which has been sent forth to all peoples and to the very ends of the earth. Without the mission ad gentes, the Church’s very missionary dimension would be deprived of its essential meaning and of the very activity that exemplifies it.

Also to be noted is the real and growing interdependence which exists between these various saving activities of the Church. Each of them influences, stimulates and assists the others. The missionary thrust fosters exchanges between the churches and directs them toward the larger world, with positive influences in every direction. The churches in traditionally Christian countries, for example, involved as they are in the challenging task of new evangelization, are coming to understand more clearly that they cannot be missionaries to non-Christians in other countries and continents unless they are seriously concerned about the non-Christians at home. Hence missionary activity ad intra is a credible sign and a stimulus for missionary activity ad extra, and vice versa.” (n. 34)⁷.

As for us religious, the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata* (25 March 1996), after outlining the relationship of consecration/mission and the prophetic character of consecrated life, recalls the specific nature of our activity whether in the field of first evangelisation or in the new evangelisation. It also emphasises the new *mission areopagi* and the need for *inculturation*. Later the Instruction of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Starting afresh from Christ* (19 May 2002) reminded religious that “this mission is still in its beginning stages and we must commit ourselves with all our resources to bring it about” (n.37), especially as a witness to the love and service for Christ by creativity in charity, proclaiming the Gospel, serving life, spreading the truth, being open to the great dialogues, answering today’s challenges (cf. nn.33-45).

The most recent *Apostolic Letter* in the form of a “Motu Proprio”, *Ubicumque et semper* in which Pope Benedict XVI established the Pontifical Council for the promotion of the new evangelisation (21 September 2010) came about from the will to “to offer appropriate responses so that the entire Church, allowing herself to be regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit, may present herself to the contemporary world with a missionary impulse in order to promote the new evangelisation.”

“Above all”, the Pope states, “this pertains to Churches of ancient origin, which live in different situations and have different needs, and therefore require different types of motivation for evangelization: in certain territories, in fact, de-

⁷ Recently considered too is that part of the Encyclical that describes the contexts of mission “ad gentes”, that is, territories, worlds, new social phenomena, cultural areas, the modern areopagi (*Redemptoris missio*, nn. 37-38). The same *Redemptoris missio* urges that attention be directed to the South and towards the East (n.40). However, some years later, within the context of the new evangelisation, *Tertio millennio adveniente* (n.38) underlined the need for Synods at the continental level. Some of these had already been celebrated while others were still to be celebrated. Therefore the Apostolic Exhortations on the presence and mission of the Church on the various continents are important for the enrichment of the Constitutions: the Church in Africa (1995); the Church in America (1999); the Church in Asia (1999); the Church in Oceania (2001) and the Church in Europe (2003).

spite the spread of secularization, Christian practice still thrives and shows itself deeply rooted in the soul of entire populations; in other regions, however, there is a clearly a distancing of society from the faith in every respect, together with a weaker ecclesial fabric, even if not without elements of liveliness that the Spirit never fails to awaken; we also sadly know of some areas that have almost completely abandoned the Christian religion, where the light of the faith is entrusted to the witness of small communities: these lands, which need a renewed first proclamation of the Gospel, seem particularly resistant to many aspects of the Christian message.”

3. Mission at the heart of the Order

The Circular Letter on mission by the General Minister (29 November 2009; Prot.N. 00782/09), he described the changes that have occurred within our Order in the field of mission and the missionary spirit:

“For a long time Br. Bernhard Christen’s principle of “One Province – One Mission” proved to be a stroke of genius: it was facilitated by the fact that very often the Capuchins were the only ones present in the territory assigned to them by Propaganda Fide and the local Church had not yet been born. And so the Province enjoyed the necessary autonomy to structure and carry out the mission it had been entrusted with.

Today these conditions have changed radically, not only in the Church and the Order but also in the political and economic fields. Just think of the concept of “globalisation”, which can mean everything or nothing, unless you consider that the economic and social policies of one country have always had an impact on the economic and political systems of the others. None of the parties involved is responsible for itself alone, but is at the same time responsible for the whole. This is true not just of the negative impact, but also the positive. If we are aware of this we ought to realise that we Capuchins also have something valuable to put forward, being the trustees of a charism that is able to transform the world” (1.4)

In the same letter the General Minister states:

“Our Constitutions define missionary service as a proclamation of the Good News of salvation to those who do not believe in Christ, and as a service to the “young churches”. (Const 174, 5-6). However, in our day the “young churches” have matured and have assumed a purely local appearance. In the same way our fraternities have been enriched by brothers from these local Christian communities. In the current process of revising the Constitutions it will be necessary to keep these changes in mind and to update the Constitutions accordingly.” (1.7)

4. The work of the Commission

The abundance of documents just cited constitutes an essential basis and reference for the enrichment of Chapter XII requested by the General Chapter of 2006. The Commission has borne them in mind when in n.177,7-8 of the PdR it outlines the various different contexts of mission, while taking up again, more concisely, the same outline in 179,1. This procedure provides a kind of *explicatio terminorum* (What is mission? Who are the missionaries today?). However the structure of Article I has remained substantially unchanged, keeping only the traditional image of *mission ad gentes* as a background. Neither in the part of Article I on *how to be missionary* (cf. PdR n.178 = Const. 175), nor elsewhere in Article I of Chapter XII, was the Commission yet able to integrate those elements – or at least some of them – that refer to “implementation” of the commitment to the *new evangelisation*, to the way or ways of implementing it as Capuchin Friars Minor, or to the specific contexts in which to implement it. The *new areopagi* would need to be highlighted properly, bearing in mind that:

“In our own time, it has been particularly challenged by an abandonment of the faith - a phenomenon progressively more manifest in societies and cultures which for centuries seemed to be permeated by the Gospel. The social changes we have witnessed in recent decades have a long and complex history, and they have profoundly altered our way of looking at the world. We need only think of the many advances in science and technology, the expanding possibilities with regard to life and individual freedom, the profound changes in

the economic sphere, and the mixing of races and cultures caused by global-scale migration and an increasing interdependence of peoples. All of this has not been without consequences on the religious dimension of human life as well. If on the one hand humanity has derived undeniable benefits from these changes, and the Church has drawn from them further incentives for bearing witness to the hope that is within her (cf. 1 Pt 3:15), on the other hand there has been a troubling loss of the sense of the sacred, which has even called into question foundations once deemed unshakable such as faith in a provident creator God, the revelation of Jesus Christ as the one Saviour, and a common understanding of basic human experiences: i.e., birth, death, life in a family, and reference to a natural moral law.” (Motu Proprio Ubiqumque et semper).

It is not a question of enlarging the Constitutions but, faithful to the mandate from the General Chapter of 2000, to express them with greater attention to the needs of humanity and to the urgent pastoral needs of the Church. *Dynamic faithfulness* to our charism demands that the new missionary horizons be integrated within our fundamental legislation. These horizons should be elaborated in close connection with *mission ad gentes* in its strict sense. In fact, “the boundaries between pastoral care of the faithful, new evangelization and specific missionary activity are not clearly definable, and it is unthinkable to create barriers between them or to put them into watertight compartments” (*Redemptoris mission* n.34).

On receiving this *Proposed Revision*, therefore, it is necessary that the Order contribute concrete suggestions and proposals so that the Commission and complete the enrichment of the Chapter XII during the second phase of its work.

II. The *Laws of the Order*. Are these merely an juridical addition to Chapter XII?

Numbers 183, 184 and 185 of the Constitutions speak neither of the spread of the faith or the proclamation of the Gospel, nor of the faith life of the friars. Instead they deal with the **Laws of the Order**: the Rule and the Constitutions. Therefore they cannot be considered as part of Chapter XII. Their actual location is outside any natural context and so makes them an appendix juxtaposed to the Constitutions.

During its work the Commission considered this state of things and recognised that it would **be more logical and consistent to insert these numbers into Chapter I** where the fundamental elements of our way of life are described and where the Rule and Constitutions are spoken of systematically. In this way the matter would be dealt with in a unified and organic way, rather than split it up.

However, before going ahead with such a transfer, the Commission wants to know the opinion of the Order and asks the Friars to express their views on this matter.

For a adequate assessment of the *status quaestionis*:

- we should keep in mind the motives of *a logical consistency in the development of the matters* that the Constitutions deal with;
- we should also consider some historical data about our Constitutions, with particular reference to:
 - 1° what our Constitutions traditionally have said about the interpretation of the Rule in Chapter I;
 - 2° to the transfer, sought by the General Chapter of 1982, of a part of the text previously found at the conclusion of Chapter XII. Number 7 of the present Constitutions was n. 172 in the Constitutions of 1968. This paragraph (n.7 in the present Constitutions and n.172 in those of 1968) speaks of the value and purpose of the Constitutions. Previously the Constitutions had never spoken of this in Chapter One.

In light of these two elements that emerge from the history of the text of our Constitutions, it should be considered that the *hypothesis of a transfer is not an absolute novelty*. It would be a partial return to the previous situation, not only in reference to the traditional text of the Constitutions, but also the text renewed between 1968 and 1982.

More specifically, the following should be noted too:

1. The Rule

Until 1968 the Constitutions did not speak about the authentic interpretation of the Rule, but in declared in Chapter I that “We accept only as a living and authentic commentary (of the Rule), the declarations of the Supreme Pontiffs, especially Nicholas III and Clement V, and the most holy life, doctrine and example of the Seraphic Father himself” (*Const.* 1925, n.2). Then the Constitutions approved in 1968 attribute to themselves the *authentic interpretation* of the Rule, placing the relative text in n.4 of Chapter I. However in the next General Chapter of 1970, this *new text* was *added*:

The authentic interpretation of the Rule is reserved to the Holy See, while the updating of the same according to the new circumstances of the times is contained in these Constitutions, approved by the General Chapter. Under the supreme authority of the Church, it is up to the General Chapter to make laws for the faithful observance of the Rule.

This was further clarified in the letter of Paul VI on 20 August 1974:

*Just as the authentic interpretation of the charism of religious life is generally the task of Church authority, so too the interpretation of a particular charism, that is proper to each Order, is also the competence of the same authority. Saint Francis himself felt the truth of the principle when he desired to obtain approval from the Apostolic See for his Rule. Therefore, the authentic interpretation of the Franciscan Rule is reserved to the same Apostolic See, however while granting to General Chapters the faculty to adapt it to the new current needs. Because these may have force of law, such adaptations, however, must be presented first to the Apostolic See for approval.*⁸

Therefore the General Chapter of 1974 also revised the passage on the authentic interpretation of the Rule and approved the following formulation, including it again in Chapter I (n.5 in the 1975 edition.)

