

THE RITE OF RELIGIOUS PROFESSION



**COMBONI MISSIONARIES
OF THE HEART OF JESUS**

Imprimatur - Fr. Alberto Pelucchi, *Vicar General*

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Introductions and Proper Texts translated by Fr. David Kinnear Glenday

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Letter of presentation from the Superior General

Dear confreres,

It is with joy that I here present to the whole Institute the Rite of Religious Profession approved by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments on the 23rd June, 2007 (Prot. 284/07/L).

In this way one of the wishes of Vatican II, as expressed in the introduction to the Rite of Religious Profession of 2nd February 1970, is fulfilled, namely, that “religious families should adapt the rite so that it more closely reflects and manifests the character and spirit of each Institute” (no. 14).

Indeed, in consequence of the grace of our Founder’s canonization, St Daniel Comboni must become ever more a source of inspiration for us; so that we gain an ever deeper perception of the way our religious consecration and missionary life are intimately linked, the two realities lived together as our one “Comboni missionary consecration”.


The conciliar Constitution *Lumen Gentium* situated religious life within the reality of baptismal consecration, and thus within the mystery of Christ and his mission. In this perspective, religious life is perceived in the first place as a gift (*consecrantur*), the awareness of which elicits a response worthy of the mystery and mission received (cf. LG 44). Some years after the Council, a text of our own Capitular Documents moved in the same direction, declaring religious life in the Institute to be a “*consecration to the Heart of Christ for the missions*” (Chapter Documents 1969, Part One, no. 85), or, in our current usage, a “missionary consecration”. It is to these depths that our Founder himself leads us, so that our missionary and religious life may acquire ever greater meaning and power of witness.

So in communion with all those who have gone before us, living out to the full this missionary and religious life as a gift, and thus being led to share in and respond to the consecration of Christ to the Father for the world, I express the hope that all the values proposed by this Rite be assimilated in a deeper experience of Christ and of a more radical self-giving, for the sake of those to whom the Lord sends us to bring the Good News.

In this way, our religious life and our missionary life, in vital union, will come to be the prophetic sign of a new world, and the expression of the values of the Kingdom.

Fraternally yours,

Rome, 30 May 2008
Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



Fr. Teresino Serra
Superior General

RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

INTRODUCTORY
CONSIDERATIONS

NOTES

The present edition contains the INTRODUCTION and THE RITE OF RELIGIOUS PROFESSION which include: Initiation to Religious Life, First Profession during Mass, Perpetual Profession during Mass, Renewal of Vows during Mass and on the Twenty-fifth and Fiftieth Anniversaries of Religious Profession.

The texts, adapted according to the charism of the Institute of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, were approved by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments on the 23rd June 2007 with Prot. 284/07/L.

It seemed, however, opportune to introduce the texts with some brief preliminary theological and liturgical considerations, so as to favour their easier assimilation and encourage further reflection. In adapting the texts, as permitted, to the reality of the Comboni Missionaries, and so to the lives of persons dedicated exclusively to the “missio ad gentes”, reference was made to the following documents:

- the Decree on the Renewal of Religious Life, *Perfectae caritatis* (1965);
- the Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity, *Ad gentes* (1965);
- the Introduction to the *Rite of Profession* in the Italian edition (1970);
- the Letter of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments to the superiors general of religious orders (1970);
- the Apostolic Exhortation on the Evangelization of the Modern World, *Evangelii nuntiandi* (1975);
- the Encyclical Letter on the Permanent Validity of the Missionary Mandate, *Redemptoris missio* (1990);
- the Post-synodal Exhortation on Consecrated Life and its Mission in the Church and in the World, *Vita consecrata* (1994);
- Daniel Comboni, *Writings* (1991).

The progressive numbering of the text corresponds as far as possible to the numbering of the official Rite in the Italian edition.

INITIATION INTO RELIGIOUS LIFE

The Rite of Initiation into Religious Life contains the essential elements that characterize the formative phase of the Novitiate, that is, its objectives, mediations, dynamics and attitudes.

The postulant who asks to be admitted to the Novitiate already senses a certain attraction to the Comboni missionary life, and the Novitiate is in fact a time to discern about this initial desire through the experience of sharing the life of the Comboni community.¹

The main *aim* of the Novitiate is initiation and formation, according to the spirituality of St. Daniel Comboni, in the following of Christ crucified, the teacher of the truth that enlightens our hearts,² the Church's spouse and the hope of the world.³ Here the young man in formation begins to live out a journey of *discipleship* which demands generous dedication to the person of Jesus from within a real Comboni community. He thus learns to keep his eyes "fixed on Jesus Christ", "loving him tenderly"⁴ through personal and community prayer, through the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours and the Sacraments, in particular the Eucharist, and through the discernment of the God's will for him, so as to be able to make his lived choices in keeping with the values he has chosen to embrace.

The Novitiate thus becomes an important time of spiritual growth, anchoring the young man in a "strong awareness of God"⁵ and a constant sense of His presence, which develops into an ability to "communicate with God in an intimate and child-like way" that "becomes all but second nature"⁶ to him. This deep attitude of faith comes to express itself in a "lively interest in [God's] glory", and in an unconditional passion for the proclamation of the Gospel to all those who have not yet heard this Good News. In this way, the candidate grows stronger in the theological virtues of

¹ *Rite of Initiation into Religious Life* [RIRL]; RL 92.1-3.

² RIRL 22 (postulants' alternative words).

³ RIRL 26 (second intention of the common intercessions); RL 92.3.

⁴ *Writings of St. Daniel Comboni* [W], 2721.

⁵ W 2698.

⁶ W 2707.

faith, hope and charity, so as not to fall later into that “emptiness and intolerable isolation” that his future life as a missionary religious might reserve for him, were he not to be totally permeated by the sense of God and apostolic zeal.⁷

Community life, with its regular times of prayer and fraternal service, becomes the *locus theologicus* where the young man’s intentions and attitudes undergo an illuminating discernment and demanding verification. It is here that he will come to be known in his ability to enter into the rhythm of the community’s timetable and programme, and to maintain regular and balanced interpersonal relations with his formators, colleagues and the other persons with whom he may come in contact.

Community life also becomes the *locus christologicus* where the novice is configured little by little to Christ Crucified. In fact, it is here that the young man is initiated into the radicality of the evangelical counsels lived out in a three-fold manner: a *life of poverty*, in total dependence on the power of God’s Word⁸ and on sharing in community for his own spiritual, human and economic support; a *life of obedience*, grounded in the discernment of God’s will as it emerges from the circumstances of life and is rendered explicit by those serving in authority; a *life of chastity*, vivified by unselfish dedication to God and the brethren, which shuns all self-seeking and personal gratification as potentially compulsive reasons for making personal choices.

In consequence, community life is also a *locus ecclesiologicalus* in the form of “a cenacle of apostles”: through witness and apostolate lived together in the places of shared missionary service, this “centre of light” sends out the manifold rays of faith, hope and charity present in the members of the Institute.⁹ In a word, the Novitiate introduces the formands to the various dimensions of community life lived as a real “small Comboni Christian community”, an icon of the Church as the “family of God”.¹⁰ Through this experience the candidate comes to perceive himself as a person who belongs to a group, or better still, as a member of the Church.

This dynamic spiritual process of initiation, set in motion by the liturgical celebration, is illuminated by the Liturgy of the Word. Like Abraham, the young man is called continually to leave his “homeland” (every form, that is, of emotional, ethnic or cultural attachment), in a permanent attitude of “exodus”, so as to be able gladly to accept and love the new land, the “mission field” God will show him, and so be-

⁷ W 2698.

⁸ Cf. W 2702: “His spirit does not seek from God the reason for the Mission he has received, but rather acts on God’s Word”.

⁹ Cf. W 2648.

¹⁰ *Ecclesia in Africa* 63; RL 92.4.

come a sign of God's blessings for whatever people he will serve in his future missionary work (*First Reading*). By leaving everything behind in obedience to the Word of God, the novice will experience the company of God's power and light. In meditating on God's Word (*Lectio Divina*), in a continuous search for God's countenance in the face of Jesus, he will savour the sweetness of an intimate relationship with the Lord, his support in times of darkness, when his "enemies" (temptations, obstacles, difficulties) assail him (*Responsorial Psalm*).

The novice's search for God and his experience of the Lord Jesus as friend and companion on the journey manifest themselves in the concrete choices he makes, and in a continuous detachment from all things, so as to make a total gift of himself to the poorest and most abandoned. Daily life lived as a purifying exodus leads him to grow in the evangelical counsels of *poverty, obedience and chastity*. His face shines with a joy that dispels every shadow of the sadness that the sacrifice involved might cause (*Gospel*). By welcoming the seed of the Word of God, he grows in inner strength, not easily shaken by the challenges of the journey and life's unpredictable events (*Gospel Acclamation*).

In the light of this experiential knowledge of the crucified and risen Lord, the novice comes to consider everything else as so much "garbage" (cf. Phil 3.8). He experiences himself as loved by this Lord, not so much because of his fidelity to external rules, but because of his faith in God, his passionate love for Christ, and his willingness to sacrifice his whole self for the sake of his brothers and sisters who still do not know the Gospel. This continuous process of self-detachment does indeed bring a share in Christ's sufferings, and in the sense of being conformed to his death, but is always aimed at bringing him to experience the amazing spiritual and apostolic fruitfulness that comes from the Lord's resurrection. The dynamic movement of being configured to Christ, based on *Baptism* and further perfected daily in the *Eucharist*, is continuous, progressive and projected towards a completion never fully attained. The journey begun in the Novitiate must continue throughout the formand's religious and missionary life (*Second Reading*).

In summary, through the contemplation and the experience of Christ the Crucified Saviour, attained in meditation on the Word of God (*Lectio Divina*), in the celebration of the sacraments, particularly of the Eucharist, and in the practice of community life, the novice discovers the will of God and accepts it generously, becoming "holy" (imbued with a strong sense of God and a deep attachment to the person of the Crucified and Risen Lord) and "able" (fruitful and creative in initiatives that enfold the evangelical charity of the Heart of Jesus)¹¹, as St. Daniel Comboni desired.