*The rule of St. Francis, confirmed by Pope Honorius, is the foundation and source of all law in our order. By virtue of our profession we are bound to observe it simply and in a Catholic manner. The authentic interpretation of this Rule is reserved to the Holy See. The Holy See has abrogated earlier pontifical declarations on the Rule in respect to their perceptive force alone, with the exception of those declarations which are contained in existing common law or in these Constitutions. Further, it recognises the right of the general chapters to adapt the Rule as need to new circumstances, provided these adaptations receive the force of law through the approval of the Holy See.*⁹

The General Chapter of 1982 made some changes and consequent adjustments to the earlier text. In particular the Chapter moved the passage to Chapter XII (n.183 in the present text of the Constitutions).¹⁰

⁸ Cf. *Analecta OFMCap* 90 (1974) 277.

⁹ *Analecta OFMCap* 90 (1974) 342.

¹⁰ What we have said above is much clearer in the following synoptic overview. It contains the four redactions of the Constitutions from 1968 to 1982. (TRANSLATOR: Rather than confuse the reader by transcribing mistaken English translations I have chosen to leave un-translated the synoptic comparisons made below and in subsequent footnotes.)

Constitutions of 1968	Constitutions of 1970 [These Constitutions were not published in English]	Constitutions of 1974	Constitutions of 1982
CHAPTER I, n. 4	CHAPTER I, n. 4	CHAPTER I, n. 4.	CHAPTER I, n. 5
1. The Rule of Saint Francis drew its origin from the Gospel and now draws us into that Gospel life.	1. The Rule of Saint Francis drew its origin from the Gospel and now draws us into that Gospel life.	1. The Rule of St. Francis drew its origin from the Gospel and now draws us into that Gospel life.	1. The Rule of St. Francis took its origin from the gospel and impels us to live according to the gospel.

<p>2. We are to strive diligently to grasp the spiritual meaning of the Rule; and, in following his admonition expressed in the Testament as well as the intention of the early Capuchin friars, we must endeavor to observe this Rule in a simple, sincere and holy manner.</p>	<p>2. We are to strive diligently to grasp the spiritual meaning of the Rule; and, in following his admonition expressed in the Testament as well as the intention of the early Capuchin friars, we must endeavor to observe this Rule in a simple, sincere and holy manner.</p>	<p>2. We are to strive seriously to grasp the spiritual meaning of the Rule. Following Francis' admonition as expressed in the Testament, as well as the ideal of the early Capuchins, we must endeavour to observe this Rule and, with God's help, live it simply and plainly..</p>	<p>2. We should strive zealously to grasp the spiritual meaning of the Rule. Following Saint Francis' admonition expressed in the Testament, as well as the spirit, gospel ideals and holy example of the early Capuchin brothers, we must endeavour to observe this Rule simply and plainly and with God's holy operation.</p>
<p>3. The superiors are to be concerned with promoting knowledge, love and observance of the Rule.</p>	<p>3. The superiors are to be concerned with promoting knowledge, love and observance of the Rule.</p>	<p>3. Superiors should heartily promote knowledge, love and observance of the Rule.</p>	<p>3. The ministers and their fraternities should heartily promote knowledge, love and observance of the Rule.</p>
<p>4. To aid the true observance of the Rule everywhere, the major Superiors should use diligence to seek out ways of living, even multiform ways, which will be more suitable for the life and apostolate of the friars whose needs differ from time to time and from place to place. In this diversity, the unity of the Rule's genuine spirit must be maintained, as well as the necessary communion with the highest authority of the Order.</p>	<p>4. To aid the true observance of the Rule everywhere, the major Superiors should use diligence to seek out ways of living, even multiform ways, which will be more suitable for the life and apostolate of the friars whose needs differ from time to time and from place to place. In this diversity, the unity of the Rule's genuine spirit must be maintained, as well as the necessary communion with the highest authority of the Order.</p>	<p>4. To make it possible for the Rule and the mind of our father and lawgiver to be observed faithfully everywhere, major superiors should see that ways of living, even pluriform ways, be carefully sought which are more appropriate for the life and apostolate of the friars whose needs differ from time to time and place to place..</p>	<p>4. That the Rule and ideals of our Father and lawgiver may be observed faithfully everywhere, the major superiors should take care that ways of life be sought which are more suited to the life and apostolate of the brothers, according differences of region, culture and the needs of times and places; these ways of living may take a variety of forms.</p>
		<p>5. True pluriformity bases itself on fraternal sharing and juridic obedience to superiors, always preserving the unity of the authentic spirit. This offers a certain freedom of action to those who work for renewal, without destroying the spirit.</p>	<p>5. But a right understanding of this variety demands the preservation of unity in the same authentic spirit, in fraternal communion and in obedience to the ministers; this allows a gospel freedom of action, especially as regards renewing our life without destroying the spirit.</p>
<p>CHAPTER I, n. 4</p>	<p>CHAPTER I, n. 4</p>	<p>CHAPTER I, n.5</p>	<p><i>CHAPTER XII, n. 183</i></p>
		<p>1. The Rule of St. Francis, confirmed by Pope Honorius, is the foundation and source of all law in our order.</p>	<p>1. We are bound by our profession to observe in a simple Catholic manner the Rule of Saint Francis confirmed by Pope Honorius.</p>

According to the note in the edition of Br. Iglesias, it would have been its purely juridical character (*attenta indole potius iuridica*)¹¹ that urged the General Chapter of 1982 to transfer n.5 at the time (also in 1975) to chapter XII. The published *acta* of the General Chapter of 1982 have many gaps and say nothing in particular on this question. Instead they simply limit themselves to report that one group preferred that the text in question be transferred to Chapter XII.¹² However this choice was not consistent with the fundamental structure of our Constitutions where the more inspirational and spiritual aspects are considered together with those that are properly normative. And vice versa. Both aspects are often connected and melded together.

2. The Constitutions

On this question we note a reverse process because, as already pointed out, **the General Chapter of 1982 transferred the following text** on the purpose, value and observance of the Constitutions **to Chapter I.** (In the Constitutions of 1968, 1970 and 1975 it was assigned to Chapter XII).

The purpose of the Constitutions is to help us observe the Rule better and more perfectly in the changed circumstances of our life. We find in them a safe support for our spiritual renewal in Christ and a powerful help for implementing the consecration of our life by which each brother totally dedicates himself to God. We are bound to observe these Constitutions by reason of our profession; we should observe them nota s servants but as sons who desire to love God above all things, who listen to the Holy Spirit

		2. By virtue of our profession we are bound to observe it simply and in a Catholic manner.	
5. The present Constitutions approved by the general Chapter contain the authentic interpretation of the Rule; under the supreme authority of the Church, the function and duty of enacting laws for the faithful observance of the Rule belongs to the general Chapter.	5. The authentic interpretation of the Rule is reserved to the Holy See, while these Constitutions, approved by the general Chapter, contain the adaptation (aggiornamento) of that interpretation to the new circumstances of times and places. Under the supreme authority of the Church it belongs to the general Chapter to enact laws for the faithful observance of the same Rule.	3. The authentic interpretation of this Rule is reserved to the Holy See. The Holy See has abrogated earlier pontifical declarations on the Rule in respect to their preceptive force alone, with the exception of those declarations which are contained in existing common law or in these Constitutions.	2. Its authentic interpretation is reserved to the Holy See, which has abrogated earlier pontifical declarations on the Rule itself as regards only their preceptive force, with the exception of those declarations which are contained in existing ecclesiastical law or in these Constitutions.
		4. Further, it [the Holy See] recognises the right of the general chapters to adapt the rule as needed to new circumstances, provided these adaptations receive the force of law through approval of the Holy See	3. Further, the Holy See recognizes the right of the general chapters to adapt the Rule to new circumstances when appropriate, provided these adaptations receive the force of law through its approval.

¹¹ Cf. BR. IGLESIAS (ed.), *Constitutiones Fratrum Minorum Capuccinorum post Concilium Vaticanum II retractatae (a.1968-1988)*. I. *Textus*. Romae, Curia generalis OFMCap., 1988; I, 166, nota 7 (here in: *Iglesias I*).

¹² Cf. *Acta Capituli Generalis LXXIX Ordinis Fratrum Minorum Capuccinorum*. Romae a die 1 iunii ad 11 iulii 1982 in Collegio S. Laurentii a Brundisio celebrati. Roma, Curia Generalis OFMCap., 1983; 140 (in seguito: *Acta 1982*).

instructing us, and who are eager for the glory of God and the salvation of our neighbour. All the brothers are strongly urged to make personal study of the Rule, the Testament and the Constitutions, and to become deeply imbued with their spirit.

And instead, the same General Chapter of 1982 left at the end of Chapter XII the text concerning the **interpretation** of the Constitutions. This text is of fundamental importance. Therefore it could find a better place in Chapter I where the Constitutions deal with the essential elements of our Capuchin life, as well as those things that govern it at both the spiritual and juridic levels. As for the matter of **dispensation** from the disciplinary prescriptions of the Constitutions, until 1968 these things have been discussed in Chapter 8 on the government of the Order. In the current text the matter is discussed in the final postscript (n.184,3).

Numbers 185-185 of the current text (with the exception of n.183 §1 and n.185 §§2-3) have a purely juridical character. However, some of the prescriptions there (especially those added recently to the text, e.g. n.184,6) could be better placed in the complementary code, as the *Project 2006* proposed.

Finally the **spiritual exhortations in n.185, §§2-3** in the current text, make up a “remnant” of those commonly found traditional exhortations that introduced the conclusion of Constitutions and the final Christological doxology. The current ones preserve that character and, as such, remain in Chapter XII. The others, as already indicated, would be placed in Chapter I or in the complementary code, a more natural context for them.

All that being said, in the following pages:

- a) is the Proposed Revision of Chapter XII of the Constitutions which, in the final numbers, conforms with the current Text;
- b) then, as an Appendix, the proposal of a possible later structure according to the idea considered by Commission to move some of the material.

It should be specified once more that the Commission has not made any decision, but asks the opinion of the Order. Therefore mention is made of a *possible structure* or a *possible relocation*. At the same time, it should be made clear that the *new possible structure or relocation* would not compromise or alter the structure of Chapter One of our Constitutions.¹³

For the Commission:

Br. Felice Cangelosi
Vicar Generale OFMCap
Commission President

Br. Francesco Polliani, OFMCap
Commission Secretary

Rome, 8 December 2010,
Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

¹³ The procedure as proposed and envisaged in the *Appendix* respects the nature of Chapter I. It finds a parallel in the Constitutions of the Friars Minor. All that which refers to the Laws of the Order is dealt with in Chapter I (under article III), while specifying some aspects for the General Statutes (Chapter I). The Constitutions of the Conventual Friars work in same way (Cf. Chapter I, article III).

Technical Notes

The Commission invites the brothers to keep in mind the suggestions already set out in the *Introductory Notes* to Chapter One. With regard to Chapter twelve be especially aware that

- 1) To facilitate the understanding and study of the proposals, the new texts have been placed side by side in columns: the first column contains the text of the Constitutions in force at present *in one's own language*; the second column contains the text of the "revised version" *in one's own language*; when required, the third column contains the text of the norms that are envisaged as belonging to the supplementary Code, again *in one's own language*.
- 2) In the second and third columns the text of each paragraph is preceded by a rubric: *current text* (when the text currently in force has not be changed); *current text with additions* (when the text that is currently in force has been retained with new elements added); *current text with changes and additions* (when the text which is currently in force has been partly changed and new elements have been added); *new text* (when the text is completely new).
- 3) Each proposal is accompanied by explanatory notes, which appear after the summary of each individual number in the text. The explanatory notes contain only what in the opinion of the Commission is regarded as necessary for the understanding of changes or additions or the introduction of a new text. Reference to the documents of the Church or of the Order is restricted to what is necessary and the bibliographical references have been greatly reduced.
- 4) The following are presented in another table: the *Latin* text of the Constitutions appears in the first column; the *Latin* text of the "revised proposals" appears in the second column; when required the *Latin* text of the norms that are envisaged as belonging to the supplementary Code is presented.
- 5) The Order is invited to consider the proposed text, evaluating in particular the changes put forward, the new additions and in some cases the new arrangement of the content presented with some transfer of text.
- 6) Respecting the freedom of each brother to express individually his own opinion, the work would be greatly assisted if the observations were shared by groups of brothers or collected and sent in by the Ministers themselves, using the sheets provided following the attached models.
- 7) The evaluation of each number or paragraph is to be made using the sheets provided following the model prepared by the Commission Secretariat.
All the parts of each sheet must be filled in, keeping in mind that anonymous sheets are not acceptable, or those sent in by "a group of brothers..." without any signature.
Whether you agree with the proposed text or not it is sufficient to "briefly" express your own opinion.
If instead you propose an alternative text this should be presented clearly and concisely. You must provide the reason for the alternative text which is being proposed.

The evaluation sheets for chapter 12 and the proposals for the same should reach the Commission by 31st May 2011.

Rome, 8 December 2011

Br. Francesco Polliani, OFMCap
Secretary of the Commission

Model form to be sent to the Secretary of the Commission
(PLEASE SEND BY E-MAIL NO LATER THAN 31ST MAY 2011)

C o m m i s s i o C o n s t i t u t i o n u m

costituzioni@ofmcap.org

EVALUATION

of each no. or § of the “Proposed revision of Chapter XII”.

Indicate as clearly and concisely as possible whether you agree with the proposed text or not. You may propose an alternative text, giving your reasons.

♦ Name of the Circumscription:

♦ Brother/s:

Name:

Surname:

Name:

Surname:

Name:

Surname:

Name:

Surname:

(...)

♦ THE EVALUATION refers to n. () of the “Proposed revision of Chapter XII”.

♦ EVALUATION:

♦ Proposed alternative text (if you think it is necessary):

♦ Reasons for the alternative text:



Commissio Constitutionum

CHAPTER XII THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL AND THE LIFE OF FAITH (1)

Article I

Our commitment to evangelise (2)

N. 177 (174)

CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (2002)	PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS
1. Christ Jesus, God's Good News, the first and greatest preacher of the Gospel, gave to all his disciples through them, to the community of faith that is the Church, the grace and mandate of spreading the gospel.	Current text (174,1-2) with changes and additions (3) 1. Christ Jesus, God's Good News, the first and greatest preacher of the Gospel, <i>sent his apostles to preach the gospel to all nations and established His Church</i> as the universal sacrament of salvation (4), which is therefore missionary by its very nature.
2. All the baptized, and especially religious by the special gift of themselves, are united to the Pilgrim Church. Through Christ's mission and that of the Holy Spirit, [the Church] is the universal sacrament of salvation and, therefore, missionary by its nature.	Current text (174,1-2) with changes and additions 2. <i>In the Church</i> , a community of faith <i>and love</i> (5) <i>enlivened by the Holy Spirit</i> (6) <i>on its pilgrim journey in time</i> (7), all the baptized, and especially religious <i>by virtue of their special consecration</i> (8), <i>are called to the grace of evangelisation and to fulfil the Lord's mandate</i> (9).
3. Through divine inspiration, Saint Francis renewed the missionary spirit of his time by the example of his life and the power of his Rule.	Current text (174,3) 3. Through divine inspiration, Saint Francis renewed the missionary spirit in his day by the example of his life and the force of his Rule. (10)
Moreover, he added momentum to those initiatives of the Church that are called missionary and through which the Gospel is proclaimed. In this way the coming Kingdom of God transforms the human person, creates a new world that is just and full of peace, [and] each day the Church is established and, day after day, becomes more perfect.	Current text (174,3) with changes and additions 4. <i>His brotherhood, living in fraternity and itinerancy</i> , (11), added momentum <i>to the Church's missionary activity for the proclamation of the gospel and the coming of the Kingdom</i> , which transforms the human person and creates a new world <i>in justice and in peace</i> (12).
4. Our Order accepts as its own the responsibility of spreading the Gospel that belongs to the whole Church. It regards and takes on this missionary work as one of its principal apostolic obligations	Current text (174,4) with changes and additions 5. <i>Therefore</i> (13) our Order accepts as its own the responsibility of spreading the Gospel, which belongs to the whole Church. <i>It values</i> missionary work and <i>undertakes it</i> (14) as one of its principal apostolic obligations <i>as a contribution to the renewal and building up of the Body of Christ</i> (15).
5. Missionaries are those brothers who bring the good news of salvation to all those in any continent or region who do not believe in Christ.	Current text (174,3) with changes 6. <i>In our apostolic fraternity</i> , all of us are called to bring the good news of salvation <i>to those</i> who do not believe in Christ, in whatever continent or region <i>they may find themselves</i> . <i>For this reason</i> , all of us consider ourselves to be missionaries (16).

<p>6. We recognize, however, the special situation of those brothers who engage in missionary activity in the service of newly established Churches.</p>	<p>Current text (174,3) reformulated, with additions (17) <i>7. Besides the missionary work undertaken in Christian communities able to disseminate evangelical witness in society, we recognise the special situation of those brothers who, leaving their own countries of origin, are sent to exercise their ministry in different social and cultural contexts where the gospel is unknown and the Church is not yet sufficiently established.</i></p>
	<p>New text <i>8. In the same way we recognise the missionary work of brothers sent to areas where there is an ancient Christian tradition in need of new evangelisation because the lives of entire groups of people are no longer informed by the gospel and many baptised people have lost a sense of faith, either partially or totally.</i></p>
	<p>New text <i>9. Let us therefore commit ourselves not to leave the Lord's missionary command unanswered or inoperative, aware that every person has the right to hear God's good news, so that they can live their vocation to the full (18).</i></p>

Explanatory notes

- (1) In the current Italian version the title of chapter XII is *The spread of the faith and the life of faith*. But the original Latin says *Faith to be spread and fostered*, the title chosen by the General Chapter of 1968, to replace *De fide disseminanda et servanda*, (“On spreading and keeping the faith”), which had been suggested by the C.C.L., and it has remained unchanged until today. *Project 2006* had proposed entitling the whole chapter: *Our mission to evangelise*. Our Commission proposes to say: “The Proclamation of the Gospel and the life of faith”.

In this way the chapter title already highlights the *proclamation of the gospel*, in obedience to the mandate (the *mission*) received from Christ. The same title more closely reflects a growing concern of the Church ever since Vatican II, symbolically expressed in the new title which Pope Paul gave to the old Mission Congregation established in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV: its new name was: *Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples* or “de Propaganda Fide”. The traditional title was kept as an alternative both out of respect for that Dicastery’s venerable history and because of the significance of the title, in which the gerund *propaganda* (from *propago*) stands for *propagation*, not the spread of propaganda. From this we can also understand that the Latin title of Chapter XII *de fide diffundenda*, or *de fide disseminanda* (the title proposed by the C.C.L.) was correct: evangelisation is not propaganda or proselytism, it is something you naturally do, as the fruit of being alive: *redundantia amoris!* (“an overflowing of love”).

- (2) The Commission also proposes to change the title of Article I (at present: *The missionary commitment of the Order*, in Latin: *De munere missionali Ordinis*). Here too the stress is on the commitment to *evangelise* (the verb is more concrete than the noun *evangelisation*), and it also refers to us: it is *our commitment*. The Order takes concrete form in brothers, as the General Minister says in his Circular Letter of 29 December 2009, *mission is for everyone* (2.4) and *belongs to everyone* (2.5): As Mattli said, we are all missionaries: “The missionary task does not of itself simply a special vocation different from that shared by all the friars ...” (PCO III, 11). Mission is intrinsic to the very vocation and calling to be a Capuchin lesser brother.
- “Granted that not all the brothers are called to actually leave their own country to do mission work, as sons of Saint Francis we are all called to be missionaries (PCO III 10). The Capuchin lesser brother cannot opt out of this commitment. A missionary obedience is not fulfilled only by leaving the country, but also by supporting the brother who does leave, by accompanying him in prayer, by offering concrete help and co-operation, and by encouraging other friars or lay people to assume responsibility for mission”.¹⁴
- (3) While keeping the content of the current text, its elements have been rearranged for the sake of greater logic: Christ; the Church; all the baptised and the religious in the Church.

¹⁴ Cfr. *Analecta OFM Cap* 125 [2009] 301.