¹¹ Cf. RIRL 26 (third and fourth intention of the *Common Intercessions*).

The Rite wisely concludes with a prayer for the formative community, that it may rise to the serious responsibility laid upon it, and may be moulded by the “patience of God”, so as to be able to welcome the individual journey of each candidate, sowing deeply in each one the seed of God’s Word, and waiting for its ripening, according to the seasons of God’s leading and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who knows how to enlighten and motivate the hearts of all to respond in authenticity.¹²

The *symbol* that characterizes this celebration of initiation into religious life, and which sums up the novices’ lived journey of configuration to the Pierced Heart of Christ, the Good Shepherd and the Missionary of the Father, is the *traditio*, the presentation to each of them of the book of Comboni’s *Writings*. Given the significance of these writings as the heritage of Comboni missionary spirituality, the novices will have to be specially introduced to them.¹³

¹² Cf. RIRL 26 (last intention of the *Common Intercessions*).

¹³ Cf. RIRL 27.

FIRST PROFESSION

The journey as disciples of Christ which the formands travel during the Novitiate leads to their First Profession, by which they make manifest their decision to “to follow Christ our Saviour more closely in the Institute of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus”.¹⁴

The period following First Profession offers the candidate the opportunity to verify over a specific period of time his ability realistically to live out the Comboni missionary spirituality in a concrete community. The wider Comboni community, for its part, desires to know the young man’s authenticity, and whether he will be able to persevere in day-to-day community living. The spiritual dimension of the formation journey must consequently go hand in hand with life in common, which is the place where spirituality must show how truly genuine it is.

The “grace” of First Profession has four elements to it. There is, first, a *spiritual* dimension: to follow Jesus Christ the Saviour “more closely”,¹⁵ “committing themselves more fully”¹⁶ to him; then comes the *missionary* dimension: “to proclaim his Gospel to all nations”;¹⁷ thirdly, there is the *Comboni* dimension: to work for “the regeneration of peoples not yet or only inadequately evangelized”;¹⁸ and, finally, there is the *ecclesial-community* dimension: “to commit themselves more fully to the service of Christ and the Church”,¹⁹ living the Comboni missionary spirituality, that is, as a “cenacle of apostles” in the spirit of the “Comboni family”.

The *spiritual dimension*, characterized as a “closer” following of Jesus, calls for an ever deeper configuration to Christ himself. It is rooted in consecration to God in Baptism and finds its most radical expression in the practice of the evangelical counsels.²⁰ The Comboni spirituality of the Heart of Jesus gives expression to this baptismal configuration to Christ, and leads it to its ultimate consequences of radical com-

¹⁴ *Rite of First Profession during Mass* [RFPdM] 36.

¹⁵ RFPdM 38 (celebrant’s initial admonition).

¹⁶ RFPdM 44 (beginning of the general intercessions).

¹⁷ RFPdM 36.

¹⁸ L.c.; RL 13.

¹⁹ RFPdM 44.

²⁰ RFPdM 38 (celebrant’s first question); LG 45-46; RL 20.1.

mitment. In the rite, in fact, the invocation to God the Father, artificer of the plan of salvation, is associated to the prayer that the candidates “keep their eyes fixed on the pierced heart of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, that they may love him tenderly and live out his love and compassion, to glorify your name among all nations”.²¹ The celebration of the Eucharist, “sacrament of charity”,²² brings to completion this baptismal configuration to the Paschal Mystery, accomplishing and perfecting it in total self-offering to God and the brethren.

Religious profession creates a “*new and special bond*” in respect of Baptism,²³ in the measure in which it expresses the novices’ intention “to commit themselves more fully to the service of Christ and the Church”.²⁴ This special bond is underlined by the *charismatic Comboni missionary* dimension of profession, which situates the configuration to Christ in a new perspective: to follow Christ the Saviour, Missionary of the Father, more closely, for the “*regeneration of the poorest and most abandoned*”, that is, for their integral human and spiritual transformation, through the direct proclamation of the Gospel and the work of human promotion. The Comboni missionary thus becomes a fruitful “sign of the love of God for those peoples who do not yet know him”.²⁵

The Comboni missionary vocation is a “*grace*”, a fruit of the work of the Spirit and not of any merely human initiative. So the prayer is made that God may bring to completion the inspiration that has led the candidates to make the religious vows,²⁶ blessing them and confirming this intention of theirs.²⁷ The invocation to the Holy Spirit as the one who works the grace of the Comboni missionary vocation – what might be called the rite’s *epiklesis* –, is expressed in the concluding prayer of the general intercessions: “through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, and of Saint Daniel Comboni, pour out your Holy Spirit on these your sons”.²⁸ The Comboni mission is thus to be carried out in the power of the Holy Spirit, who is the “prime agent of evangelization”,²⁹ and so the sacrament of Confirmation is thus also brought fully into play.

²¹ RFPdM 40; RL 21.2.

²² BENEDICT XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*.

²³ Cf. RFPdM 38 (celebrant’s initial question); RL 20.1.

²⁴ RFPdM 44 (celebrant’s admonition); RL 22.1.

²⁵ RFPdM 38 (celebrant’s second question); RL 21.2.

²⁶ Cf. RFPdM 39; also RFPdM 36; RL 20.

²⁷ Cf. RFPdM 44 (introductory admonition of general intercessions).

²⁸ RFPdM 44 (celebrant’s concluding prayer); RL 24; 56.

²⁹ JOHN PAUL II, *Redemptoris Missio* 21-40.

The rite also renders sacramentally explicit the *ecclesial-community* dimension of the grace of religious profession. The candidate asks not only God but also the Church, represented by the celebrating community, for the grace to follow Christ in the Institute of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus.³⁰ This implies that the community becomes not only the guarantor of the commitment professed by the candidates, but also the witness of their ability to live it out in the Church itself and in the Institute, made present in the particular community to which the newly-professed are assigned. The “special bond” of religious profession is thus not only a closer union with Christ, but also with the Church, of which the Institute is part.³¹ This is so much so that the formula of profession is pronounced in the presence of the Comboni community and in the hands of its appointed representative.³² The very symbol that sums up the meaning of the rite – the presentation of the Rule of Life –, signifies the community dimension of the *sequela Christi* through religious profession: “receive the Rule of our family”. The commitment to follow Christ the Saviour more closely implies the living out of the spirit of the “Comboni family”, the sign of a community experiencing salvation, of which the vows are called to be a radical and credible expression.³³

In the rite, the mention of Mother Church, perceived as generating the newly-professed to ecclesial mission in the service typical of the Comboni Missionaries, should not be read as merely a superficial juridical reference: rather, it underlines the very credibility of this religious profession in terms of the Church.³⁴ Aware of the extraordinary grace constituted by the Comboni missionary vocation and of the universal significance of this grace, Mother Church, through the intercession of Mary and of the founder St. Daniel Comboni, invokes the Holy Spirit over the candidates “so that what they have promised today in their first profession may be confirmed by their whole lives”³⁵ of personal and community commitment.

Finally, the Comboni mission is energized by three dynamic movements flowing from participation through the Eucharist in the Paschal Mystery. Inasmuch as this mission implies identification with Christ Crucified,³⁶ and so is an experience of the “the courage that comes from the resurrection”,³⁷ it is at once theological, re-

³⁰ Cf. RFPdM 36.

³¹ Cf. RFPdM 38; RL 36, 1-4.

³² Cf. RFPdM 41; RL 94.

³³ Cf. RFPdM 42; RL 23; 39.

³⁴ RFPdM 44 (introductory admonition of the general intercessions); RL 22.1.

³⁵ RFPdM 44 (general intercessions, concluding prayer).

³⁶ Cf. RFPdM 44 (general intercessions, first intention).

³⁷ RFPdM 44 (general intercessions, third intention).

ligious and liberating. It is a *theological mission* because it bears with it “God’s loving care for all humankind”.³⁸ It is a *religious mission* because it lives out the radicality of the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, through “sobriety in the use of goods”,³⁹ unreserved self-giving in love,⁴⁰ availability to the indications of the superiors, and solidarity in concern for and help to those in need.⁴¹ It is a *redeeming mission* because it manifests “the strength that leads to freedom”,⁴² when the Comboni missionary is able to proclaim the Gospel to the “the last and the least of this world” and “to make common cause” with them.⁴³ Lastly, it is an *eschatological mission* because it is “a sign of the kingdom to come”⁴⁴ which is history’s final goal, and so is a critical judgement on any absolute claim, be it human, religious or sociological.

The *symbol* that characterizes the celebration of First Profession is the presentation of the *Rule of Life* to the newly-professed, who are officially welcomed into the Institute of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus.⁴⁵ The Church assures them that through the observance of the Rule of Life they will be led to an ever deeper experience of the “Lord pierced on the cross for the salvation of the world”, according to the spirit of St. Daniel Comboni and the tradition which has its origin in him. In this way they will be able to “share the wisdom of those who have practiced this Rule before” them⁴⁶ and feel a living part of a family whose sole *raison d’être* remains the proclamation of the Gospel “to the poorest and most abandoned”.

³⁸ RFPdM 44 (general intercessions, second intention).

³⁹ RFPdM 44 (general intercessions, fourth intention); RL 27-32.

⁴⁰ RL 25-26.

⁴¹ RL 34-35.

⁴² RFPdM 44 (general intercessions, third intention).

⁴³ RFPdM 44 (general intercessions, fifth intention).

⁴⁴ RFPdM 44 (general intercessions, second intention).

⁴⁵ RFPdM 42; RL 94.

⁴⁶ RFPdM 42.

PERPETUAL PROFESSION

The special journey of *sequela Christi*, already in some degree undertaken in the Postulancy, formally begun in the Novitiate, and publicly confirmed at First Profession, is now definitively sealed with “the new and special bond of Perpetual Profession”.⁴⁷ Here it is a matter of total conformation to the Paschal Mystery, enlivened by unshakeable fidelity and made tangible by the ability to “live serenely and with determination within the Institute”,⁴⁸ for better or worse, in joy or in sorrow, in light or in dark, in success or failure, aiming at “completing what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church” (Col 1, 24).