- (4) It seems right to state directly that the Church *is established* as the sacrament of salvation, cf. *LG* n. 48: “Christ, having been lifted up from the earth has drawn all to Himself (cf. Jn 12,32). Rising from the dead (cf. Rm 6,9), He sent His life-giving Spirit upon His disciples and through Him has established His Body which is the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation. Sitting at the right hand of the Father, He is continually active in the world that He might lead men to the Church and through it join them more closely to Himself; and by nourishing them with his own body and blood, make them partakers of His glorious life”.
- (5) The addition of *and love* completes the phrase and evokes more clearly the aspect of the Church as Communion.
- (6) The Spirit is the life of the Church and gives it missionary vitality.
- (7) The adjective *pilgrim*, attributed to the Church, does not seem necessary; however, it is kept here, with the additional specification *in time*.
- (8) In the light of the documents of the magisterium (cf. *VC* 30) it is preferable to say *special consecration* (rather than *special dedication*).
- (9) The new formulation highlights the call (*they are called*) to evangelization, which is universal (for all the baptised) and specific (for religious). Here we are following the perspective of *Evangelii nuntiandi*, which considers evangelization as the calling that is proper to the Church. The current Constitutions already esteem evangelization as a grace. “Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of His death and glorious resurrection” (*Evangelii nuntiandi*, n. 14).
- (10) While keeping the whole of the first part of the current text, we propose some changes to part two. Keep in mind that at present the text of § 3 is made up of two periods. The first, which is fairly long, has Saint Francis as its subject, and it says of him that he *in his time... added momentum to those initiatives of the Church that are called missionary... Historically it is not easy to understand what exactly the statement refers to. Neither do the minutes of the 1968 General Chapter, which compiled the text, offer any particular guidance in the matter. The text proposed by the C.C.L. said very simply: Propter charisma Fundatoris sui necnon indolem et traditionem propriam, speciali modo illa Ecclesiae incepta participat (Ordo noster), quae Missiones communiter nuncupantur et plerumque exercentur...¹⁵. [“On account of the charisma of its Founder and its own tradition, our Order participates in a special way in those undertakings of the Church which are known as Missions and are generally undertaken...”]. At the Chapter itself the text was changed as follows: Sanctus Franciscus suo tempore, divina inspiratione, spiritum missionalem exemplo vitae et vi suae legislationis renovavit, et illis Ecclesiae inceptis impulsus dedit, quae missiones nuncupantur... [“In his day, Saint Francis, by divine inspiration, renewed the missionary spirit by the example of his life and the force of his legislation, and gave a boost to those undertakings of the Church which are known as Missions...”] While the first part of the text (*Sanctus Franciscus... renovavit*) was justified on the basis of the amendments presented by the Capitulars, no justification was given for the second¹⁶. When the text was subsequently edited and presented to the Chapter on 22 October 1968, the above-quoted text was altered by the single addition of the adverb *communiter* [commonly], inserted to make the text clearer: quae communiter missiones nuncupantur¹⁷. Finally, in the definitive text of 1968, instead of *vi suae legislationis* we have *vi suae Regulae*¹⁸ [by the force of his Rule]. The current text, approved by the General Chapter of 1982, revised by the post-capitular Commission¹⁹ and confirmed by the General Chapter of 1988, says: Sanctus Franciscus suo tempore, divina inspiratione, exemplo vitae et vi suae Regulae, spiritum missionalem renovavit, et illis Ecclesiae inceptis impulsus dedit, quae activitatis missionalis nomen accipiunt (Const 174,3). [“Through divine inspiration, Saint Francis renewed the missionary spirit in his day by the example of his life and the force of his Rule, and added momentum to those initiatives of the Church that are called missionary activity”].*

Taking account of what we have just said, in the *Proposed Revision* we prefer to distinguish two subjects: Saint Francis and our Fraternity. In this way we follow the perspective of the C.C.L., while at the same time taking into account the originality that was introduced into the Church with the rise of the mendicant Orders. So, the present § 3 is divided into two, first of all to affirm, with the current text, that *through divine inspiration, Saint Francis renewed the missionary spirit of his time by the example of his life and the power of his Rule* (§ 3). In the second affirmation, in § 4 and in § 6, the characteristic features *of the Franciscan brotherhood* in its initial moments are recalled (*minority, i-*

¹⁵ cf. *Schema Constitutionum nostrarum. Textus continuus quinquies emendatus cum indice alphabetico (Pro manuscripto ad usum PP. Capitularium)*. Romae, Officium Secretariatatus C.C.L., 1968; n. 201.

¹⁶ cf. *Acta 1968*, II, 322 and note 1.

¹⁷ cf. *Acta 1968*, II, 371 and note 4.

¹⁸ cf. *Acta 1968*, II, 461.

¹⁹ cf. *Iglesias*, I, 157.

tinancy, apostolicity), and these provided a new missionary impulse to a body which initially showed organisational flexibility”²⁰

- (11) Cf. previous note.
- (12) The changes proposed to § 4 are justified by reasons of style and form; they do not affect the content of the text. Note, however, that the last sentence of the current text has been deleted: *each day the Church is established and, day after day, becomes more perfect* (n. 174,3).
- (13) The word has been added to link this number to the preceding one.
- (14) *Values... and undertakes*: slight changes, made for stylistic reasons. In particular, *to value* is stronger than *to consider*; it is positive consideration, with esteem.
- (15) The content of the sentence deleted in § 4 is taken up here (cf. note 12), but it proposes a simpler formulation than the one currently in force (n. 174,3) which, since it depends on the Latin *Sic Ecclesia cotidie fundatur et in dies perfectior evadit*, could pose some problems of interpretation.
- (16) In the light of the General’s Circular Letter, *Mission at the heart of the Order* (29 Nov 2009), and strictly in line with the title of Article I, it seems appropriate that the Constitutions should state that we are all missionaries. The opening sentence of §1, with its reference to *our apostolic brotherhood* links up with a statement that recurs constantly in the Constitutions (*apostolic Order*), founded on the original charism (cf. *Proposed revision of Chapter I*, n. 4). In addition, the word “apostolic”, even etymologically, immediately suggests the idea of mission. The proposed formulation *we are all called...* is intended to present a vocation, which is *a universal calling* (i.e. one which we all share) and at the same time a *calling to universality*: we are sent “to [all] *those* who do not believe in Christ, in whatever continent or region *they find themselves*”. It seems fitting to note here with R. Cantalamessa: “We Catholics, because of our past, are more ready to be “pastors” than “fishers of men”. I mean we are better placed to shepherd the people who have remained faithful to the Church, than to bring in new people, or to “fish back” those who have drifted away. *The itinerant preaching which Francis chose for himself meets precisely this need*. It would be a shame if the existence of our own churches and large structures made us Franciscans only shepherds and not fishers of men. *Franciscans are “gospel people” thanks to their original vocation, the first true “evangelicals”*”²¹.
- (17) Both texts, §§ 7 and 8, clearly proposed *to enrich the Constitutions*, as requested by the General Chapter of 2006, are fully justified in the light of what has been explained in the Preface.
- (18) § 9 is there as a conclusion to the three (§§ 6-7-8) immediately preceding; its text derives from ... As formulated *in the form of an exhortation* it needs to be reconsidered, because it does not comply with the *declarative nature* of n. 177. Besides, n. 177 can be considered as being divided into two parts: the first (§§ 1-4), living the Christological and ecclesiological foundations of mission, plus the aspect of the Franciscan origins, which are the basic inspiration for mission in our Order; the second part - especially §§ 6-8 – appears as an *explicatio terminorum*.

N. 178 (175)

CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (2002)	PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS
1. As Saint Francis provided, missionary brothers can conduct themselves spiritually among non-Christians in two ways: either, while being subject to every human creature for God's sake, they give witness with great confidence to the Gospel life by their charity; or, when they see that it pleases God, they openly proclaim the word of salvation to non-believers that they may be baptized and become Christians.	Current text (175,1) 1. As Saint Francis provided, missionary brothers can conduct themselves spiritually among non-Christians in two ways: either, while being subject to every human creature for God's sake, they give witness with great confidence to the Gospel life by their charity; or, when they see that it pleases God, they openly proclaim the word of salvation to non-believers that they may be baptized and become Christians.
2. The brothers should willingly listen to members of the newly established Churches and dialogue with them, recognizing that particular Churches have already acquired a preferred role in the work of evangeli-	Current text (175,2) with changes and additions 2. (1) <i>On fire with love for Christ and sustained by the example of our holy missionaries</i> (2), let the brothers <i>go on mission impelled by the desire to serve the particular Chur-</i>

²⁰ cf, BENEDICT XVI, *The Mendicant Orders*. General Audience of 13 January, 2010.

²¹ R. CANTALAMESSA, “*Let us observe the Rule we have promised?*” [Conference held at] Assisi, Chapter of Mats, 15-04-2009 on the VIII Centenary of the approval of the Rule of Saint Francis; n. 4. Cf. Br. Mauro Jöhri, *Circular letter...* cit., n. 3.2.

zation. In this way it becomes clear that they have come to serve those Churches and their pastors.	ches and their pastors in the work of evangelisation (3).
(2) should willingly listen to members of the newly established Churches and dialogue with them... 178. 5. The summit of missionary activity should be considered the building up of the particular church in which the clergy, religious and laity shall have responsibility according to each one's competence.	Current text (175,2+178,5) with changes 3. <i>They should make this attitude evident by willingly listening to and engaging in dialogue with the other component parts of the Church, and should consider that the summit of missionary activity is the building up of the particular church, in which the clergy, religious and laity have responsibility according to their respective competence. (4).</i>
176, 6. The brothers should co-operate with lay missionaries, especially catechists, in work and programming and, with them, zealously care for the spiritual animation of the people, as well as their social and economic welfare.	Current text (176,6) 4. The brothers should co-operate with lay missionaries, especially catechists, in work and planning and, with them, zealously care for the spiritual animation of the people, as well as (5) their social and economic welfare.
3. As they evaluate historical, religious, social and cultural conditions in light of the gospel, let them act in a spirit of charity, with the freedom of the sons of God, and impelled by a prophetic spirit.	Current text (175,3) 5. As they evaluate historical, religious, social and cultural conditions in light of the gospel, let them act in a spirit of charity, with the freedom of the sons of God, and impelled by a prophetic spirit.
175, 4. Let them promote, in dialogue with Christian churches and non-Christian religions	New text with elements of the current text (175,4) 6. In dialogue with the other Christian churches and with the <i>various</i> religions, let them respectfully <i>seek the signs of God's presence and the seeds of the Word present in the different cultures. Taking their place with their own identity in the culture of the people among whom they live, and welcoming their genuine values, they should make them resplendent with the light of the gospel. (6).</i>
Let them promote... those changes that foster the coming of a new world and be attentive to ideas that influence the mentality and activity of peoples.	Current text (175,4 part) 7. Let them also promote those changes that foster the coming of a new world and be attentive to ideas that influence the mentality and activity of peoples. (7).

Explanatory notes

- (1) The beginning of the current text (175,2), as formulated (*recognizing that particular Churches have already acquired a preferred role in the work of evangelization*), seems rather dated. Today we may take it for granted that the “young Churches” have matured and have assumed a purely “local” appearance²². Therefore the proposed revision makes no reference to the current text.
- (2) We have accepted the proposal of *Project 2006* (n. 142,2) which, in another context, proposed a reminder that: From the beginning, our Order has recommended missionary activity, urging that it be entrusted to brothers who are on fire with love for Christ” (cf. *Const* 1925, n. 240). Most recently, the *Circular on Mission at the Heart of the Order* reminds us: “If the mission imperative is to go out to those who do not know or who have abandoned the Gospel, for the Capuchin lesser brother this involves going where no-one else is willing to go! Along with this goes a readiness to take on the fatigue of long, uncomfortable journeys, often living in very precarious conditions. *To do this one needs a heart on fire with love for God and people*”²³. The Commission felt that the expression should be completed by a mention of *the example of our holy missionaries*.
- (3) Part of the current text is taken up here (n. 175,2) adapting it to the new formulation.

²² *Ibid*, n. 1.7.

²³ *Ibid*, n. 1.7.