The confreres who come forward to make their Perpetual Profession have learned to keep their eyes fixed on Jesus crucified, and have understood the meaning of “a God who died on the cross for the salvation of souls”.⁴⁹ Thanks to this contemplation and experience of the “mystery of such great love”, they are now happy to “offer themselves to lose everything and to die for him and with him”, renouncing all their securities so as to give themselves to God and the spreading of his Kingdom, even to martyrdom if necessary.⁵⁰ “The Missionary must be prepared for everything: for joy and sadness, for life and death, for embrace and abandonment”.⁵¹

Perpetual Profession is a “grace” of the Spirit, because it is an all-encompassing response to God, who is love.⁵² By this grace, life becomes a divine event, a permanent initiative of God’s love. In this sense, the perpetually professed missionary belongs only to God, who calls and sends him, and to the brothers and sisters he is sent to; his consecration thus constitutes an exclusive, definitive, and hence far from temporary, reality. So Perpetual Profession is the sign of an indissoluble, spousal union, a freely-given response of love to the unconditional love of the Lord, who freely calls to himself those he wants, to offer them a share in his passion for the Kingdom of his Father.

This consecration to the Lord, which is so radical as to constitute a new state of life, is lived out experientially through the three vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. There are three of them, but they make up one single commitment: the pro-

⁴⁷ *Rite of Perpetual Profession* [RPP] 63; RL 98.

⁴⁸ RL 98.2.

⁴⁹ W 2721.

⁵⁰ W 2722.

⁵¹ W 218.

⁵² Cf. e.g. W 1774, 6485, 6846, 6656, 1735; cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*.

fessed let themselves be taken into the mystery of Christ, so that in their concrete human life Christ may continue to be the chaste, poor and obedient Son, consecrated and sent by the Father. For this reason, the religious profession of the Comboni missionary is at one and the same time the act of being configured to Christ, the Missionary of the Father, and a permanent commitment to be identified with him. This means living his poverty, his obedience and his virginity today, so that the message of salvation may reach everyone, especially the “poorest and most abandoned”. The vows are Christ’s wedding gifts to his bride, the Church. The professed missionary lives them *in persona Ecclesiae* and the Church lives them in him. It thus becomes evident that the first dimension of mission is consecration lived to the full.

The Rite of Perpetual Profession brings out the multiple dimensions of Comboni missionary spirituality, which are made especially manifest in this unique ecclesial event. The uniqueness of this celebration, a *solemnity* in the strict etymological sense of the word, that is, an unrepeatable event, is expressed in a rubric that asserts that “the rite of perpetual profession takes place separately from other rites of profession”.⁵³ Moreover, the invitation is to celebrate it in the presence of a large congregation⁵⁴ and in a notable place.⁵⁵ The whole celebration brings out three essential elements of the event being celebrated: the *nature* of the perpetual self-giving, the *purpose* of missionary service, and the *means* that make this possible and guarantee final perseverance.

The *nature* of Perpetual Profession has three aspects: it originates in a freely-given gift, it last for life, and it calls for dedication of great spiritual depth. The generosity of both the call and the response are to be stressed, signs respectively of that divine and human love⁵⁶ which can only be the fruit of the grace of God’s Spirit.⁵⁷ God is the “the giver of every gift”⁵⁸ and the “source of all holiness”⁵⁹ and “growth in [the] Church”.⁶⁰ Indeed, because Comboni perpetual profession is a “grace”, and hence an irreversible gift inasmuch as it is a spousal bond between God and man in Christ by the work of the Spirit, it is a commitment *ad vitam* which requires the capacity for “lifelong perseverance”,⁶¹ to “undertake forever”⁶² and “constantly to observe”⁶³ the

⁵³ RPP 8, 49.

⁵⁴ RPP 50, 53.

⁵⁵ RPP 52.

⁵⁶ RPP 60, 63 (the candidate’s answer to the celebrant’s three-fold question).

⁵⁷ Cf. RPP 65 and RPP 67 (litany of the saints, particularly the concluding petitions), 68.

⁵⁸ RPP 65.

⁵⁹ RPP 74 (first paragraph of the first blessing).

⁶⁰ RPP 74 (first paragraph of the third blessing).

⁶¹ RPP 61.

⁶² RPP 63 (celebrant’s second question).

⁶³ RPP 63 (celebrant’s third question).

service of the Gospel, becoming a permanent member of the Comboni family.⁶⁴ A commitment of such quality cannot be mere activism, but is rather a matter of passionate dedication, because it is a question of being consecrated “more intimately”⁶⁵ to Christ, imitating his example of total self-giving. This consecration is actualized in “perfect chastity for the kingdom of heaven, ... shared poverty and generous obedience.”⁶⁶ It is a self-offering that renders the professed able to spend his life generously “in the service of the mission ‘ad gentes’.”⁶⁷

The *aim* of the Comboni vocation is described as “the Lord’s service,”⁶⁸ so as to “build up the Church”, and “advance the salvation of the world,” in “the service of all [God’s] people”⁶⁹ and the “the proclamation of his Gospel.”⁷⁰ This service is given form by the spirituality of the Heart of Jesus,⁷¹ which leads the missionaries to become “more and more like Christ, the Good Shepherd”,⁷² so that they “may they share intensely in his merciful love, making the cause of the poorest and most abandoned their own”.⁷³ As “heirs of Saint Daniel’s Comboni’s apostolic zeal”,⁷⁴ the missionaries live and die with the desire of “carrying the Gospel to the ends of the earth”,⁷⁵ and act as a leaven of newness, liberation, justice and peace.⁷⁶

The *means* necessary fully to live out the Comboni vocation are an intense life of prayer and community living. A humble and docile openness to the *Word of God* becomes a fountain of the life and hope that flows from the God who does not disappoint.⁷⁷ The daily celebration of the *Eucharist* further nourishes the experience of that welcoming and benevolent love of God the Father which is the foundation of the gift of self to God the Son.⁷⁸ The Eucharist transforms the missionary so that he can reveal the “new and eternal life won by Christ’s redemption”.⁷⁹ In the experience of constant *prayer*, God’s grace purifies from all forms of selfishness and unfaithfulness

⁶⁴ Cf. RPP 76.

⁶⁵ RPP 63.

⁶⁶ RPP 63.

⁶⁷ RPP 63 (celebrant’s third question).

⁶⁸ RPP 61.

⁶⁹ RPP 74 (first blessing).

⁷⁰ RPP 61, 63.

⁷¹ Cf. RPP 61, 74.

⁷² RPP 67 (Litany of the Saints, third last intention).

⁷³ RPP 61, 74.

⁷⁴ RPP 74 (second blessing).

⁷⁵ RPP 74 (second blessing).

⁷⁶ Cf. RPP 74 (second blessing); also RFPdM 44 (general intercessions): RIRL 26 (general intercessions).

⁷⁷ Cf. RPP 74.

⁷⁸ Cf. RPP 79 (*Hanc igitur* of the Roman Canon).

⁷⁹ Cf. RPP 79 (changeable part of Eucharistic Prayer III).

“by the grace of the Holy Spirit”, setting the missionary “on fire with [God’s] love”.⁸⁰ The missionary thus becomes patient in trials, firm in faith, joyful in hope, and diligent in love.⁸¹ The importance of *community life* is also stressed: it is important to nourish the family spirit, so as “constantly to observe the Rule of Life”, “live in fraternal love”, and share “the same vocation in the service of the Church in the world”,⁸² inspired by a spirit of fraternal sharing. All this is expressed by the sign of peace, by which the newly-professed are welcomed into the Comboni family.⁸³ Once again, in this way the Comboni community becomes a “cenacle of apostles”, that nourishes in its members the light of faith, and speaks of God’s passionate love for the world.⁸⁴

Thus it is that by perpetual profession the Comboni missionary is definitively accepted into the Institute, a community rooted in communion and gathered by grace with the purpose of proclaiming the Gospel (*koinonia*). Life in common and mutual recognition for the sake of the Gospel in turn become a service rendered to those in the greatest need of the gift of faith and human dignity (*diakonia*). And this missionary service becomes a form of witness, the ultimate and irrevocable gift of oneself even to martyrdom (*martyria*).

The final symbol used in the celebration of Perpetual Profession – the *presentation of the crucifix* – sums up the whole Comboni missionary vocation. The Comboni missionary cannot understand or present himself independently from the open Heart of Christ Crucified. In the personal experience of the cross the missionary senses a “strong awareness of God”,⁸⁵ “who died on the cross for the salvation of souls”.⁸⁶ In other words, he perceives God’s presence in every event and person, especially in the victims of the greatest sufferings and injustices. It is indeed in the participation in this God’s self-emptying (*kenosis*), in sharing in “the destiny of the poorest and most abandoned”,⁸⁷ that the Comboni missionary experiences Christ’s extraordinary power⁸⁸ and the total liberation which the Gospel of love works for all humankind.

⁸⁰ RPP 74 (first blessing).

⁸¹ Cf. RPP74 (third paragraph of the first blessing).

⁸² RPP 63 (celebrant’s fourth question).

⁸³ Cf. RPP 76.

⁸⁴ Cf. W 2698.

⁸⁵ Cf. W 2698.

⁸⁶ Cf. W 2721.

⁸⁷ RPP 75.

⁸⁸ RPP 75.

RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

RITE



CONGREGATIO DE CULTU DIVINO
ET DISCIPLINA SACRAMENTORUM

Prot. N. 47/11/L

MISSIONARIORUM COMBONIANORUM CORDIS IESU

Instante Reverendo Patre Henrico Sánchez González, Superiore Generali Missionariorum Combonianorum Cordis Iesu, litteris die 12 ianuarii 2011 datis, vigore facultatum huic Congregationi a Summo Pontifice BENEDICTO PP. XVI tributarum, attentis expositis, textum *anglicum* Ordinis Professionis Religiosae, prout in adiecto exstat exemplari, perlibenter probamus seu confirmamus.

In texto imprimendo inseratur ex integro hoc Decretum, quo ab Apostolica Sede petita confirmatio conceditur. Eiusdem insuper textus impressi duo exemplaria ad hanc Congregationem transmittantur.