- (4) § 3 is composed of part of the present n. 175,2, modified to connect it to the previous §, and of the whole of n. 178,5. In this way we restore the intention behind the deleted part of n.175,2 (see above, note 1), and at the same time provide a better and more appropriate context for n. 178,5. Instead of being a recommendation addressed to all the brothers (as at present), it highlights an aspect of fundamental importance for missionaries in the service of the young Churches.
- (5) The addition of *as well as* was suggested by *Project 2006* (n. 139,2) “To avoid reducing missionary activity to social work alone” (note 396). At the same time it helps to express the fullness of the work of evangelisation. The Encyclical *Caritas in veritate* of Benedict XVI, linking up with *Evangelii nuntiandi* and *Populorum progressio* of Paul VI, recalls that “evangelization would not be complete if it did not take account of the unceasing interplay of the Gospel and of man’s concrete life, both personal and social.” “Between evangelization and human advancement — development and liberation — there are in fact profound links. On the basis of this insight, Paul VI clearly presented the relationship between the proclamation of Christ and the advancement of the individual in society. *Testimony to Christ’s charity, through works of justice, peace and development, is part and parcel of evangelization*, because Jesus Christ, who loves us, is concerned with the whole person. These important teachings form the basis for the missionary aspect of the Church’s social doctrine, which is an essential element of evangelization. The Church’s social doctrine proclaims and bears witness to faith. It is an instrument and an indispensable setting for formation in faith.” (n.15; cf. *Evangelii nuntiandi*, nn. 29.31; *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 41). For us religious the unbreakable link between evangelisation and human development had already been studied in depth in a special document published by the CICLSAL in 1978: *Religious and human development*. Complementary to this, the next document from CICLSAL (*The contemplative dimension of religious life*: March 1980) accentuated the spiritual foundations underlying all missionary activity.
- (6) *Project 2006* pointed out the inadequacy of the current n. 175,4 and, referring to n. 48 of PCO V and to n. 47 of PCO VII, replaced it with the following: “Therefore they should seek to enter into respectful dialogue, first of all with the other Churches, and then with non-Christian religions and finally with the other cultures, in order to discover common values that reveal the presence of God and can provide the basis for mutual respect in the proclamation of the gospel” (n. 138,5). The Commission proposes a different formulation, based on the conciliar Decree *Ad gentes* (n.11) and on *Vita consecrata* (n. 79), in order to underline respect for cultures on the one hand, and on the other the need for these to develop in the light of revelation and of the gospel message. In this way the *inculturation* aspect can be highlighted without confusing it with *acculturation*, both of which are stressed time and time again in the Constitutions. “In this sense our missionary activity should not be understood primarily in terms of how widely the Order is spread in the world, but rather as a way of making the charism of Saint Francis present in cultures where it is still unknown. Our presence is intended to have an impact on the surrounding reality in order to enrich it. In this it will not fail to be a support to the Christian community. If we are to be present in this way we must first be clear about our vocation as lesser brothers; this comes before both intellectual preparation and the desire to “go on the missions” (*Circular on Mission* [29 Nov 2009], n. 1.6). In this perspective attention is drawn to the proposed wording: *taking their place with their own identity in the culture of the people among whom they live... .* This is based on the awareness that the charism of the consecrated life, and of the Capuchin Franciscan life, contributes to the bringing the different cultures to fulfilment. “Genuine inculturation requires attitudes similar to those of the Lord when he became man and walked among us in love and meekness. In this sense the consecrated life makes its members particularly well suited to face the complex work of inculturation, because it accustoms them to being detached from things, even from many features of their own culture. *Applying themselves with these attitudes to the study and understanding of other cultures, consecrated persons can better discern the real values in them, and the best way to accept them and perfect them with the help of their own charism.* However, it should not be forgotten that in many ancient cultures religious expression is so deeply ingrained that religion often represents the transcendent dimension of the culture itself. In this case true inculturation necessarily entails a serious and open inter-religious dialogue, which “is not in opposition to the mission *ad gentes*” and “does not dispense from evangelization” (*Vita consecrata* n. 79).
- (7) The current text (n. 175,4) was introduced into the Constitutions by the General Chapter in 1982. According to the *Fontes aliaeque referentiae complementares* (sources) of our Constitutions²⁴, it seems that the inspiration behind it is the second part of PCO III (*New contexts*) and some passages (unspecified) from the conciliar documents *Gaudium et Spes*, *Nostra aetate*, and *Unitatis redintegratio*. But the same text of the Constitutions appears very generic, and therefore hard to understand (cf. also the previous note). Despite this, the text has been left in the Constitutions *as it stands*, but in a paragraph on its own. It should be clear from the context that it is linked to the previous §, especially its opening lines, which refer to the *dialogue with the other Christian Churches and with non-Christian religions*.

²⁴ cf. *Iglesias*, II, 43.

N. 179 (176)

CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (2002)	PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS
1. Brothers who feel they are called by divine inspiration to missionary activity in another region where evangelization is more urgent should make this known to the provincial minister. The provincial minister, however, may also call upon other qualified brothers willing to assume such work.	Current text (176,1) with changes and additions 1. Brothers who feel called by divine inspiration to missionary activity in regions where <i>the first proclamation is necessary, where young Churches need support and where new evangelisation is urgent</i> (1) should make their intention known to <i>their own</i> (2) minister. The provincial minister, however, may also call upon other qualified brothers willing to assume such work.
2. After a special doctrinal and practical preparation in missiology and ecumenism in keeping with each one's ability, the same minister should present them to the general minister who is responsible for granting letters of obedience.	Current text (176,2), modified 2. The same minister should provide <i>the brothers who are to be sent for mission</i> with theoretical and practical preparation in missiology and ecumenism <i>and inter-religious dialogue</i> (3), in keeping with each one's ability (4).
3. The ministers should not refuse to send suitable brothers because of a scarcity of brothers in the province, but let them cast their care and thought upon Him Who has continuing care of us.	Current text (176,3) 3. The ministers should not refuse to send suitable brothers because of a scarcity of brothers in the province, but let them cast their care and thought upon Him Who continually cares for us.
4. Different provinces of the Order should generously offer mutual assistance as opportunities arise and, through the general minister, offer missionaries and support to other circumscriptions in need of them.	Current text (176,4) 4. The different <i>circumscriptions</i> of the Order should generously offer mutual assistance as opportunities arise and, through the General Minister, offer missionaries and support to others <i>in greater need</i> (5).
5. Brothers may be invited to share in missionary work even for a while, especially to provide special services.	Current text (176,5) 5. Brothers may be invited to share in missionary work even for a while, especially to provide special services.
6. The brothers should co-operate with lay missionaries, especially with catechists, both in their activities and in their planning, and with them zealously provide spiritual inspiration. They should also try to promote the social and economic welfare of the people.	<i>Transferred to n. 178,4</i> (6)
	New text 6. <i>With regard to letters of obedience, the provisions of the Complementary Code are to be observed</i> (7).
7. Let superiors foster among the brothers a love and spirit of cooperation for missionary work. Let this be done in such a way that everyone, according to his own state and ability, may satisfy his missionary responsibility in fraternal communion with missionaries, by praying for the newly established Churches in union with them, and by awakening a concern among the Christian people.	Current text (176,7) 7. Let superiors (8) foster among the brothers a love for missionary work and a spirit of co-operation. This should be done in such a way that everyone, according to his own state and ability, may satisfy his missionary responsibility in fraternal communion with missionaries, by praying for the newly established Churches in union with them, and by awakening a concern among the Christian people.

Explanatory notes

- (1) The additions made to the text are explained by what is said in n. 177,7-8, and are proposed in order to stress the fact that missionary activity includes both *missio ad gentes* and *new evangelisation*.
- (2) We replace *provincial minister* by *their own minister* to give the text a wider scope, not restricted to the provinces alone.
- (3) The current text has been redrafted with an addition showing the specific kind of preparation missionary brothers should have (*and in inter-religious dialogue*).
- (4) The reference to letters of obedience is deleted here and included later in a separate paragraph.
- (5) For obvious reasons it is preferable to use the noun *circumscriptions* (replacing *provinces*).
- (6) § 6 of the current text (n. 176) has little to do with the specific context, which is about the preparation of missionaries, the missionary mandate and missionary animation within our circumscriptions and fraternities. Therefore we propose moving it to n. 178,4: this number deals with how to be missionary, which is a more appropriate context for the transferred number.
- (7) The new formulation of § 2 required the transfer of the reference to letters of obedience. Nor could the present formulation be maintained (*should present them to the General Minister, to whom it belongs to issue letters of obedience*), since the Order’s practice has changed. Besides, in Rb Saint Francis says: “Those brothers who, by divine inspiration, wish to go among the Saracens or other infidels, shall ask leave to go *from their provincial ministers*. *The ministers* shall not grant leave to go except to those whom they deem fit to be sent” (Rb Xii,1).
- (8) The term *superiors* has been kept, because here it refers not only to the ministers, but to all superiors.

N. 180 (177)

CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (2002)	PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS
1. Since the state of those who profess the gospel counsels belongs to the life and holiness of the Church and, for that reason, should be zealously promoted even from the period of the implantation of the Church, let missionary brothers strive to foster our charism in the particular Churches	Current text (177,1) with changes 1. Since the state of those who profess the gospel counsels belongs to the life and holiness of the Church, <i>the missionary brothers should</i> zealously promote it. They should especially foster our <i>spirit and the presence of</i> our charism in the particular Churches (1).
2. It is the responsibility of major superiors, therefore, to provide that brothers qualified for forming candidates of the Order be present among the missionaries.	Current text (177,2) 2. It is the responsibility of major superiors, therefore, to ensure that among the missionaries there are brothers qualified for forming candidates to the Order.
3. Let the form of our life and the spiritual heritage of our Order, which is universal and embraces all the rites of the Catholic church, be transmitted and expressed according to the circumstances of a region as well as to the unique character of each nation and particular church. Customs peculiar to one region should not be transplanted into another. It is the responsibility of the general minister, with the consent of the definitory, to decide the rite of individual jurisdictions, while observing the prescriptions of law.	Current text (177,3) 3. Let the form of our life and the spiritual heritage of our Order, which is universal and embraces all the rites of the Catholic church, be transmitted and expressed according to the circumstances of a region as well as to the unique character of each nation and particular church. Customs peculiar to one region should not be transplanted into another. It is the responsibility of the general minister, with the consent of the <i>Council</i> (2) to decide the rite of individual jurisdictions, while observing the prescriptions of law.

Explanatory notes

- (1) The text was changed to underscore the active commitment of our missionaries in the promotion of the various forms of consecrated life, and not only of our charism.
- (2) The alteration is a consequence of the choice to change the term *Definitory* to *Council* throughout the constitutional text. (cf. also later in chapter XII, n. 181,1-2-3).

N. 181 (178)

CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (2002)	PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS
1. The general minister, with the consent of the defnitory and in union with ecclesiastical authority, has the responsibility of promoting and coordinating missionary activity in the particular churches.	Current text (178,1) with changes 1. The General Minister, with the consent of the <i>Council</i> and in union with ecclesiastical authority, has the responsibility of promoting and coordinating missionary activity <i>of the Order</i> (1) in the particular churches.
2. After receiving the approval of the general minister with the consent of the defnitory, the provincial minister, with the consent of the defnitory, has the responsibility of accepting a missionary commitment proposed by the general minister as well as to underwrite agreements with the respective ecclesiastical superior.	Current text (178,2) with changes 2. After receiving the approval of the General Minister with the consent of his <i>Council</i> , the provincial minister, with the consent of the <i>Council</i> , has the responsibility of accepting a missionary commitment proposed by the general minister as well as to underwrite agreements with the respective ecclesiastical superior.
3. The general minister as well as the provincial ministers, with the consent of the defnitory, should establish a secretariat for missionary promotion and cooperation and determine its responsibility.	Current text (178,3) with changes and additions 3. The General Minister and the provincial ministers, with the consent <i>of their respective Councils</i> , should establish a secretariat for <i>evangelisation</i> (2), missionary animation and cooperation, and determine its responsibilities.
4. The brothers should cooperate diligently with religious institutes that engage in missionary work in a particular Church in the same territory or in missionary promotion at home.	Current text (178,4) with additions 4. Let the brothers cooperate diligently with religious institutes that <i>devote themselves to evangelization</i> or (3) engage in missionary work in a particular Church in the same territory or in missionary promotion at home.
5. The summit of missionary activity should be seen in the building up of the particular Church in which the clergy, religious and laity each have responsibility according to their respective competence.	<i>Transferred to n. 178,3</i> (4)

Explanatory notes

- (1) The addition of *of the Order* is necessary in this passage.
- (2) We add *evangelisation* so as to include the requirement for new evangelization, as previously indicated. The present situation, both in the Church and in the Order, with its urgent apostolic and missionary needs, calls for the mission secretariats to be rethought. These should not be understood simply as structures serving economic solidarity between the Order's jurisdictions and the Churches, but above all as structures for evangelisation and missionary formation, animation and promotion, both within and beyond the Order.
- (3) The reason for this addition has been explained several times.
- (4) The reason for the transfer to n. 178,3 has already been explained (cf. n. 178, explanatory note 4).

N. 182 (179)

CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (2002)	PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS
1. Let the brothers be mindful of Saint Francis who wished to send his companions into the world after the example of the disciples of Christ, in poverty with full trust in God the Father, proclaiming peace eve-	Current text (179,1) with changes 1. Let <i>us</i> (2) be mindful of Saint Francis, who wished to send his companions into the world after the example of the disciples of Christ, in poverty with full

rywhere by their life and word.	trust in God the Father, proclaiming peace everywhere by their life and word.
	<p>New text (2) <i>Following Capuchin tradition, we should incorporate ourselves wholeheartedly among people at every level of society (3), while not allowing ourselves to be conditioned by merely human reasons or considerations of power or security (4). Ready even to face difficult situations (5), let us place our trust in God and in the effectiveness of our gospel way of life (6).</i></p>
2. Let us commend this great undertaking to the intercession of the blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Good Shepherd, who gave birth to Christ, the light and salvation of all nations, and who, with the work of the Holy Spirit, was present on the morning of Pentecost at the beginnings of evangelization.	<p>Current text (179,2) 3. Let us commend this great undertaking to the intercession of the blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Good Shepherd, who gave birth to Christ, the light and salvation of all nations, and who, with the work of the Holy Spirit, was present on the morning of Pentecost at the beginnings of evangelization.</p>

Explanatory notes

- (1) In this concluding text of Article I it seems more pertinent to use the first person plural.
- (2) During its meeting the Commission agreed that it would be fitting to expand the current text (n. 179) which concludes Article I of Chapter XII. The drafting of § 2 was rather laborious; in the end, after several proposals, we agreed on a formulation inspired by n. 11 in the *Proposals* of PCO VI, which *Project 2006* (n. 137, 2-3) had made its own: “Our Capuchin history encourages us to resume and to update this form of immediate gospel presence among people of every class, with particular preference for those who are simple and poor. Consequently, we must strive to implement models of evangelisation that are less bound up with power and security arising from the quantity and the wealth of our resources, and instead be ready to let the poor be our teachers and to place our trust in God alone”.
- (3) The opening reference to Capuchin tradition is there to remind us of our typical characteristic as “brothers of the people”. At the same time it brings out the urgency of persevering wholeheartedly— i.e. *putting our whole heart into it* — in that same tradition of closeness to the people, preserving our aptitude for approachability and making it easy for people to listen to us ²⁵.
- (4) Once again, one of the characteristics of our minority is emphasised here: that we choose to use “poor means” and forms of evangelization that have nothing to do with power or economic security. The text is inspired by *Project 2006* (n. 137,2-3) and by a text that had been inserted after § 4 of n. 178, as a logical continuation of the exhortation to promote the social and economic well-being of people: “But their work of evangelisation should not be tied to secure economic resources, which can lead to exercising dominion over others. Instead, renouncing all social prestige, let them entrust the efficiency of their apostolate above all to the daily witness of living as lesser brothers”.
- (5) *Ready even to face difficult situations* is similar to a phrase expressed earlier in Chapter IX: *we should generously undertake humbler tasks that are regarded as especially difficult* (n. 148, 7). But as the same number in chapter IX says, this must happen because we are *moved by love for the Father who sees in secret and take no pride in the fact*. “To go where no one else is willing to go must be a key part of the Capuchin life-plan”, and it has always been faithfully practised in our history, but this cannot be said in words; to proclaim the fact would hardly be a sign of minority, but of triumphalism.
- (6) The final phrase *effectiveness of our gospel way of life* is intended to evoke the tension between *the efficiency* of our resources and the *effectiveness* of the witness we give through our form of life. At the same time, it alludes to the most essential aspect of the entire work of evangelisation²⁶ and of all missionary activity: to go about in the world in simplicity, living the radicalism of the beatitudes, and, thirsting for the Absolute, which is God, to offer our silent witness of poverty and detachment, of purity and transparency, of abandonment in obedience.

²⁵ cf. PAUL VI, *Audience to the Minister General and Definitory OFM Cap* (20 February, 1971).

²⁶ cf. *Evangelii nuntiandi*, n. 69; *Circular letter on Mission at the heart of the Order*, n. 3.2.

ARTICLE II
Our (1) Life of Faith

N. 183 (180)

CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (2002)	PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS
1. As true disciples of the Lord and sons of Saint Francis, let us preserve, with the help of divine grace, the faith that we have received from God through the Church. With all our energies and sound judgment, let us enter more profoundly into [this faith] and apply it ever more fully to our life.	Current text (180,1) with changes 1. As true disciples of the Lord and sons of Saint Francis, let us preserve, with the help of divine grace, the faith that we have received from God through the Church. With all our energies and sound judgment <i>let us ensure that our lives are more and more shaped by the faith and that it directs everything we do</i> (2).
2. We should implore God through diligent prayer for an increase of this inestimable gift and live in intimate union with the entire People of God.	Current text (180,2) 2. We should implore God through diligent prayer for an increase of this inestimable gift and live in intimate union with the entire People of God.
3. Led by the Holy Spirit, let us bear witness to Christ everywhere and, to those who ask, let us explain that hope of eternal life which is within us.	Current text (180,3) with additions 3. <i>Since faith is strengthened by sharing it</i> (3), <i>we should never tire</i> (4) of bearing witness to Christ everywhere, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. To those who ask, let us explain the hope of eternal life that is within us.

Explanatory notes

- (1) The title of Article II, *The Brothers' Life of Faith*, has been changed to *Our Life of Faith*, following the principle we have adopted, as far as possible, for all titles in the Constitutions. However, the title of this article will need more reflection, because it does not speak about our life of faith as such, but about our commitment to grow in the faith and to cultivate it. Significantly, in the Latin text of the Constitutions the title of Chapter XII is: *De fide diffundenda et colenda*. ("The faith to be spread and fostered")
- (2) The wording of the last sentence is meant to reinforce the concept expressed in the entire number.
- (3) The new opening phrase in the § expresses the link between proclamation of the faith (Article I) and the life of faith of the person who proclaims it.
- (4) This stylistic addition strengthens the overall impact of the entire number.

N. 184 (181)

CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (2002)	PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS
1. Saint Francis profoundly desired to adhere faithfully to the magisterium of the Church as the guardian of the written and spoken word of God as well as of the gospel life.	Current text (181,1) 1. Saint Francis profoundly desired to adhere faithfully to the magisterium of the Church as the guardian of the written and spoken word of God as well as of the gospel life.
2. In order to preserve this spiritual heritage intact, let us nourish a special devotion to holy Mother Church.	Current text (181,2) 2. In order to preserve this spiritual heritage intact, let us nourish a special devotion to holy Mother Church.
3. Let us be one with the Church in all things: in thought, word and action, diligently avoiding false or pernicious doctrines.	Current text (181,3) 3. Let us therefore be one with the Church in all things: in thought, word and action, diligently avoid-

	ding false or pernicious doctrines.
4. Led by a sense of an active and responsible conscience, let us offer religious submission of intellect and will to the Roman Pontiff, the supreme teacher of the universal Church, as well as to the bishops who, as witnesses to the faith, teach the people of God in union with the Supreme Pontiff.	Current text (181,4) modified 4. Led by a sense of an active and responsible conscience, let us offer religious submission of intellect and will to the Roman Pontiff, the supreme teacher of the universal Church, and (1) to the bishops who, as witnesses to the faith, teach the people of God in union with the Supreme Pontiff.
5. At the beginning of their term of office, the superiors and the other brothers should make a profession of faith, as decreed in law.	Current text (181,5) 5. At the beginning of their term of office, the superiors and the other brothers shall make a profession of faith, as decreed in law.

N. 185 (182)

CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (2002)	PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS
1. Responding to the divine vocation through which God each day requests us to take part in carrying out His plan of salvation, let us remember how closely we are bound to Christ before the people of God by virtue of profession.	Current text (182,1) 1. Responding to the divine vocation through which God each day requests us to take part in carrying out His plan of salvation, let us remember how closely we are bound to Christ before the people of God by virtue of profession.
2. Let us strive, therefore, to walk worthily and to excel all the more in the vocation to which we are called, remembering that God never gives His gifts or, therefore, a vocation in vain. His grace will not fail us in overcoming difficulties on this narrow path that leads to life.	Current text (182,2) 2. Let us strive, therefore, to walk worthily and to excel all the more in the vocation to which we are called, remembering that God never gives His gifts or, therefore, a vocation in vain. His grace will not fail us in overcoming difficulties on this narrow path that leads to life.
3. Zealously dedicating ourselves to our renewal, let us persevere with a joyful heart in the commitment of our life. Yet, conscious of our human frailty, let us move forward on the way of conversion with the entire Church that is always being renewed by the Holy Spirit.	Current text (182,3) 3. Zealously dedicating ourselves to our renewal, let us persevere with a joyful heart in the commitment of our life. Yet, conscious of our human frailty, let us move forward on the way of conversion with the entire Church that is always being renewed by the Holy Spirit.