Contrariis quibuslibet minime obstantibus.

Ex aedibus Congregationis de Cultu Divino et Disciplina Sacramentorum, die 31 martii 2011.

(Antonius Card. Cañizares Llovera)
Praefectus

(✠ Iosephus Augustinus Di Noia, OP)
Archiepiscopus a Secretis

**INTRODUCTION
TO THE RITE OF
RELIGIOUS
PROFESSION**

RITE OF RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

INTRODUCTION

NATURE AND IMPORT OF RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

Baptism and religious life

1. In response to God's calling many Christians dedicate themselves to His service and to the welfare of humanity through the sacred bonds of religious life and seek to follow Christ more closely through the evangelical counsels.⁸⁹ This leads to the grace of baptism achieving richer results in them.⁹⁰

The Church honours and guides religious life with love

2. The Church has always esteemed the religious life, which, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has taken various forms in the course of history.⁹¹ It has raised religious life to the rank of a canonical state and approved a great number of religious institutes and protected them by wise legislation.⁹² For it is the Church that receives the vows of those who make religious profession, begs God's grace for them by its public prayer, puts them in God's hands, blesses them, and unites their offering with the eucharistic sacrifice.⁹³

⁸⁹ Cf. Vat. Council II, Const. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 43: Decr. *Perfectae Caritatis*, n. 1.

⁹⁰ Cf. Vat. Council II, Const. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 43.

⁹¹ Cf. Vat. Council II, Const. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 43: Decr. *Perfectae Caritatis*, n. 1.

⁹² Cf. Vat. Council II, Const. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 45: Decr. *Perfectae Caritatis*, n. 1.

⁹³ Cf. Vat. Council II, Const. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 45.

rites for the different stages of religious life

3. The steps by which religious dedicate themselves to God and the Church are these: novitiate, first profession (or other sacred bonds), and final profession. The constitutions of religious institutes add to these a renewal of vows.

The novitiate

4. The novitiate, the beginning of life in the institute,⁹⁴ is a time of testing for both novice and community. Entry into the novitiate should be marked by a rite in which God's grace is sought for the special purpose of the period. This rite should, of its nature, be restrained and simple, celebrated in the presence only of the religious community. It should take place outside Mass.

First profession

5. First profession then follows. Through temporary vows before God and the Church the novices promise to observe the evangelical counsels. Such vows may be taken within Mass, but without special solemnity. The rite of first profession provides for the bestowal of insignia of the religious life and the habit, following the very ancient custom of giving the habit at the end of the period of probation, since the habit is a sign of consecration.⁹⁵

Perpetual profession

6. After the period prescribed by Law, final profession is made, by which religious bind themselves permanently to the service of God and the Church. Perpetual profession reflects the unbreakable union between Christ and his Bride, the Church.⁹⁶

It is very fitting that the rite of final profession should take place within Mass, with due solemnity and in the presence of the religious community and the people.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Cf. CIC, can. 646.

⁹⁵ Cf. Vat. Council II, Decr. *Perfectae Caritatis*, n. 17.

⁹⁶ Cf. Vat. Council II, Const. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 44.

⁹⁷ Cf. Vat. Council II, Const. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 80.

The rite consists of these parts:

- a)* the calling or asking of those to be professed (this may be omitted if desired);
- b)* the homily or address, which reminds the people and those to be professed of the value of religious life;
- c)* the examination, by which the celebrant or superior asks those who are to be professed whether they are prepared to be consecrated to God and to follow the way of perfect charity, according to the rule of their religious family;
- d)* the litanies, in which prayer is offered to God the Father and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints is invoked;
- e)* the profession, made in the presence of the Church, the lawful superior of the institute, the witnesses, and the congregation;
- f)* the solemn blessing or consecration of the professed, by which the Church ratifies their profession through a liturgical consecration, asking the heavenly Father to pour forth upon them the gifts of the Holy Spirit;
- g)* the presentation of the insignia of profession, if this is the custom of the religious family, as outward signs of perpetual dedication to God.

**The renewal
of vows**

7. In some religious communities vows are renewed at fixed times in accordance with the constitutions.

This renewal of vows may take place within Mass, but without solemnity, especially if renewal of vows is frequent or annual. A liturgical rite has place only in the case of renewal of vows that has the force of Law. In many religious communities, however, the custom of renewing vows has become established as an exercise of devotion. It may be carried out in many ways but the practice of doing publicly within Mass what belongs to private devotion is not to be encouraged. If it seems appropriate to renew vows publicly on special anniversaries, for example, the twenty-fifth or fiftieth year of religious life, the rite for the renewal of vows may be used with the necessary adaptations.

8. Since all these rites have their own special character, each demands a celebration of its own. The celebration of several rites within the same liturgical service is to be absolutely excluded.

MASS FOR THE RITE OF RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

Use of the
Roman Missal

9. When religious profession, and especially final profession, takes place during Mass, it is appropriate to choose one of the ritual Masses “for Religious Profession” from the Roman Missal or from those approved for each Institute. In the occurrence of the Paschal Triduum, a solemnity, a Sunday in Advent, in Lent, and in Eastertide, Ash Wednesday, a day in Holy Week or the Easter octave, or November 2, the Mass is that of the day, maintaining as suitable, however, the special formularies for the profession in the Eucharistic prayer and final blessing.

and of the Lectionary

10. Because the Liturgy of the Word, with readings appropriately chosen for the celebration of the profession, is of great importance to illustrate the nature and the responsibilities of religious life, when the Mass “for religious profession” is not allowed, the readings can be chosen from those proposed in the Lectionary for such a Mass, except on the Easter Triduum, solemnities, Sundays of Advent, of Lent, of Eastertide, Ash Wednesday, the whole of Holy Week and Easter octave, and November 2.

11. White vestments are worn for the ritual Mass of religious profession.

ADAPTATIONS TO BE MADE BY INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTES

12. The norms governing the rite of initiation (nos. 16-27 of the ritual) are not of obligation unless this is clearly stated (as in the prohibition of having the rite within Mass, no. 2) or the

nature of the rite so demands (as in the rule that the rite should be restrained and simple, no. 3).

13. All who make or renew their religious profession within Mass must use the rites of temporary profession, final profession, or renewal of vows, unless they possess a particular right in this matter.⁹⁸

Norms
guiding adaptation

14. Religious families should adapt the rite so that it more closely reflects and manifests the character and spirit of each institute. For this purpose the faculty of adapting the rite is given to each institute; its decisions are then to be reviewed by the Apostolic See.

In making adaptations in the rite of profession, the following points should be especially respected:

- a) The rite takes place immediately after the gospel.
- b) The arrangement of parts must remain intact, but some parts may be omitted or others of a similar nature substituted.
- c) A liturgical distinction between perpetual profession and temporary profession or renewal of vows must be strictly maintained. What is proper to one rite may not be inserted into another.
- d) As is stated in the pertinent places, many formularies in the rite of profession may be changed, and in fact must be, to reflect more clearly the character and spirit of each institute. Where the *Roman Ritual* offers several optional formularies, particular rituals may add others of the same kind.

Profession
before
Communion

15. Profession in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, prior to communion, is not in harmony with a true understanding of the liturgy. Henceforth, then, new religious communities are forbidden to adopt the practice. Institutes that follow this practice on the basis of a particular Law are urged to discontinue it.

⁹⁸ Cf. Vat. Council II, Const. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 80.

Similarly, all religious following a rite proper to them are instructed to embrace and follow authentic liturgical forms, putting aside anything in conflict with the principles of the liturgical reform. This is the way to achieve that simplicity, dignity, and closer unity that the Council has so strongly endorsed.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Cf. Vat. Council II, Const. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 80.

CHAPTER I

**RITE
OF INITIATION
INTO RELIGIOUS LIFE**

CHAPTER I

INITIATION INTO RELIGIOUS LIFE

16. On the day when the canonical novitiate begins, it is fitting that there should be a ceremony to ask God's grace for achieving the special purpose of the novitiate.
17. It is appropriate that the rite should take place during a special celebration of the Word on the nature of religious life and the spirit of the Institute. It is forbidden to perform the rite of initiation during Mass.
18. The rite is to be very simple and direct, in the presence of the religious community only.
19. The texts for the rite must avoid anything that may seem to diminish the novices' freedom of choice or obscure the true meaning of the noviciate as time of testing.
20. For the celebration of this rite it is opportune to choose a place which is meaningful for the daily life of the community. If it seems necessary, however, the rite may take place in the chapel.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

21. The rite may appropriately begin with a greeting by the superior, or the singing of a psalm or other suitable hymn.
22. Then the superior questions the postulants in these or similar words:

Dear brothers, what do you ask from us?

The postulants reply together in these or similar words:

We ask to live with you,
in a time of discernment,
desiring to follow Christ, the Missionary of the Father,
according to the charism of St. Daniel Comboni.

The superior replies:

May the Lord grant you his help and protection.

All: Amen.

The questioning may be omitted, and the request for admission may take place as follows: one of the postulants, facing the superior and community, speaks in the name of all:

God's love and the missionary ideal
have led us to you;
we ask you to help us
to follow Christ crucified,
in a life which is poor, obedient and chaste,
to experience your life as a community,
and to witness the Gospel
at every moment of our lives,
especially with the poorest and most abandoned.
Bring us to know the spirit of the Founder,
St. Daniel Comboni,
and the Rule of Life of the Institute.

Or he may use similar words, expressing the aspirations and thoughts of the postulants themselves.

The superior responds in these words:

May God in his mercy be with you always
and may Christ our teacher grant light to us all.

All: Amen.

23. After the questioning or request for admission, the superior says:

Let us pray.

Lord God, source of every vocation in the Church,
listen to the prayer of these sons of yours,
who ask to join our missionary family
so as to serve you more perfectly;
grant that their sharing in our life in common
may increase fraternal love in us all.
Through Christ Our Lord.

All: Amen.

CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

24. Suitable texts from Holy Scripture are then read, with appropriate responsories (see Lectionary, nos. 93-154). The following passages are suggested:

Genesis 12:1-4

Go from your country and your kindred.