Preliminary note

As already noted in the Preface, the Commission proposes the same structural arrangement of the material as in the current text, while reserving the right to think again – in the light of the Order's suggestions – about the position of the following numbers: should they be left in their current position or inserted into Chapter I? The possible new positioning of the texts concerned – which at this stage is only a hypothesis – is added as an Appendix to this Proposed Revision.

n. 186 (183)

CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (2002)	PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS
183,1. By virtue of our profession, we must observe the Rule of Saint Francis, confirmed by Pope Honorius, simply and in a catholic manner.	Current text (183,1) with changes and additions 1. The Rule of Saint Francis, confirmed by Pope Honorius III, <i>is the foundation and source of every other law in our Order</i> (1). By virtue of our profession, we are bound to observe <i>it</i> simply and with Catholic faith, <i>in accordance with these Constitutions</i> (2).
2. Its authentic interpretation is reserved to the Holy See which has abrogated earlier pontifical declarations on the Rule only as regards their preceptive force, excepting those contained in the existing universal law and in these Constitutions.	Current text (183,2) 2. Its authentic interpretation is reserved to the Holy See, which has abrogated earlier pontifical declarations on the Rule only as regards their prescriptive force, excepting those contained in the existing universal law and in these Constitutions.
3. Furthermore, the Holy See recognizes the right of the General Chapter to adapt the Rule to new circumstances when appropriate. But these adaptations obtain the force of law only through the approval of the Holy See.	Current text (183,3) 3. Furthermore, the Holy See recognizes the right of the General Chapter to adapt the Rule to new circumstances when appropriate. But these adaptations obtain the force of law only through the approval of the Holy See.

Explanatory notes

- (1) The text has been expanded by resuming the formulation adopted at the General Chapter of 1974²⁷. It seems more than appropriate to state in the Constitutions that the Rule is the foundation of all other law in the Order. By doing so, the relevance and topicality of the Rule is asserted: the Rule is not a venerable document from the past, a fine museum piece, but an indispensable *guide* on how to relive the gospel life embodied in the life of Francis and in the Rule itself.²⁸ Besides, if the Constitutions themselves are an aid to the constant improvement of our observance of the Rule, it is clear that they must find in the Rule their primary source of inspiration.
- (2) The adaptation follows the Formula of Profession (cf. Const. 20,4).

N. 187 (184)

CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (2002)	PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS
1. The authentic interpretation of the Constitutions is reserved to the Holy See. The General Chapter, with the consent of two-thirds of the vocals, may add to, change, repeal or abrogate the Constitutions, according to the needs of the times, so that appropriate renewal, with a certain continuity, may be fostered. [Such acts, however, require] the approval of the Holy See.	Current text (184,1) 1. The authentic interpretation of the Constitutions is reserved to the Holy See. The General Chapter, with the consent of two-thirds of the vocals, may add to, change, repeal or abrogate the Constitutions, according to the needs of the times, so that appropriate renewal, with a certain continuity, may be fostered. Such acts, however, require the approval of the Holy See.
2. Outside the chapter, the general minister, with the consent of the definitory, has the right to settle doubts or to fill in the lacunas that may occur in our	Current text (184,2) 2. Outside the chapter, the General Minister, with the consent of the <i>Council</i> , has the right to settle doubts

²⁷ cf. *Analecta OFM Cap* 90 (1974) 341-347; *Constitutiones Fratrum Minorum Capuccinorum*, iussu Definitorii generalis editae. Romae, Curia generalis OFM Cap, 1975; n. 5.

²⁸ cf. O. SCHMUCKI, *Gli Scritti legislativi di san Francesco in Approccio storico-critico alle Fonti Francescane*. Roma 1979; 98.

own law; these solutions remain in force until the next chapter.	or to fill in the lacunae that may occur in our own law; these solutions remain in force until the next chapter.
3. In particular cases, superiors may dispense their own subjects and guests according to circumstances from disciplinary regulations of the Constitutions, whenever they judge that it would be beneficial for their spiritual good.	Current text (184,3) 3. In particular cases, superiors may dispense their own subjects and guests according to circumstances from disciplinary regulations of the Constitutions, whenever they judge that it would be beneficial for their spiritual good.
4. A temporary dispensation of an entire province is reserved to the general minister, of an entire fraternity to its own major superior.	Current text (184,4) 4. A temporary dispensation of an entire province is reserved to the General Minister, of an entire fraternity to its own major superior.
5. Provincial chapters or the Conferences of Major Superiors may enact special statutes that must be approved by the general minister with the consent of the definitory, so that the prescriptions of the Constitutions may be appropriately applied according to the circumstances of provinces and regions.	Current text (184,5) 5. Provincial chapters or the Conferences of Major Superiors may enact special statutes that must be approved by the General Minister with the consent of the <i>Council</i> , so that the prescriptions of the Constitutions may be appropriately applied according to the circumstances of provinces and regions.
6. All questions of conflicting rights whether between religious or houses or between circumscriptions of the Order are resolved according to our <i>Modus procedendi</i> .	Current text (184,6) 6. All questions of conflicting rights whether between religious or houses or between circumscriptions of the Order are resolved according to our “ <i>Modus procedendi</i> ”.

N. 188 (185)

CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (2002)	PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS
1. Our Order is governed by the universal law of the Church, the Rule and the Constitutions. Only this text of the Constitutions has juridical force in the entire Order.	Current text (185,1) 1. Our Order is governed by the universal law of the Church, the Rule and the Constitutions. Only this text of the Constitutions has juridical force in the entire Order.
2. Since laws and statutes cannot be made for every particular case, in all our actions let us keep before our eyes the Holy Gospel, the Rule we have promised to God, sound traditions and the example of the saints.	Current text (185,2) 2. Since laws and statutes cannot be made for every particular case, in all our actions let us keep before our eyes the Holy Gospel, the Rule we have promised to God, sound traditions and the example of the saints.
3. Let superiors lead the brothers in the life of our fraternity and in the observance of the Constitutions, and inspire them in adhering to these Constitutions as a daring adventure of love.	Current text (185,3) Let superiors lead the brothers in the life of our fraternity and in the observance of the <i>Rule and (2) Constitutions</i> , and inspire them in adhering to these Constitutions as a daring adventure of love.

CONCLUSION

N. 189 (186)

CURRENT CONSTITUTIONS (2002)	PROPOSED REVISION: CONSTITUTIONS
<p>1. When near death, Saint Francis imparted the blessing of the most holy Trinity, together with his own, upon sincere observers of the Rule. Therefore, after casting aside every negligence, let all of us endeavor with fervent love to follow the gospel perfection manifested in the Rule itself and in our Order.</p>	<p>Current text (n. 186,1) 1. When he was near to death, Saint Francis imparted the blessing of the most holy Trinity, together with his own, upon sincere observers of the Rule. Therefore, casting aside all negligence, let us all strive with fervent love to attain the gospel perfection manifested in the Rule itself and in our Order.</p>
<p>2. Let us remember, dearest brothers, the text on which our seraphic Father preached to a chapter of the brothers: 'Great things have we promised to God, but greater things has He promised to us.' For this reason, let us strive to observe these Constitutions and whatever we have promised, and, with a burning desire, aspire to those goods that have been promised to us, with the help of Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother.</p>	<p>Current text (n. 186,2) 2. Let us remember, dearest brothers, the text on which our seraphic Father preached to a chapter of the brothers: 'Great things have we promised to God, but greater things has He promised to us'. Let us therefore strive to observe these Constitutions and whatever we have promised, and, with a burning desire, yearn for the things that have been promised to us, with the help of Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother.</p>
<p>3. While pursuing all these things, let us cast our eyes upon our Redeemer that, knowing his good pleasure, we may strive to please Him with pure love. Observance of the Constitutions will help us not only to observe the Rule we have promised but also to fulfill the divine law and follow the gospel counsels. As our labors abound so will our consolation in Christ Jesus. We will be able to do all things in Him Who strengthens us, for He Who is the Wisdom of God grants us understanding in everything and gives abundantly to all.</p>	<p>Current text (n. 186,3) 3. While pursuing all these things, let us cast our eyes upon our Redeemer so that, knowing His good pleasure, we may strive to please Him with pure love. Observance of the Constitutions will help us not only to observe the Rule we have promised but also to fulfill the divine law and follow the gospel counsels. As our labors abound, so will our consolation in Christ Jesus. We will be able to do all things in Him Who strengthens us, for He Who is the Wisdom of God and gives abundantly to all will grant us understanding in everything.</p>
<p>4. Christ then, Who is the Light and Expectation of the nations, the End of the Law, the Salvation of God, the Father of the world to come, the Word and the Power that upholds all things and, lastly, our Hope, in Whom all things are possible, delightful and easy, and to Whom our frailty is known, will not only give us strength for following His commands and counsels, but will also pour out His heavenly gifts in such abundance that, after overcoming all obstacles, we may be able to follow and imitate Him with the greatest eagerness of our hearts, using visible things as passers-by and as those yearning for things eternal.</p>	<p>Current text (n. 186,4) 4. Christ then, Who is the Light and Expectation of the nations, the End of the Law, the Salvation of God, the Father of the world to come, the Word and the Power that upholds all things and, finally, our Hope, in Whom all things are possible, delightful and easy, and to Whom our frailty is known, will not only give us strength to follow His commands and counsels, but will also pour out His heavenly gifts in such abundance that, having overcome all obstacles, we may be able to follow and imitate Him with the greatest eagerness in our hearts, using visible things as strangers and yearning for things eternal.</p>

<p>5. In Christ, Who is God and Man, the True Light, the Splendor of Glory, and the Brilliance of Eternal Light; in Christ, the Mirror without blemish, the Image of the Goodness of God; in Christ, appointed by the Father as the Judge, Law-giver, and Savior of all peoples; in Christ, to Whom the Father and Holy Spirit have borne witness and in Whom are our merit, model of life, help and reward; in Christ, Who by God has been made for us Wisdom and Justice, be all our thought, meditation and imitation.</p>	<p>Current text (n. 186,5) 5. On Christ, therefore, Who is God and Man, True Light, Splendor of Glory, and Brilliance of Eternal Light; on Christ, the Mirror without blemish, the Image of God’s Goodness; on Christ, appointed by the Father as Judge, Law-giver and Savior of all peoples; on Christ, to Whom the Father and Holy Spirit have borne witness and in Whom are our merits, our model of life, our help and our reward; on Christ, Whom God has made our Wisdom and Justice, be all our thought, meditation and imitation.</p>
<p>6. Lastly, to Christ, Who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, co-eternal, consubstantial, and co-equal, be everlasting praise, honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.</p>	<p>Current text (n. 186,6) 6. Lastly, to Christ, Who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, co-eternal, consubstantial, and co-equal, be everlasting praise, honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.</p>

APPENDIX
Possible new positioning of the texts in chapter XII

Chapter I

For nos. 1 to 6 cf. proposed revision of Chapter I, previously sent out to the Order

Position in the current Constitutions	Text (according to Proposed revision)	Possible position in the proposed revision
Chapter I, n. 5	1. The Rule of Saint Francis, flowing from the Gospel, spurs us on to live the gospel life.	Chapter I, n. 7
	2. <i>Following the example of our saints</i> , we should eagerly strive to grasp the spiritual meaning of the Rule, and to observe it simply and purely, through the Spirit working in us, just as our Founder himself cautioned in his Testament, in accordance with the spirit and the gospel intentions of the first Capuchin brothers <i>and the living tradition of the Order</i> .	
	3. <i>The ministers and guardians</i> , together with <i>their fraternities</i> , should be keen to promote knowledge, love and observance of the Rule.	
	4. So that the Rule and intentions of our Father and law-giver may be <i>always</i> faithfully observed throughout the world, the <i>ministers</i> should take <i>diligent</i> care to seek the most suitable ways for the brothers to live their lives and conduct their apostolates, even in a variety of forms, according to different regions and cultures and the needs of times and places.	
	5. True pluriformity, in fact, is based on fraternal communion and obedience to superiors, safeguarding always the unity of the same genuine spirit. In this way, evangelical freedom of action is ensured, especially in what concerns the renewal, <i>vigour and fruitfulness</i> of our life, so that the spirit is not extinguished.	