In those days the Lord said to Abram...

Psalms 26[27]:1,4,5, 8b, 9d & 11.

R. Your face, Lord, do I seek.

Philippians 3:8-14

I count all things as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ.

Brethren: Indeed I count everything as loss...

Alleluia verse: Luke 11:27-28

**Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it:
they will be not see corruption.**

Matthew 19:16-26

If you would be perfect, go sell what you possess and come, follow me.

At that time: Behold, one came up to Jesus...

25. At their conclusion the superior addresses the religious community and the postulants on the meaning of the religious life and the spirit of the institute, or he reads an appropriate chapter of the rule.

COMMON INTERCESSIONS

26. The intercessions may be prepared following the model suggested here, from which may be selected the prayers considered most appropriate, or other intercessions may be properly prepared.

United in prayer, we implore God our Father
to bless these brothers
and confirm them in their intent.

Lord, hear us. - **R.** Lord, graciously hear us.

For the holy Church of God:
that, enriched by the Comboni missionary charism,
she may be ever more resplendent
in the eyes of Christ her spouse,
the hope of the world.

R. Lord, graciously hear us.

For the welfare of all the peoples:
that all those who consecrate themselves to the service of God,
be promoters of Gospel justice
born of charity and love.

R. Lord, graciously hear us.

For our brothers **N.N.:**
that in this time of discernment

they may come to discover the will of God
and cling to it generously.

R. Lord, graciously hear us.

For our brothers **N.N.:**
that, constant in prayer
and apostolic zeal,
they may fulfil the Founder's expectations
and be "holy and capable".

R. Lord, graciously hear us.

For our community,
that it may sow the Word of God with generosity
and learn from Him to wait patiently for its fruit.

R. Lord, graciously hear us.

Our Father.

Then the superior may add the following or a similar prayer:

Lord God, who continuously enrich your Church
with a variety of charisma,
look benignly upon these brothers of ours,
who intend to experience
the life of our Institute;
through the intercession of Saint Daniel Comboni,
grant them to know its spirit
and confirm us all in your faithful service.
Through Christ Our Lord.

All: Amen.

CONCLUSION

27. After this the Superior entrusts the newly admitted novices to the care of the novice master, and with his confreres greets them in the spirit of Christian love in the way customary in the religious community. He then gives them the Writings of St Daniel Comboni and the Rule of Life. Meanwhile, an appropriate hymn or canticle of praise is sung.

CHAPTER II

**RITE
OF FIRST PROFESSION
DURING MASS**

CHAPTER II

RITE OF FIRST PROFESSION DURING MASS

28. The rite described in this chapter takes place during Mass. It may be used only for those religious who make their first profession upon successful completion of the novitiate (see Introduction, no. 5).
29. The Mass may correspond to the liturgy of the day, or the ritual Mass for the day of first profession may be used, in accordance with the rubrics (see Introduction, nos. 9-11).
30. It is proper for the superior who receives the profession to preside over the Eucharistic sacrifice.
31. The profession ordinarily takes place at the chair; if circumstances so dictate, the chair may be placed in front of the altar. Seats should be so arranged in the sanctuary for those making profession that the faithful have a complete view of the liturgical rites.
32. Enough bread and wine for consecration should be prepared for the ministers, those making their profession, and their parents, relatives, and fellow religious. If only one chalice is used, it should be sufficiently large. In addition to what is needed for Mass, there should also be ready:
 - the ritual for religious profession;
 - the book of the Rule of Life.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

33. When the people and the religious are assembled and everything is ready, the procession moves through the church to the altar in the usual way, while the choir and people sing the entrance antiphon of the Mass. Those to be professed may fittingly join in the procession, accompanied by the novice master. When they come to the sanctuary all make the customary reverence to the altar and go to their places; then Mass continues.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

34. The readings may be chosen either from the Mass of the day or from the texts suggested by the Lectionary (nos. 96-157).
When the proper ritual Mass may not be celebrated, a reading can still be chosen from the Lectionary for religious profession, except during the Paschal Triduum, on solemnities, on the Sundays of Advent, Lent, Eastertide, Ash Wednesday, any day of Holy Week or the Octave of Easter, and November 2 (cf. no. 10).
When the Creed is prescribed by the liturgy of the day, it is said after the general intercessions.

RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

Calling or request

35. After the gospel the celebrant and the people sit, but those to be professed stand. Then, according to choice or as circumstances demand, the deacon or the novice master calls those to be professed by name.
They answer:

Present.

36. The celebrant then questions them in these or similar words:

Dear brothers, what do you ask of God and of his holy Church?

The candidates reply together in these words:

**We ask for God's merciful love
and for the grace of serving him more perfectly
in the Institute of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus
to follow Christ our Saviour more closely
and proclaim his Gospel to all nations,
for the regeneration of the poorest and most abandoned.**

The celebrant and all the members of the religious community reply:

Thanks be to God.

Homily

37. Those to be professed then sit and listen to the homily or address which should develop the scriptural readings and the theme of religious profession as God's gift and call for the sanctification of those chosen and for the good of the Church and the whole human family.

Examination

38. After the homily or address, those to be professed stand, and the celebrant questions them on their readiness to dedicate themselves to God and to seek perfect charity, according to the rule or constitutions of our Institute.

The celebrant questions them, saying:

**My dear brothers,
by water and the Holy Spirit in Baptism
you have already been consecrated to God's service:
are you resolved to unite yourselves more closely
to him and his mission
by the new and special bond of religious profession?**

They answer:

I am.

The celebrant continues:

In your desire to be a sign of the love of Christ for those peoples who do not yet know him, are you resolved to live in chastity for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, embracing a life of poverty, and offering God the gift of your obedience?

They answer:

I am.

39. Then the celebrant confirms their intention in these or similar words:

May Almighty God grant you his grace to fulfil what you resolve.

All: Amen.

Prayer for God's grace

40. The celebrant then prays for God's help, saying:

Let us pray.

All pray for a while in silence. Then the celebrant says:

Lord,
look upon these servants of yours
who today by their religious profession in the presence of the Church
resolve to dedicate their lives to you
to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world;
grant them always to keep their eyes fixed
on the pierced heart of Jesus, the Good Shepherd,
that they may love him tenderly
and live out his love and compassion,
to glorify your name among all nations.
Through Christ Our Lord.

Amen.

Profession

41. After the prayer, two professed confreres stand near the celebrant to act as witnesses. Those to be professed come one by one to the celebrant and read the formula of profession. Apart from the introduction and conclusion, which the candidates may compose themselves, the formula must always include these words:

For the honour of God, before the Church, here (name of the diocese**), in the presence of N.N., I N.N. vow *for one year* chastity, poverty and obedience, according to the Constitutions of the Institute of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus.**

Then they return to their places and remain standing.

Presentation of the Rule of Life and fraternal embrace

42. The celebrant introduces the presentation of the Rule with these words:

N.N., God has chosen and called you to follow Christ and to proclaim to the world the power and wisdom of his death and resurrection.

Then he presents each newly-professed with the book of the Rule, saying:

Receive the Rule of our family:
by keeping it faithfully,
may you know the love of the Lord,
pierced on the cross for the salvation of the world,
and come to share the wisdom
of those who have practiced this Rule before you.

The newly-professed replies:

Amen.

After receiving the book, he returns to his place.

43. As a sign that they are now members of the Institute, the newly professed may exchange a brotherly embrace with the celebrant and the other professed confreres. Meantime the following antiphon with psalm 132(133), or another appropriate hymn, may be sung:

**Behold, how good and pleasant it is
when brothers dwell in unity.**

General intercessions

44. The rite of profession is concluded with the general intercessions or prayers of the faithful, which may be prepared on the following model:

Today our community rejoices in the Lord because of the religious profession of these brothers of ours, who intend to commit themselves more fully to the service of Christ and the Church according to the charism of Saint Daniel Comboni. United in heart, we ask God our Father to bless them and confirm them in their purpose.
Lord, hear us.

R. Lord, graciously hear us.

– For the holy Church of God, our mother:
that adorned by the virtues of her children
she may resemble Christ,
meek, humble and crucified.

R. Lord, hear us.

– For all persons consecrated to God:
that by fidelity to their vocation
they may be a sign of God's loving care
for all humankind
and a sign of the kingdom to come.

R. Lord, hear us.

– For all the peoples of the world:
that they may recognise in the life
of those consecrated to God
the courage that comes from the resurrection
and the strength that leads to freedom.

R. Lord, hear us.

– For our brothers **(N.N.)**,
who today have consecrated themselves to God
in the Institute of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus:
by their lives of poverty, chastity and obedience,
may they be an example of sobriety in the use of goods,
of unreserved self-giving in love
and of true solidarity with those in need.

R. Lord, hear us.

– For the last and the least of this world:
that the Gospel may be boldly announced to them
and that they may find in the followers of Comboni
persons committed “to make common cause” with them
with confidence and hope.

R. Lord, hear us.

– For this community:
that it may never give in to discouragement in the face of opposition,
but may always respond
with untiring commitment in the work of evangelisation,
with courage in trials,
and with perseverance in doing good.

R. Lord, hear us.

Let us pray:

Hear, O Lord, the prayer of your people,
and through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary,

**Mother of the Church,
and of Saint Daniel Comboni,
pour out your Holy Spirit on these your sons
whom you have called to follow Christ more closely,
so that what they have promised today in their first profession,
may be confirmed by their whole lives.
Through Christ Our Lord.**

All: Amen.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

45. During the offertory chant, some newly-professed may bring to the altar the bread, wine and water to be used for the Eucharistic sacrifice.
46. If it seems opportune, the celebrant gives the sign of peace to each of the newly professed, in the usual way or in accordance with the customs of the place.
47. After the celebrant has received the body and blood of Christ, the newly professed come to the altar to receive communion which may be given to them under both kinds. Then their parents, relatives, fellow religious and, according to the judgment of the Ordinary, all present may receive communion in the same way.

CHAPTER III

**RITE
OF PERPETUAL
PROFESSION
DURING MASS**

CHAPTER III

RITE OF PERPETUAL PROFESSION DURING MASS

48. It is fitting that the rite of profession by which a religious binds himself to God for ever should take place on a Sunday or a solemnity of the Lord, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or of a saint distinguished in the living of the religious and missionary life.
49. The rite of perpetual profession takes place separately from other rites of profession (see Introduction, no. 8).
50. Notice of the day and hour should be given to the faithful in good time so that they may attend in greater numbers.
51. The Mass is that of the liturgy of the day, or the ritual Mass for the day of perpetual profession may be used, in accordance with the rubrics (see Introduction, nos. 9-11).
52. Where possible, it is preferable that the Mass be concelebrated, with the principal celebrant being the superior who will receive the profession.
53. Profession ordinarily takes place in the church of the religious community. For pastoral reasons, however, or in order to promote esteem for the religious life, to give edification to the people of God, or to permit larger attendance, the rite may take place in the cathedral, parish church, or some other notable church, as may seem fitting.
54. Similarly, where religious from two or more institutes wish to celebrate their profession at the same eucharistic sacrifice, the rite of profession may suitably take place in the cathedral, a parish church, or some other notable church with the bishop presiding and the superiors of the institutes concelebrating. Those making their profession will pronounce their vows before their respective superiors.

55. As the nature of the rite demands, the whole liturgical service should be celebrated with fitting solemnity, but any appearance of lavishness unbecoming to religious poverty should be avoided.
56. The profession ordinarily takes place at the chair. To enable the faithful to take part more easily, the celebrant's chair may be placed in front of the altar. In lay institutes, a chair is to be prepared in a suitable part of the sanctuary for the superior who is to receive the profession of the members of the institute. Seats should be so arranged in the sanctuary for those making profession that the faithful may have a complete view of the liturgical rites.
57. Enough bread and wine for consecration should be prepared for the ministers, those making their profession, and their parents, relatives, and fellow religious. If only one chalice is used, it should be sufficiently large. In addition to what is needed for Mass, there should also be ready:
 - a) the ritual for religious profession;
 - b) the Crucifix to be given to the newly professed.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

58. When the people and the confreres are assembled and everything is ready, the procession moves through the church to the altar in the usual way, while the choir and people sing the entrance antiphon of the Mass. Those to be professed may fittingly join in the procession, accompanied by the formator and, in lay institutes, the superior. When they come to the sanctuary, all make the customary reverence to the altar and go to their places; then Mass continues.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

59. The readings may be taken either from the Mass of the day or from the texts suggested in the Lectionary (nos. 96-157). When the Mass "For religious profession" is not permitted, a reading may be chosen from those suggested in the Lectionary for such a Mass, except during the Paschal Triduum, on solemnities, on the Sundays of Advent, Lent, Eastertide, Ash Wednesday, any day of Holy Week or the Easter Octave, and November 2 (cf. no. 10). When the Creed is prescribed by the liturgy of the day, it is recited before the Eucharistic Liturgy. The general intercessions are omitted.

RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

Calling or request

60. After the gospel the celebrant and the people sit, but those to be professed stand. Then, according to choice or as circumstances demand, the deacon or the superior of the community calls those to be professed by name.

They answer:

Lord, you have called me: here I am.

61. The celebrant then questions them in these or similar words:

My dear brothers, what do you ask of God and of his holy Church?

The candidates reply together in these words:

**We ask for lifelong perseverance in the Lord's service
and in the proclamation of his Gospel
in this religious family of the Comboni Missionaries
of the Heart of Jesus.**

The celebrant and all the members of the religious community reply:

Thanks be to God.

Homily or address

62. Those to be professed then sit and listen to the homily or address which should develop the scriptural readings and the theme of religious profession as God's gift and call for the sanctification of those chosen and for the good of the Church and the whole human family.

Examination

63. After the homily or address, those to be professed stand, and the celebrant questions them on their readiness to dedicate themselves to God and to seek perfect charity, according to the rule of our Institute.

The celebrant questions them, saying:

Dear brothers,
you have been with us now for some years
as missionaries dedicated to the proclamation of the Gospel;
are you now resolved to consecrate yourselves more intimately
to the one who called you
by the new and special bond of perpetual profession?

They answer:

I am.

The celebrant continues:

Are you resolved, with the help of God,
to undertake forever a life
of perfect chastity for the kingdom of heaven,
of shared poverty and generous obedience,
as chosen by Christ our Lord
and his Virgin Mother?

They answer:

I am.

The celebrant continues:

Are you resolved to spend your life generously
in the service of the mission “ad gentes”
according to the charism of our Founder, Saint Daniel Comboni?

They answer:

I am.

The celebrant continues:

Are you resolved,
with the help of the Holy Spirit,
constantly to observe the Rule of Life of our family,
that you may live in fraternal love,
sharing the same vocation
in the service of the Church in the world?

They answer:
I am.

64. At the end of the questions, the celebrant confirms the intention of those to be professed in these words:

May the grace of almighty God bring your desire to fulfilment.

All: Amen.

Litany

65. All rise. The celebrant stands, with hands joined, and says, facing the people:

Dearest beloved brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to God the almighty Father,
the giver of every gift,
that he may bless and strengthen the holy purpose
which he himself has inspired in these his sons.

66. The deacon gives the sign to kneel.

Let us kneel.

The celebrant kneels at his chair. Those to be professed prostrate themselves or kneel. The rest kneel. During the Easter Season and on all Sundays, all stand except those to be professed.

67. Then the cantors sing the litany for the rite of religious profession, all making the responses. In this litany one or the other of the petitions marked with the same letter may be omitted. At the appropriate place there may be inserted invocations of saints especially venerated in our Institute or by the faithful; other petitions may be added to suit the occasion.

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
Saint Michael,
Holy Angels of God,

pray for us
pray for us
pray for us



Saint John the Baptist, pray for us
Saint Joseph, pray for us,
Saint Peter and Saint Paul, pray for us
Saint John, pray for us
All you holy Apostles and Evangelists, pray for us

Saint Mary Magdalene, pray for us
All holy disciples of the Lord, pray for us

Saint Stephen, pray for us
Saint Lawrence, pray for us
Saint Agnes, pray for us
All holy martyrs, pray for us

Saint Basil , pray for us
Saint Augustine, pray for us
Saint Benedict, pray for us
Saint Boniface, pray for us
Saint Bernard, pray for us
Saint Francis, pray for us
Saint Dominic, pray for us
Saint Ignatius of Loyola, pray for us
Saint Vincent de Paul, pray for us
Saint John Bosco, pray for us
Saint Catherine of Siena, pray for us
Saint Teresa of Jesus, pray for us

Saint Francis Xavier, pray for us
Saint Peter Claver, pray for us
Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus, pray for us
Saint Daniel Comboni, pray for us
Saint Josephine Bakhita, pray for us
Holy Martyrs of Uganda, pray for us
Saint Martin de Porres, pray for us
All holy men and women of God, pray for us.

Lord, be merciful,
From all evil,
From every sin,

Lord, deliver us, we pray.
Lord, deliver us, we pray.
Lord, deliver us, we pray.

From everlasting death,
 By your Incarnation,
 By your Death and Resurrection,
 By the outpouring of the Holy Spirit,

Lord, deliver us, we pray.
 Lord, deliver us, we pray.
 Lord, deliver us, we pray.
 Lord, deliver us, we pray.

Be merciful to us sinners,

Lord, we ask you,
 hear our prayer.

a) By the self-offering of your servants
 and their apostolic work,
 make the life of your Church ever more fruitful.

Lord, we ask you,
 hear our prayer.

a) Give in ever greater abundance
 the gifts of the Holy Spirit
 to your servant, Pope **N.**,
 and to all his brother bishops.

Lord, we ask you,
 hear our prayer.

b) By the life and labour of all religious
 promote the welfare of all people.

Lord, we ask you,
 hear our prayer.

b) Lead all men and women
 to the fullness of the Christian life.

Lord, we ask you,
 hear our prayer.

c) Grant that all religious communities
 may live and grow in the love of Christ
 and the spirit of their founders.

Lord, we ask you,
 hear our prayer.

c) Give to all
 who profess the Gospel counsels
 a fuller share in the work
 of redemption.

Lord, we ask you,
 hear our prayer.



d) Reward a hundredfold
the parents of your servants
for the sacrifice they have made.

Lord, we ask you,
hear our prayer.

d) Make these servants of yours
who today consecrate themselves to you,
more and more like Christ, the Good Shepherd.

Lord, we ask you,
hear our prayer.

e) Give these servants of yours
the grace of perseverance
in their commitment to a life consecrated to mission.

Lord, we ask you,
hear our prayer.

e) Bless these brothers of ours,
make them holy, and consecrate them
to your service.

Lord, we ask you,
hear our prayer.

Jesus, Son of the living God,

Lord, we ask you,
hear our prayer.

Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.

Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.

68. Then the celebrant alone rises and says, with extended arms:

Lord,
listen to the prayers of your people;
prepare the hearts of your servants
for consecration to your service;
by the grace of the Holy Spirit
purify them from all sin
and set them on fire with your love.
Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

69. The deacon then says:

Let us rise.

All stand.

Profession

70. After the litany, two conferees stand near the celebrant to act as witnesses.
71. Those to be professed come, one by one, to the celebrant and read the formula of profession, which they themselves have written out beforehand.

Apart from the introduction and conclusion which the candidates may compose themselves, the formula of profession must always include the following words:

For the honour of God, before the Church, here (name of the diocese**), in the presence of N.N...., I (N.N.).... vow *perpetual* chastity, poverty and obedience, according to the Constitutions of the Institute of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus.**

72. Then the newly professed may fittingly go to the altar, one by one, to place on it the formula of profession; if it can be done conveniently, each of them should sign the document of profession upon the altar itself. After this, each goes back to his place.
73. Afterward, the newly professed may stand and sing an antiphon or other chant expressing the spirit of self-giving and joy, for example:

**Uphold me, Lord, according to your promise
that I may live;
and let me not be put to shame in all my hope.**

Solemn blessing or consecration of the professed

74. Then the newly professed kneel; the celebrant with hands extended over them says the prayer of blessing, using one of the formulas which follow.

1.