Chapter XII, n. 183	1. The Rule of <i>Saint Francis</i> , approved by Pope Honorius III, is the foundation and source of every other law in our Order. Its authentic interpretation is reserved to the Holy See which has abrogated earlier pontifical declarations on the same Rule as regards their binding force, excepting those contained in the existing universal law and in these Constitutions.		Chapter I, n. /71
	2. Furthermore, the Holy See recognizes the right of the General Chapter to adapt the Rule to new circumstances when appropriate. But these adaptations obtain the force of law only through the approval of the Holy See.		
Chapter I, n. 6	1. Our Seraphic Father dictated the Testament when, being close to death, marked with the sacred stigmata and filled with the Holy Spirit, he more eagerly longed for our salvation.		Chapter I, n. 8
	2. In it he recalls his gospel experience and puts it forward once more, expresses his last will and entrusts to us the precious inheritance of his spirit.		
	3. The Testament was given to us so that we might constantly improve our observance of the Rule we have professed, according to the mind of the Church.		
	4. Therefore, continuing the tradition of our Order, we accept the Testament as the primary spiritual explanation of the Rule and an outstanding source of inspiration for our life.		

Chapter I, n. 7	1. The purpose of the Constitutions is to help us to observe the Rule better and more perfectly in the changing circumstances of our life.		Chapter I, n. 9
	2. In them we find solid support for our spiritual renewal in Christ and effective help to bring to fulfilment the consecration of our life, which each brother has made totally to God.		
	3. We should observe the Constitutions, to which we are bound by virtue of our religious profession, not as slaves but as sons who desire to love God above all things in Christ, listening to the Holy Spirit instructing		

	us, and intent on the glory of God and the salvation of our neighbour.		
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Chapter XII, n. 184	1. The authentic interpretation of the Constitutions is reserved to the Holy See. The General Chapter, with the consent of two-thirds of the vocals, may add to, change, repeal or abrogate the Constitutions, according to the needs of the times, so that appropriate renewal, with a certain continuity, may be fostered. Such acts, however, require the approval of the Holy See.	Chapter I, n. 9/1
	2. Outside the chapter, the General Minister, with the consent of the Council, has the right to settle doubts or to fill in the lacunae that may occur in our own law; these solutions remain in force until the next chapter.	
	3. In particular cases, superiors may dispense their own subjects and guests according to circumstances from disciplinary regulations of the Constitutions <i>and of the Complementary Code</i> , whenever they judge that it would be beneficial for their spiritual good.	
	4. A temporary dispensation of an entire province is reserved to the general minister, of an entire fraternity to its own major superior.	
	5. Provincial chapters or the Conferences of Major Superiors may enact special statutes that must be approved by the general minister with the consent of the <i>Council</i> , so that the prescriptions of the Constitutions <i>and of the Complementary Code</i> may be appropriately applied according to the circumstances of provinces and regions.	
	6. All questions of conflicting rights whether between religious or houses or between circumscriptions of the Order are resolved according to our “Modus procedendi”	
	7. Our Order is governed by the universal law of the Church, the Rule and the Constitutions, <i>and the Complementary Code</i> . Only this text of the Constitutions <i>and the Complementary Code</i> have juridical force in the entire Order(1).	

Explanatory note

(1) We will need to assess whether the contents of this number (9/1 = Current text n. 184), reproduced above, should be maintained in its entirety in the Constitutions, or whether part of it (cf. §§ 2-7) can be transferred to the Complementary Code. On this point, see the proposals of *Project 2006* regarding the *General Statutes*²⁹.

²⁹ The *General Statutes* of *Project 2006*, in Chapter I, under the title *Particular Law for our Life as Capuchin Lesser Brothers*, make the following provisions:

1/1. (*Const. 185.1*)

1. Our Order, as a whole and in its sub-divisions, is governed by the universal law of the Church and by its own law.

2. Its own law comprises the Rule, the Constitutions, and the General Statutes, and also norms which the Order, through the General Statutes, and each conference, province, vice-province, custody, delegation and house, may adopt with the approval of the competent authority.

1/2.

Chapter I, n. 7	1. <i>We should lovingly apply ourselves to personal study and careful, meditative reading, conducted also in community</i> , of the Rule, the Testament and the Constitutions, so that we become deeply imbued with their spirit.	Chapter I, n. 9/2 (current n. 9, §§ 4-5)
	2. <i>Let us commit ourselves also to observe the other norms of our particular law which complement the Constitutions.</i>	

Chapter XII

Position in the current Constitutions	Text (according to the Proposed revision)	Possible position in the proposed revision
Chapter XII, n. 182	1. Responding to the divine vocation through which God each day requests us to take part in carrying out His plan of salvation, let us remember how closely we are bound to Christ before the people of God by virtue of profession.	Chapter XII, n. 185
	2. Let us strive, therefore, to walk worthily and to excel all the more in the vocation to which we are called, remembering that God never gives His gifts or, therefore, a vocation in vain. His grace will not fail us in overcoming difficulties on this narrow path that leads to life.	
	3. Zealously dedicating ourselves to our renewal, let us persevere with a joyful heart in the commitment of our life. Yet, conscious of our human frailty, let us move forward on the way of conversion with the entire Church that is always being renewed by the Holy Spirit.	
Chapter XII, n. 183,1	4. Let <i>us therefore</i> observe simply and with Catholic	

(*Const. 185.1*) The texts of the Constitutions and General Statutes have juridical value in the entire Order, while subordinate law is valid for those structures for which it was approved.

1/3.

(*new; cf Const. 184.1*) It is for the General Chapter, by an absolute majority, both to approve the General Statutes and to add to, modify, derogate from or repeal them, according to the needs of the times and the requirements of renewal, but as far as possible maintaining fidelity to our tradition.

1/4.

(*new; cf Const. 184.1.2*) The authentic interpretation of the General Statutes is reserved to the General Chapter. Outside the General Chapter the General Minister, with the consent of the Definitory, has the authority to settle any doubts and fill in any gaps that may exist. These solutions remain in force until the next Chapter.

1/5.

(*new; cf Const. 184.3.4*) It is for the General Minister, with the consent of the Definitory, to grant a temporary dispensation, in each particular case, from observance of the General Statutes. The other ministers have this power in accordance with the competence granted to them by the General Statutes.

1/6.

(*Const. 184.5*) It is for the General Minister, with the consent of the Definitory, to approve particular statutes drafted by the conferences of ministers, so that the Constitutions and the General Statutes may be properly applied to the conditions prevailing in the circumscriptions.

1/7.

In our Order, the term “*ministers*” is to be understood as : the general minister and the provincial minister, with their respective vicars; the vice-provincial and the custodian custodian.

1/8.

Within the ambit of that part of the institute entrusted to their governance, the following are ordinaries: the general minister and the provincial minister, with their respective vicars; the vice-provincial and the custodian custodian (*cf can. 134 §1*).

	faith, <i>in accordance with these Constitutions</i> , the Rule of Saint Francis, confirmed by Pope Honorius, to <i>which we are bound</i> in virtue of our profession.	
Chapter XII, n. 185,3	5. Let superiors lead the brothers in the life of our fraternity and in the observance of the <i>Rule and Constitutions</i> , and inspire them in adhering to these Constitutions as a daring adventure of love. (2).	Chapter XII, n. 185
Chapter XII, n. 185, 2	6. Since laws and statutes cannot be made for every particular case, in all our actions let us keep before our eyes the Holy Gospel, the Rule we have promised to God, the sound traditions and the example of the saints.	Chapter XII, n. 185

CONCLUSION

(cf. PR n. 189 = Current text n. 186)

1. When he was near to death, Saint Francis imparted the blessing of the most holy Trinity, together with his own, upon sincere observers of the Rule. Therefore, casting aside all negligence, let us all strive with fervent love to attain the gospel perfection manifested in the Rule itself and in our Order.

2. Let us remember, dearest brothers, the text on which our seraphic Father preached to a chapter of the brothers: 'Great things have we promised to God, but greater things has He promised to us.' Let us therefore strive to observe these Constitutions and whatever we have promised, and, with a burning desire, yearn for the things that have been promised to us, with the help of Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother.

3. While pursuing all these things, let us cast our eyes upon our Redeemer so that, knowing His good pleasure, we may strive to please Him with pure love. Observance of the Constitutions will help us not only to observe the Rule we have promised but also to fulfill the divine law and follow the gospel counsels. As our labors abound, so will our consolation in Christ Jesus. We will be able to do all things in Him Who strengthens us, for He Who is the Wisdom of God and gives abundantly to all will grant us understanding in everything.

4. Christ then, Who is the Light and Expectation of the nations, the End of the Law, the Salvation of God, the Father of the world to come, the Word and the Power that upholds all things and, finally, our Hope, in Whom all things are possible, delightful and easy, and to Whom our frailty is known, will not only give us strength to follow His commands and counsels, but will also pour out His heavenly gifts in such abundance that, having overcome all obstacles, we may be able to follow and imitate Him with the greatest eagerness in our hearts, using visible things as strangers and yearning for things eternal.

5. On Christ, therefore, Who is God and Man, True Light, Splendor of Glory, and Brilliance of Eternal Light; on Christ, the Mirror without blemish, the Image of God's Goodness; on Christ, appointed by the Father as Judge, Law-giver and Savior of all peoples; on Christ, to Whom the Father and Holy Spirit have borne witness and in Whom are our merits, our model of life, our help and our reward; on Christ, Whom God has made our Wisdom and Justice, be all our thought, meditation and imitation.

6. Lastly, to Christ, Who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, co-eternal, consubstantial, and co-equal, be everlasting praise, honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.