Father in heaven
and source of all holiness,
creator of the human race,
your love for us was so great
that you gave us a share in your own divine life.
Neither the sin of Adam
nor even the sins of the whole world
could alter your loving purpose.

In the dawn of history
you gave us Abel as an example of holiness.
Later, from your beloved Hebrew people
you raised up men and women graced with every virtue.
Foremost among them all stands Mary,
the ever-virgin daughter of Zion.
From her pure womb was born Jesus Christ,
your eternal Word,
the Saviour of the world.
You sent him, Father, as our pattern of holiness.
He became poor to make us rich,
a slave to set us free.
With love no words can tell
he redeemed the world by his paschal mystery
and won from you the gifts of the Spirit
to sanctify his Church.
The voice of the Spirit has drawn
countless numbers of your children
to follow in the footsteps of your Son.

They leave all things
to be one with you in the bonds of love
and give themselves wholly to your service
and the service of all your people.

Look with favour, then,
on these who have heard your call.
Send them the Spirit of holiness;
help them to fulfil in faith
what you have enabled them to promise in joy.
Keep always before their eyes Christ, the divine teacher.
Give them perfect chastity,
ungrudging poverty
and wholehearted obedience.
May they glorify you by their humility,
serve you with docility,
and be one with you in fervent love.

May they build up the Church by the holiness of their lives,
advance the salvation of the world,
and stand as a sign of the blessings that are to come.
Lord, protect and guide these servants of yours.
At the judgment seat of your Son
be yourself their great reward.
Give them the joy of vows fulfilled.
Made perfect in your love,
may they rejoice in the communion of your saints
and praise you for ever in their company.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

2.

Lord God, creator of the world
and father of all,
we praise you and give you thanks
for the bond of love
you have maintained with us,
undeterred by sin,
and by the work of your hands.

In Abraham, the father of believers,
you called a multitude of peoples
to walk in the shadow of your faithfulness.
In your servant Moses, sent to the oppressed,
you opened up a path of hope
in the land of exile and of tears.
In the prophets of Israel
you spoke to the heart of a people in darkness,
setting alight their desire for a Saviour.

In the fullness of time
you sent your Son into the world,
firstborn of the new creation
reconciled in love,
calling people of every tongue and nation
to the inexhaustible source of life
sprung from his pierced heart.
And so, by the gift of his Spirit,
you formed the Church, his mystical body,
consecrating her to the same mission
of carrying the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Now, Father, look with favour on these sons of yours
whom you called to be with Christ for ever
in the practice of the evangelical counsels;

pour into their hearts your Holy Spirit,
 that they may hold all things to be a loss
 compared to the sublime knowledge of your Son:
 may they share intensely in his merciful love,
 making the cause of the poorest and most abandoned their own.
 As heirs of Saint Daniel's Comboni's apostolic zeal
 in the Institute he wanted to be a cenacle of apostles,
 may these brothers of ours,
 under the guidance of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
 throw all their energies into the proclamation of the Gospel.

Lord, may they sow abundantly on earth
 the hope that never fails,
 and grant them at the end of their lives
 to be received into your heavenly Jerusalem
 in the company of a multitude of brothers and sisters.
 Through Christ Our Lord.

All: Amen.

3.

Lord God,
 source of holiness and growth in your Church,
 all creation owes you its debt of praise.
 In the beginning of time
 you created the world to share your joy.
 When it lay broken by Adam's sin,
 you promised a new heaven and a new earth.
 You entrusted the earth to the care of men and women
 to be made fruitful by their work.
 Living in this world they were to direct their steps
 to the heavenly city.



By your sacraments
you make us your children
and welcome us into your Church;
you distribute among us the many gifts of your Spirit.
Some serve you in chaste marriage;
others forego marriage for the sake of your kingdom.
Sharing all things in common,
with one heart and mind in the bond of love,
they become a sign of the communion of heaven.

Father, we pray you now,
send your Spirit upon these servants of yours
who have committed themselves
with steadfast faith
to the words of Christ your Son.
Strengthen their understanding
and direct their lives by the teaching of the Gospel.
May the law of love rule in their hearts,
and concern for others distinguish their lives,
so that they may bear witness to you, the one true God,
and to your infinite love for all people.
By their courage in daily trials
may they receive, even in this life,
your promised hundredfold,
and at the end an everlasting reward in heaven.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Presentation of the Crucifix and sign of peace

75. After the blessing of the professed, the newly professed rise and come before the celebrant, who presents the crucifix to each with these words:

Recieve the image of Christ crucified:
may his divine wisdom guide you now and for ever,
and his power impel you to share
the destiny of the poorest and most abandoned.

76. Now the celebrant declares the perpetual membership of the newly-professed in the Institute, saying:

**Dearly beloved brothers,
you are now part of this family
of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus;
as a sign that henceforth all will be in common among us
let us exchange a sign of peace.**

Each newly-professed exchanges a sign of peace with the celebrant and all the professed confreres, while the choir and people sing Psalm 132(133) with the antiphon:

**Behold, how good and pleasant it is
when brothers dwell in unity.**

Or another appropriate chant.

77. The newly professed return to their places and the Mass continues with the offertory chant.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

78. During the offertory chant, some of the newly professed may bring to the altar the bread, wine, and water for the eucharistic sacrifice.
79. In the eucharistic prayers, memory of the professed may be made according to the text below:

In **EUCHARISTIC PRAYER I**, the proper form of the *Hanc igitur* (Therefore, Lord, we pray) is said:

Therefore, Lord, we pray:
graciously accept this oblation of our service,
and of these your servants **[N.N.]**,
which we make to you on their profession day;
sanctify this offering in your mercy,
so that those who by your gift
have dedicated their lives to you today,
may, at the glorious coming of your Son,
be admitted to the joy of the eternal Pasch.
(Through Christ our Lord. Amen.)

In the intercessions of **EUCHARISTIC PRAYER II**, after the words and all the clergy, the following is added:


Be mindful also, Lord, of these brothers **[N.N.]**,
who have dedicated themselves today
to your perpetual service,
and grant that they may always raise
their hearts and minds to you
and glorify your name.
Remember also our brothers and sisters...

In the intercessions of **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER III**, after the words the entire people you have gained for your own, the following is added:

Strengthen also these your servants in their holy purpose,
for they have dedicated themselves
by the bonds of religious consecration to serve you always.
Grant that they may give witness in your Church
to the new and eternal life won by Christ's redemption

If the proper Preface is not used, **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER IV** may be said; in its intercession, after the words to the praise of your glory, a commemoration of the professed may be inserted in this way:

Therefore, Lord, remember now
all for whom we offer this sacrifice:
especially your servant, **N.** our Pope
and **N.** our Bishop,
the whole Order of Bishops,
and all the clergy.
Be mindful also of these brothers [**N.N.**],
who consecrate themselves to you more closely today
by perpetual profession,
those who take part in this offering,
those gathered here before you,
your entire people,
and all who seek you with a sincere heart.
Remember also
those who have died in the peace of your Christ...

80. The celebrant gives the sign of peace to each of the newly professed in the usual way, or according to the custom of the place.
81. After the celebrant has received the body and blood of Christ, the newly professed religious come to the altar to receive communion which may be given to them under both kinds. Then their parents, relatives, and confreres and, according to the dispositions of the Ordinary, all present may receive communion in the same way. 

CONCLUDING RITE

82. When the prayer after communion has been said, the newly professed stand before the altar, and the celebrant, facing them, may say:

1.

May God, who inspires all holy desires
and brings them to fulfilment,
protect you always by his grace
so that you may fulfil the duties of your vocation
with a faithful heart.

All: Amen.

May he make each of you a witness
and sign of his love for all people.

All: Amen.

May he make those bonds,
with which he has bound you to Christ on earth,
endure for ever in heavenly love.

All: Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit,
come down on you and remain for ever with you
who have taken part in these sacred celebrations.

All: Amen.

2.

May God, who is the source of all good intentions,
enlighten your minds and strengthen your hearts.
May he help you to fulfil with steadfast faith
all you have promised.

All: Amen.

May the Lord enable you to travel in the joy of Christ
as you follow along his way,
and may you gladly share each other's burdens.

All: Amen.

May the love of God unite you
and make you a true family,
praising his name
and showing forth Christ's love.

All: Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit,
come down on you and remain for ever with you
who have taken part in these sacred celebrations.

All: Amen.

CHAPTER IV

**RENEWAL OF VOWS
DURING MASS**

RENEWAL OF VOWS DURING MASS

83. Renewal of vows, which is governed by the general law of the Church or by a particular ruling of the constitutions, may take place during Mass.
84. The rite for the renewal of vows should be conducted with the greatest simplicity.
85. Either the Mass corresponding to the liturgy of the day or the ritual Mass for the day of the renewal of vows is used, in accordance with the rubrics (see Introduction, no. 9).
86. It is proper for the superior who receives the renewal of vows to preside over the eucharistic sacrifice.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

87. The readings may be taken either from the Mass of the day or from the texts suggested in the Lectionary (nos. 96-157).
When the Mass “For religious profession” is not permitted, a reading may be chosen from those suggested in the Lectionary for such a Mass, except during the Paschal Triduum, on solemnities, on the Sundays of Advent, Lent, Eastertide, Ash Wednesday, any day of Holy Week or the Easter Octave, and November 2 (cf. no. 10). When the Creed is prescribed by the liturgy of the day, it is recited after the general intercessions.
88. After the gospel a homily which uses the readings from Scripture to emphasize the meaning and the value of religious life is given.

RENEWAL OF VOWS

Prayer for God's grace

89. After the homily the celebrant prays for God's help, saying:

God our Father gives us the grace
to persevere in our resolutions.
Let us pray to him for these sons of his
who are resolved today to renew their vows for mission
in the presence of the Church.

All pray for a time in silence. Then the celebrant says:

Lord,
in your providence
you have called these sons of yours
to be perfect as the Gospel teaches;
in your mercy grant that they may persevere to the end
along the way of your love
on which they have set out with such joy.
Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Renewal of profession

90. After the prayer, two perpetually professed members of the community stand near the celebrant to act as witnesses. Those who are to renew their profession come, one by one, to the celebrant and read the formula of profession. If there is a large number renewing their vows, the formula of profession may be recited by all. However, the concluding words, *This I promise...* must be said by each individually, as a clear expression of his will.

For the honour of God, before the Church, present here (**name of the diocese**), I N.N. (or: We here present), in the presence of N.N., vow *for one year* chastity, poverty and obedience, according to the Constitutions of the Institute of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus.

**This I promise, with the help of Mary, Mother of the Saviour,
and the protection of Saint Daniel Comboni.**

General intercessions

91. The rite fittingly concludes with the recitation of the general intercessions or prayer of the faithful. The prayers may be based on the following model, from which may be chosen those prayers considered most appropriate, or others may be properly prepared.

Dearest beloved brothers,
let us pray to God the Father
for his holy Church,
for the peace and salvation of the world,
for our missionary family
and for these brothers who today have renewed their vows.
Lord, hear us. **R.** Lord, graciously hear us.

– For our Holy Father the Pope and all the bishops:
that by sound teaching and loving care
they may be faithful shepherds of God’s holy people.
Lord, hear us.

– For the peace and salvation of the world:
that all religious
may be messengers and servants
of the peace of Christ,
Lord, hear us.

– For our brothers N.N.:
that their religious consecration in the Comboni Institute
may bear authentic fruits of holiness and zeal
for a renewed evangelization.
Lord, hear us.

– For our brothers N.N.:
that in their chaste, poor and obedient lives
they may show forth the fruitfulness of the Church,
be friends and helpers of the poor,



**and attract those who are far off
to the sweet yoke of Christ.
Lord, hear us.**

**– For all of us here present:
that by our prayers and example,
we may be light and leaven of the world,
in the footsteps of Saint Daniel Comboni.
Lord, hear us.**

Lord God,
source of all holiness,
give ear to the prayers of this missionary family,
and through the intercession of the blessed Virgin Mary,
your humble servant and our Mother,
bless and protect these sons of yours,
that, with your help, they may faithfully fulfil
what they have promised through your grace.
Through Christ Our Lord.

All: Amen

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

92. During the offertory chant some of the religious who have renewed their vows may bring the bread, wine, and water to the altar for the eucharistic sacrifice.
93. The celebrant gives to each of the religious who have renewed their vows the sign of peace in the usual way or in accordance with the custom of the place. If there are many, he gives the sign of peace to the first, who gives it to the rest.
94. After the celebrant has received the body and blood of Christ, the religious who have renewed their profession come to the altar to receive communion under both kinds. In the same way the parents, relatives, and confreres of the professed, as well, according to the judgment of the local Ordinary, as all present, may receive the Eucharist under both kinds.

**ON THE TWENTY-FIFTH
OR FIFTIETH
ANNIVERSARY
OF RELIGIOUS
PROFESSION**

ON THE TWENTY-FIFTH OR FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

95. On days when there occur none of the celebrations listed in nos. 1-11 of the “Table of liturgical days”, the Mass “On the twenty-fifth or fiftieth anniversary of religious profession” from the Roman Missal may be celebrated, with readings taken from the Lectionary for religious professions. When the Mass “On the twenty-fifth or fiftieth anniversary of religious profession” is not permitted, readings may be chosen from those suggested in the Lectionary for religious professions, provided there do not occur any of the celebrations included in nos. 1-9 of the “Table of liturgical days”.

**READINGS
AND
OTHER TEXTS**

BIBLICAL READINGS

The Readings indicated here may be found in full in the Lectionary for Ritual Masses.

FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

96. **Genesis 12:1-4**
Go from your country and your kindred.
In those days the Lord said to Abram...
97. **1 Samuel 3:1-10**
Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.
In those days the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord...
98. **1 Kings 19:4-9.11-15**
Stay on the mount before of the Lord.
In those days Elijah went a day's journey into the wilderness...
99. **1 Kings 19:16, 19-21**
Elishah rose up and followed Elia.
In those days, the Lord said to Elijah...
100. **Song of Solomon 2:8-14**
Arise, my love, and come away.
The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes...

101. **Song of Solomon 8:6-7**

Love is strong as death.

Set me as a seal...

102. **Isaiah 61:9-11**

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord.

The descendants of my people shall be known...

103. **Hosea 2:14, 19-20**

I will espouse you for ever.

Thus says the Lord: "Behold I will allure her..."

RESPONSORIAL PSALMS

104. **Psalm 23[24]:1-2,3-4ab, 5-6**

R. Lord, this is the generation of those who seek your face.

105. **Psalm 26[27]:1,4,5, 8b, 9d & 11**

R. Your face, Lord, do I seek.

106. **Psalm 32[32]:2-3, 4-5, 11-12, 13-14, 18-19, 20-21**

R. Blessed the people whom the Lord has chosen as his heritage.

107. **Psalm 33[34]:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9**

or:

10-11, 12-13, 15-17 & 19

R. I will bless the Lord at all times.

or:

R. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

108. **Psalm 39[40]: 2 & 4ab, 7-8a, 8b-9, 10, 12**

R. Behold, I come Lord, to do your will.

109. **Psalm 44[45]: 11-12, 14-15, 16-17**

R. Behold the bridegroom! Go out to meet Christ the Lord.

110. **Psalm 62[63]: 2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9**

R. My soul thirsts for you, O my God.

111. **Psalm 83[84]: 3-4, 5-6a & 8, 11-12**

R. How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!

112. **Psalm 99[100]: 2, 3-4, 5**

R. Come into the presence of the Lord with singing.

FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

113. **Acts 2:42-47**

All who believed were together and had all things in common.

The brethren held steadfastly...

114. **Acts 4:32-35**

One heart and soul.

Now the company of those who believed...

115. **Romans 6:3-11**

Let us walk in newness of life.

Brethren: All of us who have been baptised into Christ Jesus...

116. **Romans 12:1-13**

Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.

I appeal to you, brethren, by the mercies of God...

117. **1 Corinthians 1:22-31**

We preach Christ crucified.

Brethren: Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom...

118. **1 Corinthians 7:25-35**

The virgin is anxious about the affairs of the Lord.

Brethren: Concerning the unmarried, I have no command...

119. **Ephesians 1:3-14**

God chose us in Christ that we should be holy and blameless before him.

Blessed be the God and Father...

120. **Philippians 2:1-4**

Have the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

Brethren: If there is any encouragement in Christ...

121. **Philippians 3:8-14**

I count all things as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ.

Brethren: Indeed I count everything as loss...

122. **Colossians 3:1-4**

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

Brethren: If you have been raised with Christ...

123. **Colossians 3:12-17**

And over all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Brethren: Put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved...

124. **1 Thessalonians 4:1-3, 7-12**

This is the will of God, your sanctification.

Brethren, we beg and exhort you...

125. **1 Peter 1:3-9**

Without having seen Jesus Christ, you love him.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!...

126. **1 John 4:7-16**

If we love one another, God abides in us.

Beloved, let us love one another;...

127. **Revelation 3:14, 20-22**

I will eat with him, and he with me.

"The words of the Amen,...

128. **Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20**

Come Lord Jesus!

I, John, hear a voice that said to me...

ALLELUIA VERSE AND VERSE BEFORE THE GOSPEL

129. **Psalm 132[133]:1**

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!

130. **Matthew 11:25**

Blessed are you Father, Lord of heaven and earth: you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom.

131. **Matthew 19:27-29**

You who have left everything for my sake and for the Gospel will receive a hundredfold and inherit the kingdom of heaven.

132. **Cf. Matthew 25:1, 6**

Keep the lamp of faith alight and revive the flame of the love: behold the bridegroom comes.

133. **Luke 11:27-28**

Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it: they will be not see corruption.

134. **Luke 11:28**

Blessed are they who hear the word of God and lovingly keep it.

135. **John 14:23**

If a man loves me, he keep my word, says the Lord, and my father will love him and we will come to him.

136. **John 15:5**

I am the vine and you are the branches, says the Lord; he who lives in me, and I in him, will bear much fruit.

137. **2 Corinthians 8:9**

Though Jesus Christ was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.

138. **Galatians 2:20**

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.

139. **Galatians 6:14**

Far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.

140. **Philippians 3:8-9**

I count everything as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him.

141. **Cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:14**

God called you to this through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL

142. **Matthew 5:1-12**

Blessed are you... Rejoice and be glad.

At that time: Seeing the crowds, Jesus...

143. **Matthew 11:25-30**

You have hidden these things from the wise and revealed them to infants.

At that time Jesus declared...

144. **Matthew 16:24-27**

Whoever loses his own life for my sake, will find it.

At that time: Jesus told his disciples...

145. **Matthew 19:3-12**

For the sake of the kingdom of heaven.

At that time: Pharisees came up to Jesus...

146. **Matthew 19:16-26**

If you would be perfect, go sell what you possess and come, follow me.

At that time: Behold, one came up to Jesus...

147. **Matthew 25:1-13**

Behold the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.

At that time: Jesus told his disciples this parable:

The kingdom of heaven shall be compared to ten maidens...

148. **Mark 3:31-35**

Whoever does the will of God, is my brother, sister, and mother.

At that time: The Mother of Jesus and his brethren came...

149. **Mark 10:24-30**

We have left everything and followed you.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: "Children..."

150. **Luke 1:26-28**

Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.

At that time, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city...

151. **Luke 9:57-62**

No one who put his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.

At that time: As Jesus and his disciples were going along the road...

152. **Luke 10:25-37**

Go and do likewise.

At that time: Behold, a lawyer stood up...

153. **Luke 10:38-42**

Martha received him. Mary has chosen chose the good portion.

At that time: Jesus entered a village...

154. **John 12:24-26**

If a grain of wheat dies, it bears much fruit.

At that time: Jesus told his disciples: "Truly, truly, I say to you..."

155. **John 15:1-8**

Abide in me, and I in you.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: "I am the true vine..."

156. **John 15:9-17**

You are my friends, if you do what I command you.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: "As the Father has loved me,..."

157. **John 17:20-26**

I desire that they also may be with me where I am.

At that time: Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven and prayed, saying, "Holy Father, I do not pray for these only,..."

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